


UW ALPHA EPSILON DELTA 2011 AED PRE-MED EXPO

MCAT Strategies for Success

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- *Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.*
–Sir Richard Steele

 - *Education is not preparation for life, education is life itself.* –John Dewey

 - *Seeing much, suffering much and studying much are the three pillars of learning.*
–Benjamin Disraeli

Today's Outline

- GPA and MCAT scores:
 - ▣ How much do they really matter?
- The MCAT: what is it?
- How to prepare for the MCAT
- Importance of Verbal Comprehension/ Reasoning
- Test-Taking Skills
- Study Skills
- Vocabulary
- Recommended reading



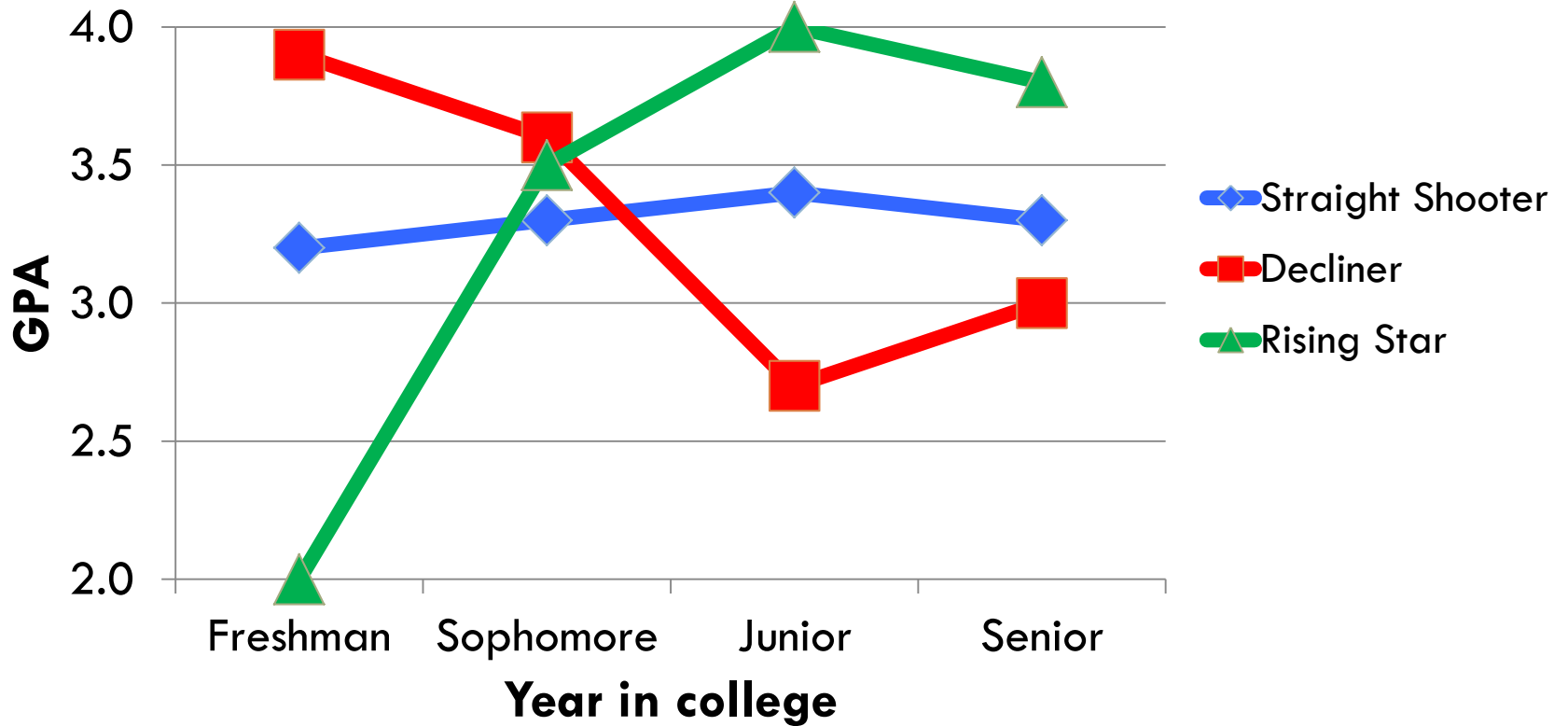
GPA: What really matters

Application Info

- Three ways to get a 3.3 in college.

	Fresh-man	Sopho-more	Junior	Senior	Average
Straight Shooter	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.3
Decliner	3.9	3.6	2.7	3.0	3.3
Rising Star	2.0	3.5	4.0	3.8	3.3

