

# Syllabus

Cambridge O Level Biology

Syllabus code 5090

For examination in June and November 2013





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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Why choose Cambridge?

University of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) is the world's largest provider of international qualifications. Around 1.5 million students from 150 countries enter Cambridge examinations every year. What makes educators around the world choose Cambridge?

### Developed for an international audience

International O Levels have been designed specially for an international audience and are sensitive to the needs of different countries. These qualifications are designed for students whose first language may not be English and this is acknowledged throughout the examination process. The curriculum also allows teaching to be placed in a localised context, making it relevant in varying regions.

### Recognition

Cambridge O Levels are internationally recognised by schools, universities and employers as equivalent to UK GCSE. They are excellent preparation for A/AS Level, the Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE), US Advanced Placement Programme and the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma. CIE is accredited by the UK Government regulator, the Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator (Ofqual). Learn more at [www.cie.org.uk/recognition](http://www.cie.org.uk/recognition).

### Support

CIE provides a world-class support service for teachers and exams officers. We offer a wide range of teacher materials to Centres, plus teacher training (online and face-to-face) and student support materials. Exams officers can trust in reliable, efficient administration of exams entry and excellent, personal support from CIE Customer Services. Learn more at [www.cie.org.uk/teachers](http://www.cie.org.uk/teachers).

### Excellence in education

Cambridge qualifications develop successful students. They build not only understanding and knowledge required for progression, but also learning and thinking skills that help students become independent learners and equip them for life.

### Not-for-profit, part of the University of Cambridge

CIE is part of Cambridge Assessment, a not-for-profit organisation and part of the University of Cambridge. The needs of teachers and learners are at the core of what we do. CIE invests constantly in improving its qualifications and services. We draw upon education research in developing our qualifications.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.2 Why choose Cambridge O Level Biology?

International O Levels are established qualifications that keep pace with educational developments and trends. The International O Level curriculum places emphasis on broad and balanced study across a wide range of subject areas. The curriculum is structured so that students attain both practical skills and theoretical knowledge.

Cambridge O Level Biology is recognised by universities and employers throughout the world as proof of knowledge and understanding. Successful Cambridge O Level Biology candidates gain lifelong skills, including:

- a better understanding of the technological world, with an informed interest in scientific matters
- the ability to recognise the usefulness (and limitations) of scientific method, and how to apply this to other disciplines and in everyday life
- the development of relevant attitudes, such as a concern for accuracy and precision, objectivity, integrity, enquiry, initiative and inventiveness
- further interest in, and care for, the environment
- a better understanding of the influence and limitations placed on scientific study by society, economy, technology, ethics, the community and the environment
- the development of an understanding of the scientific skills essential for both further study at A Level and in everyday life.

Candidates may also study for a Cambridge O Level in a number of other science subjects including Physics and Chemistry. In addition to Cambridge O Levels, CIE also offers Cambridge IGCSE and International A & AS Levels for further study in both Biology as well as other science subjects. See [www.cie.org.uk](http://www.cie.org.uk) for a full list of the qualifications you can take.

## 1.3 How can I find out more?

### If you are already a Cambridge Centre

You can make entries for this qualification through your usual channels, e.g. your regional representative, the British Council or CIE Direct. If you have any queries, please contact us at [international@cie.org.uk](mailto:international@cie.org.uk).

### If you are not a Cambridge Centre

You can find out how your organisation can become a Cambridge Centre. Email either your local British Council representative or CIE at [international@cie.org.uk](mailto:international@cie.org.uk). Learn more about the benefits of becoming a Cambridge Centre at [www.cie.org.uk](http://www.cie.org.uk).

# 2. Assessment at a glance

## Cambridge O Level Biology Syllabus code 5090

All candidates enter for **three** papers – Papers 1 and 2 and either Paper 3 or 6.

<b>Paper 1: Multiple choice</b>		<b>1 hour</b>	
40 compulsory multiple choice questions. The questions involve four response options. 40 marks			
<b>Paper 2: Theory</b>		<b>1 hour 45 minutes</b>	
This paper has three sections. Section A carries 50 marks and consists of a small number of compulsory, structured questions. Section B carries 20 marks and consists of two compulsory questions. Each question is worth 10 marks. Section C carries 10 marks and candidates must choose <b>one</b> from a choice of two questions. 80 marks			
<b>Paper 3: Practical test</b>	<b>1 hour 15 minutes</b>	<b>Paper 6: Alternative to practical</b>	<b>1 hour</b>
This paper consists of two or three compulsory, practical questions. 40 marks		A written paper of questions designed to test past experience of practical work. 40 marks	

# 2. Assessment at a glance

## Availability

This syllabus is examined in the May/June examination session and the October/November examination session.

This syllabus is available to private candidates. However, it is expected that private candidates learn in an environment where practical work is an integral part of the course. Candidates will not be able to perform well in this assessment or progress successfully to further study without this necessary and important aspect of science education.

International O levels are available to Centres in Administrative Zones 3, 4 and 5. Centres in Administrative Zones 1, 2 or 6 wishing to enter candidates for International O Level examinations should contact CIE Customer Services.

## Combining this with other syllabuses

Candidates can combine this syllabus in an examination session with any other CIE syllabus, except:

- syllabuses with the same title at the same level
- 0653 IGCSE Combined Science
- 0654 IGCSE Co-ordinated Sciences (Double)
- 5096 O Level Human and Social Biology
- 5125 O Level Science (Physics, Biology)
- 5126 O Level Science (Chemistry, Biology)
- 5129 O Level Combined Science
- 5130 O Level Additional Combined Science

Please note that IGCSE, Cambridge International Level 1/Level 2 Certificates and O Level syllabuses are at the same level.

# 3. Syllabus aims and objectives

## 3.1 Aims

The aims provide the educational purposes of following a course in this subject. Some of these aims are reflected in the assessment objectives; others are not because they cannot readily be translated into objectives that can be assessed. The aims are not listed in an order of priority.

The aims are to:

1. provide, through well designed studies of experimental and practical biological science, 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 import;
  - 1.2 recognise the usefulness, and limitations, of scientific method and to appreciate its applicability in other disciplines and in everyday life;
  - 1.3 be suitably prepared and stimulated for studies beyond Ordinary Level in pure sciences, in applied sciences or in science-dependent vocational 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 enquiry;
  - 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 that 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.

