

BRISTOL FREE SCHOOL
OCR A Level Biology Transition Booklet



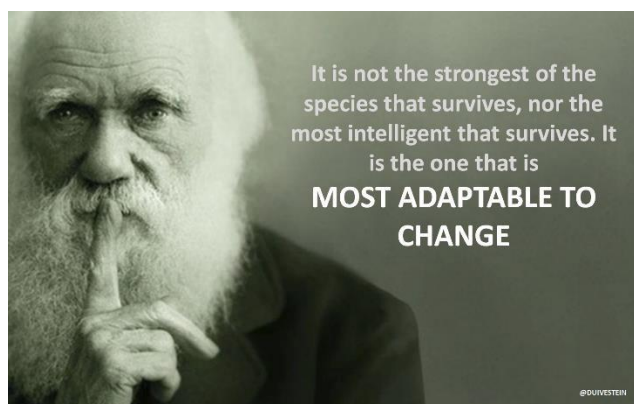
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Transition from GCSE to A Level



Moving from GCSE Science to A Level can be a daunting leap. You'll be expected to remember a lot more facts, equations, and definitions, and you will need to learn new maths skills and develop confidence in applying what you already know to unfamiliar situations.

This booklet aims to give you a head start by helping you:

- to pre-learn some useful knowledge from the first chapters of your A Level course
- understand and practice of some of the maths skills you'll need.
- gain some key note taking skills

Learning objectives

After completing this booklet you should be able to:

- define practical science key terms
- recall the answers to the retrieval questions
- make Cornell notes based on revision sites, talks and videos
- revise tricky GCSE content
- use GCSE content and new concepts to pre-learn some of the work covered in the early part of the course
- perform maths skills including:
 - converting between units, standard form, and prefixes
 - using significant figures
 - rearranging formulae
 - magnification calculations
 - calculating percentages, errors, and uncertainties
 - drawing and interpreting line graphs.

• **How do you work throughout the course?**

Don't just slog! By just putting in the hours (in class or at home) but not being efficient or not testing yourself you may waste time. Reading through or rewriting notes is a start but you also need to *process your study*. Now is a good time to look back at how you worked and revised for GCSE. Make a note of what worked and where it went wrong - remember, everyone is different, and you should find out what suits *you*, develop a routine and stick to it.

Processing your work is very important. It means engaging with the concepts and facts and reorganising them somehow, not just reading a book and hoping it goes in. How do you process information? There are many ways of doing this - some of which will suit you while others won't - here are some suggestions.

(a) Bullet points and practice questions

Instead of rewriting notes word for word (tedious!), you could write out revision bullet points, preferably from memory. You could also answer questions such as those found in the textbook or use online revision sites or use some of the past paper questions on the shared area. You could make your own flash cards

(b) Working with others

Another good way to process information is to explain it to others - teachers will tell you that they only really understood some things when they had to teach them for the first time! If you can find a friend who will partner you regularly, you can explain topics to each other. This will be a great way of processing and understanding the work - and be a bit more fun too (beware of distracting each other though!).

(c) Use manageable chunks

It is easy to feel overwhelmed by a whole unit, module or topic but if you approach it weekly in smaller chunks, it will feel manageable. You have to be organised and work regularly to keep up with the constant flow of new material.

• **How do you remember facts?**

There are many more facts, terms and definitions in A level biology compared with GCSE. Many of these will be unfamiliar, and feature more complex terminology. However, some are more important than others and there are ways of dealing with them.

(a) Multicoloured highlighting

A good starting point is the specification itself. Here, the key terms are picked out for you and you will find similar key terms and definitions highlighted in your textbook. Highlighting in your notes or making your own glossary are good ways of making key facts memorable and familiar.

(b) Study skills

Once again, memorising is an individual skill; everyone is different in how they learn. However, certain things are known about how we learn. These can be found in study skills books such as the *Sciences Good Study Guide* from the Open University, which is well worth a look. You can also use revision/study websites (see below).

(c) Reminder notes and concept mapping

We have mentioned that explaining to others is a good way of learning, but for more personal study you need to consider things such as note writing and memory techniques as well as revision, self-testing and practising exams. Visual memory is far better than verbal memory - it uses a different part of your brain and is more efficient. So make your study and revision notes as visual as possible. Use your own drawings, flow charts and diagrams. Some people also like to use *concept maps* or *spider diagrams*, especially for revision. If you have never done one of these, have a go.

- **Examination papers**

Exam questions are chosen by OCR very carefully to test your knowledge and understanding of the specification. You should plan to *practise exam questions as you go along*, not just before you sit an exam. However, once a whole unit is nearing completion, you need to practise whole papers to get a feel of what it is like in a real exam. You will be used to this from GCSE, including mock exams arranged by your school. Do as many of your own *mocks* as you can.

Past papers, mark schemes and examiners' comments are all available. Your textbook has valuable past questions, tips and comments from examiners throughout - take note of these as you go along. The OCR website (<http://www.ocr.org.uk>) and school shared area have the specification and mark schemes/examiners' comments. Another very useful website is physics and maths tutor (www.physicsandmathstutor.com/past-papers/a-level-biology/). This can be much more user friendly than the OCR website. Be careful to use only *OCR* materials for exam preparation because different awarding bodies have slightly different definitions and content. Your textbook has been written especially for the OCR specification. It uses all the right terms and exam requirements, so make it your first point of reference.

