

Biology

Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (2021) (Syllabus 6093)

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INTRODUCTION

The O-Level Biology syllabus is designed to have less emphasis on factual materials, but a much greater emphasis on the understanding and application of scientific concepts and principles. This approach has been adopted in recognition of the need for students to develop skills that will be of long-term value in an increasingly complex and globalised world, rather than focusing on large quantities of factual material, which may have only short-term relevance.

It is envisaged that teaching and learning programmes based on this syllabus will feature a wide variety of learning experiences designed to promote inquiry. Teachers are encouraged to use a combination of appropriate strategies in teaching topics in this syllabus. The assessment will be specifically intended to test skills, comprehension and insight in familiar and unfamiliar contexts.

AIMS

These are not listed in order of priority.

The aims are to:

1. provide, through well-designed studies of experimental and practical Biology, a worthwhile educational experience for all students, whether or not they go on to study science beyond this level and, in particular, to enable them to acquire sufficient understanding and knowledge to
 - 1.1 become confident citizens in a technological world, able to take or develop an informed interest in matters of scientific importance
 - 1.2 recognise the usefulness, and limitations, of the scientific method and to appreciate its applicability in other disciplines and in everyday life
 - 1.3 be suitably prepared for studies beyond Ordinary Level in Biology, in applied sciences or in science related courses.
2. develop abilities and skills that
 - 2.1 are relevant to the study and practice of science
 - 2.2 are useful in everyday life
 - 2.3 encourage efficient and safe practice
 - 2.4 encourage effective communication.
3. develop attitudes relevant to science such as
 - 3.1 concern for accuracy and precision
 - 3.2 objectivity
 - 3.3 integrity
 - 3.4 inquiry
 - 3.5 initiative
 - 3.6 inventiveness.
4. stimulate interest in and care for the local and global environment.

5. promote an awareness that
 - 5.1 the study and practice of science are co-operative and cumulative activities, and are subject to social, economic, technological, ethical and cultural influences and limitations
 - 5.2 the applications of science may be both beneficial and detrimental to the individual, the community and the environment
 - 5.3 science transcends national boundaries and that the language of science, correctly and rigorously applied, is universal
 - 5.4 the use of information technology (IT) is important for communications, as an aid to experiments and as a tool for the interpretation of experimental and theoretical results.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

These describe the knowledge, skills and abilities which candidates are expected to demonstrate at the end of the course. They reflect those aspects of the aims which will be assessed.

A Knowledge with Understanding

Candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in relation to:

1. scientific phenomena, facts, laws, definitions, concepts, theories
2. scientific vocabulary, terminology, conventions (including symbols, quantities and units)
3. scientific instruments and apparatus, including techniques of operation and aspects of safety
4. scientific quantities and their determination
5. scientific and technological applications with their social, economic and environmental implications.

The subject content defines the factual knowledge that candidates may be required to recall and explain. Questions testing those objectives will often begin with one of the following words: *define*, *state*, *describe*, *explain* or *outline*. (See the *Glossary of Terms*)

B Handling Information and Solving Problems

Candidates should be able – in words or by using symbolic, graphical and numerical forms of presentation – to:

1. locate, select, organise and present information from a variety of sources
2. translate information from one form to another
3. manipulate numerical and other data
4. use information to identify patterns, report trends and draw inferences
5. present reasoned explanations for phenomena, patterns and relationships
6. make predictions and propose hypotheses
7. solve problems.

These assessment objectives cannot be precisely specified in the subject content because questions testing such skills may be based on information which is unfamiliar to the candidate. In answering such questions, candidates are required to use principles and concepts that are within the syllabus and apply them in a logical, reasoned or deductive manner to a novel situation. Questions testing these objectives will often begin with one of the following words: *predict*, *suggest*, *calculate* or *determine*. (See the *Glossary of Terms*)

C Experimental Skills and Investigations

Candidates should be able to:

1. follow a sequence of instructions
2. use techniques, apparatus and materials
3. make and record observations, measurements and estimates
4. interpret and evaluate observations and experimental results
5. plan investigations, select techniques, apparatus and materials
6. evaluate methods and suggest possible improvements.

WEIGHTING OF ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

Theory Papers (Papers 1 and 2)

- A** Knowledge with Understanding, approximately 45% of the marks.
B Handling Information and Solving Problems, approximately 55% of the marks.

Practical (Paper 3)

- C** Experimental Skills and Investigations, 100% of the marks.