# 3. Syllabus aims and objectives

## 3.2 Assessment objectives

The assessment objectives describe the knowledge, skills and abilities that candidates are expected to demonstrate at the end of the course. They reflect those aspects of the aims that are 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 and 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 curriculum content defines the factual knowledge that candidates may be required to recall and explain. Questions testing these objectives will often begin with one of the following words: *define, state, name, describe, explain (using your knowledge and understanding) or outline*. (See the glossary of terms at the back of this booklet.)

### B Handling information and solving problems

Candidates should be able – using oral, written, 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 curriculum content because questions testing such skills may be based on information that 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: *discuss, predict, suggest, calculate, explain (give reasoned explanations and explain the processes of using information and solving problems) or determine*. (See the glossary of terms at the back of this booklet.)

# 3. Syllabus aims and objectives

## C Experimental skills and investigations

Candidates should be able to:

1. follow a sequence of instructions;
2. use techniques, apparatus, measuring devices and materials effectively and safely;
3. make and record observations, measurements, calculations and estimates with due regard to precision, accuracy and units;
4. interpret, evaluate and report upon observations and experimental data;
5. identify problems, design/plan and carry out investigations, including the selection of techniques, apparatus, measuring devices and materials;
6. evaluate methods and suggest possible improvements.

## 3.3 Weighting of assessment objectives

### Theory papers (Papers 1 and 2)

- A Knowledge with understanding, approximately 55% of the marks
- B Handling information and solving problems, approximately 45% of the marks

### Practical assessment (Papers 3 and 6)

This is designed to test appropriate skills in assessment objective C and carries 25% of the marks for the subject.

# 3. Syllabus aims and objectives

## 3.4 Nomenclature, units and significant figures

### Nomenclature

The proposals in 'Signs, Symbols and Systematics (The Association for Science Education Companion to 16–19 Science, 2000)' and the recommendations on terms, units and symbols in 'Biological Nomenclature (2009)' published by the Institute of Biology, in conjunction with the ASE, will generally be adopted.

To avoid difficulties arising out of the use of *l* as the symbol for litre, use of  $\text{dm}^3$  in place of *l* or litre will be made.

In accordance with current ASE convention, decimal markers in examination papers will be a single dot on the line. Candidates are expected to follow this convention in their answers.

### 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.

# 4. Curriculum content

## 1. Cell structure and organisation

### Content

- 1.1 Plant and animal cells
- 1.2 Specialised cells, tissues and organs

### Learning outcomes

Candidates should be able to:

- (a) examine under the microscope an animal cell (e.g. from fresh liver) and a plant cell (e.g. from *Elodea*, a moss, onion epidermis, or any suitable, locally available material), using an appropriate temporary staining technique, such as iodine or methylene blue;
- (b) draw diagrams to represent observations of the plant and animal cells examined above;
- (c) identify, from fresh preparations or on diagrams or photomicrographs, the cell membrane, nucleus and cytoplasm in an animal cell;
- (d) identify, from diagrams or photomicrographs, the cellulose cell wall, cell membrane, sap vacuole, cytoplasm, nucleus and chloroplasts in a plant cell;
- (e) compare the visible differences in structure of the animal and the plant cells examined;
- (f) state the function of the cell membrane in controlling the passage of substances into and out of the cell;
- (g) state the function of the cell wall in maintaining turgor (turgidity) within the cell;
- (h) 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;
- (i) identify these cells from preserved material under the microscope, from diagrams and from photomicrographs;
- (j) differentiate *cell*, *tissue*, *organ* and *organ system* as illustrated by examples covered in sections 1 to 12, 15 and 16.

# 4. Curriculum content

## 2. Diffusion and osmosis

### Content

- 2.1 Diffusion
- 2.2 Osmosis
- 2.3 Active transport

### Learning outcomes

Candidates should be able to:

- (a) define *diffusion* as the movement of molecules from a region of their higher concentration to a region of their lower concentration, down a concentration gradient;
- (b) define *osmosis* as the passage of water molecules from a region of their higher concentration to a region of their lower concentration, through a partially permeable membrane;
- (c) describe the importance of a water potential gradient in the uptake of water by plants and the effects of osmosis on plant and animal tissues;
- (d) define *active transport* as the movement of ions into or out of a cell through the cell membrane, from a region of their lower concentration to a region of their higher concentration against a concentration gradient, using energy released during respiration.
- (e) discuss the importance of active transport as an energy-consuming process by which substances are transported against a concentration gradient, as in ion uptake by root hairs and glucose uptake by cells in the villi.

## 3. Enzymes

### Content

- 3.1 Enzyme action
- 3.2 Effects of temperature and pH

### Learning outcomes

Candidates should be able to:

- (a) define *catalyst* as a substance that speeds up a chemical reaction and is not changed by the reaction;
- (b) define *enzymes* as proteins that function as biological catalysts;
- (c) explain enzyme action in terms of the 'lock and key' hypothesis;
- (d) investigate and describe the effect of temperature and of pH on enzyme activity.

# 4. Curriculum content

## 4. Plant nutrition

### Content

4.1 Photosynthesis

4.2 Leaf structure

4.3 Mineral nutrition

### Learning outcomes

*Candidates should be able to:*

- (a) understand that photosynthesis is the fundamental process by which plants manufacture carbohydrates from raw materials;
- (b) investigate the necessity for chlorophyll, light and carbon dioxide for photosynthesis, using appropriate controls;
- (c) state the equation (in words or symbols) for photosynthesis;
- (d) investigate and state the effect of varying light intensity, carbon dioxide concentration and temperature on the rate of photosynthesis (e.g. in submerged aquatic plants);
- (e) understand the concept of limiting factors in photosynthesis;
- (f) describe the intake of carbon dioxide and water by plants;
- (g) understand that chlorophyll traps light energy and converts it into chemical energy for the formation of carbohydrates and their subsequent storage;
- (h) explain why most forms of life are completely dependent on photosynthesis;
- (i) identify and label the cuticle, cellular and tissue structure of a dicotyledonous leaf, as seen in cross-section under the microscope, and describe the significance of these features in terms of function, i.e.
  - distribution of chloroplasts – photosynthesis;
  - stomata and mesophyll cells – gas exchange;
  - vascular bundles – transport;
- (j) understand the effect of a lack of nitrate and magnesium ions on plant growth.

