



Test Prep and Admissions

For AP Biology Teachers: How to Use This Book in Your Classroom

This Kaplan review book is an invaluable tool for students, but teachers can also use it to understand the format of the exam and to cover the expansive amount of content for the AP Biology course. Inside, in addition to an extensive review and sample questions and tests, you will find the basics of the AP Biology exam, information about how the test is scored, and tips on test-taking strategies and stress management to share with your students. A list of biology-oriented books and websites provides further resources for you to use in your lessons.

Whether you cover the material for the AP Biology exam in the classroom or give students material to review as homework, this book will help you get your students to the level they need to be at in order to score well on the exam. Incorporating the material covered in this book into your coursework is not difficult; in fact, one chapter can be covered for each lesson in your course. Let's start from the beginning.

STRUCTURE, STRATEGY, AND ATTITUDE

Part One of this book provides a basic overview of test structure and scoring. Understanding the structure of the AP Biology exam can help students develop confidence in their ability to perform well on the exam. It is important they know how the free-response questions are scored, as well as the basic features of a good answer to these types of questions. This section will help students learn proper exam pacing, and how to use critical thinking skills to effectively eliminate distracters on the multiple-choice section of the exam. It also teaches students how to use the ten-minute reading period to effectively plan their essay responses.

Stress management skills are an essential part of doing well on the exam. The key to staying relaxed is to be fully prepared for the exam and to have a plan to tackle any difficult situation. Preparing for the stress and confusion that can be part of the AP Biology process will help students learn how to deal with Test Day anxiety.

THE DIAGNOSTIC TEST

Teachers can use Part Two, the diagnostic test, to gauge student strengths and weaknesses. This short, 20-question sampling of test-like questions should be given to your students as a "starter," to see what areas they need to work on. Have your students take the test, then tally their results. You can divide your students into study groups depending on the areas in which they're having trouble. Or, you can mix students up so that those who scored well on certain sections of the diagnostic test help students who did not score well on those sections, and vice-versa.

If you notice that the entire class needs work on a certain topic, such as ecology, you can dedicate one day to studying that particular section of the test. To study a section, simply have your students read over the corresponding review chapter, along with related study material. Afterwards, have them take a full-length test or create some of your own study questions concerning the topics they were shaky on. This diagnostic test is a great way to determine general trends of student performance and to create a focus for future lesson plans.

Have your students take the second full-length practice test, and have each individual figure out the best method of study from there. If students are well-prepared for the AP Biology exam, they will be less likely to cram material into their brains at the last minute and more likely to get a good night's rest before the exam. Taking tests that mirror the actual AP Biology exam will make students familiar with the timing and format well in advance, giving them a great advantage on Test Day.

It is important both to *be* well-prepared and to *feel* well-prepared. Careful study and practice over time, as outlined above, builds confidence and a deeper knowledge of the material. Students who prepare this way are less likely to spend the nights before the exam desperately trying to memorize the difference between mitosis and meiosis. Using this book is one step in giving your students the best possible preparation for the AP Biology exam.

Best of luck to you and your students!