Paper 3 will assess appropriate aspects of objectives C1 to C6 in the following skill areas

- Planning (P)
- Manipulation, measurement and observation (MMO)
- Presentation of data and observations (PDO)
- Analysis, conclusions and evaluation (ACE)

The assessment of Planning (P) will have a weighting of 15%. The assessment of skill areas MMO, PDO and ACE will have a weighting of 85%.

SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT

Candidates are required to enter for Papers 1, 2 and 3.

Paper	Type of Paper	Duration	Marks	Weighting
1	Multiple Choice	1h	40	30%
2	Structured and free-response questions	1h 45 min	80	50%
3	Practical	1 hr 50 min	40	20%

Theory Papers

Paper 1 (1 h, 40 marks)

This paper will consist of 40 compulsory multiple choice items.

Paper 2 (1 h 45 min, 80 marks)

This paper will consist of two sections.

Section A will carry 50 marks and will consist of a variable number of compulsory structured questions.

Section B will carry 30 marks and will consist of 3 free response questions. The first two questions are compulsory questions, one of which will be a data-based question requiring candidates to interpret, evaluate or solve problems using a stem of information. This question will carry 8–12 marks. The last question will be presented in an either/or form and will carry 10 marks.

Practical

Paper 3 (1 h 50 min, 40 marks)

This paper will comprise two to three compulsory practical questions, based mainly on Assessment Objective C.

One or more of the questions may incorporate assessment of Planning (P) and require candidates to apply and integrate knowledge and understanding from different sections of the syllabus. The assessment of PDO and ACE may include questions on data-analysis which do not require practical equipment and apparatus.

Candidates are not allowed to refer to notebooks, textbooks or any other information during the assessment.

CONTENT STRUCTURE

THEMES	Topics
I. PRINCIPLES OF BIOLOGY	1. Cell Structure and Organisation 2. Movement of Substances 3. Biological Molecules
II. MAINTENANCE AND REGULATION OF LIFE PROCESSES	4. Nutrition in Humans 5. Nutrition in Plants 6. Transport in Flowering Plants 7. Transport in Humans 8. Respiration in Humans 9. Excretion in Humans 10. Homeostasis 11. Co-ordination and Response in Humans
III. CONTINUITY OF LIFE	12. Reproduction 13. Cell Division 14. Molecular Genetics 15. Inheritance
IV. MAN AND HIS ENVIRONMENT	16. Organisms and their Environment

SUBJECT CONTENT

THEME I: PRINCIPLES OF BIOLOGY

Overview

A basic characteristic of life is the hierarchy of structural order within the organism. Robert Hooke (1635–1703), one of the first scientists to use a microscope to examine pond water, cork and other things, was the first to refer to the cavities he saw in cork as 'cells', Latin for chambers. Subsequent scientists developed Hooke's discovery of the cell into the Cell Theory upon which modern Biology is built. The Cell Theory states that all organisms are composed of one or more cells, and that those cells have arisen from pre-existing cells.

In this section, two key principles of biology are studied. The first principle is the correlation of structure to function. This is illustrated by how each part of the cell is suited for its intended function. The second principle is that specialisation results in the division of labour which enables the cell to effectively carry out a number of vital life processes. A strong foundation in the principles of biology will pave the way for students to master the content in the subsequent topics.

1. Cell Structure and Organisation

Content

- Plant and Animal Cells
- Specialised Cells, Tissues and Organs

Learning Outcomes

Candidates should be able to:

- (a) identify cell structures (including organelles) of typical plant and animal cells from diagrams, photomicrographs and as seen under the light microscope using prepared slides and fresh material treated with an appropriate temporary staining technique:
 - chloroplasts
 - cell surface membrane
 - cell wall
 - cytoplasm
 - cell vacuoles (large, sap-filled in plant cells, small, temporary in animal cells)
 - nucleus
- (b) identify the following membrane systems and organelles from diagrams and electron micrographs:
 - endoplasmic reticulum
 - mitochondria
 - Golgi body
 - ribosomes
- (c) state the functions of the membrane systems and organelles identified above
- (d) compare the structure of typical animal and plant cells

- (e) state, in simple terms, the relationship between cell function and cell structure for the following:
- absorption – root hair cells
 - conduction and support – xylem vessels
 - transport of oxygen – red blood cells
- (f) differentiate cell, tissue, organ and organ system

Use the knowledge gained in this section in new situations or to solve related problems.

2. Movement of Substances

Content

- Diffusion
- Osmosis
- Active Transport

Learning Outcomes

Candidates should be able to:

- (a) define *diffusion* and describe its role in nutrient uptake and gaseous exchange in plants and humans
- (b) define *osmosis* and describe the effects of osmosis on plant and animal tissues
- (c) define *active transport* and discuss its importance as an energy-consuming process by which substances are transported against a concentration gradient, as in ion uptake by root hairs and uptake of glucose by cells in the villi

Use the knowledge gained in this section in new situations or to solve related problems.

