

# Welcome to A level



# Biology



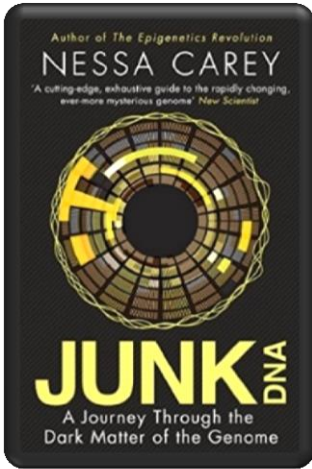
This pack contains a programme of activities and resources to get you excited about your start in A level Biology. We only expect you to complete the cells poster task for September (separate document), so this is just a booklet of extra resources that you can choose to do at your leisure. There are some really cool Ted talks, movies to watch, books to read, some revision strategy ideas and even a pre-course knowledge quiz to get your brain ready for September. Have fun!



<https://www.distance-education-academy.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/biology-a-level-course.jpg>

## Book Recommendations

Kick back this summer with a good read. The books below are all popular science books and great for extending your understanding of Biology

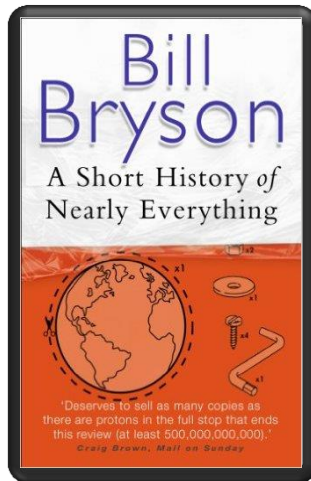
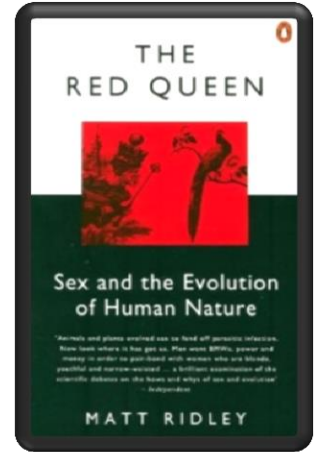


### Junk DNA

Our DNA is so much more complex than you probably realize, this book will really deepen your understanding of all the work you will do on Genetics. Available at [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)

### The Red Queen

Its all about sex. Or sexual selection at least. This book will really help your understanding of evolution and particularly the fascinating role of sex in evolution. Available at [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)



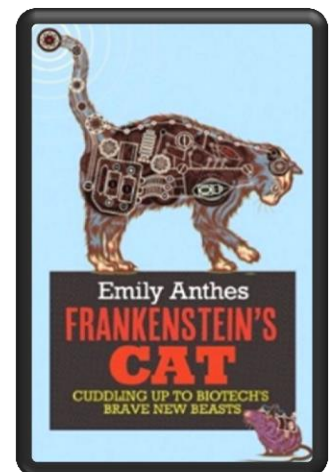
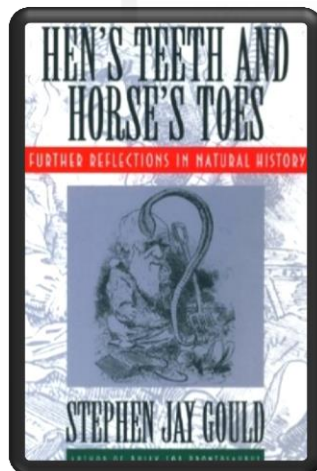
### A Short History of Nearly Everything

A whistle-stop tour through many aspects of history from the Big Bang to now. This is a really accessible read that will re-familiarise you with common concepts and introduce you to some of the more colourful characters from the history of science! Available at [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)

Studying Geography as well?

### Hen's teeth and horses toes

Stephen Jay Gould is a great Evolution writer and this book discusses lots of fascinating stories about Geology and evolution. Available at [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)



An easy read..

### Frankenstein's cat

Discover how glow in the dark fish are made and more great Biotechnology breakthroughs. Available at [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)

You will also find any books by Professor Steve Jones incredibly useful and interesting.

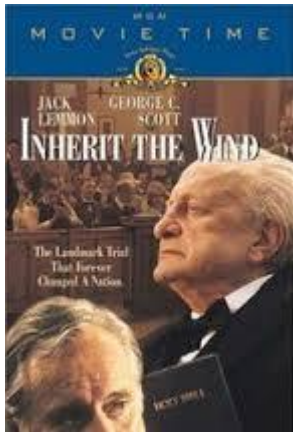
# Movie Recommendations

Everyone loves a good story and everyone loves some great science. Here are some of the picks of the best films based on real life scientists and discoveries. There are so many more than those in this list including Gattaca and Outbreak (very topical right now!) You'll find lots of options here <https://www.bioexplorer.net/biology-movies.html/>



### Inherit The Wind (1960)

Great if you can find it. Based on a real life trial of a teacher accused of the crime of teaching Darwinian evolution in school in America. Does the debate rumble on today?



