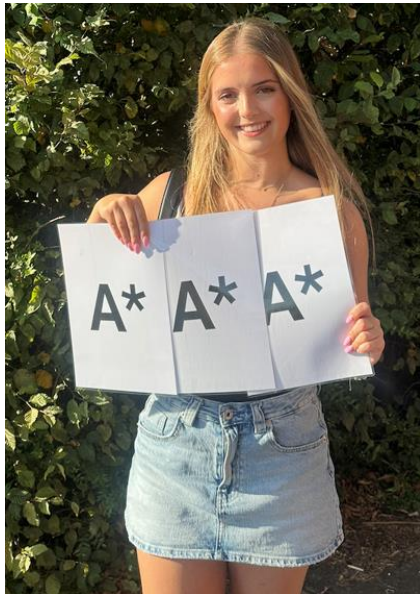




Year 12 Welcome Evening



The school of choice for parents in Reading: where success is desirable, demanded and achieved.

ASPIRATION RESPECT EXCELLENCE

Aims of this presentation

- To help students make the best possible start to Sixth Form life
- To explain the ethos and expectations of Highdown Sixth Form Centre
- To help answer some key questions about Highdown Sixth Form Centre



Who are the key staff?

- Mr Prior - Head of Sixth Form
- Ms Pattison - Second in Sixth, Pastoral
- Mr Lilley – Second in Sixth, Achievement
- Dr Love – Professional Tutor

- Mrs Kaminska - Learning Mentor / Attendance
- Sixth Form Welfare Lead

- The mentors
- A-Level teachers!



What myths do we need to 'bust'?

TRUE OR FALSE??

- I don't have any studying to do
- Nobody else wears an ID badge, I don't have to
- I don't have to go to mentor period
- I can work in Waitrose all weekend and do well in my exams
- No-one does any work after the PPEs in the summer term, so I am off to Newquay with my mates



What does studying in the Sixth Form involve?

- 3 (sometimes 4) 'Level 3' subjects studied for two years
- Timetabled Independent Learning sessions
- A focused CCC programme, as well as a Mentor Period programme to support academic, social and personal progress
- Timetabled 'Enrichment' twice per fortnight
- Developing a wide range of **supercurricular** experiences to impress university admissions tutors and employers



How are A-Levels structured?

- A-Levels have been linear for a decade now
- A student studying an **A-Level** subject has chosen to study it for two years
- Examinations in May/June of Year 13 (2027)
- Coursework still an important part of some courses
 - Art / English / Geography / History / Music / EPQ
- A-Levels are graded A*-E, not A*-C



How have Vocational Courses changed?

- Assessment includes rigorous exams.
- Assignments no longer allow ongoing marking and improvement.
- During an assignment teachers are limited in the help they can offer.
- Once work is handed in (has to be by the deadline) limited feedback can be given before it can be resubmitted.
- If a unit is not passed - the qualification cannot be passed.
- Each assignment has to meet the deadlines and must meet ALL criteria.



How is the Sixth Form experience structured?

- Start A-Level/Vocational Level 3 courses in September 2026
- A-Level linear PPEs April 2027 and December 2027
- Vocational exams in Year 12, and ongoing assessment
- Core Maths – exams in May/June 2027
- EPQ – Final submission June 2027
- University application Sept – Nov 2027
- A-Level linear exams May/June 2028



How can students excel in Sixth Form?

Developing a 'Sixth Form Mindset'



Research has shown that 90% of reasons to explain why students struggle with Sixth Form Study are issues of **character**, not **cognition**

Cognition



Character



In other words...

- Gaining a brilliant set of GCSE grades does not necessarily mean students are going to breeze through A-Levels
- A-Levels are a big difference from GCSEs
- Past performance is no guarantee of future performance
- Are you a thriver?
- Or are you a diver?



The Five Elements of the Sixth Form Mindset

- Research has shown that there are five key elements to success at A level - and more importantly, that these five elements can be learned.
- They are not gifts or genetic quirks handed down to lucky people.



The Five Elements of the Sixth Form Mindset – what are ‘thrivers’ like?

- **Vision:** Thrivers have developed an answer to the question ‘Why have you joined our Sixth Form?’ They have thought about what they want to achieve.
- **Effort:** Thrivers outwork their peers – 4 or 5 times harder in terms of time spent on tasks beyond the classroom. They are proactive, rather than passively waiting for instruction.
- **Systems:** Thrivers organise themselves – they know the structure and content of their courses.
- **Practice:** Thrivers revise differently. They focus on the things they can’t do, rather than constantly restudying what they can do.
- **Attitude:** There is a resilience to the thrivers. They are happy to receive all feedback – good and bad – to develop further.



