

The Security+ Blueprint: How Hitting the “Stop” instead of “Snooze” Button Forced Me to Pass



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7 min read

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Disclaimer: *The views and experiences shared in this article are purely my own. The CompTIA Security+ is a certification where opinions on preparation, resources, and difficulty vary widely. This is simply my candid,*

personal journey, and if sharing my story helps even one person on their path, I'm genuinely happy.

I just earned the **CompTIA Security+ certification (SY0-701)**.

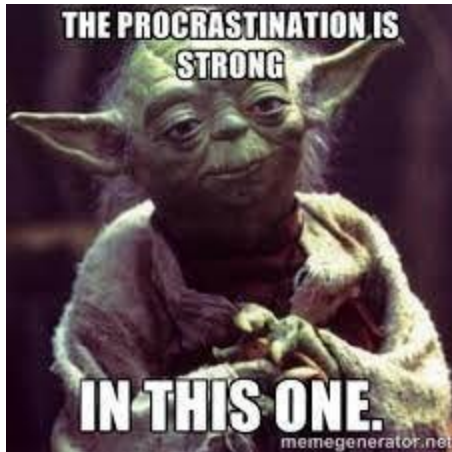
It wasn't some epic battle, but it was personally a long-necessary checkpoint. And if I'm honest, if you told me five weeks ago I'd be writing this, I'd have probably just kept hitting "snooze".

My journey wasn't the perfect, disciplined march to victory. Oh no, it involved a good dose of last-minute scramble and the cold, hard reality of an expiring exam voucher. **(Yes, I actually tried to push an October exam to December. My inner procrastinator is unmatched at times xD.)**