GPA are interpreted dynamically through time



Application Info

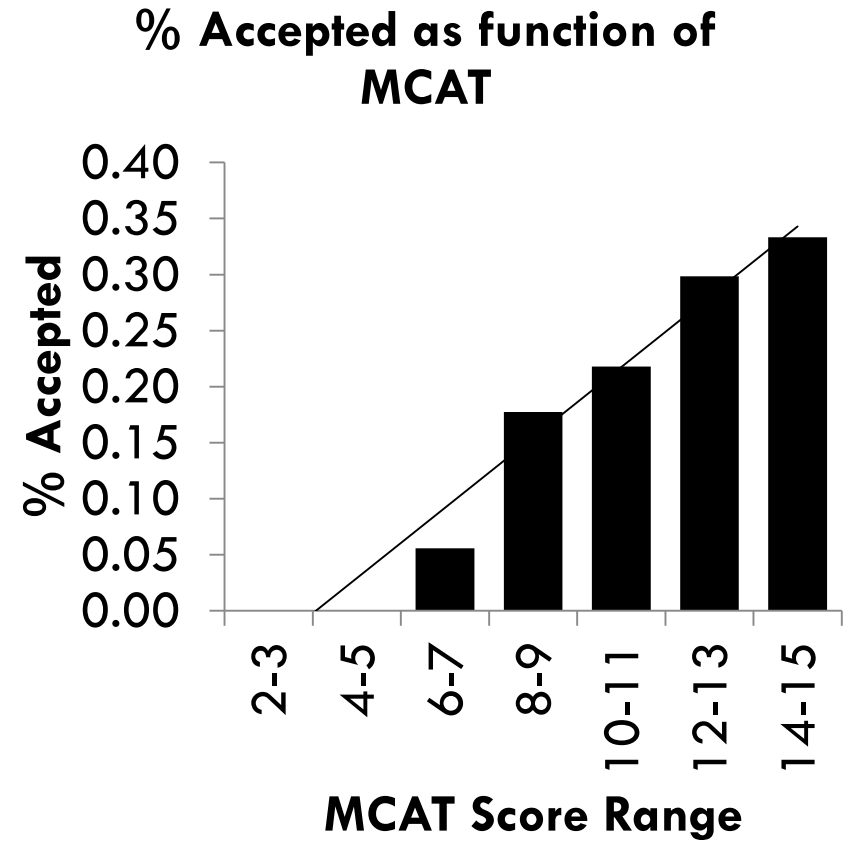
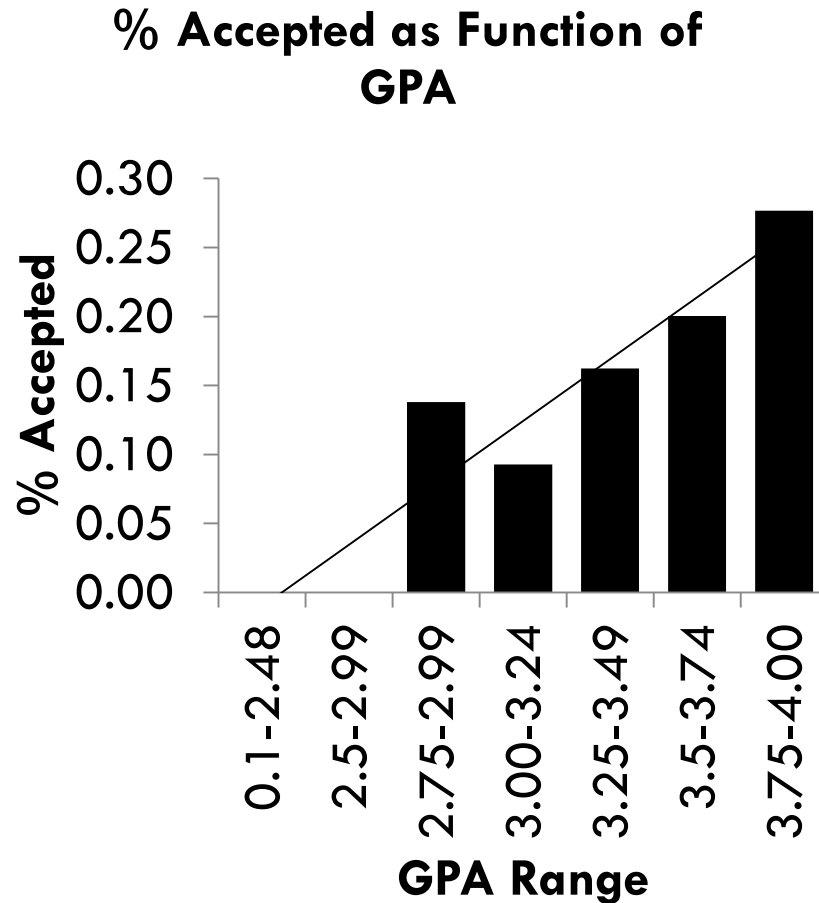
□ UWSOM: Weighted GPA

	Fresh- man	Sopho- more	Junior	Senior	Average	Weighted GPA
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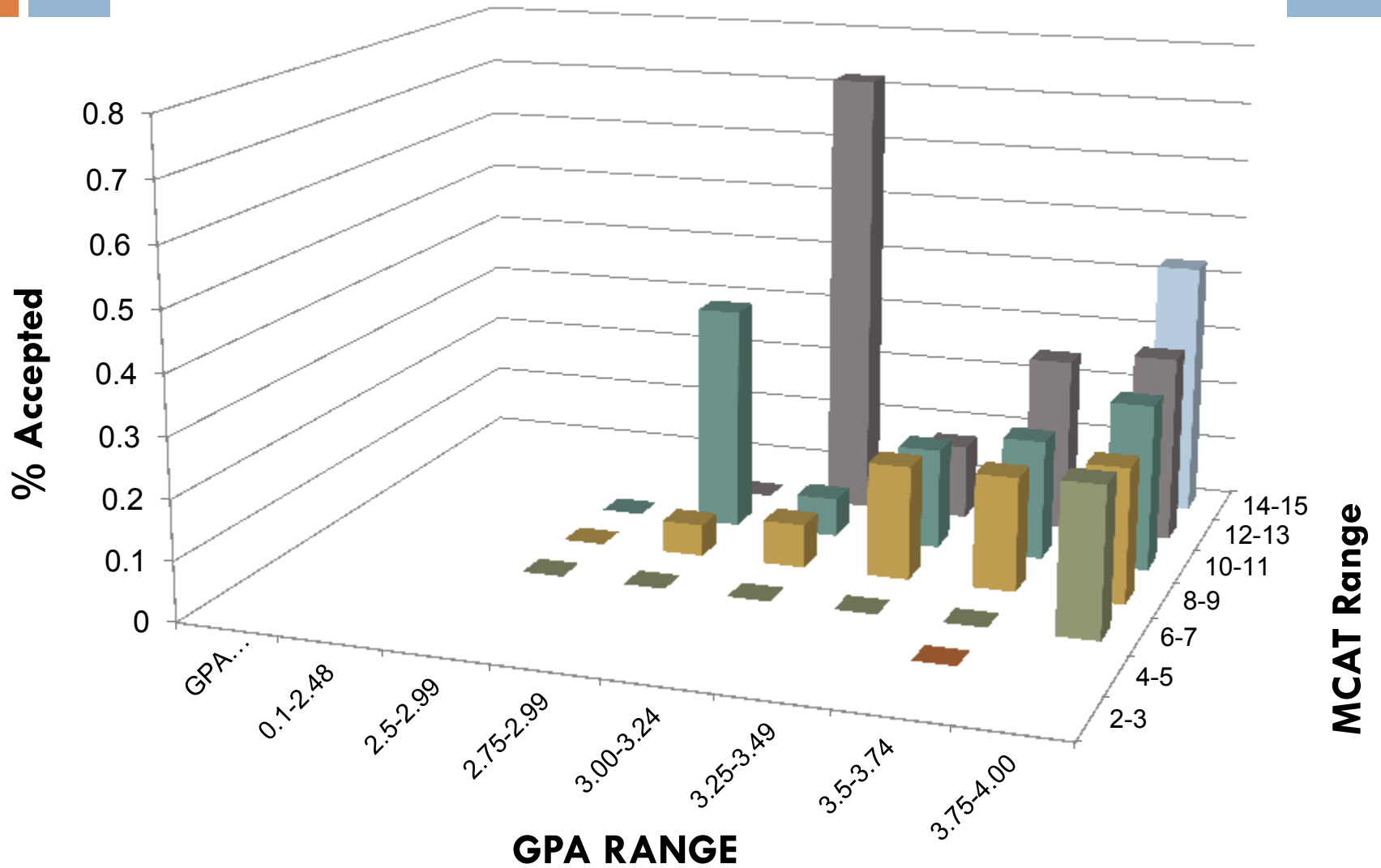
Raw data from UWSOM website

