

MCAT Self-Study Guide

If you're ready to start preparing for the MCAT but aren't ready to drop \$2000 on a Kaplan course, this guide is for you! If you've survived your premed classes so far, then you already know how to study for a test. The MCAT is just a test, and you can definitely study for it on your own.

You should plan for 150-400 hours of studying. If you're studying during the semester, you should be spending as much time on the MCAT as you would be spending on a difficult class (10-12 hrs/week). You should also **budget \$\$\$ for registration and practice material.** This guide has some info on fee assistance and ways to save money, but keep looking. You'll likely spend \$200+ if you qualify for fee assistance, and \$400+ if you don't.

The most important lesson I learned from the MCAT process is that **active studying >>> passive studying.** Reading and understanding isn't enough; you can't check a concept off your list until you've done some practice problems for it.

I'm a Humanities major who studied independently for 3 months and scored 524 (131/131/132/130). I started with **250 hours of content review** (mostly watching Khan Academy vids and making flashcards; I also took the AAMC sample exam and some testing company practice exams during this time). Then I did **150 hours of just practice problems, practice exams, and flashcard review.** However, most other people I talked to have told me they spent twice as much time on practice problems and exams as on content review. Either way, it's helpful to make a schedule before you start studying and to try your best to stick to it.

Good Luck! You got this :]

(PS, if you found this guide helpful, consider paying it forward by making a donation to the [Berkeley Free Clinic](#) and supporting free healthcare for marginalized communities)

Sections

- [What's on the 2015 MCAT](#)
- [Registration](#)
- [Target Scores](#)
- [Designing a Study Schedule](#)
- [Resources for Content Review](#)
- [High Yield Content](#)
- [Resources for Practice](#)
- [Miscellaneous Advice](#)
- [CARS Tips](#)

What's on the 2015 MCAT

[Official AAMC Site](#)

List of all topics covered (don't be intimidated by how long this is)

In 2015, the AAMC introduced a new format of the MCAT. The 2015 MCAT has a greater focus on biochemistry and a new section that tests concepts from psychology and sociology. Additionally, the passages in the science sections now focus on concepts that are directly related to health and healthcare, whereas the old MCAT would have had passages on things like the kinematics of a catapult or an inorganic chemical reaction in a lab. The new sections are:

- **Chemical and Physical Foundations of Biological Systems**
 - 59 problems, 95 minutes
 - 44 passage-based questions (10 passages) + 15 stand-alone questions
- **Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills**
 - 53 problems, 90 minutes
 - All passage-based questions (9 passages)
- **Biological and Biochemical Foundations of Living Systems**
 - 59 problems, 95 minutes
 - 44 passage-based questions (10 passages) + 15 stand-alone questions
- **Psychological, Social, and Biological Foundations of Behavior**
 - 59 problems, 95 minutes
 - 44 passage-based questions (10 passages) + 15 stand-alone questions

Registration

- Read through all [the info on the AAMC website](#) before you register
- Register early: it's cheaper and you can choose a convenient location before it fills up
- You should plan to take the MCAT **no later than early July of the year you start applying for medical school**. You should have finished your science prerequisites (Physics / Chem / Orgo / Bio / Biochem)
 - There is no calculus and only very basic statistics on the test
 - All the psychology/sociology that you need for the MCAT is on Khan Academy, but taking those classes could still be helpful
- [Fee assistance](#) is available for MCAT registration and prep materials

Target Scores

- If having a goal will motivate you, here's how you can calculate your target score:
 - [AAMC GPA/MCAT tables](#)
 - Old MCAT: [AAMC GPA/MCAT tables](#) by race/ethnicity
 - Old MCAT: [AAMC GPA/MCAT tables](#) by other factors (major, sex, etc.)

- These tables can help you decide on a target score by seeing how many people in your demographic group with your GPA were accepted into M.D. schools (D.O. statistics will be different). Obviously there's more to your app than your numbers, but your numbers are usually the first thing that med schools will look at.
- You can also get a subscription to the [MSAR](#), which gives you acceptance information for specific schools. If you have an idea of where you'll be applying, this will be very useful.

Designing a Study Schedule

Find a calendar (physical or online) that you will actually use. Map out the weeks you will be studying, and how much time you will have to study each week. Your goal should be 150-400 hours over 2 to 6 months (I would recommend 200-300 hours over 3-4 months if possible). You want your studying to be concentrated, or you'll forget what you did at the beginning. You don't have to jump into intense studying: you can start with a couple hours a day and work your way up.

