VPWEB.DEV · STUDY SCHEDULE

CompTIA A+ — Weekly Plan

A 10-week daily study schedule (both Core exams) · Exam 220-1201 & 220-1202

A day-by-day plan that pairs Professor Messer's free A+ course with a hands-on home-lab thread. Weeks 1–5 cover Core 1 (220-1201) ending in that exam; Weeks 6–10 cover Core 2 (220-1202). A+ rewards people who've physically touched the hardware and the command line — so labs run all the way through. Check off each block as you go.

YOUR SETUP: 3+ hrs on weekdays · weekends light or off · watch videos at ·1.25×

COMPTIA A+ · WEEK 1

Core 1 — Hardware foundations

Goal this week: Start Core 1 with the physical fundamentals: components, RAM, storage, motherboards, CPUs, and power. Get hands-on early.

Day 1 ~3 hrs — *Orientation + components*

- [ ] 0:45 Setup: download the 220-1201 objectives PDF; watch Messer's intro + "how to study" videos
- [ ] 1:45 Messer: motherboards, CPUs, expansion cards (form factors, sockets, BIOS/UEFI)
- [ ] 0:30 Active recall: write today's key terms in your own words

Day 2 ~3 hrs — *RAM & storage*

- [ ] 2:00 Messer: RAM types (DDR3/4/5, ECC) and storage (HDD, SSD, M.2, NVMe, RAID)
- [ ] 0:30 Active recall
- [ ] 0:30 Lab: open a PC (or detailed photos) and locate the RAM, storage, CPU, and PSU

Day 3 ~3 hrs — *Power & cooling*

- [ ] 1:30 Messer: power supplies, connectors, and cooling
- [ ] 1:00 Build a flashcard set: RAID levels + RAM types
- [ ] 0:30 Active recall

Day 4 ~3 hrs — *Cables & connectors*

- [ ] 2:00 Messer: cables & connectors (USB, SATA, RJ45, HDMI, DisplayPort, Thunderbolt)
- [ ] 0:30 Active recall
- [ ] 0:30 Flashcards

Day 5 ~3 hrs — *Consolidate hardware*

- [ ] 1:30 Messer: finish remaining hardware topics
- [ ] 0:45 Pop Quiz / practice questions on hardware
- [ ] 0:45 Lab: reseat RAM and identify every cable on a real machine

Weekend — *light or off*

- [ ] Best case: re-skim the connectors and RAM/RAID tables
- [ ] Otherwise: rest

End-of-week checkpoint: Components, RAM/storage, RAID, and connectors solid · comfortable working inside a PC.

Next up — Week 2 — printers and mobile devices, finishing the hardware-heavy material.

A+ rewards hands-on practice. Touching the parts beats re-watching videos — open a machine whenever you can.

COMPTIA A+ · WEEK 2

Core 1 — Printers + Mobile Devices

Goal this week: Finish the hardware domain (printers) and cover laptops and mobile devices.

Day 1 ~3 hrs — *Printers (part 1)*

- [ ] 1:45 Messer: laser printers and the imaging process (the 7 steps)
- [ ] 0:45 Memorize the laser imaging steps in order
- [ ] 0:30 Flashcards

Day 2 ~3 hrs — *Printers (part 2)*

- [ ] 1:30 Messer: inkjet, thermal, impact, 3D printers, and maintenance
- [ ] 1:00 Active recall: print-quality issues and causes
- [ ] 0:30 Lab: examine a printer / change a cartridge or toner

Day 3 ~3 hrs — *Laptops*

- [ ] 2:00 Messer: laptop hardware (battery, keyboard, display components) and replacement procedures
- [ ] 0:30 Active recall
- [ ] 0:30 Flashcards

Day 4 ~3 hrs — *Mobile devices*

- [ ] 2:00 Messer: mobile connectivity (cellular, Bluetooth, hotspot), accessories, ports, synchronization
- [ ] 0:30 Active recall
- [ ] 0:30 Flashcards

Day 5 ~3 hrs — *Consolidate hardware + mobile*

- [ ] 1:00 Practice questions: hardware + mobile
- [ ] 0:45 Review misses
- [ ] 1:15 Lab: pair a Bluetooth device, set up a hotspot, explore mobile settings

Weekend — *light or off*

- [ ] Best case: re-skim the laser imaging steps and mobile connectivity
- [ ] Otherwise: rest

End-of-week checkpoint: Hardware domain done · laser imaging process memorized · mobile devices covered.

Next up — Week 3 — networking: ports, protocols, wireless, and IP addressing.

The laser imaging process is a classic exam target — know all seven steps in order.

