



Intro to the MCAT

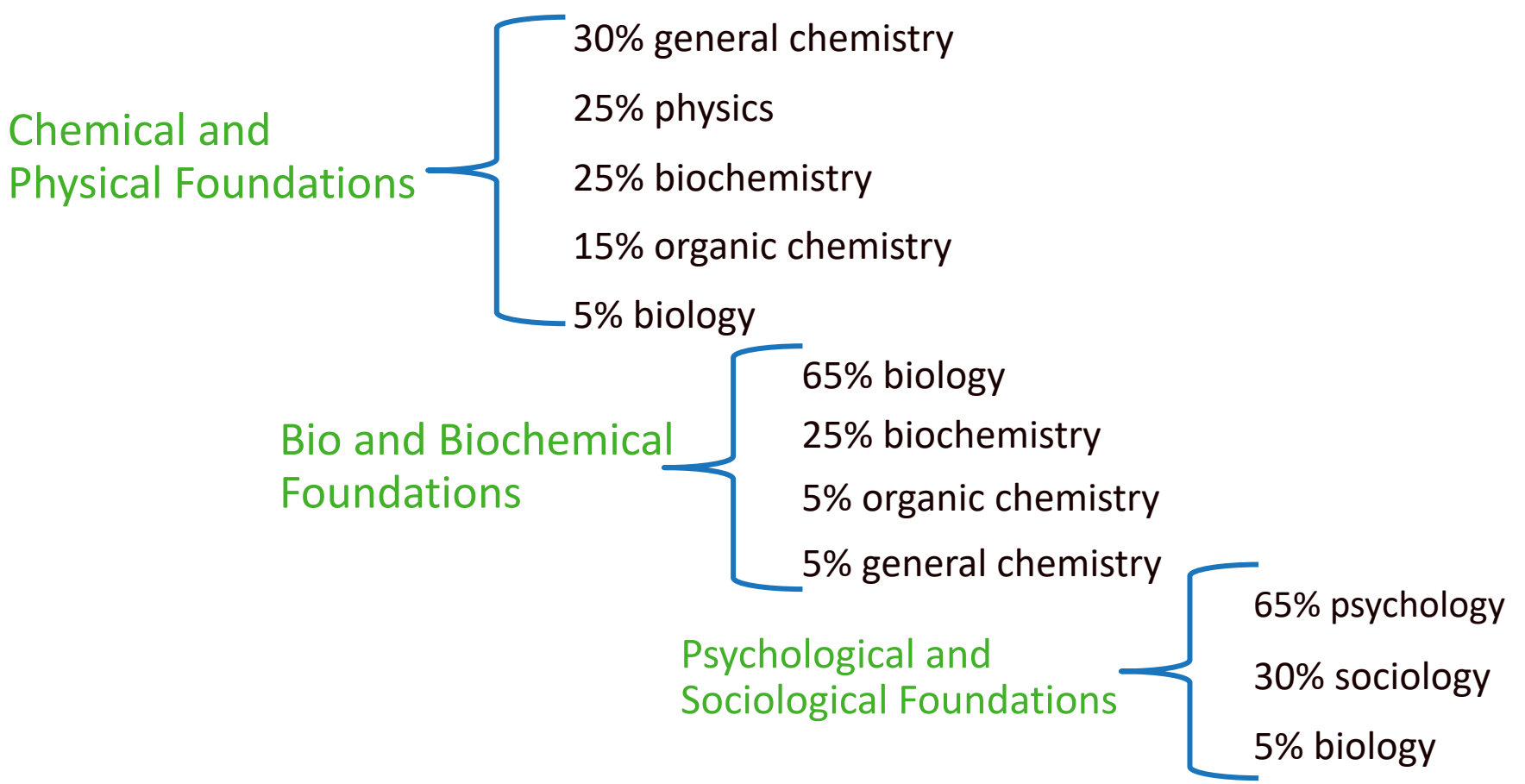
Understanding the test

The MCAT is a test like no other

Exam Overview		
Section	# of Questions	Time Allotted
Examinee Agreement		8 minutes
Tutorial (optional)		10 minutes
Chemical and Physical Foundations of Biological Systems	59	95 minutes
Break (optional)		10 minutes
Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills	53	90 minutes
Mid-Exam Break (optional)		30 minutes
Biological and Biochemical Foundations of Living Systems	59	95 minutes
Break (optional)		10 minutes
Psychological, Social, and Biological Foundations of Behavior	59	95 minutes
Void Question		5 minutes
Satisfaction Survey (optional)		5 minutes
Total Content Time		6 hours 15 minutes
Total "Seated" Time*		Approx. 7 hours 33 minutes

**Total seated time does not include check-in time on arrival at the test center.*

Subjects Tested



“High-Yield”

Warning: anything on the AAMC MCAT outline is fair game!

However, some topics are more likely to appear than others...

Topic	Number of questions
Biology	45
Biochem	30
Physics	15
Gen Chem	20
Organic Chem	11
Psychology	38
Sociology	18
CARS	53
Total	230

Takeaways:

Biology and biochemistry are about 1/3 of the test!

You have more psychology questions than physics and chemistry combined.

Organic chemistry is about 5% of your questions.

Things to think about

- **Content**

LOTS of stuff you need to know

- **Strategy**

Strategy is important in every area, but ESPECIALLY in CARS.

- Cars is not a test of your knowledge. It's a test of skill.

- **Timing / endurance**

Many students are exhausted by the time they get to the Psych section.

Where to begin?

- **Getting started:**

1. **ASAP: take a diag**

2. **Based on diag, set up a study plan (can use Blueprint's free)**

- **If you're already at your goal – take a month to do AAMC**