- **Useful websites and wider reading**

Your teachers will have to write a reference for you in the summer term for UCAS. They will be asked if there is anything else you have done to support you in your studies. There are some suggestions of websites that you could use below:

[Http://physicsandmathstutor.com/](http://physicsandmathstutor.com/)

<http://savemyexams.com/>

<http://www.centreofthecell.org/>

<http://www.biology-online.org/>

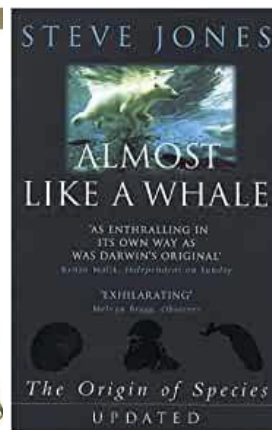
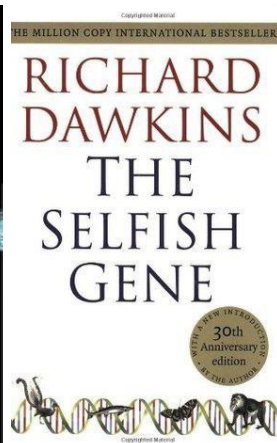
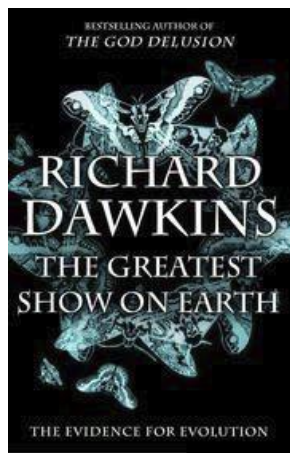
<http://www.ibiblio.org/virtualcell/amazingbiology/>

<http://www.biology4kids.com/>

<http://www.stolaf.edu/people/giannini/biological%20anamatons.html>

<http://www.abpschools.org.uk/>

Wider reading from biological books will help. A few possible books/periodicals are:



Keeping up to date with the latest science news is also important! Some good links:

[Science & Environment | Latest News & Updates | BBC News](#)

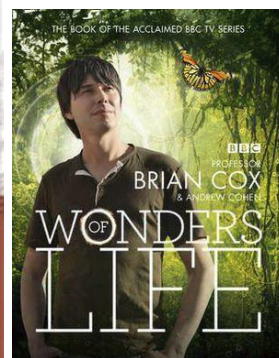
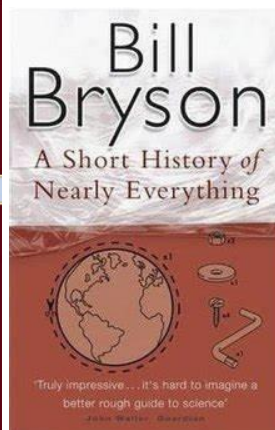
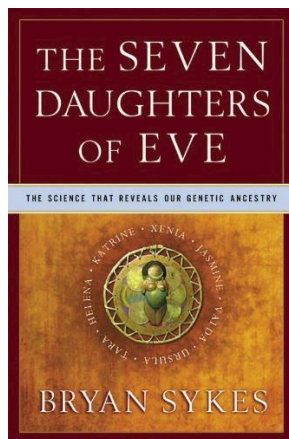
[National Geographic](#)

[New Scientist | Science news, articles, and features](#)

[Nature](#)

[Science News | The latest news from all areas of science](#)

[ScienceDaily: Your source for the latest research news](#)



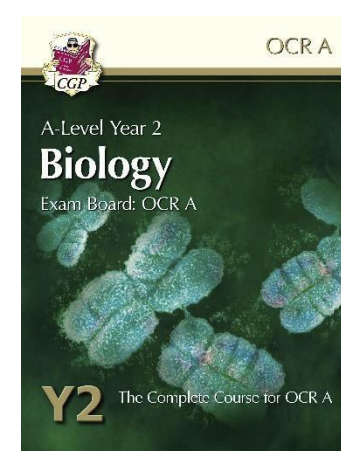
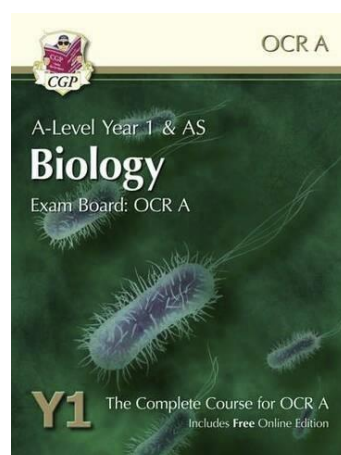
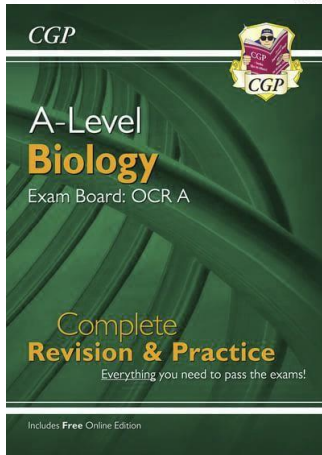
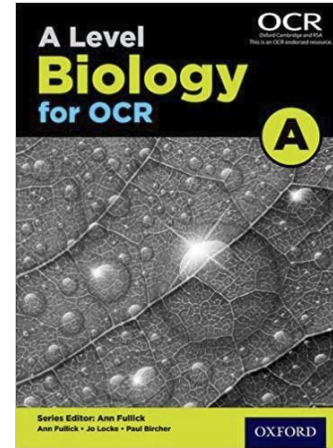
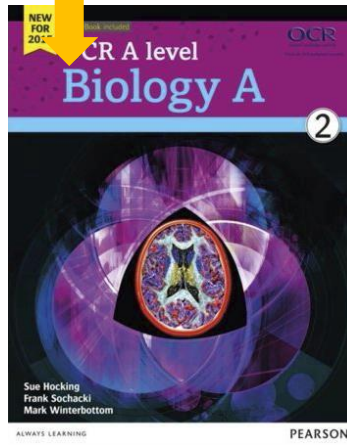
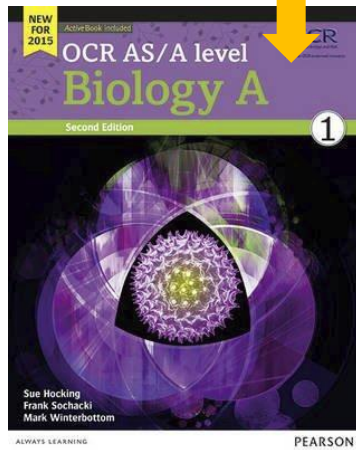
Remember to make notes on what you read. In particular, what are your thoughts and reflections – This will help you when it comes to applying to university!

