

Dear Student,

Congratulations on being selected to be in the Advanced Placement Biology class at Menlo-Atherton High School. This upcoming year will be fast-paced and challenging, yet ultimately rewarding. To ensure that you can do well from the onset, you should do the following:

1. Pick up a class text from the library. Before you go, to ensure they are open, call 322-5311 x5161. You can also go to www.mabears.org and click on the “Library” link on the side to find out their hours. NOTE: they are not open on weekends. **2011-12-** this year, we are getting a new textbook, but it won’t arrive until the end of July, so you should call ahead to make sure that they have it available for you to check out. The text is Campbell’s Biology, 9th Edition (AP Edition). If you wish to get a head start, in June you can check out the old AP Bio textbook and read and take notes on chapters 1-6, they cover the much of the same content and it would be a good way to get a head start on understanding the material. You ultimately will have to take notes from the new text, but for those students who want, this option is available. We are attempting to get access to the online version of the textbook, but at this time, we are unsure when that will happen, so check in occasionally with the library to find out when that happens.
2. Read Chapters 1-8. You should take detailed notes in a separate spiral bound notebook that will be used exclusively for reading notes. This is **NOT** to be done on computer unless you have special circumstances/needs that you discuss with me **IN ADVANCE** (and merely being a messy or slow handwriter is not sufficient, the practice will help you prepare for timed essays). These notes will be used for ongoing, open-note reading quizzes that will begin early next year. Be sure to include both “big picture” concepts as well as the important details/terms/examples. Do NOT forget to read and take notes on the various key figures and “Inquiry”/“Exploring”/etc sections. These 8 chapters will be covered in the first 4 weeks of class. Be sure to put in the time it takes to understand what you are writing, and use your notes to organize the concepts and facts in a way that helps you learn the material. Simple lists of vocabulary words and their definitions alone are not sufficient
 - Cornell Notes format, while not required, could be helpful
 - You will be adding to these notes throughout the year, and need to find information in them. It is helpful to have a few blank pages in the beginning to create your own table of contents
 - A format that has helped some students is to put at the beginning of every chapter’s notes a copy of the “key concepts” from that chapter’s introduction and then vocabulary words and their definitions. To do this, after putting the chapter’s title, copy the key concepts from the textbook and then skip a couple of pages for the vocabulary and then start in on your notes. As you encounter vocabulary terms you need to define, after you put them into your notes, copy the definition into the vocabulary section. Alternately, you can put the vocabulary section at the end of the chapter notes. Going back through your notes to find these vocabulary terms is also a good way to review the notes.
3. Collect and organize your Biology/AIS/Chemistry notes and review them to refresh your memory, especially about topics such as molecular structures, bonds, cell structure/function and DNA.
4. It is recommended that you skim over Chapters 11-17, at least the chapter summaries, to introduce yourself to those topics, we’ll be diving into those after the first month.

I look forward to teaching you next year. Enjoy your summer.

Sincerely,

Patrick Roisen
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