

First Aid for the USMLE Step 1: The Really Short Version

Tao Le, MD, MHS
Associate Clinical Professor
Chief, Section of Allergy & Immunology
University of Louisville

Senior Editor
First Aid Board Series
USMLERx Test Bank Series

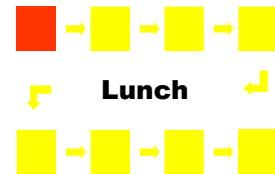
Relax.

Overview

- USMLE Step 1 – The Basics
- Defining Your Goals
- Timelines for Study
- Approaching Each Subject
- Choosing Prep Resources
- More Tips
- Overview of First Aid/USMLERx
- Q&A

USMLE Step 1 - The Basics

- 8 hours total
- 280 questions in 7 one hour blocks
- 40 questions per block
- 45 minutes of break time



Question Types

- One-best answer items
- No sequential items
- A few with multimedia
- Clinical vignettes
 - 70-80% of exam
 - Multi-step reasoning

A 32 year old caucasian woman presents with a 5 day history of occasional double vision and ptosis. What is the most appropriate diagnostic test?

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Item 1 of 46
Block 2 of 4

Investigators are studying the use of a new laboratory test to identify patients with a particular disease. The table below summarizes the results of initial research involving 200 subjects.

Test Result	Disease		
	Present	Absent	
Positive	100	40	140
Negative	80	80	160
	180	120	300

Which of the following is the approximate sensitivity of a positive test result?

- A. 0.50
- B. 0.33
- C. 0.60
- D. 0.67
- E. 0.75

Block View Summary: 01/13/12
Doi: 10.1177/0131224211411111

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Item 1 of 46
Block 2 of 4

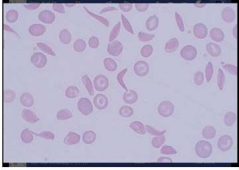
A 55-year-old man who has alcoholic cirrhosis is brought to the emergency department because he has been vomiting blood for 2 hours. He has a 2-month history of abdominal distention, dilated veins over the anterior abdominal wall, and internal hemorrhoids. Which of the following veins is the most likely origin of the hematemesis?

- A. Inferior mesenteric veins
- B. Left gastric vein
- C. Periumbilical veins
- D. Superior rectal vein
- E. Superior vena cava

Block View Summary: 01/13/12
Doi: 10.1177/0131224211411111

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A 2-year-old boy is brought to the emergency department because of shortness of breath and left-sided abdominal pain for 3 hours. He appears pale. Physical examination shows hypotension and tachycardia. There is splenomegaly with the spleen tip palpated 8 cm below the left costal margin. Laboratory studies show:



Microbiology: 5.1 (01/17/12-14/12)

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Scores and Passing Rates

- Passing is 192
- Mean is 229
- 20 points is 1 SD
- Allopathic med students
 - 96% pass on first try
 - 99% eventually pass
- Osteopathic med students
 - 93% pass on first try
- IMGs
 - 78% pass on first try

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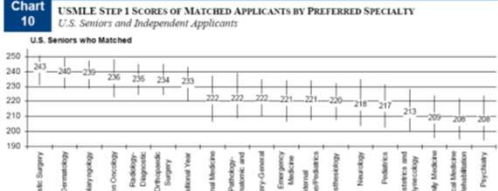
Defining Your Goals

- Just pass the exam → 210 – 229
- Beat the mean → 230 – 249
- Ace the exam → 250+
- **“ROAD to Riches”**
 - Radiology/Radiation Oncology
 - Ortho/Ophtho/Otolaryngo/Urology
 - “Aesthetic” Surgery (plastics)
 - Dermatology

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NRMP: Charting Outcomes in the Match

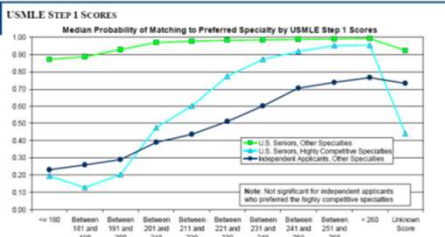
Chart 10 USMLE STEP 1 SCORES OF MATCHED APPLICANTS BY PREFERRED SPECIALTY
U.S. Seniors and Independent Applicants



