



# Biology Advice

"A-levels are hard but the reward of getting the grades you want will outweigh all of your hard work!"

# ATIKAN THANASARAKIT

Imperial College London - Biomedical Sciences (deferred entry)

For A-level Biology I think the most important thing is to revise regularly. I recommend starting your revision for each topic on the day you cover it in the lesson and not to tell yourself that you will catch up later. Making connections between topics helped me memorise the details in each one faster; I found mind mapping and flow charts really helpful for this. I also used websites like [alevelbiologytutor](http://alevelbiologytutor.com). They have revision guides as well as packs of multiple choice and synoptic questions on there. Though some of them are from different exam boards I think it's worth a try if you feel you want to do more questions.

**A\*AB**

# JOSH MARTIN

King's College London - Dentistry (deferred entry)



My advice for A-level revision, especially for Biology, is to make your revision as active as possible. A great way to do this is by always carrying past paper questions or flashcards with you, then if you finish your homework a bit earlier than expected you can always fit in a mini revision session! When exams were coming up, I used to structure my revision for each subject by first sitting down and doing a good amount of past paper questions and then, as a bit of a mental break just looking over and testing myself using my flashcards; this is a really good way to maximise the amount of revision you do in a set amount of time. So I would advise you to constantly make flash cards from your notes during the year using revision guides and make sure to use the past paper question packs that Amy gives you, I found them really useful.

One last tip is that you don't realise how much you forget after doing and marking a past paper, so there is value in repeating the same past paper questions multiple times during your revision so that you gain a really good understanding of the mark scheme.

Good luck with your studies, A-levels are hard but the reward of getting the grades you want will outweigh all of your hard work!

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# LOTTE ELLEMANN

Gap Year - Psychology (2018 entry)



The best piece of advice I can give is to start your revision as early as possible. Even though June feels like a long way away it'll come around so quickly. The earlier you get the content memorised the quicker you can move onto doing past papers. In regards to past papers it's important to do them more than once. You might get 100% on a paper straight after learning a topic but can you get 100% on the same paper in 2 weeks time or 2 months time?

I highly recommend window pens. Writing definitions, cycles and processes on your windows and mirrors means that anywhere you look in your room or even when your brushing your teeth you'll be revising! I also used the website snaprevise. They condense the spec points into short, understandable videos and give tips on exam technique at the end of each episode.

Make sure you work in an environment with as little distractions as possible. I liked to work at school and hand my phone into reception. It means that you can do solid revision without constantly checking your phone (if you're at home ask someone to hide your phone for you or turn it off).

The last piece of advice I would give, is to ask questions and use all the resources that are given to you! There's no point waiting until the last minute, if you don't understand something go and ask for help. I know that it seems exhausting and tedious but the more you do now the less regrets you'll have in August.

# AGATHA WEINER

University of Edinburgh - Philosophy & Psychology  
(deferred entry)



Not sure I have many 'tips' but just work hard haha. I used a whiteboard when revising though and found that really helpful. Just memorising and then seeing how much I could write down. I'd also say practice maths because I didn't realise the exam would involve so much! And in the actual exam plan your time so that you leave time for the end for checking. Especially so you can check your maths working. Think that's all I've got really!

**AAB**

# NATALIE KONDRATII

## Gap Year



This is really obvious, but practice makes perfect. Do not just do lots of past papers absent-mindedly, though. Write down all of your mistakes in your revision notebook and then attempt the past paper again until you get 100%. To improve your memory/recall etc, try making mind maps. Make them personal and colourful! I used an app on my laptop called MindNode. You can then hang it up on your bedroom wall and read it before going to bed.

Do every single question in the question packs that Amy gives you. From what I remember, they are split into modules. There are hundreds of questions in there. Make a note of every mistake you have made and put all the model answers in a separate mind map. Pay attention to key words in the textbooks and mark schemes. Do not try to rephrase an answer using your own words; exam boards are very strict with this kind of thing when they write A-level science exams. Make flash cards with all the relevant terminology.

Make sure you know the difference between validity, accuracy, reliability etc. Also, words that start with a G like gluconeogenesis and glycolysis. Make notes on all the experiments and make sure you understand how they work and how they can go wrong. Be consistent; haphazard revision is ineffective and a waste of time. Allocate an hour before/after college and get in the habit of revising regularly.

If all else fails, just watch Planet Earth/Blue Planet. It's relevant and has some beautiful cinematography. That counts as revision, right?!

