

CAT Toppers' DILR Strategy Guide

How CAT toppers practised DILR, and how they selected sets in the exam

Nearly **a quarter of CAT toppers** named DILR as their weakest section. Their fix had two parts: build comfort first by solving sets **without a timer**, then add speed. In the exam, **set selection** decided their score.

Part A: The 3-Stage Practice Method

Stage	What to do	CAT topper
1. Untimed	Solve each set without a timer, even if it takes 1–2 hours. Do not look at the solution first.	Nikita Agarwal, 99.22; Amaan Hussain, 99.47
2. Timed	Once comfortable, give each set a limit of about 20–25 minutes; if it still won't open, study the solution and move on.	Nikita Agarwal, 99.22; Srishti Vazirani, 99.00
3. Volume	Solve 3–5 sets every day from previous year papers, sectionals and mocks; aim for wide variety.	Kunal, 98.44; Nancy Jain, 99.72

What toppers did	CAT topper
Aimed for exposure to around 400 DILR sets	Amit Shailesh, CAT 2022, 94.62, IIM Lucknow
Called previous year papers the best source for DILR practice	Kunal, CAT 2022, 98.44, MDI Gurgaon

What toppers did	CAT topper
Refused to look at answers, and once solved a caselet on her 38th attempt	Vasundhara Tiwari, CAT 2019, 96.68, IIM Udaipur

“My advice is to never look at the solution before trying the set on your own, no matter how long it takes.” — Amaan Hussain, CAT 2025, 99.47

Part B: Set-Selection Rules for the Exam

What toppers did	CAT topper
Spend the first 4–7 minutes reading all the sets	Pranshav Shah, 99.80; Kirti Goyal, 99.10
Drop any set you cannot structure in about 3 minutes	Sanjiv Kumar, 99.99
Prefer familiar set types and fewer data points; avoid conditional sets	Pranshav Shah, 99.80; Sanjiv Kumar, 99.99
Leave complex types such as Games and Tournaments for last	Sanjiv Kumar, 99.99
Pick off easy questions from a hard set; some take 3–5 minutes without solving the whole set	Nikita Agarwal, 99.22
Move on if you make no progress in about 10 minutes	Sahiti Potnuru, 98.23
Target 2 sets solved fully and accurately before attempting more	Amaan Hussain, 99.47; Shreyasee Sarkar, 99.68

The rule that matters most is the time cap. Anmol Gupta (CAT 2025, 100 percentile in DILR) did not pick sets in advance; he started with whichever set was in front of him, but gave each set a maximum of 5 minutes to decide whether it was solvable.

Practise now: solve real DILR sets from CAT previous year papers at mbauniverse.com/cat/previous-question-papers and read topper interviews at mbauniverse.com/cat/topper.

