

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. Ideally before the start of summer, pick up a class text from the library. Before you go, ensure that they are open by checking the MA website. You can go to www.mabears.org and click on the "Students" tab and select the Library link at the bottom to find out their hours. NOTE: they are not open on the weekends.
2. Read Ch. 1-6. You should take **HAND WRITTEN** detailed notes in a separate spiral bound notebook that will be used exclusively for reading notes. You WILL be able to use these notes during reading quizzes that will be checking to see if you've read the chapters.
 - This is NOT to be done on computer or to include photocopies unless you have special circumstances/needs that you discuss with me IN ADVANCE (and merely being a messy or slow hand writer is not sufficient, the practice will help you prepare for timed essays) in preparation for ongoing open-note reading quizzes that will begin early next year. Another reason to handwrite your notes is research has demonstrated you tend to retain more information that way.
 - Be sure to include both "big picture" concepts as well as the important details/terms/examples.
 - Many students find copying some key diagrams/flowcharts helpful, but it is not required.
 - Read the "Examples of Reading Notes" handout to get a sense of how to do the notes. Note: the example text is from a previous book, but it remains a valid example. It will also give you a preview of the sorts of questions to expect to see on the quizzes.
 - These 6 chapters will be covered in the first 6 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.
3. Collect and organize your old Biology notes and review them to refresh your memory, especially about topics such as cell structure/function and DNA as well as ecology. Review your Chemistry notes on atoms, bonds (especially the difference between ionic/polar covalent/and covalent bonds), acids/bases, concentration, pH/buffers, and the basics of chemical reactions.
4. It is recommended that you skim over Ch. 9-15, at least the chapter summaries, to introduce yourself to those topics.

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

Sincerely,
Patrick Roisen
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