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# Study Skills for Premeds

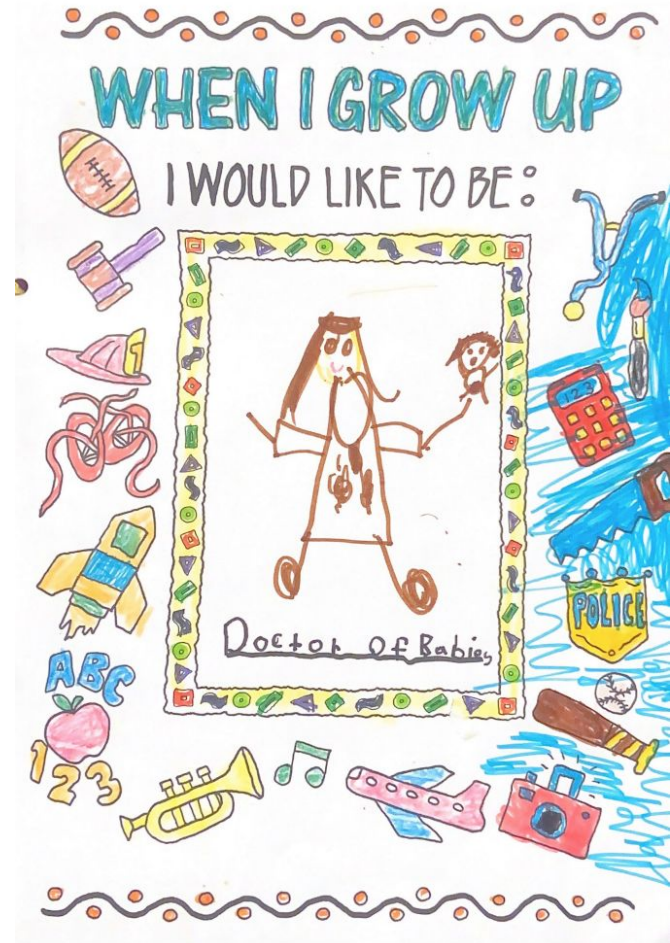
— Studying for Community College, —  
University, and the MCAT

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# Who am I?

- Former community college student and recent UCLA graduate
- Applying in the 2022-23 Medical School Application Cycle
- Currently working as a Mohs Surgery Histotechnician, volunteering at PreMedCC, and doing clinical research at a local hospital
- Future Physician



# My Academic Journey



## Ventura College: 2013-2016

- Undecided for first two years, then Liberal Arts major
- Was on academic probation



## Santa Barbara City College (2017-2019)

- Biology for transfer major
- Completed IGETC, transfer prerequisites, and medical school prerequisites



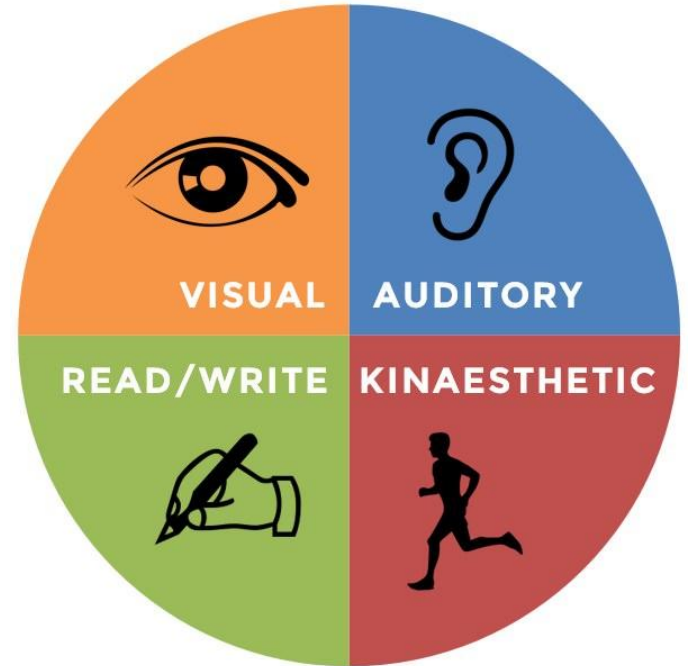
## University of California, Los Angeles (2019-2021)