# 4. Curriculum content

## 5. Animal nutrition

### Content

- 5.1 Nutrients
- 5.2 Diet
- 5.3 World food supplies
- 5.4 Human alimentary canal
- 5.5 Chemical digestion
- 5.6 Absorption and assimilation

### Learning outcomes

*Candidates should be able to:*

(a) list the chemical elements that make up:

- carbohydrates;
- fats;
- proteins;

(b) describe tests for:

- starch (iodine in potassium iodide solution);
- reducing sugars (Benedict's solution);
- protein (biuret test);
- fats (ethanol emulsion test);

(c) list the principal sources of, and describe the dietary importance of carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins (C and D only), mineral salts (calcium and iron only), fibre (roughage) and water;

(d) name the diseases and describe the symptoms resulting from deficiencies of vitamin C (scurvy), vitamin D (rickets), mineral salts calcium (rickets) and iron (anaemia);

(e) understand the concept of a balanced diet;

(f) explain why diet, especially energy intake, should be related to age, sex and activity of an individual;

(g) state the effects of malnutrition in relation to starvation, heart disease, constipation and obesity;

(h) discuss the problems that contribute to famine (unequal distribution of food, drought and flooding, increasing population);

(i) identify the main regions of the alimentary canal and the associated organs: mouth (buccal) cavity, salivary glands, oesophagus, stomach, duodenum, pancreas, gall bladder, liver, ileum, colon, rectum and anus;

(j) describe the main functions of these parts in relation to ingestion, digestion, absorption, assimilation and egestion of food, as appropriate;

(k) identify the different types of human teeth and describe their structure and functions;

(l) state the causes of dental decay and describe the proper care of teeth;

(m) describe peristalsis;

# 4. Curriculum content

- (n) explain why most foods must be digested;
- (o) describe:
- digestion in the alimentary canal;
  - the functions of a typical amylase, protease and lipase, listing the substrates and end-products;
- (p) describe the structure of a villus, including the roles of capillaries and lacteals;
- (q) describe the significance of villi in increasing the internal surface area;
- (r) state the function of the hepatic portal vein as the route taken by most of the food absorbed from the small intestine;
- (s) state:
- that large molecules are synthesised from smaller basic units:  
glycogen from glucose;  
proteins from amino acids;  
lipids (fats and oils) from glycerol and fatty acids;
  - the role of the liver in the metabolism of glucose and amino acids;
  - the role of fat as a storage substance;
  - that the formation of urea and the breakdown of alcohol occur in the liver.

## 6. Transport in flowering plants

### Content

6.1 Water and ion uptake

6.2 Transpiration and translocation

### Learning outcomes

*Candidates should be able to:*

- (a) relate the structure and functions of root hairs to their surface area and to water and ion uptake;
- (b) state that transpiration is the evaporation of water at the surfaces of the mesophyll cells followed by the loss of water vapour from the leaves through the stomata;
- (c) describe:
- how water vapour loss is related to cell surfaces, air spaces and stomata;
  - the effects of air currents (wind), and the variation of temperature, humidity and light intensity on transpiration rate;
  - how wilting occurs;
- (d) investigate, using a suitable stain, the pathway of water in a cut stem;
- (e) explain the movement of water through the stem in terms of transpiration pull;
- (f) identify the positions of xylem and phloem tissues as seen in transverse sections of unthickened, herbaceous, dicotyledonous roots, stems and leaves;
- (g) state the functions of xylem and phloem.

# 4. Curriculum content

## 7. Transport in humans

### Content

#### 7.1 Circulatory system

#### Learning outcomes

*Candidates should be able to:*

- (a) describe the circulatory system as a system of tubes with a pump and valves to ensure one-way flow of blood;
- (b) describe the double circulation in terms of a low pressure circulation to the lungs and a high pressure circulation to the body tissues and relate these differences to the different functions of the two circuits;
- (c) name the main blood vessels that carry blood to and from the heart, lungs, liver and kidneys;
- (d) describe the structure and function of the heart in terms of muscular contraction and the working of valves;
- (e) compare the structure and function of arteries, veins and capillaries;
- (f) investigate and state the effect of physical activity on pulse rate;
- (g) describe coronary heart disease in terms of the occlusion of coronary arteries and state the possible causes (diet, stress and smoking) and preventive measures;
- (h) identify red and white blood cells as seen under the light microscope on prepared slides, and in diagrams and photomicrographs;
- (i) list the components of blood as red blood cells, white blood cells, platelets and plasma;
- (j) state the functions of blood:
  - red blood cells – haemoglobin and oxygen transport;
  - white blood cells – phagocytosis, antibody formation and tissue rejection;
  - platelets – fibrinogen to fibrin, causing clotting;
  - plasma – transport of blood cells, ions, soluble food substances, hormones, carbon dioxide, urea, vitamins and plasma proteins;
- (k) describe the transfer of materials between capillaries and tissue fluid.

# 4. Curriculum content

## 8. Respiration

### Content

- 8.1 Aerobic respiration
- 8.2 Anaerobic respiration
- 8.3 Human gas exchange

### Learning outcomes

Candidates should be able to:

- (a) define *respiration* as the release of energy from food substances in all living cells;
- (b) define *aerobic respiration* as the release of a relatively large amount of energy by the breakdown of food substances in the presence of oxygen;
- (c) state the equation (in words or symbols) for aerobic respiration;
- (d) state the uses of energy in the body of humans: muscle contraction, protein synthesis, cell division, active transport, growth, the passage of nerve impulses and the maintenance of a constant body temperature;
- (e) define *anaerobic respiration* as the release of a relatively small amount of energy by the breakdown of food substances in the absence of oxygen;
- (f) state the equation (in words or symbols) for anaerobic respiration in humans and in yeast;
- (g) describe the effect of lactic acid production in muscles during exercise;
- (h) know the percentages of the gases in atmospheric air and investigate and state the differences between inspired and expired air;
- (i) investigate and state the effect of physical activity on rate and depth of breathing;
- (j) identify on diagrams and name the larynx, trachea, bronchi, bronchioles, alveoli and associated capillaries;
- (k) state the characteristics of, and describe the role of, the exchange surface of the alveoli in gas exchange;
- (l) describe the role of cilia, diaphragm, ribs and intercostal muscles (external and internal) in breathing.

