

BIOLOGY - A LEVEL (A Linear Course)

Course introduction

Biology literally means 'the study of life'. Biology examines the structure, function, growth, origin, evolution, and distribution of living things. The course includes studies at the molecular level, through to the cellular level, on to whole organisms and finally ecology, investigating organisms' interactions with their environment.

Saving threatened species, feeding people, genetically modified organisms, stem cell research, and curing diseases - the 21st Century offers many challenges to a biologist.

Biological knowledge is increasing at a prodigious rate. Studying Biology gives you the skills and opportunities to advance human knowledge and understanding in today's world, in order to make a difference to tomorrow's world



Entrance requirements

Students who wish to study this subject must have acquired a minimum of 5 GCSEs or equivalent at 4-9, including English Language and Maths at 6 or above and at least a Grade 6 in Core and Additional Science (or Biology) GCSE.

How the course is taught

Biology is taught using a mixture of practical, group work, problem solving and whole class teaching, tailored to specific needs. You will be expected to read around the subject independently and complete regular homework.

Areas covered by the course

- 1 - Biological molecules
- 2 - Cells
- 3 - Organisms exchange substances with their environment
- 4 - Genetic information, variation and relationships between organisms
- 5 - Energy transfers in and between organisms (A Level only)
- 6 - Organisms respond to changes in their internal and external environments (A Level only)
- 7 - Genetics, populations, evolution and ecosystems (A Level only)
- 8 - The control of gene expression (A Level only)

Career opportunities

Whether you decide to go on to work in a hospital, laboratory, courtroom, ocean, zoo, classroom, TV Studio, boardroom or industry (to name a few), you can make a contribution as a biologist. A background in biology gives you transferable skills and increases your career options. Biology is always relevant to life! Biology combines well with other sciences such as Chemistry and Physics. The following also have close links: Physical Education, Geography, Psychology, Mathematics and Health and Social Care. However many students study Biology alongside completely unrelated subjects.

How the course is assessed

Paper 1:

What is Assessed

- Any content from topics 1 – 4, including relevant practical skills.

Assessed

- Written exam: 2 hours
- 91 marks
- 35% of A-Level

Questions

- 76 marks: a mixture of short and long answer questions
- 15 marks: extended response questions

Paper 2:

What is Assessed

- Any content from topics 5 – 8, including relevant practical skills.

Assessed

- Written exam: 2 hours
- 91 marks
- 35% of A-Level

Questions

- 76 marks: a mixture of short and long answer questions
- 15 marks: comprehension question

Paper 3:

What is Assessed

- Any content from topics 1 – 8, including relevant practical skills.

Assessed

- Written exam: 2 hours
- 78 marks
- 30% of A-Level

Questions

- 38 marks: structured questions, including practical techniques
- 15 marks: critical analysis of given experimental data
- 25 marks: one essay from a choice of two titles