Enrolled Agent Cheat Sheet 2026

The night-before summary, built like the exam.

— Questions	**—** Time limit	**Pass all three SEE parts …** Passing score
— Exam fee	**Internal Revenue Service…** Governing body	

The credential & the 2026 change

- EA = highest IRS credential · unlimited practice rights (like CPAs/attorneys)
- From Mar 1, 2026: PSI Services administers the SEE — not Prometric. Per part: 100 questions (85 scored) in 3.5 hours, scaled 200–800, 500 passes, four attempts per window
- Three parts — Individuals · Businesses · Representation — all passed within 3 years
- Path: PTIN -> 3 parts -> Form 23 (Pay.gov) -> suitability check (tax compliance + background)
- Maintain: renew every 3 years · CE · annual PTIN renewal

Part 1 anchors

- Gift basis = carryover · inherited basis = step-up · LT gain needs >1 year (anniversary = ST)
- Wash sale: 30 days either side -> loss disallowed, added to new basis
- Capital losses: $3,000/yr vs ordinary income, indefinite carryforward
- §121 home: $250k/$500k exclusion, 2-of-5-year own + use
- Safe harbors: 90% current OR 100% prior-year tax (110% if prior AGI > $150k)
- Early IRA distribution: 10% additional tax unless exception
- Social Security: at most 85% taxable · post-2018 alimony: no deduction/no income
- Qualifying child: relationship + age + residency + support + joint-return, ALL required
- Hobby: income taxable, losses dead · employee home office: suspended (self-employed only: exclusive + regular use)

Part 2 anchors

- C corp = double tax · S corp: <=100 shareholders, 1 class, domestic, reasonable comp before distributions
- Partnership: basis caps losses; distributions over basis = gain; guaranteed payments = SE income
- LLC defaults: 1 member = disregarded · 2+ = partnership (corp only by election)
- §351: property for stock + 80% control = no gain · §1031: real property only
- Start-up: $5k now (phase-out over $50k) + 180-month amortization · meals 50%
- §1245: depreciation recaptured as ordinary · §267: related-party losses disallowed (offset buyer's later gain)
- FUTA = employer-only · QBI: up to 20% pass-through deduction (limits apply)

Part 3 anchors

- Unlimited practice: EA / CPA / attorney · PTIN = anyone paid to prepare
- Form 2848 = represent · 8821 = information only
- Assessment SOL: 3 yrs · 6 yrs (25% omission) · none (fraud/no return) — collection is a separate 10-yr clock
- Refund claim: later of 3 yrs from filing / 2 yrs from payment
- Lien = claim · levy = seizure · CDP request: 30 days · OIC: collectibility / liability / effective admin
- Contingent fees: exam/refund-claim/judicial only · client records: return promptly, unpaid bill or not

Source: Internal Revenue Service (IRS) · Last verified September 16, 2026

- E-file mandate: >10 covered returns · EITC diligence: Form 8867 · preparer copies: 3 years
- OPR sanctions: censure -> suspension -> disbarment

Night before

- Re-run the day-count table above — Part 3 punishes fuzzy clocks
- Current-year dollar figures (standard deduction, limits): check the current IRS pubs — they index annually and this sheet deliberately omits them
- Verify appointment logistics in your PSI confirmation, not old Prometric guidance

Official sources

- PSI Services / Internal Revenue Service — IRS SEE — Candidate Information Bulletin (PSI): https://test-takers.psigov.us/api/content/bulletin/12238
- Internal Revenue Service (IRS) — Become an Enrolled Agent — IRS: https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/enrolled-agents/become-an-enrolled-agent
- Internal Revenue Service (IRS) — Maintain Your Enrolled Agent Status — IRS: https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/enrolled-agents/maintain-your-enrolled-agent-status

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