

Introduction to Question Banks: Peer Tutors Share Pros and Cons

Question Bank	Pros	Cons
<p>USMLE Easy https://new.usmle-easy.com/institution <i>Note: Be sure to sign in using the "Institutional" log-in.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USMLE Easy is good for the first year and half of second year to prepare for exams. I used USMLEasy during the Reproductive block in organ systems. Good for seeing material in a question format. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caught too many mistakes in both grammar/spelling and explanations/content. I didn't find the explanations very useful (lacked necessary detail) and sometimes the explanation didn't match the question. Many of the questions I encountered were superficial/one-step questions based on your knowledge of facts. Overall, I would try to avoid this one, unless you just need to see things in a question format.
<p>Board Vitals http://online.statref.com/BoardVitals.aspx?SessionID=24B74D4LVBXHTSU <i>Note: Use your cmich.edu account and validate your email after registration.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I used BoardVitals during our Renal/Endo block. I liked the way they asked questions, it was similar to a typical NBME style test. They had great figures/graphs incorporated into their questions. I found Board Vitals helpful for some of the biomedical ethics, statistics, and psychiatry questions. I felt that UWorld lacked in these areas. (<i>Step 1 study</i>) For a free resource, I thought BoardVitals was great. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explanations were lacking and there seemed to be a lot of "low-yield" information, which could be considered a pro/con depending on what stage of preparation you are in.
<p>USMLE Rx: https://www.usmle-rx.com/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I started USMLE-Rx in Neuro and have stuck to this one ever since. Reinforces the material presented in First Aid by putting the material in a realistic question format. Presents some extra information that isn't in FA, which can be useful. Questions written well and while not exactly similar to the style encountered from NBME, is still very close. Helps illustrate major ideas that are good to know. When analyzing the questions, Rx provides good explanations and appropriate pictures and even provides the First Aid pages that the question was written from, which is extremely convenient. Used USMLE Rx as extra questions for micro and drugs because it was nice to have extra questions that tested the high yields (<i>Step 1 study</i>). Great reinforcement of First Aid content, and great big picture questions. Overall, great resource to learn from and it goes on sale (50% off) a lot. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explanations are usually good and satisfactory as they relate to FA, but if you're looking for more detail behind mechanisms and patho/phys, this may not be the best resource. May give you a false sense of security since I thought the questions were more straightforward than the questions in a typical NBME exam. Rx only addresses how well you know First Aid, and while that is still very useful given how good First Aid is for Step 1, there is still important information that students need to know that is not entirely addressed, which makes sense as First Aid is a review book and not a primary source. Lacks sufficient physiology questions. Definitely doesn't go into as much detail in the explanation.

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<p>Kaplan Qbank https://www.kaptest.com/medical-prep/usmle</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent/perfect explanations. • Great physiology questions. • Covers important details of microbiology very well. • References several major resources (First Aid, Pathoma, Kaplan MedEssentials) by page number so you can review concepts in your resource of choice. • References several major resources (First Aid, Pathoma, Kaplan MedEssentials) by page number so you can review concepts in your resource of choice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some questions can be minutiae focused.
<p>UWorld https://www.uworld.com/home.aspx</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have been using UWorld for the majority of my question prep. The explanations are excellent and explain concepts very clearly and concisely, I think it is important to get accustomed to board-style questions as early as possible (UWorld is most similar to Step questions), can be and should be used as a learning tool rather than an assessment. Many people tend to start UWorld late and try to save questions for the end, but there are over 2400 questions to get through and their value as learning tools should be exploited. • Closest a student can get to NBME written questions. • Very in-depth clinical scenarios to illustrate a variety of concepts, similar to NBME type questions. Also has very in-depth diagrams and explanations for all their answers to really help you understand all aspects of the question. • Most resembles Step 1. • Very concise representation of information. • Good explanations for each answer choice when analyzing a question. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive. • Does not allow you to take screen shots or copy, making it difficult to make your own notes. • Hard to take notes on a computer when analyzing questions because they are trying to prevent copyright infringement. For that reason, I do my questions on my iPad so I can write up notes on my computer. • Some concepts may not be heavily tested subjects so it might be hard to learn more about those topics elsewhere. • I honestly cannot think of any cons of using UWorld.