Most Universities want to know what you thought/reflected/learnt not just a list of what you read/did. Being able to critically evaluate is key, especially for Oxbridge, Redbrick Universities, medical courses and other competitive entry places.

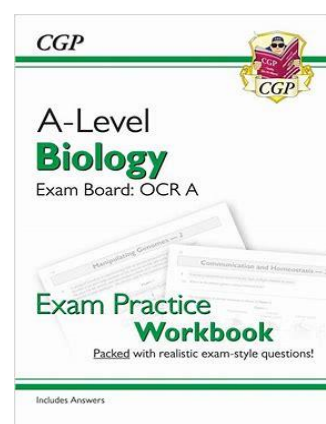
Useful text books

The following text books have been specifically written for the course (**remember that we will be doing Biology A not B**). Remember that libraries are a good source of books!

Our favorite that **we will provide**



This is the workbook – there are good questions in here but only really provide enough challenge up to a grade C. We recommend past papers instead.



Support

All Staff are very approachable for help. You must say if you are struggling or if you need more help. Remember, A levels are designed to be more independent. If you need support you must ask! If you can't find us please drop us an email to arrange a time to meet.

Advice from previous students (comments directly from students via student voice)

Learn everything as you go along and ask questions as you go along. Make sure you understand everything and don't leave it to the exam season. Use revision questions and past papers. Start revision early. The earlier the better!

Don't underestimate biology.

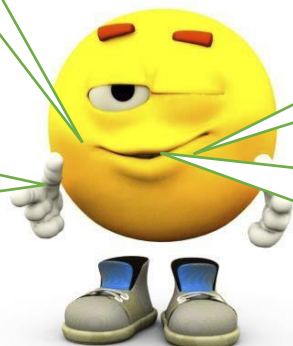
Ask for help if you're struggling - your teachers are there to support you

Start working from the start & do lots of past paper questions

Try to revise as you go along. I know everybody says that and you will probably ignore it but if you get stuff into your head early on you're more likely to understand/remember it for the exam.

Make sure you actually understand the topic - not just about memorising the textbook cause it may become difficult when having to apply the knowledge in the exam.

Revise throughout the year and don't leave things until the last minute! Also don't be afraid to ask questions if you're stuck as the course moves



Careers

By studying Biology you open a wide range of career choices as employers value the skills you gain in the course. Biology opens the door to many interesting degree options too, including:

- Medicine / Vet. science
- Teaching/lecturing
- Nature and Environmental Conservation work
- Pharmacology
- Research and development: treating disease
- Sports science
- Botany / ecology / field work
- Psychology

TASK 1

1.1 Retrieval questions

You need to be confident about the definitions of terms that describe measurements and results in A Level Biology.

Learn the answers to the questions below, then cover the answers column with a piece of paper and write as many answers as you can. Check and repeat.

1.11 Practical science key terms

When is a measurement valid?	when it measures what it is supposed to be measuring
When is a result accurate?	when it is close to the true value
What are precise results?	when repeat measurements are consistent/agree closely with each other
What is repeatability?	how precise repeated measurements are when they are taken by the <i>same</i> person, using the <i>same</i> equipment, under the <i>same</i> conditions
What is reproducibility?	how precise repeated measurements are when they are taken by <i>different</i> people, using <i>different</i> equipment
What is the uncertainty of a measurement?	the interval within which the true value is expected to lie
Define measurement error	the difference between a measured value and the true value
What type of error is caused by results varying around the true value in an unpredictable way?	random error
What is a systematic error?	a consistent difference between the measured values and true values
What does zero error mean?	a measuring instrument gives a false reading when the true value should be zero
Which variable is changed or selected by the investigator?	independent variable
What is a dependent variable?	a variable that is measured every time the independent variable is changed
Define a fair test	a test in which only the independent variable is allowed to affect the dependent variable
What are control variables?	variables that should be kept constant to avoid them affecting the dependent variable

1.12 Basic components of living systems

Learn the answers to the questions below then cover the answers column with a piece of paper and write as many answers as you can. Check and repeat.