# 4. Curriculum content

## 9. Excretion

### Content

9.1 Structure and function of kidneys

9.2 Kidney dialysis

### Learning outcomes

*Candidates should be able to:*

- (a) define *excretion* as the removal of toxic materials and the waste products of metabolism from organisms;
- (b) describe the removal of carbon dioxide from the lungs;
- (c) identify on diagrams and name the kidneys, ureters, bladder, urethra and state the function of each (the function of the kidney should be described simply as removing urea and excess salts and water from the blood; details of kidney structure and nephron are **not** required);
- (d) describe dialysis in kidney machines as the diffusion of waste products and salts (small molecules) through a membrane; large molecules (e.g. protein) remain in the blood.

## 10. Homeostasis

### Content

10.1 Structure and function of the skin

### Learning outcomes

*Candidates should be able to:*

- (a) define *homeostasis* as the maintenance of a constant internal environment;
- (b) explain the concept of control by negative feedback;
- (c) identify, on a diagram of the skin, hairs, sweat glands, temperature receptors, blood vessels and fatty tissue;
- (d) 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 coordinating role of the brain.

# 4. Curriculum content

## 11. Coordination and response

### Content

- 11.1 Nervous system
- 11.2 Receptors
- 11.3 Reflex action
- 11.4 Hormones

### Learning outcomes

*Candidates should be able to:*

- (a) state that the nervous system – brain, spinal cord and nerves, serves to coordinate and regulate bodily functions;
- (b) identify, on diagrams of the central nervous system, the cerebrum, cerebellum, pituitary gland and hypothalamus, medulla, spinal cord and nerves;
- (c) describe the principal functions of the above structures in terms of coordinating and regulating bodily functions;
- (d) describe the gross structure of the eye as seen in front view and in horizontal section;
- (e) state the principal functions of component parts of the eye in producing a focused image of near and distant objects on the retina;
- (f) describe the pupil reflex in response to bright and dim light;
- (g) outline the functions of sensory neurones, relay neurones and motor neurones;
- (h) discuss the function of the brain and spinal cord in producing a coordinated response as a result of a specific stimulus (reflex action);
- (i) 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;
- (j) state the role of the hormone adrenaline in boosting the blood glucose concentration and give examples of situations in which this may occur;
- (k) describe the signs (increased blood glucose concentration and glucose in urine) and treatment (administration of insulin) of diabetes mellitus.

# 4. Curriculum content

## 12. Support, movement and locomotion

### Content

- 12.1 Bones
- 12.2 Joints
- 12.3 Antagonistic muscles

### Learning outcomes

*Candidates should be able to:*

- (a) identify and describe, from diagrams, photographs and real specimens, the main bones of the forelimb (humerus, radius, ulna and scapula) of a mammal;
- (b) describe the type of movement permitted by the ball and socket joint and the hinge joint of the forelimb;
- (c) describe the action of the antagonistic muscles at the hinge joint.

## 13. The use and abuse of drugs

### Content

- 13.1 Antibiotics
- 13.2 Effects of heroin
- 13.3 Effects of alcohol
- 13.4 Effects of tobacco smoke

### Learning outcomes

*Candidates should be able to:*

- (a) define a *drug* as any externally administered substance that modifies or affects chemical reactions in the body;
- (b) describe the medicinal use of antibiotics for the treatment of bacterial infection;
- (c) describe the effects of the abuse of heroin: a powerful depressant, problems of addiction, severe withdrawal symptoms and associated problems such as crime and infection e.g. AIDS;
- (d) describe the effects of excessive consumption of alcohol: reduced self-control, depressant, effect on reaction times, damage to liver and social implications;
- (e) describe the effects of tobacco smoke and its major toxic components (nicotine, tar and carbon monoxide) on health: strong association with bronchitis, emphysema, lung cancer and heart disease, and the association between smoking during pregnancy and reduced birth weight of the baby;
- (f) recognise the fact that many people regard smoking as no longer socially acceptable.

# 4. Curriculum content

## 14. Microorganisms and biotechnology

### Content

- 14.1 Microorganisms
- 14.2 Food biotechnology
- 14.3 Industrial biotechnology

### Learning outcomes

Candidates should be able to:

- (a) list the main characteristics of the following groups: viruses, bacteria and fungi;
- (b) outline the role of microorganisms in decomposition;
- (c) explain the role of yeast in the production of bread and alcohol;
- (d) outline the role of bacteria in yoghurt and cheese production;
- (e) describe the use of fermenters for large-scale production of antibiotics and single cell protein;
- (f) describe the role of the fungus *Penicillium* in the production of penicillin.

## 15. Relationships of organisms with one another and with the environment

### Content

- 15.1 Energy flow
- 15.2 Food chains and food webs
- 15.3 Carbon cycle
- 15.4 Nitrogen cycle
- 15.5 Parasitism
- 15.6 Effects of humans on the ecosystem
- 15.7 Pollution
- 15.8 Conservation

### Learning outcomes

Candidates should be able to:

- (a) state that the Sun is the principal source of energy input to biological systems;
- (b) describe the non-cyclical nature of energy flow;
- (c) define the following terms and establish the relationship of each in food webs:
  - *producer* – an organism that makes its own organic nutrients, usually using energy from sunlight through photosynthesis;
  - *consumer* – an organism that gets its energy by feeding on other organisms;
  - *herbivore* – an animal that obtains its energy by eating plants;

# 4. Curriculum content

- *carnivore* – an animal that obtains its energy by eating other animals;
- *decomposer* – an organism that obtains its energy from dead or waste organic matter;
- *food chain* – a chart showing the flow of energy (food) from one organism to the next, beginning with the producer (e.g. mahogany tree → caterpillar → songbird → hawk);

(d) describe energy losses between trophic levels and infer the advantages of short food chains;

(e) describe and interpret pyramids of numbers and of biomass;

(f) describe and state the importance of the carbon cycle;

(g) describe the nitrogen cycle in making available nitrogen for plant and animal protein, including the role of bacteria in nitrogen fixation, decomposition and nitrification (details of denitrification and the names of individual bacteria are **not** required);