Core 1 — Networking

Goal this week: The networking domain: ports and protocols, hardware, wireless, IP addressing, and connection types.

Day 1 ~3 hrs — *Ports & protocols*

- [ ] 1:45 Messer: TCP/UDP ports and protocols
- [ ] 0:45 Start memorizing the ports table
- [ ] 0:30 Flashcards

Day 2 ~3 hrs — *Network hardware*

- [ ] 2:00 Messer: routers, switches, access points, firewalls, modems, PoE
- [ ] 0:30 Active recall
- [ ] 0:30 Flashcards (ports, continued)

Day 3 ~3 hrs — *Wireless*

- [ ] 1:45 Messer: 802.11 standards, bands, channels, WPA2/WPA3
- [ ] 0:45 Active recall
- [ ] 0:30 Lab: log into a SOHO router and explore the wireless settings

Day 4 ~3 hrs — *IP addressing*

- [ ] 2:00 Messer: IPv4/IPv6, static vs dynamic, APIPA, subnet mask, gateway, DHCP/DNS
- [ ] 0:30 Active recall
- [ ] 0:30 Lab: run ipconfig / ip a and identify your IP, mask, and gateway

Day 5 ~3 hrs — *Connection types + consolidate*

- [ ] 1:00 Messer: internet connection types, network types, tools
- [ ] 0:45 Pop Quiz: networking
- [ ] 1:15 Practice questions: networking

Weekend — *light or off*

- [ ] Drill the ports table until it's automatic
- [ ] Otherwise: rest

End-of-week checkpoint: Networking solid · ports memorized · comfortable reading IP configuration.

Next up — Week 4 — virtualization & cloud, then begin hardware/network troubleshooting.

Ports are guaranteed points and PBQ fodder — get them memorized cold this week.

Core 1 — Virtualization/Cloud + Troubleshooting (part 1)

Goal this week: Cover the cloud/virtualization domain, then begin the biggest domain — troubleshooting — with the methodology.

Day 1 ~3 hrs — *Cloud*

- [ ] 1:45 Messer: cloud models (IaaS/PaaS/SaaS), deployment (public/private/hybrid), characteristics
- [ ] 0:45 Active recall
- [ ] 0:30 Flashcards

Day 2 ~3 hrs — *Virtualization + Lab*

- [ ] 1:30 Messer: client-side virtualization, hypervisors (Type 1/2), requirements
- [ ] 1:00 Lab: install VirtualBox and create a VM
- [ ] 0:30 Active recall

Day 3 ~3 hrs — *Troubleshooting methodology*

- [ ] 1:30 Messer: the six-step troubleshooting methodology
- [ ] 1:00 Memorize the six steps in order
- [ ] 0:30 Flashcards

Day 4 ~3 hrs — *TS: power / POST / RAM / CPU*

- [ ] 2:00 Messer: motherboard/RAM/CPU/power issues, beep codes, overheating
- [ ] 0:30 Active recall
- [ ] 0:30 Practice questions

Day 5 ~3 hrs — *TS: storage & RAID*

- [ ] 1:30 Messer: storage & RAID problems (SMART, clicking, RAID not found)
- [ ] 0:45 Active recall
- [ ] 0:45 Practice questions

Weekend — *light or off*

- [ ] Best case: re-skim the six steps + cloud models
- [ ] Otherwise: rest

End-of-week checkpoint: Cloud/virtualization done · methodology memorized · first VM running.

Next up — Week 5 — finish troubleshooting, drive practice exams, and pass Core 1.

The six-step methodology underpins dozens of questions. When a scenario skips a step, that skipped step is usually the answer.

COMPTIA A+ · WEEK 5

Core 1 — Finish Troubleshooting + EXAM

Goal this week: Finish the troubleshooting domain, drive practice exams to 90%, and pass Core 1 (220-1201).

Day 1 ~3 hrs

TS: display & mobile

- [ ] 1:45 Messer: video/display and mobile-device issues
- [ ] 0:45 Active recall
- [ ] 0:30 Practice questions

Day 2 ~3 hrs

TS: printers & network

- [ ] 1:45 Messer: printer and wired/wireless network issues
- [ ] 0:45 Active recall
- [ ] 0:30 Flashcards

Day 3 ~3 hrs

First full practice exam

- [ ] 1:30 Take a full Core 1 practice exam
- [ ] 1:00 Review every miss and note its domain
- [ ] 0:30 Flashcards on the weak areas

Day 4 ~3 hrs

Weak-area review

- [ ] 2:00 Re-study your weakest topics
- [ ] 0:30 Targeted practice questions
- [ ] 0:30 Active recall

Day 5 ~3 hrs

The 90% gate + book

- [ ] 1:30 Final Core 1 practice exam — aim for a confident 90%+
- [ ] 0:45 Review
- [ ] 0:45 Logistics: register and pass Core 1 (220-1201)

Weekend

light or off

- [ ] Rest — you're halfway. A light re-skim before Core 2 is plenty.