Specialty	Score
Plastic Surgery	243
Dermatology	240
Otolaryngology	236
Radiation Oncology	236
Radiology	234
Diagnostic Radiology	234
Orthopedic Surgery	233
Transitional Care	232
Internal Medicine	222
Pathology	222
Academic and General Surgery	221
Emergency Medicine	221
Internal Medicine	220
Infectious Diseases	218
Anesthesiology	217
Neurology	217
Pediatrics	213
Obstetrics and Gynecology	209
Family Medicine	208
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation	206
Psychiatry	206

NRMP: Charting Outcomes in the Match

Chart 15



Timeline for Study

- The “Just Pass” Schedule – 1 to 2 months
 - First Aid High Yield Facts
 - Crammable subjects
 - Review questions – 1 question bank
- The “Gunner” Schedule – 2 to 6 months
 - In addition to above
 - Less cramnable subjects
 - More review questions – 2 question banks

Choosing Study Strategies

- Structure and characteristics of the subject
- Structure and characteristics of your curriculum
- Time assigned to a particular subject or system
- Your style of learning

Anatomy

- Traditional anatomy is low yield
- Know anatomy for specific diseases, traumatic injuries, procedures, and common surgeries
- Neuroanatomy, embryology, basic cross sectional anatomy is high-yield
- Be able to identify structures on X-rays, CTs, MRIs, electron micrographs, and photomicrographs

Biochemistry

- Crammable!!
- High yield topics include vitamin deficiencies, diseases of genetic errors, key regulatory enzymes
- Understand the “pathobiochemistry”
- Be familiar with medically relevant laboratory techniques

Microbiology & Immunology

- Crammable!!
- 40% bacteriology, 25% immunology, 25% virology, 5% parasitology. So don't fixate on bacteriology!
- Focus on distinguishing characteristics, target organs, method of spread, and diagnosis
- Know the immune response, vaccines, immunodeficiency diseases
- Know viral structures and genome

Pathology

- Huge but important topic
- Know hallmark characteristics of each disease including signs and symptoms
- Look for clues in age, sex, ethnicity, activity
- Know descriptions of “trigger” words
- Most questions with gross specimens and photomicrographs can be answered from the history alone

Pharmacology

- Crammable!!
- Focus on prototypic drugs; forget obscure derivatives, trade names, dosages
- Major categories are ANS, CNS, antimicrobial, cardiovascular, and oncology
- Mechanisms, clinical uses, and toxicities are high-yield
- Review associated biochemistry, physiology and microbiology

Physiology

- Concept oriented
- Diagrams work well in physiology
- Know basic physiologic relationships, hormones
- Many clinical vignettes incorporate pathophysiology

Psychiatry

- Includes psychology, sociology, psychopharmacology
- High-yield- personality, psychosomatic/ somatoform, substance abuse, eating disorders

Public Health

- Mix of biostats, epidemiology, ethics, law, healthcare delivery, patient safety, quality improvement
- Biostats and epidemiology is very high-yield
- Doctor-patient interactions

Review Resources

- Text reviews
- Test banks
- Self-test reviews
- Case-based reviews
- Review courses
- Other media
 - Flash cards
 - Videos
 - Mobile apps

Picking and Choosing Resources

- Buy books/resources early
- Buy only what you can use
- Don't blindly buy a whole series
- Check out the book reviews in *First Aid for the USMLE Step 1* (Section 4)

Study Tips

- Establish a study schedule and stick with it
- Alternate study methods for variety
- Save “crammable” subjects for the end
- Focus on high yield material and previous learned material
- Allow time in schedule for breaks, exercise and personal issues
- Stay relaxed and grounded
- Use our checklist to keep you on track

CBT Tips

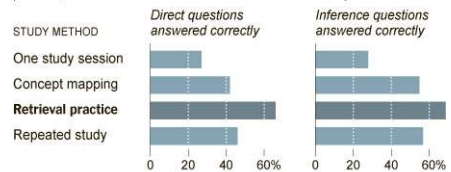
- Be very familiar with the CBT tutorial
- Know the keyboard shortcuts
- Use computerized practice tests in addition to paper exams
- Mix Q&A throughout and at end



The New York Times

Learning Through Testing

Researchers asked college students to study a short science text using one of four study methods, then tested them a week later. The most effective study method combined two study sessions with retrieval practice, tests that asked the students to recall what they had read.



Source: Science

www.nytimes.com

CBT Practice Options

Types	Suggested Use
USMLE Sample Test	Format familiarity
NBME/CBSSA	Benchmarking
Commercial Test Banks	Practice/study Simulation

Test Day Tips

- Less coffee on test day
- Layered clothing
- Read lead in first for long questions
- Manage the clock
- Light lunch
- The “C” reflex
- P = MD/DO



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