### Gorillas in the Mist (1988)

An absolute classic that retells the true story of the life and work of Dian Fossey and her work studying and protecting mountain gorillas from poachers and habitat loss. A tear jerker.

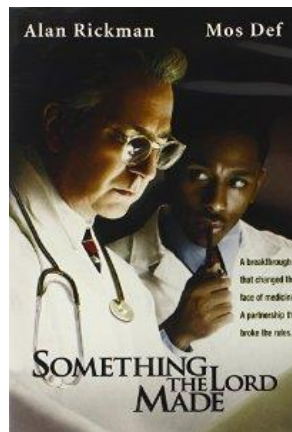
### Andromeda Strain (1971)

Science fiction by the great thriller writer Michael Crichton (he of Jurassic Park fame). Humans begin dying when an alien microbe arrives on Earth.



### Lorenzo's Oil (1992)

Based on a true story. A young child suffers from an autoimmune disease. The parents research and challenge doctors to develop a new cure for his disease.



### Something the Lord Made (2004)

Professor Snape (the late great Alan Rickman) in a very different role. The film tells the story of the scientists at the cutting edge of early heart surgery as well as issues surrounding racism at the time.

There are some great TV series and box sets available too, you might want to check out: Blue Planet, Planet Earth, The Ascent of Man, Catastrophe, Frozen Planet, Life Story, The Hunt and Monsoon. There are also some great documentaries on Netflix such as Pandemic which is obviously particularly topical at the moment.

## Ted talks and other Presentations

If you have 30 minutes to spare, here are some great presentations (and free!) from world leading scientists and researchers on a variety of topics. They provide some interesting answers and ask some thought-provoking questions. Use the link or scan the QR code to view:

### **A New Superweapon in the Fight Against Cancer**

Available at :

[http://www.ted.com/talks/paula\\_hammond\\_a\\_new\\_superweapon\\_in\\_the\\_fight\\_against\\_cancer?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/paula_hammond_a_new_superweapon_in_the_fight_against_cancer?language=en)

Cancer is a very clever, adaptable disease. To defeat it, says medical researcher and educator Paula Hammond, we need a new and powerful mode of attack.



### **Why Bees are Disappearing**

Available at :

[http://www.ted.com/talks/marla\\_spivak\\_why\\_bees\\_are\\_disappearing?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/marla_spivak_why_bees_are_disappearing?language=en)

Honeybees have thrived for 50 million years, each colony 40 to 50,000 individuals coordinated in amazing harmony. So why, seven years ago, did colonies start dying en-masse?

### **Why Doctors Don't Know About the Drugs They Prescribe**

Available at :

[http://www.ted.com/talks/ben\\_goldacre\\_what\\_doctors\\_don\\_t\\_know\\_about\\_the\\_drugs\\_they\\_prescribe?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/ben_goldacre_what_doctors_don_t_know_about_the_drugs_they_prescribe?language=en)

When a new drug gets tested, the results of the trials should be published for the rest of the medical world — except much of the time, negative or inconclusive findings go unreported, leaving doctors and researchers in the dark.



### **Growing New Organs**

Available at :

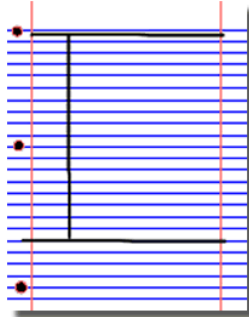
[http://www.ted.com/talks/anthony\\_atalla\\_growing\\_organs\\_engineering\\_tissue?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/anthony_atalla_growing_organs_engineering_tissue?language=en)

Anthony Atalla's state-of-the-art lab grows human organs — from muscles to blood vessels to bladders, and more.

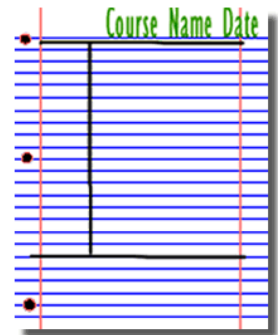
# Research activities

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.