But divers....

HIGHDOWN SCHOOL
AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

The low vision student

- Characterised by listlessness, boredom, low-level anxiety, exasperation, and a tendency to procrastinate



HIGHDOWN SCHOOL
AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

The low effort student

- Characterised by satisfaction, contentment and short-termism – oblivious to levels of hard work put in by others.



HIGHDOWN SCHOOL
AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

The low attitude student

- Characterised by anger, frustration with progress, unhappiness, self-loathing, negativity – often comparing themselves unfavourably to others



HIGHDOWN SCHOOL
AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

The low (or no)-systems student

- Characterised by a scaling-up of old systems that now can't cope, missing deadlines because the work has been forgotten, poor sleep and late waking, chaotic bags and folders, often high-stress



HIGHDOWN SCHOOL
AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

The low practice student

- Often organised and hardworking but loyal to repeated patterns of GCSE preparation, comfortable behaviours, sense of control achieved through large stationery purchases, claims "you can't revise" for skills-based courses



The new UCAS form

UCAS

What are the questions?



Why do you want to study this course or subject?

VISION



How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?

EFFORT



What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and how are these experiences useful?

ATTITUDE





Key Information

- School day – every day starts at 8:40 and finishes at 15:10
- Attendance – a staged approach
- Signing in and out – students can go off site at break and lunch – but must sign out and back in again
- Flexible Working Passes – Information will follow in Term 2 (after half-term)
- Dress Code - Put simply “Is a student suitably dressed for a learning environment?”
- ID badges - a safeguarding issue – will be produced ASAP
- WEX – W/C 28th June



One last thing – you never have ‘nothing to do’!

UCAS

What are the questions?



Why do you want to study this course or subject?



How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?



What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?



One last thing – you never have ‘nothing to do’!



What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?



You never have 'nothing to do'!



SUPER-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Activities that are related to the subject you want to study, but go **ABOVE** and **BEYOND** the school curriculum

- How do they link to what you want to study?
- What was it that particularly interested you about what you watched/read/listened to/saw?



Excellence Evenings 2026



Well Done!

You have been successful despite.....

- COVID
- Pressure from Teachers/Parents
- Peer pressure
- Your own pressure you put on yourself
- Exam system
- Lack of time
- Distractions
- Sunny Weather





Quiz Time

**1. After age 30, the
brain shrinks exactly
0.25% in mass each
year**

True or False

2. The brain is the fattiest part of the body with a fat content of around 60%

True or False

**3. The brain feels pain
like the rest of the body**

True or False

**4. The human brain is so soft
that a table knife would be
more than enough to slice
through it**

True or False

**5. The energy transferred by
the brain is enough to light a
5 Watt light bulb
True or False**

**6. The average brain weighs
as much as an average
Chihuahua dog**

True or False

**7. The essential oil of
jasmine can quickly
restore mental
alertness**

True or False

8. How fast can electrical impulses travel between neurons in the brain?

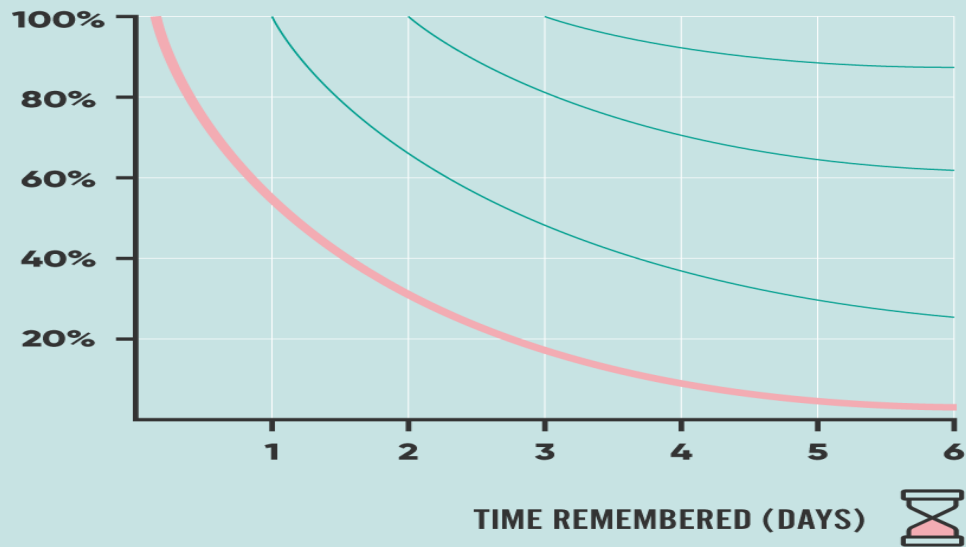
- A. Up to 10 mph**
- B. Up to 50 mph**
- C. Up to 120 mph**
- D. Up to 270 mph**

