



5 MCAT Mistakes to Avoid

M PREP & ACCEPTED.COM



WHO AM I?

- **Co-Founder of M Prep (MCAT Question a Day) and Director of the M Prep eCourse**
- **Experienced MCAT instructor (2000+ hrs of MCAT coaching)**
- **Author of much of M Prep's core strategy content**



AGENDA

- **MCAT Overview**
- **5 Mistakes to Avoid**
- **Resources/Thinks to Remember**
- **Q&A**



MCAT OVERVIEW

- Take the MCAT as an opportunity to have fun with science and reading. You're going to have to do that in med school anyway. If you treat the MCAT as an unfortunate chore, your score may reflect your sentiments...

Section	# of Questions	Time (mins)	Scoring Scale
C.P.B.S (Chem & Phys)	59	95	118 - 132
Break		10	
C.A.R.S (Verbal)	53	90	118 - 132
Break		30	
B.B.L.S (Bio & Biochem)	59	95	118 - 132
Break		10	
P.S.B.B (Psych & Soc)	59	95	118 - 132
		6 Hours, 15 Minutes	

- **Sciences Sections**
 - 10 passages, 15 discrete questions
 - 4-6 questions per passage
- **C.A.R.S. Section**
 - 9 passages, no discrete questions
 - 5-7 questions per passage



MISTAKE 1

STARTING TOO LATE/RUSHING

- Probably one of the most common mistakes
- Easy to avoid, harder to remedy
 - Push back test date?
 - Delay application?
- Generally recommended:
 - Baseline:
 - 8 weeks
 - Comfort with content:

Low +6 weeks -2 weeks High
 - Past standardized test performance:

Low +4 weeks -2 weeks High
 - Weekly study amount:

Low (~10 hrs/week) 1.5x 0.75x High (30+ hrs/week)



MISTAKE 2

MAKING IT ALL ABOUT CONTENT

- **The MCAT's goal is to test critical thinking, not content**
 - You still have to know a lot of content, but it's almost guaranteed that you're going to see content you've never seen before, no matter how much you study.
 - Exceptional scores can still be achieved without obscure content knowledge because the vast majority of questions can be answered using problem-solving strategies.

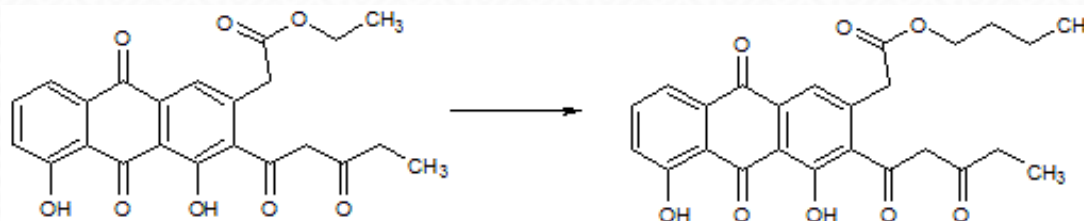


MISTAKE 2

MAKING IT ALL ABOUT CONTENT

- **Hard to tell what's testable on the MCAT**
 - Of the info that's testable, how much of it is common?
- **Prep books aren't very helpful in identifying high-yield content**
- **Three concepts underlie ~80% of all MCAT organic chemistry questions**
 - The general physical properties and intermolecular forces of common functional groups
 - The relationship between pH and pKa as it relates to solubility, charge, and reactivity of organics
 - Basic foundational principles of reactions including the nucleophilicity/electrophilicity and steric hindrance

PHYSICAL PROPERTIES Practice



In the reaction above, which of the following compounds is used to prepare the product?

- A. $\text{MgBrCH}_2\text{CH}_3$
- B. $\text{CH}_3\text{CH}_2\text{OCH}_2\text{CH}_3$
- C. $\text{CH}_3\text{CH}_2\text{COOH}$
- D. $\text{CH}_3\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{OH}$



MISTAKE 3

WEAK PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Taking the practice exam and checking the answers alone is not sufficient to get full value from the practice.

Steps to take:

- 1. Take the practice exam/section**
- 2. Immediately write your impressions from the practice: How were you on time? Did your stamina run out? Where did you feel confident and where were you nervous?**
- 3. Wait 1-2 days before checking your answers**
- 4. Create a spreadsheet where you log each wrong question. Log answers to:**
 - Why did I get this wrong? Be as specific as possible. Don't let yourself off the hook.**
 - What do I need to do/know next time to not get this question wrong?**
- 5. Sort the reasons for wrong answers and look for patterns in the distribution**
- 6. Focus on the areas that show up as key reasons why you are getting questions wrong**



