

## 4 Steps to Prepare For and Pass Your CCNA Exam

Any success in life, even the smallest one, is a consequence of hard and persistent work. But trying hard is not always enough. You need to have the appropriate stimulation to be guided towards the right path at the right time. Keeping this in mind will help you make the right decisions that will lead you to successfully passing your CCNA exam -- and doing so with a high score. Cisco's CCNA exam, as any other basic technical exam, can be completed by preparing with appropriate study guides and learning by doing -- so make sure you practice your commands! This article has three basic aims:

- To guide you in choosing the appropriate training materials from which you will benefit the most based on the content structure and level.
- To show you what it takes to move one step beyond the boundaries of the exam level. This will not only help you get CCNA certified, but will prepare you for the real world. Acquiring the knowledge and expertise to be able to handle real life situations, the ones that are not included in your exam preparation -- this is what will help you succeed in your career.
- To help you put everything together so you can successfully complete your CCNA exam and be prepared for your career as a Cisco Certified Networking Associate

**Choosing the Appropriate CCNA Training Material** Before going to war you need to have "ammunition". So make sure you choose the best study aid that will help you the most. If you enjoy learning from books and feel that you will benefit the most from reading, then I would suggest buying a comprehensive text that combines study material with lab scenarios. Take a look at the self study books [available from Cisco Press](#). Also, [ciscobible.net](#) has provided some [free resources](#). If you're not too fond of reading, or would prefer to have someone show you everything you need to know then take a look at a training package that includes video tutorials and practice exams. Taught by a CCIE, Train Signal's CCNA training is a complete CCNA study guide that will help you build your hands on experience. It includes instructions on setting up your own lab, performing specific tasks, and focuses on both -- theory and real world scenarios. Keep in mind that there are plenty of other CCNA study guides and preparation materials out there, and you do have some options on how you learn. You can also take a class or a boot camp, but bear in mind that these will be more expensive than self directed options like books and video training. Here's what you need to consider before deciding on one CCNA study guide, training, or class -- before you buy, ask yourself:

- Is my training comprehensive and does it cover all of the exam objectives? (you can learn about what's covered on the CCNA exam from Cisco's [CCNA exam blueprint](#).)
- Does my training include real-world scenarios to help me get experience?
- Does my training offer practice exams where I can see how I'm doing and measure the areas I need to improve on?
- Is my training quality and from a reputable source?
- Is my training convenient and affordable?

**Acquiring Practical Experience -- Using Simulators & Real Cisco Devices** Study guides and training videos are great tools for preparing for and passing the CCNA exam, and if that's all you want to do, great! If you're actually interested in becoming a true Cisco Network Associate then you'll need to make sure that you're retaining your knowledge and building on it to be a successful CCNA. To do that you need to practice what you learn; it's the only way to get experience and learn from your mistakes. If you're just a beginner you can start practicing on a router simulator. Toogit is a free router simulator that you can download and use to configure your router in a networked environment. There are plenty of other router simulators out there, just do a Google search and you'll be able to find them. I however, don't recommend spending money on simulation software. There is nothing better than using the real Cisco devices and if you really want to master configuring, operating and maintaining a network infrastructure you need to get your hands on the real deal. So if you're going to spend money, use it wisely and get a real Cisco lab setup (you can get one on eBay pretty reasonably). All you need to get started is a single router or a switch, and eventually you can buy more hardware to add to your collection. There's really no need to buy a complete package of Cisco devices, unless you're very serious about networking and know that this is your chosen career path (and you have some extra money to spend). One last thing to keep in mind before buying a Cisco lab or even a single Cisco device is to make sure you are buying from a trustworthy person with at least some kind of guarantee. If the machine is loaded with a Cisco IOS and operating normally then even the smallest guarantee period is adequate. Whether you're utilizing simulators or the real machines make sure you spend lots of time practicing. You know what they say, practice makes perfect and there's no better way to master Cisco networking than getting your hands dirty.

**Working on Real CCNA Exam Questions** Besides configuration questions, the CCNA exam examines some basic theoretical knowledge through multiple choice questions. Of course your study guide is the first place to look for samples of such questions along with detailed explanations. Nevertheless you may want to utilize practice exams and try to answer as many questions as you may find on the internet. [ciscobible.net](#) has some [free practice questions](#) and [free real simulation](#) that you can take a look at. And I'm sure there are plenty of other websites that offer similar content. If you want to do it right and make sure you're getting the best practice exam out there, try [Pass4sure practice exams](#); they are not free, but they're definitely worth the extra money.

**Before You Take Your CCNA Exam** Following the above suggestions will definitely help you get a high score on your CCNA exam. Make sure you:

- Choose the appropriate CCNA training material
- Practice what you've learned using

simulators and real Cisco devices - Test your knowledge to make sure you're ready to take your CCNA exam Here are a few more tips for you to keep in mind: - Have a good night's sleep before the exam day. Do not stay up late studying. You are definitely not going to learn anything new on the last day. - Try to wear something comfortable on the exam day. And try to be relaxed; stress is definitely your worst enemy. - Read each exam question slowly. Read it twice if you are not comfortable with it. Don't worry about time, you have enough to finish. It is easy to make mistakes when you rush. Examiners know this and sometimes they tend to insert suggested answers with wrongly typed words, so pay attention. You can easily spot the wrong answers when you carefully read every suggested answer. - If you're not sure about something, then do not forget that the method of "elimination" works most of the time. Try to eliminate all irrelevant answers and focus on those that seem right. - Don't forget to memorize all the theory that your training material suggests to learn. One last thing, in the unlikely event of failing the exam -- do not get disappointed and do not give up. We all have bad times now and then, after all we are human. I am sure that the next time you will surpass your expectations. Trust me on this: Good luck!