

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL AS & A LEVEL

Biology 9700

Assessment Overview

Examinations 2028, 2029 and 2030

How the qualification is assessed

The table shows the papers and components described for this syllabus. AS candidates take the designated AS components; the full A Level includes the additional components shown. A component's raw mark is the total available on that assessment; its weighting is the share of the qualification result, which may differ from its share of raw marks.

Paper or component	Duration	Raw marks	Weighting	Question or task structure
1: Multiple Choice	1 h 15 min	40	AS 31%; A 15.5%	40 compulsory questions
2: AS Structured Questions	1 h 15 min	60	AS 46%; A 23%	Compulsory structured questions
3: Advanced Practical Skills	2 h	40	AS 23%; A 11.5%	Laboratory examination
4: A Level Structured Questions	2 h	100	A 38.5%	Advanced content; AS knowledge assumed
5: Planning, Analysis and Evaluation	1 h 15 min	30	A 11.5%	Written investigation and data questions

Read the weighting against your qualification route. A longer paper or a larger raw-mark total does not automatically mean a greater final weighting. Prepare for every component that applies to you, including practical, oral or coursework requirements where specified.

What each component requires

For the AS Level, you take Papers 1, 2 and 3.

Paper 1 is a multiple-choice examination lasting one hour and fifteen minutes. It contains 40 questions, carries 40 marks and contributes 31 per cent of the AS Level, or 15.5 per cent of the full A Level.

Paper 2 contains structured questions based on the AS syllabus. It also lasts one hour and fifteen minutes, carries 60 marks and contributes 46 per cent of the AS Level, or 23 per cent of the full A Level.

Paper 3 is Advanced Practical Skills. It is a two-hour, hands-on practical examination carrying 40 marks. You will carry out experimental work, collect and present observations, analyse data and draw conclusions. It contributes 23 per cent of the AS Level, or 11.5 per cent of the full A Level.

To complete the full A Level, you also take Papers 4 and 5.

Paper 4 is an A Level structured-question examination lasting two hours. It carries 100 marks and contributes 38.5 per cent of the full A Level. Questions assess the additional A Level content while also requiring knowledge from the AS course.

Paper 5 focuses on Planning, Analysis and Evaluation. It lasts one hour and fifteen minutes, carries 30 marks and contributes 11.5 per cent. You will plan investigations, analyse results and evaluate experimental procedures. The context of these questions may extend beyond the listed syllabus content.

The AS Level may be taken independently. The full A Level may be completed through a staged route or by taking all five papers in one examination series. AS Level grades range from a to e, while full A Level grades range from A star to E.

Preparing the right kind of response

For numerical answers, show a clear method and units. For data questions, distinguish a description of the results from an explanation using scientific ideas. In investigation questions, identify variables, measurement methods and specific improvements. A general statement such as "make it more accurate" needs an explanation of how.

The assessment objectives are visible in the response itself: relevant knowledge, appropriate use of the stimulus or task, a clear method or explanation, and a conclusion where requested. The command word and mark allocation help show the depth required. An answer should respond to the actual question, not reproduce a memorised passage that only partly fits.

Timing and examination arrangements

Begin preparation with accurate, untimed work, then move towards the duration and conditions of your required component. Use mark allocations to guide pacing while allowing time to read instructions and check the response. Any practice pacing advice is study guidance, not a new Cambridge time rule.

Examinations are available in the June and November series, with an additional March series in India. Private candidates are permitted to enter.

An approved examination centre confirms entries, available component options, deadlines and any practical or speaking arrangements. Preparation-course access does not itself constitute an examination entry.

Key pointers: Know your required components, follow question choices precisely and practise the relevant response formats. **Next:** Open **Learning Resources** to see which materials support this preparation.