

Pearson Edexcel GCSE Biology Higher Tier Paper 1

Paper 1 (*Paper code: 1BIO/1F, 1BIO/1H)

Written examination: 1 hour and 45 minutes

50% of the qualification

100 marks

Content overview

- Topic 1 – Key concepts in biology
- Topic 2 – Cells and control
- Topic 3 – Genetics
- Topic 4 – Natural selection and genetic modification
- Topic 5 – Health, disease and the development of medicines

Assessment overview

A mixture of different question styles, including multiple-choice questions, short answer questions, calculations and extended open-response questions.

Calculators may be used in the examination. Information on the use of calculators during the examinations for this qualification can be found in *Appendix 8: Calculators*.

Link for the full specification:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/GCSE/Science/2016/Specification/gcse-biology-spec.pdf>

For Pearson Edexcel GCSE Biology Paper 1

The topics that show up *most consistently* across past papers are:

1. **Cells & Microscopy**
2. **Enzymes**
3. **Diffusion, osmosis & active transport**
4. **Mitosis / cell cycle**
5. **Genetics & inheritance**
6. **DNA / protein synthesis**
7. **Disease & the immune system**
8. **Natural selection / evolution**
9. **Required practical + graph skills**
10. **Magnification calculations**

Highest-priority topics to revise

Topic 1 — Key Concepts in Biology

These are almost guaranteed somewhere in the paper:

- Cell structure
- Microscopes + magnification
- Enzymes
- Diffusion/osmosis/active transport
- Food tests

The magnification formula is especially common:

$$\text{Magnification} = \frac{\text{image size}}{\text{actual size}}$$

Topic 2 — Cells and Control

Frequently tested:

- Mitosis
- Stem cells
- Nervous system
- Brain and eye (triple)
- Reflex arc

Topic 3 — Genetics

Very common:

- DNA structure

- Protein synthesis
- Punnett squares
- Genetic diagrams
- Meiosis vs mitosis
- Variation

Topic 4 — Natural Selection & Genetic Modification

Usually appears every year in some form:

- Evolution
- Natural selection
- Selective breeding
- Genetic engineering
- Classification

Topic 5 — Health & Disease

Big exam favourites:

- Communicable diseases
- Immune system
- Vaccination
- Antibiotics
- Drug testing
- Monoclonal antibodies (triple)

Topics that often carry BIG marks

These are the ones examiners love for 4–6 mark questions:

- Required practical
- Interpreting graphs/tables
- Experimental methods (variables, control variables)
- Explain questions using scientific language
- Genetics crosses
- Evolution explanations
- Disease transmission

Best “night before” revision order

If you're short on time, do this order:

1. Enzymes
2. Osmosis/diffusion
3. Magnification calculations
4. Mitosis vs meiosis
5. Genetics/Punnett squares
6. Immune system
7. Evolution & natural selection
8. Required practical