But here I am, out the other side. This is my journey & my POV of how I got through it and so can you easily!



Hitting the “Stop Button”: Why a Deadline Was My Best Study Plan



I don't have the exact timeline because, frankly, I postponed taking this exam for over 8 months, always coming up with some excuse.

But then came the **deadline**. My voucher was about to expire, and I couldn't push my exam past October. So, on September 12th after suddenly realizing the issue, I finally scheduled it for the third week of October.

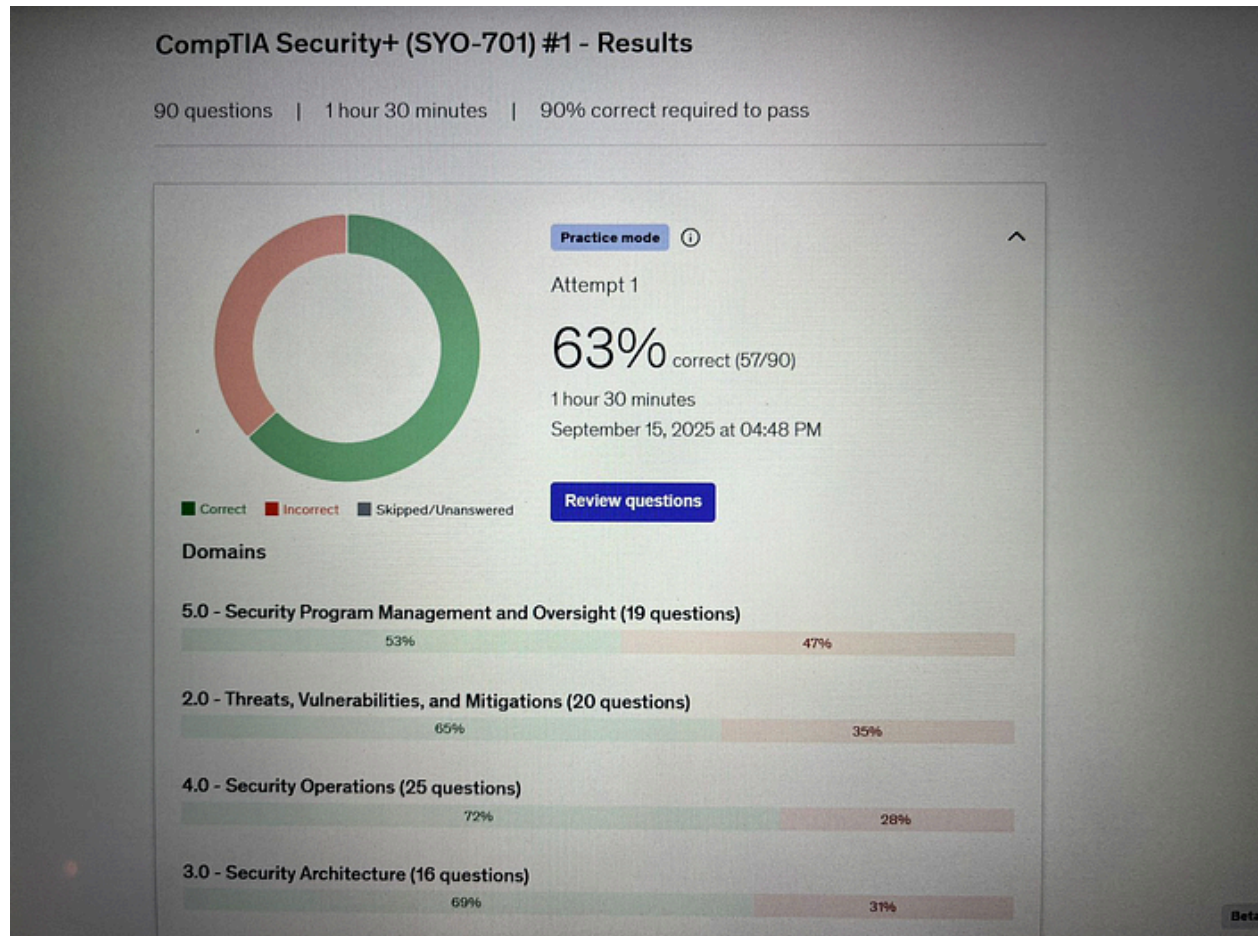
My study pattern that followed was, surprisingly, more consistent than my usual last-minute college efforts lol. I didn't have a fixed time slot. There were days I studied in the most random situations — like being stuck for a solid two hours post-event due to bad weather, just grinding away. Other days, though I had ample time it was just 15 to 30 minutes of going through.

