

Popular Threads on Solosez

Bar Preparation

Tyler Hawkes

I'm a law student wondering what the best bar prep is: Bar Bri, Kaplan, or a new company called passyourbar. Any opinions?

Karl Paananen

I used MicroMash, and also made use of various free programs my Law School has.

MicroMash worked best for me because I could study on my own, on my own schedule at my own rate. But maybe a different approach would fit your own particular learning style better. I personally couldn't face one of the ones that relied on watching videotaped lectures.

Karl E. V. Paananen

Eric J. Friday

Bar Bri if you need structure or outside discipline. If you are self motivated, and work better on your own schedule, micromash and 6 day PMBR combo. It's also a good idea to get the barbri book from your state for sample questions for any state specific portions. MM was not so strong on the state questions 4 years ago.

MJG

What state do you plan on taking? I just passed NJ, sworn in yesterday to be exact.

Shawn M. French, Sr.

As someone who had a son born 5 weeks before the bar exam, I highly recommend PMBAR for the multistate and Barbri for everything else.

Brian Pedigo

I used Barbri in California. The video lectures were dreadfully boring; I frequently contemplated jamming my pencil into my eye socket to stay awake. Aside from that, their study materials are the best (in my opinion). I think that all the information you need to pass the bar is contained in the Conviser

Mini Review. You may want to supplement your MBE practice using Adaptibar (<http://www.adaptibar.com/>) <<http://www.adaptibar.com/>>. I liked Adaptibar a lot more than PMBR.

Best of luck during your studies,

William Shapiro

I don't know what state you are in, and I have never heard of passyourbar. However, Bar/Bri works for a lot of people. However, if you are like me, it didn't work for me. In California, there was an outfit called Barpassers which I used, which worked really well for my type of learning.

The sad thing is, even though you have just spent thousands upon thousands of dollars, you will still need to spend more to actually be prepared to take the Bar Exam.

Steve O'Donnell

Ditto. Loved Micromash...well at least as much as one can love a bar prep system. Studying on my own was much better for me than sitting with a bunch of other pre-lawyers listening to a lecture. Plus, you can always tell other lawyers "I didn't take Barbri" without telling them more and they tend to assume that you're a genius for passing the bar without a course.

Jonathan Schulman

I agree with PMBR for the MBE, and another program for the rest of the exam. PMBR only does MBE, and they do a really good job of it. I only took Barbri so I can't talk about other prep courses, but it did a pretty good job of covering the state part of the exam. I didn't like the MBE questions from Barbri, they were much easier than PMBR, and gave a false sense of security. The PMBR questions were tough, and much closer to what was on the real exam.

Amy Kleinpeter

I took Barbri twice -- video lectures in California and was shocked how interesting they were (sorry Brian!) although I did several times skip out to go to the hotel bar to watch the Lakers -- they were in the playoffs that year.

Then I used Barbri tapes for Texas -- listened to them while driving or exercising and finished the night before the exam -- passed no problem despite knowing a heck of a lot less, but apparently it was enough.

Not sure what people mean about outside discipline for Barbri -- I just went to or listened to lectures and mostly no matter WHAT exam study course you use, learning and studying is something you do on

your own. Your attitude is of paramount importance I really think, not what exam course you take.

What I loved about Barbri was (a) the lectures were not boring, at least the CA ones were not. Texas, some were, but many were not and (b) the multiple choice questions you could do on your computer. I just studied by listening to lectures and doing practice exams -- if I bombed a exam topic, I would listen to that topic again.

One SUPER important advice one of the lecturers said -- now is NOT the time to change what works for you. If you studied in law school by smoking 4 packs a day and writing outlines, do that. If you studied by listening to lectures, going out a lot to stay un-anxious, and taking practice tests -- do that.

My biggest advice is beware the advice of other bar-takers. I loved my class as it was a small class in Pasadena at night -- the big Los Angeles live lectures terrified me the couple times I went as there were all these terrified anxious people who were spending about 8x as many hours as I were and spouting all this junk about what you HAVE to know or other terrifying crap. Just do your thing and pass and be glad. Maybe that is my motto for life, who knows, but it worked for me for the bar and my far brilliant-er (jk) friends who took the big group course and listened to all the conventional "wisdom" had to retake.

Mindy McDermott

OOPs damn reply.

Don't know your state but have to do a shout out for Pieper. Peiper People Pass! I also did the PMBR for multistate. Having those materials to work with is worth it alone even if you never attend their class. (I did, if I paid - I went) But if peiper is available consider it. Or other Barbri alternatives. Peiper held your attention - FYI I was/am in NY.

Mindy McDermott

The difference between Barbri and Peiper for us in NY was that Peiper you took notes. ALOT of notes. Where I think - b/c I didn't take Barbri - you have outlines pre-made that you fill in? Really not sure on that.

But it really came done to how do you learn - Like Amy said - don't go changing your style now. I never could pay attention if i only had to listen and fill something in every once in a while. I needed to write to learn. So Pieper for me - and it worked, it also worked for a lot of other people.

But look into how the programs work. Then decide.

Sarah Gold

Yeah, your mileage may vary depending on what worked for you. Pieper totally did not work for me. The maddening number of mnemonics made my head hurt, and while I diligently took every last note in class, nothing seemed to help on the essays.

PMBR helped a great deal on the MBE, though I found the Study Smart software from BarBri useful for working the questions intensively.

I did take a 3-day intensive course through BarWrite for essay writing that actually made a difference for me. Whether it was the confidence that I knew I could write something down each time, or whether it actually made my essays improve, I'm not sure.

Knowing what does and doesn't work for you makes a big difference in what you should choose.

Eric C. Davis

Barbri was the ticket in Tennessee and Alabama, although 17-18 years ago. PMBR helped as well.