What is the formula to calculate magnification?	Magnification = $\frac{\text{Size of image}}{\text{actual size of object}}$
Why are cells stained before being viewed with a light microscope?	staining increases contrast between different cell components, makes them visible, and allows them to be identified
What is an eyepiece graticule?	a glass disc that fits on top of the eyepiece lens that is marked with a fine scale from 1 to 100
What is a stage micrometer?	a microscope slide with a very accurate scale in micrometers (μ) engraved on it
What is a scientific drawing?	a labelled line drawing that is used to highlight particular features and does not include unnecessary detail or shading, it should always have a title and state the magnification
What is magnification?	how many times larger an image is than the actual size of the object being viewed
What is resolution?	the ability to see individual objects as separate entities
What is the function of the nucleus?	controls the metabolic activities of the cell as it contains genetic information in the form of DNA
What is the nucleolus?	area within the nucleus that is responsible for producing ribosomes
What is the function of mitochondria?	site of production of ATP in the final stages of cellular respiration
What are vesicles?	membranous sacs that are used to transport materials in the cell
What are lysosomes?	specialised forms of vesicles with hydrolytic enzymes that break down waste material in cells
What is the role of the cytoskeleton?	controls cell movement, movement of organelles within the cell, and provides mechanical strength to the cell
Name the three types of cytoskeletal filaments	microfilaments, microtubules, and intermediate fibres
Give two types of extension that protrude from some cells	flagella (whip-like protrusions) and cilia (tail-like protrusions)
What is the endoplasmic reticulum (ER)?	a network of membranes enclosing flattened sacs called cisternae
What are the functions of the two types of ER?	smooth ER - lipid and carbohydrate synthesis, and storage rough ER - synthesis and transport of proteins
What is the function of the Golgi apparatus?	plays a part in modifying proteins and packaging them into vesicles

Research activities

Research, reading and note making are essential skills for A level Biology study. For the following task you are going to produce 'Cornell Notes' to summarise your reading.

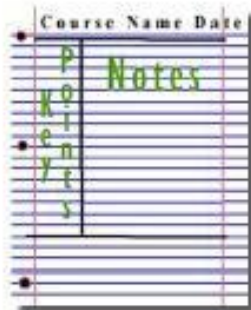
1. Divide your page into three sections like this



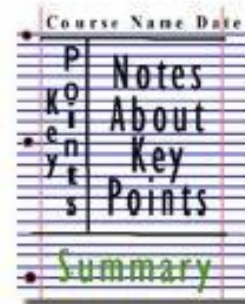
2. Write the name, date and topic at the top of the page



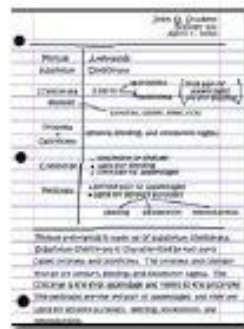
3. Use the large box to make notes. Leave a space between separate ideas. Abbreviate where possible.



4. Review and identify the key points in the left hand box



5. Write a summary of the main ideas in the bottom space



TASK 2

Pre-Knowledge tasks

Use the above Cornell method of note taking to help you do the following tasks. These are some of the concepts that you will cover early in the course.

Exchange and Transport

Organisms need to exchange substances selectively with their environment and this takes place at exchange surfaces. Factors such as size or metabolic rate affect the requirements of organisms and this gives rise to adaptations such as specialised exchange surfaces and mass transport systems. Substances are exchanged by passive or active transport across exchange surfaces. The structure of the plasma membrane enables control of the passage of substances into and out of cells

Find and read information on this topic (you could make more Cornell notes if you wish):

Hint: use the websites listed earlier in the guide as a starting point!!!

And take a look at these videos:

<http://ed.ted.com/lessons/insights-into-cell-membranes-via-dish-detergent-ethan-perlstein>

<http://ed.ted.com/lessons/what-do-the-lungs-do-emma-bryce>

Task 2.1:

Create a poster, mind map or notes. Your task should either: compare exchange surfaces in mammals and fish or compare exchange surfaces in the lungs and the intestines. You could use a Venn diagram to do this. Your poster should:

Describe diffusion, osmosis and active transport

Explain why oxygen and glucose need to be absorbed and waste products removed.

Compare and contrast your chosen focus.

Cells

The cell is a unifying concept in biology, you will come across it many times during your two years of A level study. Prokaryotic and eukaryotic cells can be distinguished on the basis of their structure and ultrastructure. In complex multicellular organisms cells are organised into tissues, tissues into organs and organs into systems. During the cell cycle genetic information is copied and passed to daughter cells. Daughter cells formed during mitosis have identical copies of genes while cells formed during meiosis are not genetically identical

Read the information on these websites (you could make more Cornell notes if you wish):

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zcrhcj6/revision/1>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zq4sk2p/revision/1>

And take a look at these videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcTuQpuJyD8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0k-enzoeOM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCLmR9-YY7o>

Task 2.2:

Produce a one page revision guide summarising one of the following topics: Cells and Cell Ultrastructure, Prokaryotes and Eukaryotes, or Mitosis and Meiosis. Whichever topic you choose, your revision guide should include:

Key words and definitions

Clearly labelled diagrams

Short explanations of key ideas or processes.

Biological Molecules

Biological molecules are often polymers and are based on a small number of chemical elements. In living organisms carbohydrates, proteins, lipids, inorganic ions and water all have important roles and functions related to their properties.

DNA determines the structure of proteins, including enzymes. Enzymes catalyse the reactions that determine structures and functions from cellular to whole-organism level. Enzymes are proteins with a mechanism of action and other properties determined by their tertiary structure. ATP provides the immediate source of energy for biological processes.

Read the information on these websites (you could make Cornell notes if you wish):

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zgcn97h/revision/1>

And take a look at these videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8WJ2KENIK0>

<http://ed.ted.com/lessons/activation-energy-kickstarting-chemical-reactions-vance-kite>

Task 2.3:

Krabbe disease occurs when a person doesn't have a certain enzyme in their body. The disease affects the nervous system. Write a letter to a GP or a sufferer to explain what an enzyme is.

