



BridgePoint Law
Professional Corporation

CAREER TALK · SPRING 2026

Tackling Your Bar Exams *with Confidence.*

Exam preparation strategies for new law graduates.

Dr. Ningjing (Natalie) Zhang, Ph.D., J.D.

Founder & Principal Lawyer

BRIDGEPOINT LAW PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

A SHORT NOTE BEFORE WE BEGIN

This is one lawyer's experience — *not legal or exam advice.*

WHAT THIS TALK IS

A personal account of how I prepared for and wrote the Ontario Bar Exams in 2023. Strategies, habits, and honest lessons from one candidate's path.

WHAT THIS TALK IS NOT

It is *not* legal advice, official exam guidance, or a guarantee of results. Every candidate is different — please use your own judgment and refer to the Law Society of Ontario for official information.

If I could pass on the first try, *so can you.*



EDUCATION

B.A. & Ph.D. History — Fudan University
M.A. Gender Studies & J.D. — Queen's University

PATH

Immigrated to Canada at 30. Started in ESL.
LSAT — three attempts. Law school average B+ / B.

FAMILY

Single mother of two. No family in Canada.

BAR

June 2023 — passed Barrister & Solicitor, first try.
Called to the Ontario Bar: March 1, 2024.

TODAY

Founder, BridgePoint Law Professional Corporation

Six things, in thirty minutes.

01 The mindset shift
that changes everything

02 Studying the materials
(the right way)

03 Mock exams & what
they're really for

04 Test day logistics

05 Life logistics around
the exam

06 Mental health
& the long view

THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT MINDSET SHIFT

Don't learn. Locate.

*Open book. Multiple choice. No essays.
Many answers are verbatim in the materials.*

~~YOUR BRAIN~~ IS NOT THE DATABASE. THE MATERIALS ARE. YOU ARE THE SEARCH ENGINE.



Read once. *Recognize*, don't understand.

01 Read everything once. Twice if you have time — *but once is usually enough.*

02 Don't try to understand. *Try to recognize.*

03 If a section is confusing — *skip it. Move on.*

04 When you flip the page, *your eye should know what's on it.*

Four colours. *Every page.*



YELLOW

Key knowledge points and rules

A solicitor must hold settlement funds in trust until release is authorized in writing.



PINK

Case names and case principles

*The reasoning in *Hadley v. Baxendale* still governs remoteness in contract.*



GREEN

Numbers, dates, dollar limits, deadlines

Notice must be served within 10 days of discovery; the cap is \$35,000.



BLUE • OPTIONAL

Procedural steps and order of operations

First, file the requisition; then, serve all parties; finally, enter the order.

Don't memorize *someone else's brain*.

Indices someone else wrote are organized for the way *they* think — not you. Use it for two things only.

01 Looking up answers when you do mock questions
Train your fingers, not your memory.

02 Finding your weak spots
Where do you keep getting it wrong? Read again.

MY PERSONAL COUNT

6

Full mock days. Three sets each for Barrister & Solicitor — that's the level I'd suggest aiming for.

Mocks aren't graded. *They're rehearsals.*

REALITY 01

Most third-party mocks are harder than the real thing.

Don't panic at low scores.

↘ harder

REALITY 02

One provider's mocks are very close to the real exam.

No sponsorship — email us for the name privately.

≈ real

REALITY 03

Three mock sets per exam — six full mock days.

The goal is timing & pattern recognition, not perfection.

3 × 2

Treat them as *one project*, not two.

BARRISTER

**First. Familiar.
Easier to overprepare.**

Comes first on the calendar. Most students front-load all their energy here. Beautifully prepared. No problem.

SOLICITOR – THE TRAP

**Denser. Less narrative.
Easy to underestimate.**

I've watched smart students prepare beautifully for Barrister, run out of runway, and fail Solicitor. Plan for both from day one.

The math of the day.

PER EXAM

~7 hrs

Each exam runs about seven hours, split across morning and afternoon sessions.

QUESTIONS

220-240

All multiple choice. The volume is the point — don't dwell on any single one.

PER QUESTION

1:50

Just under two minutes. If you don't know — guess, mark it, move on. Come back at the end.

NON-NEGOTIABLE

Never leave a bubble blank. *No penalty for guessing.*

Buy yourself *ten extra minutes*.

a **Arrive early.**

Better to wait at the door than to walk in flustered.

b **Scan your materials beforehand.**

All annotated materials stay in the room. Save high-resolution copies at home.

c **Unwrap snacks at home.**

Protein bars are ideal — silent, no washroom triggers, sustained calories.

d **Drink less water than usual.**

Washroom breaks need an invigilator escort. Use it right before each session, then minimize.

*Out loud. Not by hint.
Concrete asks > vague hopes.*

ONTARIO BAR · 2023

I sponsored my parents on visitor visas to come help with the kids.
It's the single thing that made it possible.

NY BAR · 2026

Doing it again. My dad is here right now. He doesn't love being in Canada — but I needed help, and he came.

Six hours, every day.

DAILY TARGET · FOCUSED READING

6+

English is my second language, so I needed the volume. Working through this? Adjust the plan — but don't burn out.

A SHORT STORY

Mid-study, a former boss called and asked me to take a file. I said no. She held a grudge through my entire articling year. I'd say no again.

– Failing because I helped someone who didn't matter is the worst possible trade.

A perfect parent *and* a perfect student? Pick one. For two months.

■ *Outsource everything you can.*

Whatever can be paid for, paid help can do.

■ *Spend the money.*

Costco frozen food for two months will not damage anyone.

■ *Lost a day to illness?*

Yours or your kid's. Don't catastrophize. Pick it up tomorrow.

■ *Schedule on the wall.*

Update it weekly. Plans flex — that's why they exist.

The best decision *I made.*

One accountability partner.
Studied together — in person,
on video. *If one missed, the other
texted.*

BRIDGEPOINT LAW · INFORMAL WHATSAPP

A small group of bar candidates, holding
each other accountable.

MY ASSISTANT writing the California Bar

ME writing the New York Bar

YOU? writing the Ontario Bar

Email us to join — when you pass, leave the group happy.

I am not someone who naturally loves studying.
Or working out. *I've kept the gym for five years anyway.*

WILLPOWER

Environment.

THE LESSON

COUCH AT HOME

The library.

WHERE I STUDY

LIVING ROOM

The gym.

WHERE I WORK OUT

Your mind is the instrument. *Protect it.*

01 · SLEEP

Non-negotiable.

No all-nighters. Especially the night before.

02 · BODY

Eat well. Move daily.

Don't introduce new diets or workouts in this window. Just maintain.

03 · DAY BEFORE

Rest.

No last-minute review marathons. Pack your bag, walk, sleep early.

04 · TRAVEL

Book the hotel early.

Toronto in late spring 2026 = tourist season. Book now.

HOTEL SCRIPT

"I'm writing a professional licensing exam — I'd like a quiet room, *away from the elevator and ice machine.*"

It does *not* define you.

I know excellent lawyers
who passed on
attempt #2.

MOST COMMON FAILURE PATTERN

Answering from memory instead of from the materials.

THE DISCIPLINE THAT PREVENTS IT

Always flip. Always confirm. *Even if you're sure.*

AN EXCEPTION

If your law school grades are excellent — this caution may not apply.

bridgepointlaw.ca

EMAIL US FOR

The WhatsApp study group
invite

EMAIL US FOR

The mock exam provider name

EMAIL US FOR

General questions on the bar

I won't check email at midnight. Please be patient.

A BLESSING IN CHINESE

考运昌隆

Wishing you flourishing good fortune in your exams.

*"This window will end.
You will be on the other side."*