- Start by mapping out a timeline of **practice exams**
 - Take at least 6 practice exams (4 from the AAMC, 2+ from [testing companies](#))
 - Take the first two or three tests untimed, so you can get used to the format of the MCAT. These can be half-length tests or full length tests, although keep in mind that full length tests might take you two days if you do them untimed. Remember: the early tests are NOT about getting a sense of your score, they are about getting used to the MCAT.
 - Take at least three exams under testing conditions: timed, with the same breaks that the AAMC provides.
 - Spread out your practice tests so you don't get burned out. Start as early as possible and take them every 1-3 weeks. **Don't wait until you feel "ready."**
 - Save one of the Scored AAMC exams for the week of your actual exam. This will give you the best idea of how you're likely to score (*usually* +/- 3 points).
 - Give yourself at least a day to [review](#) each exam.
- Now figure out when you're going to take other AAMC materials
 - You should take the **Section Bank**, and you should take it as close to the exam as you can while giving yourself enough time to [review](#). There are 3 sections (chem/phys, bio/biochem, psych/soc). Each takes around three hours (don't try to do it all on one day). Give an extra day per section for solid [review](#). You may do poorly on the section bank, but that's okay because your focus should be on [REVIEWING](#) it: where did you go wrong, what topics do you need to study intensely, where did you make logical errors, etc.
 - Take at least one of the **CARS question packs**, both if you struggle with CARS. These should take a day each. You can take the other question packs as well if you need extra practice in those subjects. The **Official Guide** also has good problems.
- Now you can ration out your remaining time for **content review**.

- If you are busy one day and fall behind on content review, don't compensate for it by skipping a practice exam. Practice exams are infinitely more important.
- Remember: taking + reviewing notes or reading + comprehending a prep book chapter are **PASSIVE LEARNING**. Doing practice problems and practice tests and (to a lesser extent) reviewing flashcards are **ACTIVE LEARNING**. Trying to study by reviewing your notes is the equivalent of trying to get exercise by walking from the couch to the fridge. It's a start, but it doesn't have much impact.
- I would recommend **making flashcards** instead of taking notes (I did both, and it took sooo much time, plus I didn't use the notes much once I had flashcards).
- **Do practice problems and practice tests during this time!!!**
- Don't worry too much about the source of your content review, whether it's a prep book or Khan Academy or a combination. Shop around and pick what works best for your learning style and budget.
- Space out the timing of the subjects that you review in a way that makes sense to you. Try to start with the subject you find most difficult/boring, so you don't put it off or end up not having enough time. If you would get bored doing the same subject for two weeks, then alternate subjects every day.
- I'm sharing the structure of my actual study plan below (not that I think it was ideal)
- All exams are timed unless otherwise noted (section bank/question packs were untimed)
 - If I could redo things, I would have spaced out my practice exams more so that I didn't take so many near the end. I got pretty burnt out by this schedule.
- I didn't always finish the subjects for content review those first 10 weeks, but if I skipped anything important it got covered when I did the section banks and question packs. The material I covered in the last 3.5 weeks >>>> the first 10 weeks.
- The first 10 weeks I studied 3-6 hours a day. The last 3.5 weeks I worked about 6-8 hours a day. I always took 1-2 days off a week. The day before the exam, I went to the beach and didn't study at all.
- Khan was a great resource for Psych/Soc but I think I would have done just as well if I'd used a prep book for all the science material.

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Week 1	Physical Processes + Individuals and Society (Khan)						
Week 2							
Week 3	Biomolecules + Cells (Khan)					AAMC Sample Exam (untimed)	
Week 4							

Week 5	Organ Systems + Society and Culture + Social Inequality (Khan)						
Week 6						TPR Diagnostic Exam (untimed)	
Week 7	Processing the Environment (Khan) +						
Week 8	General Chemistry (Kaplan)						
Week 9	Behavior (Khan) + Organic Chemistry (Kaplan)					EK Exam #1 (untimed)	
Week 10							
Week 11	C/P Section Bank		B/B Section Bank		P/S Section Bank		
Week 12	NS Exam 1			NS Exam 2		CARS Question Pack	
Week 13	NS Exam 3			NS Exam 4		Physics Question Pack	AAMC Scored #1
Week 14	Chem Question Pack		~Beach Day~	MCAT			