- **If you're ~5 pt's below your goal – take 1-2 months**
- **If you're 5-10 pt's below your goal – take 3-4 months**
- **If you're 10-15 pt's below your goal – take 5ish months**
- **If you're 15-20+ pt's below your goal – 6+ months**

3. **Download and review AAMC's science outline**

Starting out?

Correlate with classwork and plan ahead!

Some classes are not technically required, but can be helpful for the MCAT.

Anatomy and Physiology

Neurology

Immunology

Endocrinology

Think about those extra's!

Lab experience

Shadowing

Letters of recommendation

Things to think about

- **Content**

ACTIVE engagement – ask yourself Q's, quiz yourself. Do **NOT** passively read.

STOP taking notes and **START** “taking questions”

e.g. don't write “here is the structure of generic amino acid”
INSTEAD write “what is the structure of a generic amino acid?”

Haven't taken a class?

- **Content Classes – haven't taken Biochem yet?!**
- **If you're missing a class, you can self-study (or take a college class) for about 1 semester's worth of stuff while ALSO MCAT prepping (e.g. I never took sociology, so I'm going to self-teach sociology while MCAT prepping)**
- **If you're missing 1+ years worth of class content DO NOT PREP for the MCAT (e.g. I've never taken any physics or Biochem and I want self-teaching a year of physics while MCAT prepping – NO NO NO NO!!!!)**

How to prep

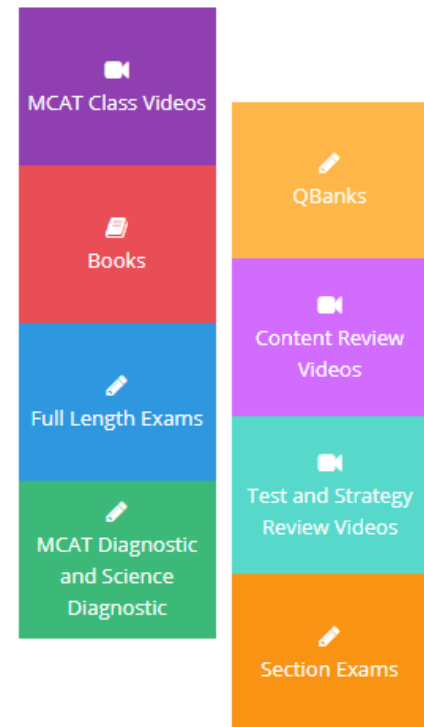
- **MCAT Prep – is NOT cleanly, perfectly divisible into “content” and “practice”**
 - **Nobody is EVER done with “all my content” so instead it’s transition from a mix of content/strategy/practice that slowly moves towards more practice**
 - **RIGHT FROM VERY BEGINNING you should be practicing passages/questions**
 - **As you progress, you should be using tests to help you determine what are your content weaknesses.**

Why is an MCAT study plan important?

