McTier's Magic Motivators!

Helpful hints for the Biology 2025 exam

Exam Tips

- Work out your timing for the exam:
    - 15min reading + 2.5hrs writing (150mins) for 120marks,
    - ie. 40marks for Multiple Choice, 80marks for Short Answer
      Suggestion:
        - 50 minutes for the MC section (40 marks)
        - 90 minutes for the SA section (80 marks)
        - 10 minutes to check that you have answered every question
- Consider how you will use the 15 minutes reading time to interpret large amounts of text or diagrams/graphs. Look for the big questions with lots of reading to fully understand the blurb or data given.
- Take a short time before you start answering each question to understand what is being asked and make sure you write an answer that addresses the question.
- Read the question carefully.
- Use the mark allocation and space available to make a judgment of what is required.
- Make sure your answers are concise (short and to the point).
- Don't 'overfill' the answer section
- Dot points are fine!
- Tables to compare are fine!
- Students often give too much information in their answers (this wastes time!).
- Give your best answer first. Students should only give the number of reasons/points asked for in the question (i.e. two reasons/points for 2 marks)
- Use approved abbreviations, eg. DNA, gRNA, GM, LD, H2O, Tc, mAb
- Remember questions may ask you to interpret or use previous knowledge.
- Do not restate information provided in the stem, you must provide some extra relevant information that indicates your understanding.
- Don't include irrelevant information, especially if it is contradictory to previous information in your answer.
- Make sure that you refer to data when you are required to. What can this question look like?
- Some questions may seem like a definition question, but actually ask you to apply your knowledge to the situation. So read the question carefully. eg. "What is meant by the term 'vector' in the context given?"
- Similarly, questions will ask you about how a particular technique has an effect on a process; for example, '*Explain how Polymerase Chain Reaction can be useful in determining evolutionary relationships'*. This question isn't getting you to outline the steps of PCR but how the process can be used to infer relationships.
- If you are asked to outline the steps of a process (i.e. cellular respiration, PCR, natural selection, CRISPR-CAS9) and the question is worth 3 marks, ensure you include three clear steps of the process in your answer.
- Sometime rather than outlining steps, it may ask you to explain why the steps are important, or a reason associated with those steps (eg. Why is there a temperature change for each PCR step?)
- Read your answers carefully and check for accuracy.

Study Tips:

- Do lots of trial exams and VCAA exams. Do them well – quality!
- If you are writing your notes, get it done in the first 2 weeks, then focus on trial exams.
- Create chunks of study time (20-40min chunks)

- Set a goal for each revision session and review it at the end, eg. I will do 40MC questions.
- Read widely – Science and news articles etc, case studies in textbooks.
- Do 1 thing at a time! – turn your phone off when you are studying