MCAT	2-3		4-5		6-7		8-9		10-11		12-13		14-15	
GPA RANGE	acc	tot	acc	tot	acc	tot	acc	tot	acc	tot	acc	tot	acc	tot
>3.75	0	0	0	0	3	12	23	102	60	215	35	112	3	7
3.5-3.74	0	0	0	1	0	12	29	152	42	209	14	48	0	2
3.25-3.49	0	0	0	0	0	21	23	121	18	107	2	16	0	0
3.00-3.24	0	0	0	0	0	7	4	55	2	31	3	4	0	0
2.75-2.99	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	19	3	8	0	1	0	0
2.50-2.74	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	4	0	0	0	0
0.10-2.48	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	0	0	0	1	3	54	80	451	125	574	54	181	3	9

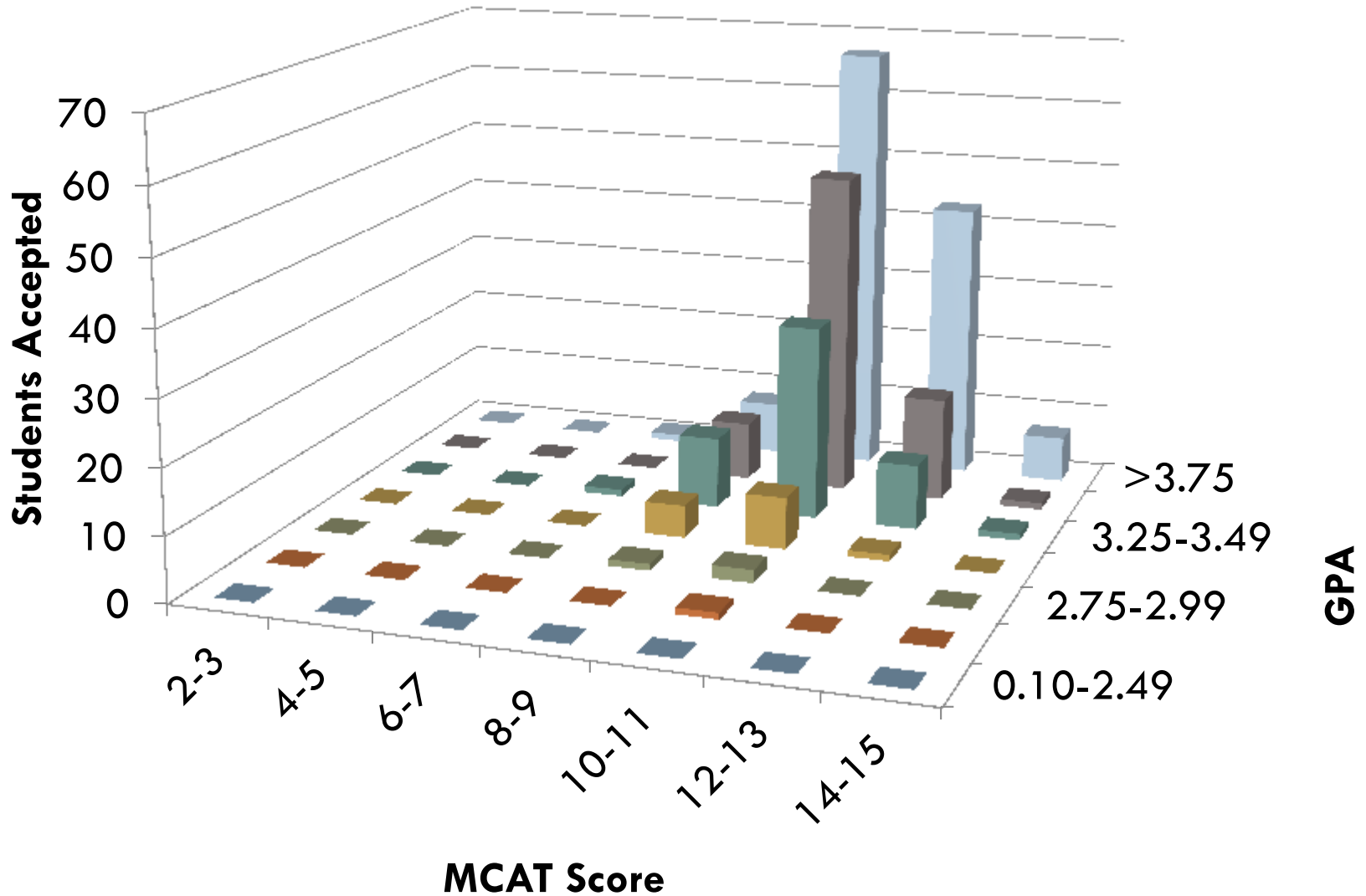
Higher GPAs and MCAT scores help you get into medical school



