

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

TWENTY FIRST CENTURY SCIENCE COMBINED SCIENCE B

J260

For first teaching in 2016

J260/05 Summer 2022 series

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers are also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

Advance Information for Summer 2022 assessments

To support student revision, advance information was published about the focus of exams for Summer 2022 assessments. Advance information was available for most GCSE, AS and A Level subjects, Core Maths, FSMQ, and Cambridge Nationals Information Technologies. You can find more information on our [website](#).

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Paper 5 series overview

This paper comprises of short answer styles and extended response, including one Level of Response question (structured questions, problem solving, calculations, and practical). To be successful on this paper it is expected that candidates will be familiar with key concepts and be able to apply the knowledge to unfamiliar situations. It is also expected that candidates will be familiar with a range of practical techniques and will be able to plan investigations. This is the first examination of the GCSE Twenty First Century Science B since examinations have resumed after an absence of two series. The candidates had been given advance information of the key areas of the specification which was assessed since their education has been disrupted over the last two years. Most candidates attempted all of the questions and appeared to have no time constraints.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knew how to measure transpiration • could explain what biodiversity was and the impacts on the environment • were able to recall the full nervous pathway for a reflex • understood the structure of the nervous system • understood and could explain hormone responses • carried out correct calculations and showed all working out • could explain the process of genetic engineering • knew the difference between aerobic and anaerobic respiration • understood how adrenalin effects the body • understood negative feedback • were able to explain the role of thyroxine in the body. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • were unfamiliar with a potometer and how to use it, generally confusing it with counting bubble for photosynthesis investigations • unable to recall the reflex pathway and linked reflex to conscious action • confused genetic engineering with artificial selection • did not know the composition of blood • did not link increased oxygen to increased levels of respiration • did not know the hormones involved with controlling blood sugar levels • did not show working out on calculation questions • could not explain negative feedback • explanation of the role of adrenalin limited to 'fight or flight' response • did not know the role of thyroxine in the body • confused thyroxine with the hormones of the menstrual cycle • were not able to give ethical points for the use of placebos.

Question 1 (a)

1 Transpiration takes place in plants.

(a) Complete the sentences to describe transpiration.

Put a **ring** around each correct answer.

Water is **absorbed** / **lost** / **translocated** through the stomata in a plant's leaves.

This causes **sugars** / **water** / **water and sugars** to move up the

meristem / **phloem** / **xylem** tissue in the plant's stem.

[3]

Most candidates were able to give some correct responses and gain at least 1 mark. Many candidates chose 'absorbed' and 'water and sugars'. Transpiration did not appear to be a well understood concept.

Question 1 (b)

(b) Fig. 1.1 shows one of the stomata from a leaf.

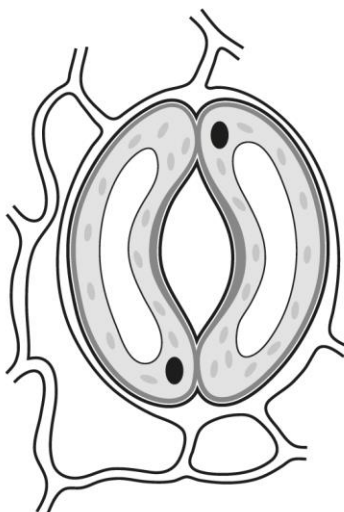


Fig. 1.1

Add **two** labels to Fig. 1.1.

Label 1 The pore through which water diffuses.

Label 2 A guard cell.

[1]

Many candidates found this question a challenge. Most tended to label the areas below the guard cell incorrectly or only correctly identified the pore. Both correct labels were required to gain the mark.

Question 1 (d) (i)

(d) Amir sets up a leafy twig in a bubble potometer as shown in Fig. 1.2.