(h) understand the role of the mosquito as a vector of disease;

(i) describe the malaria pathogen as an example of a parasite and describe the transmission and control of the malarial pathogen (details of the life cycle of the pathogen are **not** required);

(j) describe the effects of humans on the ecosystem with emphasis on examples of international importance (tropical rain forests, oceans and important rivers);

(k) describe the consequences of deforestation in terms of its effects on soil stability, climate and local human populations;

(l) evaluate the effects of:

water pollution by sewage, by inorganic waste and by nitrogen-containing fertilizers;

air pollution by greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide and methane), contributing to global warming;

air pollution by acidic gases (sulfur dioxide and oxides of nitrogen), contributing to acid rain;

pollution due to insecticides;

(m) discuss reasons for conservation of species with reference to maintenance of biodiversity, management of fisheries and management of timber production;

(n) discuss reasons for recycling materials, with reference to **named** examples.

# 4. Curriculum content

## 16. Development of organisms and continuity of life

### Content

- 16.1 Asexual reproduction
- 16.2 Sexual reproduction in plants
- 16.3 Sexual reproduction in humans
- 16.4 Sexually transmitted diseases

### Learning outcomes

Candidates should be able to:

- (a) define *mitosis* as cell division giving rise to genetically identical cells in which the chromosome number is maintained and state the role of mitosis in growth, repair of damaged tissues, replacement of worn out cells and asexual reproduction;
- (b) define *asexual reproduction* as the process resulting in the production of genetically identical offspring from one parent and describe **one named**, commercially important application of asexual reproduction in plants;
- (c) define *meiosis* as a reduction division in which the chromosome number is halved from diploid to haploid;
- (d) state that gametes are the result of meiosis (reduction division);
- (e) define *sexual reproduction* as the process involving the fusion of haploid nuclei to form a diploid zygote and the production of genetically dissimilar offspring;
- (f) 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 under a light microscope;
- (g) state the functions of the sepals, petals, anthers and carpels;
- (h) use a hand lens to identify and describe the anthers and stigmas of **one**, locally available, **named**, wind-pollinated flower, and examine the pollen grains under a light microscope;
- (i) outline the process of pollination and distinguish between self-pollination and cross-pollination;
- (j) compare, using fresh specimens, an insect-pollinated and a wind-pollinated flower;
- (k) 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);
- (l) investigate and describe the structure of a non-endospermic seed in terms of the embryo (radicle, plumule and cotyledons) and testa, protected by the pericarp (fruit wall);
- (m) state that seed and fruit dispersal by wind and by animals provides a means of colonising new areas;
- (n) describe the external features of **one**, locally available, **named** example of a wind-dispersed fruit or seed and of one **named** example of an animal-dispersed fruit or seed;
- (o) investigate and state the environmental conditions that affect germination of seeds: suitable temperature, water and oxygen;
- (p) describe the uses of enzymes in the germination of seeds;

# 4. Curriculum content

- (q) identify on diagrams of the male reproductive system and give the functions of the testes, scrotum, sperm ducts, prostate gland, urethra and penis;
- (r) identify on diagrams of the female reproductive system and give the functions of the ovaries, oviducts, uterus, cervix and vagina;
- (s) compare male and female gametes in terms of size, numbers and mobility;
- (t) 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;
- (u) explain the role of hormones in controlling the menstrual cycle (including FSH, LH, progesterone and oestrogen);
- (v) describe fertilisation and early development of the zygote simply in terms of the formation of a ball of cells that becomes implanted in the wall of the uterus;
- (w) state the function of the amniotic sac and the amniotic fluid;
- (x) describe the function of the placenta and umbilical cord in relation to exchange of dissolved nutrients, gases and excretory products (**no** structural details are required);
- (y) describe the special dietary needs of pregnant women;
- (z) describe the advantages of breast milk compared with bottle milk;
- (aa) describe the following methods of birth control:
  - natural, chemical (spermicides), mechanical, hormonal and surgical;
- (bb) explain that syphilis is caused by a bacterium that is transmitted during sexual intercourse;
- (cc) describe the symptoms, signs, effects and treatment of syphilis;
- (dd) discuss the spread of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and methods by which it may be controlled.

## 17. Inheritance

### Content

- 17.1 Variation
- 17.2 Chromosomes and DNA
- 17.3 Monohybrid inheritance
- 17.4 Selection
- 17.5 Genetic engineering

### Learning outcomes

Candidates should be able to:

- (a) describe the difference between *continuous* and *discontinuous variation* and give examples of each;
- (b) state that a chromosome includes a long molecule of DNA;
- (c) state that DNA is divided up into sections called genes;
- (d) explain that genes may be copied and passed on to the next generation;

# 4. Curriculum content

- (e) define a gene as a unit of inheritance and distinguish clearly between the terms *gene* and *allele*;
- (f) describe complete dominance using the terms *dominant*, *recessive*, *phenotype* and *genotype*;
- (g) describe *mutation* as a change in the structure of a gene (e.g. sickle cell anaemia) or in the chromosome number (e.g. 47 in Down's syndrome instead of 46);
- (h) name radiation and chemicals as factors that may increase the rate of mutation;
- (i) predict the results of simple crosses with expected ratios of 3:1 and 1:1, using the terms *homozygous*, *heterozygous*, *F<sub>1</sub> generation* and *F<sub>2</sub> generation*;
- (j) explain why observed ratios often differ from expected ratios, especially when there are small numbers of progeny;
- (k) explain *codominance* by reference to the inheritance of the ABO blood group phenotypes (A, B, AB, O, gene alleles I<sup>A</sup>, I<sup>B</sup> and I<sup>O</sup>);
- (l) describe the determination of sex in humans (XX and XY chromosomes);
- (m) describe *variation* and state that competition leads to differential survival of organisms, and reproduction by those organisms best fitted to the environment;
- (n) assess the importance of natural selection as a possible mechanism for evolution;
- (o) describe the role of artificial selection in the production of economically important plants and animals;
- (p) explain that DNA controls the production of proteins;
- (q) state that each gene controls the production of one protein;
- (r) explain that genes may be transferred between cells (reference should be made to transfer between organisms of the same or different species);
- (s) explain that the gene that controls the production of human insulin can be inserted into bacterial DNA;
- (t) understand that such genetically engineered bacteria can be used to produce human insulin on a commercial scale;
- (u) discuss potential advantages and dangers of genetic engineering.