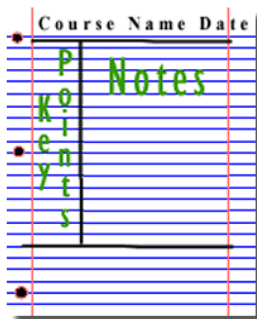
1. Divide your page into three sections like this



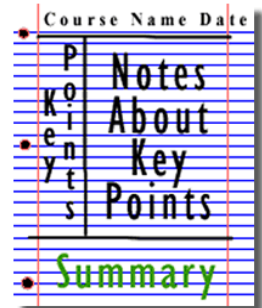
2. Write the name, date and topic at the top of the page



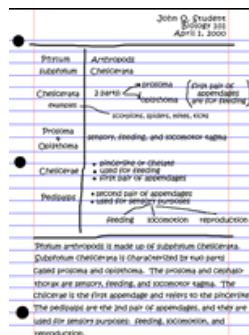
3. Use the large box to make notes. Leave a space between separate ideas. Abbreviate where possible.



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



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



Images taken from <http://coe.jmu.edu/learningtoolbox/cornellnotes.html>

You can also watch youtube videos to help you learn this valuable notetaking technique

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErSjc1PEGKE>

## Pre-Knowledge Topics

A level Biology will use your knowledge from IGCSE and build on this to help you understand new and more demanding ideas. Complete the following tasks to make sure your knowledge is up to date and you are ready to start studying. :

### **DNA and the Genetic Code**

In living organisms nucleic acids (DNA and RNA have important roles and functions related to their properties. The sequence of bases in the DNA molecule determines the structure of proteins, including enzymes.

The double helix and its four bases store the information that is passed from generation to generation. The sequence of the base pairs adenine, thymine, cytosine and guanine tell ribosomes in the cytoplasm how to construct amino acids into polypeptides and produce every characteristic we see. DNA can mutate leading to diseases including cancer and sometimes anomalies in the genetic code are passed from parents to babies in disease such as cystic fibrosis, or can be developed in unborn foetuses such as Downs Syndrome.

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

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/z36mmp3/revision>

<http://www.s-cool.co.uk/a-level/biology/dna-and-genetic-code>

And take a look at these videos:

<http://ed.ted.com/lessons/the-twisting-tale-of-dna-judith-hauck>

<http://ed.ted.com/lessons/where-do-genes-come-from-carl-zimmer>

#### **Task:**

**Produce a poster or a PowerPoint or similar Your work should use images, keywords and simple explanations to:**

Define gene, chromosome, DNA and base pair

Describe the structure and function of DNA and RNA

Explain how DNA is copied in the body

Outline some of the problems that occur with DNA replication and what the consequences of this might be.

### **Evolution**

Transfer of genetic information from one generation to the next can ensure continuity of species or lead to variation within a species and possible formation of new species. Reproductive isolation can lead to accumulation of different genetic information in populations potentially leading to formation of new species (speciation). Sequencing projects have read the genomes of organisms ranging from microbes and plants to humans. This allows the sequences of the proteins that derive from the genetic code to be predicted. Gene technologies allow study and alteration of gene function in order to better understand organism function and to design new industrial and medical processes.

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

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/z237hyc/revision/4>

<http://www.s-cool.co.uk/a-level/biology/evolution>

And take a look at these videos:

<http://ed.ted.com/lessons/how-to-sequence-the-human-genome-mark-j-kiel>

<http://ed.ted.com/lessons/the-race-to-sequence-the-human-genome-tien-nguyen>

#### **Task:**

**Produce a one page revision guide for an AS Biology student that recaps the key words and concepts in this topic. Your revision guide should:**

Describe speciation

Explain what a genome is

Give examples of how this information has already been used to develop new treatments and technologies.

## **Biodiversity**

The variety of life, both past and present, is extensive, but the biochemical basis of life is similar for all living things. Biodiversity refers to the variety and complexity of life and may be considered at different levels. Biodiversity can be measured, for example within a habitat or at the genetic level. Classification is a means of organising the variety of life based on relationships between organisms and is built around the concept of species. Originally classification systems were based on observable features but more recent approaches draw on a wider range of evidence to clarify relationships between organisms. Adaptations of organisms to their environments can be behavioural, physiological and anatomical. Adaptation and selection are major factors in evolution and make a significant contribution to the diversity of living organisms.

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

<http://www.s-cool.co.uk/a-level/biology/ecological-concepts>

<http://www.s-cool.co.uk/a-level/biology/classification>

And take a look at these videos:

<http://ed.ted.com/lessons/why-is-biodiversity-so-important-kim-preshoff>

<http://ed.ted.com/lessons/can-wildlife-adapt-to-climate-change-erin-eastwood>

### **Task:**

**Write a persuasive letter to an MP, organisation or pressure group promoting conservation to maintain biodiversity.**

Your letter should:

Define what is meant by species and classification

Describe how species are classified

Explain one way scientists can collect data about a habitat, giving an example

Explain adaptation and how habitat change may pose a threat to niche species

## **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

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

<http://www.s-cool.co.uk/a-level/biology/gas-exchange>

<http://www.s-cool.co.uk/a-level/biology/nutrition-and-digestion/revise-it/human-digestive-system>

