

A level Biology Key Words and what they mean to you...

Key words used in exams / assessments.

Analyse	To identify main ideas, how they are related and why they are important. It is often expected you are able to analyse data / trends.
Carry Out	To successfully perform a practical component without assistance, often under 'exam conditions'
Comment on	To discuss, criticise, or explain - detail dependent upon depth of question being posed (i.e. how many marks are available).
Compare	To show both the differences and the similarities.
Contrast	To compare by showing the differences.
Criticise	To provide your judgement or reasoned opinion of something, showing its good and bad points. Be reasoned with the answer and careful not to 'attack' a particular point.
Define	To give the formal meaning of something by distinguishing it from related terms. This is often a matter of giving a memorised definition.
Describe	To write a detailed account or verbal picture in a logical sequence or story form.
Diagram	To make a graph, chart or drawing. Be sure to label it and add a brief explanation.
Discuss	To present arguments for and against a point of view and reach a conclusion. The arguments must be supported with appropriate evidence.
Explain	The word 'explain' means to give reasons. You have to 'explain' (give reasons) why rather than just define. To explain is to suggest the how and why, using examples to assist your 'explanation'.
Evaluate	To give an opinion, supported by some expert opinions, of the truth or importance of a concept. Show the advantages and disadvantages.
Illustrate	To explain and / or make clear by use of concrete examples, comparisons or analogies.
Interpret	To give the meaning using examples and personal comments to make something clear.
Justify	To give a statement of why you think something is so. Give reasons for your statement or conclusion.
List	To produce a list of words, sentences or comments.
Outline	To give a general summary. It should contain a series of main ideas supported by secondary facts. Show the organisation of the idea.
Prove	To show by argument or logic that something is true. However, the word 'prove' has a very specific meaning in maths and physics.
Relate	To show the connection between things, telling how one causes or is like another.
Review	To give a survey or summary in which you look at the important parts and criticise if necessary.
State	To describe the main points in precise terms. Use brief, clear sentences. Omit details or examples.
Summarise	To give a brief, condensed account of the main ideas.
Trace	To follow the progress or history of the subject.