3. Biological Molecules

Content

- Water and Living Organisms
- Carbohydrates, Fats and Proteins
- Enzymes

Learning Outcomes

Candidates should be able to:

- (a) state the roles of water in living organisms
- (b) list the chemical elements which make up
- carbohydrates
 - fats
 - proteins

- (c) describe and carry out tests for
- starch (iodine in potassium iodide solution)
 - reducing sugars (Benedict's solution)
 - protein (biuret test)
 - fats (ethanol emulsion)
- (d) state that large molecules are synthesised from smaller basic units
- glycogen from glucose
 - polypeptides and proteins from amino acids
 - lipids such as fats from glycerol and fatty acids
- (e) explain enzyme action in terms of the 'lock and key' hypothesis
- (f) explain the mode of action of enzymes in terms of an active site, enzyme-substrate complex, lowering of activation energy and enzyme specificity
- (g) investigate and explain the effects of temperature and pH on the rate of enzyme catalysed reactions

Use the knowledge gained in this section in new situations or to solve related problems.

THEME II: MAINTENANCE AND REGULATION OF LIFE PROCESSES**Overview**

Life is sustained through the integrated organisation of the whole organism. In humans, the maintenance and regulation of life processes include nutrition, transport, respiration, excretion, homeostasis and co-ordination and response. The key overarching theme in the study of the organ systems is the correlation between form and function.

4. Nutrition in Humans**Content**

- Human Alimentary Canal
- Chemical Digestion
- Absorption and Assimilation

Learning Outcomes

Candidates should be able to:

- (a) describe the functions of main regions of the alimentary canal and the associated organs: mouth, salivary glands, oesophagus, stomach, duodenum, pancreas, gall bladder, liver, ileum, colon, rectum, anus, in relation to ingestion, digestion, absorption, assimilation and egestion of food, as appropriate
- (b) describe peristalsis in terms of rhythmic wave-like contractions of the muscles to mix and propel the contents of the alimentary canal
- (c) describe the functions of enzymes (e.g. amylase, maltase, protease, lipase) in digestion, listing the substrates and end-products
- (d) describe the structure of a villus and its role, including the role of capillaries and lacteals in absorption
- (e) state the function of the hepatic portal vein as the transport of blood rich in absorbed nutrients from the small intestine to the liver
- (f) state the role of the liver in
 - carbohydrate metabolism
 - fat digestion
 - breakdown of red blood cells
 - metabolism of amino acids and the formation of urea
 - breakdown of alcohol
- (g) describe the effects of excessive consumption of alcohol: reduced self-control, depressant, effect on reaction times, damage to liver and social implications

Use the knowledge gained in this section in new situations or to solve related problems.

5. Nutrition in Plants

Content

- Leaf Structure
- Photosynthesis

Learning Outcomes

Candidates should be able to:

- identify and label the cellular and tissue structure of a dicotyledonous leaf, as seen in transverse section using the light microscope and describe the significance of these features in terms of their functions, such as the
 - distribution of chloroplasts in photosynthesis
 - stomata and mesophyll cells in gaseous exchange
 - vascular bundles in transport
- state the equation, in words and symbols, for photosynthesis
- describe the intake of carbon dioxide and water by plants
- state that chlorophyll traps light energy and converts it into chemical energy for the formation of carbohydrates and their subsequent uses
- investigate and discuss the effects of varying light intensity, carbon dioxide concentration and temperature on the rate of photosynthesis (e.g. in submerged aquatic plant)
- discuss light intensity, carbon dioxide concentration and temperature as limiting factors on the rate of photosynthesis

Use the knowledge gained in this section in new situations or to solve related problems.

6. Transport in Flowering Plants

Content

- Water and Ion Uptake
- Transpiration and Translocation

Learning Outcomes

Candidates should be able to:

- identify the positions and explain the functions of xylem vessels, phloem (sieve tube elements and companion cells) in sections of a herbaceous dicotyledonous leaf and stem, using the light microscope
- relate the structure and functions of root hairs to their surface area, and to water and ion uptake
- explain the movement of water between plant cells, and between them and the environment in terms of water potential (calculations on water potential are **not** required)
- outline the pathway by which water is transported from the roots to the leaves through the xylem vessels
- define the term *transpiration* and explain that transpiration is a consequence of gaseous exchange in plants

- (f) describe and explain
- the effects of variation of air movement, temperature, humidity and light intensity on transpiration rate
 - how wilting occurs
- (g) define the term *translocation* as the transport of food in the phloem tissue and illustrate the process through translocation studies

Use the knowledge gained in this section in new situations or to solve related problems.

