
Course Goals and Expectations
Advance Placement Biology

Mrs. Goodwin
hgoodwin@falmouth.k12.ma.us
<https://www.msgoodwin.com>

Welcome! Our goal is to have a productive year learning about "the science of life!" You will work hard in this class, but you will also have many great learning experiences, and, I hope, gain an appreciation for the complexity and diversity of life.

The following is a description of the goals and expectations I have for each student in AP Biology. You and a parent or guardian should read this description carefully and return it to me signed by September 10, 2018.

Grading Policy:

Tests (50%)

Generally, you will have 3 tests per quarter. Tests will always be announced in advance. Free-response questions (FRQs) are a major part of the AP exam. To help you prepare for the AP exam, you will have 2-3 essays on each test that will be graded based on the AP criteria. Missed tests should be made up promptly as the longer you wait to take the test, the lower your score is likely to be. All tests must be made up by the end of the quarter. Tests cannot be retaken. The midterm and the final exam will count as 20% of the course grade.

Quizzes (10%)

Quizzes will be given at least once a cycle on the reading material from the night before, content covered in class previously or lab results that have been collected. They may be announced or unannounced so keep up with your homework!

Homework/Class Work/Lab Work (15%) & Lab Reports (25%)

You can expect homework on a regular basis. Homework assignments are written on the board each day. Homework usually involves reading, note taking, lab setup or completion, problem solving, or exam preparation. A daily lesson plan/agenda is available should you be absent on my web-site. Even if there is no actual assignment (which will be rare), I suggest reading, studying vocabulary, rewriting notes, etc.

Various types of homework will be assigned, including chapter review questions from the text, case studies, completing labs etc. Assignments will count for a different number of points depending on their length and complexity. Major projects or papers will be equivalent to a test or a lab report.

Most labs will require a formal lab report, done **INDIVIDUALLY**, often including data charts and graphs. Data will be the same between group members, but the interpretation and explanation of the results are to be in **YOUR** own words. No two lab reports should ever be the same. You will usually have about a week in which to complete the lab report. **Lab reports are due at the beginning of your class period.**

Assignments must be turned in for grading on the day they are due, unless you previously arranged with me for an alternate due date. Late work will be marked down, generally 50% for one late, after that, I don't want it, but I would still highly recommend doing the assignment. Work not turned in will receive a grade of zero.

Materials Needed:

You should bring to class each day:

- 1) Three-ring binder. It is to your benefit to maintain an organized binder with the following sections: Homework, Class handouts, Problems/Labs, Exams and Quizzes. These should be organized by the chapter or topic we are studying.
- 2) A spiral or composition book for vocabulary for each chapter studied. All the bold terms within the text are to be included, not just the ones listed at the beginning of the chapter.
- 3) A package of colored pencils
- 4) A composition book for lab work (description below)
- 5) Pencil
- 6) I recommend that you keep a calculator in your backpack. We use these often in lab and sometimes in class. A 4 function or a graphing calculator are allowed on the AP Exam, so that will be all you will be able to use on tests.
- 7) Our textbook is Campbell's *Biology*. You do not need to bring the textbook to class as we have copies of an earlier edition in our classroom to use for reference.

Laboratories:

There are thirteen "required" labs in AP Biology. When we are in the lab, you will usually work with a partner, or in a small team. Labs are a chance to learn by doing and gain hands-on experience using scientific equipment and procedures. You will be given lab instructions, advised on safety guidelines, and shown where the necessary materials and equipment are. Lab time is to be taken seriously and you should work efficiently and safely. When you finish the lab, you must clean up your work area and return all equipment.

Every student must purchase a laboratory notebook. This should be a “composition book” and NOT a spiral bound. Some colleges are requesting evidence of labs to be eligible for advanced credit. This should be very neatly organized and contain adequate summaries (not word-for-word duplication of the lab book instructions) of purpose, setup, procedures, results and conclusions. Diagrams of experimental design would be helpful. Writing a summary requires the student to understand the experiment in such a way that only the essential information is chosen to be included in the lab notebook.

Attendance:

To perform your best, whether in school or on the job, good attendance is absolutely necessary. You should be in class every day unless illness or a serious family situation requires you to be absent. Very few students can make up missed work as well as if they had been present in class. This is especially true in an AP course. It is your responsibility to find out the work you missed and get caught up. You must be in class on time unless you have an excused late pass from a teacher or staff member. If you are consistently tardy to class, I will assign a detention. If you accumulate too many unexcused absences you may lose credit for the class.