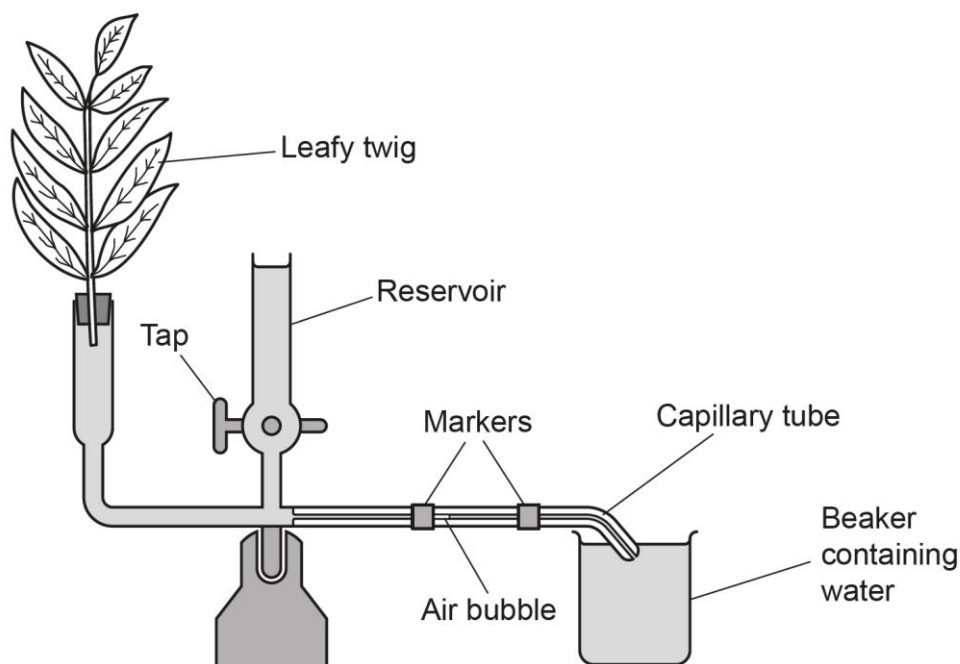


Fig. 1.2

Amir wants to use the bubble potometer to investigate the rate of transpiration in the leafy twig.

(i) Describe the **two** measurements Amir would need to make.

1

2

[2]

Most candidates confused this investigation with investigating rate of photosynthesis using Elodea. Many candidates' answers suggested that counting bubbles was the correct measurement to be taken.

Assessment for learning



The learning outcome from chapter B3, 'describe how to use a simple potometer', was being assessed here, rather than a practical activity. Teachers are encouraged to offer a diverse range of practical opportunities to allow students to access the learning outcomes as well as those listed in the practical activity group. This would also include observing stomata under a microscope as suggested in the linked learning activities.

Question 1 (d) (ii)

- (ii) Suggest the purpose of the reservoir
- and**
- tap.

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

There were many unsuccessful responses for this question, with many candidates seeming to not know what a potometer is or could link to transpiration. The purpose of the reservoir and tap was not understood by candidates with very few realising that the bubble could be reset.

Question 1 (e) (i)

- (e) Amir investigated the rate of transpiration in the leafy twig in four different experiments.

The table shows Amir's results.

Experiment	Temperature (°C)	Wind speed (m/s)	Light level	Calculated mean rate (mm/s)
A	22	0.1	Dull	1.27
B	22	0.1	No light	0.61
C	20	4.8	Bright	1.54
D	28	0.3	Dull	

Amir has not yet calculated the mean rate for experiment **D**. The results from his three repeats of experiment **D** were 4.55, 4.17 and 0.75 mm/s.

- (i) Discuss arguments for and against ignoring the result of 0.75 mm/s for experiment
- D**
- .

For

.....

Against

..... [2]

Candidates were very good at identifying the outlier, and most were given this mark. Only a few did not know why an outlier would still be included

Question 1 (f)

- (f) Amir wants to make a conclusion about the effect of light level on the rate of transpiration.

Explain why he can **only** do this by comparing experiments **A** and **B**.

.....
..... [1]

This question was well answered with many candidates recognising that wind speed and temperature were the same.

Exemplar 1

A reflex arc ~~is~~ ~~can~~ creates an automatic response when the receptor detects a stimulus. A reflex arc ^{in the skin} stops us from getting hurt. The receptor detects a stimulus and sends an electric impulse along the sensory ^{neuron} ~~neuron~~ which carries the impulse to the Central Nervous System (spinal cord and brain). Then the impulse travels along the motor neuron to the effector to respond accordingly and in this case it would be ~~the~~ the muscle contracts to move hand away from the sharp object. Reflex arcs have a long axon which makes the impulse travel quick and is surrounded by a fatty sheath which insulates the axon, ^{also helping} ~~making~~ it travel fast. The [6] dendrites connect neurons to each other with a small space in between called the synapse which helps the electrical impulse move quickly from one ^{reflex arc} ~~neuron~~ to the next.

The candidate's response was placed in Level 3 and given 6 marks. The candidate gives a clear and correct description of the reflex arc and all sections of the arc are included. This part of the response alone would be Level 2, 4 marks. To extend this answer into Level 3, this candidate also clearly explains that this response is automatic along with correct extra information about the reflex arc, i.e. the structure of the nerve cells and synapses.