Your poster should:

Describe the structure of an enzyme

Explain what enzymes do inside the body

Maths skills

TASK 3

1 Numbers and units

1.1 Units and prefixes

A key criterion for success in biological maths lies in the use of correct units and the management of numbers. The units scientists use are from the *Système Internationale* - the SI units. In biology, the most commonly used SI base units are metre (m), kilogram (kg), second (s), and mole (mol). Biologists also use SI derived units, such as square metre (m²), cubic metre (m³), degree Celsius (°C), and litre (l).

To accommodate the huge range of dimensions in our measurements they may be further modified using appropriate prefixes. For example, one thousandth of a second is a millisecond (ms). Some of these prefixes are illustrated in the table below.

Multiplication factor	Prefix	Symbol
10 ⁹	giga	G
10 ⁶	mega	M
10 ³	kilo	k
10 ⁻²	centi	c
10 ⁻³	milli	m
10 ⁻⁶	micro	μ
10 ⁻⁹	nano	n

Practice questions

- 1 A burger contains 4 500 000 J of energy. Write this in:
a kilojoules b megajoules.
- 2 HIV is a virus with a diameter of between 9.0×10^{-8} m and 1.20×10^{-7} m.
Write this range in nanometres.

1.2 Powers and indices

Ten squared = $10 \times 10 = 100$ and can be written as 10^2 . This is also called 'ten to the power of 2'.

Ten cubed is 'ten to the power of three' and can be written as $10^3 = 1000$.

The power is also called the index.

Fractions have negative indices:

$$\text{one tenth} = 10^{-1} = 1/10 = 0.1$$

$$\text{one hundredth} = 10^{-2} = 1/100 = 0.01$$

Any number to the power of 0 is equal to 1, for example, $29^0 = 1$.

If the index is 1, the value is unchanged, for example, $17^1 = 17$.

When multiplying powers of ten, you must *add* the indices.

$$\text{So } 100 \times 1000 = 100\,000 \text{ is the same as } 10^2 \times 10^3 = 10^{2+3} = 10^5$$

When dividing powers of ten, you must *subtract* the indices.

So $100/1000 = 1/10 = 10^{-1}$ is the same as $10^2/10^3 = 10^{2-3} = 10^{-1}$

But you can only do this when the numbers with the indices are the same.

So $10^2 \times 2^3 = 100 \times 8 = 800$

And you can't do this when adding or subtracting.

$10^2 + 10^3 = 100 + 1000 = 1100$

$10^2 - 10^3 = 100 - 1000 = -900$

Remember: You can only add and subtract the indices when you are multiplying or dividing the numbers, not adding or subtracting them.

Practice questions

3 Calculate the following values. Give your answers using indices.

a $10^8 \times 10^3$ **b** $10^7 \times 10^2 \times 10^3$

c $10^3 + 10^3$ **d** $10^2 - 10^{-2}$

4 Calculate the following values. Give your answers with and without using indices.

a $10^5 \div 10^4$ **b** $10^3 \div 10^6$

c $10^2 \div 10^{-4}$ **d** $100^2 \div 10^2$

1.3 Converting units

When doing calculations, it is important to express your answer using sensible numbers. For example, an answer of 6230 μm would have been more meaningful expressed as 6.2 mm.

If you convert between units and round numbers properly, it allows quoted measurements to be understood within the scale of the observations.

To convert 488 889 m into km:

A kilo is 10^3 so you need to divide by this number, or move the decimal point three places to the left.

$$488\,889 \div 10^3 = 488.889 \text{ km}$$

However, suppose you are converting from mm to km: you need to go from 10^3 to 10^{-3} , or move the decimal point six places to the left.

333 mm is 0.000 333 km

Alternatively, if you want to convert from 333 mm to nm, you would have to go from 10^{-9} to 10^{-3} , or move the decimal point six places to the right.

333 mm is 333 000 000 nm

Practice question

5 Calculate the following conversions:

a 0.004 m into mm

b 130 000 ms into s

c 31.3 ml into μl

d 104 ng into mg

6 Give the following values in a different unit so they make more sense to the reader.

Choose the final units yourself. (Hint: make the final number as close in magnitude to zero as you can. For example, you would convert 1000 m into 1 km.)

- a 0.000 057 m b 8 600 000 μ l c 68 000 ms d 0.009 cm

2 Decimals, standard form, and significant figures

2.1 Decimal numbers

A decimal number has a decimal point. Each figure *before* the point is a whole number, and the figures *after* the point represent fractions.

The number of decimal places is the number of figures *after* the decimal point. For example, the number 47.38 has 2 decimal places, and 47.380 is the same number to 3 decimal places.

In science, you must write your answer to a sensible number of decimal places.

Practice questions

- New antibiotics are being tested. A student calculates the area of clear zones in Petri dishes in which the antibiotics have been used. List these in order from smallest to largest.

0.0214 cm² 0.03 cm² 0.0218 cm² 0.034 cm²

- A student measures the heights of a number of different plants. List these in order from smallest to largest.

22.003 cm 22.25 cm 12.901 cm 12.03 cm 22 cm

2.2 Standard form

Sometimes biologists need to work with numbers that are very small, such as dimensions of organelles, or very large, such as populations of bacteria. In such cases, the use of scientific notation or standard form is very useful, because it allows the numbers to be written easily.

Standard form is expressing numbers in powers of ten, for example, 1.5×10^7 microorganisms.

Look at this worked example. The number of cells in the human body is approximately 37 200 000 000 000. To write this in standard form, follow these steps:

Step 1: Write down the smallest number between 1 and 10 that can be derived from the number to be converted. In this case it would be 3.72

Step 2: Write the number of times the decimal place will have to shift to expand this to the original number as powers of ten. On paper this can be done by hopping the decimal over each number like this:

6.3900000000

until the end of the number is reached.