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:**

**Create a poster. Your poster 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):

<http://www.s-cool.co.uk/a-level/biology/cells-and-organelles>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/zvjycdm/revision>

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:**

**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 more Cornell notes if you wish):

<http://www.s-cool.co.uk/a-level/biology/biological-molecules-and-enzymes>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/zb739j6/revision>

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:**

**Krabbe disease occurs when a person doesn't have a certain enzyme in their body. The disease effects 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

## **Ecosystems**

Ecosystems range in size from the very large to the very small. Biomass transfers through ecosystems and the efficiency of transfer through different trophic levels can be measured. Microorganisms play a key role in recycling chemical elements. Ecosystems are dynamic systems, usually moving from colonisation to climax communities in a process known as succession. The dynamic equilibrium of populations is affected by a range of factors. Humans are part of the ecological balance and their activities affect it both directly and indirectly. Effective management of the conflict between human needs and conservation help to maintain sustainability of resources.

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

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/z7vqtfr/revision>

<http://www.s-cool.co.uk/a-level/biology/ecological-concepts>

And take a look at these videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZKIHe2LDP8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E8dkWQVFAoA>

### **Task:**

**Produce a newspaper or magazine article about one ecosystem (e.g. the arctic, the Sahara, the rainforest, or something closer to home like your local woodland, nature reserve or shore line).**

**Your article should include:**

Key words and definitions

Pictures or diagrams of your chosen ecosystem.

A description of the changes that have occurred in this ecosystem

An explanation of the threats and future changes that may further alter this ecosystem.

## **Control Systems**

Homeostasis is the maintenance of a constant internal environment. Negative feedback helps maintain an optimal internal state in the context of a dynamic equilibrium. Positive feedback also occurs. Stimuli, both internal and external, are detected leading to responses. The genome is regulated by a number of factors. Coordination may be chemical or electrical in nature

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

<http://www.s-cool.co.uk/a-level/biology/homeostasis>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/topics/z8kxpv4>

And take a look at these videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x4PPZCLnVkA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x4PPZCLnVkA>

### **Task:**

**Produce a poster summarising one of the following topics: Temperature Control, Water and the Kidneys, Glucose, or The Liver.**

Whichever topic you choose, your poster or display should include:

Key words and definitions

Clearly labelled diagrams

Short explanations of key ideas or processes.

### **Energy for Biological Processes**

In cellular respiration, glycolysis takes place in the cytoplasm and the remaining steps in the mitochondria. ATP synthesis is associated with the electron transfer chain in the membranes of mitochondria and chloroplasts in photosynthesis energy is transferred to ATP in the light- dependent stage and the ATP is utilised during synthesis in the light-independent stage.

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

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/zcxrd2p/revision>

<http://www.s-cool.co.uk/a-level/biology/respiration>

And take a look at these videos:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00jbG\\_cfGuQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00jbG_cfGuQ)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2f7YwCtHcgk>

#### **Task:**

**Produce an A3 annotated information poster that illustrates the process of cellular respiration and summarises the key points.**

Your poster should include:

Both text and images

Be visually stimulating

Key words and definitions

Clearly labelled diagrams

Short explanations of key ideas or processes.

### **Scientific and Investigative Skills**

As part of your A level you will complete the practical assessment group (PAG) component. This will require you to carry out a series of practical activities as well as planning how to do them, analysing the results and evaluating the methods. This will require you to: use appropriate apparatus to record a range of quantitative measurements (to include mass, time, volume, temperature, length and pH), use appropriate instrumentation to record quantitative measurements, such as a colorimeter or potometer, use laboratory glassware apparatus for a variety of experimental techniques to include serial dilutions, use of light microscope at high power and low power, including use of a graticule, produce scientific drawing from observation with annotations, use qualitative reagents to identify biological molecules, separate biological compounds using thin layer/paper chromatography or electrophoresis, safely and ethically use organisms, use microbiological aseptic techniques, including the use of agar plates, safely use instruments for dissection of an animal organ, or plant organ, use sampling techniques in fieldwork.

