

Considering AP Biology? Here's what you need to know!

AP Biology is a rigorous AP-level course designed to match the material of an entry-level college Biology class. Students who elect to take AP Biology in high school will take the AP test in May.

About the AP Exam: The AP test rates students from 0-5 with a score of 3, 4 or 5 considered passing. Many post-secondary schools accept a passing AP score in lieu of taking the class, potentially saving the student money and allowing the student to take higher level classes earlier than his/her peers. The AP exam is split into two parts: 90 minute multiple choice (63 multiple choice, 6 grid-in) and 90 minute Free response (2 long, 3 short essays) including 10 minutes of reading time.

About the course: The AP Biology curriculum is approximately 25% lab, 75% lecture with an emphasis on student involvement. Students are expected to read the chapter before coming to class and to be able to participate in discussion.

About the Lab component: Students are expected to maintain a lab notebook. As AP Biology labs often emphasize inquiry, students will practice formulating and testing hypotheses. Upon completing an experiment, students will examine the results and determine how to next proceed. Ideally, students will act and learn as graduate students do through experimentation. Students will learn how to prepare formal lab reports and how to present findings to colleagues.

AP Biology Big Ideas: The AP Biology curriculum was recently restructured. The 2012-2013 school year was the first year for the new curriculum. AP Biology is now organized into 4 Big Ideas

Big Idea 1: The process of evolution drives the diversity and unity of life.

Big Idea 2: Biological systems utilize free energy and molecular building blocks to grow, to reproduce and to maintain dynamic equilibrium.

Big Idea 3: Living systems store, retrieve, transmit and respond to information essential to life processes.

Big Idea 4: Biological systems interact, and these systems and their interactions possess complex properties.

For more information: Please see the College Board AP Biology website or contact Miss Pillai.

http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/sub_bio.html?biology

Tanuja Pillai Room 231

tpillai@washoeschools.net

Frequently Asked Questions:

How much homework will I have to do?

There will be reading homework most nights. There are also a few questions assigned with each chapter as well as vocabulary for each unit. The questions and vocabulary take relatively little time. Students are expected to read the chapter thoroughly and to come to class with questions. The reading takes the most time.

Can I take this class as a sophomore?

Yes. Should you? Every student is different. AP Biology requires a lot of independent reading. Some sophomores excel and others do not. Approximately half of the AP test grade comes from the essay component. The ability to decipher essay questions improves with time and practice and not every sophomore is ready for that. **Sophomores who choose to take AP Biology must concurrently take Chemistry or have already completed Chemistry.** Taking this class without chemistry is NOT recommended.

Is AP Biology the same as regular Biology?

No. AP Biology covers topics not covered in 9th grade Biology and goes into much more detail. Students taking AP Biology have much more reading and independent lab work than students in 9th grade Biology.

Will taking AP Biology help my GPA?

Like all AP classes, AP Biology is weighted at Galena High School however, it is a rigorous course and as such it is difficult to get 'A.'

When is the AP Biology exam?

AP Biology is the first test given on the second week of AP testing.

Should I buy an AP review text?

YES! Check that it emphasizes the new curriculum. The best time to find a used copy is right after the AP test (3rd week of May) or just after school ends (early June.)

Do we do anything in class after the AP exam?

Yes. Part of the time will be spent working on individual projects in genetics, ecology or human body systems. The other part will focus on topics the students vote for that were not covered in detail earlier in the year.

Please contact Miss Pillai with additional questions

tpillai@washoeschools.net