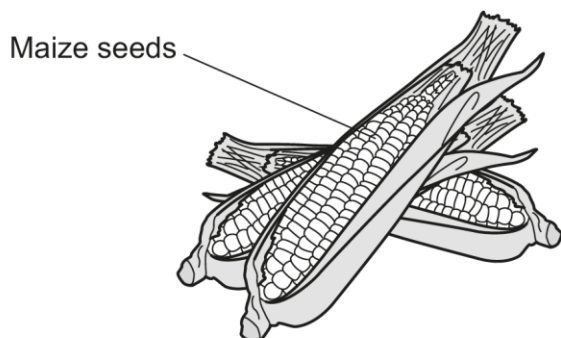
Exemplar 2

- A reflex is an automatic response
- the stimulus now detects the change in the environment
- now the receptor feels a sharp pain sending an electrical ~~impulse~~ impulse along the sensory neurone
- this ~~impulse~~ impulse travels to our spinal cord
- where the information ~~is~~ ~~is~~ has now processed and been sent to the relay neurone
- the information travels along the motor neurone to the effector
- now our body creates a response to this by refraining from the stimulus [6]

Exemplar 2 was placed in Level 2 and given 4 marks. The pathway given is correct and complete. The candidate also explains that the response is automatic but does not give any extra information.

Question 4 (a) (i)

4 Maize is an important food crop.



Folic acid helps the body to make healthy red blood cells, and is found in certain foods. However, maize seeds do not provide people with enough folic acid.

(a) Beans have high levels of folic acid.

Scientists want to genetically engineer maize to produce more folic acid by using genes from beans.

(i) Describe why this is an example of genetic engineering.

.....
..... [1]

Most candidates were aware of what genetic engineering was and could explain that genes were removed from one organism and placed into another. There was some confusion with natural selection.

Question 4 (a) (ii)

(ii) Describe the main steps in the process of genetically engineering the maize.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
..... [3]

The process of genetic engineering appeared to either be understood or not. The most commonly given marks were 0 or 3. Many used the word 'plasmid' but did not always appear to know what it meant. Less successful responses tended to describe the process of artificial selection.

Question 4 (b)

- (b) Suggest the next step that the scientists should take to investigate whether the modified maize could improve people's diets.

.....
..... [1]

Some candidates did recognise that adding folic acid to maize could improve diets and that it would be eaten but struggled to link this with diseases caused by a lack of folic acid. Many did not link the folic acid to improved folic acid levels and therefore better health.

Question 4 (c)

- (c) Suggest **one** benefit and **one** possible risk of genetically engineering maize in this way.

Benefit
.....
Risk
..... [2]

The benefit section of this question was not answered well. Many did not link the folic acid to improved folic acid levels and therefore better health. Candidates seemed to be aware of the risk of genetic engineering, but the answers given were vague and insufficient, e.g., stating that the risks were not known.

Question 5 (a) (i)

- 5** Scientists think that two species of a plant called small cordgrass and smooth cordgrass bred to produce a new species called Townsend's cordgrass.

(a) **Fig. 5.1** shows the number of chromosomes in the cells of three species of cordgrass.