#### **Task:**

**Produce a glossary for the following key words:**

accuracy, anomaly, calibration, causal link, chance, confounding variable, control experiment, control group, control variable, correlation, dependent variable, errors, evidence, fair test, hypothesis, independent, null hypothesis, precision, probability, protocol, random distribution, random error, raw data, reliability, systematic error, true value, validity, zero error,

We can't visit Science centres but many have virtual tours and activities:

Glasgow Science  
Centre - Glasgow

Dundee Science  
Centre - Dundee

Life – Newcastle-  
upon-Tyne

Cambridge Science  
Centre - Cambridge

Anglesey Sea Zoo -  
Anglesey

Think-tank -  
Birmingham

National Museum -  
Cardiff

The Eden Project -  
Cornwall

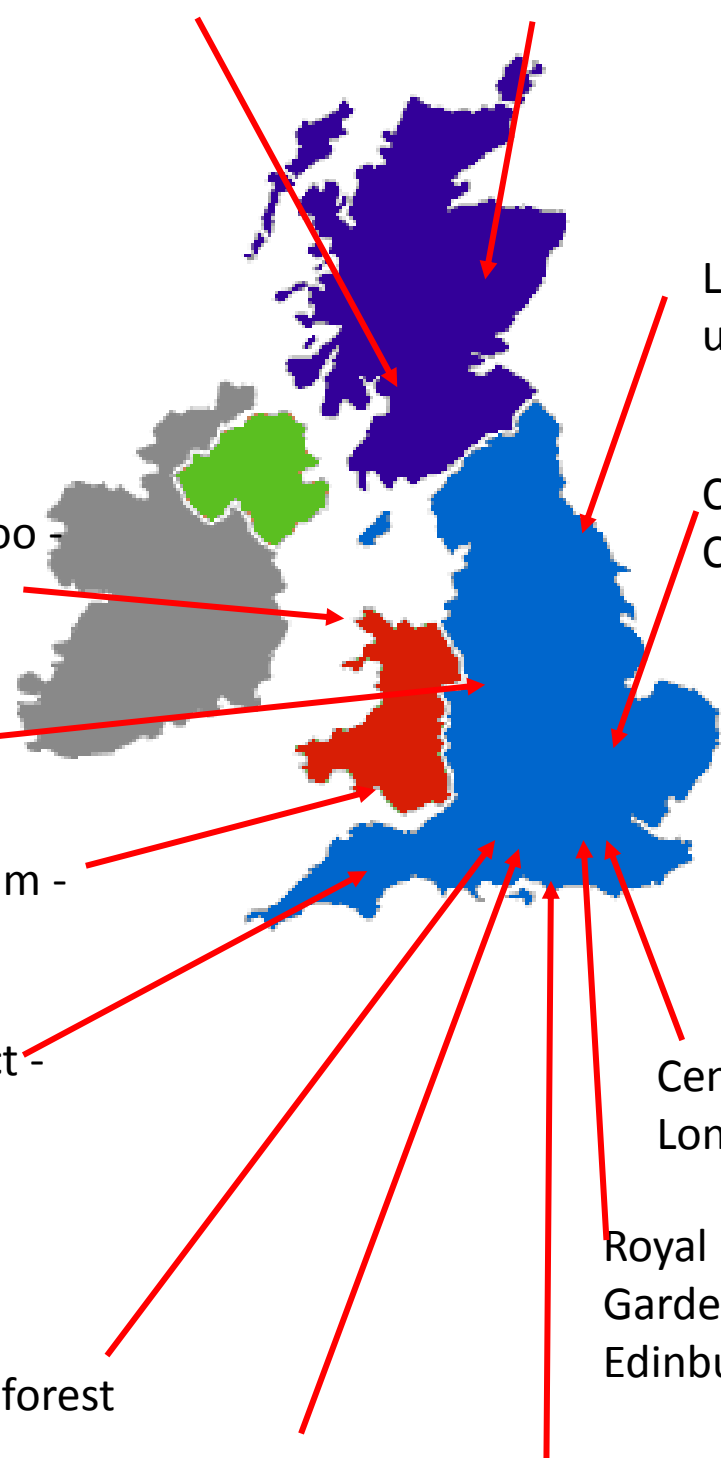
Centre of the Cell -  
London

The Living Rainforest  
- Newbury

Royal Botanic  
Gardens – Kew -  
Edinburgh

Oxford University  
Museum of Natural  
History - Oxford

National Marine  
Aquarium - Plymouth



## Ideas for Day Trips

If you are on holiday in the UK in the summer or fancy a browse online:

Remember there are also lots of zoos, wildlife and safari parks across the country, here are some you may not have heard of or considered, many of which have lots of online learning opportunities:  
Colchester Zoo, Cotswold Wildlife Park, Banham Zoo (Norfolk), Tropical Birdland (Leicestershire), Yorkshire Wildlife Park, Peak Wildlife Park, International Centre for Birds of Prey (York), Blackpool Zoo, Beale Park (Reading)

There are also hundreds of nature reserves, with online learning, located all over the country including:  
RSPB sites at Lochwinnoch, Saltholme, Fairburn Ings, Old Moor, Conwy, Minsmere, Rainham Marshes, Pulborough Brooks, Radipole Lake, Newport Wetlands.  
Wildlife Trust Reserves and others at Rutland Water, Pensthorpe, Insh Marshes, Attenborough Centre, Inversnaid, Skomer, Loch Garten, Donna Nook, Chapmans Well, Woodwalton Fen, London Wetland Centre, Martin Down and Woolston Eyes Reserve.