# 5. Practical assessment

## 5.1 Paper 3 and Paper 6

Whichever assessment route is chosen, the following points should be noted:

- Same assessment objectives for both Paper 3 and Paper 6
- Same practical skills to be learned and developed by candidates for both Paper 3 and Paper 6
- Same benefits to theoretical understanding that come from practical work
- Same motivational effect and enthusiasm and enjoyment for teachers and pupils
- Same sequence of practical activities is appropriate

## 5.2 Laboratory conditions

Adequate bench space (at least 1 m × 1 m for each student)

Water supply – not necessarily mains supply

Gas supply (for heating) – mains/cylinder

Electrical supply – mains/batteries/generator

Secure area for preparation and storage of items made for practical lessons and tests

## 5.3 Laboratory equipment

The following is a list of the conditions, materials and equipment that are considered appropriate for the teaching of O Level Biology.

In accordance with the COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) Regulations operative in the UK, a hazard appraisal of the list has been carried out. The following codes are used where relevant.

**C** = corrosive substance

**F** = highly flammable substance

**H** = harmful or irritating substance

**O** = oxidizing substance

**T** = toxic substance

# 5. Practical assessment

## Apparatus and materials

Safety equipment appropriate to the work being planned, but at least including eye protection such as safety spectacles or goggles

### Chemical reagents

- hydrogen carbonate indicator (bicarbonate indicator)
- iodine in potassium iodide solution (iodine solution)
- Benedict's solution (or an alternative such as Fehling's)
- [C] biuret reagent(s) (sodium or potassium hydroxide solution and copper sulfate solution)
- [F] ethanol/methylated spirit
- cobalt chloride paper
- pH indicator paper or universal indicator solution or pH probes
- litmus paper
- glucose
- sodium chloride
- aluminium foil or black paper

### Instruments

- rulers capable of measuring to 1 mm
- mounted needles or seekers or long pins with large heads
- means of cutting biological materials e.g. scalpels, solid-edged razor blades or knives
- scissors
- forceps
- means of writing on glassware (e.g. wax pencil, water-resistant marker, small self-adhesive labels and pencils)

### Glassware and other apparatus (some of which may be glass, plastic or metal)

- beakers or other containers
- test-tubes, test-tube racks and test-tube holders
- funnels
- droppers or teat pipettes or plastic or glass dispensing bottles
- dishes such as Petri dishes or tin lids
- means of measuring small and larger volumes such as syringes, graduated pipettes or measuring cylinders
- glass rod
- capillary tube
- glass slides and coverslips

# 5. Practical assessment

- thermometers covering at least the range 0–100 °C (any range starting below 0 and ending above 100 °C is suitable)
- means of heating such as Bunsen or other gas burner or spirit burner
- white tile or other suitable cutting surface
- visking tube or other selectively permeable membrane material
- hand lens (at least X6)

## Desirable apparatus and materials

- microscope with mirror and lamp or with built in light, at least low-power (X10) objective, optional high-power (X40) objective will greatly increase the range of cellular detail that can be resolved.
- mortar and pestle or blender
- chemical reagents in addition to those listed above
- copper(II) sulfate (blue crystals)
- dilute (1 mol dm<sup>-3</sup>) hydrochloric acid
- a source of distilled or deionised water
- eosin/red ink
- limewater
- methylene blue
- [C] potassium hydroxide
- sodium hydrogen carbonate (sodium bicarbonate)
- Vaseline/petroleum jelly (or similar)

# 5. Practical assessment

Experimental skills are assessed in Paper 3, *Practical Test* and Paper 6, *Alternative to Practical*.

## 5.4 Paper 3: Practical test

1. The practical test is designed to test candidates' abilities:

- (a) to follow carefully a sequence of instructions within a set time allowance;
- (b) to use familiar, and unfamiliar, techniques to record their observations and make deductions from them;
- (c) to recognise and observe features of familiar and unfamiliar biological specimens, record their observations and make deductions about functions of whole specimens or their parts;
- (d) to make clear line drawings of the specimens provided, indicate magnification and to label familiar structures;
- (e) to interpret unfamiliar data and draw conclusions from their interpretations;
- (f) to design/plan an investigation to solve a problem;
- (g) to comment on a procedure used in an experiment and suggest an improvement.

In addition, the practical test is designed to test candidates' abilities:

- (h) to employ manipulative skills in assembling apparatus, in using chemical reagents and in using such instruments as mounted needles, scalpels and razor blades, forceps and scissors;
  - (i) to observe reactions, read simple measuring instruments and perform simple arithmetical calculations;
  - (j) to measure to an accuracy of 1 mm, using a ruler.
2. Candidates may be asked to carry out simple physiological experiments, involving tests for food substances (see 5 (b)), enzyme reactions, hydrogen carbonate indicator solution, cobalt chloride paper, etc. It is expected that glassware and instruments normally found in a laboratory e.g. beakers, test-tube racks, funnels, thermometers, droppers and so on, should be available for these experiments.
3. Candidates may be asked to carry out simple physiological experiments, involving the use of the items mentioned above in 1 (h) 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.
4. The material set will be closely related to the subject matter of the syllabus, but will not necessarily be limited to the particular types mentioned therein. In order to assist their own practical work, and to supply possible examination specimens, schools are asked to build up a reference collection of material.
5. When planning practical work, teachers should make sure that they do not contravene any school, education authority or government regulations that restrict the sampling, in educational establishments, of urine, saliva, blood or other bodily secretions and tissues.