Resources for Content Review

AAMC Recommended Resources

- [Khan Academy](#) is especially helpful: the videos were developed with cooperation from the AAMC and they cover pretty much every topic on the official AAMC list.
 - There are ~175 hours of Khan Academy videos for the MCAT. I watched about $\frac{2}{3}$ of them, mostly at 1.5x speed. A lot of people have since told me that spending so much time on Khan was overkill, but I def recommend using Khan for Psych/Soc.
 - [This dropbox](#) has written notes for most of the videos (much faster than watching all of them)

- I've heard good reviews of prep books from companies like Examcrackers, Kaplan, and The Berkeley Review. I used Kaplan for some chemistry topics when I was burned out on Khan Academy and I found it pretty useful. The only problem is that none of these resources come from the AAMC, so some topics are missing, underemphasized, or overemphasized. For example, Kaplan is way harder//more detailed than AAMC material.
- Recommendation by Dirtybird from SDN: mcat-review.org has content info in the exact same order that each topic shows up on the [official content outline](#). This will be useful for filling in gaps left by test prep books.
- Your old course textbooks aren't designed to prepare you for the MCAT. They can be good supplements, but they aren't primary study material.
- **Anki** is a free flashcard app that helps you learn/memorize things faster using spaced repetition: basically, it shows you different flashcards at different time intervals depending on how easy or difficult you rate each one. You can make your own decks or you can download pre-made decks. There are some amazing MCAT 2015 decks that people have shared.
- I am a huge fan of physical flashcards as well. I made about [300-400 high-density flashcards](#). They seem intimidating, but once I got used to spending extra time focusing on each flashcard they really helped me make connections between related topics. I also made smaller flashcards for content that I missed on practice tests.
- Not all content is equal—some topics come up on the MCAT very frequently, while others are rarely tested. Focus your time and energy on these high-yield topics.

High-Yield Content

(Note: Theoretically, anything that the AAMC has on its list of MCAT topics could appear on the MCAT. However, these are the things that appear most frequently on AAMC materials and exams. If you have limited time, skip low-yield topics. In my experience, Organic Chemistry and Physics are the two subjects where low-yield topics almost never show up—like, I have never seen a non-carbonyl orgo reaction mechanism or the double-slit experiment on *any* AAMC practice material. **Items in bold are ~extra high-yield~ as in 90% chance you will encounter them on your exam, so you should know them very well.**)

- Physics
 - The trend for high-yield physics content is concepts that can cross over into biology//healthcare: for example, electromagnetism is important because it can help you understand medical technology, electrochemistry because of how it relates to the nervous system, etc.
 - **Fluids (how they connect to circulatory system, the relationships between pressure, resistance, and diameter)**
 - Optics
 - **Circuits and electromagnetism**
 - Radiation
 - Electrochemistry

- Sound
- Energy, $E=hf$
- **Know units and how to interconvert between them**
- **Lot of calculations with scientific notation (no calculators)**
- General Chemistry
 - **Acid/Base Chemistry**
 - pH and pI
 - Periodic Trends (atomic size, electronegativity, etc)
 - Redox Reactions
 - **Bioenergetics (Entropy, enthalpy, free energy)**
- Organic Chemistry
 - **Functional groups**
 - **Types of isomers (diastereomers, enantiomers, anomers, etc.)**
 - **Lab techniques (distillation, NMR, chromatography, IR, etc.)**
 - **Carbonyl Chemistry**
 - SN1 vs SN2 reactions
- Biology
 - **Cellular transport + Biosignaling: Channels, Transporters, RTKs, GPCRs, etc.**
 - Organ systems
 - High-yield: **Nervous, Circulatory**, Lymphatic, **Endocrine**, Excretory
 - Mid-Yield: Reproductive, Digestive, Respiratory
 - Low-Yield: Muscular, Skeletal, Integumentary
 - **Classical and Molecular Genetics**
 - **Cell membrane**
 - **Hormones**
 - **Enzymes**
 - Cytoskeleton components
 - Anatomy + life cycles of bacteria and viruses
 - Mitosis and Meiosis
- Biochemistry
 - Everything in biochem is high-yield but I'm gonna try and list it all anyway
 - **Amino Acids (Structures + Chemical Properties + 3-letter abbreviations + 1-letter abbreviations)**
 - Structures and Properties and Metabolism of Carbohydrates, Fats, and Proteins
 - Structures and Properties of Nucleic Acids
 - **Aerobic and anaerobic respiration (know glycolysis, TCA, and ETC back and forth)**
 - Gluconeogenesis, beta-oxidation, pentose phosphate pathway
 - **Enzyme Kinetics (especially michaelis-menten)**
 - **Lab techniques (PCR, Blots, reducing/non-reducing SDS-PAGE)**
- Psychology
 - Self-Identity (especially **Theories of Development**)