In this example that requires 13 shifts, so the standard form should be written as 3.72×10^{13} .

For very small numbers the same rules apply, except that the decimal point has to hop backwards. For example, 0.000 000 45 would be written as 4.5×10^{-7} .

Practice questions

- 3 Change the following values to standard form.
a 3060 kJ b 140 000 kg c 0.000 18 m d 0.000 004 m
- 4 Give the following numbers in standard form.
a 100 b 10 000 c 0.01 d 21 000 000
- 5 Give the following as decimals.
a 10^6 b 4.7×10^9 c 1.2×10^{12} d 7.96×10^{-4}

2.3 Significant figures

When you use a calculator to work out a numerical answer, you know that this often results in a large number of decimal places and, in most cases, the final few digits are 'not significant'. It is important to record your data and your answers to calculations to a reasonable number of significant figures. Too many and your answer is claiming an accuracy that it does not have, too few and you are not showing the precision and care required in scientific analysis.

Numbers to 3 significant figures (3 s.f.):

7.88 25.4 741

Bigger and smaller numbers with 3 significant figures:

0.000 147 0.0147 0.245 39 400 96 200 000 (notice that the zeros before the figures and after the figures are *not* significant - they just show you how large the number is by the position of the decimal point).

Numbers to 3 significant figures where the zeros *are* significant:

207 4050 1.01 (any zeros between the other significant figures *are* significant).

Standard form numbers with 3 significant figures:

9.42×10^{-5} 1.56×10^8

If the value you wanted to write to 3.s.f. was 590, then to show the zero was significant you would have to write:

590 (to 3.s.f.) or 5.90×10^2

Remember: For calculations, use the same number of figures as the data in the question with the lowest number of significant figures. It is not possible for the answer to be more accurate than the data in the question.

Practice question

- 6 Write the following numbers to **i** 2 s.f. and **ii** 3 s.f.
a 7644 g
b 27.54 m
c 4.3333 g
d $5.995 \times 10^2 \text{ cm}^3$
- 7 The average mass of oxygen produced by an oak tree is 11800 g per year.
Give this mass in standard form and quote your answer to 2 significant figures.

3 Working with formulae

It is often necessary to use a mathematical formula to calculate quantities. You may be tested on your ability to substitute numbers into formulae or to rearrange formulae to find specific values.

3.1 Substituting into formulae

Think about the data you are given in the question. Write down the equation and then think about how to get the data to substitute into the equation. Look at this worked example.

A cheek cell has a 0.06 mm diameter. Under a microscope it has a diameter 12 mm. What is the magnification?

$$\text{magnification} = \text{image size (mm)} \div \text{object size (mm)} \quad \text{or} \quad M = \frac{I}{O}$$

Substitute the values and calculate the answer:

$$M = 12 \text{ mm} / 0.06 \text{ mm} = 12 / 0.06 = 200$$

Answer: magnification = $\times 200$ (magnification has no units)

Sometimes an equation is more complicated and the steps need to be carried out in a certain order to succeed. A general principle applies here, usually known by the mnemonic BIDMAS. This stands for **B**rackets, **I**ndices (functions such as squaring or powers), **D**ivision, **M**ultiplication, **A**ddition, **S**ubtraction.

Practice questions

- Calculate the magnification of a hair that has a width of 6.6 mm on a photograph. The hair is 165 μm wide.
- 2 Estimate the area of a leaf by treating it as a triangle with base 2 cm and height 9 cm.
- 3 Estimate the area of a cell by treating it as a circle with a diameter of 0.7 μm . Give your answer in μm^2 .
- 4 An *Amoeba* population starts with 24 cells. Calculate how many *Amoeba* cells would be present in the culture after 7 days if each cell divides once every 20 hours. Use the equation $N_t = N_0 \times 2^n$ where N_t = number after time t , N_0 = initial population, n = number of divisions in the given time t .
- 5 In a quadrat sample, an area was found to contain 96 aphids, 4 ladybirds, 22 grasshoppers, and 3 ground beetles. Calculate the diversity of the site using the equation $D = 1 + \frac{\sum n^2}{N}$ where n = number of each species, N = grand total of all species, and D = diversity.

Remember: In this equation there is a part that needs to be done several times then summed, shown by the symbol Σ .

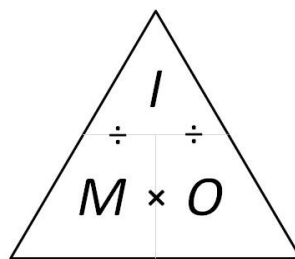
3.2 Rearranging formulae

Sometimes you will need to rearrange an equation to calculate the answer to a question. For example, the relationship between magnification, image size, and actual size of specimens in micrographs usually uses the

equation $M = \frac{I}{O}$, where M is magnification, I is size of the

image, and O = actual size of the object.

You can use the algebra you have learnt in Maths to rearrange equations, or you can use a triangle like the one shown.



Cover the quantity you want to find. This leaves you with either a fraction or a multiplication:

$$M = I \div O \quad O = I \div M \quad I = M \times O$$

Practice questions

- A fat cell is 0.1 mm in diameter. Calculate the size of the diameter seen through a microscope with a magnification of $\times 50$.
- A Petri dish shows a circular colony of bacteria with a cross-sectional area of 5.3 cm^2 . Calculate the radius of this area.
- In a photograph, a red blood cell is 14.5 mm in diameter. The magnification stated on the image is $\times 2000$. Calculate the real diameter of the red blood cell.
- Rearrange the equation $34 = 2a/135 \times 100$ and find the value of a .
- The cardiac output of a patient was found to be $2.5 \text{ dm}^3 \text{ min}^{-1}$ and their heart rate was 77 bpm. Calculate the stroke volume of the patient.
Use the equation: cardiac output = stroke volume \times heart rate.
- In a food chain, efficiency = $\frac{\text{Biomass transferred}}{\text{biomass taken in}} \times 100$
A farmer fed 25 kg of grain to his chicken. The chicken gained weight with an efficiency of 0.84. Calculate the weight gained by the chicken.

