

CCNA Cheat Sheet 2026

The night-before summary, built like the exam.

—	2h	—
Scored questions	Time limit	Passing score
\$300	Cisco	
Exam fee	Governing body	

Fast-reference guide for the Cisco Certified Network Associate exam. Use this the week of your test to confirm logistics and refresh high-yield concepts.

Exam Logistics At a Glance

Item	Detail
Format	Proctored, computer-based exam
Duration	120 minutes
Cost	300 USD
Delivery	Pearson VUE (in-person or OnVUE online proctoring)
Validity	3 years

- The exam is delivered through Pearson VUE, Cisco's authorized testing provider, either at an Authorized Test Center or via the OnVUE online proctored service with a live remote proctor.
- If testing online, OnVUE requires a minimum of 6 Mbps download and 2 Mbps upload internet speed — test your connection well before exam day.
- Book your seat through the Pearson VUE testing portal using your Cisco certification account; scheduling early secures preferred dates and time slots.
- Your CCNA certification stays valid for 3 years from the pass date, after which recertification credits or a retake are required.

Official Content Domains

1. Network Fundamentals — 20%
2. Network Access — 20%
3. IP Connectivity — 25% (the most heavily weighted domain)
4. IP Services — 10%
5. Security Fundamentals — 15%
6. Automation and Programmability — 10%

The blueprint is organized into 6 official content domains. Because IP Connectivity carries the single largest weight, prioritize routing concepts — especially OSPF operation and route path selection — over lower-weighted topics when time is tight.

Key Terms and Concepts to Memorize

- VLAN vs. subnet — a VLAN is a Layer 2 broadcast domain; a subnet is a Layer 3 logical grouping. They are commonly mapped one-to-one but are conceptually distinct.

- OSPF vs. EIGRP — OSPF is a link-state, standards-based protocol using cost as its metric; EIGRP is a Cisco-proprietary advanced distance-vector protocol using a composite metric.
- STP roles — root bridge, root port, designated port, and blocking port prevent Layer 2 loops in switched networks.
- NAT vs. PAT — NAT maps one private address to one public address; PAT (NAT overload) maps many private addresses to one public address using port numbers.
- IPv6 address types — global unicast, link-local, and multicast each serve distinct roles; link-local addresses are required on every IPv6-enabled interface.
- AAA framework — Authentication, Authorization, and Accounting underpin Cisco's approach to network access control.
- APIs and automation — REST APIs, JSON data structures, and controller-based networking (e.g., SDN) appear in the Automation and Programmability domain and are easy to underprepare for.
- Wireless fundamentals — know the difference between autonomous and lightweight access points, and the role of a wireless LAN controller (WLC).

Common Gotchas and Traps

- Don't confuse switch port security violation modes (protect, restrict, shutdown) — each behaves differently when a MAC address violation occurs.
- Subnetting errors are the most common cause of lost points; practice VLSM and CIDR math until it is automatic, not just theoretically understood.
- Distinguish administrative distance from metric — administrative distance picks the best source among differing protocols, while metric picks the best path within the same protocol.
- Access control list processing is top-down and stops at first match — an early overly broad line can silently block or permit traffic you didn't intend.
- Don't assume default VLAN and native VLAN are the same configuration concept — mismatched native VLANs across a trunk cause silent connectivity issues.
- Simulation and simlet-style items reward methodical CLI verification (show commands) over guessing — always confirm state before answering.

Night-Before Checklist

- Confirm your exam appointment time, location or OnVUE link, and bring a valid government-issued photo ID that matches your Pearson VUE registration name.
- If testing online, re-run the OnVUE system test to confirm your connection meets the 6 Mbps download / 2 Mbps upload minimum and that your testing space is clear and private.
- Do a final pass on subnetting drills, OSPF vs. EIGRP comparisons, and STP port roles — these are high-frequency, high-value topics.
- Review the domain weighting one more time so your last-minute review time is spent proportionally, with extra focus on IP Connectivity.
- Get sleep rather than cramming new material; recognition speed on scenario-based questions benefits more from rest than last-minute memorization.
- Arrive or log in early — plan for check-in time separate from the 120-minute exam window itself.

Official sources

- Cisco — CCNA Exam v1.0 (200-301) — Official Exam Topics: https://learningcontent.cisco.com/documents/200_301_CCNA_v1.0_2.pdf
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics — Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, May 2025 — Network and Computer Systems Administrators (SOC 15-1244): <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes151244.htm>
- Pearson VUE — Cisco IT Certification Exams — Pearson VUE: <https://www.pearsonvue.com/us/en/cisco.html>

Free practice questions for this exam: www.everyexamprep.com/practice/exams/technology/cisco-ccna