Once lockdown is over and things are back to normal, many organisations also have opportunities for people to volunteer over the summer months, this might include working in a shop/café/visitor centre, helping with site maintenance or taking part in biological surveys. Not only is this great experience, it looks great on a job or UCAS application.

For opportunities keep an eye out in your local press, on social media, or look at the websites of organisations like the RSPB, Durrell, Wildlife Trust, National Trust or Wildlife & Wetland Trust.

There are also probably lots of smaller organisations who would also appreciate any support you can give!

And there's loads on the Durrell website including an interactive tour produced by Mrs Williams's cousin!

## Science on Social Media

Science communication is essential in the modern world and all the big scientific companies, researchers and institutions have their own social media accounts. Here are some top tips to keep up to date with developing news or interesting stories, I'm sure you'll find lots more:

Follow on Twitter:

Commander Chris Hadfield – former resident aboard the International Space Station @cmdrhadfield

Tiktaalik roseae – a 375 million year old fossil fish with its own Twitter account!  
@tiktaalikroseae

NASA's Voyager 2 – a satellite launched nearly 40 years ago that is now travelling beyond our Solar System  
@NSFVoyager2

Neil dGrasse Tyson – Director of the Hayden Planetarium in New York  
@neiltyson

Sci Curious – feed from writer and Bethany Brookshire tweeting about good, bad and weird neuroscience  
@scicurious

The SETI Institute – The Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence, be the first to know what they find!  
@setiinstitute

Carl Zimmer – Science writer Carl blogs about the life sciences  
@carlzimmer

Phil Plait – tweets about astronomy and bad science  
@badastronomer

Virginia Hughes – science journalist and blogger for National Geographic, keep up to date with neuroscience, genetics and behaviour  
@virginiahughes

Maryn McKenna – science journalist who writes about antibiotic resistance  
@marynmck



Find on Facebook:

Nature - the profile page for nature.com for news, features, research and events from Nature Publishing Group

Marin Conservation Institute – publishes the latest science to identify important marine ecosystems around the world.

National Geographic - since 1888, National Geographic has travelled the Earth, sharing its amazing stories in pictures and words.

Science News Magazine - Science covers important and emerging research in all fields of science.

BBC Science News - The latest BBC Science and Environment News: breaking news, analysis and debate on science and nature around the world.





There are a wide array of online courses available. Some you have to pay for, but many are heavily discounted at the moment. Others are free. Here are a few suggestions



Centre of excellence Zoology course  
Currently discounted by 70% (normally £127) with the code PICODI70  
[www.centreofexcellence.com/shop/zoology-diploma-course/](http://www.centreofexcellence.com/shop/zoology-diploma-course/)

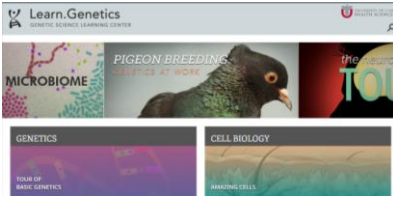
Online course provider run by Harvard, MIT and Berkley University as well as universities from around the world. Huge range of free courses, including a great one on DNA and Genetics.  
[www.edx.org/course/dna-biologys-genetic-code](http://www.edx.org/course/dna-biologys-genetic-code)



Ever fancied going to Harvard? Well you can (virtually at least!). Harvard University currently has a range of courses available online free of charge. This intro to biochemistry would be really useful, although it does go to undergrad level by the end of the course so this one is not for the faint hearted  
<https://online-learning.harvard.edu/course/principles-biochemistry-1?delta=0>

# Science websites

These websites all offer an amazing collection of resources that you should use again and again throughout your course.



Probably the best website on Biology....

Learn Genetics from Utah University has so much that is pitched at an appropriate level for you and has lots of interactive resources to explore, everything from why some people can taste bitter berries to how we clone mice or make glow in the dark jelly fish.

<http://learn.genetics.utah.edu/>



In the summer you will most likely start to learn about Biodiversity and Evolution. Many Zoos have great websites, especially London Zoo. Read about some of the case studies on conservation, such as the Giant Pangolin, the only mammal with scales. <https://www.zsl.org/conservation>



At GCSE you learnt how genetic diseases are inherited. In this virtual fly lab you get to breed fruit flies to investigate how different features are passed on.

<http://sciencecourseware.org/vcise/drosophila/>



DNA from the beginning is full of interactive animations that tell the story of DNA from its discovery through to advanced year 13 concepts.