My entire plan revolved around one core principle: **learning from my mistakes instead of just passively reviewing the material.**

The Start at 63%. The Test-First, Learn-from-Mistakes Strategy

My preparation truly began on **September 15th** with my first mock test from Jason Dion Set1 #1.

The result? A **63%**. Nope this wasn't a failure; it was nothing but a clear diagnostic.

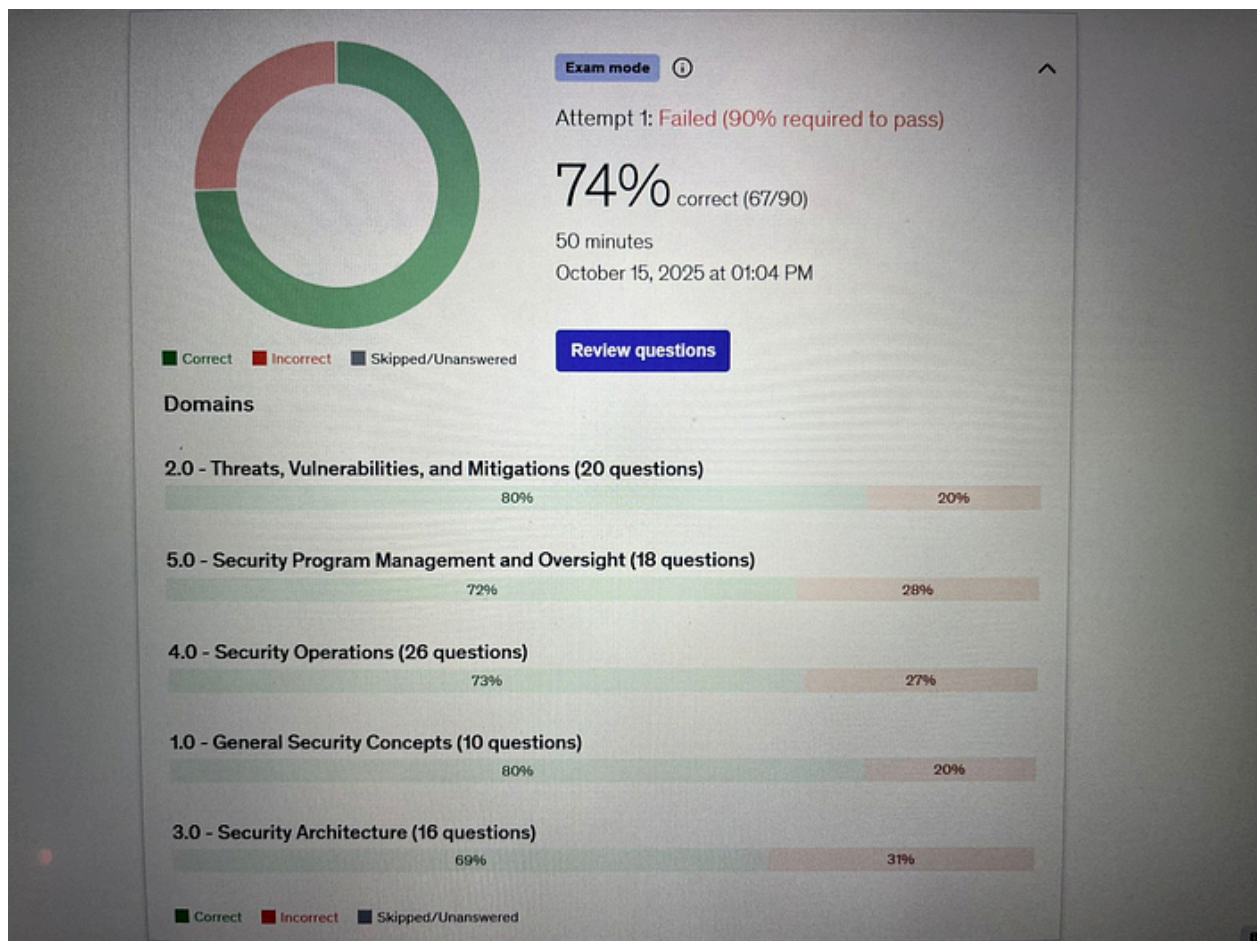


Here is how my initial scores broke down across all five domains:

- **1.0 General Security Concepts: 50%**
- **2.0 Threats, Vulnerabilities, and Mitigations: 65%**
- **3.0 Security Architecture: 69%**
- **4.0 Security Operations: 72%**
- **5.0 Security Program Management and Oversight: 53%**

This told me exactly where to focus. My approach was always: **Test** → **Identify Mistakes** → **Study** → **Test Again**.

I worked through the **next 15 days** by mid October and after around 15–20 different exams. I hit a familiar plateau around **70–75%**.