7. Transport in Humans

Content

- Circulatory System

Learning Outcomes

Candidates should be able to:

- (a) identify the main blood vessels to and from the heart, lungs, liver and kidney
- (b) state the role of blood in transport and defence
- red blood cells – haemoglobin and oxygen transport
 - plasma – transport of blood cells, ions, soluble food substances, hormones, carbon dioxide, urea, vitamins, plasma proteins
 - white blood cells – phagocytosis, antibody formation and tissue rejection
 - platelets – fibrinogen to fibrin, causing clotting
- (c) list the different ABO blood groups and all possible combinations for the donor and recipient in blood transfusions
- (d) relate the structure of arteries, veins and capillaries to their functions
- (e) describe the transfer of materials between capillaries and tissue fluid
- (f) describe the structure and function of the heart in terms of muscular contraction and the working of valves
- (g) outline the cardiac cycle in terms of what happens during systole and diastole (histology of the heart muscle, names of nerves and transmitter substances are **not** required)
- (h) describe coronary heart disease in terms of the occlusion of coronary arteries and list the possible causes, such as diet, stress and smoking, stating the possible preventative measures

Use the knowledge gained in this section in new situations or to solve related problems.

8. Respiration in Humans

Content

- Human Gas Exchange
- Aerobic Respiration
- Anaerobic Respiration

Learning Outcomes

Candidates should be able to:

- (a) identify on diagrams and name the larynx, trachea, bronchi, bronchioles, alveoli and associated capillaries
- (b) state the characteristics of, and describe the role of, the exchange surface of the alveoli in gas exchange
- (c) describe the removal of carbon dioxide from the lungs, including the role of the carbonic anhydrase enzyme
- (d) describe the role of cilia, diaphragm, ribs and intercostal muscles in breathing
- (e) describe the effect of tobacco smoke and its major toxic components – nicotine, tar and carbon monoxide, on health
- (f) define and state the equation, in words and symbols, for aerobic respiration in humans
- (g) define and state the equation, in words only, for anaerobic respiration in humans
- (h) describe the effect of lactic acid in muscles during exercise

Use the knowledge gained in this section in new situations or to solve related problems.

9. Excretion in Humans

Content

- Structure and Function of Kidneys
- Kidney Dialysis

Learning Outcomes

Candidates should be able to:

- (a) define *excretion* and explain the importance of removing nitrogenous and other compounds from the body
- (b) outline the function of the nephron with reference to ultra-filtration and selective reabsorption in the production of urine
- (c) outline the role of anti-diuretic hormone (ADH) in osmoregulation
- (d) outline the mechanism of dialysis in the case of kidney failure

Use the knowledge gained in this section in new situations or to solve related problems.

10. Homeostasis**Content**

- Principles of Homeostasis
- Skin

Learning Outcomes

Candidates should be able to:

- define *homeostasis* as the maintenance of a constant internal environment
- explain the basic principles of homeostasis in terms of stimulus resulting from a change in the internal environment, a corrective mechanism and negative feedback
- identify on a diagram of the skin: hairs, sweat glands, temperature receptors, blood vessels and fatty tissue
- describe the maintenance of a constant body temperature in humans in terms of insulation and the role of: temperature receptors in the skin, sweating, shivering, blood vessels near the skin surface and the co-ordinating role of the hypothalamus

Use the knowledge gained in this section in new situations or to solve related problems.

11. Co-ordination and Response in Humans**Content**

- Receptors – Eye
- Nervous System – Neurones (Reflex Action)
- Effectors – Endocrine Glands

Learning Outcomes

Candidates should be able to:

- state the relationship between receptors, the central nervous system and the effectors
- describe the structure of the eye as seen in front view and in horizontal section
- state the principal functions of component parts of the eye in producing a focused image of near and distant objects on the retina
- describe the pupil reflex in response to bright and dim light
- state that the nervous system – brain, spinal cord and nerves, serves to co-ordinate and regulate bodily functions
- outline the functions of sensory neurones, relay neurones and motor neurones
- discuss the function of the brain and spinal cord in producing a co-ordinated response as a result of a specific stimulus in a reflex action
- define a *hormone* as a chemical substance, produced by a gland, carried by the blood, which alters the activity of one or more specific target organs and is then destroyed by the liver
- explain what is meant by an endocrine gland, with reference to the islets of Langerhans in the pancreas

- (j) state the role of the hormone adrenaline in boosting blood glucose levels and give examples of situations in which this may occur
- (k) explain how the blood glucose concentration is regulated by insulin and glucagon as a homeostatic mechanism
- (l) describe the signs, such as an increased blood glucose level and glucose in urine, and the treatment of *diabetes mellitus* using insulin

Use the knowledge gained in this section in new situations or to solve related problems.

