How to Pass Security+

In 30 Days or Less

Seven Simple Steps to Success

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Get Certified Get Ahead

Yes, you can pass the Security+ exam in 30 days or less. Many other people have done it. Why not you?

I am frequently asked how I have passed so many certification exams. The short answer is **"one at a time."** I don't mean to be flip with that answer, but it's the truth. If I could rephrase the question it would be **"How do you pass a certification exam?"**

Don't Assume it's Easy

First, don't take any exam for granted. Don't let anyone tell you it's easy and you don't need to study. I say this from experience.

I failed the Security+ exam the first time I took it. This was back when it was SY0-101 (the first iteration of this exam) and it has become progressively more complex and difficult.

My mistake? I believed all the posts I read indicating this exam was easy. After working in IT jobs for so many years and teaching many security-related topics in advanced courses, I decided to plop down the two hundred or so dollars and take this exam.

There are not many things as disheartening as finishing an exam and seeing the message that you failed. Thankfully, I knew exactly what I did wrong. I took the exam for granted. I didn't study. I didn't make the same mistake again and soon passed this exam.

Look at the Objectives

The objectives identify what you can expect to be tested on.

When reviewing the objectives, your goal is to identify what is familiar and what is not familiar. A study guide can help you clarify these objectives and how you might be tested on them.
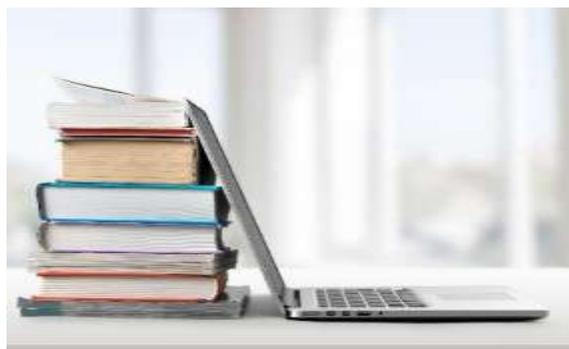
Seven Simple Steps to Success

An Overview

1 Get a Good Study Guide

- The first step to pass the Security+ exam in 30 days or less is to get a good study guide.

2 Do the Assessment

- As soon as you get the book, do the Assessment exam at the beginning of the book.

3 Get a Discount Voucher & Schedule Exam

- Schedule your exam for 30 days after you do the assessment.

4 Start Studying

- Read half a chapter a day for four days in row.

5 Mix Studying with Review

- After four days of studying new material, take one day for review.

6 Do the Post Exam

- Do the post exam at the end of the book.

7 Take the Exam & Celebrate Your Success

- On test day, review key material.

"SUCCESS IS A MATTER OF UNDERSTANDING AND RELIGIOUSLY PRACTICING SPECIFIC, SIMPLE HABITS THAT ALWAYS LEAD TO SUCCESS."

– ROBERT J. RINGER

Step 1

Get a Good Study Guide

I have earned almost all of my certifications through self-study. When possible, I get one or more study guides that cover the exam objectives. Ideally, a single book is enough but in general, it's always a good idea to get more than one. If you don't understand the concepts described by one author, you can get a different perspective from another author and you end up with a deeper understanding.

Study guides, such as the CompTIA Security+: Get Certified Get Ahead: SY0-501 Study Guide, typically include the objectives in the book along with an objective map telling you exactly where that objective is covered in the book.

Many people have said the CompTIA Security+: Get Certified Get Ahead: SY0-501 Study Guide was their single source of study. I'm grateful and humbled to hear this. However, that isn't typical. Two or more study guides is common.

When getting a study guide, ensure you get one for the exam you plan to take. Exams periodically change and using an old book to take a new exam isn't the best path to success.

Step 2

Do the Assessment

As soon as you get the book, do the Assessment exam at the beginning of the book.

When doing practice test questions from the book, write down your answers on a piece of paper instead of marking up the book. This way you can take the questions again later without seeing the answers circled.

Alternatively, using online practice test questions allow people to track their scores to help gauge their progress with the materials. When some people take questions from the book, they misinterpret their understanding and their progress.

ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO IDENTIFY A GOOD STUDY GUIDE IS BY THE REVIEWS. CHECK OUT THESE REVIEWS ON AMAZON.

