

Prepping for the Biological/Biochemical Foundations Section of the MCAT

Overview

- 59 Questions spread across 10 passages (4-6 Qs per passage)
 - Skills tested are recall (1), understanding (2), research (3) and data interpretation (4)
- 95 minutes to complete the section
 - Goal should be 8 mins per passage/Q set (~3 minutes reading, ~5 minutes on Qs)
 - Pacing checks should be every 2-3 passages, 1 min per discrete Q
 - Master a way to keep track of passage information (e.g. highlighting, note-taking) AND simplify figures/tables/charts/graphs
- Passages cover familiar concepts from life sciences
 - Biology (65%)
 - Introductory Biochemistry (25%)
 - General/Organic Chemistry (10%)

Required Coursework

- Two semesters of Biology required –abstract reasoning and critical thinking also a must-have
 - Courses which emphasize abstract thinking (philosophy), logical reasoning (law, debate), literature analysis (upper-level humanities), Questions spread across 9 passages
- Introductory Biochemistry *strongly recommended* as these topic make up 1/4th of 2 of the science sections. More bang for your buck!
- General Chemistry and Organic Chemistry are foundational for understanding biochemistry
- Courses with labs components or Research Skills courses can help with data-reasoning and research design/ethics questions
 - Scientific literature review classes or seminars can boost familiarity with complex figures

Challenging practice AND review is the best way to improve in areas of content confidence –
Simple repetition and reinforcement of the science will not yield better scores.

Next Step Resources

- **FREE** MCAT Diagnostic (½ Scored Section)
- **FREE** MCAT Full Length (1 Full Scored Section)
- Next Step Full Length MCATs 2-10 (9 Full Scored Sections)
- Next Step Bio/Biochem Strategy and Practice Book (40+ Practice Passages)
- Next Step Office Hours
- Next Step AAMC Bio/Biochem review video series
- Next Step Biology and Biochemistry Lesson Videos and Content Review Videos (100+ hours)

Free Biology and Biochemistry Resources

- Khan Academy – B/B Passages with 3-5 Questions (Not in Test Format)
- Editorial articles, review articles in appropriate peer-reviewed journals are a good way to familiarize students with nomenclature, statistics, data presentation, understanding of relationships between the sciences