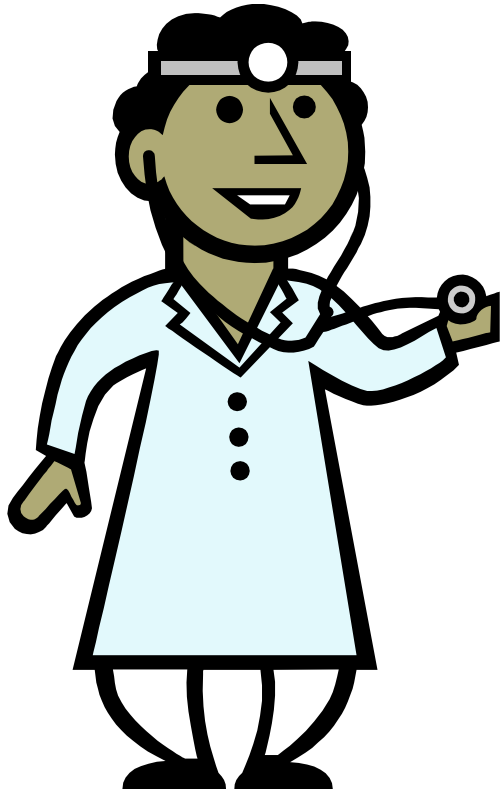
Interpreted



Number of students accepted into UWSOM, by GPA and MCAT scores



Medical College Admission Test



□ Computer Based

■ Physical Sciences

- 52 Questions/70 Minutes

■ Verbal Reasoning Section

- 60 minutes/40 questions

■ Writing Section

- 60 minutes, 2 prompts

- 2 essays 30 minutes each

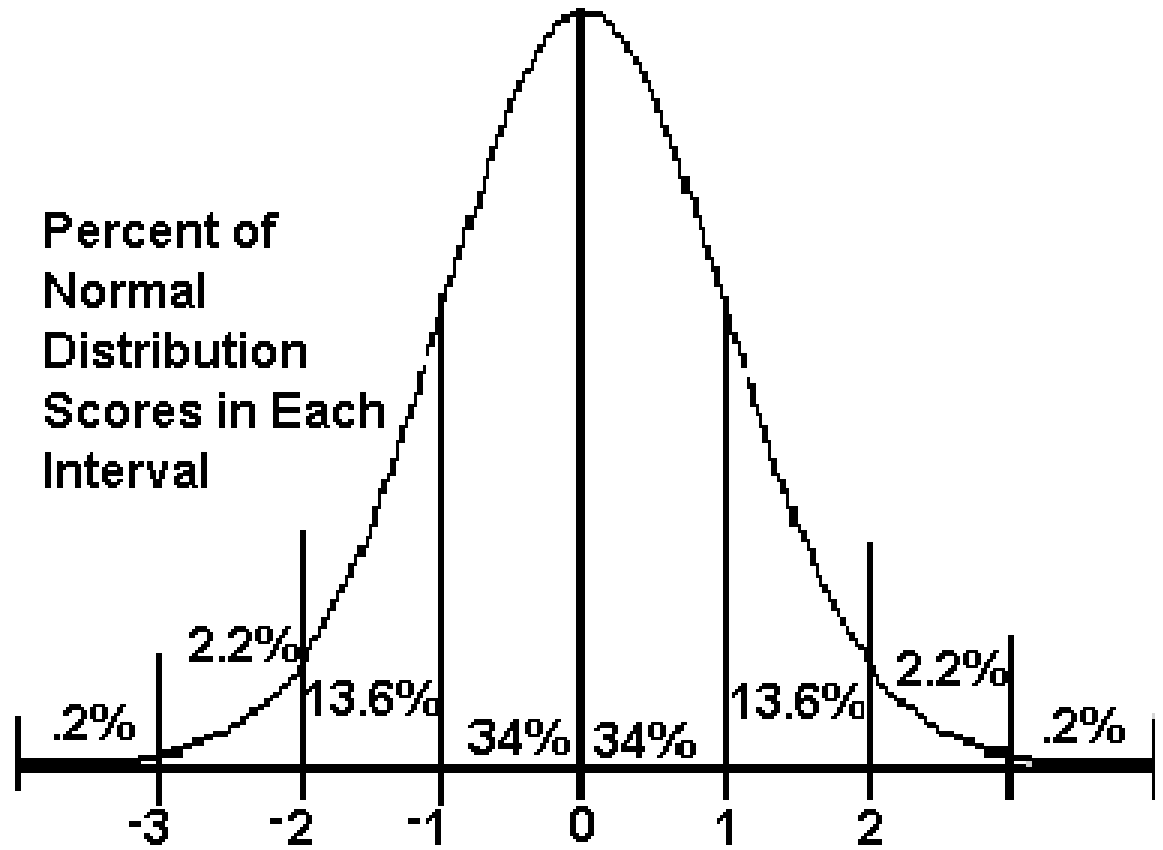
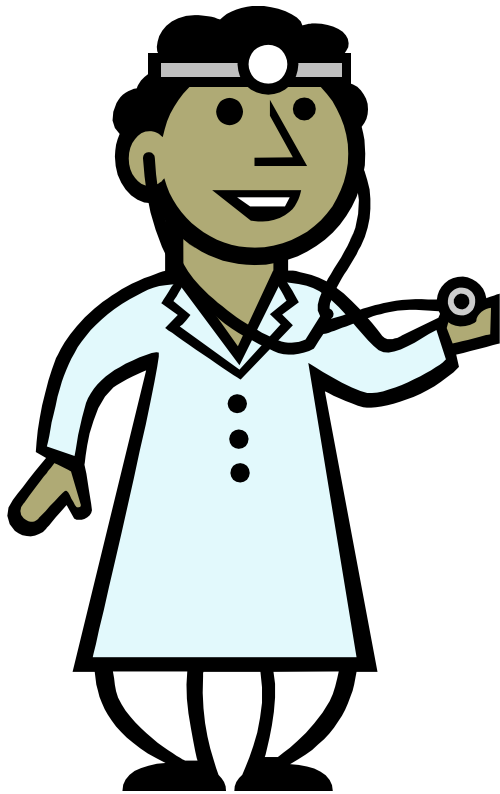
- Scoring J-T with O as the mean