End-of-week checkpoint: Core 1 passed. One exam down.

Next up — Week 6 — Core 2 begins with the Operating Systems domain.

Don't book Core 1 until you're consistently scoring 90%+ on fresh practice exams.

Core 2 — Operating Systems (part 1)

Goal this week: Start Core 2 with the OS domain: Windows editions, tools, and the command line.

Day 1 ~3 hrs — *Orientation + Windows editions*

- [ ] 0:45 Download the 220-1202 objectives PDF
- [ ] 1:45 Messer: Windows editions and features
- [ ] 0:30 Active recall

Day 2 ~3 hrs — *Command line*

- [ ] 2:00 Messer: CLI commands (ipconfig, ping, chkdsk, sfc, gpupdate, diskpart)
- [ ] 0:30 Active recall
- [ ] 0:30 Lab: run each command in a Windows VM

Day 3 ~3 hrs — *Windows tools*

- [ ] 2:00 Messer: Task Manager, MSConfig, regedit, services.msc, MMC, Event Viewer
- [ ] 0:30 Active recall
- [ ] 0:30 Flashcards

Day 4 ~3 hrs — *Control Panel/Settings + networking*

- [ ] 1:45 Messer: Control Panel vs Settings; Windows networking (workgroup/domain, shares)
- [ ] 0:45 Active recall
- [ ] 0:30 Lab: map a network drive

Day 5 ~3 hrs — *Consolidate Windows*

- [ ] 1:00 Practice questions: Windows
- [ ] 0:45 Review misses
- [ ] 1:15 Lab: explore every Windows tool you learned this week

Weekend — *light or off*

- [ ] Best case: re-skim the CLI commands
- [ ] Otherwise: rest

End-of-week checkpoint: Windows editions, tools, and command line solid.

Next up — Week 7 — OS install, file systems, and macOS/Linux.

Practice the command line in a real (virtual) Windows machine — muscle memory beats memorizing syntax.

Core 2 — OS install + macOS/Linux

Goal this week: Finish the OS domain: installation, file systems, macOS, and the Linux command line.

Day 1 ~3 hrs — *OS installation*

- [ ] 1:45 Messer: install/upgrade methods, boot methods, partitioning (GPT/MBR)
- [ ] 0:45 Active recall
- [ ] 0:30 Flashcards

Day 2 ~3 hrs — *File systems + Lab*

- [ ] 1:30 Messer: file systems (NTFS, exFAT, FAT32, ext4, APFS)
- [ ] 1:00 Lab: install Windows fresh in a VM
- [ ] 0:30 Active recall

Day 3 ~3 hrs — *macOS*

- [ ] 1:45 Messer: macOS features (Time Machine, Mission Control, Keychain, Disk Utility)
- [ ] 0:45 Active recall
- [ ] 0:30 Flashcards

Day 4 ~3 hrs — *Linux (part 1) + Lab*

- [ ] 1:30 Messer: Linux basics and commands (ls, cd, pwd, cp, mv, rm)
- [ ] 1:00 Lab: install a Linux distro in a VM and run the commands
- [ ] 0:30 Active recall

Day 5 ~3 hrs — *Linux (part 2) + consolidate*

- [ ] 1:30 Messer: chmod, chown, sudo, apt/yum, grep, ip, ps
- [ ] 0:45 Lab: practice permissions and a package install
- [ ] 0:45 Practice questions: OS domain

Weekend — *light or off*

- [ ] Best case: re-skim Linux commands and file systems
- [ ] Otherwise: rest

End-of-week checkpoint: OS domain complete · comfortable installing Windows/Linux and using both command lines.

Next up — Week 8 — the Security domain.

Linux commands feel foreign at first — typing them in a VM is the fastest way to make them stick.

COMPTIA A+ · WEEK 8

Core 2 — Security

Goal this week: Cover the security domain: physical and logical security, malware, social engineering, and best practices.

