31 Days Before Your CCNA Exam: A day-by-day review guide for the CCNA 640-802 exam (2nd Edition)

By Allan Johnson

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31 Days Before your CCNA Exam, Second Edition, offers you a personable and practical way to understand the certification process, commit to taking the exam, and finish your preparation using a variety of Foundational and Supplemental study resources.

The book breaks down key exam topics into 31 daily review sessions using short summaries, lists, tables, examples, and graphics. A Study Resources section provides you with a quick reference for locating more in-depth treatment of a day's topics within the relevant Foundational and Supplemental resources.
Use this day-by-day guide to organize, prepare, and review all the CCNA® objectives. The features of the book empower you to fit exam preparation into an otherwise busy schedule:

- Tear out visual calendar summarizes each day's study topics
- Checklist highlights important tasks and deadlines leading up to your exam
- Description of the 640-802 CCNA exam organization and sign up process, includes how to use a voucher
- Strategies from the author help you to be mentally, organizationally, and physically prepared for exam day
- Conversational tone, making your study time more enjoyable

Allan Johnson entered the academic world in 1999 after ten years as a business owner and operator. He has a passion for teaching and holds both an MBA and an M.Ed in occupational training and development. Allan currently works full time developing CCNA instructional support and training materials.

Category: Cisco® Certification

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Introduction

You are almost there! If you're reading this Introduction, you've probably already spent a considerable amount of time and energy pursuing your CCNA certification. Regardless of how you got to this point in your travels through your CCNA studies, *31 Days Before Your CCNA Exam* most likely represents the last leg of your journey on your way to the destination: to become a Cisco Certified Network Associate. However if you are like me, you might be reading this book at the *beginning* of your studies. If such is the case, this book provides you with an excellent overview of the material you must now spend a great deal of time studying and practicing. I must warn you, though; unless you are extremely well versed in networking technologies and have considerable experience configuring and troubleshooting Cisco routers and switches, this book will *not* serve you well as the sole resource for CCNA exam preparation. Therefore, let me spend some time discussing my recommendations for study resources.

Study Resources

Cisco Press offers an abundance of CCNA-related books to serve as your primary source for learning how to install, configure, operate, and troubleshoot medium-size routed and switched networks. See the inside cover of this book for a quick list of my recommendations.

Foundational Resources

First on the list must be Wendell Odom's *CCNA Official Exam Certification Library*, Third Edition (ISBN: 1587201836). If you do not buy any other books, buy this set of two. Wendell's method of teaching, combined with his technical expertise and down-to-earth style, is unsurpassed in our industry. As you read through his books, you sense that he is sitting right there next to you walking you through the material. The practice exams and study materials on the CD in the back of the book are worth the price of the book. There is no better resource on the market for a CCNA candidate.

Next on the list must be Steve McQuerry's *Authorized Self-Study Guide CCNA Preparation Library*, Seventh Edition (ISBN: 1587054647). These two books are indispensable to those students who take the two Cisco recommended training classes for CCNA preparation: Interconnecting Cisco Network Devices 1 (ICND1) and Interconnecting Cisco Network Devices 2 (ICND2). These courses, available through Cisco Training Partners in a variety of formats, are usually of a very short duration (1 to 6 weeks) and are geared toward the industry professional already working in the field of networking. Steve's books serve the reader well as a concise, but thorough, treatment of the CCNA exam topics. His method and approach often differ from and complement Wendell's approach. I recommend that you also refer to these books.

If you are a Cisco Networking Academy student, you are blessed with access to the online version of the CCNA curriculum and the wildly popular Packet Tracer network simulator. Although there are two versions of the CCNA curriculum—Discovery and Exploration—I chose to use the four CCNA Exploration courses in my daily review of the exam topics. The Exploration curriculum provides a comprehensive overview of networking, from fundamentals to advanced applications and services. The Exploration courses emphasize theoretical concepts and practical application, while providing opportunities for students to gain the skills and hands-on experience needed to design, install, operate, and maintain networks in small-to-medium businesses, as well as enterprise and service provider environments. In an Academy class, not only do you have access to Packet Tracer, but you have access to extensive, guided labs and real equipment on which to practice your CCNA skills. To learn more about CCNA Exploration and to find an Academy near you, visit http://www.cisco.com/web/learning/netacad/course_catalog/CCNAexploration.html.