■ Biological Sciences

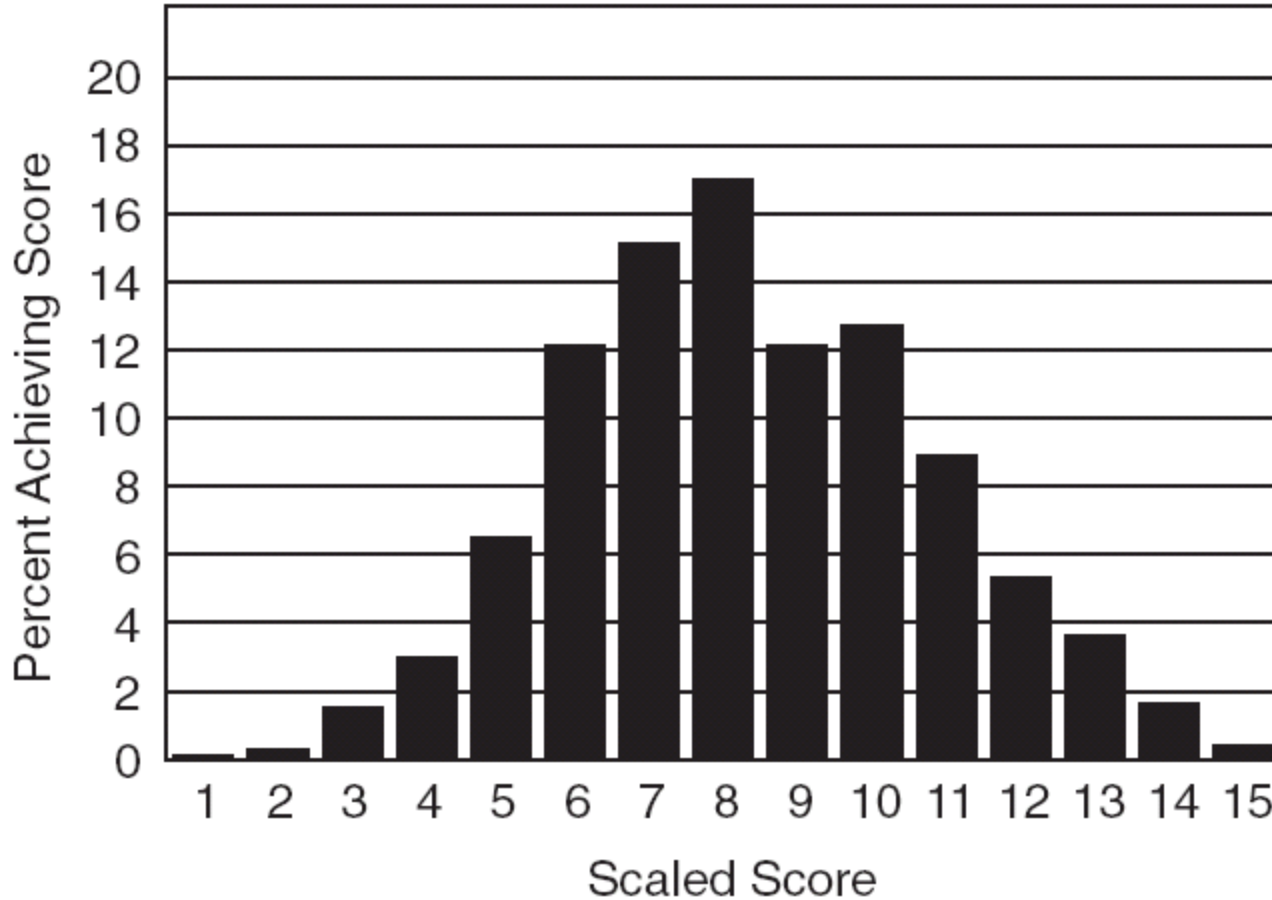
- 52 Questions/70 Minutes

Medical College Admission Test

- Scoring: 1-15 with 8 as the mean and 2 as the standard deviation



Physical Sciences

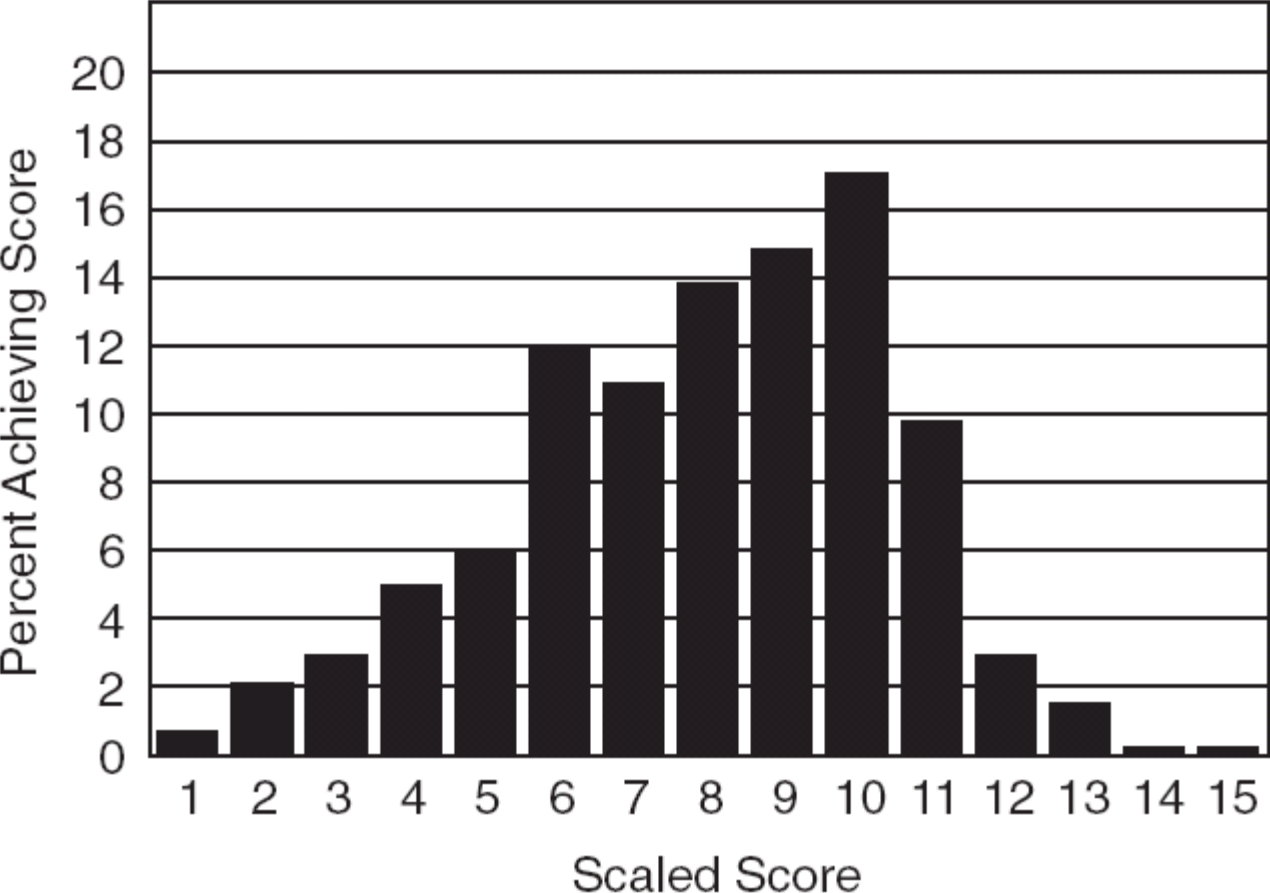


Scaled Score

Mean = 8.4

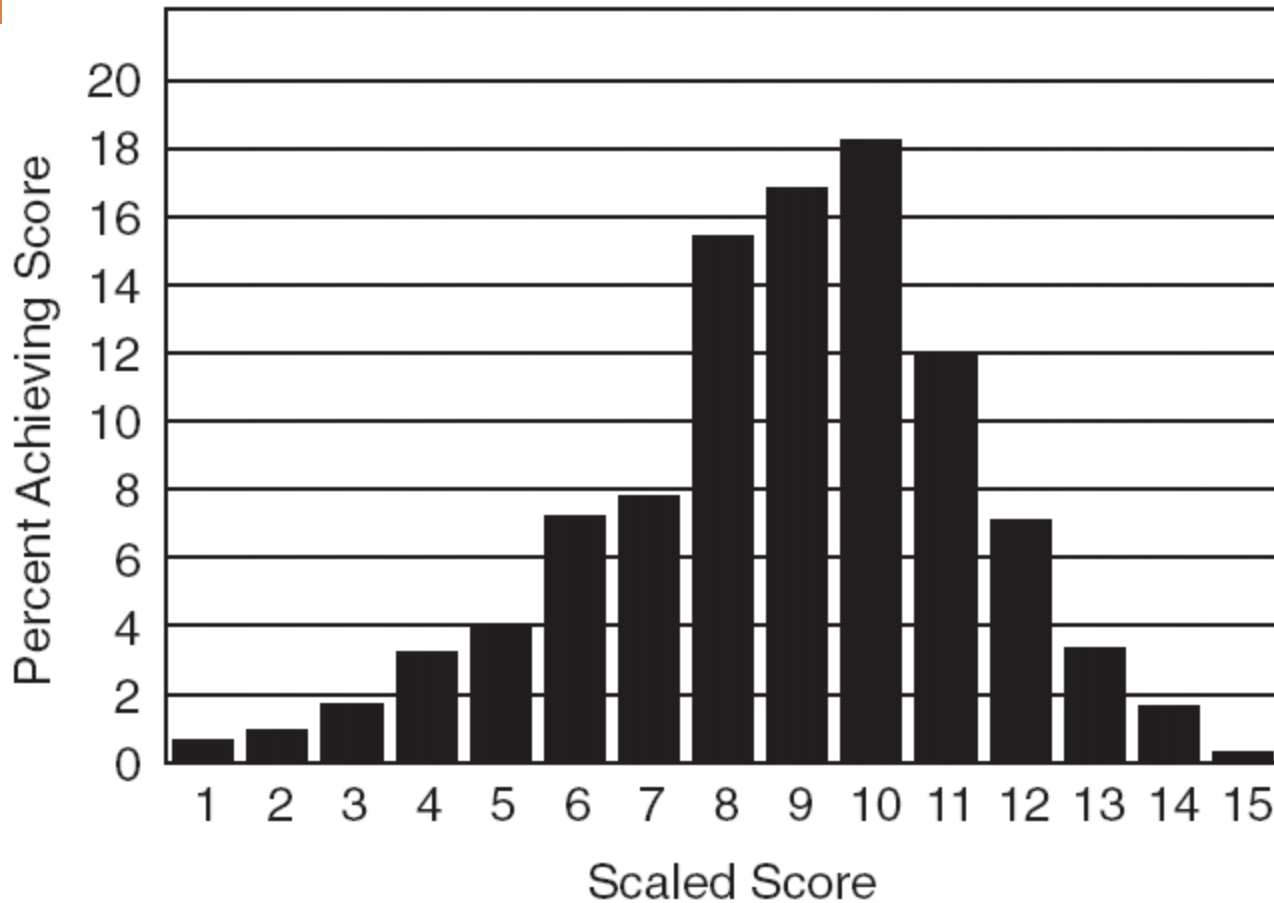
Std Deviation = 2.4

Verbal Reasoning



Scaled Score
Mean = 8.0
Std Deviation = 2.6

Biological Sciences



Scaled Score

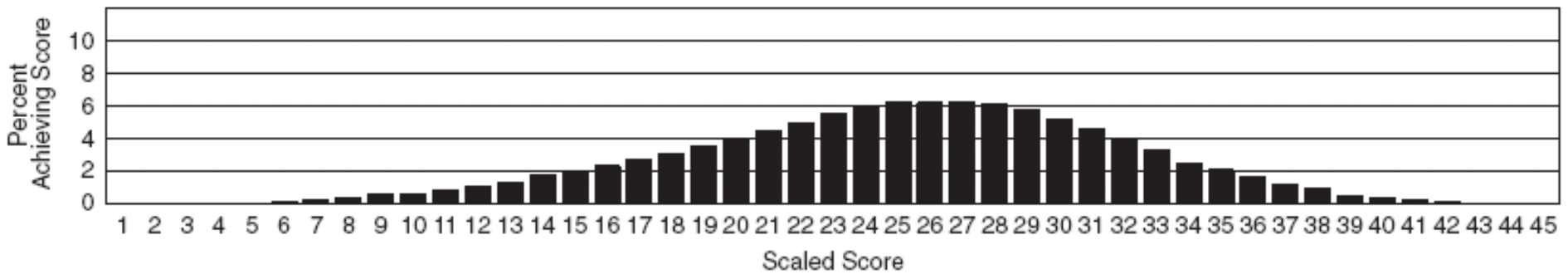
Mean = 8.8

Std Deviation = 2.5



Table 1
 Percentages of MCAT Examinees Achieving Scaled Score Levels and
 Associated Percentile Rank Ranges by Area of Assessment
 Combined 2007 Administrations N = 67,828

Total Score



Scaled Score

Mean = 25.1

Std Deviation = 6.4

For more info...

- MCAT

- www.aamc.org/students/mcat/start.htm

How to prepare for the MCAT

- Take the requisite science courses, as well as classes in the humanities and social sciences
 - ▣ Intro class in: Physics, General Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, Biology
- Use resources on www.aamc.org
- Supplemental materials: *if needed*
- Commercial review course: *if it suits you*

Importance of Verbal Reasoning

- Improved Communication
- Listening
- Understanding
- Expression
- Doing well in your classes now
- Getting into graduate/professional school!



Test Taking Skills

Tips for Standardized Tests

- You take the test, don't let the test take you!