THEME III: CONTINUITY OF LIFE**Overview**

The many aspects of form and function that we have examined in this syllabus can be viewed in the widest context as various adaptations aimed at ensuring reproductive success. Reproduction is vital for the survival of species across generations. In 1953, James Watson and Francis Crick developed the model for deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), a chemical that had then recently been deduced to be the physical carrier of inheritance. In this section, we examine how genes interact to produce hereditary characteristics in the offspring. This section focuses on understanding the processes involved in the continuity of life and how genetic information is passed from one generation to the next.

12. REPRODUCTION**Content**

- Asexual Reproduction
- Sexual Reproduction in Plants
- Sexual Reproduction in Humans
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Learning Outcomes

Candidates should be able to:

- (a) define *asexual reproduction* as the process resulting in the production of genetically identical offspring from one parent
- (b) define *sexual reproduction* as the process involving the fusion of nuclei to form a zygote and the production of genetically dissimilar offspring
- (c) identify and draw, using a hand lens if necessary, the sepals, petals, stamens and carpels of one, locally available, named, insect-pollinated, dicotyledonous flower, and examine the pollen grains using a microscope
- (d) state the functions of the sepals, petals, anthers and carpels
- (e) use a hand lens to identify and describe the stamens and stigmas of one, locally available, named, wind-pollinated flower, and examine the pollen grains using a microscope
- (f) outline the process of pollination and distinguish between self-pollination and cross-pollination
- (g) compare, using fresh specimens, an insect-pollinated and a wind-pollinated flower
- (h) describe the growth of the pollen tube and its entry into the ovule followed by fertilisation (production of endosperm and details of development are **not** required)
- (i) identify on diagrams, the male reproductive system and give the functions of: testes, scrotum, sperm ducts, prostate gland, urethra and penis
- (j) identify on diagrams, the female reproductive system and give the functions of: ovaries, oviducts, uterus, cervix and vagina
- (k) briefly describe the menstrual cycle with reference to the alternation of menstruation and ovulation, the natural variation in its length, and the fertile and infertile phases of the cycle with reference to the effects of progesterone and estrogen only
- (l) describe fertilisation and early development of the zygote simply in terms of the formation of a ball of cells which becomes implanted in the wall of the uterus

- (m) state the functions of the amniotic sac and the amniotic fluid
- (n) describe the function of the placenta and umbilical cord in relation to exchange of dissolved nutrients, gases and excretory products (structural details are **not** required)
- (o) discuss the spread of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and methods by which it may be controlled

Use the knowledge gained in this section in new situations or to solve related problems.

13. Cell Division

Content

- Mitosis
- Meiosis

Learning Outcomes

Candidates should be able to:

- (a) state the importance of mitosis in growth, repair and asexual reproduction
- (b) explain the need for the production of genetically identical cells
- (c) identify, with the aid of diagrams, the main stages of mitosis
- (d) state what is meant by *homologous pairs* of chromosomes
- (e) identify, with the aid of diagrams, the main stages of meiosis (names of the sub-divisions of prophase are **not** required)
- (f) define the terms *haploid* and *diploid*, and explain the need for a reduction division process prior to fertilisation in sexual reproduction
- (g) state how meiosis and fertilisation can lead to variation

Use the knowledge gained in this section in new situations or to solve related problems.

14. Molecular Genetics

Content

- The Structure of DNA
- The Role of DNA in Protein Synthesis
- Genes
- Genetic Engineering and Medical Biotechnology

Learning Outcomes

Candidates should be able to:

- (a) outline the relationship between DNA, genes and chromosomes
- (b) state the structure of DNA in terms of the bases, sugar and phosphate groups found in each of their nucleotides
- (c) state the rule of complementary base pairing

- (d) state that DNA is used to carry the genetic code, which is used to synthesise specific polypeptides (details of transcription and translation are **not** required)
- (e) state that each gene is a sequence of nucleotides, as part of a DNA molecule
- (f) explain that genes may be transferred between cells. Reference should be made to the transfer of genes between organisms of the same species or different species – transgenic plants or animals
- (g) briefly explain how a gene that controls the production of human insulin can be inserted into bacterial DNA to produce human insulin in medical biotechnology
- (h) discuss the social and ethical implications of genetic engineering, with reference to a named example

Use the knowledge gained in this section in new situations or to solve related problems.