# 5. Practical assessment

## 5.5 Paper 6: Alternative to practical

1. The Alternative to Practical is designed to test candidates' abilities:
  - (a) to follow carefully a sequence of instructions within a set time allowance;
  - (b) to use and describe familiar, and use and suggest unfamiliar, techniques to record their observations and make deductions from them;
  - (c) to recognise and observe features of photographs and drawings of familiar and unfamiliar biological specimens, record their observations and make deductions about functions of whole specimens or their parts;
  - (d) to make clear line drawings of the images of specimens provided, indicate magnification and to label familiar structures;
  - (e) to interpret unfamiliar data and draw conclusions from their interpretations;
  - (f) to design/plan an investigation to solve a problem;
  - (g) to comment on a procedure used in an experiment and suggest an improvement;
  - (h) to observe simulations and images of reactions, read, from photographs and diagrams, simple measuring instruments and perform simple arithmetical calculations;
  - (i) to measure to an accuracy of 1 mm, using a ruler.
2. Candidates may be asked to describe simple physiological experiments, involving tests for food substances (see 5 (b)), enzyme reactions, hydrogen carbonate indicator solution, cobalt chloride paper, and other materials listed in this syllabus. It is expected that candidates will have experience of the use of glassware and instruments normally found in a laboratory e.g. beakers, test-tube racks, funnels, thermometers, droppers and other apparatus listed in this syllabus, so that they can describe their use in such experiments.
3. Candidates may be asked to describe simple physiological experiments, involving the use of the items mentioned above in 1 (h) involving plant or animal materials. Accurate observations of life-sized and magnified images of such specimens will be expected.
4. The material set will be closely related to the subject matter of the syllabus, but will not necessarily be limited to the particular types mentioned in it. In order to assist their own practical work, schools are recommended to build up a reference collection of material with which candidates can practice.
5. When planning practical work, teachers should make sure that they do not contravene any school, education authority or government regulations that restrict the sampling, in educational establishments, of urine, saliva, blood or other bodily secretions and tissues.

# 6. Appendix

## 6.1 Glossary of terms used in science papers

During the moderation of a question paper, care is taken to ensure that the paper and its individual questions are, in relation to the syllabus, fair as regards balance, overall difficulty and suitability. Attention is also paid to the wording of questions to ensure that it is as concise and as unambiguous as possible. In many instances, Examiners are able to make appropriate allowance for an interpretation that differs, but acceptably so, from the one intended.

It is hoped that the glossary (which is relevant only to biology, human and social biology and agriculture) 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. *Define* (the term(s) ...) is intended literally, only a formal statement or equivalent paraphrase being required.
2. *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 the light of the indicated mark value.
3. *State* implies a concise answer with little or no supporting argument (e.g. a numerical answer that can readily be obtained 'by inspection').
4. *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.
5. (a) *Explain* may imply reasoning or some reference to theory, depending on the context. It is another way of asking candidates to give reasons for. The candidate needs to leave the examiner in no doubt **why** something happens.  
(b) *Give a reason/Give reasons* is another way of asking candidates to explain **why** something happens.
6. (a) *Describe*, the data or information given in a graph, table or diagram, requires the candidate to state the key points that can be seen in the stimulus material. Where possible, reference should be made to numbers drawn from the stimulus material.  
(b) *Describe*, a process, requires the candidate to give a step by step written statement of what happens during the process.  
*Describe* and *explain* may be coupled, as may *state* and *explain*.
7. *Discuss* requires the candidate to give a critical account of the points involved in the topic.
8. *Outline* implies brevity (i.e. restricting the answer to giving essentials).

# 6. Appendix

9. *Predict* 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 in an earlier part of the question.

*Predict* also implies a concise answer, with no supporting statement required.

10. *Deduce* is used in a similar way to *predict* except that some supporting statement is required (e.g. reference to a law/principle, or the necessary reasoning is to be included in the answer).

11. *Suggest* is used in two main contexts i.e. either to imply that there is no unique answer (e.g. in Biology, there are a variety of factors that might limit the rate of photosynthesis in a plant kept in a glasshouse) or to imply that candidates are expected to apply their general knowledge and understanding of biology to a 'novel' situation, one that may be formally 'not in the syllabus' – many data response and problem solving questions are of this type.

12. *Find* is a general term that may variously be interpreted as *calculate*, *measure*, *determine*, etc.

13. *Calculate* is used when a numerical answer is required. In general, working should be shown, especially where two or more steps are involved.

14. *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).

15. *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 (e.g. the Young modulus, relative molecular mass).

16. *Estimate* implies a reasoned order of magnitude statement or calculation of the quantity concerned, making such simplifying assumptions as may be necessary about points of principle and about the values of quantities not otherwise included in the question.

17. *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).

In diagrams, *sketch* implies that a simple, freehand drawing is acceptable; nevertheless, care should be taken over proportions and the clear exposition of important details.

In all questions, the number of marks allocated are shown on the examination paper and should be used as a guide by candidates to how much detail to give. In describing a process the mark allocation should guide the candidate about how many steps to include. In explaining why something happens, it guides the candidate how many reasons to give, or how much detail to give for each reason.

# 6. Appendix

## 6.2 Resource list

Books endorsed by CIE for use with this syllabus

Author	Title and date	Publisher	ISBN
Ian J Burton	<i>The Cambridge Revision Guide GCE O Level Biology (2000)</i>	Cambridge University Press <a href="http://uk.cambridge.org/education/international/cie">http://uk.cambridge.org/education/international/cie</a>	978 0521723756
Mary Jones	<i>O Level Biology (2003)</i>	Oxford University Press <a href="http://www4.oup.co.uk">http://www4.oup.co.uk</a>	0195799828
Mary Jones & Geoff Jones	<i>Biology: International Edition for IGCSE and O Level (2002)</i>	Cambridge University Press <a href="http://uk.cambridge.org/education/international/cie">http://uk.cambridge.org/education/international/cie</a>	0521891175

Other helpful textbooks:

Author	Title and date	Publisher	ISBN
Julian Ford-Robertson	<i>Revise GCSE Study Guide in Biology (2001)</i>	Letts Educational <a href="http://www.letts-education.com">http://www.letts-education.com</a>	1858059291
D. Hayward	<i>Teaching and Assessing Practical Skills in Science (2003)</i>	Cambridge University Press <a href="http://uk.cambridge.org">http://uk.cambridge.org</a>	0521753597
D. Hayward	<i>IGCSE Study Guide for Biology (endorsed by CIE) (2005)</i>	Hodder Murray <a href="http://www.hoddereducation.co.uk">http://www.hoddereducation.co.uk</a>	071957904X
M. Jenkins	<i>Biology Lives (2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2001)</i>	Hodder & Stoughton <a href="http://www.hodderheadline.co.uk">http://www.hodderheadline.co.uk</a>	0340790512
Mary Jones	<i>Biology for IGCSE (2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2002)</i>	Heinemann <a href="http://www.heinemann.co.uk">http://www.heinemann.co.uk</a>	0435966782
D. G. Mackean	<i>IGCSE Biology (2002)</i>	John Murray <a href="http://www.johnmurray.co.uk">http://www.johnmurray.co.uk</a>	0719580536
T. Parkin & J. Simpkins	<i>Biology Copymasters (1996)</i>	Longman <a href="http://www.longman.co.uk">www.longman.co.uk</a>	0582287332
W.R. Pickering	<i>Complete Biology (2000)</i>	Oxford University Press <a href="http://www4.oup.co.uk">http://www4.oup.co.uk</a>	0199147396

