



BIOLOGY

A Level Subject Information



Biology A Level (AQA)

Biology A-level goes into much more detail than you will have covered at GCSE. It will give you the skills to make connections and associations with all living things around you. Biology literally means the study of life and if that is not important, what is? Being such a broad topic, you are bound to find a specific area of interest, plus it opens the door to a fantastic range of interesting careers.

Biology is of particular relevance for careers in: biological science, medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry, nursing, midwifery, pharmacy, biochemistry, conservation, physiotherapy, optometry, dietetics and speech therapy.

Syllabus Content and Assessments

Year 1 Subject Content	Year 2 Subject Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Biological molecules• Cells• Organisms exchange substances with their environment• Genetic information, variation and relationships between organisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Energy transfers in and between organisms• Organisms respond to changes in their internal and external environments• Genetics, populations, evolution and ecosystems• The control of gene expression

Practical Endorsement

There is no coursework component to the course and 15% of the marks for A-level Biology are based on what you learned in your practicals. You will achieve a qualification following the successful completion of twelve practicals throughout the A level course. This is separate to your Biology examination grade.

A level Assessment

Assessment will be by three, two hour examinations at the end of the course. The examinations will be synoptic and contain assessment of the practical skills developed during the endorsement. The examination will consist of short and longer answer questions including a 25 mark essay at the end of paper three. 10% of Biology exams will assess mathematical skills at higher tier GCSE level.

What is needed to study Biology?

Biology is a very challenging A level subject which requires dedication and hard work. Good grades in Science and Additional Science or Separate Sciences and Mathematics at GCSE are essential. There is a large factual content, which you must be prepared to spend much time and effort learning. You may wish to consider taking another Science subject such as Chemistry, Physics or Mathematics alongside Biology, as these subjects would complement Biology very well.

What should I do to prepare for A level Biology?

Make sure you are confident in your **understanding** and **recall** of the following GCSE topics; DNA, cell division, inheritance, evolution, gene technology, nervous system, homeostasis, cells, diffusion, osmosis, active transport, digestion, photosynthesis, respiration, food chains and webs, carbon cycle, nitrogen cycle. **Longman GCSE Biology** textbook is a good resource to use to recap GCSE work.

Advanced Biology for you by Gareth Williams is an excellent A Level text book although you will be provided with an electronic version of the text book that follows the course (**AQA Biology A Level, Second Edition, Oxford Press, Toole and Toole ISBN 978-0-19-835177-1**).

You could start by reading up on biological molecules, cells, the cell membrane and transport as these form part of the first units of study.

Any students interested in the course may obtain more detailed information from Head of Biology, Mr G. J. Walker.