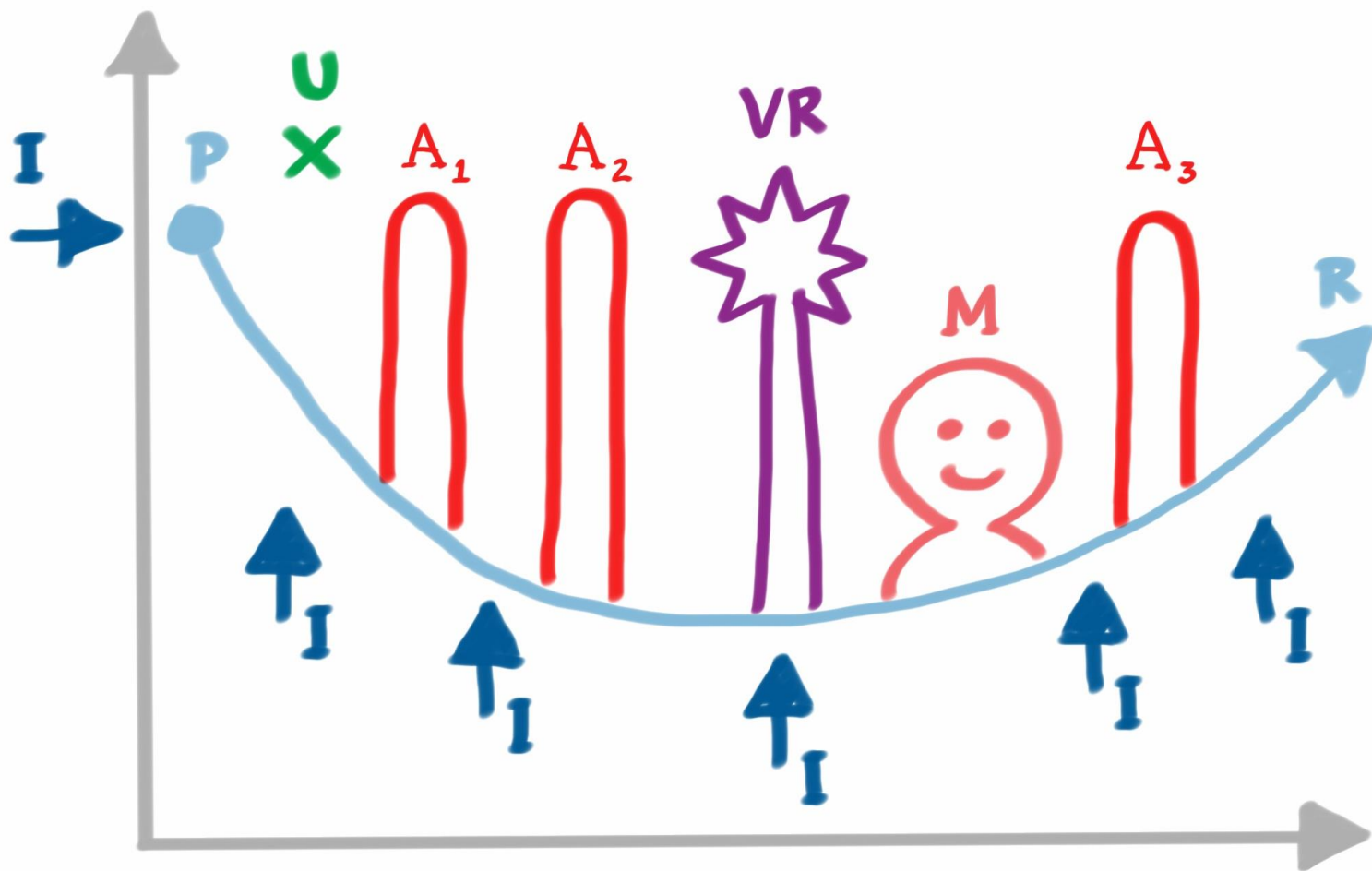
9. Although the brain makes up only about 2% of body weight, how much of the body's energy does it use?