Step 3

Get a Discount Voucher and Schedule Exam

Schedule your exam for 30 days after you do the assessment.

You can get a free code for a discounted voucher at a site like gcgapremiumpass.com.

The coupon code will give you 10% off any CompTIA test vouchers. However, it is NOT valid for any of the CompTIA packages at this time. In other words, this code won't work for any of the CompTIA bundles.

Step 4

Start Studying

Set a time to read the study guide daily and stick to your schedule. Some people study best in the morning. Others study best in the evening. If you don't know what works best for you, study throughout the day as your schedule allows.

However, you do need to study every day.

Most study guides include an objective map at the beginning of the book. For example, the **CompTIA Security+: Get Certified Get Ahead SY0-501 Study Guide** lists all of the objectives for the SY0-501 exam in the introduction. Next to each of the objectives, it lists the chapters where you can find the relevant content.

Read half a chapter a day for four days in row.

- After reading, review the Chapter Review topics for what you read.
- After the review, do at least 10 of the practice test questions for the chapter.
- After doing the practice test questions, take the time to read the explanation.

IDEALLY, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO LOOK AT ANY QUESTION AND NOT JUST KNOW WHY THE CORRECT ANSWER IS CORRECT, BUT ALSO WHY THE INCORRECT ANSWERS ARE INCORRECT. THIS WAY, YOU HAVE THE BEST CHANCE OF ACCURATELY INTERPRETING THE ACTUAL QUESTIONS ON THE COMPTIA EXAM AND ANSWERING THEM CORRECTLY.

Step 5

Mix Studying with Review

After four days of studying new material, take one day for review.

- Reread all the chapter reviews from chapters you've finished.
- Do all of the practice test questions that you've finished previously.
- Look at blog articles for any topics that interest you or you want to dig into deeper.

Spend the next four days reading new material followed by another day of review. The last set of studying days will be only two days of new material.

It's entirely possible that all of the topics aren't clear to you. Some quick Internet searches should help you identify the answers. Additionally, there are many forums where people provide helpful answers to each other. If you post a well-thought-out question to one of these forums, you can get some great responses.

When a topic isn't clear, look for more information on the topic online. **Supplement your studies with online materials** such as blog posts. Research further to clarify any unclear topics.

Important

Use Practice Exams

After you've studied the concepts related to the objectives, use practice exams to test your readiness. Many study guides including the CompTIA Security+: Get Certified Get Ahead: SY0-501 Study Guide include practice test questions at the end of each chapter. Use these to test your comprehension of the chapter topics.

Some books also have a pre-test before the first chapter and a post-test after the last chapter. Additionally, there are many other sources for practice test questions such as the Get Certified Get Ahead Premium site.

When using practice test questions, your goal is not to get them all correct. Instead, your goal is to test your comprehension.

Practice test questions help you gauge your understanding and ability to pass the actual exam. These can be very useful, but beware of questions without explanations.

Step 6

Do the Post Exam

Do the post exam at the end of the book.

- After doing the practice test questions, take the time to read the explanations.
- Review any material that isn't clear to you.

A **good recipe for success** to pass a certification exam includes:
- Using all the materials, and most importantly, all the quizzes.
- Getting scores of at least 90% on all the quizzes.
- Don't memorize quiz questions and answers.
- Read the explanations.
- Ensure you understand why each answer is correct, and why each answer is incorrect. This best prepares you to accurately interpret the questions on the live exam and answer them correctly.

Step 7

Take the Exam and Celebrate Success

On test day, review key material. This includes Chapter Reviews from each chapter.

Here are the **5 success tips** for Security+ you can use on exam day.

- Arrive early
- Skip questions that don't make sense
- Pay attention to words like BEST, MOST, and LEAST
- Read the full question
- Use Multiple-Choice Tips

After taking the exam, take time to CELEBRATE your success. You deserve it.

Get Certified Get Ahead

ABOUT

My name is Darril Gibson.

Years ago, I set a goal for myself. I decided I wanted to become a full-time author and write books that help others.

Since then, I have authored or coauthored more than 40 books and I am very grateful for the emails I regularly receive from readers sharing their successes after reading one of my books. It started from my original CompTIA Security+: Get Certified Get Ahead study guide for exam SY0-201 and has grown from there.

I created this white paper as a reference for people that want to get certified and get ahead in their career.

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