One to book mark!  
<http://www.dnafb.org/>



Ok, so not a website, but a video you definitely want to watch. One of the first topics you will learn about is the amazing structure of the cell. This BBC film shows the fascinating workings of a cell... a touch more detailed than the "fried egg" model you might have seen.

[http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xzh0kb\\_the-hidden-life-of-the-cell\\_shortfilms](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xzh0kb_the-hidden-life-of-the-cell_shortfilms)

If this link expires – google "BBC hidden life of the cell"

# Science: Things to do!



Lockdown then holiday and boredom has set in? There are loads of citizen science projects you can take part in either from the comfort of your bedroom, out and about, or when on holiday. Wikipedia does a comprehensive list of all the current projects taking place. Google 'citizen science project'

**AgeGuess**

**big butterfly count**  
15th July - 7th August



*The Big Moss Map*

# MOOC



Want to stand above the rest when it comes to UCAS? Now is the time to act.

MOOCs are online courses run by nearly all Universities. They are short FREE courses that you take part in. They are usually quite specialist, but aimed at the public, not the genius!

There are lots of websites that help you find a course, such as edX and Future learn.

You can take part in any course, but there are usually start and finish dates. They mostly involve taking part in web chats, watching videos and interactives.

Completing a MOOC will look great on your Personal statement and they are dead easy to take part in!

WHAT IS IT?

# MOOC

MASSIVE	OPEN	ONLINE	COURSE
Classes may consist of up to 100,000+ students.	Registration is open to anyone around the world.	The course is taken completely online.	They're similar to college courses, but don't offer credit.

what is a MOOC?

**University**  
The whole cake.

**MOOC**  
aka Massive Open Online Courses

One slice of the cake.

An intense period of study covering a wide range of areas and ideas.

A brief free digital delve into a specific area of study. Connecting and working with users from across the globe.

# A Level Biology Transition Baseline Assessment

The following 40 minute test is designed so you can self-assess your recall, analysis and evaluative skills and knowledge.

Remember to use your exam technique: look at the command words and the number of marks each question is worth. A suggested mark scheme is provided for you to check your answers.

1. a) What are the four base pairs found in DNA?

.....  
(2)

b) What does DNA code for?

.....  
(1)

c) Which organelle in a cell carries out this function?

.....  
(1)

2. a) What theory did Charles Darwin propose?

.....  
(1)

b) Why did many people not believe Darwin at the time?

.....  
(1)

c) Describe how fossils are formed.

.....  
.....  
.....  
(3)

d) The fossil record shows us that there have been some species that have formed and some that have become extinct.

i) What is meant by the term 'species'?

.....  
(2)

ii) Describe how a new species may arise:

.....  
.....  
.....(3)

3. Ecologists regularly study habitats to measure the species present and the effect of any changes. One team of ecologists investigated the habitat shown in the picture below:

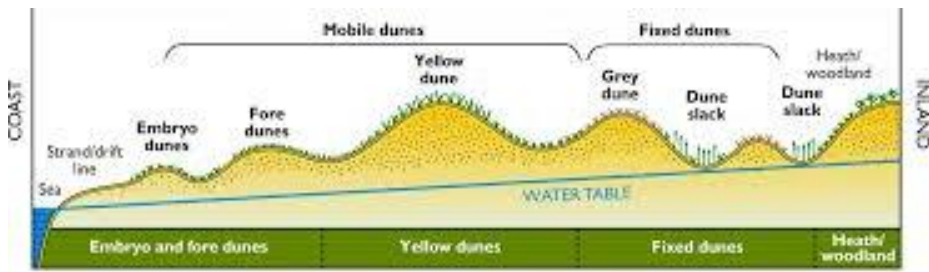


Image taken from <http://www.macaulay.ac.uk/soilquality/Dune%20Succession.pdf>

a) Define the following keywords:

i) Population

.....

ii) Community

.....

(2)

b) Give an example of one biotic factor and one abiotic factor that would be present in this habitat

Biotic: .....

Abiotic: .....

(2)

c) Describe how the ecologists would go about measuring the species present between the coast and the inland.

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

(6)

4. Every living organism is made of cells.



Image taken from <http://prestigebox.com/worksheet/label-an-animal-cell-worksheet>

a) Label the following parts of the animal cell:

- 2 .....
- 5 .....
- 8 .....

(3)

b) Describe how is the structure of the cell membrane related to its function?

.....  
.....  
.....