- A. About 5%**
- B. About 10%**
- C. About 20%**
- D. About 50%**

**Every time you recall a
memory or have a new
thought a new
connection is made
between neurones**

THE FORGETTING CURVE





you wretched old
crab

1 point
w/ my
pen.

"Zip your lips!" It's my turn.
 "I can do this, I say."
 "Just back off - let me learn!"
 Shut your mouth

Then Midge snuffed and ~~snuffled~~ snuffled and stamped to the floor.

"But where would you be if I walked out
you can't handle that - go take a hike! That door?"

"I'd be writing!" I say. "Or whatever I ~~want~~ like
"Anything" and "Nothing" - then the other two.

7) But she ~~isn't~~ ^{is} right ~~there~~ ^{in my} ~~chair~~ ^{single's, across} ~~my~~ ^{right in, a mess} ~~chair~~ ^{hopping my chair, "zig}
Then the tears start to fall, "But its scary
out there."

"You're a sissy," I say. "And a bully to boot."
"You're a meany," she says. And ~~me~~ I
let out a ~~both start to~~ hoot.

"Let me stay," Midge is whining. Her head
on my knee.

"There, there" ^{on my knee.} ^{now} put her ^{is if she were there}

If you stop me from starting, there's nothing to go
the lines that were split are ~~now~~ now.

~~puppy - dog~~ ^{wild} ~~dog~~ ^{cat} ~~cat~~ ^{dog} ~~dog~~ ^{jim}

"I just wanted to show you from how much
I love you. But I saw you from
heartache, rejection, pain. There." one of me

Id ~~think~~ ^{feel} ~~like~~ ^{like} ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~do~~ ^{do} ~~nothing~~ ^{nothing} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~world~~ ^{world} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~nothing~~ ^{nothing} ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~brother~~ ^{brother} ~~face~~ ^{face}

45 weeks (the longest time)
Facing failure (the most common)
Facing failure (the most common)
Facing failure (the most common)

It's time
that you
~~are~~ fall it,
your
time

is 

~~Must~~

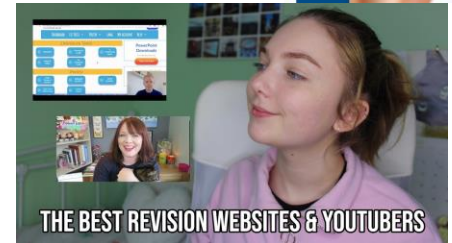
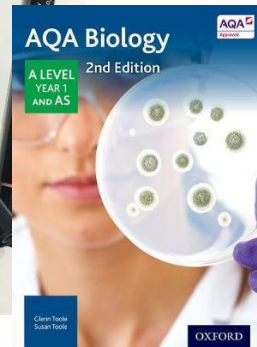
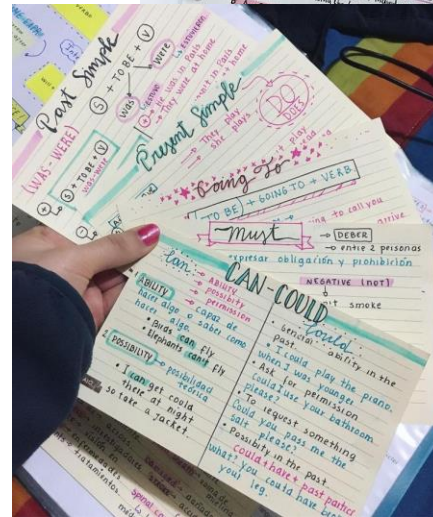
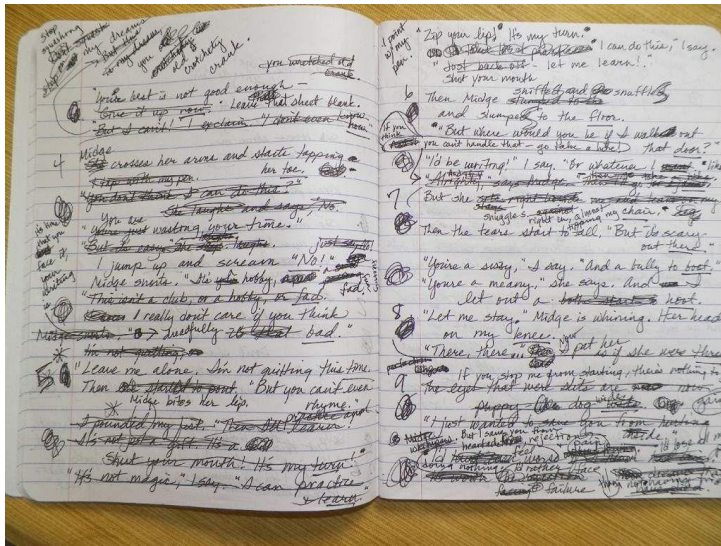
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Queso

