

CAT Toppers' VARC Strategy Guide

How CAT toppers turned VARC from their weakest section into a scoring one

About **40% of CAT toppers** named VARC as their weakest section, and **nine in ten of them were engineers**. None of them had a magic trick. They built a daily reading habit, practised a fixed number of RCs, and changed how they attempted the section in the exam.

Part A: Build the Reading Habit

What toppers did	CAT topper
Read 6–7 articles a day (The Hindu, Indian Express, Medium, Guardian) and solve 4–5 RCs	Nancy Jain, CAT 2020, 99.72, IIM Calcutta
Start with an easy book like The Alchemist, then move to Aeon essays and long-form articles	Srishti Vazirani, CAT 2024, 99.00, SPJIMR Mumbai
Read JSTOR Daily: dense, but shorter than Aeon essays	Harshit Pansari, CAT 2024, 99.18, SPJIMR Mumbai
Read about 10,000 words a day to build reading speed	Kunal, CAT 2022, 98.44, MDI Gurgaon
Fix a daily VARC slot: 5 Para Jumbles, 5 Para Summaries, 5 Odd-One-Outs and at least 1 RC	Prateek Kumar Rai, CAT 2022, 99.80, SPJIMR Mumbai
Time yourself: try 6 RCs in one hour	Anushree Naik, CAT 2019, 98.20, IIM Ahmedabad

“I don't have a reading habit, so I focused on strategy rather than content.” — Sanjiv Kumar, CAT 2024, 99.99

Part B: Exam-Day VARC Tactics

What toppers did	CAT topper
Skim all RCs for 10–15 seconds before choosing which to attempt	Srishti Vazirani, 99.00
Read the questions first, then the passage	Jayant Kocchar, 99.62
Cap your time: 7.5 minutes per RC, 1.5 minutes per VA question	Sanjiv Kumar, 99.99
Eliminate three options, then mark the one left	Pranshav Shah, 99.80
Answer using only the text up to the line the question refers to	Vasundhara Tiwari, 96.68
If Para Jumbles and Summaries cost you marks, attempt RCs only	Srishti Yadav, 99.69

Mistakes Toppers Fixed

What toppers did	CAT topper
Avoiding RCs on unfamiliar topics; fixed by reading widely	Srishti Vazirani, 99.00
Picking the wrong RCs; switched to attempting all RCs partially	Aditya Uday Manolkar, 99.56
Not crossing the VARC cut-off in most mocks; fixed with option elimination, then scored 96+ in VARC	Shubham Bajaj, 99.98

Practise now: solve RCs from free CAT sample papers at mbauniverse.com/cat/sample-paper and read 50+ CAT topper interviews at mbauniverse.com/cat/topper.