

A-LEVEL BIOLOGY



INFORMATION
for students and parents

2026 ENTRY

WHY STUDY BIOLOGY AT THE MAYNARD?

We are all fascinated by the intricate processes and relationships found in living organisms and communities. Who has not been fascinated by David Attenborough describing the perils and hardships of the living world? But the knowledge of biological issues is also central to the way we lead our lives, from understanding health issues to considering the welfare of the planet. Many new and exciting areas of employment have opened up with the development of new biological technologies and knowledge such as the human genome project and stem cell technology.

A-level Biology at The Maynard reflects the excitement and challenge of the new Science. We follow the AQA syllabus which supports and challenges the students as they develop their understanding of the living world. Students are taught in small groups with access to a rich variety of resources and there is a strong emphasis on independent learning and practical activities.

Our students achieve excellent results and go on to study a wide variety of biologically related courses from Medicine, Nursing, Veterinary Science and Dentistry to Food Science, Psychology, Biology and Biochemistry to name just a few.

BIOLOGY A-LEVEL: THE CONTENT

A-level Biology is divided into eight topics. Four are taught in Lower 6 and four in Upper 6. The topic titles are:

Lower 6 year

- Biological molecules
- Cells
- Organisms exchange substances with their environment
- Genetic information, variation and relationships between organisms

Upper 6 year

- Energy transfers in and between organisms
- Organisms respond to changes in their internal and external environments
- Genetics, populations, evolution and ecosystems
- The control of gene expression



ASSESSMENT

A-level Biology

The A-level course is assessed by three terminal examinations each lasting two hours. Paper 1 covers all the Lower 6 topics and Paper 2 covers all Upper 6 topics. The final paper examines all eight topics and includes a synoptic essay. The papers will include questions that target the conceptual and theoretical understanding of experimental methods. In addition, practical skills will be assessed and reported separately as a Science Practical Endorsement. This will be awarded a 'pass' or 'fail' grade and will not affect the overall A-level grade.

Learning Biology does not just happen in the classroom. An important part of the course is fieldwork and we offer a variety of opportunities to study biology through extracurricular trips.

We encourage students to build up their knowledge by wider reading and debate. Our school library takes several relevant magazines and we run a Science Reading Group, as part of ESP, where all Science-based Sixth Formers are encouraged to debate the findings of recent scientific articles. All students also have the opportunity to take part in the Biology Olympiad, an exciting opportunity to test their knowledge to the full.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

The qualification builds on the knowledge, understanding and practical skills that you gained in GCSE Biology or in GCSE Combined Science. You should have at least a grade 7 in GCSE Biology (or 7:7 grades in Combined Science). You should have at least a grade 6 in GCSE Mathematics, as numerical and mathematical skills are important in Biology and form 10% of the assessment, and at least a grade 7 in English Language as you will need to be able to communicate effectively.





MADE FOR GIRLS AGE 4 - 18

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