

USMLE Step 1 Resources

First Aid (20)

- Start early with this one
- Use each section as it corresponds to the committee you are working on
- Felt that First Aid was not a great resource because it doesn't promote understanding of material, only memorization of mnemonics
- A must for Step 1
- Good to look at throughout 2nd year to pull important concepts from committees.
- Memorize this.
- Good as an overview of everything.
- Excellent book and must have for any student.
- General review book. Very helpful
- Rely heavily on this. Knowing First Aid well will cover most every topic of the test.
- A must!

Qbank (17)

- Used extensively and found it similar in content to the actual exam and would highly recommend its use
- Great practice, mostly good information
- Very good, should have started using it earlier
- More appropriate questions at the level of the real boards. Best resource.

Board Simulator Series (7)

- Question books were harder than the exam, but provided good review of material.
- Great teaching tool. Students must realize that they won't do well on these questions, but should read EVERY answer explanation.
- Much harder than the actual exam, but as long as you don't start to panic they are useful.
- Too detailed and not reflective of actual test style and content.
- Too detailed and discouraging.
- For questions found that to be a little more difficult but a useful study tool.
- Too detailed and too discouraging.

BRS Pathology (5)

- Looked at other ones, but found this one to be the most useful.

Underground Clinical Vignettes (4)

- For case studies and buzzwords

Kaplan Course (3 week) (3)

Robbins Review of Pathology (2)

MicroCards (2)

Lippincott's Pharm (2)

Step-Up (2)

- General review book. Very helpful.

Boards to Wards (1)

Linda Costanzo's Physiology (1)

- Great and approachable book for review of Step 1

Other hints:

- Devote the last two weeks to mostly questions
- Do not worry about pathology slides. It is not heavily tested on the boards and CWRU teaching prepares you well enough without much review. Definitely study bugs and drugs. Both pharm and infectious disease are tested heavily on Step 1.
- For Anatomy: High-Yield Anatomy, High-Yield Embryology, BRS Gross Anatomy
- For Behavioral Science: High-Yield Behavioral Science
- Biochemistry: Lippincott's Illustrated Reviews
- Microbiology: Medical Microbiology and Immunology (Lange), bug cards.
- Pathology: BRS Pathology
- Pharmacology: High-Yield Pharmacology, drug cards
- Physiology- STARS Physiology
- Make some sort of plan ahead of time. I spent a few months studying during school and about 10 days after school.
- Do as many questions as possible before taking the test.
- Practice questions are the best way to study and prepare.
- Study in a group of two. It is more fun and it's hard to back out. Go through questions together, discussing your approach and all aspects of the answer and then looking it up if not right or to fill in.
- Definitely start studying by spring break.
- If you knew everything in First Aid, you would pass. Don't read textbooks or old notes. Study pharmacology a little more intensely
- Limit to a few resources as not to get overwhelmed and then not cover all of the material.

USMLE Step 2 Resources

Qbank (16)

- By far the best resource. Questions are similar to board questions and it provides explanations for right and wrong answers
- Great and definitely recommend it. It was very helpful.
- Questions are exactly like board questions and teaching/answers have enough details to be useful as a learning tool.
- By far the best resource. I highly recommend it.

First Aid (15)

- Good read-straight-through resource which quickly reviewed all of the topics in which it has been so long since we've been exposed to and really pointed out a few things to memorize which made certain questions quick and easy

NMS (13)

- Good question sections
- Very good book
- Found questions to be helpful and similar in length and content to actual Step 2 questions
- All questions with good explanations.
- Question book is excellent
- Most accurately reflected the test content.
- Ok, but didn't fit my study style well.

Crush the Boards (6)

- Excellent and the question book had great questions almost exactly like the boards.
- Helpful to read through and briefer than First Aid but not with enough information to fully reconstruct the picture all of the time.
- Especially helpful in areas of ophthalmology, dermatology and radiology.

Quick review of texts used in core clerkships (5)

Blueprint Books (4)

- Good supplement

PreTest Vignettes (3)

Appleton & Lange (2)

- Good question sections

Lippincott CD (1)

Current Medical Diagnosis and Treatment (1)

Prescription for the Boards (1)

Other hints:

- Step 2 is like all of the shelf exams put together, so you have a more practically-tested knowledge base than for step 1, and a good goal is to do better than on Step 1 and show improvement/consistency-most people I know did better on part 2.

- Preparation done for Shelf exams in the clerkships really helped prepare for Step 2.
- Buy used Kaplan Q books.
- Utilize all the breaks during the actual exam. Get up, walk around, eat a snack, go to the bathroom.
- Take the earplugs even if you do not think you will need them.
- On Step 2, study medicine. Found neurology and surgery to be low yield.
- Develop a certain level of knowledge by initially concentrating on reviewing and learning the basic material by reading various texts and then transition to learning from doing questions. Try to learn all the material discussed in question explanations and develop test-taking and timing strategies.
- For Step 2, concentrate mainly on question books. If you feel that you prepared the material necessary for success on the wards and for the shelf exams, then the material need only be reviews and application of the material is paramount.
- The most difficult part about Step 2 was simply the duration. Prepare oneself by doing many practice questions and mocking the true exam.
- You can share Qbank with other students. This works well and saves money.
- Studying for Step 2 was much less stressful than Step 1.
- Step 2 does not require as much intense studying and Step 1 does. The actual test day is very tiring.
- Don't stress out about Step 2. I found it to be an unusually "fair" test...few trick questions, rare syndromes, exotic diseases.
- There is a Kaplan outline book for Step 2 and it is terrible. Mistakes on almost every page.
- I advise doing an AI in Medicine, 2 week electives in SICU, MICU, CICU or 2 week consult electives in Cardiology, Renal.
- Set aside enough time to deal with real-life issues and studying. The usual study months (Sept.-Dec.) are also match registration, interview, and final elective months.
- It's easier to do Qbank questions while on a heavy rotation. For reading, you will need a light rotation.
- I found an ID rotation and CLINICAL pathology rotation very useful

The number in **blue represents the number of students who recommended the resource.

*Compiled by Allison Schwebel
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Based upon 30 respondents*