Books for Premedical Students
(for your infinite free time; revised January 2015)

All premedical students should read…

*Medical School Admission Requirements: the Most Authoritative Guide to All U.S. and Canadian Medical Schools*, published yearly by the AAMC (also known as the MSAR, available from www.aamc.org). This is an essential book: it is the most accurate, up-to-date guide to the US and Canadian allopathic medical schools.

*The Official Guide to the MCAT Exam*, published by the AAMC. This is an essential book, too: it demystifies the exam and the medical school admissions process. It’s your best resource for deciding how to study for the exam.


A must-read website for all premeds: [https://www.aamc.org/students/aspiring/](https://www.aamc.org/students/aspiring/)

A must-read website for prospective M.D./Ph.D.’s: [https://www.aamc.org/students/research/mdphd/](https://www.aamc.org/students/research/mdphd/)

Useful reading for health professions school applicants:

*Write for Success: Preparing a Successful Essay for Your Application to Health Professions School*, by Evelyn Jackson and Harold Bardo, a book published by the NAAHP

*Interviewing for Health Professions Schools*, a pamphlet produced by the NAAHP

These NAAHP publications can be ordered online from the organization—see [http://www.naahp.org/Publications/InterviewBrochure.aspx](http://www.naahp.org/Publications/InterviewBrochure.aspx) and [http://www.naahp.org/Publications/WriteforSuccess.aspx](http://www.naahp.org/Publications/WriteforSuccess.aspx) for details.

Non-fiction books about life in medical school and residency:

*Match Day: One Day and One Dramatic Year in the Lives of Three Young Doctors*, by Brian Eule

*A Not Entirely Benign Procedure, Revised Edition: Four Years as a Medical Student*, by Perri Klass, M.D.

*Treatment Kind and Fair: Letters to a Young Doctor*, by Perri Klass, M.D.

Non-fiction books about life as a physician:

*Something for the Pain: Compassion and Burnout in the ER*, by Dr. Paul Austin

*Hope in Hell: Inside the World of Doctors Without Borders*, by Dan Bertolotti

*Patients and Doctors: Life-Changing Stories from Primary Care*, by Jeffrey Borkan, Shmuel Reis, Jack Medalie, and Dov Steinmetz

*Another Day in the Frontal Lobe: A Brain Surgeon Exposes Life on the Inside*, by Dr. Katrina Firlik

*Paradise General: Riding the Surge at a Combat Hospital in Iraq*, by Dr. Dave Hnida

*This Side of Doctoring: Reflections from Women in Medicine*, by Eliza Lo Chin, M.D.

*Complications: A Surgeon’s Notes on an Imperfect Science*, by Atul Gawande, M.D.

*Better: A Surgeon’s Notes on Performance*, by Atul Gawande, M.D.

*The Measure of Our Days*, by Jerome Groopman, M.D.
How Doctors Think, by Jerome Groopman, M.D.

The Blood of Strangers: Stories from Emergency Medicine, by Dr. Frank Huyler

Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure the World, by Tracy Kidder

Level 4: Virus Hunters of the CDC, by Joseph P. McCormick, M.D. and Susan Fisher-Hoch, M.D.

Six Months in Sudan: A Young Doctor in a War-Torn Village, by James Masalyk, M.D.

The Woman with a Worm in Her Head and Other True Stories of Infectious Disease, by Pamela Nagami, M.D.

What Doctors Feel: How Emotions Affect the Practice of Medicine, by Danielle Ofri, M.D.

Becoming Dr. Q: My Journey from Migrant Farm Worker to Brain Surgeon, by Alfredo Quinones-Hinojosa, M.D. and Mim Eichler Rivas

Every Patient Tells a Story: Medical Mysteries and the Art of Diagnosis, by Lisa Sanders, M.D.

God’s Hotel: A Doctor, A Hospital, and a Pilgrimage to the Heart of Medicine, by Victoria Sweet, M.D., Ph.D.

My Own Country: A Doctor’s Story of a Town and Its People in the Age of AIDS, by Abraham Verghese, M.D.

Non-fiction books about health science, health policy, health ethics, and health care reform:

Snake Oil Science: The Truth About Complementary and Alternative Medicine, by R. Barker Bausell

First, Do No Harm, by Lisa Belkin

How We Do Harm: A Doctor Breaks Ranks About Being Sick in America, by Otis Wenn Brawley, M.D. with Paul Goldberg

America’s Bitter Pill: Money, Politics, Backroom Deals, and the Fight to Fix Our Broken Healthcare System, by Steven Brill

The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures, by Anne Fadiman

Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End, by Atul Gawande, M.D.

The Checklist Manifesto: How to Get Things Right, by Atul Gawande, M.D.

Bad Science: Quacks, Hacks and Big Pharma Flacks, by Ben Goldacre, M.D.

Health Care Reform: What It Is, Why It’s Necessary, How It Works, by Jonathan Gruber, with H.P. Newquist

Unaccountable: What Hospitals Won’t Tell You and How Transparency Can Revolutionize Health Care, by Marty Makary, M.D.

The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer, by Siddhartha Mukherjee, M.D.

Do You Believe in Magic? The Sense and Nonsense of Alternative Medicine, by Paul Offit, M.D.

An Imperfect Offering: Humanitarian Action for the Twenty-First Century, by James Orbinski, M.D.

Safe Patients, Smart Hospitals: How One Doctor’s Checklist Can Help Us Change Health Care from the Inside Out, by Peter Pronovost, M.D., Ph.D., and Eric Vohr

The Healing of America: A Global Quest for Better, Cheaper, and Fairer Health Care, by T.R. Reid

Trick or Treatment: The Undeniable Facts About Alternative Medicine, by Simon Singh and Edzard Ernst, M.D.

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, by Rebecca Skloot
The Creative Destruction of Medicine: How the Digital Revolution Will Create Better Health Care, by Eric Topol, M.D.

Overdiagnosed: Making People Sick in the Pursuit of Health, by Dr. Gilbert Welch, Dr. Lisa Schwartz, and Dr. Steven Woloshin

Interesting websites and blogs:

Atul Gawande, the surgeon and health care reform expert, is a frequent contributor to The New Yorker, and his work is always worth reading. His articles can be accessed at http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/bios/atul_gawande/search?contributorName=atul%20gawande.

The journal Health Affairs provides in-depth coverage of health care and health care delivery systems, and has its own blog, the Health Affairs Blog, available at healthaffairs.org/blog/.


Science’s Science Insider blog’s subtitle says it all: “Breaking news and analysis from the world of science policy.” The url is http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/. For premedical students interested in biomedical research, it’s a valuable read.

Another important blog for premedical students interested in biomedical research is Nature’s news blog, available at http://blogs.nature.com/news/.

NPR has two interesting health-related blogs: its main health blog, Shots, is available at http://www.npr.org/blogs/health/, and its Goats and Soda blog, which covers international health and public health issues, and is available at http://www.npr.org/blogs/goatsandsoda/.