

# Challenge Early College High School Pre-AP Biology Syllabus

**Teacher:** Ms. SuzAnne Sisak ([ssisak@houstonisd.org](mailto:ssisak@houstonisd.org))

**Textbook:** Miller, K. and J. Levine. (2004). *Biology*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

**GradeSpeed (Parent/Student Connect):** Linked at [www.houstonisd.org](http://www.houstonisd.org)

**Calendar:** Linked at [www.challengehs.org](http://www.challengehs.org) (click on Faculty/Staff, then SuzAnne Sisak, then calendar in the upper right corner)

## Purpose of Course:

**Biology is the study of life.** The course involves the structure and function of living organisms, energy transformations, comparative survey of life processes, diversity of life and the interdependence of organisms and their environment. The purpose of this course is to present biology content within a pattern of unifying themes that helps students understand the larger significance of the details they are learning. Students will be asked to think critically about concepts and relate them to the world in which they live.

## Summary of Course Content:

Nature of science	Cells and cellular processes	Microorganisms
Biological classification	Plants	Evolutionary principles
Ecology	Genetics	Human biology

## Grading Process:

**Your grade will be the total points you have earned divided by the total possible points in the class (ex:  $243/300 = 81\%$ ).** You will be graded on a variety of work, including, but not limited to: tests, labs, quizzes, homework, participation, activities and projects. **The significance of the work will be reflected in the point value.** For example, tests will be worth significantly more than quizzes (ex: a test may be worth 50 points, a quiz may be worth 10 points)

## Academic Integrity:

**Any form of cheating**, including, but not limited to, plagiarism, copying, forgery or falsification **will not be tolerated in this class.** Any student caught cheating will receive a zero for that assignment and disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with school policy.

## Daily Quizzes/Activities:

It is the **student's responsibility** to write down, complete, and turn in all assignments on the due date. Homework is due at the **beginning** of each class period, when the teacher requests. Assignments submitted later in the class period or later in the day are considered late and points will be deducted.

**There will be a quiz in Biology every day** unless announced otherwise. Most quizzes are worth 10 points. This is to help build successful study habits that involve studying a bit each day and deter "cramming" the night before a test.

### Late Work:

The only late work accepted is that turned in the **same week** (before 1pm Friday). This is because of the fast pace of the class. For example, if you miss a homework assignment on Monday, I will accept it until Friday at 1pm. However, if you miss a homework assignment on Friday, you will have until the end of the day (1pm) to turn it in. In addition, **30% of the total grade will be deducted** from the grade. An example would be turning in a homework late in the class period that would have received a 10 (100%) will now receive a 7 (70%). However, keep in mind **late work with a deduction is better than not turning in any work and receiving a zero!**

Students making up work from absence do not fall under the late work policy. However, **work missed due to absence must be made up on a timely basis** that will be determined on a case by case basis.

### Tests:

Test will be a combination of different strategies to assess learning. Most tests are 50 points (30 multiple choice questions, 2 short answer questions). Tests will be announced at least two class periods prior to the testing day. Any student absent on the **day prior to the test will be expected to take the test on the original day**. Any student absent the day of the test is expected to approach the teacher about their absence and take the test they day they return. **Students absent** the day of the test will take a **retest that will be significantly more difficult** than the original test since that student had additional study time. **There are no test re-takes for poor test grades.** Be prepared the first time!

### Tutorials:

Tutorial sessions are available to help students better understand information in a small group or individual session. It is highly recommended that students having difficulty in this class take advantage of these opportunities to get help and show initiative in bringing up poor grades. My scheduled tutorial days are **Monday and Thursday after school (3:30pm – 4:30pm)**. Other times can also be scheduled. Tutorial sessions also offer a quiet place for the student to complete homework.

### Binders/notebooks:

Students are required to keep a **binder or notebook** for this class (individual, **NOT combined with other classes**). Organizational skills are vital to student success. This binder will aid you in organizing and keeping up with your notes and assignments. **Binders will be checked periodically, often without prior notice to the student.**

### Required Materials:

3 ring binder with paper or notebook  
#2 Pencils  
Pens  
Erasers

### Optional Materials:

Highlighters  
3 hole punch  
Scissors  
Colored pencils/markers

## Classroom Rules:

Violation of classroom rules will result in disciplinary action.

1. **Show respect for yourself and others.** This classroom is a safe place. No verbal, physical or body language abuse will be tolerated.
2. **Do Not talk while others** (teacher and students) **are speaking.** Once you finish a test or quiz, do not talk while others are testing. **Talking while others are testing may be perceived as cheating.**
3. **No food, drinks or gum in the classroom.** This is a scientific laboratory and doing so violates the safety rules.
4. **Each class is on a pass system.** At the beginning of the **semester**, each student will be issued **4 passes.** These passes are for restroom breaks or locker visits. A pass must be presented to the teacher in conjunction with asking permission to use the pass. **Passes will not be accepted for the first 20 minutes of any class period.** Once a student has used up their passes, no additional passes will be issued until the beginning of the next semester.