MISTAKE 4

NOT EXPERIMENTING WITH STUDYING

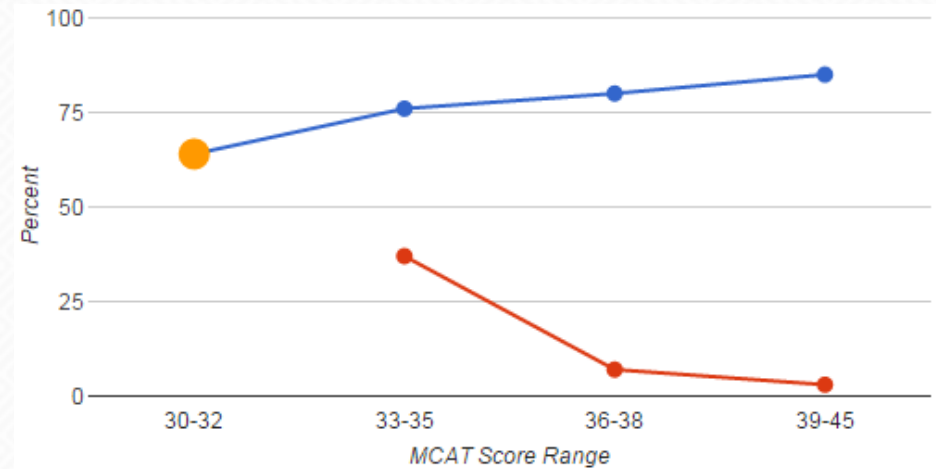
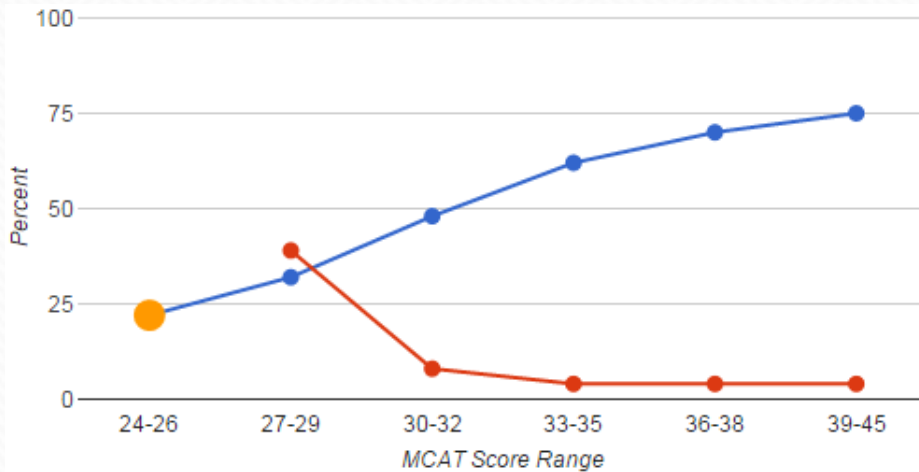
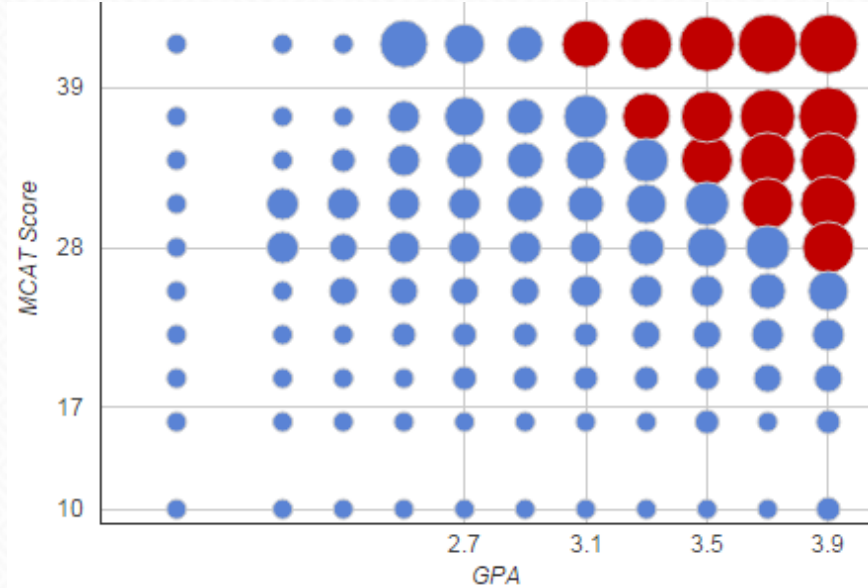
- **How well do you know your own learning style? When was the last time you tested different study methods?**
- **Visceral reaction against a method doesn't mean it won't work**
- **Use a scientific approach: set up experiments with different study methods and track your results**



MISTAKE 5

STRESSING OUT ABOUT THE SCORE

Percentile	New	Old
25	492	18
37	496	21
51	500	24
64	504	27
77	508	30
87	512	33
95	516	36
98	520	39





RESOURCES

- **M Prep (links on next slide)**
- **Accepted.com**
- **Khan Academy MCAT Videos**
- **AAMC Practice Exams/Question Packs**
- **MCAT Courses**
- **Pre-2015 MCAT Resources**



VISIT US

- **Free Question of the Day plus access to 2700+ past questions**
- **Qbank (full-length practice exams coming soon) with 1000+ passage-based questions**
- **Med schools database, MCAT retake calculator, blog, and more!**

mcatquestion.com

- **MCAT eCourse**

mcatquestion.com/ecourse



THANK YOU!

Q&A