- **Attribution Theory**
- Stereotype vs. Prejudice vs. Discrimination
- Harlow Monkey Experiments
- **Social Perception** (primacy/recency, halo effect, just world)
- **Social Psychology**
- Folkways vs. mores vs. taboos
- **Classical and Operant Conditioning**
- Theories of Emotion
- Theories of Sensory Processing
- **Research Design**
- **Interpreting Statistical Data**
- Sociology
 - **Symbolic Interactionism vs. Social Constructionism vs. Conflict Theory vs. Functionalism**
 - Cultural Relativism vs. Ethnocentrism
 - Social Determinants of Health + Healthcare Disparities

Resources for Practice

- **Taking** practice tests and **reviewing** practice tests are equally important. I used a method almost identical to [7sage's Blind Review](#) for reviewing most of my practice materials.
- Free Practice exams: Many test prep companies offer free practice exams (and some half-exams). I've included some below but there may be more.
 - [The Princeton Review](#)
 - Kaplan
 - [Next Step](#)
 - [Altius](#)
 - Keep in mind that these practice exams are not written by the AAMC, so they often differ in the material that gets focused on and the style of questions, particularly in the CARS section. Still, they're useful: they help you get used to the format of the exam, help you get accustomed to sitting down for a 7 hour test, and test your understanding of the material.
 - The scores from test companies tend to be deflated (to convince you that you need to pay for their classes). Don't worry about this. Unless you're scoring below 500 on these tests within a month of your actual exam, you're probably fine. If you are scoring below 500 and it is close to your test day, you might want to consider voiding or delaying your exam until you're more prepared.
 - In the beginning, it can be helpful to take practice tests untimed, over the course of a day or two. As you approach your test day, make sure you **take at least 3 tests under timed conditions**.

- **Start taking practice tests early and take as many as you can. The # of practice questions & practice tests you do is more closely correlated with your final score than the # of hours you spent studying.**
- Khan Academy Passages
 - Free passages, especially good practice for early on in your content review to help you get used to the passage-based question format
 - Helpful spreadsheet that tells you what topic/video each Khan Academy passage is based on (credit to electricnoogie from SDN)
 - The CARS practice passages were the best CARS practice that I found besides the passages that you can buy from the AAMC
- Khan Academy Practice Problems
 - These are sets of 10 standalone problems that you can find at the beginning of a set of KA videos
 - These tend to be much harder than anything you would find on the MCAT, especially when they involve calculations
 - I did many of these after watching the set of related videos, which allowed me to apply a concept right after studying it. I'd only recommend doing these problems for **high-yield** topics, bc they take time and destroy your self-esteem.
- AAMC Practice Materials
 - These materials are the ***gold standard***. Written by the same people who wrote the test, they give you the best idea of what the actual test will be like.
 - You can buy AAMC materials//other MCAT prep materials @ **reduced prices** [here](#)
 - Product Reviews:
 - Official MCAT flashcards
 - These are flashcards with 25 practice questions for each subject covered in the test (150 total)
 - Helpful if you have them, but not necessary
 - The Official Guide to the MCAT Exam
 - Contains an outline of what topics are on the exam, what to expect on exam day, and some practice questions
 - 3/5 the info is important but it's all online if you spend time browsing the AAMC MCAT website. Idk about the questions.
 - Online Practice Questions from the Official Guide
 - Again, I didn't use these but I've heard they were useful
 - Official MCAT Sample Test
 - The first full-length from the AAMC. Instead of a score, it gives you the percent correct. Lots of online resources will help you convert the percentage into a ballpark score so you can get an idea of your progress.
 - ***** 5 stars super useful! I took this a few months before the test, partway through content review. It gave me really good feel for the

AAMC question style and helped me figure out where to focus my review.