However, if you are not an Academy student but would like to benefit from the extensive authoring done for these courses, you can buy any or all of the CCNA Exploration Companion Guides (CG) and Lab Study Guides (LSG) of the Academy's popular online curriculum. Although you will not have access to the Packet Tracer network simulator software, you will have access to the tireless work of an outstanding team of Cisco Academy Instructors dedicated to providing students with comprehensive and engaging CCNA preparation course material. The titles and ISBNs for the CCNA Exploration CGs and LSGs are as follows:

- Network Fundamentals (CG ISBN: 1587132087; LSG ISBN: 1587132036)
- Routing Protocols and Concepts (CG ISBN: 1587132060; LSG ISBN: 1587132044)
- LAN Switching and Wireless (CG ISBN: 1587132079; LSG ISBN: 1587132028)
- Accessing the WAN (CG ISBN: 1587132052; LSG ISBN: 158713201X)

You can find these books at http://www.ciscopress.com by clicking the **CISCO NETWORKING ACADEMY** link.

Supplemental Resources

In addition to the book you hold in your hands, I recommend two more supplemental resources to augment your final 31 days of review and preparation.

First, Eric Rivard and Jim Doherty are coauthors of *CCNA Flash Cards and Exam Practice Pack,* Third Edition (ISBN: 1587201909). The text portion of the book includes more than 700 flash cards that quickly review exam topics in bite-sized pieces. Also included are nearly 200 pages of quick-reference sheets designed for late-stage exam preparation. And the included CD features a test engine with more than 500 CCNA practice exam questions.

Second, Wendell Odom has put together an excellent collection of more than four hours of personal, visual instruction in one package, titled *CCNA Video Mentor,* Second Edition (ISBN: 1587201917). It contains a DVD with 20 videos and a lab manual. Wendell walks you through common Cisco router and switch configuration topics designed to develop and enhance your hands-on skills.

The Cisco Learning Network

Finally, if you have not done so already, you should now register with the Cisco Learning Network at http://cisco.hosted.jivesoftware.com/. Sponsored by Cisco, the Cisco Learning Network is a free social-learning network where IT professionals can engage in the common pursuit of enhancing and advancing their IT careers. Here you will find many resources to help you prepare for your CCNA exam, as well as a community of like-minded people ready to answer your questions, help you with your struggles, and share in your triumphs.

So which resources should you buy? That question is largely up to how deep your pockets are or how much you like books. If you're like me, you must have it all! I admit it. My bookcase is a testament to my Cisco "geekness." But if you are on a budget, choose one of the foundational study resources and one of the supplemental resources, such as Wendell Odom's certification library and Rivard/ Doherty's flash cards. Whatever you choose, you will be in good hands. Any or all of these authors will serve you well.

Goals and Methods

The main goal of this book is to provide you with a clear and succinct review of the CCNA objectives. Each day's exam topics are grouped into a common conceptual framework that uses the following format:

- A title for the day that concisely states the overall topic
- A list of one or more CCNA 640-802 exam topics to be reviewed
- A Key Topics section to introduce the review material and quickly orient you to the day's focus
- An extensive review section consisting of short paragraphs, lists, tables, examples, and graphics
- A Study Resources section to provide a quick reference for locating more in-depth treatment of the day's topics

The book counts down starting with Day 31 and continues through exam day to provide post-test information. You will also find a calendar and checklist that you can tear out and use during your exam preparation inside the book.

Use the calendar to enter each actual date beside the countdown day and the exact day, time, and location of your CCNA exam. The calendar provides a visual for the time that you can dedicate to each CCNA exam topic.

The checklist highlights important tasks and deadlines leading up to your exam. Use it to help you map out your studies.

Who Should Read This Book?

The audience for this book is anyone finishing preparation for taking the CCNA 640-802 exam. A secondary audience is anyone needing a refresher review of CCNA exam topics—possibly before attempting to recertify or sit for another certification to which the CCNA is a prerequisite.

Getting to Know the CCNA 640-802 Exam

For the current certifications, announced in June 2007, Cisco created the ICND1 (640-822) and ICND2 (640-816) exams, along with the CCNA (640-802) exam. To become CCNA certified, you can pass both the ICND1 and ICND2 exams, or just the CCNA exam. The CCNA exam covers all the topics on the ICND1 and ICND2 exams, giving you two options for gaining your CCNA certification. The two-exam path gives people with less experience a chance to study for a smaller set of topics at one time. The one-exam option provides a more cost-effective certification path for those who want to prepare for all the topics at once. This book focuses exclusively on the one-exam path using the entire list of exam topics for the CCNA 640-802 exam.

Currently for the CCNA exam, you are allowed 90 minutes to answer 50–60 questions. Use the following steps to access a tutorial at home that demonstrates the exam environment before you go to take the exam:

- Step 1: Visit http://www.vue.com/cisco.Step 2: Look for a link to the certification tutorial. Currently, it can be found on the right side of the web page under the heading Related Links.Step 3: Click the Certification tutorial link.