11

2.





Topic: _____

Cornell Notes Structure

Cues Column

- Keywords, main concepts, & core ideas
- Concise facts
- Questions that arise
- Potential test questions
- Study prompts

When?

Right after lecture / session

Notes Column

- Main lecture notes
- Use concise sentences, symbols, abbreviations, lists
- Diagrams, visual aids
- Case studies, examples

When?

During lecture / session

Summary Column

- Summary of main points, top-level ideas
- This is your quick reference area
- Personal insights & reflecting
- Recap the key concepts *When?*

When?

After completing note-taking

8.2 A-level required practical activities

markphysicshelp MPH

The following practicals must be carried out by all students taking this course. Written papers will assess knowledge and understanding of these, and the skills exemplified within each practical.

Required activity	Apparatus and technique reference
1. Investigation into the effect of a named variable on the rate of an enzyme-controlled reaction	a, b, c, f, l
2. Preparation of stained squashes of cells from plant root tips; set-up and use of an optical microscope to identify the stages of mitosis in these stained squashes and calculation of a mitotic index	d, e, f
3. Production of a dilution series of a solute to produce a calibration curve with which to identify the water potential of plant tissue	c, h, j, l
4. Investigation into the effect of a named variable on the permeability of cell-surface membranes	a, b, c, j, l
5. Dissection of animal or plant gas exchange or mass transport system or of organ within such a system	e, h, j
6. Use of aseptic techniques to investigate the effect of antimicrobial substances on microbial growth	c, i
7. Use of chromatography to investigate the pigments isolated from leaves of different plants, eg leaves from shade-tolerant and shade-intolerant plants or leaves of different colours	b, c, g
8. Investigation into the effect of a named factor on the rate of dehydrogenase activity in extracts of chloroplasts	a, b, c
9. Investigation into the effect of a named variable on the rate of respiration of cultures of single-celled organisms	a, b, c, i
10. Investigation into the effect of an environmental variable on the movement of an animal using either a choice chamber or a maze	h
11. Production of a dilution series of a glucose solution and use of colorimetric techniques to produce a calibration curve with which to identify the concentration of glucose in an unknown 'urine' sample	b, c, f
12. Investigation into the effect of a named environmental factor on the distribution of a given species	a, b, h, k, l

Assignments 11/4/2021, 6:17 AM

Multiple Choice on carbohydrates, proteins, enzymes and lipids

Due 8 Nov

[View assignment](#)

Reply

November 8, 2021

Assignments 11/8/2021, 11:46 AM Updated

Folders for marking - DUE WED 10th NOV

Due 10 Nov

[View assignment](#)

Assignments 11/8/2021, 11:47 AM

Assignment details have been modified

Reply

Michael BENNETT 7/14, 10:25 AM

Reply

Michael BENNETT 7/14, 10:25 AM

PLCs....

MODULE 2: Foundations in biology

2.1.1: Cell structure

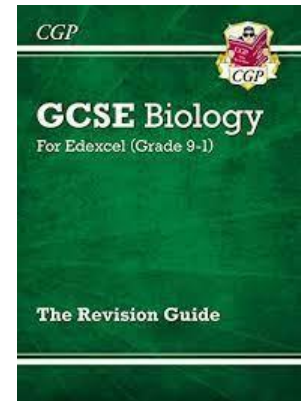
Learners should be able to demonstrate and apply their knowledge and understanding of:	Notes ready?				Revision done?
a) the use of microscopy to observe and investigate different types of cell and cell structure in a range of eukaryotic organisms					
b) the preparation and examination of microscope slides for use in light microscopy					
c) the use of staining in light microscopy					
d) the representation of cell structure as seen under the light microscope using drawings and annotated diagrams of whole cells or cells in sections of tissue					
e) the use and manipulation of the magnification formula					
f) the difference between magnification and resolution					
g) the ultrastructure of eukaryotic cells and the functions of the different cellular components					
h) photomicrographs of cellular components in a range of eukaryotic cells					
i) the interrelationship between the organelles involved in the production and secretion of proteins					
j) the importance of the cytoskeleton					
k) the similarities and differences in the structure and ultrastructure of prokaryotic and eukaryotic cells					