15. Inheritance

Content

- The Passage of Information from Parent to Offspring
- The Nature of Genes and Alleles, and their Role in Determining the Phenotype
- Monohybrid Crosses
- Variation
- Natural and Artificial Selection

Learning Outcomes

Candidates should be able to:

- (a) define a *gene* as a unit of inheritance and distinguish clearly between the terms *gene* and *allele*
- (b) explain the terms dominant, recessive, codominant, homozygous, heterozygous, phenotype and genotype
- (c) predict the results of simple crosses with expected ratios of 3:1 and 1:1, using the terms homozygous, heterozygous, F₁ generation and F₂ generation
- (d) explain why observed ratios often differ from expected ratios, especially when there are small numbers of progeny
- (e) use genetic diagrams to solve problems involving monohybrid inheritance (genetic diagrams involving autosomal linkage or epistasis are **not** required)
- (f) explain co-dominance and multiple alleles with reference to the inheritance of the ABO blood group phenotypes (A, B, AB and O) and the gene alleles (I^A, I^B and I^o)
- (g) describe the determination of sex in humans – XX and XY chromosomes
- (h) describe mutation as a change in the structure of a gene such as in sickle cell anaemia, or in the chromosome number, such as the 47 chromosomes in the condition known as Down syndrome
- (i) name radiation and chemicals as factors which may increase the rate of mutation
- (j) describe the difference between continuous and discontinuous variation and give examples of each
- (k) state that variation and competition lead to differential survival of, and reproduction by, those organisms best fitted to the environment

- (l) give examples of environmental factors that act as forces of natural selection
- (m) explain the role of natural selection as a possible mechanism for evolution
- (n) give examples of artificial selection such as in the production of economically important plants and animals

Use the knowledge gained in this section in new situations or to solve related problems.

THEME IV: MAN AND HIS ENVIRONMENT**Overview**

All living organisms are part of a complex network of interactions called the web of life. This section focuses on the interrelationships between living things and the environment. These include two major processes. The first is the cycling of nutrients, as illustrated by the carbon cycle. The second major process is the flow of energy from sunlight to organisms further down the food chain.

Human activities can upset natural ecosystems, causing permanent damage not just to local environments but also the global environment. As a part of this environment, humans must show a sense of responsibility for its maintenance.

16. Organisms and their Environment**Content**

- Energy Flow
- Food Chains and Food Webs
- Carbon Cycle
- Effects of Man on the Ecosystem
- Environmental Biotechnology
- Conservation

Learning Outcomes

Candidates should be able to:

- (a) briefly describe the non-cyclical nature of energy flow
- (b) explain the terms producer, consumer and trophic level in the context of food chains and food webs
- (c) explain how energy losses occur along food chains, and discuss the efficiency of energy transfer between trophic levels
- (d) describe and interpret pyramids of numbers and biomass
- (e) describe how carbon is cycled within an ecosystem and outline the role of forests and oceans as carbon sinks
- (f) evaluate the effects of
 - water pollution by sewage and by inorganic waste
 - pollution due to insecticides including bioaccumulation up food chains and impact on top carnivores
- (g) outline the roles of microorganisms in sewage treatment as an example of environmental biotechnology
- (h) discuss reasons for conservation of species with reference to the maintenance of biodiversity and how this is done, e.g. management of fisheries and management of timber production

Use the knowledge gained in this section in new situations or to solve related problems.

SUMMARY OF KEY QUANTITIES, SYMBOLS AND UNITS

The list below is intended as a guide to the more important quantities which might be encountered in teaching and learning. This list is not exhaustive.

<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Unit</i>
length	<i>l</i>	mm, cm, m
area	<i>A</i>	cm ² , m ²
volume	<i>V</i>	cm ³ , dm ³ , m ³
mass	<i>m</i>	mg, g, kg
concentration	<i>c</i>	g / dm ³
time	<i>t</i>	s, ms, min,
pH	pH	–
temperature	<i>T</i>	°C
energy	<i>E</i>	J

PRACTICAL ASSESSMENT

Scientific subjects are, by their nature, experimental. It is therefore important that an assessment of a candidate's knowledge and understanding of Science should include a component relating to practical work and experimental skills.

This assessment is provided in Paper 3 as a formal practical test and is outlined in the Scheme of Assessment.

Paper 3

This paper is designed to assess a candidate's competence in those practical skills which can realistically be assessed within the context of a formal test of limited duration.