- You are looking for the credited response, not necessarily the “correct” answer, but rather, the one that is least wrong.
- It's an opportunity for you to distinguish yourself from the rest and shine.
- Because the MCAT is a passage-based exam, there are some strategies specific to it

How to Tackle a Passage

- Active Reading: MAPS
- Main Point
 - ▣ The CORE of what the author is trying to communicate
- Attitude
 - ▣ Who the author is as expressed by the TONE of the passage (critical, advocating, neutral)
- Purpose
 - ▣ Compare and contrast, propose a new theory, describe a process, trace the evolution of an idea
- Support
 - ▣ HOW the author constructs the passage



Active Reading and Notating

- Translate the main idea of each paragraph or chunk of information into your own words.
- Notice and highlight pivotal words and transitions: “but”, “yet”, “nonetheless”, “although”, “despite”, “except”, “in contrast”, “however”, “nevertheless”
- Write out the main idea and overall tone of the passage before answering the questions.

Key Words and Phrases

- Example markers:
 - for example...
 - for instance...
 - on the one hand...
- Listing markers:
 - there are several...
 - first, second, third...
 - in addition,...
- Emphasis Markers:
 - clearly...
 - most important...
 - crucial...
- Conclusion Markers:
 - therefore...
 - thus...
 - consequently...

Working The Questions



- Read the question carefully
- Refer to the passage and your notes to find information
- Use process of elimination

Question Types

□ Specific

- A detail from the passage that was directly stated
- Asks you to extrapolate something from the passage that was not directly stated
- Vocabulary: what a word used in the passage means in the given context

□ General

- Asks about the main idea
- Asks about the author's tone/attitude

Question Types Continued

□ Complex

- The question states something from the passage then asks you what the author said to support that statement
- The question states something from the passage then asks you how/if that helps or hurts the authors argument
- The question stem brings up a new idea and asks you to figure out how the author would reply to that
- “Negative” questions: ask you to find the choice that does not or least supports something from the passage
- Roman Numeral Questions

Process of Elimination

- Think of the answer before reading the choices then eliminate choices that don't go along with your "best choice"
- Eliminate answer choices that had nothing to do with the passage
- Compare the remaining answer choices to each other
- Use the passage and your MAPS

Things to Keep in Mind

- If part of answer choice is wrong, the whole answer choice is wrong
- Question choices are meant to trick you:
 - ▣ Trick One: statements that are in the passage but that don't answer the question
 - ▣ Trick Two: answer choice is excessively negative or positive
 - ▣ Trick Three: answer choice is not specific enough

Things to Keep in Mind cont.