- Studying and practicing for the MCAT tend to be doable...
...but when you factor in planning as well, it can get stressful!
- This is especially true if you:
 - Work full-time
 - Are also taking college courses
 - Have a weak content background or specific MCAT needs

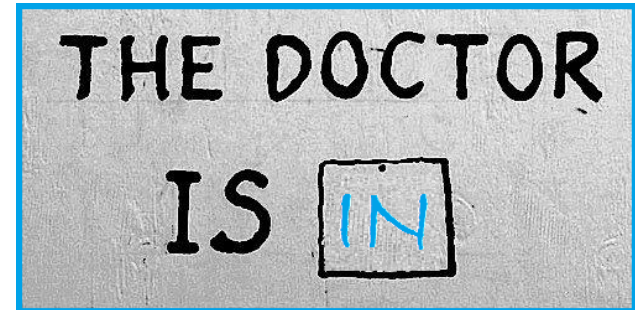
What should this plan include?

- **Content review**
 - Book chapters (from a set of prep books)
 - And/or content review videos
- **Strategy/practice**
 - Individual question practice (topic-specific)
 - Passage practice (topic-specific)
 - Full sections
 - Full-length exams
- **AAMC resources**



Why is it important to take a diagnostic?

- It's vital to get a feel for the exam early on! Then, you can:
 - Review weak areas
 - Sections, topics, timing or endurance issues
 - Optimize future prep
 - Start your Lessons Learned Journal
 - Begin planning your study schedule
- But remember, it's still early in the process! DON'T:
 - Worry about your score or feel pressure to improve right away
 - Assume your strengths/weaknesses will be the same on every test



What comes next?

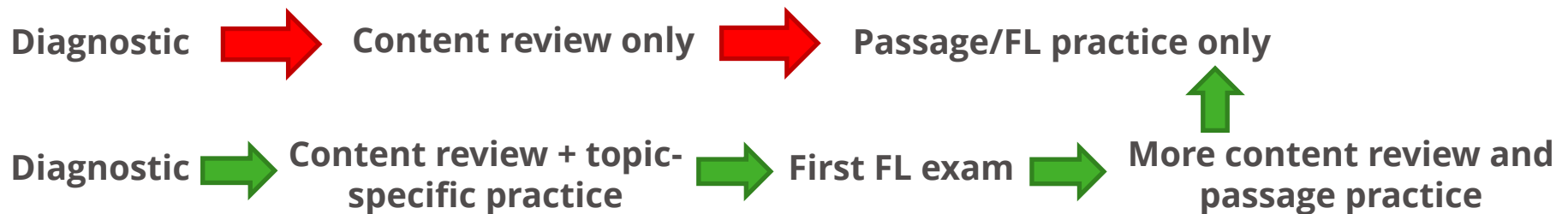
- Content review!
- **However:** it's very important to start question/passage practice early, too.
- Don't plan to do 100% of your content review before moving on to strategy!

Not ideal!