Candidates will be assessed in the following skill areas:

(a) Planning (P)

Candidates should be able to

- identify key variables for a given question/problem
- outline an experimental procedure to investigate the question/problem
- describe how the data should be used in order to reach a conclusion
- identify the risks of the experiment and state precautions that should be taken to keep risks to a minimum

(b) Manipulation, measurement and observation (MMO)

Candidates should be able to

- set up apparatus correctly by following written instructions or diagrams
- use common laboratory apparatus and techniques to collect data and make observations
- describe and explain how apparatus and techniques are used correctly
- make and record accurate observations with good details and measurements to an appropriate degree of precision
- make appropriate decisions about measurements or observations

(c) Presentation of data and observations (PDO)

Candidates should be able to

- present all information in an appropriate form
- manipulate measurements effectively for analysis
- present all quantitative data to an appropriate number of decimal places/significant figures

(d) Analysis, conclusions and evaluation (ACE)

Candidates should be able to

- analyse and interpret data or observations appropriately in relation to the task
- draw conclusion(s) from the interpretation of experimental data or observations and underlying principles
- make predictions based on their data and conclusions
- identify significant sources of errors and explain how they affect the results
- state and explain how significant errors may be overcome or reduced, as appropriate, including how experimental procedures may be improved.

One, or more, of the questions may incorporate some assessment of skill area P, set in the context of the syllabus content, requiring candidates to apply and integrate knowledge and understanding from different sections of the syllabus. It may also require the treatment of given experimental data in drawing relevant conclusions and analysis of a proposed plan.

The assessment of skill areas MMO, PDO and ACE will be set mainly in the context of the syllabus content. The assessment of PDO and ACE may also include questions on data-analysis which do not require practical equipment and apparatus.

The material used in experiments will be closely related to the subject matter of the syllabus but will not necessarily be limited to the particular types mentioned in the curriculum content.

Candidates may be asked to carry out exercises comprising:

1. simple physiological experiments, involving tests for food substances, enzyme reactions, hydrogencarbonate indicator solution, cobalt(II) chloride paper and so on
2. simple physiological experiments, involving the use of sharp instruments on plant or animal materials (accurate observations of these specimens will need a hand lens of not less than $\times 6$ magnification for each candidate)
3. manipulative skills in assembling apparatus, in using chemical reagents and in using such instruments as mounted needles, scalpels and razor blades, forceps and scissors
4. measurements using appropriate instruments (e.g. thermometer, syringe, measuring cylinder, ruler and so on) and simple arithmetical calculations
5. familiar and unfamiliar techniques to record observations and make deductions from them
6. recognition and observation of features of familiar and unfamiliar biological specimens, recording observations and making deductions about functions of whole specimens or their parts
7. clear line drawings of the specimens provided, indicating magnification and labelling familiar structures

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Candidates are expected to be familiar with the use of data-loggers. Assessment of Skill P may include the appropriate use of data-loggers.

When planning practical work, teachers should make sure that they do not contravene any school, education authority or government regulations which restrict the sampling, in educational establishments, of urine, saliva, blood or other bodily secretions and tissues. Candidates should also be aware of the need to take simple precautions for safety and/or accuracy.

Responsibility for safety matters rests with Centres.

Within the Scheme of Assessment, the practical paper constitutes 20% of the O-Level Biology examination. It is therefore recommended that the schemes of work include learning opportunities that apportion a commensurate amount of time for the development and acquisition of practical skills.

Apparatus List

This list given below has been drawn up in order to give guidance to Centres concerning the apparatus that is expected to be generally available for examination purposes. The list is not intended to be exhaustive and practical examinations may require additional apparatus and materials. Centres will be notified in advance of the details of the apparatus and materials required for each practical examination. General laboratory glassware and items that are commonly regarded as standard equipment in a Biology laboratory (e.g. Bunsen burner, tripod and gauze, safety goggles, paper towels and so on) are not included in this list.

Unless otherwise stated, the rate of allocation is 'per candidate'.

Light microscope, with high- and low-power objective lenses (2 candidates to 1)

Microscope slides and coverslips

Mounted needle

Hand lens (not less than $\times 6$)

Half metre rule or metre rule

30 cm plastic ruler with a mm scale

Syringes (e.g. 1 cm³, 5 cm³, 10 cm³)

Dropper/Pasteur pipettes

Measuring cylinders

Beakers

Petri dishes

Test-tube (some of which should be heat-resistant)

Test-tube rack and holder

Boiling tubes

Boiling tube rack

Glass rod

Rubber bungs to fit test-tubes and boiling tubes

Knife or scalpel

Forceps

Capillary tubes

Visking tubings

Rubber tubings

Thermometer: $-10\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ to $+110\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$

Stopwatch

White tile

Filter funnel and paper

Pestle and mortar

Spatulas

Glass marker pen

Cotton wool

Black paper

Aluminium foil

Balance to an accuracy of 0.01 g (to be made accessible to candidates)

Retort stand and clamp

Bench lamp with 60 W bulb

Distilled/deionised water in a wash bottle

Reagents

This list given below has been drawn up in order to give guidance to Centres concerning the standard reagents that are expected to be generally available for examination purposes. The list is not intended to be exhaustive and Centres would be notified in advance of the full list of all the reagents that are required for each practical examination.