- Major in Molecular Cell and Developmental Biology
- Minor in Society and Genetics
- Graduated Summa Cum Laude

# Learning Styles

- Visual Learners:
  - Learners need to *see* information to understand it
  - Learn best through looking at graphs, videos, charts, PowerPoints, or other visual media
- Auditory Learners:
  - Learners need to *hear* information to understand it
  - Learn best through listening to lectures, repeating information, and discussing with groups
- Read/Writing Learners:
  - Learners need to *read* or *write* information to understand it
  - Learn best through reading textbooks, taking notes, or rewriting information
- Kinesthetic Learners:
  - Learners need to *physically do* something to understand it
  - Learn best through carrying out experiments or working with their hands

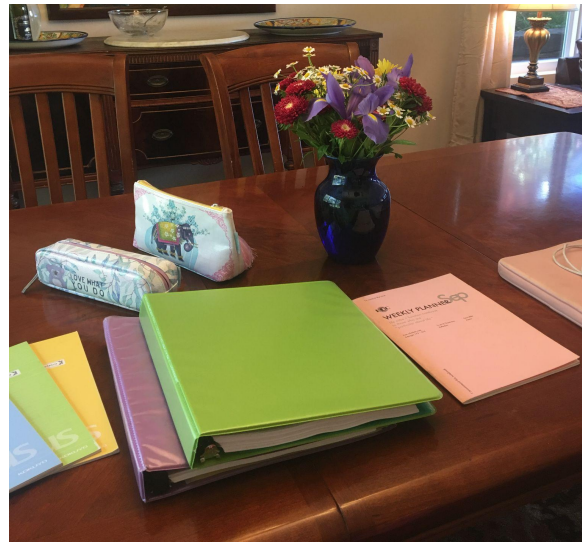
NOTE: You can be a blend of many different learning styles!



# Studying Environment

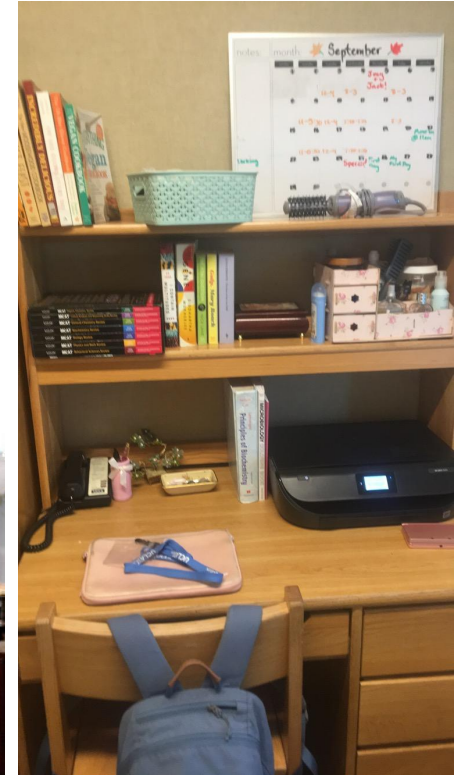
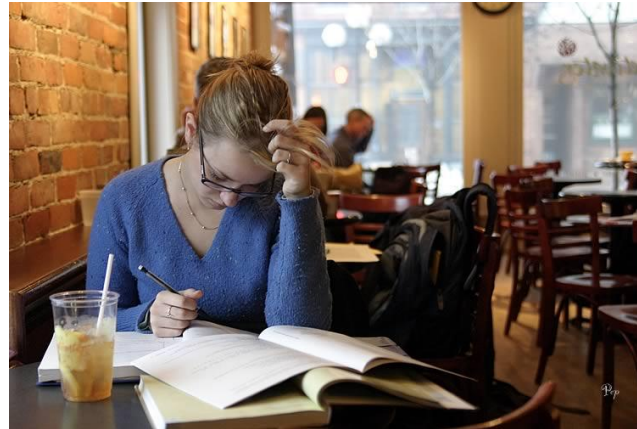
## Locations:

- Home
- Library
- Coffee Shop



## Things to consider:

- Responsibilities
- Distractions
- Sound level
- Time of Day
- Solo or with a group



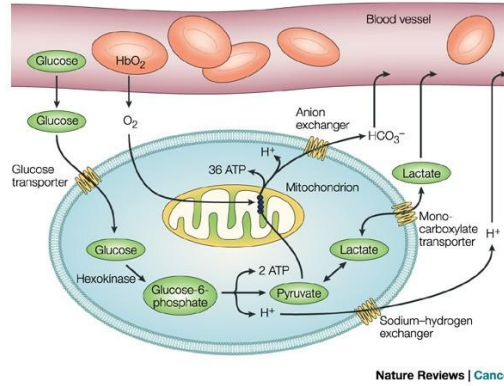
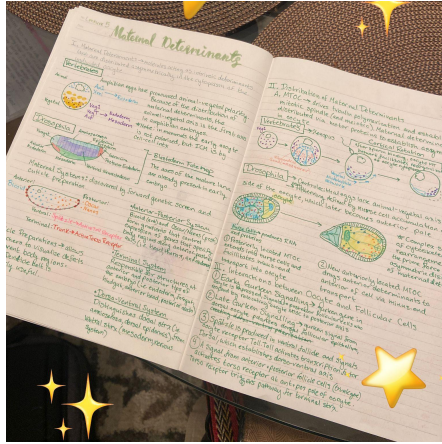
# Studying at Community College

## Resources:

- School Library
- Study Rooms
- Studying Labs (ex. Math Lab, Computer Labs, Writing Center, etc.)
- MESA
- Tutoring Resources
- Disabled Student Programs
- Ask your Professors!

Your local Community College may not have all of these resources available. If you are able to commute, consider transferring to another larger community college near you.

# Studying for Biology, Anatomy, or Physiology



**Memorization Heavy!**

Rewriting notes

Make a study group to discuss class content or important pathways

Make flashcards or use Quizlet/Anki to memorize information



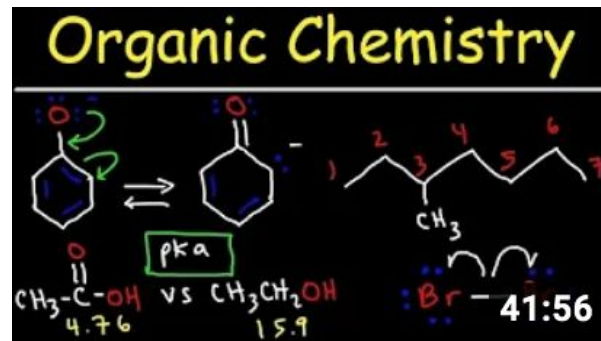
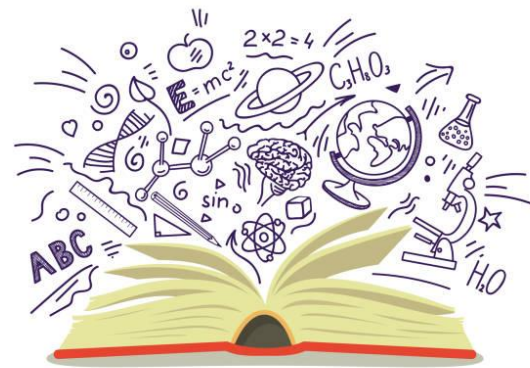
# Studying for Chemistry, Math, and Physics

## Repetition is key!

Complete all practice problems and find new ones from Textbooks

Watch videos for topics you don't understand (Kahn Academy, The Organic Chemistry Tutor, AK Lectures, Recorded Lectures)

Take notes to stay engaged in lecture





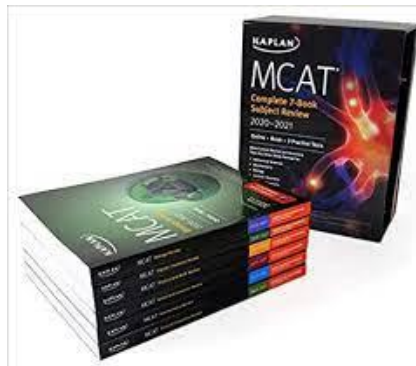
# Transferring!