2.1.2: Biological molecules

Learners should be able to demonstrate and apply their knowledge and understanding of:	Notes ready?				Revision done?
a) how hydrogen bonding occurs between water molecules, and relate this, and other properties of water, to the roles of water for living organisms					
b) the concept of monomers and polymers and the importance of condensation and hydrolysis reactions in a range of biological molecules					
c) the chemical elements that make up biological molecules					
d) the ring structure and properties of glucose as an example of a hexose monosaccharide and the structure of ribose as an example of a pentose monosaccharide					
e) the synthesis and breakdown of a disaccharide and polysaccharide by the formation and breakage of glycosidic bonds					
f) the structure of starch (amylose and amylopectin), glycogen and cellulose molecules					
g) how the structures and properties of glucose, starch, glycogen and cellulose molecules relate to their functions in living organisms					
h) the structure of a triglyceride and a phospholipid as examples of macromolecules					
i) the synthesis and breakdown of triglycerides by the formation (esterification) and breakage of ester bonds between fatty acids and glycerol					
j) how the properties of triglyceride, phospholipid and cholesterol molecules relate to their functions in living organisms					

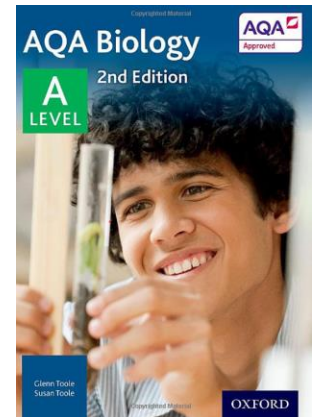
GCSE:

Neurones carry an electrical impulse from receptors in the fingers to the coordinator in the brain to the effector in the hand muscle



A Level Grade E:

Sensory neurones carry an electrical impulse from receptors in the fingers to the coordinator in the brain via **relay** and **motor** neurones to the effector in the hand muscle

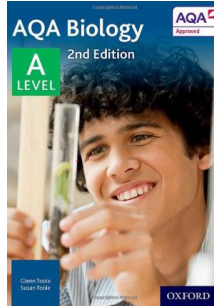


A Level Grade C:

Sensory neurones carry an electrical impulse via **saltatory conduction** from **Pacinian corpuscle** receptors in the fingers to the **motor area in cerebral hemisphere in the brain** via relay and motor neurones to the effector in the hand muscle. **The action of sodium and potassium ions causes a wave of depolarisation which is transmitted via channel proteins in the neurones**



A Level Grade A:



Sensory neurones carry an electrical impulse via saltatory conduction from Pacinian corpuscle receptors in the fingers to the motor area in cerebral hemisphere in the brain via relay and motor neurones to the effector in the hand muscle. The action of sodium and potassium ions causes a wave of depolarisation which is transmitted via channel proteins in the neurones. High intensity stimuli result in higher frequency stimuli passing along neurones. Maximum depolarisation is +40mv per wave and is due to the alternating closure of sodium and potassium voltage gated proteins. Addition of sodium channel blockers will inhibit the depolarisation.

Use the exam question...

- (b) Explain how **one** feature of an alveolus allows efficient gas exchange to occur.

The alveolus is thin and is only 1 cell thick and
this allows gas exchange to occur.

Use the exam question...

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The alveolus is thin and is only 1 cell thick and
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_____(b) 1. (The alveolar epithelium) is one cell thick;

Reject thin membrane

2. Creating a short diffusion pathway / reduces the diffusion distance;

2 max

(2)

Use the exam question...

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Reject thin membrane

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2 max

(2)

Use the exam question...

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* alveolar epithelium

* short diffusion pathways

* reduces diffusion distance

(2)

Use the exam question...

