

Prepping for the Psychological and Sociological 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 **or less** per passage set (~3 minutes reading, ~5 minutes on Qs)
 - 1 min per discrete Q
 - Most students do NOT run out of time on this section! With any extra time, return to marked questions and the passages that were most difficult – rather than ending the exam early
 - Master a way to keep track of passage information (e.g. highlighting, note-taking) AND simplify figures/tables/charts/graphs
- Passages cover concepts from the following:
 - Introductory psychology (65%)
 - Introductory sociology (30%)
 - Introductory biology (5%)

Required Coursework

- One semester of either intro psychology or intro sociology *highly* recommended
- If student can only choose one, they should take psychology
- Higher-level social science courses (Developmental Psychology, Abnormal Psychology, etc.) are also beneficial, but not as much so as a general introductory course
- Statistics can be helpful but is absolutely not required
- Courses with lab components or Research Skills courses can help with data/reasoning and research design/ethics questions
 - Scientific literature review classes can boost familiarity with complex figures
- As in the other sections: courses which emphasize abstract thinking (philosophy), logical reasoning (law, debate), literature analysis (upper-level humanities) are also recommended – and can provide a nice break in a science-heavy schedule!

The P/S section asks more specific, content-based questions than the other science sections, but plenty of passage/reasoning practice is still absolutely necessary to succeed.

Next Step Resources

- **FREE** MCAT Diagnostic (contains one-half of a scored P/S section)
- **FREE** MCAT Full Length (contains one full scored P/S section)
- Next Step Full Length MCATs 2-10 (contain 9 full scored sections in total)
- Next Step Psych/Soc Strategy and Practice Book (40+ practice passages and many discrete questions)
- Next Step Office Hours
- Next Step QBank (1000 discrete questions covering all MCAT sciences, online)
- Next Step AAMC Psych/Soc review video series (available to MCAT course students)
- Next Step Psychology and Sociology Lesson Videos and Content Review Videos (100+ hours, available to MCAT course students)

Free Psychology and Sociology Resources

- Khan Academy – P/S passages with 3-5 questions (not in test format)
- Khan Academy P/S videos
- Editorial articles, review articles in appropriate peer-reviewed journals