

BIOLOGY



ROYAL
HOSPITAL
SCHOOL



IS BIOLOGY THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR ME?

Choose to study biology if:

- You are genuinely interested in the subject – interested enough to read about it
- You like solving problems
- You like understanding how things work
- You are prepared to work hard
- You meet the entry criteria

WHAT DO I NEED TO STUDY BIOLOGY?

- Grade 7 in GCSE Biology, or Grade 8/7 at Double Award Science. However, the reality is that we are interested in far more than your GCSE Biology grade.

SUCCESS IN A LEVEL BIOLOGY RELIES ON MANY SKILLS:

- Maths skills, as at least one grade's worth of questions are maths-based.
- Language skills, as there are well in excess of 1000 new words to learn to use correctly.
- Problem-solving skills, as many of the marks in exam papers are based on application of knowledge rather than recall.
- Consequently, how you have done in all your GCSE exams is important. We recommend that pupils have a GCSE points average of 6.5 or higher before they consider biology as an A Level course, so that they have the right skill set to be able to cope with the demands of the course.

Interesting fact: Pupils with similar GCSE point scores gain, on average, one grade higher at A Level Biology if they also study Chemistry!

BIOLOGY HAS AT LEAST ANOTHER 50 INTERESTING YEARS

– James Watson



WHAT WILL YOU STUDY?

Studying A Level Biology will enable you to gain a greater understanding of the principles of life. The A Level course will focus on key principles that underpin all of biology:

- Cell structure and interactions between cells to form tissues, organs, organ systems and organisms in animals and plants
- Molecular biochemistry
- The transfer of energy within and between organisms
- The significance of biodiversity
- DNA as the hereditary molecule and DNA technology.

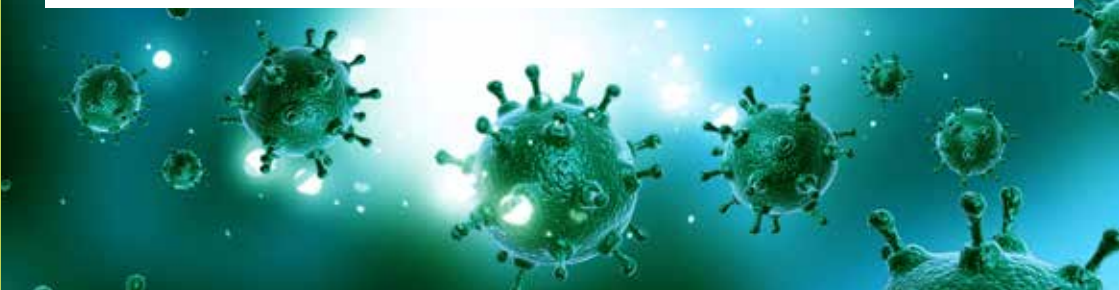
Whether it is covering the complex biochemistry of respiration and photosynthesis, the biological basis of disease or the mechanism for muscle contraction, the A Level Biology course is both challenging and rewarding.

There is a strong focus on practical skills, including assessment based on an understanding of a range of experiments, and the scientific method.

COURSE OVERVIEW:

A Level Biology at RHS follows the Cambridge International A Level syllabus. All course content is examined in five examinations at the end of Year 13, as follows:

| COMPONENT | LENGTH | WEIGHTING |
|--|--------------|-----------|
| Paper 1 Multiple Choice: 40 multiple choice questions based on textbook chapters 1–12 | 1 hr | 15.5% |
| Paper 2 Structured Questions: structured short answer questions based on textbook chapters 1–12 | 1 hr 15 mins | 23% |
| Paper 3 Advanced Practical Skills: candidates carry out two or three experiments under timed conditions. | 2 hrs | 11.5% |
| Paper 4 Structured Questions: structured variable length questions based on chapters 13–19 plus 15 mark extended response question | 2 hrs | 38.5% |
| Paper 5 Planning, Analysis and Evaluation: structured variable length questions | 1hr 15 mins | 11.5% |



BIOLOGY TRIPS & OPPORTUNITIES:

During your time studying biology in Years 12 and 13 you will have the opportunity to potentially participate in a range of interesting trips including:

- Biology lectures in London
- Time spent working on a Site of Special Scientific Interest at Holbrook Creek or at a relevant environmental field centre
- Trips and lectures at local universities

In addition to this, you will have access to:

- All the Biological Sciences Review magazines, including the online archive
- A wide variety of biology-related books in our well-stocked library, many of which are recommended on our A Level reading lists.

A Level pupils are encouraged to attend the weekly BioClinic to help support their independent learning.



If you would like to discuss the A Level specification and the options that the Biology Department offer, please don't hesitate to contact

Mr Ben Raybould, Head of Biology

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