MCAT®

Three-Month Study Plan

Getting Started

Prepare for the MCAT by following our organized 3-Month MCAT study plan. Three months is the minimum amount of time most students should study for the MCAT. With just a few months before test day, you'll need to spend a good amount of time studying each week if you want to score competitively on the MCAT. Below is a detailed weekly plan that will show you how to study for the MCAT in three months.

MCAT Study & Practice Materials

Before you get started, you'll need to gather together your study materials. Here is our recommended list.

Kaplan MCAT Resources

- **MCAT Practice Questions**: Kaplan's MCAT QBank saves you time with targeted questions. You'll learn from your mistakes and raise your score with in-depth explanations.
- **MCAT Question of the Day:** Sign up for free to receive realistic MCAT practice questions delivered straight to your inbox!
- **Kaplan's MCAT Complete 7-Book Subject Review + Online Resources:** With Kaplan's MCAT books, you not only get the printed resources that cover

the subject matter from all the test sections but also access to three full-length practice tests online and additional science videos. The book set is worthwhile for these tests alone since they provide realistic practice that includes scaled scores and percentiles for each section as well as detailed explanations for every question.

- **Flashcards:** When you only have a few minutes to study, a set of flashcards can be a great tool. Kaplan provides a boxed set of applicable flashcards for the current MCAT.
- **Take a Class:** If the idea of studying for the MCAT on your own is stressful, consider taking an MCAT prep class such as Live Online, On Demand, or In Person—all teach you the strategies and skills you'll need to score high on the MCAT. The courses' study plans will help you decide what to study, when to take practice tests, and how to perform your best on test day.

AAMC® MCAT Resources

- **AAMC's MCAT Essentials Guide**: Before you register for the MCAT, you'll be required to review the official information in the *Essentials Guide*. You'll learn about test logistics, content, and timing. If you're just beginning your MCAT prep, this is a great place to start.
- **AAMC Full-Length Tests**: The AAMC offers four full-length practice tests to purchase online.
- **AAMC Free Planning & Study Resources:** The AAMC offers free resources to students studying for the MCAT, such as a Free Sample Test which has the same look, feel, length, and functionality as the actual exam.
- **AAMC Sample Questions and Sections**: The AAMC website offers two different packages of practice questions. The first is the Official MCAT Section

Bank, which includes 300 practice questions in section packs of natural sciences, behavioral sciences, and social sciences. The second is the Official MCAT Question Pack, which has passages and questions from old MCAT tests covering Biology, Physics, Chemistry, and Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills (CARS).

Other MCAT Resources

- **Online Calendar:** Online calendars are helpful for keeping track of and being able to access your personal MCAT study plan from anywhere. Stay accountable by sharing your calendar with others so they know your schedule and can help you stay on track.

Week 1

Below is a step-by-step process for kicking off your 3-month MCAT study plan.

Step 1

Start by taking a practice test or question set that covers all the topics from the MCAT to familiarize yourself with the test and establish your baseline performance. The MCAT Sample Test is a great resource for this. There is also a free online practice test available from Kaplan, as well as 3 full-length tests including with the Kaplan MCAT Books.

Step 2

Use your initial test results to determine which content areas you need to work on. Modifying the study plan below accordingly. For example, if you did well on all cell

biology and genetics questions, you might only study those topics briefly and spend more time on a Biology subject you didn't do as well with, such as the endocrine system or immunology.

Step 3

Build a weekly study schedule. Proactively fill in your calendar with study blocks, planning to study at minimum for three hours per day, six days per week. Take one day off from studying each week so you have time to recharge. Put specific topics to study into each block so that you ensure that you have sufficient prep time set aside.

Step 4

Set up a rotating schedule that works through these topics:

- **Biochemistry**
- **Biology**
- **General Chemistry**
- **Organic Chemistry**
- **Physics/Math**
- **Behavioral Sciences**

Step 5

For test-like practice, use the AAMC Sample Questions and Sections and choose passages based on the content areas you have reviewed. In addition, study for the Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills (CARS) section daily. Use the AAMC Sample Questions and Sections to read passages and work on passage-related questions.