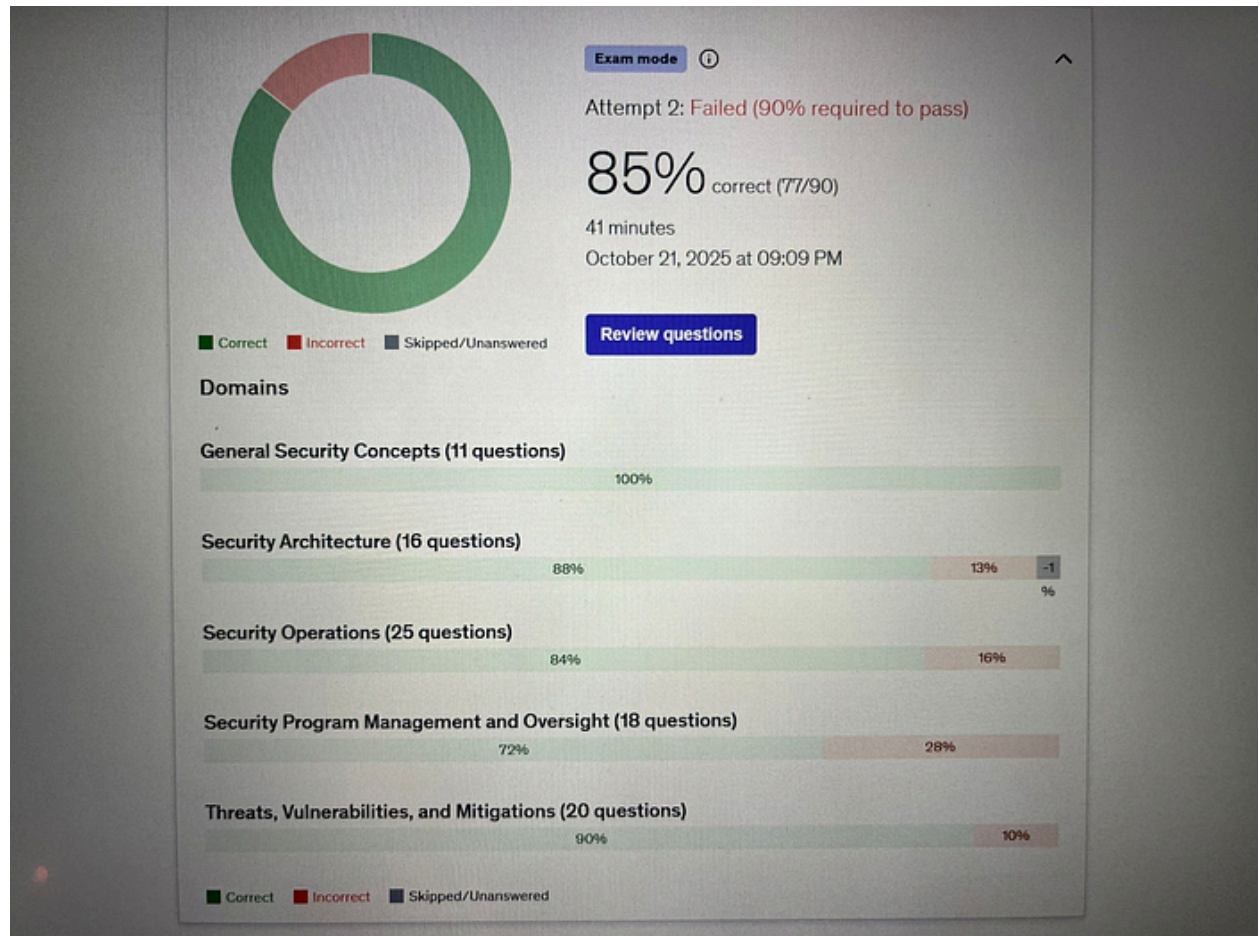


After pushing through for the next few days, at my final mock, taken just two hours before the exam while watching some NFL.



I don't suggest doing this lol

I hit 85% for the first and last time. I never hit the “recommended” 95%,
but honestly, I’m fine with that.



Learning Tricks:

Having little to no corporate experience, a lot of the governance and policy terms were completely new.

I remember repeatedly making mistakes just because I couldn't grasp what the question was asking.

My solution was simple: **Use analogies.** For instance, I kept confusing SOW, MOU, MOA, and MSA.

Here is how I finally mapped them using the analogy of a professional sports team:

Term	Explanation	Sports Player Analogy
SOW (Statement of Work)	A detailed document that outlines the specific tasks, deliverables, timelines, and responsibilities involved in a project.	Think of it as a coach's game plan—detailing the exact plays, strategies, and roles each player must perform during the game.
WO (Work Order)	A request or instruction to begin specific work, typically issued after a task is defined in the SOW.	This is like when a coach gives a player a direct instruction during the game —"Go take that shot!" or "Defend that player!"—with clear, actionable steps.
MOA (Memorandum of Agreement)	A formal, legally binding document that outlines specific terms and conditions agreed upon by parties to collaborate on a project or task.	It's like a signed contract between two teams to play a series of matches, agreeing on specific conditions like the number of games, locations, and rules.
MOU (Memorandum of Understanding)	A less formal document than an MOA, outlining the intentions and expectations of two or more parties, often used to establish a partnership.	Imagine two players from rival teams agreeing to train together in the off-season. They outline their goals and what each player will contribute, but it's not a binding contract.

An Example of what I used : Mental Mapping of terms for a permanent understanding

This approach ensured I wasn't just learning them temporarily for the exam, instead understanding the concepts so well you could explain them back to someone.

My Prep Stack:

Now, for the thing **everyone asks: *RESOURCES.***

I wanted to keep my preparation focused, avoiding the sprawl of a dozen different books or courses, mainly due to both financial and time constraints.