When you get to the testing center and check in, the proctor verifies your identity, gives you some general instructions, and then takes you into a quiet room containing a PC. When you're at the PC, you have a few things to do before the timer starts on your exam. For instance, you can take the tutorial to get accustomed to the PC and the testing engine. Every time I sit for an exam, I go through the tutorial, even though I know how the test engine works. It helps me settle my nerves and get focused. Anyone who has user-level skills in getting around a PC should have no problems with the testing environment.

When you start the exam, you are asked a series of questions. Each question is presented one at a time and

must be answered before moving on to the next question. The exam engine does not let you go back and change your answer. The exam questions can be in one of the following formats:

- Multiple choice
- Fill-in-the-blank
- Drag-and-drop
- Testlet
- Simlet
- Simulation

The multiple-choice format requires that you point and click a circle or check box next to the correct answer or answers. Cisco traditionally tells you how many answers you need to choose, and the testing software prevents you from choosing too many or too few.

Fill-in-the-blank questions typically require you only to type numbers. However if words are requested, the case does not matter unless the answer is a command that is case sensitive (such as passwords and device names when configuring authentication).

Drag-and-drop questions require you to click and hold, move a button or icon to another area, and release the mouse button to place the object somewhere else—typically in a list. For some questions, to get the question correct, you might need to put a list of five things in the proper order.

Testlets contain one general scenario and several multiple-choice questions about the scenario. These are ideal if you are confident in your knowledge of the scenario's content because you can leverage your strength over multiple questions.

A simlet is similar to a testlet in that you are given a scenario with several multiple-choice questions. However, a simlet uses a network simulator to allow you access to a simulation of the command line of Cisco IOS Software. You can then use **show** commands to examine a network's current behavior and answer the question.

A simulation also uses a network simulator, but you are given a task to accomplish, such as implementing a network solution or troubleshooting an existing network implementation. You do this by configuring one or more routers and switches. The exam then grades the question based on the configuration you changed or added. A newer form of the simulation question is the GUI-based simulation, where a graphical interface like that found on a Linksys router or the Cisco Security Device Manager is simulated.

What Topics Are Covered on the CCNA Exam

The topics of the CCNA 640-802 exam focus on the following eight key categories:

- Describe how a network works.
- Configure, verify and troubleshoot a switch with VLANs and interswitch communications.
- Implement an IP addressing scheme and IP Services to meet network requirements in a medium-size enterprise branch office network.
- Configure, verify, and troubleshoot basic router operation and routing on Cisco devices.
- Explain and select the appropriate administrative tasks required for a WLAN.
- Identify security threats to a network and describe general methods to mitigate those threats.
- Implement, verify, and troubleshoot NAT and ACLs in a medium-size enterprise branch office network.
- Implement and verify WAN links.

Although Cisco outlines general exam topics, it is possible that not all topics will appear on the CCNA exam and that topics that are not specifically listed might appear on the exam. The exam topics provided by Cisco and included in this book are a general framework for exam preparation. Be sure to check the Cisco website for the latest exam topics.

Cisco Networking Academy Student Discount Voucher

If you are a Cisco Networking Academy student, you have the opportunity to earn a discount voucher to use when registering and paying for your exam with Pearson VUE. To receive the discount voucher, you must complete all four courses of the CCNA Exploration curriculum and receive a score of 75 percent or higher on your first attempt of the final exam for the final CCNA Exploration course, *Accessing the WAN*. The amount of the discount varies by region and testing center, but typically it has been as much as 50% off the full exam price. Log in to the Academy Connection and click Help at the top of the page to research more information on receiving a discount voucher.

Registering for the CCNA 640-802 Exam

If you are starting your *31 Days to Your CCNA* today, register for the exam right now. In my testing experience, there is no better motivator than a scheduled test date staring me in the face. I'm willing to bet it's the same for you. Don't worry about unforeseen circumstances. You can cancel your exam registration for a full refund up to 24 hours before taking the exam. So if you're ready, you should gather the following information in Table I-1 and register right now!

Table I-1 Personal Information for CCNA 640-802 Exam Registration

Item	Notes
Legal Name	
Social Security or Passport Number	
Cisco Certification ID or Test ID[1]	
Cisco Academy Username[2]	
Cisco Academy ID Number[2]	
Company Name	
Valid Email Address	
Voucher Number2	
Method of Payment	

[1]Applies to exam candidates if you have previously taken a Cisco certification exam (such as the ICND1 exam)

[2]Applies to Cisco Networking Academy students only

To register for an exam, contact Pearson VUE via one of the following methods:

- **Online**: http://www.vue.com/cisco.
- **By phone**: In the United States and Canada call 1-800-829-6387, option 1, then option 4. Check the

website for information regarding other countries.

The process and available test times will vary based on the local testing center you choose.

Remember, there is no better motivation for study than an actual test date. *Sign up today.*

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