

Revising for your IGCSE Biology

1. **Get a copy of the specification** at this link. It is vital that you know what you need to know!
<http://www.edexcel.com/quals/igcse/igcse-leg/4325/Pages/default.aspx>
2. Use the **specification to guide your revision**. Start at the beginning and tick off the statements that you are confident with. This will highlight the areas that you need to concentrate on.
3. **Don't simply read the text book!** You will not gain much by doing this. Your revision must be active work, where your brain is working hard. This is usually in the form of answering questions.
4. If making notes, do not copy from the text book. Instead, use the syllabus as your guide to the places in the textbook... don't forget to use the index of the text book.
5. **Past papers:** These present a wealth of useful information. It is essential that you do them. There are a few available on the IGCSE Biology website but the rest the Biology Department has made available on the network for you. Do not treat them as a memory test! You *must* use your text book to help you answer the questions you do not immediately know. You will then be learning. The mark schemes are there to check your answers.

When doing past papers you must commit yourself to *writing down* answers – do not just think to yourself “oh, I know that”. Only when you commit yourself to putting pen to paper will you appreciate whether, or not, you know the correct answer.

Lots of questions of the same type come up every year. As you work through the paper you will become aware of them. Definitions and descriptions of biological phenomena usually expect the same sort of answer from year to year. You must endeavour to learn the form of words that gathers the marks for describing such things as osmosis and breathing as well as other biological processes. In addition, using biological and other relevant terms when you're asked to EXPLAIN is the right way to gain the best of marks. (For example, the changes involved when we exercise include muscle **contraction**, increase in heart **rate** and blood **flow**, oxygen delivery via **oxyhaemoglobin**, increased **energy** production via **respiration** both **aerobic** and **anaerobic**, **lactic acid** etc.)

6. When answering questions on the exam, you must read them properly. Take your time and **read the full question**. Make sure that you understand and that you give yourself time to think about what is being asked. A lot of the time there is plenty of information in the question to help you.