4 Magnification

To look at small biological specimens you use a microscope to magnify the image that is observed. The microscope was developed in the 17th century. Anton van Leeuwenhoek used a single lens and Robert Hooke used two lenses. The lenses focus light from the specimen onto your retina to produce a magnified virtual image. The magnification at which observations are made depends on the lenses used.

4.1 Calculating the magnifying power of lenses

Lenses each have a magnifying power, defined as the number of times the image is larger than the real object. The magnifying power is written on the lens.

To find the magnification of the virtual image that you are observing, multiply the magnification powers of each lens used. For example, if the eyepiece lens is $\times 10$ and the objective lens is $\times 40$ the total magnification of the virtual image is $10 \times 40 = 400$.

Practice questions

1 Calculate the magnification of the virtual image produced by the following combinations of lenses:

a objective $\times 10$ and eyepiece $\times 12$
eyepiece $\times 15$

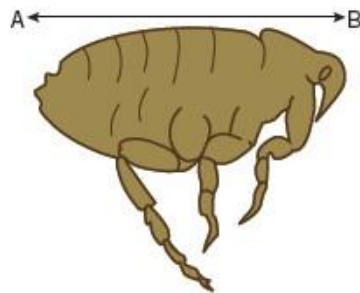
b objective $\times 40$ and
eyepiece $\times 15$

4.2 Calculating the magnification of images

Drawings and photographs of biological specimens should always have a magnification factor stated. This indicates how much larger or smaller the image is compared with the real specimen.

The magnification is calculated by comparing the sizes of the image and the real specimen. Look at this worked example.

The image shows a flea which is 1.3 mm long. To calculate the magnification of the image, measure the image (or the scale bar if given) on the paper (in this example, the body length as indicated by the line A-B).



For this image, the length of the image is 42 mm and the length of the real specimen is 1.3 mm.

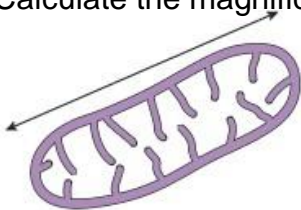
$$\text{magnification} = \frac{\text{length of image}}{\text{length of real specimen}} = 42/1.3 = 32.31$$

The magnification factor should therefore be written as $\times 32.31$

Remember: Use the same units. A common error is to mix units when performing these calculations. Begin each time by converting measurements to the same units for both the real specimen and the image.

Practice question

2 Calculate the magnification factor of a mitochondrion that is 1.5 μm long.



4.3 Calculating real dimensions

Magnification factors on images can be used to calculate the actual size of features shown on drawings and photographs of biological specimens. For example, in a

photomicrograph of a cell, individual features can be measured if the magnification is stated. Look at this worked example.

The magnification factor for the image of the open stoma is $\times 5000$.

This can be used to find out the actual size of any part of the cell, for example, the length of one guard cell, measured from A to B.

Step 1: Measure the length of the guard cell as precisely as possible. In this example the image of the guard cell is 52 mm long.

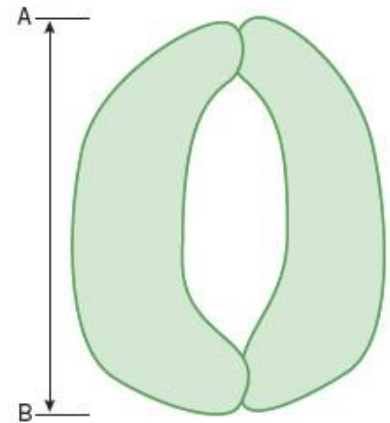
Step 2: Convert this measurement to units appropriate to the image. In this case you should use μm because it is a cell.

So the magnified image is $52 \times 1000 = 52\,000 \mu\text{m}$

Step 3: Rearrange the magnification equation (see Topic 3.2) to get:

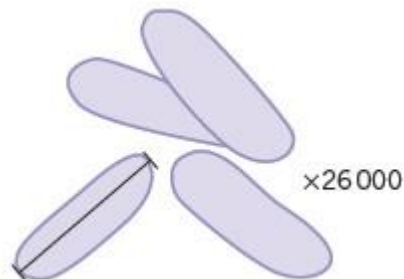
real size = size of image/magnification = $52\,000/5000 = 10.4$

So the real length of the guard cell is $10.4 \mu\text{m}$.



Practice question

3 Use the magnification factor to determine the actual size of a bacterial cell.



5 Percentages and uncertainty

A percentage is simply a fraction expressed as a decimal. It is important to be able to calculate routinely, but is often incorrectly calculated in exams. These pages should allow you to practise this skill.

5.1 Calculating percentages as proportions

To work out a percentage, you must identify or calculate the total number using the equation:

$$\text{percentage} = \frac{\text{number you want as a percentage of total number}}{\text{total number}} \times 100\%$$

For example, in a population, the number of people who have brown hair was counted.

The results showed that in the total population of 4600 people, 1800 people had brown hair.

The percentage of people with brown hair is found by calculating:

$$\frac{\text{number of people with brown hair}}{\text{total number of people}} \times 100$$

$$= \frac{1800}{4600} \times 100 = 39.1\%$$

Practice questions

- 1 The table below shows some data about energy absorbed by a tree in a year and how some of it is transferred.