## Common Concerns:

- Switching from Semester System to a Quarter System
  - Semester System is usually 15 weeks, Quarter System is 10 weeks
  - Most UCs (except Berkeley and Merced) are on Quarter System
- Curved grades
  - Most sciences classes have a curve, but it will never hurt you
- Larger classes
  - Upper-division classes are smaller than lower-division , but still much larger than the typical class size at community colleges
- Less homework, more accountability
  - Practice problems and practice exams are offered, but often not required
  - You still need to do them to do well!

# Studying for the MCAT

- Save your notes!
- Determine if you want to take gap year(s)
- Expect to study full-time for 3 months, or part-time for 6 months
- Use your time wisely
- Practice problems and Practice Exams are key to success
  - Jack Westin has free practice problems and CARS passages
  - Kaplan, Blueprint, Princeton Review etc. exams are good practice, but scores are deflated
  - AAMC resources are closest to the actual exam, save them for last
  - Thoroughly review the problems you got wrong



MEDSCHOOLCOACH

Section	Question	Topic/Question	Correct Answer	Why Correct Answer is Correct/Why Was I Wrong	Strategy for Next Time
C/P	4	Gases: If all of Gas X is held in a sealed container at STP, what will be the approximate volume?	22.4L	Easy answer! I accidentally added up all of the moles of gas produced instead of focusing on just the one mole of Gas X.	Read the questions a little closer. Maybe highlight exactly what the question is asking.
C/P	12	Vectors: Two vectors of magnitudes A = 8 units and B = 5 units make an angle that varies from 0 to 180 degrees. The magnitude of the resultant A + B vector cannot equal:	2 units	The smallest possible value of the resultant would be 3 units when A and B are antiparallel at 180 degrees. The largest possible resultant is 13 units when they are parallel and making an angle of 0 degrees. So for this question, all I needed to do was establish the range of possible values and find the outlier (2 in this case). To find the angle, the answer key uses the formula $\cos^{-1} (A^2 - B^2 - C^2) / (A \times B \times 2)$ Where C is the units given in the answer key.	I didn't review vectors before this, but the math is really simple. If I see a similar problem I'll remember to add the smaller (lying parallel at 0 degrees) or subtract the smaller from the big (lying antiparallel at 180 degrees) to find a range of values.
C/P	13	Optics: What is the effect of the PRK laser in treating nearsightedness?	The radius of curvature of the cornea is increased.	My gut said this one, but I changed my answer. The passage states that the treatment for myopia is to laser off a small portion of the apex of the cornea. This flattens the cornea slightly, which causes an increase in the radius of curvature. The radius of curvature extends from the surface to the focal point. Myopia is caused by an abnormally shortened focal length that lays in front of the retina. To treat it, we need to extend the focal point back to the retina, thereby increasing the radius of curvature.	This makes sense now. I was thinking too literally (shorter cornea means shorter radius?) and I forgot what exactly radius of curvature meant.
C/P	17	Intermolecular Forces: The intermolecular forces that exist within the NH3 gas are:	Dipole-dipole and LDF	I knew this one too! I thought that gases only exhibit van der Waals forces, but in reality ideal gasses exhibit little to no intermolecular forces. This question didn't have none of the above as an answer, so I should have assumed that I was looking for any possible intermolecular force present. NH3 has a strong permanent dipole so that was definitely an answer choice. It also has LDF (like everything). I would also assume that it exhibits hydrogen bonding because the H is bound to N (also works for F and O)	Don't overthink it! Ideal gasses exhibit little intermolecular forces, but if a question wants me to list the possible IMF then go with what you see.