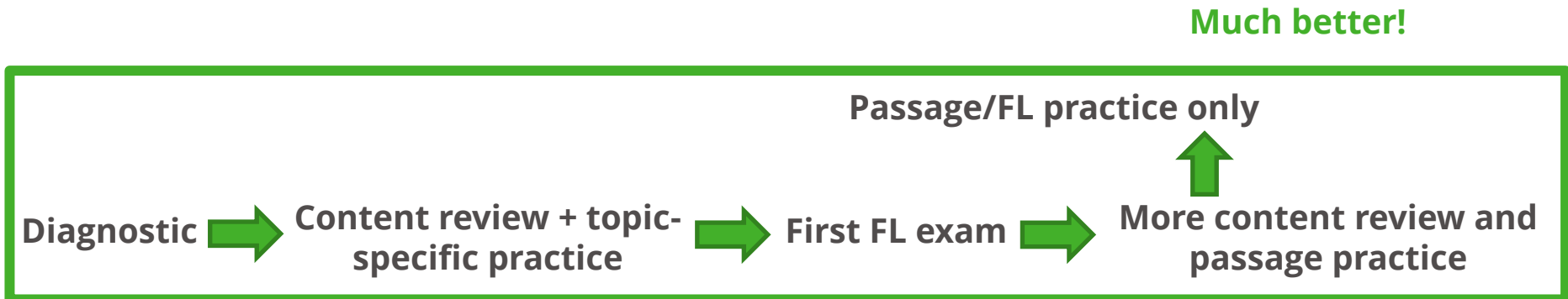
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How many FLs should you take?

- **MYTH:** The more practice FLs you take, the better.
- In reality – thorough review is most important!
- # of FLs should vary based on prep timeline, endurance, etc.
 - “Typical” student: takes 7-8 FLs
 - If you have endurance of timing problems: take more
 - If you’re confident/crunched for time: 4-5 may be enough!
- Remaining FLs can be taken as separate sections

Plans can evolve over time!

- For example: Prep is much more time-consuming than expected?
 - Evaluate how thoroughly you are reading/taking notes
 - Reprioritize assignment types and topics
- Or are you having trouble staying focused?
 - Cover multiple topics in a day instead of a single topic
 - Break content review up into more manageable chunks
 - Don't forget to stay healthy!

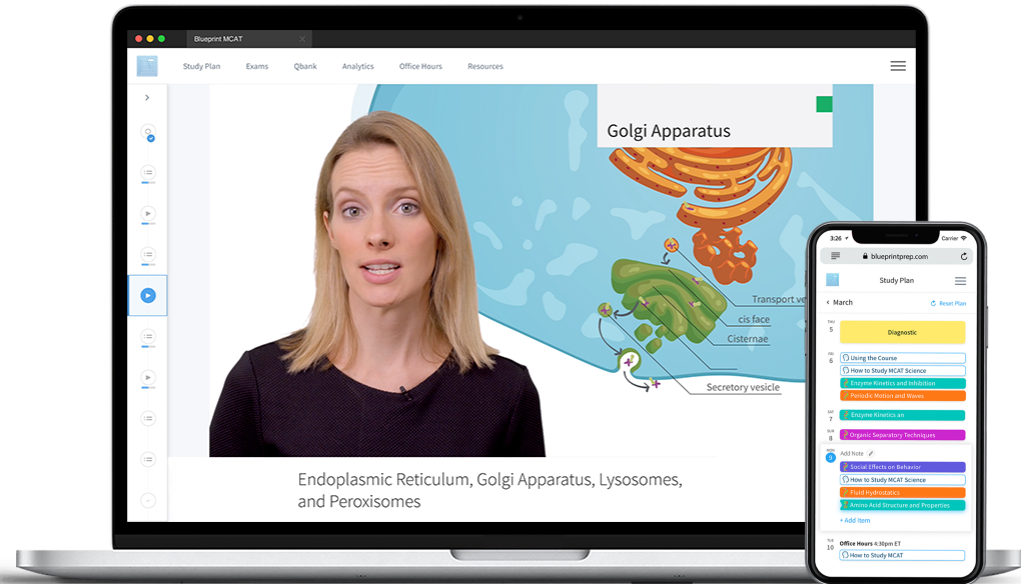
Finally : remember to take breaks!

