

## **DAT Study Tips\***

### **Biology**

Materials: DAT Destroyer, Feralis Biology Notes, Cliff's AP Bio 3rd Edition, DAT Bootcamp (Both Cliff's AP Bio and Feralis Notes are free online)

Biology is one of the most time consuming sections to study for, given that the scope of the material covered in DAT biology is so randomly big. Cliff's AP Bio 3rd Edition is very comprehensive, so I would recommend starting with that. Take notes and study it in detail at least once.

Feralis Biology Notes is a condensed, very detailed compilation summary of Cliff's AP Bio 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition; it is great for reviewing specific topics that you are weak in, but it is harder to read since it is so dense.

DAT Bootcamp is great for practicing; do all of the practice tests, take notes on the questions that you get wrong, and study those questions/topics extensively using Cliff's AP Bio 3rd Edition and/or Feralis Biology Notes. Again, the material covered on the exam is very random, so your practice test scores can vary in range depending on what questions you get on that specific test.

DAT Destroyer Biology is significantly harder than the actual exam. It is completely fine if you don't finish the problems in DAT Destroyer, but it is a good practice problem bank for the difficult questions on DAT biology if you have extra time to get more practice. If you are under time crunch, focus on Cliff's AP Bio 3rd Edition and DAT Bootcamp.

There are 30 questions in the DAT biology section; about 25 are questions that were covered in Cliff's AP Bio 3rd Edition; about 5 questions are difficult questions that cover random details that DAT Bootcamp and DAT Destroyer can help cover. I personally mainly studied Cliff's AP Bio 3rd Edition and the DAT Bootcamp practice test questions for DAT biology.

## **General Chemistry (GC)**

Materials: DAT Destroyer, Chad's videos, DAT Bootcamp

GC is one of the most high yielding sections on the DAT. The scope of the material is fairly defined unlike the Biology section, so it is very doable to improve your score in this section.

Chad's videos are very comprehensive and useful for covering all the material you need to know for GC. Go through all the videos, take notes, and do the quizzes. The videos and quizzes cover more than what you need to know, since it is also a MCAT study material.

Once you have gone through all of Chad's videos. Start practicing using DAT Bootcamp and DAT Destroyer. DAT Bootcamp practice exams are great for GC, because the wording and the distribution of types of questions are very similar to the actual DAT. Again, take notes on the questions that you get wrong, and read your notes on those questions and topics.

DAT Destroyer is actually useful for studying GC. It is significantly harder than the actual DAT, but it helps to cover the difficult questions (about 4) that come up on the actual DAT.

There are 30 questions on GC. It is a mix of calculation based questions and conceptual questions. About 4 questions are trickier questions that you can prepare for by doing DAT Bootcamp and DAT Destroyer practice questions. Sometimes there are 1-2 questions on lab techniques. You can find a list of lab techniques on DAT Bootcamp Study Strategies.

## **Organic Chemistry (OC)**

Materials: DAT Destroyer, Chad's videos, DAT Bootcamp

OC is very similar to GC in the way that you can study for it. It is also a high yielding section, and the scope of the material is also defined like the GC section.

Like the GC section, start with Chad's videos to cover all the material you need to know for OC. Go through all the videos, take notes, and do the quizzes.

Once you have gone through all of Chad's videos. Start practicing using DAT Bootcamp and DAT Destroyer. Again, take notes on the questions that you get wrong, and read your notes on those questions and topics. The DAT Bootcamp practice tests are similar to the actual DAT

DAT Destroyer is very useful for studying GC. It is also harder than the actual DAT. The organic chemistry roadmaps in DAT Destroyer are useful for reviewing all the reactions given the starting reagent.

There are 30 questions on OC. It is a mix of reaction questions ( $A+B \rightarrow ?$ ) and conceptual questions. Overall, there are no specifically harder questions on this section, but given the scope of the material (numerous reactions), it is important to know the material in completion as much as possible.

