

## How to use Step 1-Preclinical

*By Dr. Jason Ryan, MD, Founder of Boards & Beyond*

Members often ask me the best way to use Boards & Beyond, and the real answer is “whatever way works best for you.” Everyone studies and remembers information in different ways, so the study strategy that gets one medical student a solid passing score on the USMLE Step 1 exam might not work for you at all.

I realize that this is an unsatisfying answer, so here is a guide to how I would use Boards & Beyond to study for Step 1. This is a method that has been used by many of my students with good success.

### Go Slow

Especially if this is your first time watching a Boards & Beyond video, go slow. Pause and go back if you need to. Make sure you understand each point in the video before moving on to the next one.

### Take Notes

The best way to learn from a Boards & Beyond video is to take notes while you watch. Turn your viewing experience from a passive to an active exercise. Watch as if you were in class with a live lecturer, but with the ability to pause or rewind if you miss something. We recommend taking notes in the margins of our books or the PDF files included in your subscription. Write down key points. Make sketches. Underline words. By engaging your motor brain in addition to the visual and auditory senses, you will retain more information.

### Review and Take the Quizzes

After watching a video, wait 24 hours before taking the associated quiz. During this time, review your notes as if you were preparing for a quiz in class. This is also a great time to review other resources that cover topics from the videos, such as [First Aid for the USMLE](#)—you can now [view First Aid’s high-yield content from within Boards & Beyond](#). For students who like to use Anki, we recommend the [AnKing Step Deck](#) (and if you subscribe to Anki premium, you can now [access Boards & Beyond from Anki](#)). You can unsuspend cards after you watch the video and go through them before taking the quiz. Between the video, a review of your notes, First Aid, Anki, and reading from books (many of which can be found through your institution’s library page), you should have a solid foundation for the material. Then, take the quiz and carefully review each answer explanation. Add new information to your notes based on things you learn from the quizzes.

### Start Basic

Begin by watching videos in these sections: [Basic Pharmacology](#), [Biochemistry](#), [Cell Biology](#), [Genetics](#), [Pathology](#), and [Immunology](#). These topics lay the foundation for later learning in organ systems. If you understand concepts in these areas, you will more easily grasp advanced topics like diseases and treatments.

### Move Ahead

After watching the Boards & Beyond sections on the basic topics listed above, move on to organ systems and other topics like [Cardiology](#), [Endocrinology](#), [Infectious Disease](#), [Gastroenterology](#), [Hematology](#), [Neurology](#), [Renal](#), [Ophthalmology](#), and [Pulmonary](#). Finish up by watching the videos on [Biostatistics & Epidemiology](#), [Behavioral Science](#), [Dermatology](#), [Musculoskeletal](#), [Psychiatry](#), [Reproductive](#), and [Anesthesia](#).

### Make Custom Quizzes

Once you've gone through all of our videos and quizzes, use the [Quizzes Homepage](#) to create custom quizzes for yourself. The quiz creator tool allows you to build a quiz using any topics you choose. You can also filter for used/unused questions and correct/incorrect questions once you have selected one or more topics. Create quizzes for yourself to go through all of the content areas a second time. The questions should be familiar to you at this point. Seeing them a second time will reinforce the material. If you struggle with certain topics, go back and watch those videos again.

### Move On

Once you've watched all of our videos, reviewed your notes, taken the associated quizzes, and used custom quizzes to re-test yourself, you should have a strong foundation for Step 1. Many students supplement with [UWorld](#), [NBME exams](#), or other resources at this point to reinforce the material. These Qbanks and resources will hold more value for you once you've experienced the full scope of Boards & Beyond to build your knowledge base.