Marian Palma Cardona

I took Pieper fresh out of law school and passed NY/NJ on first try. I never took another bar review so I can't compare, but I know I passed because of John Pieper. Obviously, I highly recommend them.

Nancy Mayer

For NC I think Barbri +PMBR raises the chance of passing. While I've known people who have passed using other programs this seems to increase your chance of passing the NC test...

I also took advantage of my schools special bar review review classes -- they also helped. One practice exam from my school was almost an exact copy of one of the essays on my bar exam-- now that was a gift.

Shalom Stephens

I took PMBR before they were forced to modify their materials after losing a copyright infringement case brought on by the people who produce the MBE. Those materials were invaluable and I can understand why they lost the case -- many of the MBE questions were very familiar. I would still believe that it would be a very valuable course. I will always consider it the most valuable 2 days during my entire bar prep. As for the general bar courses, a lot depends on how you best memorize/learn materials as they all work slightly differently in how you take in the information. I would talk to recent bar takers to find out how each one work.

I took the bar in NY and took BarBri. I had a handful of friends who did Pieper and the Pieper style would not have worked for me (it was a lot of writing) where BarBri was a lot of filling in. We did, however, exchange notes and "predictions" for what would be on the bar so we could get an idea of where the holes might have been.

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Eric Arnold

Depending on your comfort level and risk tolerance, another option is to just pick up everything there is from Craigslist or the like and skip taking a course. This way you can sample different approaches to see what works for you and save the extortionate fare for lean times. There will be loads of people still trying to clear out their materials from the July exam. If you go this route, get as much as you can, but I recommend at least getting the BarBri state books and PMBR books and CDs. The PMBR CDs are a blast, filled with some classic bits. I didn't use Micromash's software, but did work with their multistate books for a short time – IMO they are not a viable alternative to nor worthwhile supplement for PMBR. Jeff Adachi's Bar Breakers is decent for grinding out essays.

Two things a formal class offers that you miss out on by going it alone: feedback and community. The necessity/value of both depends on your personality. I'd imagine BarBri's essay comments are modestly helpful, and having a group to talk/vent law with can be calming when your SO/friends don't really care if someone's a holder in due course. Whether these are worth a year's rent is up to you. Bar Exam Lolcats on Facebook will suffice for friends in a pinch.

If you have an iPhone, get the My Study Cards app – it's cheap and there are a few bar study flash card sets already written up for it. Plus, you can make your own cards. Far more convenient than commercial sets.

Finally, and particularly if you go self-study, I'd just like to emphasize what Amy said – now's not the time to change your study habits. Do whatever worked for you in school. The bar has a ton of information to digest, but is completely manageable if you approach it systematically. I lost a couple of weeks trying out different approaches and not retaining a thing. Spent the last month pumping out the exact same outlines I did through law school, just at a different coffee shop. Passed, but most importantly, learned how to take the next one :)

Best of luck to you,

Kimberly Alderman

This is also a situation where "Know Thyself" comes into play. Think about how you studied for the LSAT (even SATs) and whether that was successful. I've never been much of a classroom learner for that kind of stuff, so I elected to go with the books instead of the courses for the Bar. I went with the 2004 edition of the 3 volumes of PMBR (green, blue, red). (I do not know if this was before or after the lawsuit someone mentioned). I bought them on Ebay for super cheap (test year 2007). They were unmarked, though. For ME, it would be important not to get information overload. I like a manageable

pile of materials that I can work through thoroughly. So if I got a bunch of stuff, I would feel overloaded and unhappy. But I used those books very thoroughly. Did not get into the PMBR CDs much, but the couple I listened to seemed pretty good. I tend to space with audio, though.

I'm leaning towards taking another bar in February that doesn't allow any transfer of Multistate scores, so I'll be in the same boat as you I suppose. Feel free to shoot me a PM.

Ylda Kopka

Speaking of the BarBri lawsuit, when are we supposed to get checks? I thought a settlement was reached and just waiting approval and we're all getting some cash someday.

Thanks,

Shalom Stephens

As for the BarBri suit, last I looked it was in appeals... we will be lucky to see that money upon retirement and I will be happy with \$20 at that point.

Jennifer Norton Weil

I did Barbri and PMBR for Texas and passed it on the 1st try. I did Barbri for New York and passed NY & NJ together on the 1st try. I did nothing at all for New Jersey, but I considered my studying for the MBE to count for studying for the NJ bar, since it's just "multistate" law on both the MBE and on the NJ essays.

My only beef with Barbri, in both Texas and NYC, was that they were not very courteous (to put it mildly) to students. We were treated like cattle who had to fork over their \$\$\$ and herd over to their seats ASAP. I wasn't too keen on paying mucho \$\$\$ to watch tapes, either, which was my experience in NY because I did the February bar. In Texas, they kept screaming (over and over and over, at the top of their lungs, quite rudely) at us on the first day about where to line up to pick up our materials. To me, this just reflected their poor organizational skills, which does not strike confidence in the heart of the nervous bar exam taker. But all that mess calmed down as the courses got underway in both NY & Texas.

Sapna Llano

Actually, Kaplan just introduced bar review classes in FL and NJ for Feb and I think NY may be up and coming in July... I think they may offer a bar review/mbe combo- so that may be another option.

I took the bar in 2001 and took Barbri for NY and NJ and PMBR - Barbri was dreadfully boring but got me through.

Good luck!

rachael price

I loved the ipod study method for Bar/bri. Great if you are self-motivated, or if you have a crazy schedule that doesn't fit the lecture schedule.

Lisa Runquist

Oh, how far we have come! When I was studying for the bar, mostly you went to lectures (mostly live, some videotaped) and read the materials. In some situations, there were cassettes available. lol