

# Past Papers



PAST PAPERS, MARK SCHEMES, SPECS

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As amazing as biology is, and as broad and deep and fascinating as its reaches are, at the end of the day your grasp of knowledge is tested by exams. Exams strip the beauty of biology and leave it naked. Exams are limited by time and space in a restrictive way in which the beautiful biospheres of the universe aren't.

Don't let that take the focus away from news articles, breakthroughs and your own wandering imagination for too long. But every now and again, and certainly before exams, take time out to practise answering exam questions from past papers. Unfortunately, on top of knowing biology, you need to also get an idea of the language of exam questions, the answers you are expected to regurgitate, and often, an examiner's idiolect which will surely metamorphose in time.

Practising with past papers and mark schemes is essential to understanding what the examiners expect of you, and getting accustomed to the type of questions that come up. There is a big range which includes:

short answers of one word or two, which generally test basic knowledge – **grade E**

comprehensions about case studies and experiments, which include tables, graphs and introductory information; all these must be used together to work out the correct answers – **grades D to A**

essays with synoptic content; these are used to assess your overall A Level Biology knowledge, ability to select relevant content from AS and A2, as well as your extra reading done outside of the specification; you can improve this by reading [articles](#) – **grade A\***