Step 6

Start with the fundamentals of each subject area, and split your time between

different topics each day. In order to get the most out of your study time and really focus on each test topic, you should plan on focusing on individual topics for at least an hour to an hour and a half.

Here's a sample calendar of what your first week of study might look like:

- **Sunday:** Full Length Test
- **Monday:** Test Review and Study Planning
- **Tuesday:** Biology, Biochemistry, + CARS
- **Wednesday:** General Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, + CARS
- **Thursday:** Physics, Psychology and Sociology, + CARS
- **Friday:** Revisit problem areas and modify Study Plan
- **Saturday:** Day Off!

Specific content areas for Week One include:

- **Biology:** Cell Biology
- **Biochemistry:** Amino Acids, Peptides, and Proteins
- **General Chemistry:** Atomic Structure and the Periodic Table
- **Organic Chemistry:** Nomenclature
- **Physics:** Dimensional Analysis, Basic Math and Statistics
- **Psychology and Sociology:** Biological Basis of Behavior
- **CARS:** Reading to Find the Most Important Information

Weeks 2 – 8

Once you get through your first week of studying for the MCAT, you'll want to adjust your 3-month MCAT study plan so it's organized around your existing

commitments. Some days you may be able to schedule reviewing more than one topic; on other days, you may be able to fit in only one. Remember to work on CARS every day.

- Devote study blocks on a rotating basis to Biochemistry, Biology, General Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, Physics, and Behavioral Sciences.
- For test-like practice, use the AAMC Sample Questions and Sections and choose passages based on the content areas you have reviewed.
- In addition, continue to study for the Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills (CARS) section on a daily basis. Use the AAMC Sample Questions and Sections to read passages and work on passage-related questions.

An example week might look something like this:

- **Sunday:** Biology, Biochemistry, + CARS
- **Monday:** General Chemistry, + CARS
- **Tuesday:** Organic Chemistry, + CARS
- **Wednesday:** Physics, + CARS
- **Thursday:** Psychology and Sociology, + CARS
- **Friday:** Revisit problem areas and modify Study Plan
- **Saturday:** Day Off

Specific topics to study each week include:

Week 2:

- **Biology:** Reproduction, Embryogenesis and Development
- **Biochemistry:** Protein Structure and Function
- **General Chemistry:** Bonding and Chemical Interactions
- **Organic Chemistry:** Isomers
- **Physics:** Kinematics and Translational Motion
- **Psychology and Sociology:** Sensation and Perception

- **CARS:** Reading to Find the Most Important Information

Week 3:

- **Biology:** The Nervous System
- **Biochemistry:** Enzymes
- **General Chemistry:** Compounds and Stoichiometry
- **Organic Chemistry:** Bonding
- **Physics:** Work and Energy
- **Psychology and Sociology:** Learning and Memory
- **CARS:** Reading to Find the Most Important Information

Week 4:

- **Biology:** The Endocrine System
- **Biochemistry:** Carbohydrate Structure and Function
- **General Chemistry:** Chemical Kinetics
- **Organic Chemistry:** Alcohols and Ethers
- **Physics:** Thermodynamics
- **Psychology and Sociology:** Cognition and Language
- **CARS:** Reading to Find the Most Important Information

Week 5:

- **Biology:** The Respiratory System
- **Biochemistry:** Lipid Structure and Function
- **General Chemistry:** Equilibrium
- **Organic Chemistry:** Organic Oxidation and Reduction
- **Physics:** Fluids
- **Psychology and Sociology:** Emotion and Stress
- **CARS:** Foundation of Comprehension Questions

Week 6:

- **Biology:** The Cardiovascular System
- **Biochemistry:** DNA and Replication
- **General Chemistry:** Thermochemistry
- **Organic Chemistry:** Aldehydes and Ketones
- **Physics:** Electrostatics
- **Psychology and Sociology:** Identity and Personality
- **CARS:** Reasoning Within the Text Questions

Week 7:

- **Biology:** The Immune System
- **Biochemistry:** RNA Transcription and Translation
- **General Chemistry:** The Gas Phase
- **Organic Chemistry:** Carboxylic Acids
- **Physics:** Magnetism
- **Psychology and Sociology:** Psychological Disorders
- **CARS:** Reasoning Beyond the Text Questions

Week 8:

- **Biology:** The Digestive System
- **Biochemistry:** Biological Membranes
- **General Chemistry:** Solutions
- **Organic Chemistry:** Carboxylic Acid Derivatives
- **Physics:** Circuits
- **Psychology and Sociology:** Social Processes and Behavior
- **CARS:** Reading and Answering Within the Time Allowed

Weeks 9–11

Start each week with a practice test, and follow up with a full day of test review. Carefully evaluate the topics and types of questions that you are missing, and use that to hone your study strategy.