Discipline:

For everyone to be able to learn, we must have a classroom in which students are attentive, follow directions, carry out assigned tasks, work together when appropriate, treat others with respect and, especially in the lab, are safety conscious. Students who disrupt class keep themselves and their classmates from learning. Classroom management should not be, and is not usually, an issue in an AP course. However, I will take whatever disciplinary steps are necessary to maintain a classroom in which everyone can learn. These include teacher-assigned detentions, temporary removal from class or lab, phone calls to parents, assignment of administrative detention, and, if necessary, having a student permanently removed from class, with loss of credit.

Academic Dishonesty

Every student is required to do their own work. Be it a homework assignment, a lab report, an in class assignment, a test, a project etc. Unless otherwise noted, every assignment is to be done **INDIVIDUALLY**. The internet is an amazing resource, but not for copying homework assignments. Talking about lab results with other class members is another great resource, but a lab report is to be written out separately and in that person’s own words. If you are the giver or the taker you will receive a zero.

Call Back Day:

If you need extra help or to make up missed work, you can do so with me on Wednesday afternoons at 2:10 PM. If for some reason I cannot stay after school, I will try to let you know in advance. It is your responsibility to come for extra help when needed.

AP Exam:

The AP Biology exam is usually the second week in May. Students register for the exam in March. It is generally expected that those taking an AP course will take the exam for that course. I recommend buying *Pearson Education Test Prep Series AP Biology* (Amazon) book at the beginning of the year to help you prepare for the exam and to assist you throughout the year. More about the format and topics will be given at the beginning of the year.

Web-site

<https://www.msgoodwin.com>

Please use my web-site, bookmark it, add it to your home screen, whatever is easiest for you. The web-site will have labs, class notes, handouts, homework assignments, helpful web-sites etc. It will hopefully be a very useful resource for you!

Tips to Success

1. Quiet structured study time

Help establish a study routine by setting up a quiet study area and a consistent quiet study time nightly. The routine will help you practice good study habits for college.

Should the study area be your bedroom or a family area, like the dining room? That depends on your household and you! If you are self-motivated and can work steadily without supervision, then a quiet desk space in your bedroom would work well. However, if your bedroom is equipped with distractions like a stereo or TV, then this might not be conducive to concentrating on homework and the family area may work better.

2. Work on Biology EVERY night

For you to stay up-to-date in this course you need to spend some time on biology every night. The ideal would be about one (1) hour per night or approximately six (6) hours per week. This would include textbook reading, lecture review, lab notebook assignments, and test preparation. On weeks when you cannot devote that one hour on a weeknight, you should put in extra time on weekends to make up for it.

On nights where you have minimal time, you should at least review the day's lecture notes (notes in your notebook and on the Web)

3. Support Study Groups

Arrange a study group with other students in the class. Each student will have different strengths and weaknesses in this course. In one unit, you will be the teacher to other students and in a different unit you will be the student. Putting two or more heads together is always a benefit. You never learn something as well as when you have to explain it to someone else.

However let me emphasize that, while study groups and cooperative effort are strongly encouraged; on final written work, all students are required to craft their own answers and must have a completely uniquely worded answer for each question

4. Use a Lifeline

Ask for help. I can stay after most days for extra help. Also, you have my e-mail address and you can readily e-mail me for help at any time after school hours and I will make every effort to reply to you immediately. Do not feel like you are intruding, I am here to help you understand and learn to love the subject of Biology as much as I do.

5. Don't Panic! Stick with it!

Some parts of this course will come more easily than others. Work steadily and do not be discouraged. Success will build as you improve your critical thinking skills and your writing ability through practice. This is a college course and you are working on more than learning biology; you are working on skills that you will use to succeed academically for years to come.

You need to work hard and work steadily and you will be rewarded in this course. This is your class, your time, your goals. I know that we will have a great year!!!

I have read the above information and will do my best to have a successful year in AP Biology. Please return to Mrs. Goodwin by September 10th, 2018.

Student Name _____

Student signature _____

Date _____

I have read the above information and will do my best to help my son or daughter have a successful year in AP Biology.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____