

PASADENA HIGH SCHOOL
SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

Dear 2022-2023 AP Biology Student,

May 2022

I am pleased to have you as a member of what promises to be a great class. I can assure you that you will get the information that you need to be successful in this class. Please read this introduction to the course carefully so that you understand what you are getting into and what you can expect to get out of AP Biology. **The OPTIONAL summer assignment follows this introductory letter.**

The Advanced Placement Program of the College Board is designed to let students in high school obtain college credit and/or advanced placement in college above the introductory level courses. The College Board hires the Educational Testing Service (ETS) to write and grade the AP Biology exam. Grades are assigned on a basis of 1 to 5 with 3, 4, and 5 as “passing” scores. Most of this year’s exam, as in previous years, was based on lecture and text analysis material. A portion of the exam is based on the AP Biology Labs.

AP Biology is a course taught in high school. Colleges expect a student to have had an “equivalent” experience to their freshmen course, including laboratories, and to have mastered its contents. Many colleges give credit to applicants with scores of 3 or higher if they are non-science majors, but few will accept a score of 3 for advanced placement if the student is a science major.

It is important for you to consider why you are taking this course. If your primary reason is a desire to accept and tackle a difficult intellectual challenge, to take an advanced science course, and/or to “pass” the AP exam, then the AP Biology course offered here at PHS can help you meet these goals. If, on the other hand, your primary goal is to obtain credit for a college biology course, then to avoid being disappointed you should contact the college you are likely to attend. Find out if they accept AP scores for credit, and get this information in writing and keep it.

Keep in mind that even if you score high on the exam, you may elect not to exempt introductory biology in college. We will do some great labs, but we cannot match the facilities that are available in most colleges. With the preparation you will get in this course, the good grade that you can earn in introductory biology could be very helpful to your college G.P.A.

AP Biology is a course which will make unusually heavy demands on your time and energy. There is a tremendous amount of material to cover, a lot of work to do, and very little time available. You, as a student, and your parents, should not be surprised by the course requirements that are in excess of what you would expect for a normal honors course.

Some additional requirements apply: All students enrolled in AP Biology will take the AP exam in the spring—it costs about \$95 (without a fee waiver). The purpose of this course is to prepare you to take this difficult exam! Students will be required to read and learn material both in the text and in other references. Some of the reading material will not be covered in lecture but you will still be tested on it.

All AP Biology students have the option to complete a summer assignment. The optional assignment can be found on the following page. This optional assignment will be due the first day of school in August should you choose to do the assignment.

The greatest challenge of this course is the requirement that students remain consistent throughout the year. In regular courses a bright, high-ability student can let his/her effort slide from time to time and make up for it with a big push right before the exam. Other students may work hard for one semester and then let their efforts flag in the spring. These efforts will threaten even the brightest student's chances of passing this difficult exam.

Choose your extracurricular activities wisely. Past AP Biology students have been able to participate fully in athletics, ASB, clubs, and student publications, but they have had to plan their time carefully. Daily class attendance is important. **Past experience has shown that students who have one or more absences per week usually do not receive a passing grade. Success in this course will depend on your motivation and maturity, your ability to read for content and to communicate well in writing, and your ability to get organized.** The priority you give this course is also important because some of you will be enrolled in more than one AP class. Your priorities are your business, but remember that scores of 4 or 5 require great effort!

I look forward to working with you next year, and I am sure that we will accomplish a great deal together. If you have any questions over the summer please feel free to email me at jacalone.rachel@pusd.us

****OPTIONAL Summer Assignment on the following page****

Mrs. Rachel Jacalone
AP Biology Teacher

PS. Please share this information with your parents

AP Biology OPTIONAL Summer Assignment

Your **optional** summer assignment is to plant seeds in a pot and bring that potted plant on the first day of school. Your job throughout the year will be to water/feed your plant and make sure that it stays alive in our classroom for the whole school year. If your plant lives the whole year you will receive 20 points extra credit at the end of the year!

Requirements:

- choose seeds for a plant that will live indoors (it will be living in our classroom all year)
- must plant seeds in the pot (do not buy a plant that is already potted and growing)
- pot size should be 3 inches to 10 inches (make sure pot has a bottom dish so that water that drains does not spill on counter)
- write your name on the pot
- take a picture of your plant each week and make a chart to record observations
- on the observation chart also write the type of seeds that you plant and the conditions that your plant prefers

Please email with any questions! Have a great summer, see you and your plant in August!

Mrs. Jacalone

jacalone.rachel@pusd.us