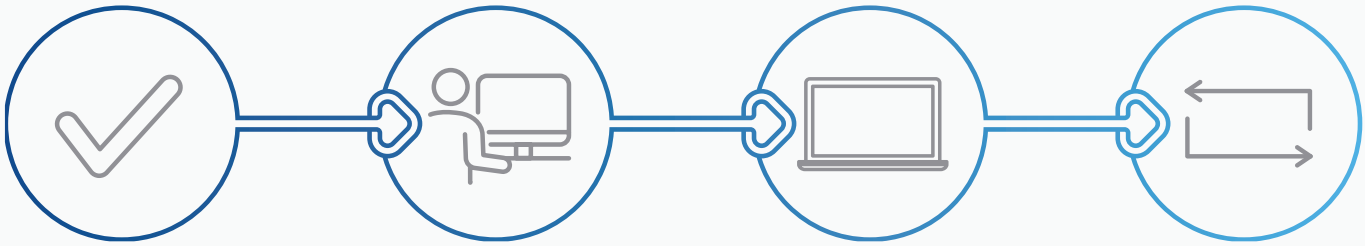
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MCAT Study Guide

Psychological, social, and biological foundations of behavior

MCAT prep timeline: Junior year of college



November
Register for April or May MCAT

January
Start studying for your MCAT

April/May
Take the MCAT

August
Retake the MCAT if needed

Overview:

Psychological, social, and biological foundations of behavior is the fourth section on the MCAT. This section will ask you questions about how psychological, biological, and social factors impact behavior, culture, society, and people's well-being. It is also the section that focuses the most on discrete knowledge. You can expect questions that test concepts from psychology, sociology, and biology. While it's not required to take undergraduate courses in psychology or sociology, these courses are recommended to do well on this section.

There are 59 questions and you will have 95 minutes to complete this section. There are 15 standalone questions. The remaining 44 questions are passage-base questions.

The psychological, social, and biological foundations of behavior section, like the other three science sections of the MCAT, is scored on a scale of 118 to 132. These four subscores are added together to make up your final score which can range from 472 to 520. A score of 501 puts you in the 50th percentile, meaning that you've scored better than half of the people who take the exam. Most med school admissions experts recommend applying with a score of 509 or above, putting you in the 80th percentile.

How to study for the psychological, social, and biological foundations of behavior: Resources for content review

One of the most important aspects of preparing for the MCAT, and the P/S section in particular, is using comprehensive, high-quality study materials. Although there are dozens of resources out there to choose from, try not to dive into every single thing out there! Resource overload is real and not all review materials are created equal. Choose a handful of great resources to serve as the source of your P/S review. We recommend:

- Blueprint Psych/Soc book
- Blueprint Psych/Soc flashcards
- Blueprint MCAT Course

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How to study for the psychological, social, and biological foundations of behavior: Resources for practice

While review books and lesson videos serve as the foundation to your MCAT prep, having your content memorized is just the barrier to entry for the P/S section. In order to do well on the exam, regular applied practice with questions representative of the official MCAT is essential. Here are a few resources we recommend to serve as practice material:

For unstructured, passage-based questions:
- Blueprint Qbank
- AAMC Section Bank

For structured, full-length exams:
- Blueprint Full-Length exams
- AAMC Full-Length Practice Exams

Try to dedicate roughly a third of your MCAT preparation time to content review, and the remaining two-thirds to passage-based practice questions using the resources mentioned above. One of the most common mistakes students make when studying for the MCAT is not dedicating enough time to practice. We cannot stress this point enough!

Must-know topics for the P/S section:
MCAT experts often refer to the knowledge tested on the exam as "a mile wide, but an inch deep." While this may be somewhat of a generalization, it offers a useful insight into how best to study for the exam. Focus on the fundamentals, the relationships, and the big picture, and less on the minutia. Some foundational concepts and topics will show up more often than others, and can serve as a launching point for analyzing and reasoning through more complex passages. A few of these must-know topics are below:

1. **Visual and Auditory Systems, Sensation, and Perception**
2. **Brain Structures and Function**
3. **Developmental Timelines and Stages**
   - Piaget's Cognitive Development
   - Freud's Psychosexual Development
   - Erikson's Psychosocial Development
4. **Theories of…**
   - Emotion: James-Lange, Cannon-Bard, Shachter-Singer
   - Motivation: Instinct, Arousal, Drive-Reduction
   - Language: Learning, Nativist, Social Interactionist
5. **Personality and Psychological Disorders**
6. **Types of Study Design (Case-Control, Case Study, Longitudinal, Etc.) and Statistical Methods**



Need help navigating the pre-med process?

Blueprint MCAT can help by offering 1:1 MCAT tutoring and admissions consulting

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