(3)

5. A medical research team investigated how quickly the body deals with glucose after a meal. They studied the blood glucose concentration of people who exercised versus those who did not. Here are their results:

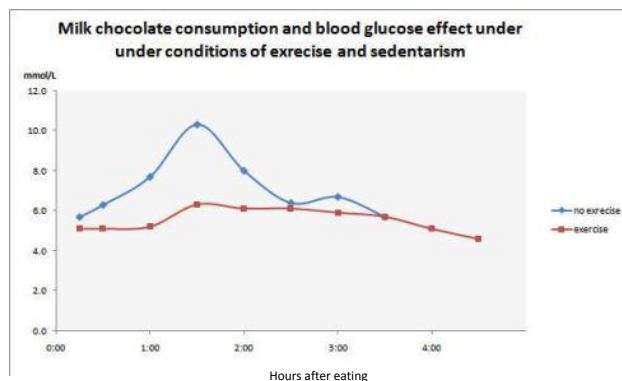


Image taken from <https://memoirsofanamnesic.wordpress.com/category/blood-glucose/>

a) What organ in the body regulates blood glucose concentration?

.....

(1)

b) Explain how the stages that would bring about a return to normal blood glucose concentrations.

.....

.....

.....

.....

(4)

c) Name one variable the researchers will have controlled.

.....

(1)

d) The researchers made the following conclusion:

**“Blood glucose returns to normal values for all people after 4 hours”**

To what extent do you agree with this conclusion.

.....

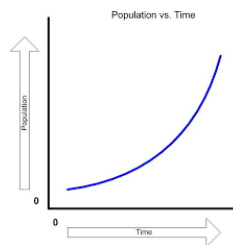
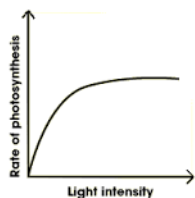
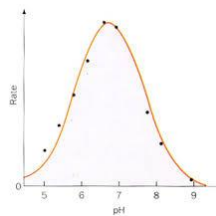
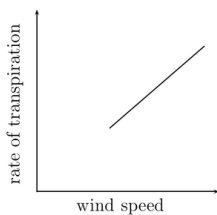
.....

.....

.....

(3)

6. Scientists need to be able to interpret data in graphs to decide if there are trends in the results. For each graph below, describe the trend.



(4)

Suggested Mark Scheme:

Question			Answer	Marks
1	a		Adenine-Thymine Cytosine-Guanine	1 1
	b		Protein/enzymes	1
	c		Ribosomes	1
2	a		Evolution (by natural selection)	1
	b		Not enough evidence	1
	c		(Plant/animal dies) and is quickly buried in sediment Not all conditions for decay are present Hard parts of the body are replaced by minerals	1 1 1
	d	i	Organisms that can reproduce to produce viable offspring/offspring that can also reproduce (fertile)	1
		ii	3 from Geographical isolation/named example Mutation of genes Natural Selection/selective advantage Species can no longer interbreed (not produce fertile offspring)	1 1 1 1
3	a	i	A group of organisms, all of the same species, and all of whom live together in a particular habitat.	1
		ii	The total of all populations living together in a particular habitat.	1
	b		Biotic – one from: Predators, prey, plant, microbes	1
		Abiotic – one from: Availability of water, temperature, mineral concentration, reference to climate/weather	1	
	c		Measure out a transect Using a tape measure Use a quadrat At regular (named) intervals Identify species present Using a key/guide	1 1 1 1 1 1
4	A		2 Nucleolus	1
			5 Smooth Endoplasmic Reticulum	1
			8 Golgi body	1

Question		Answer	Marks
4	b	<p>Any 3 from the following structure <b>and</b> function must be given.</p> <p>Lipid bilayer - has a hydrophobic inside and hydrophilic outside, allowing for selective permeability</p> <p>Proteins - allow for specific substances to come or some molecules to pass through,</p> <p>Cholesterol - allows for fluidity of the membrane,</p> <p>Glycoproteins - for cell identification they serve as markers</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p>
5	a	Pancreas	1
	b	<p>3 from</p> <p>Pancreas detects change</p> <p>Insulin secreted</p> <p>By alpha cells</p> <p>Respiration increased</p> <p>Uptake of glucose increased</p> <p>Liver increases storage of glucose as glycogen</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p>
	c	<p>Any one from:</p> <p>Amount of chocolate, time taken to eat, other food/drink consumed, age, gender, weight, fitness level/metabolic rate, health/pre existing conditions, use of medicines/drugs</p>	1
	d	<p>Any three from</p> <p>Data suggests that blood glucose returns to normal</p> <p>Doesn't show how much exercise has been done</p> <p>Doesn't say age/gender/other named variable</p> <p>May only be true for chocolate/only one type of food investigated</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p>
6		<p>Top left: transpiration increases when wind speed increases/there is a positive correlation</p> <p>Top right: rate increases with pH until the optimum is reached, after the optimum, rate decreases</p> <p>Bottom left: Increasing light initially increases the rate of photosynthesis, but after a while remains constant</p> <p>Bottom right: Population increases slowly at first and then increases at a greater rate/increases exponentially</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p>