



BIOLOGY

STAFF

Dr Hounsell (HOD)
Mr Ellis
Mrs Edwards
Mrs Fitzgerald
Mrs Bailey
Mrs Wardlaw
Mrs Wood
(technician)

SUPPORT

We encourage you to seek help whenever you need it, so either come and see us or get in touch via email or Teams. C206 is open each lunchtime for you to drop in and get help.

INTRODUCTION

In biology, you have chosen an extremely rewarding subject, which will prepare you well for a wide range of future careers. Many of our Biology students go on to study medical-related degrees such as medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, radiography, pharmacology, pharmacy, optometry and various biomedical science courses. Many others follow biology-related degrees such as natural sciences, biology, biochemistry, genetics, ecology, microbiology and zoology. Whilst there is plenty of fascinating biological content to learn, it is important to remember that biology is a practical subject, and you will study a range of practical investigations and techniques. Biology is also a quantitative numerical science and so a basic level of mathematical ability is required of all students. 15% of the total exam marks will assess mathematical ability at GCSE grade 6 or above.

WHAT TO BRING FOR YOUR FIRST LESSON

You are expected to come prepared with all the basic equipment you would bring to any lesson. You will be provided class exercise book and a printed biology 'knowledge organiser' and specification booklet all of which should be brought to every lesson. You should always bring a scientific calculator that you are comfortable using for every lesson. At A level, you have some freedom to organise your work files as you see fit, but as a minimum, you should invest in a large lever arch file (preferably 4-ring) with dividers to help keep work from different teachers organized.

classwork, homework and independent study

Lessons will include practical work (including assessed practical), group work, learning activities, explanations and exam practice.

Your homework will always be to 'learn the biology'! This means that whatever work you do in between lessons, you should come to each one feeling as confident as you can with the material covered up to that point. Your teachers will however set specific tasks, including exam question practice and completion of sections from the specification booklet as formal homework. Typically, this work should take around 5 hours a week to complete.



You will have 3 formal synoptic assessments in biology throughout the year, which will take the form of a paper made up of exam questions which could assess any part of the course covered up to that point. You should also expect regular quizzes and other tasks, all designed to identify gaps in your knowledge and understanding that you can then work to fill!

In addition to any set homework, you **MUST** review every single lesson afterwards to ensure that you understand it, or you will quickly get left behind. This might include sorting and labelling the work in your folder, rewriting notes in your own words, writing summaries or spider diagrams, practicing drawing diagrams from memory using the knowledge organisers, etc.

A level biology is much harder than GCSE, so unfortunately you can never afford to coast, even if you did well at GCSE. Always ask your teachers if there is something you do not understand.

RESOURCES

You will be provided with printed copies of 'knowledge organisers' and specification booklet. These are not text books, but expanded versions of the course specification, which distil each topic down to the essentials of what you need to learn. We provide access to a host of electronic resources, including HGS biology course notes and packs of exam questions with answer books. Below is a selection of textbooks and revision guides that we recommend, and whilst it is not necessary for you to purchase them all, it could be highly beneficial to have your own copy of a text book, revision guide or both. Numerous other titles are available as a quick online search will prove – just be sure to search for resources relevant to Edexcel A level Biology Specification B (9BIO)

- **EDEXCEL A LEVEL BIOLOGY STUDENT BOOK 1** - ISBN: 9781471807343 (£28.99)
- **EDEXCEL A LEVEL BIOLOGY STUDENT BOOK 2** - ISBN: 9781471807374 (£28.99) **EDEXCEL A LEVEL BIOLOGY STUDENT BOOK (Y1 AND Y2)** - ISBN: 9781510469938 (£38.99)
- **REVISE EDEXCEL AS/A LEVEL BIOLOGY REVISION GUIDE** - ISBN: 9781447989967 (£11)
- **CGP BOOKS - HEAD START TO A-LEVEL BIOLOGY** - ISBN: 9781782942795 (£4.95)

WHAT TO DO TO PREPARE BEFORE STARTING THE COURSE

In the first couple of weeks of the autumn term you will sit a baseline assessment, which will help us to assess your knowledge and understanding of some of the fundamental areas of GCSE biology that will be developed at A level. As part of your preparation for this assessment, there is a pack of activities for you must complete prior to your arrival. Biology Bridging work is located on our website using this link
<https://www.heckgrammar.co.uk/sixth-form/subject-information/>

The start of the A-level course is always challenging, but you will find it easier if you do a little preparation over the summer, before the start of term.

Have a good summer, and we look forward to seeing you in September.