Energy absorbed by the tree in a year	3 600 000 kJ/m ²
Energy transferred to primary consumers	2240 kJ/m ²
Energy transferred to secondary consumers	480 kJ/m ²

Calculate the percentage of energy absorbed by the tree that is transferred to
a primary consumers **b** secondary consumers.

- 2 One in 17 people in the UK has diabetes.

Calculate the percentage of the UK population that have diabetes.

5.2 Calculating the percentage change

When you work out an increase or a decrease as a percentage change, you must identify, or calculate, the total original amount:

$$\% \text{ increase} = \frac{\text{increase}}{\text{original amount}} \times 100$$

$$\% \text{ decrease} = \frac{\text{decrease}}{\text{original amount}} \times 100$$

Remember: When you calculate a percentage change, use the total *before* the increase or decrease, not the final total.

Practice questions

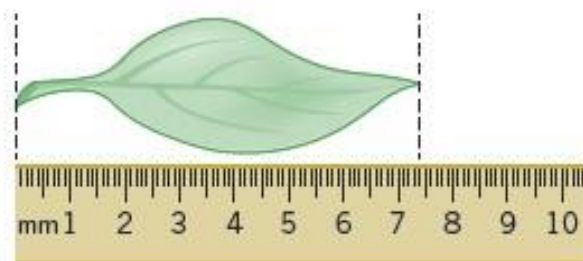
3 Convert the following mass changes as percentage changes.

Sucrose conc. / mol dm ⁻³	Initial mass / g	Final mass / g	Mass change / g	Percentage change in mass
0.9	1.79	1.06		
0.7	1.86	1.30		
0.5	1.95	1.70		
0.3	1.63	1.76		
0.1	1.82	2.55		

5.3 Measurement uncertainties

When you measure something, there will always be a small difference between the measured value and the true value. This may be because of the size of the scale divisions on your measuring equipment, or the difficulty of taking the measurement. This is called an uncertainty.

To estimate the uncertainty of a measurement with an instrument with a marked scale such as a ruler, a good rule of thumb is to let the uncertainty be equal to half the smallest division on the scale being used.



Using a ruler with a mm scale, the length of the leaf seems to be 74 mm. The smallest division is 1 mm, so the uncertainty is 0.5 mm.

The true length is therefore 74 mm \pm 0.5 mm.

Practice question

4 Give the uncertainty for the following pieces of equipment:

a large measuring cylinder with 2 cm³ divisions

b digital stopwatch timer measuring to the nearest hundredth of a second

c thermometer with 0.1 °C divisions.

5.4 Calculating percentage uncertainties

The uncertainty is the range of possible error either side of the true value due to the scale being used, so the value recorded for the measurement = closest estimate \pm uncertainty.

The difference between the true value and the maximum or minimum value is called the **absolute error**.

Once the absolute error has been established for a particular measurement, it is possible to express this as a percentage uncertainty or **relative error**. The calculation to use is:

$$\text{relative error} = \frac{\text{absolute error}}{\text{measured value}} \times 100\%$$

In the leaf example above, the absolute error is ± 0.5 mm.

The relative error is therefore:

$$0.5/74 \times 100\% = 0.7\%$$

Practice questions

5 Complete the table to show the missing values in the last two columns.

Measurement made	Equipment used	Absolute error	Relative error
Length of a fluid column in a respirometer is 6 mm	mm scale	0.5 mm	
Volume of a syringe is 12 cm ³ of liquid	0.5 cm ³ divisions		
Change in mass of 1.6 g	balance with 2 d.p.		

6 Scatter graphs and lines of best fit

The purpose of a scatter graph with a line of best fit is to allow visualisation of a trend in a set of data. The graph can be used to make calculations, such as rates, and also to judge the correlation between variables. It is easy to draw such a graph but also quite easy to make simple mistakes.

6.1 Plotting scatter graphs

The rules when plotting graphs are:

- Ensure that the graph occupies the majority of the space available:
 - In exams, this means more than half the space
 - Look for the largest number to help you decide the best scale
 - The scale should be based on 1, 2, or 5, or multiples of those numbers
- Ensure that the dependent variable that you measured is on the y-axis and the independent variable that you varied is on the x-axis
- Mark axes using a ruler and divide them clearly and equidistantly (i.e. 10, 20, 30, 40 not 10, 15, 20, 30, 45)

- Ensure that both axes have full titles and units are clearly labelled
- Plot the points accurately using sharp pencil 'x' marks so the exact position of the point is obvious
- Draw a neat best fit line, either a smooth curve or a ruled line. It does not have to pass through all the points. Move the ruler around aiming for:
 - as many points as possible on the line
 - the same number of points above and below the line
- If the line starts linear and then curves, be careful not to have a sharp corner where the two lines join. Your curve should be smooth
- Confine your line to the range of the points. Never extrapolate the line beyond the range within which you measured
- Add a clear, concise title.

Remember: Take care, use only pencil and check the positions of your points.

Practice questions

- 1 Use your calculated data in Topic 5.2 question 3 to plot a graph of % mass change against sucrose concentration.
- 2 For each of the tables of data:
 - a Plot a scatter graph
 - b Draw a line of best fit
 - c Describe the correlation

Turbidity of casein samples at different pH	
	% transmission
pH	(blue light)
9.00	99
8.00	99
6.00	87
5.00	67
4.75	26
4.50	30
4.00	24
3.75	43
3.50	64

Sodium bicarbonate concentration / %	Rate of oxygen production by pondweed / mm ³ s ⁻¹
6.5	1.6
5.0	2.1
3.5	1.2
2.0	0.8
1.0	0.5
0.5	0.2