- Question choices are meant to trick you:
 - ▣ Trick Four: answer choice switches things around: B causes A when the passage said A causes B
 - ▣ Trick Five: has a word like “not” in it that makes it the opposite of something said in the passage
 - ▣ Trick Six: has nothing to do with the passage, the choice might even be true in reality but if it has nothing to do with the passage it’s most likely wrong

- 
- *For the resolute and determined, there is both time and opportunity.*

–Ralph Waldo Emerson

- *The person who knows how will always have a job; but the person who knows why will be his boss.*

-Carl C. Wood

- *He whom prosperity humbles and adversity strengthens is the true hero.*

-Josh Billings



*Hope lies in dreams, in imagination
and in the courage of those who
dare to make dreams into reality.*

Jonas Salk



STUDY SKILLS

Study Skills

□ Time Management

- <http://calendar.google.com>
- Make prioritized lists
- Make time to exercise and relax
- Plan ahead: develop an overview
- Don't rush in the morning. Eat a balanced breakfast and have things ready to go from the night before.

Study Skills

□ Focus

- Have reasonable goals
- Study even if you don't feel like it, just for five minutes
- Take a ten minute break for every hour you study
- Don't study continuously for long blocks of time
- Reward yourself
- Learn to live one day at a time
- Accept what you can't change, change what you can

Study Skills

- Environment:
 - ▣ Limit distractions: no phone, no TV
 - ▣ Silence: Library, or White Noise: Coffee shop
- Organization:
 - ▣ Keep a clean backpack
 - ▣ Keep one folder/notebook per subject



VOCABULARY BUILDING

Word Roots for Physiology

- A- or an- : without; absence
- Anti : against
- -Ase : signifies an enzyme
- Auto : self
- Bi : two
- Brady : slow
- Cardio : heart
- Cephalo : head
- Cerebro : brain
- Contra : against
- -crine : a secretion
- Crypt- : hidden
- Cutan- : skin
- -cyte or cyto- : cell
- De- : without, lacking
- Di- : two

Word Roots for Physiology

- Dys- : difficult, faulty
- -elle : small
- -emia : blood
- Endo- : inside or within
- Epi- : over
- Erythro- : red
- Exo- : outside
- Extra- : outside
- Gastro- : stomach
- -gen, -genic : produce
- Gluco-, glyco- : sugar or sweet
- Hemi- : half
- Hemo- : blood
- Hepato- : liver
- Homo- : same
- Hydro- : water
- Hyper- : above or excess

Word Roots for Physiology

- Hypo- : beneath or deficient
- Inter- : between
- Intra- : within
- -itis : inflammation of
- Kali- : potassium
- Leuko- : white
- Lipo- : fat
- Lumen- : inside of a hollow tube
- -lysis : split apart or rupture
- Macro- : large
- Micro- : small
- Mono- : one
- Multi- : many
- Myo- : muscle
- Oligo- : little, few
- Para- : near, close

Word Roots for Physiology

- Patho-, -pathy : related to disease
- Peri- : around
- Poly- : many
- Post- : after
- Pre- : before
- Pro- : before
- Pseudo- : false
- Re- : again
- Retro- : backward or behind
- Semi- : half
- Sub- : below
- Super- : above, beyond
- Supra- : above, on top of
- Tachy- : rapid
- Trans- : across, through

Practice

- Hyperventilate:
 - ▣ (hyper-excess, ventilate-to bring in air) to breathe abnormally fast or deeply
- Exocrine:
 - ▣ (exo-outside, -crine- a secretion) secreting externally, directly or through a duct
- Endocrine:
 - ▣ (endo-inside, -crine- a secretion) secreting internally

Practice

- Agenesis:
 - ▣ (α-without, genesis-birth) absence or incomplete development of an organ or body part
- Hepatosplenomegaly:
 - ▣ (hepato-liver, spleno-spleen, mega-large) enlargement of the liver and spleen

Practice

- Adrenaline
 - ▣ (ad-above, renal-kidney) a catecholamine secreted by the adrenal medulla in response to stress
- Epinephrine
 - ▣ (epi-above, nephros-kidney) a catecholamine secreted by the adrenal medulla in response to stress

Practice

□ Hydrocephaly

- (hydro-water, cephalo-head) a usually congenital condition in which an abnormal accumulation of fluid in the cerebral ventricles causes enlargement of the skull and compression of the brain, destroying much of the neural tissue

Dan's recommended reading list



- *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*—Anne Fadiman
- *Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure the World* —Tracy Kidder
- *Mama Might Be Better Off Dead: The Failure of Health Care in Urban America* —Laurie Kaye Abraham
- *No Pity: People with Disabilities Forging a New Civil Rights Movement* —Joseph P Shapiro
- *On Doctoring: Stories, Poems, Essays* —Edited by Richard Reynolds and John Stone

Word of the Day

- Signup.dictionary.com/wordoftheday

Other ways to practice:

Crossword puzzle:
puzzles.usatoday.com

Read the news: www.nytimes.com,
www.cnn.com, online.wsj.com

References:

- Human Physiology: An Integrated Approach.
Dee Unglaub Silverthorn
- How To Study In College, 7th Ed. Walter Pauk
- The Princeton Review: MCAT Verbal Workbook.
Special thanks to Jennifer Wooddell