

6 Day Countdown for a Biology Exam

The end of the semester is near. It might seem like there is a mountain of information containing unusual and unknown names. The task may seem impossible but with this plan it is EASY.

6th day before the test: Time to breakdown Biology into categories of subject matter such as Biochemistry, Cells, Genetics, etc. There should be about 4-5 MAIN ideas. Review your notes and circle any things that you don't understand. Look in the book or ask the teacher or another student to get everything clarified. Now you are ready for the countdown.

5th day: Study your 1st category of subject matter on your list. Study as if you have the exam tomorrow. Use notecards for names and examples.

4th day: Give yourself a quick quiz on the matter you studied last night or test yourself with a friend. Reward yourself if you pass. Now start the 2nd category of material and finish only when you can pass the test on that subject tomorrow.

3rd day: Again, quiz yourself or test yourself with a friend on yesterdays material. Study the 3rd category of material.

2nd day: Do the test thing again today. If there is a 4th category, learn that today. If not, test yourself on the whole chapter.

A good thing to do this day is get together with a friend for a question-and-answer session. The night before the test may not be a good time to do this because the other person may hinder your progress or not concentrate on what YOU need to know (when you teach biology to a friend you learn a lot).

Highlight in your notes everything you still do not know or are unsure of.

DAY BEFORE THE FINAL: Make a list of all the highlighted information you still don't know. STUDY those and the little details you may have overlooked before. Review the notes one last time. By now you should know everything like the back of your hand. SIT BACK AND RELAX!! YOU ARE PREPARED!! Go to bed early and reward yourself for not having to cram.

TIMING: For each category, it should take about 2-3 hours more or less to learn each category. That leaves lots of time for other things. Also, days 1+2 can be combined if time is a problem.

Study Tips for Biology

VISUALIZE: Scientific names are descriptive - It is a universal code to describe a particular characteristic of an animal or what it may look like. Try to visualize what these names are and you will probably remember them.

Ie: Cnidarians (Coelenterates) means having a big center cavity. The animals in this phylum are jellyfish and hydras. The Latin "Cyto" means cell, so cytoplasm, cytolysis, cytokinesis all deal with the cell in some way.

THE BOOK: Amazingly enough, the book has many GREAT illustrations and tidbits of information to make subjects more alive and interesting. It is a good resource for clarifying relationships and concepts.

SCHEDULE: Keep a schedule. It is almost physically impossible to cram every detail into your head in a single night and expect to not get details a bit jumbled by test time.

MULTIPLE-CHOICE TESTS:

1. Read the questions carefully.
2. Always try to guess what the answer is BEFORE you look at the choices.
3. If you are unsure about an answer, eliminate what it CAN'T be. Try to remember if any of the answers left are related to that subject. Do you remember seeing that word in the chapter?
If you have never heard of a choice it is probably a distractor. If you can not recognize a choice then it is probably NOT the answer.
4. After eliminating all other choices, take a logical guess. At least you have narrowed down the odds of getting the answer correct. Remember, the first guess is usually more reliable unless you obtain a major revelation along the way.
5. If after a few seconds you are still perplexed, mark the question so you can find it easier later and go on with the test. Sometimes the answer you're looking for is given in a different problem. Go back to that question later.
6. NEVER leave a multiple choice question blank. You have a 20-25% chance of getting it right by guessing.

ALL-OF-THE-ABOVE QUESTIONS: If 2 or more of the answers are correct, then the all-of-the-above option is the correct answer, EVEN IF you are unsure of the third option.

LOOK-ALIKE OPTIONS: Sometimes there are 2 options that are alike except for one word. Such a pair indicates that the question is focused there. USUALLY, not always, you can assume the answer is one of that pair.

SLEEP: During finals, sleep is a good thing. Try not to ignore it.

RELATIONSHIPS AND LISTS: Biology 30 is categorized with many relationships and lists. Definitions are important. For example, a matching question ask you to identify the functions of various parts of the cell. Also, always look for relationships within the material. Be able to compare and contrast biological processes such as Cellular Respiration and Photosynthesis. ... in actuality most of what you have learned is interwoven. For example, you studied cells as the basic unit of life in Unit 1, photosynthesis in Unit 2, plants in Unit 3, and genetic engineering of plants in Units 4 & 5.

ATTITUDE: Last but not least, think POSITIVELY. Think of the test as a game of trivial pursuit; you against the teacher. Smile ... you are prepared, so it is an even match!!

Good Luck!