# THEO KEMP

University of Bristol - Biochemistry



My A-level journey was not a traditional one. I didn't perform as expected the first time I completed my A levels. As a result I ended up doing Human Biology at Manchester Metropolitan. I realised very quickly that this was completely the wrong place for me. I wish that when I first did my A2s, I would have known the consequences of not doing enough work. After the first term at Man Met, I dropped out to retake at Ashbourne. I am now studying Biochemistry at Bristol. I worked as hard as I could for 6 months to get the results I needed. In order to do as well as you can, you really need to start working in January. You will quickly come to realise that the next 6 months is a very small and insignificant amount of time in the long run but are actually some of the most important in your life. If you get the results you want, you will get into the uni of your choice and have some of the best experiences you've ever had and meet some incredible people.

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# THEO KEMP

## University of Bristol - Biochemistry

I recommend creating a checklist for each of the spec points. Next to each one, add a section so you can see if you have notes, and flashcards on each spec point. Once this has been created, figure out how many days you have until your first exam, and then the rate at which you need to complete the spec points. E.g. if you have 14 spec points, and 7 days to complete them, then you need to complete 2 per day. When writing your notes, write out everything in a high amount of detail, then when creating the flashcards, condense this information to just the key points. Create a spreadsheet with every day from the day you intend to start working, to the first exam. Then figure out which notes and flashcards need to be done by which date. When the notes/flashcards are completed, highlight it to show you've done it.

You should use a similar technique with past papers. Create a list of papers by year and unit. When you've completed a past paper highlight it and put your mark in. This will let you keep track of papers you have and haven't done so you can always test yourself on new material. By doing this you will also quickly realise that many questions they ask are just very small variations on previous questions. It will also allow you to gain an idea of what the terminology in each question is actually asking for. It may also be helpful to write yourself the definitions of what each term means. My biggest tip for doing well in the coming A2s, is don't stop working. 6 months may seem like a very long and dull time but when you get the results you want and you look back it's all worth it and it doesn't feel like a large amount of time at all.

Good luck!

# GIULIA SASSARINI

University of South Wales - Master of Chiropractic



My advice is manage your time in a way that suits yourselves the best. Don't postpone any work until the weekend or the day before it's due: do it the same day you're given it, as you're fresh from the lesson and you'll remember the things better than a week later.

There's no need to study every day for hours, I personally I find it more helpful revising 20-30 minutes, then taking a break, than start again, and so on. If you learn to do these things now it'll be easier at university, because there you have to do work constantly to keep up with every module.

Regarding Biology specifically: don't forget the AS material; I found the CGP textbook (with both AS and A2) very useful for AS modules, as it summarises all the content in a few pages. Use memory tricks, rewrite things down to help memorise and summarise processes or definitions, and learn the key words, those are the ones the examiners will look for.

I got the grades I was hoping for and I got into the university I wanted, so everything went fine, but I know I could've done more to get maybe a better grade, or avoid being disappointed at the end of the exam, and be scared as hell on Result Day. Good luck!

**AAB**

# MARIA SELYANINA

St George's, University of London – Biomedical Sciences



If you're bored while revising you're doing it wrong! Make sure you have all your notes nicely written and clearly organised. Going over the specification will help you to understand what topics you've covered and where more work needs to be done. Go over as many past papers AFTER you've learnt the material of your subjects. I would start doing it in April to give yourself time to mark all the past papers as well as analysing your mistakes. (Do the past papers without looking at mark scheme first and time yourself!!!) After marking your work write down a question where you did not get a full mark and the answers for it in bullet points. Make flash cards or just write the questions in a separate note book. Get yourself familiar with specific definitions and vocabulary used in mark schemes!

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# MARIA SEL'YANINA

St George's, University of London – Biomedical Sciences

Pair yourself up with someone and revise together. Give yourselves each different topics to analyse and memorise, and then teach each other! Make sure to be clear and serious with it. Teaching someone allows to fully understand a material you're trying to learn, and also helps to transfer it to the long term memory.

Sleep deprivation is a huge issue among students. Please, do not forget to have a rest (wisely) and a PROPER sleep before each exam. I was so exhausted by the time of my last exam that I was not able to read the questions and think clearly when my chemistry exam came. Unfortunately, exam preparations require some sacrifices such as giving up on your social life for a while.

After the exam do not go over it in your head, leave it in the exam hall. It does not matter how you feel after them, even if you think you might failed. You will create anxiety by doing that and may even lose motivation to continue doing your best ! Trust me: YOU NEVER KNOW HOW YOU'VE DONE ON YOUR EXAM! And creating illusions will only upset you. Do not look at raw answers on StudentRoom. The majority of them were wrong last year, and, again, you'll just put yourself in stress.

Do not be lazy and do work! You will be proud go yourself when you get results!