
Grading Procedures for the AP Biology Examination

The raw scores of the AP Biology Examination are converted to the following 5-point scale:

- 5—Extremely Well Qualified
- 4—Well Qualified
- 3—Qualified
- 2—Possibly Qualified
- 1—No Recommendation

Some colleges give undergraduate course credit to students who achieve scores of 3 or better on AP exams. Other colleges require students to achieve scores of 4 or 5. You may check the policy for individual colleges on the College Board website (www.collegeboard.com). Below is a breakdown of how the grading of the AP Biology Exam works.

Section I: Multiple-Choice Questions

The multiple-choice section of the exam is worth 50% of your total score. The raw score of Section I is determined by crediting one point for each correctly answered question. Therefore, it is important to answer each question. *There is no penalty for guessing!*

Section II: Free-Response Questions

Section II counts for 50% of your examination grade. The free-response section is scored by several hundred faculty consultants, including high school teachers and college instructors from all over the country who work in a central location to grade the essays. This period of scoring exams is called the “Reading.” To ensure that scoring of all exams is consistent, grading rubrics, or standards, are developed and then faculty consultants are trained in their application. Because of this intense training, group discussion, and supervision, your essay should receive the same score regardless of who reads it. Ongoing internal checks during the Reading ensure this. Each of your essays will be evaluated by a faculty consultant trained to score that single response.

Your answers to the free-response questions must be presented in essay form. Outlines or unlabeled and unexplained diagrams are not given credit. Your performance on any single essay is evaluated independently of the other essays. Do not assume that information provided in one question will be considered during the grading of another essay. You should repeat information from question to question if it is necessary to illustrate your point.