# 6. Appendix

## CD-ROMS

*BIOSCOPE biological microscope simulation* (Edition 2004) ISBN 1845650263 Cambridge-Hitachi, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 2BS, UK, [www.cambridge-hitachi.com](http://www.cambridge-hitachi.com)

Includes 56 slide sets of plant and animal specimens, with features that give the feeling of a real microscope. Paper-based tasks (in Word and PDF format), each of 45 to 60 minutes duration, accompany the slides.

*Experiment Simulator* (Edition 2005) ISBN 1845651405 Cambridge-Hitachi, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 2BS, UK, [www.cambridge-hitachi.com](http://www.cambridge-hitachi.com).

Like the bioscope developed by Cambridge Assessment, and providing six simulated science experiments to inspire and support pupil learning. Includes excellent worksheets and teacher notes.

These titles represent some of the products available at the time of printing this booklet.

Teachers are encouraged to choose products for class use that they feel will be of interest to their students and which will support their own teaching style.

## Websites

The website [www.practicalbiology.org](http://www.practicalbiology.org) is a joint project of the Nuffield Foundation Curriculum Programme and the Society of Biology and CLEAPSS. It details a range of helpful classroom experiments and demonstrations.

Useful websites available at the time of writing

<http://www.cellsalive.com> CELLS alive

<http://www.lungusa.org/diseases/lungemphysem.html> American Lung Association

<http://www.saps.plantsci.cam.ac.uk/> SAPS (Science and Plants for Schools)

<http://www.middleschoolscience.com> Middleschoolscience

<http://www.schoolscience.co.uk> Schoolscience Applications of science

<http://www.sciencespot.net> The Science Spot

<http://www.s-cool.co.uk> S-cool has GCSE Revision for biology

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize> GCSE BITESIZE revision in biology

Resources are also listed on CIE's public website at [www.cie.org.uk](http://www.cie.org.uk). Please visit this site on a regular basis as the Resource lists are updated through the year.

Access to teachers' email discussion groups, suggested schemes of work and regularly updated resource lists may be found on the CIE Teacher Support website at <http://teachers.cie.org.uk>. This website is available to teachers at registered CIE Centres.

# 7. Additional information

## 7.1 Guided learning hours

O Level syllabuses are designed on the assumption that candidates have about 130 guided learning hours per subject over the duration of the course. ('Guided learning hours' include direct teaching and any other supervised or directed study time. They do not include private study by the candidate.)

However, this figure is for guidance only, and the number of hours required may vary according to local curricular practice and the candidates' prior experience of the subject.

## 7.2 Recommended prior learning

We recommend that candidates who are beginning this course should have previously studied a science curriculum such as that of the Cambridge Lower Secondary Programme or equivalent national educational frameworks. Candidates should also have adequate mathematical skills for the content contained in this syllabus.

## 7.3 Progression

O Level Certificates are general qualifications that enable candidates to progress either directly to employment, or to proceed to further qualifications.

Candidates who are awarded grades C to A\* in O Level Biology are well prepared to follow courses leading to AS and A Level Biology, or the equivalent.

## 7.4 Component codes

Because of local variations, in some cases component codes will be different in instructions about making entries for examinations and timetables from those printed in this syllabus, but the component names will be unchanged to make identification straightforward.

## 7.5 Grading and reporting

Ordinary Level (O Level) results are shown by one of the grades A\*, A, B, C, D or E indicating the standard achieved, Grade A\* being the highest and Grade E the lowest. 'Ungraded' indicates that the candidate's performance fell short of the standard required for Grade E. 'Ungraded' will be reported on the statement of results but not on the certificate.

# 7. Additional information

Percentage uniform marks are also provided on each candidate's statement of results to supplement their grade for a syllabus. They are determined in this way:

- A candidate who obtains...
  - ... the minimum mark necessary for a Grade A\* obtains a percentage uniform mark of 90%.
  - ... the minimum mark necessary for a Grade A obtains a percentage uniform mark of 80%.
  - ... the minimum mark necessary for a Grade B obtains a percentage uniform mark of 70%.
  - ... the minimum mark necessary for a Grade C obtains a percentage uniform mark of 60%.
  - ... the minimum mark necessary for a Grade D obtains a percentage uniform mark of 50%.
  - ... the minimum mark necessary for a Grade E obtains a percentage uniform mark of 40%.
  - ... no marks receives a percentage uniform mark of 0%.

Candidates whose mark is none of the above receive a percentage mark in between those stated according to the position of their mark in relation to the grade 'thresholds' (i.e. the minimum mark for obtaining a grade). For example, a candidate whose mark is halfway between the minimum for a Grade C and the minimum for a Grade D (and whose grade is therefore D) receives a percentage uniform mark of 55%.

The uniform percentage mark is stated at syllabus level only. It is not the same as the 'raw' mark obtained by the candidate, since it depends on the position of the grade thresholds (which may vary from one session to another and from one subject to another) and it has been turned into a percentage.

## 7.6 Resources

Copies of syllabuses, the most recent question papers and Principal Examiners' reports for teachers are available on the Syllabus and Support Materials CD-ROM, which is sent to all CIE Centres.

Resources are also listed on CIE's public website at **www.cie.org.uk**. Please visit this site on a regular basis as the Resource lists are updated through the year.

Access to teachers' email discussion groups, suggested schemes of work and regularly updated resource lists may be found on the CIE Teacher Support website at **http://teachers.cie.org.uk**. This website is available to teachers at registered CIE Centres.

