

A LEVEL BIOLOGY

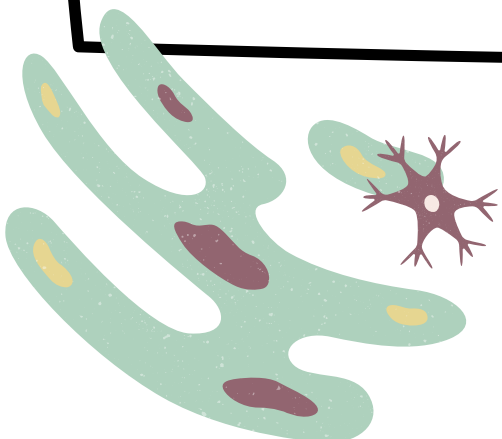
Year 11-12 Transition | Pre Knowledge Topics

WHAT TO EXPECT:

A level Biology will use your knowledge from GCSE and build on this to help you understand new and more demanding ideas.

EXPECTATIONS

- 1 Complete the following tasks to ensure your knowledge is current and that you are fully prepared to begin studying effectively. These tasks are designed to refresh key concepts, identify any gaps in understanding, and help you start your learning with confidence and clarity.



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DNA AND THE GENETIC CODE:

In living organisms nucleic acids (DNA and RNA) have important roles and functions related to their properties. The sequence of bases in the DNA molecule determines the structure of proteins, including enzymes. The double helix and its four bases store the information that is passed from generation to generation. The sequence of the base pairs adenine, thymine, cytosine and guanine tell ribosomes in the cytoplasm how to construct amino acids into polypeptides and produce every characteristic we see. DNA can mutate leading to diseases including cancer and sometimes anomalies in the genetic code are passed from parents to babies in disease such as cystic fibrosis, or can be developed in unborn foetuses such as Down's Syndrome.

Read the information on the website (you could make more Cornell notes if you wish): [A level Biology will use your knowledge from GCSE and build on this to help you understand new and more demanding ideas.](#)

TASK:

Produce a wall display to put up in your classroom in September. You might make a poster or do this using PowerPoint or similar.

Your display should use images, keywords and simple explanations to:

- Define gene, chromosome, DNA and base pair.
- Describe the structure and function of DNA and RNA.
- Explain how DNA is copied in the body.
- Outline some of the problems that occur with DNA replication and what the consequences of this might be.

VIDEOS:

- <http://ed.ted.com/lessons/the-twisting-tale-of-dna-judith-hauck>
- <http://ed.ted.com/lessons/where-do-genes-come-from-carl-zimmer>



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EVOLUTION:

Transfer of genetic information from one generation to the next can ensure continuity of species or lead to variation within a species and possible formation of new species. Reproductive isolation can lead to accumulation of different genetic information in populations potentially leading to formation of new species (speciation). Sequencing projects have read the genomes of organisms ranging from microbes and plants to humans. This allows the sequences of the proteins that derive from the genetic code to be predicted. Gene technologies allow study and alteration of gene function in order to better understand organism function and to design new industrial and medical processes.

Read the information on these websites (you could make more Cornell notes if you wish):

TASK:

Produce a one page revision guide for an AS Biology student that recaps the key words and concepts in this topic.

Your revision guide should:

- Describe the speciation.
- Explain what a genome is
- Give examples of how this information has already been used to develop new treatments and technologies.

VIDEOS:

- <http://ed.ted.com/lessons/how-to-sequence-the-human-genome-mark-j-kiel>
- <http://ed.ted.com/lessons/the-race-to-sequence-the-human-genome-tien-nguyen>



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BIODIVERSITY:

The variety of life, both past and present, is extensive, but the biochemical basis of life is similar for all living things. Biodiversity refers to the variety and complexity of life and may be considered at different levels. Biodiversity can be measured, for example within a habitat or at the genetic level. Classification is a means of organising the variety of life based on relationships between organisms and is built around the concept of species. Originally classification systems were based on observable features but more recent approaches draw on a wider range of evidence to clarify relationships between organisms. Adaptations of organisms to their environments can be behavioural, physiological and anatomical.

Adaptation and selection are major factors in evolution and make a significant contribution to the diversity of living organisms.

TASK:

Write a persuasive letter to an MP, organisation or pressure group promoting conservation to maintain biodiversity.

Your letter should:

- Define what is meant by species and classification.
- Describe how species are classified.
- Explain one way scientists can collect data about a habitat, giving an example. Explain adaptation and how habitat change may pose a threat to niche species.

VIDEOS:

- <http://ed.ted.com/lessons/why-is-biodiversity-so-important-kim-preshoff>
- <http://ed.ted.com/lessons/can-wildlife-adapt-to-climate-change-erin-eastwood>



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EXCHANGE AND TRANSPORT:

Organisms need to exchange substances selectively with their environment and this takes place at exchange surfaces. Factors such as size or metabolic rate affect the requirements of organisms and this gives rise to adaptations such as specialised exchange surfaces and mass transport systems. Substances are exchanged by passive or active transport across exchange surfaces. The structure of the plasma membrane enables control of the passage of substances into and out of cells.

TASK:

Create a poster or display to go in your classroom in September. Your poster should either: compare exchange surfaces in mammals and fish or compare exchange surfaces in the lungs and the intestines. You could use a Venn diagram to do this.

Your poster should:

- Describe diffusion, osmosis and active transport.
- Explain why oxygen and glucose need to be absorbed and waste products removed. Compare and contrast your chosen focus.

