

I passed CCNA. This is how I did it for those interested.

I passed my ICND 1 a while back and now my ICND 2 which now gives me my CCNA R&S. Thanks to all that helped me on this site, it really is the best place to come when you can't get a clear answer from the book. There is always someone who knows the answer to any question put forward. My next step is CCNA Wireless then I think CCNP R&S. I did fail the ICND 2 a couple of weeks ago but the computer froze on me 3 or 4 times and eventually the keyboard locked out on me. I had about 25 minutes for the whole exam rather than the normal amount of time. I either had to give up then or just rush and try my best. I did the latter, I got close but not close enough. I hope to get a free exam voucher for that, it is still under investigation. As I travel around the world to different countries and cities quite often my way of studying is not the best but I have little choice. How I did it may help others especially if your working life is similar to mine so here it is.

===== **Study Material** I bought a few things so I could get different views/questions from different authors. All of these are still cheap enough to buy bar one. Cisco Press ICND 2 by Wendell Odom. Top quality book with a good practice exam, this also contains 6 simulator questions. CCNA Portable Command Guide Brilliant for carrying around and it has a lab example on all subjects and some good tips. Command Memorizer This is cheap very good for practicing your commands. There are other things that come with it but I never used them as my other study resources were good enough. I would have paid the money just for this one part.

www.configureterminal.com/cisco-ccent-ccna/ccent-command-memorizer-icnd1-simulations-exams.html Bryant Advantage CCNA study guide is cheap and has some good things in it, he has a good way of explaining things. [CCNA Simulator ? Packet Tracer 5.2](#) Brilliant bit of kit but probably not good enough for CCNP. I came across a few limitations on some CCNA labs so for CCNP there will probably be a lot more. Videos TrainSignal by Chris Bryant, not cheap but they are very good. There are videos for all CCNA subjects and these are great to watch while static and on the move. I bought my self an IPOD so I can also watch them on the train and plane while I am travelling.

===== **Hardware** As I travel around the world a lot I cannot carry equipment around with me. However, to go further than the CCNA I am going to have to rent Racks. I could have rented racks during my CCNA study but I live in hotels most of the time and the connections are not good for email let alone a rack. My idea was to build my own lab and have remote access to it but getting the time to build it when I am home only 1 week at a time is also difficult especially when I have a family and small children to entertain.

===== **How I studied** I read every page on that ICND 2 book before doing any practical and that I think was a big mistake, it wasted a lot of time. When I started reading it the 2nd time and then doing it practically I had forgot so much of the theory, I was quite shocked how much. It sticks better if you actually do it practically as well, I will never do that again without doing practically at the same time. Once I finished the book I went through the practice exams but I only did a custom exam and only chose one subject at a time. Even when I could answer the question I still looked at it again to find quicker ways of solving the problem, time is very very important on the exam so you need to be able to find the answer quickly. After going through the book a 2nd time I then went onto my other study materials. I knew by then my weak areas and so I concentrated on those. I watched but sometimes only listened to my videos while I was travelling. Even just listening to them is better than nothing at all. I used packet tracer to practice building what I had learned and the command memorizer to quickly practice my commands. The latter is great because you can quickly wipe it and do it again and again until it sinks in.

===== **How long did it take to study for the ICND2/CCNA** I started studying ICND 2 middle of May 2009. I had a 4 month break with no study at all due to long work hours. I then went back to my studies. It total it was around 4 or 5 months to study for ICND 2. I studied most night and at most weekends.

===== **How did I know I was ready for the CCNA exam** This was not easy with the CCNA because it contains so much material. I went over the practice exams time and time again but skipping over the questions I knew I could answer and concentrating ones I could not so easily/quickly, eventually leaving me with no questions/subjects to concentrate on. I did the practice custom exams only, this concentrates on one subject rather than a few at the same time. I found this the best way as at first I was getting mixed up with STP, RSTP when the questions were all mixed up. I went over the labs on each subject until I could create, break and fix each one. By this time I was just repeating myself and I knew I could answer the questions and I could build all the labs. At that point I guessed/hoped I was ready so I booked my exam for one week later.

===== **During the week before the**

exam I personally think the best time to book an exam is when you think you are ready not in advance when you think you may be ready. By giving myself 1 more week doing it this way I could then take my time, double check and fine tune what I knew. It was worth it because I did come across some things I thought I knew well but I was able to fine tune those in time. The night before the exam I opened up the practice exam and chose all questions. Each question I went to I just clicked on show answer, I found this just helped me remember a bit more of the theory and obviously I could go through all 150 + questions quickly.

===== **Exam Day** I booked my exam 8.30 in the morning so I could get work as early as possible straight after. I could not book it for weekends. I got up early and the only thing I took with me was my CCNA Portable Command Guide from Cisco Press. I went to a coffee shop close to the exam centre, had a coffee and some breakfast and just flicked through the book. I would have taken my ICND 2 book but I don't travel with books like that as they are too big and bulky on planes so I just use PDF's.

===== **Tips** If you don't know your IP really well then don't sit the exam, you don't have time to waste in the exam. I only had 2 minutes left on my exam at the end, I was doing really well for time then after I finished a big question I noticed that I make a mistake so I had to do it all again. One of my weak points I discovered during my training was troubleshooting. Knowing the commands, how to build something yourself and the theory is good but not good enough. You are looking at networks other people have built and you need to find out what is wrong and correct it. I would do things like make the subnets different on OSPF and then debug OSPF to see the errors coming in or leave out the no auto-summary on EIGRP and starting pinging with debugs on or doing traceroutes. Anything really, just get it working then purposely break it and then debug it. If you really don't know the answer to a question in the exam and you cannot use the process of elimination then just take an educated guess and move on to the next question. Losing time on a question you don't know may cost you vital marks on questions you do know but have no time to answer, end result could be a fail rather than a pass. The very first question I had on my exam I did not know, the way the question was written confused me on what they were actually asking from me. I knew after reading the question I could not answer it and not even use the process of elimination so I took a guess at it and moved on. ===== I hope this helps a few of you. Regards and best of luck John