- iodine solution, in a container with a dropping pipette
- Benedict's solution, in a container with a dropping pipette
- ethanol (denatured), in a stoppered bottle with a dropping pipette
- copper sulfate and sodium hydroxide solutions for Biuret tests or commercially prepared Biuret reagent, in bottles with droppers
- glucose solution
- starch solution
- sodium chloride
- dilute hydrochloric acid
- hydrogen carbonate indicator
- sodium hydrogen carbonate
- limewater
- Universal Indicator paper and chart
- litmus paper
- cobalt chloride paper
- methylene blue
- petroleum jelly (or similar)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN BIOLOGY PAPERS

It is hoped that the glossary will prove helpful to candidates as a guide, i.e. it is neither exhaustive nor definitive. The glossary has been deliberately kept brief not only with respect to the number of terms included but also to the descriptions of their meanings. Candidates should appreciate that the meaning of a term must depend in part on its context.

1. *Calculate* is used when a numerical answer is required. In general, working should be shown, especially where two or more steps are involved.
2. *Comment* is intended as an open-ended instruction, inviting candidates to recall or infer points of interest relevant to the context of the question, taking account of the number of marks available.
3. *Compare* requires candidates to provide both similarities and differences between things or concepts.
4. *Define (the term(s) ...)* is intended literally, only a formal statement or equivalent paraphrase being required.
5. *Describe* requires candidates to state in words (using diagrams where appropriate) the main points of the topic. It is often used with reference either to particular phenomena or to particular experiments. In the former instance, the term usually implies that the answer should include reference to (visual) observations associated with the phenomena.
6. *Determine* often implies that the quantity concerned cannot be measured directly but is obtained by calculation, substituting measured or known values of other quantities into a standard formula.
7. *Discuss* requires candidates to give a critical account of the points involved in the topic.
8. *Estimate* implies a reasoned order of magnitude statement or calculation of the quantity concerned, making such simplifying assumptions as may be necessary about the points of principle and about the values of quantities not otherwise included in the question.
9. *Explain* may imply reasoning or some reference to theory, depending on the context.

10. *Find* is a general term that may be variously interpreted as calculate, measure, determine, etc.
11. *List* requires a number of points, generally each of one word, with no elaboration. Where a given number of points is specified, this should not be exceeded.
12. *Measure* implies that the quantity concerned can be directly obtained from a suitable measuring instrument, e.g. length, using a rule, or mass, using a balance.
13. *Outline* implies brevity, i.e. restricting the answer to giving essentials.
14. *Predict* or *deduce* implies that the candidate is not expected to produce the required answer by recall but by making a logical connection between other pieces of information. Such information may be wholly given in the question or may depend on answers extracted from an earlier part of the question.
15. *Sketch*, when applied to graph work, implies that the shape and/or position of the curve need only be qualitatively correct, but candidates should be aware that, depending on the context, some quantitative aspects may be looked for, e.g. passing through the origin, having an intercept, asymptote or discontinuity at a particular value.

Sketch, when applied to diagrams, implies that a simple, freehand drawing is acceptable; nevertheless, care should be taken over proportions and the clear exposition of important details.
16. *State* implies a concise answer with little or no supporting argument, e.g. a numerical answer that can be obtained 'by inspection'.
17. *Suggest* is used in two main contexts, i.e. either to imply that there is no unique answer, or to imply that candidates are expected to apply their general knowledge to a 'novel' situation, one that may be formally 'not in the syllabus'.
18. *What is meant by (the term(s) ...)* normally implies that a definition should be given, together with some relevant comment on the significance or context of the term(s) concerned, especially where two or more terms are included in the question. The amount of supplementary comment intended should be interpreted in light of the indicated mark value.

SPECIAL NOTE

Units, significant figures

Candidates should be aware that misuse of units and/or significant figures, i.e. failure to quote units where necessary, the inclusion of units in quantities defined as ratios or quoting answers to an inappropriate number of significant figures, is liable to be penalised.

Calculators

An approved calculator may be used in all papers.