- Breaks are absolutely essential to staying at your best throughout your prep.
- How should a break be spent?
 - Exercising; keeping a normal routine
 - Catching up with other obligations (and even having fun)
 - **NOT thinking about the MCAT!**
- For longer prep plans, set aside 1 day for a break per week
- For shorter timelines, set aside 1 half-day per week

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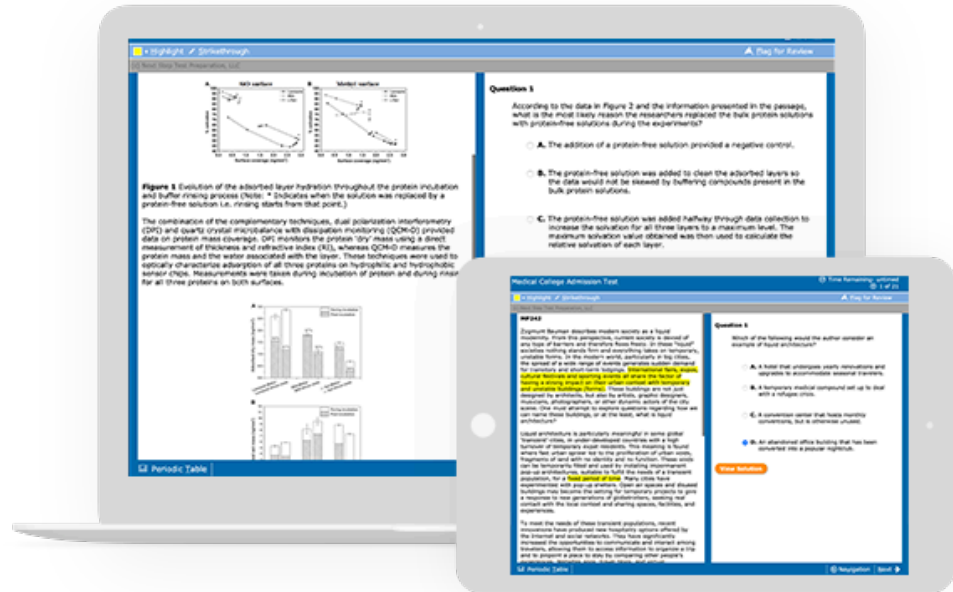


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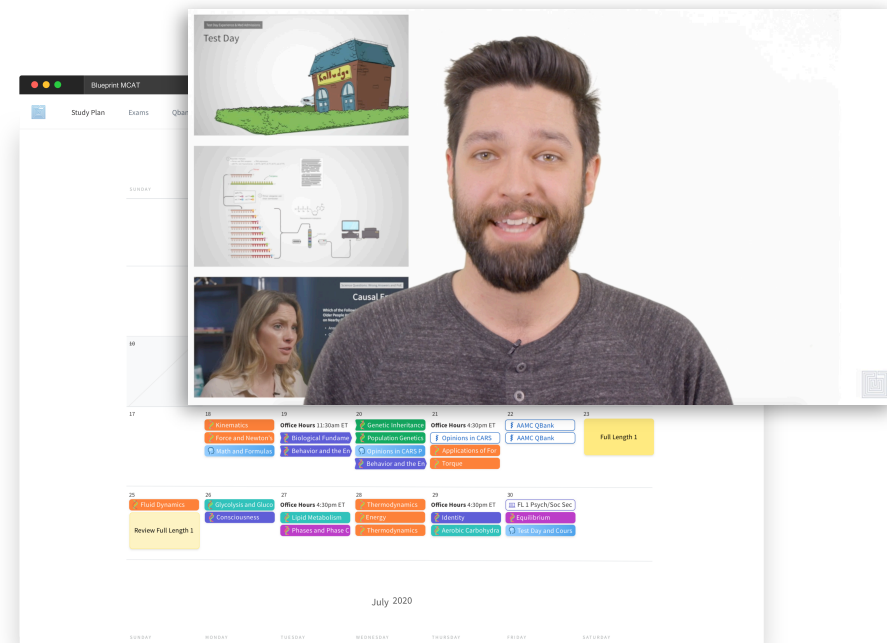


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