This is what **I used** and what aligned with my learning style (**I'm attaching the link below for you guys**).

There are various other resources and options available, but these are the ones I felt comfortable with and relied upon:

- **Jason Dion's Practice Exams (Udemy):** I relied on his **Set 1 & Set 2** practice exams primarily. Each set typically offers six mocks of 90 questions. The sheer volume of questions and the detailed explanations I needed for learning from mistakes.

<https://www.udemy.com/course/comptia-security-sy0-701-practice-exams/?couponCode=25BBPMXNVD35V2>

<https://www.udemy.com/course/comptia-security-sy0-701-practice-exams-2nd-edition/?couponCode=25BBPMXNVD35V2>

- **Exam Compass Free Quizzes:** These were quick, free online quizzes, often structured as **24 separate exams** of around 25 questions each. These were great for rapid-fire review and cementing terminologies.

<https://www.examcompass.com/comptia/security-plus-certification/free-security-plus-practice-tests>

- **YouTube (The PBQ Pre-Game):** I knew the **Performance-Based Questions (PBQs)** were part of the exam, but I honestly never even looked into them until the day before!
- I spent time on YouTube with **CyberKraft** and **Networking Guru**. They were helpful in giving me a conceptual understanding of what the PBQ interface would look like and how to logically approach the questions.

The Exam Day:

Oh, the exam wording. CompTIA truly loves playing with words. My key to success was realizing the test structure is less about memorization and

more about **reading, analyzing, and comprehending the specific technical challenge** being presented.

For the MCQs: Questions often contain words that are absolutely useless — just **red herrings** to throw you off.

My method was to look for the **keyword**, understand exactly what was being asked, think of the solution in my mind, and *then* check the options.

Most questions were surprisingly simple, one-liners, making it easy to spot the hint if you stayed calm. I completed 71 MCQs in a 30-minute blitz.

For the PBQs: I was in the same boat as countless others — scratching my head and wondering what to do. I don't believe there is an official way to perfectly prepare for them (at least I did not find any).

- **The Rule: Flag the PBQs immediately.** Complete all multiple-choice questions first. Then, return to the flagged PBQs with a clear, calm mind.

- **The Approach:** The solution is pure **logical thinking and understanding**. Read the question a few times, see what is being mentioned, click around the screen, and explore the interface carefully. Take your time.

Pertaining to **my personal experience — I had 75 questions (71 MCQs & 4 PBQs)** and I was able to complete the entire exam and review in about 60–70 minutes.

The Ready Switch:

What was the most important habit?

I'd just say, **relax and enjoy the process, and stop allowing your mind to overthink it.**

The **CompTIA exam, in my opinion, is designed not to trick you, but to genuinely test your foundational knowledge**, showing they want you to succeed if you put in the conceptual work.

I wasn't the right person to talk about burnout because I was trying to postpone the exam! But that feeling when you're done and everything clears out? It feels good.

My final non-negotiable step was that **focused revision** the day before.

Going through all the notes — just the concepts and questions I had repeatedly missed — was what flipped my switch from unsure to ready.

And the end result:

EXAM: CompTIA Security+ Certification Exam

DATE: 22-Oct-2025



PASSING SCORE: 750

CANDIDATE SCORE: 795

PASS/FAIL: Pass

The CompTIA Security+ Certification Exam has a scaled score between 100 and 900.

Once you are done with the exam, the result appears right when you are done with your testing

In my case it took 24 hours to receive the official mail and certificate, which will vary for everyone

Final Thoughts:

It's been a fun few weeks, and I genuinely enjoyed this journey of taking up the Security+ exam.

I have to laud CompTIA ; it does a great job of the baseline knowledge needed in the domain & industry.

In my opinion starting with a CompTIA certification, like **Security+** or **PenTest+** (depending on what aligns with your goals) is a great entry point into the cybersecurity world.

I truly hope this look into my study journey helps someone else feel less stressed and more prepared.

Thanks for following along my journey!

I wrote this right after finishing my exam, though it may be published a few days later.

I'm happy to answer any questions you have about my preparation in the comments below!

All the best to everyone planning to take it up — you've got this!