- For test-like practice, use the AAMC Sample Questions and Sections and choose passages based on the content areas you have reviewed.
- Continue to study for the Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills (CARS) section on a daily basis. Use the AAMC Sample Questions and Sections to read passages and work on passage-related questions.

A sample week during this period may look like:

- **Sunday:** Full Length Test
- **Monday:** Test Review and Study Planning
- **Tuesday:** Biology, Biochemistry, + CARS
- **Wednesday:** General Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, + CARS
- **Thursday:** Physics, Psychology and Sociology, + CARS
- **Friday:** Revisit problem areas and modify Study Plan
- **Saturday:** Day Off

Specific content areas for Weeks 9 through 11 include:

Week 9:

- **Biology:** The Musculoskeletal System
- **Biochemistry:** Carbohydrate Metabolism
- **General Chemistry:** Acids and Bases
- **Organic Chemistry:** Nitrogen and Phosphorus-Containing Compounds

- **Physics:** Waves and Sound
- **Psychology and Sociology:** Social Thought Processes
- **CARS:** Synthesis of Reading and Answering Questions

Week 10:

- **Biology:** Homeostasis and the Excretory System
- **Biochemistry:** Lipid and Amino Acid Metabolism
- **General Chemistry:** Oxidation and Reduction
- **Organic Chemistry:** Spectroscopy
- **Physics:** Light and Optics
- **Psychology and Sociology:** Social Structure and Demographics
- **CARS:** Synthesis of Reading and Answering Questions

Week 11:

- **Biology:** Genetics and Evolution
- **Biochemistry:** Bioenergetics and Regulation of Metabolism
- **General Chemistry:** Electrochemistry
- **Organic Chemistry:** Separation and Purification
- **Physics:** Atomic and Nuclear Phenomena
- **Psychology and Sociology:** Social Stratification
- **CARS:** Synthesis of Reading and Answering Questions

The Week Before the MCAT

Begin the final week before the MCAT by taking and reviewing your practice test, looking over every question and using the results to modify your study plan if needed. Spend extra time reviewing CARS, re-reading the passages to determine

what information you actually needed and what you didn't.

1. Early in the week, take an AAMC Practice Test. Set aside time to review the test.
2. For your remaining few days, spend time reviewing the content areas that were your biggest opportunities on your last full-length test. If you've never truly mastered a topic, though, now is not the time to attempt to learn it. Instead, focus on the material that you struggled with the first time through but think you can master given just a little more time.
3. If you have time, travel to the testing center first to ensure you know how to get to the correct building, where to park, and where your test room is. Having all these logistics out of the way will help reduce your stress on test day—and ensure you aren't late!
4. Take the day before the test completely off; your brain needs to rest before the marathon of test-taking to come! Eat healthy, balanced meals and get a full night of rest to mentally and physically prepare for test day. On the day you take the MCAT, wake up with plenty of time to spare, and be sure to eat breakfast before leaving.

Here's a recommended schedule of what to do the week before the MCAT:

- **Sunday:** AAMC Practice Test
- **Monday:** Test Review and Study Planning for Final Week
- **Tuesday:** Final Content Review
- **Wednesday:** Final Content Review; Visit Test Center
- **Thursday:** Final Content Review
- **Friday:** Day Off
- **Saturday:** Test Day

With this 3-month MCAT study plan, you should be well on your way to success on test day. But remember: if you don't feel prepared for your test after 3 months or aren't scoring anywhere near where you want to be on your practice tests, then you may want to change your test date so you don't end up with a less-than-ideal MCAT score on your medical school application. It's much better in the long run to push your plans back a bit than to not do well and then have to retest anyway.

Was This Information Helpful?

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