## **PAT**

Materials: DAT Bootcamp, Crack The DAT

The PAT section of DAT consists of 6 different sections with 90 questions (15 question in each section). The most important part of this section is timing. Given that you only have 60 minutes to complete 90 questions, you have to practice how to pace yourself properly so you get through all of the questions. Find out what sections that you can get through with maximal speed and accuracy, and make sure you have time to get through all of those sections, so you can focus on the rest with more time and less pressure. When studying for the PAT section, it is essential to practice consistently. Do at least 5 questions of each section everyday. Make sure you know how to properly solve them.

DAT Bootcamp has tutorials (under study strategies) to get you started on learning how to solve PAT questions of each section. DAT Bootcamp is very useful in explaining the solutions for each question, and it is just slightly harder than the actual DAT. Do not get discouraged if your first few practice exam scores are low. With consistent practice, you will learn how to pace yourself better and you will become faster at solving these kinds of questions, so your score will most likely improve drastically.

Crack The DAT is also useful as extra practice problem bank. It is not necessary to do them, but it is for extra practice if you have time. Crack The DAT questions vary in difficulty level; some are slightly easier and some are the same difficulty as the actual DAT. The solution explanation is not as helpful as that of the DAT Bootcamp.

This section of the DAT can seem very intimidating at first, but it is important to get started early on this section. Allow yourself at least 20 days to become fluent in solving the PAT questions.

## **Reading Comprehension (RC)**

Materials: DAT Bootcamp

RC is the hardest section to improve on the DAT. If you are not strong on RC already, try your best to start reading (Scientific American articles) consistently as early as possible, and practice summarizing the main idea in your head.

There are three passages on RC, 50 questions in total. The passages on DAT RC are factually based and related to scientific topics (Biology, Ecology, Physics, etc...). The questions are a mix of factual details, main idea, tone, and application (mainly the first two).

DAT Bootcamp is very similar to the actual exam in terms of question type, wording, and distribution, but it is harder than the actual exam. I recommend doing all of the DAT Bootcamp questions for consistent reading practice and getting used to the question types and wording. There are also study tips under the Study Strategy section of DAT Bootcamp; there you can find different methods that you can use to conquer the RC section. Try it out and determine which one works the best for you.

## **Quantitative Reasoning (QR)**

Materials: DAT Bootcamp, Math Destroyer

The QR section of the DAT is one of the most high yielding and doable sections. It does NOT cover materials from Calculus 1 and above. You should know minimum algebra, trigonometry, geometry, probability, and statistics. Start by memorizing formulae given in Math Destroyer or DAT Bootcamp or Chad's Videos' website. If you need extra help with reviewing certain concepts, Chad's Videos also include a math section.

Practice is very essential. Do all of the DAT Bootcamp questions, because it is very similar to the actual exam in terms of question type, wording, and distribution, but it is harder than the actual exam.

Math Destroyer is also great for the same reason as above, but it is also significantly harder than the actual exam. It is not necessary to do all of the questions; it is just for extra practice.

You are under a time crunch for the QR section (40 questions in 45 minutes). Learning how to pace yourself in this section is essential. Make sure you mark and skip the hard questions, go through the entire test first, and then go back to conquer the hard questions.

## Overall

### 1. DAT Bootcamp

- a. 3 months subscription for under \$300. If you are on a tight budget, share an account with friend(s) to split the cost
- b. The interface and setup of the website are very similar to the actual DAT testing screen
- c. One of the must-get study material, because the question type, wording, and distribution of question type are very similar to the actual exam
- d. Detailed and useful solution explanation
- e. Harder than the actual DAT
- f. I recommend doing all of the practice tests **at least once**, take notes on what you get wrong, and review your notes

### 2. Crack The DAT

- a. The question type and difficulty vary from section to section. Honestly, I personally would not recommend it (also it is not worth the price in my opinion) because the practice exams are not similar to the actual DAT
- b. The science sections are more random and unnecessarily hard than the actual DAT
- c. The RC section is easier than the actual DAT, and the question types are **not** similar.
- d. PAT is the only section that is similar to the actual DAT, but it varies in difficulty level; some are slightly easier and some are the same difficulty as the actual DAT. The solution explanation is not as helpful as that of the DAT Bootcamp. I used this for extra practice, and I did not do all of the questions.

