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Editor's note: This is a personal story shared as an anecdote. You should definitely NOT look to this example for your own CFA preparation approach (unless desperate!) Hi, I'm Scott, and a few years ago, I passed my CFA Level 1 with just 2 weeks worth of studying. I started two Saturdays away from the actual test having done no more than a cursory glance at my books beforehand. And somehow, incredibly, I managed to pass. Zee wrote to me one day asking if I'd like to share my story with 300Hours readers on how to pass CFA Level 1 in 2 weeks. Over the course of the Christmas holidays, I wrote my experience down. So, here is my story. I believe a significant factor that allowed me to pull this off was my background, both in work and education. I read Economics at Oxford and did pretty well - that helped me save time in some of the basics of CFA Level 1. I was also a management consultant for investment banks and wealth managers. Consultant projects range from several weeks to several months, and having 3 years experience at the time, I had a wide range of knowledge and expertise across several financial sectors. Without a relevant background in work and education, I don't think this would have been possible for me. I didn't choose to attempt to take CFA Level 1 with only two weeks worth of prep - I basically had no other choice. My biggest mistake was to underestimate how little time and drive I would have for the exams. I always did well in exams in the past and thought that this would be just like the others. Although the exam itself was probably not too different in difficulty, balancing it with work was the problem. I was rammed with a high-pressure project about 3 months before the exam, working 80-100 hour weeks. This meant that I didn't have any time to do anything else, never mind think about studying for the CFA exams. As the exams approached, I had two choices - either forgo the exam and waste the money I paid for the sign up fees and materials, or try and pass with by the skin of my teeth. Two weeks before exam day, I chose to push for it and see what happens. I took a full 10 working days off to study for the CFA Level 1. That was already a very painful sacrifice, but nothing compared to what I had to endure in the following two weeks. Throughout the entire two weeks, I dedicated all of my time to studying. I didn't leave my flat and lived off takeout meals. I had told my friends, girlfriend and parents that I would be communicating for two weeks so I didn't speak to any of them either, save for a few online chats here and there. Basically I became a hobo for two weeks in my own home. And what did I get done? I'd say there were 3 important things that I got right, given my situation. Starting with exam papers allowed me to roughly understand what areas I would need more studying in and what areas I could go light on. By the end of the two weeks, I managed about 4 papers under proper exam conditions, and speed-read about 6 more - reading the question and immediately going through the model answers. Practice exams really helped tune my studying - I would recommend it regardless of whether you're time constrained or not. I totally do NOT recommend this to current CFA Level 1 candidates. But apart from doing the practice questions in the exams, I skipped these 3 topics: Economics: light weighting in exam, and I could wing it a little based on what I learned in school Corporate Issuers: light weighting in exam, and I had a bit of experience from my job that helped me Derivatives: light weighting in exam, and I also found the exam questions very confusing and not worth the time I think I prioritized right in terms of topics to study for Level 1, but since I don't know otherwise, I can't really say. Of course, binning topics is something I'd only recommend if you had no other choice and had to prioritize. I particularly regret not giving myself a good grounding in Derivatives - CFA Level 2 only got worse and I had to go back to Level 1 and cover a lot of ground. This was based on advice from a colleague. As Ethics is tailor-made to the CFA curriculum, it was the one topic that I had no previous knowledge or experience about. By leaving it to the last few days approaching the exam, I already had a good idea of what to read up on based on the questions I've seen in the practice exams I've attempted so far. And since Ethics is also a lot of memorization, it made sense to read up on it closer to the exam. I don't think anyone can say they WILL pass the CFA exam with this little time left to prepare with any certainty. I did think that I stood a much better chance than others, given my background and prep, but in the end I know that luck was a huge factor. If you're relatively new to finance concepts and materials, passing with just 2 weeks preparation is probably out of the question altogether. I was fortunate to have a job highly relevant to several CFA topics, further supported by an economics education. It effectively allowed me to skip through a majority of the time needed to study the topic, although you'll still need to do practice exams to familiarise yourself with the question format. Passing CFA Level 1 with a hodgepodge understanding of the material also had consequences in Levels 2 and 3. I struggled with a lot of material in the later levels. I had to relearn a lot of the basics of Level 1 just to understand what was going on for most of the Level 2 topics. It's worthwhile building a solid foundation and study routine since CFA Level 1. If you're serious about passing and become a CFA Charterholder. If you do find yourself in this situation, sticking to what I did will probably give you the best chance of passing. But if passing is your main concern, the surest way to maximise your chances would be to start early and have a study plan. At the end of the day, yes, I did pass with just two weeks of study. But I think I was INCREDIBLY lucky to have managed. I'm glad I studied hard and tried to pass it instead of waiting for the next exam. But I'm not confident I could do it again. Have you got any questions to ask about Scott's experience? Comment below! Meanwhile, here are other related articles of interest to help your CFA Level 1 preparations: Skip to main content Reddit and its partners use cookies and similar technologies to provide you with a better experience. By accepting all cookies, you agree to our use of cookies to deliver and maintain our services and site, improve the quality of Reddit, personalize Reddit content and advertising, and measure the effectiveness of advertising. By rejecting non-essential cookies, Reddit may still use certain cookies to ensure the proper functionality of our platform. For more information, please see our Cookie Notice and our Privacy Policy. Editor's note: This is a personal story shared as an anecdote. You should definitely NOT look to this example for your own CFA preparation approach (unless desperate!) Hi, I'm Scott, and a few years ago, I passed my CFA Level 1 with just 2 weeks worth of studying. 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