

First Aid is great, and some people will say it's all you need – but you can't just memorize it and expect to do well. Most of the information in it represents more complex concepts and you need to understand those to do well for the exam. My advice is to use other, subject specific review books, and use First Aid later in your review (last 2 weeks) just to make sure that you understand everything. Question banks and books are okay, but none are really representative of the USMLE, which would be the main reason to use them (in my mind) – though they are useful when you get burned out after studying for weeks.

My biggest piece of advice though is: Study really hard your M2 year (M1 also, but you're probably already done with that), and learn the material really well, that way your 4 or 6 weeks of boards studying is review, not 1<sup>st</sup> time learning. Don't neglect your M2 classes for boards studying.

Here's book advice, though I Advice for Step 1:  
don't think it'll be too helpful – what I used:

#### Path/Pathophys

BRS path – standard stuff – questions kind of suck though

Robbins review questions – good and more comprehensive than other question books

CPP lecture notes – most handouts were fantastic review for the boards

Pathophys for the boards and wards – I mostly skimmed this and filled in parts not covered by CPP notes

Goljan Audio lectures – pretty cool

#### Pharm

Pharm Cards (Lippincotts) – better than books – best way I found to use them was by trying to memorize only one aspect at a time (class, use, special uses, resistance, side effects, etc.), trying to do all at once was overwhelming

#### Micro/Immuno

Lange – pretty good – more info than in ridiculously simple, but I think most prefer ridiculously simple

#### Psych subjects (Brain and Behavior, Human Development)

BRS Psych - yeah

#### Biochem

Lippincotts

#### Anatomy

I tagged throughout the M2 year, so I just did anatomy out of First Aid

#### Physio

Costanzo (not the BRS version)

Histo

I just did the First Aid, but I heard High Yield was excellent

Neuroanatomy

High Yield was really good – esp after pathology/pathophys

Nutrition, Genetics

First Aid

can't remember any more

Good luck!

I would advise picking subject specific books in a format you like and are familiar with. If you like outlines, go for BRS/First Aid. Once you pick your books, stick with them and finish them. All of the study aids essentially cover the same information. Just because you see someone studying a different book, don't run out and buy it. You will end up not getting through all of the material.

Make a schedule for what you will study each day. This will keep you on track. Also be sure to schedule break time. You need to take time to relax so you can be more focused when you do study.

Do lots and lots of practice questions. Kaplan QBank is the most popular. I used the clinical vignettes series and found it very helpful. I tried to do 1-2 hours of question per day during the month before I took the exam.

I did not sign up for an intensive course because I know that I learn best by reading and doing questions. If you learn best from lectures and need structure, sign up for a class (but be warned that they are expensive!). Also, note that the Kaplan books that correspond to their course are very good and you can purchase them on ebay.

Dr. Goljan is a pathology professor from Ohio State who gives phenomenal Step 1 reviews through Kaplan. I did a google search on him and downloaded audio lectures to my ipod, which I listened to for 2 hours/day. I think this was the biggest asset to my USMLE studying.

Take the practice Step 1 at the testing center. It's a really great opportunity to gauge your level of preparation and get familiar with the testing format and environment.