- Question Packs
 - Passages from the old (pre-2015) exams, which had a different style. For example, a physics passage on the old exam might be something you would encounter in a physics class, with a picture of a circuit and questions about current and resistance. The new exam still tests most of the same topics, but the passage will likely have some relation to healthcare.
 - Because these are from the old exam, there is little biochemistry and no psych or sociology covered in these.
 - 4/5 useful practice (especially the CARS passages, which aren't covered in the Section Bank. Get the other ones if you really feel you need extra practice in those subjects.)
- Section Bank
 - Practice passages in the new exam format, covering Chemistry/Physics, Bio/Biochem, and Psych/Soc sections of the exam
 - 5/5 sooooo useful, these are pretty difficult but such good practice. If you do the whole section bank (will take at least three days) and then [review](#) the answers thoroughly (should take a couple days to a week) you will be very well prepared. I'd recommend doing the SB within a few weeks of the exam because it'll really help you pinpoint your weak spots. The SB is HARD so don't be discouraged if your score is low.
- AAMC Practice Exams 1 and 2
 - *major key*
 - These are full-length practice exams. I would not take the MCAT without taking at least one of these. Besides being the closest thing you will find to the actual test, they will give you a pretty accurate prediction of your score (generally +/- 3 points). I would plan to take at least one within a week of the test for a score prediction and one a few weeks earlier to track your progress.

Miscellaneous Advice

- One of the most important resources that will get you through the MCAT is a supportive community. This includes people who are also studying for the MCAT as well as your family/friends who will help keep you sane. Meditation + Exercise + Netflix are also key.
- You don't *need* a study buddy or a study group but they can be super helpful.
- There are a lot of online communities where you can ask questions and get advice, including [SDN](#) (full of neurotic premeds) and [reddit.com/r/mcat](#) (full of slightly less neurotic premeds). These sites have [so much good intel](#) from people who have been

through the whole process before, but don't let them convince you that you need to score 520+ to get into med school.

- One super useful study tactic I used is to try to explain what you've learned that day to someone else—a friend or family member or study buddy (or stuffed animal if ur lonely). It helps to transition from **passive learning** (reading/watching khan academy videos/taking notes) to **active learning** (answering questions/asking questions/teaching someone else the material).
- A week before your exam, drive/bus/walk to your testing center at the same time of day that you would leave for the exam to get a feel for the location and traffic.
- It's easy to stress about the little things that could affect you on test day, but honestly if you have taken 6+ practice tests and been studying fairly consistently for a few months, there is very little you can do on test day that will affect your score. I slept about 4 hours/night for a whole week before the test, had to pee so bad during C/P that I thought I bombed it, and got really hungry during CARS and almost ran out of time. Even though I wasn't my optimal self I still went into autopilot during the test and performed as well as I had been during my review. Adrenaline will keep you going.
- Still, if you're concerned about what snacks to bring, I went low-carb, high-energy: greek yogurt, nuts, banana+peanut butter, tabbouleh salad, and a chocolate bar.

Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills (CARS) Tips

A lot of people struggle with this section more than others, so I went a lil overboard with the advice. This is all what worked for me, but everyone is different. There's a lot of good advice online, so look around and figure out what strategies work best for you.

- This section is all about **close reading**. I really believe that the best prep for CARS is an upper-level humanities or social science class with an engaging professor that involves **reading essays** and making arguments about them. It could be philosophy, art history, anthropology, history, or anything else that interests you as long as it focuses on **reading essays** (not novels, primary sources, or textbooks).
- If that's not an option, you can still practice on your own.
 - I used Khan Academy Practice Passages and AAMC Question Packs + AAMC Official tests for CARS practice.
 - I've heard the "Kaplan method" for CARS is a waste of time from a few people, but I've heard good reviews about Examcrackers 101 Passages. There are also lots of youtube videos where people explain how to approach specific CARS passages.
 - Khan Academy and the AAMC give detailed breakdowns of all their answers, which is nice. With the AAMC, you can see a record of how you've answered questions in the past but with Khan you can't.
 - **Keep track of what questions you miss (and why) so that you can look for patterns.** Most of my missed questions were in the category of

“Reasoning Beyond the Text” (as opposed to “Foundations of Comprehension” or “Reasoning Within the Text”). I was basing a lot of my answers to these questions on my assumptions about the author instead of using evidence from the text. I learned to recognize those questions when I came to them and it improved my score a lot.