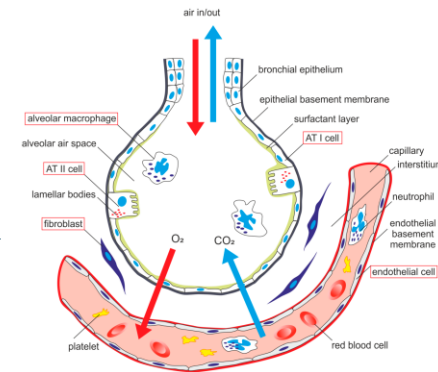
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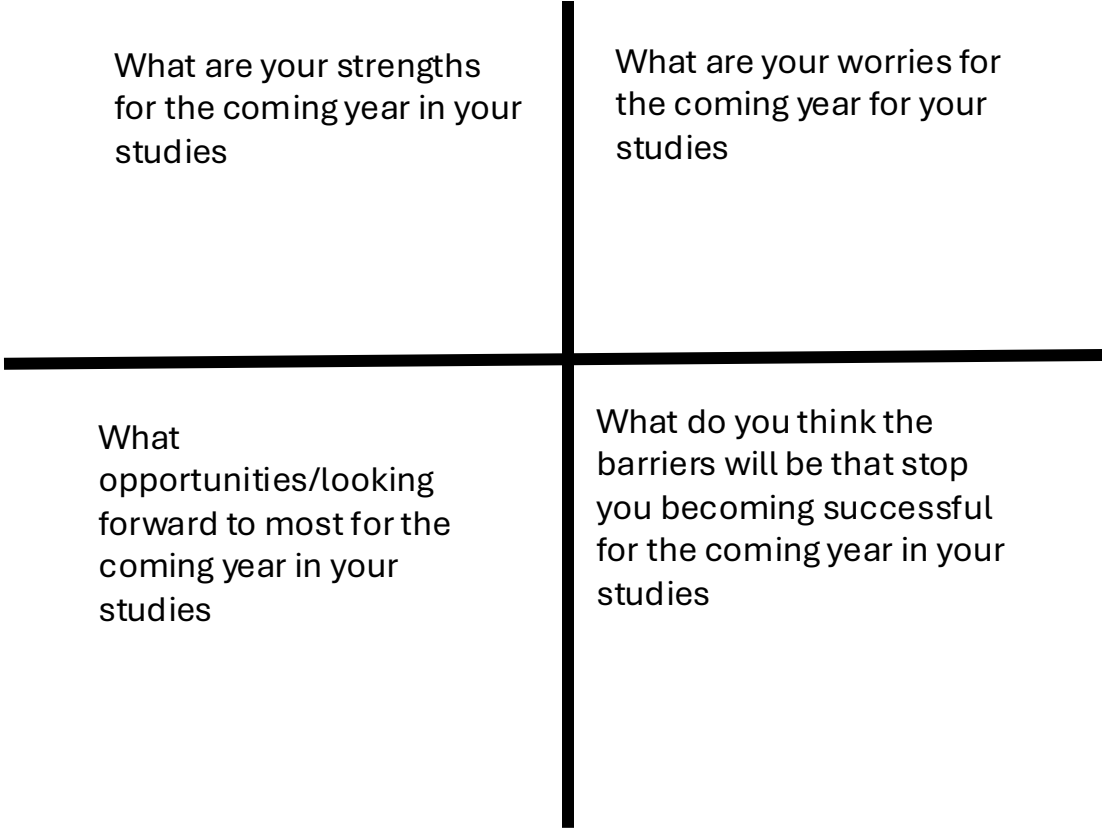
* 1 cell thick

* short diffusion pathways

* reduces diffusion distance







What are your strengths
for the coming year in your
studies

What are your worries for
the coming year for your
studies

What
opportunities/looking
forward to most for the
coming year in your
studies

What do you think the
barriers will be that stop
you becoming successful
for the coming year in your
studies

What are your strengths
for the coming year in your
studies

**Enjoy the subjects I've
selected and I know the
teachers well**

What
opportunities/looking
forward to most for the
coming year in your
studies
**Looking forward to working
with my friends I and being
more independent**

What are your worries for
the coming year for your
studies

**What to do if I don't
understand the work in
the lesson I have just
had**

What do you think the
barriers will be that stop
you becoming successful
for the coming year in your
studies

**Handling work in on time as I
have part time job outside
school**

Waiting for Motivation?



Apply the 5-Minute Rule

1

Identify the task

2

Set a timer for 5 minutes

3

Start working

4

Evaluate after 5 minutes

Excellence Evenings 2026