Day 1 ~3 hrs — *Physical & logical security*

- [ ] 1:45 Messer: physical security, MFA, least privilege, ACLs
- [ ] 0:45 Active recall
- [ ] 0:30 Flashcards

Day 2 ~3 hrs — *Malware*

- [ ] 2:00 Messer: malware types (virus, worm, trojan, ransomware, rootkit, keylogger, spyware, botnet)
- [ ] 0:30 Active recall
- [ ] 0:30 Flashcards

Day 3 ~3 hrs — *Social engineering & attacks*

- [ ] 1:45 Messer: phishing, tailgating, shoulder surfing, DDoS, on-path, zero-day
- [ ] 0:45 Build an attack-types table
- [ ] 0:30 Active recall

Day 4 ~3 hrs — *Wireless + best practices*

- [ ] 1:45 Messer: wireless security (WPA2/WPA3), password policy, account management
- [ ] 0:45 Active recall
- [ ] 0:30 Flashcards

Day 5 ~3 hrs — *Data destruction + consolidate*

- [ ] 1:00 Messer: data destruction/disposal, SOHO + browser security
- [ ] 0:45 Practice questions: security
- [ ] 1:15 Review misses

Weekend — *light or off*

- [ ] Best case: re-skim malware types + the attack table
- [ ] Otherwise: rest

End-of-week checkpoint: Security domain solid · malware and attacks memorized.

Next up — Week 9 — software troubleshooting and operational procedures.

Malware types and social-engineering attacks are heavy on Core 2 — know the indicators of each.

COMPTIA A+ · WEEK 9

Core 2 — Software Troubleshooting + Operational Procedures

Goal this week: Cover software troubleshooting (including the malware-removal steps) and the operational/professional domain.

Day 1 ~3 hrs — *Windows troubleshooting*

- [ ] 1:45 Messer: Windows problems (BSOD, slow boot, services failing)
- [ ] 0:45 Active recall
- [ ] 0:30 Flashcards

Day 2 ~3 hrs — *Malware removal*

- [ ] 1:30 Messer: the malware-removal seven-step process
- [ ] 1:00 Memorize the seven steps in order
- [ ] 0:30 Active recall

Day 3 ~3 hrs — *Mobile troubleshooting*

- [ ] 1:30 Messer: mobile OS/app and mobile security issues
- [ ] 0:45 Active recall
- [ ] 0:45 Practice questions: software troubleshooting

Day 4 ~3 hrs — *Operational procedures (part 1)*

- [ ] 1:45 Messer: documentation, change management, backups (3-2-1), safety/ESD
- [ ] 0:45 Active recall
- [ ] 0:30 Flashcards

Day 5 ~3 hrs — *Operational procedures (part 2) + scripting*

- [ ] 1:15 Messer: incident response, communication, remote access
- [ ] 0:45 Active recall
- [ ] 1:00 Lab: write a simple .bat or PowerShell line (e.g. map a drive) — A+ covers basic scripting

Weekend — *light or off*

- [ ] Best case: re-skim the malware-removal steps + backup types
- [ ] Otherwise: rest

End-of-week checkpoint: All Core 2 domains covered · malware-removal steps memorized.

Next up — Week 10 — review, practice exams, and pass Core 2.

The malware-removal seven steps are tested directly — memorize the order, especially disabling/enabling System Restore around remediation.

COMPTIA A+ · WEEK 10

Core 2 — Review + EXAM

Goal this week: Drive Core 2 practice exams to 90%, do a light final review, and pass 220-1202 to complete your A+.

Day 1 ~3 hrs

First full practice exam

- [ ] 1:30 Take a full Core 2 practice exam
- [ ] 1:00 Review every miss
- [ ] 0:30 Flashcards on weak areas

Day 2 ~3 hrs

Weak-area review

- [ ] 2:00 Re-study your weakest domains
- [ ] 0:30 Targeted practice questions
- [ ] 0:30 Active recall

Day 3 ~3 hrs

PBQ drills + 90% gate

- [ ] 1:30 A second full practice exam
- [ ] 1:00 Review
- [ ] 0:30 PBQ-style drills

Day 4 ~1.5 hrs

Light review + logistics

- [ ] 1:00 Re-skim CLI commands, malware-removal steps, and ports
- [ ] 0:30 Register the exam / test your proctoring setup — then rest

Day 5 exam day

Sit and pass

- [ ] – Light: re-read the exam-day strategy and rest
- [ ] – Sit and pass 220-1202 — you are CompTIA A+ certified

Weekend

light or off

- [ ] Celebrate — you earned it
- [ ] Consider Network+ next to deepen your networking and open more roles

End-of-week checkpoint: Core 2 passed — CompTIA A+ certified.

Next up — Stack toward Network+ (there's a 10-week schedule for that too).

On exam day, flag-and-move on tough PBQs, bank the multiple-choice, and circle back with the time you saved.