VIDEOS:

- <http://ed.ted.com/lessons/insights-into-cell-membranes-via-dish-detergent-ethan-perlstein>
- <http://ed.ted.com/lessons/what-do-the-lungs-do-emma-bryce>



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CELLS:

The cell is a unifying concept in biology, you will come across it many times during your two years of A level study. Prokaryotic and eukaryotic cells can be distinguished on the basis of their structure and ultrastructure. In complex multicellular organisms cells are organised into tissues, tissues into organs and organs into systems. During the cell cycle genetic information is copied and passed to daughter cells. Daughter cells formed during mitosis have identical copies of genes while cells formed during meiosis are not genetically identical

TASK:

Produce a one page revision guide to share with your class in September summarising one of the following topics: Cells and Cell Ultrastructure, Prokaryotes and Eukaryotes, or Mitosis and Meiosis.

Whichever topic you choose, your revision guide should include:

- Key words and definitions
- Clearly labelled diagrams
- Short explanations of key ideas or processes.

VIDEOS:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcTuQpuJyD8>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0k-enzoeOM>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCLmR9-YY7o>



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BIOLOGICAL MOLECULES:

Biological molecules are often polymers and are based on a small number of chemical elements. In living organisms carbohydrates, proteins, lipids, inorganic ions and water all have important roles and functions related to their properties. DNA determines the structure of proteins, including enzymes. Enzymes catalyse the reactions that determine structures and functions from cellular to whole-organism level. Enzymes are proteins with a mechanism of action and other properties determined by their tertiary structure. ATP provides the immediate source of energy for biological processes.

TASK:

Krabbe disease occurs when a person doesn't have a certain enzyme in their body. The disease affects the nervous system. Write a letter to a GP or a sufferer to explain what an enzyme is.

Your poster should:

- Describe the structure of an enzyme.
- Explain what enzymes do inside the body.

VIDEOS:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8WJ2KENIKO>
- <http://ed.ted.com/lessons/activation-energy-kickstarting-chemical-reactions-vance-kite>



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ECOSYSTEMS:

Ecosystems range in size from the very large to the very small. Biomass transfers through ecosystems and the efficiency of transfer through different trophic levels can be measured. Microorganisms play a key role in recycling chemical elements. Ecosystems are dynamic systems, usually moving from colonisation to climax communities in a process known as succession. The dynamic equilibrium of populations is affected by a range of factors. Humans are part of the ecological balance and their activities affect it both directly and indirectly. Effective management of the conflict between human needs and conservation help to maintain sustainability of resources.

TASK:

Produce a newspaper or magazine article about one ecosystem (e.g. the arctic, the Sahara, the rainforest, or something closer to home like your local woodland, nature reserve or shoreline).

Your article should include:

- Key words and definitions
- Pictures or diagrams of your chosen ecosystem.
- A description of the changes that have occurred in this ecosystem.
- An explanation of the threats and future changes that may further alter this ecosystem.

VIDEOS:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZKIHe2LDP8>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E8dkWQVFAoA>



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CONTROL SYSTEMS:

Homeostasis is the maintenance of a constant internal environment. Negative feedback helps maintain an optimal internal state in the context of a dynamic equilibrium. Positive feedback also occurs. Stimuli, both internal and external, are detected leading to responses. The genome is regulated by a number of factors. Coordination may be chemical or electrical in nature.

TASK:

Produce a poster to display in your classroom in September summarising one of the following topics: Temperature Control, Water and the Kidneys, Glucose, or The Liver.

Whichever topic you choose, your poster or display should include:

- Key words and definitions
- Clearly labelled diagrams
- Short explanations of key ideas or processes.

VIDEOS:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x4PPZCLnVKA>



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ENERGY FOR BIOLOGICAL PROCESSES:

In cellular respiration, glycolysis takes place in the cytoplasm and the remaining steps in the mitochondria. ATP synthesis is associated with the electron transfer chain in the membranes of mitochondria and chloroplasts in photosynthesis energy is transferred to ATP in the light-dependent stage and the ATP is utilised during synthesis in the light-independent stage.

TASK:

Produce an A3 annotated information poster that illustrates the process of cellular respiration and summarises the key points.

Your poster should include:

- Both text and images Be visually stimulating
- Key words and definitions Clearly labelled diagrams
- Short explanations of key ideas or processes.

VIDEOS:

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00jbG_cfGuQ_kA
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2f7YwCtHcgk>



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SCIENTIFIC AND INVESTIGATIVE SKILLS:

As part of your A level you will complete a practical assessment. This will require you to carry out a series of practical activities as well as planning how to do them, analysing the results and evaluating the methods. This will require you to: use appropriate apparatus to record a range of quantitative measurements (to include mass, time, volume, temperature, length and pH), use appropriate instrumentation to record quantitative measurements, such as a colorimeter or photometer, use laboratory glassware apparatus for a variety of experimental techniques to include serial dilutions, use of light microscope at high power and low power, including use of a graticule, produce scientific drawing from observation with annotations, use qualitative reagents to identify biological molecules, separate biological compounds using thin layer/paper chromatography or electrophoresis, safely and ethically use organisms, use microbiological aseptic techniques, including the use of agar plates and broth, safely use instruments for dissection of an animal organ, or plant organ, use sampling techniques in fieldwork.

TASK:

Produce a glossary for the following key words:

- accuracy
- anomaly
- calibration
- causal link
- chance
- confounding variable
- control experiment
- control group
- control variable
- correlation
- dependent variable
- errors
- evidence
- fair test
- hypothesis
- independent
- null hypothesis
- precision
- probability
- protocol
- random distribution
- random error
- raw data
- reliability
- systematic error
- true value
- validity
- zero error