- You should **never ever skim a CARS passage**, because the answers tend to be in the details.
- Focus is important—getting enough sleep and eating well make a difference. If the passage is so mind-numbingly boring that you don’t think you can go on, try imagining that one of your friends wrote it (!) and they’re super excited about it (!) and they’re reading it to you (!) with exclamation points (!)
- “Chunking” will also help with comprehension (it’s less gross than it sounds)
 - If you are having trouble understanding a long sentence, it might be because you are reading it word-by-word. Group the words into short, meaningful phrases instead.
- When you first start practicing CARS passages, take your time. Read the passage a few times: once for understanding, and once with a critical eye.
 - The first time you read it, keep an open mind, as if you really want to agree with the argument. **What is the main point of the passage? What are the secondary points? Does the author have a positive or negative tone towards the subject? Is the essay meant to argue a point, compare two different ideas, describe a movement, or tell a narrative?** Take your time until you feel like you really understand what is being communicated.
 - The second time, read with a critical (though not necessarily *doubtful*) eye: analyze the form of the argument. **What is the structure of the passage? Are the points backed up with evidence? What kind of evidence? Notice when two things are compared or contrasted. Notice the transition words, notice when a new idea is introduced, and notice when a strong statement is provided without any evidence.** Highlight these things if it’s helpful.
 - With practice you will be able to read an essay with an open mindset and a critical mindset at the same time !
- After you’ve read the whole passage, you can start answering the questions. Try to get through them fairly quickly, or you will end up wasting time trying to justify wrong answers. Remember: **an answer that is mostly right and a little bit wrong is wrong. The right answer will not always look like a “right answer”** — sometimes it’s just the only answer that isn’t contradicted by the passage.
- CARS is all about the little details
 - Pay attention to the wording of the question—is it asking which answer fits with the passage, or which answer contradicts the passage?
 - Pay attention to the wording of the answers, ESPECIALLY the **qualifiers vs absolutes**. Qualifiers are the words and phrases like “sometimes,” “most,” “often,” “in general,” “may be,” or “tend to be” which allow **room for doubt**. An

absolute like “always,” “never,” “is,” or “will” means the text has to support that **this statement always applies.**

- ex: Which of the following statements would the author of the passage most likely agree with?
 - You should **never** mix liquor and beer on the same night
 - You should drink a glass of water for **every** alcoholic beverage you consume
 - Taking Advil **can be** a good way to relieve hangovers
 - Alcohol **is** the devil’s juice
- For answers 1,2, and 4, you would need evidence from the text to support that they are **always** true. For answer 3, you only need evidence that it is **sometimes** true, because “can” is a qualifier.
- While answers with qualifiers are more likely to be right, this isn’t always the case. For example, say the passage states that Advil should **never** be used to treat hangovers because it could cause liver damage, and that staying hydrated while drinking alcohol is the **best** way to prevent a hangover. In this case, answer 2 would probably be correct.
- The details you need are in the passage; your previous knowledge or stereotypes should not inform the answer.
 - For example, if the passage supports lowering taxes and you assume the author must be politically conservative, that doesn’t mean that the author would agree with all mainstream conservative values. If you get a question asking, “Which would the author most likely agree with?”, don’t pick the answer that says “less restrictive gun control laws” unless there is evidence for that in the passage.
- my process on the CARS section ~in excruciating detail~
 - During the break before the section, I made a chart on my scratch paper telling me how much time I should have left after every 10 questions (I actually did this with all 4 sections, it helps with time management). This section has 53 questions in 90 minutes. I gave myself 15 minutes for every 10 questions, so it looked like this:
 - 10 questions 75 minutes left
 - 20 questions 60 minutes left
 - 30 questions 45 minutes left
 - 40 questions 30 minutes left
 - 50 questions 15 minutes left
 - As long as I was within about 5 minutes of my target time I didn’t panic. If I was running more than 5 minutes late I would panic // read the passages faster.
 - Before reading a passage, I would skim the first question or two to get an idea of what to look out for in the passage.
 - Then I would read the passage very slowly, highlighting any phrases or sentences that stood out to me (like when a new point was made, or the author seemed to contradict themselves).

- Once I was done reading the passage, I would carefully read through each question and each of the answers and then try to answer as quickly as possible, referring back to the passage to confirm my answer. Once I answered a question, I wouldn't go back and change it (changing ur answer=death like 90% of the time).
- This technique worked for me bc I'm a slow reader with a good short-term memory (which is important for quickly answering questions like: which of the following arguments did the author not make in the passage, or which claim did the author not provide evidence for). If your short-term memory is bad, you might try different techniques, like reading all the questions before the passage so you know what to look out for.

Thanks for reading! This document is a work in progress, so if you have questions or suggestions please contact me at mcattedoggo@gmail.com. Do me a favor though and read the whole thing before you reach out! Def let me know if any of my links are outdated or broken.