### 3. DAT Destroyer 2017

- a. Useful only for covering harder questions on the science and math sections (to score above a 21-22)
- b. Not necessary to complete all of the questions, especially the Biology section
- c. It is significantly harder than DAT Bootcamp and the actual DAT; it is ok if you don't know everything covered in DAT Destroyer

### 4. Math Destroyer

- a. Extra practice for QR; not required
- b. Comprehensive formulae sheet
- c. Harder than the actual DAT, but it helps to prepare you for the harder questions

## 5. Feralis Biology Notes

- a. Very condensed and detailed Biology note compilation; harder to read
- b. Useful for learning extra information about your weaker topics in depth
- c. Free pdf can be found online

## 6. Cliff's AP Bio 3rd Edition

- a. Comprehensive and easy to read for reviewing basic Biology
- b. Free pdf can be found online
- c. One of the must-get materials for Biology
- d. Read over the entire book in detail **at least once**
- e. Revisit specific chapters for your weaker topics

## 7. Chad's videos

- a. One of the must-get materials for GC and OC
- b. About \$50 subscription per month. If you are on a tight budget, share an account with friend(s) to split the cost
- c. Watch the GC and OC videos, take notes, do quizzes **at least once**
- d. Math videos also available if needed
- e. Formulae sheet and study notes for all sections are available on the website
- f. Since it is also used as a MCAT study material, it goes more in depth than necessary, but the scope is generally the same.

## 8. 2007 DAT Exam

- a. Free pdf online
- b. Easier than the actual exam overall
- c. Not necessary, but good for practice

## 9. 2009 DAT Exam

- a. \$27+\$7 shipping for the paper copy; there is also an online version
- b. The QR section is **NOT** similar to the actual test, because in current years the QR questions focus more on reasoning instead of algebra and geometry. Not necessary to do this section unless you absolutely want to.
- c. The RC section was harder than the actual exam
- d. Overall, I personally do **not** think it is necessary to do this exam. I scored in the low 20's for all of my sections (I took it 2 days before my actual DAT), so I don't think it accurately measures your ability to perform well on the actual DAT

The study materials that I personally found to be most essential were **Cliff's AP Bio 3rd Edition, DAT Bootcamp, and Chad's Videos**. If you are under a time crunch, I would recommend you at least go through those three materials first, and then get extra practice and resource as needed. I studied for about a month, took a day off every week to relax (but still practice minimum amount of PAT questions). Not everyone study the same way, so please take the time to explore what study routine works for you the best, and then plan out your study schedule accordingly.

It is completely in your advantage to delay your DAT if you don't feel prepared; I delayed by exam by about 2 weeks, and I do not regret that decision at all. Honestly, I still panicked and felt extremely unprepared for the DAT on the day before my DAT, but I felt like I was more excited to be over with it, and that was how I determined that I was ready to take the DAT.

Lastly, some general advice: the point of practice tests is not to estimate your score; it is essential to take note on what you struggle with and internalize the material. So do not get discouraged by your practice test scores; I would say that no practice test accurately measured my actual DAT score.

I sincerely wish you the best of luck on your DAT, and I hope this study tip has been helpful to you.

*\*This DAT Study Tips document was created by a JHU Student and Dental School Applicant. The statements made above are 100% the student-dental school applicant's opinion and advice. The student-dental school applicant's DAT scores were: 25PAT/25QR/25RC/28BIO/26GC/30OC/28TS/27AA*