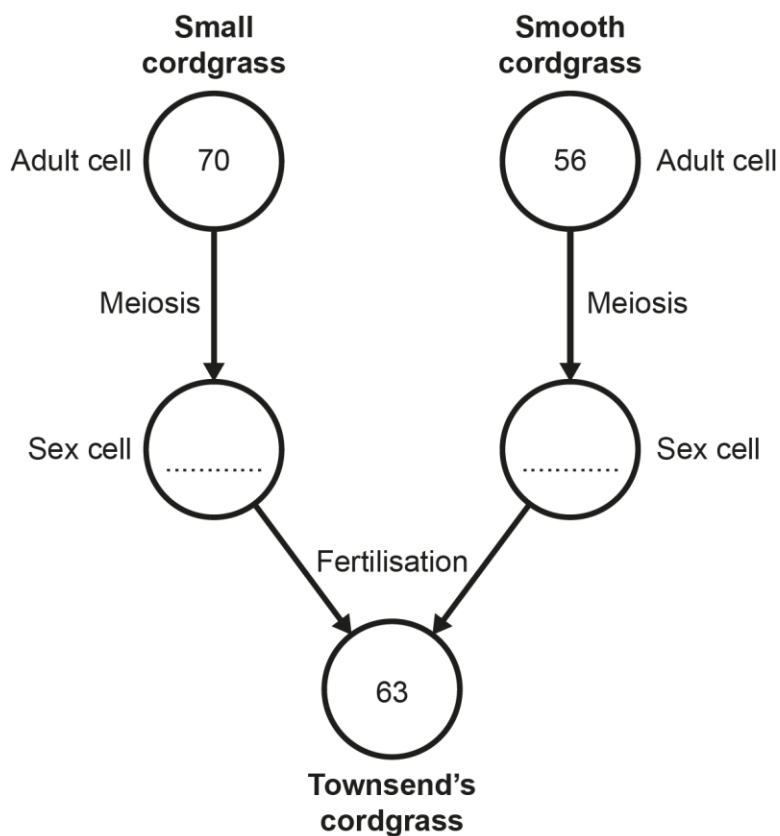


Fig. 5.1

- (i)** Complete **Fig. 5.1** by writing in the number of chromosomes that would be found in each **sex cell**.

[1]

Question 5 (a) (i) was well answered.

Question 5 (a) (ii)

- (ii) Explain why **Fig. 5.1** supports the idea that Townsend's cordgrass is produced when small and smooth cordgrass are bred.

.....

.....

.....

..... **[2]**

When answering this section of the question, candidates did not link the combining of chromosomes at fertilisation to the diploid number of chromosomes. More successful responses did link the number of chromosomes in the sex cells before and after fertilisation to support the statement.

Question 5 (b)

- (b) Another species called common cordgrass has evolved.

A survey in Ireland found common cordgrass in 156 of 200 salt marshes.

Calculate the percentage of salt marshes with common cordgrass found in Ireland.

Percentage = % **[2]**

This question was answered well by candidates, with most being able to calculate percentages. Candidates generally showed all working out, which is always good practice.

Question 5 (d)

(d) Common cordgrass:

- reduces the populations of native salt marsh plants
- grows over open mudflats where birds feed.

Common cordgrass can be removed by:

- digging it up by hand
- use of poisonous chemicals.

Explain the benefits **and** challenges of maintaining the biodiversity of Irish salt marshes.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [3]

Candidates were able to explain the challenges of maintaining the biodiversity but did not always identify the benefits. Many recognised that there would be food available but did not include a potential increase in bird species. It was also apparent that many candidates thought that an 'Irish salt marsh' was an actual plant, this was reflected in the answers given by candidates.

Question 5 (e) (ii)

(ii) Label an **X** on **Fig. 5.2** to show where the process of differentiation occurs.

[1]

Many candidates were given the mark for this question, by placing an X in the correct place.

Question 6 (a)

- 6** High blood cholesterol and high blood pressure increase the risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD).

(a) State **two** factors that can **reduce** risk of CVD.

1

2 [2]

Candidates performed well on this question, but many tended to write vague and insufficient statements regarding diets, e.g., 'eat a healthy diet' or just 'diet' with no further justification.

Question 6 (b)

- (b)** Statins are medicines which reduce blood cholesterol levels. Different medicines, called ACE inhibitors, can reduce blood pressure.

Suggest why statins and ACE inhibitors are **only** given to individuals with high cholesterol or blood pressure.

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

Candidates mostly referenced that taking medication to lower blood pressure and cholesterol would be harmful as it would reduce them to dangerously low levels, rather than stating that there is risk to the medication but that the benefits outweigh the risks.

Question 6 (c) (i)

(c) Scientists wanted to know if taking statins and ACE inhibitors would reduce the risk of developing CVD in people with average blood pressure. The scientists recorded the blood pressure and age of every person who took part in the study.

(i) Suggest **one** more piece of information that would be useful to know about the people in the study.

..... [1]

Many candidates gave reasonable suggestions and were given this mark. Most commonly seen answers referred to gender and family history.

Question 6 (c) (ii)

(ii) The people taking part in the study were put in two groups. One group was given a placebo. The other group was given statins and ACE inhibitors.

Explain why it was ethical to use a placebo in this study.

.....
.....
.....
..... [2]

When reading this question, candidates appeared to miss the ethical part of this question and did not identify any ethical issues. Candidates generally described what a placebo was (as most appeared to be aware of what a placebo was and were keen to explain this in their answers) and the role of placebos in double blind trials rather than the reasons for the use of them in the first instance. Candidates did not appear to know what a statin or an ACE inhibitor was, so focused their answers on the familiar word.

Question 6 (d) (iii)

- (iii) The cost of statins and ACE inhibitors for one person for a year can be less than £30.

Evaluate the use of statins and ACE inhibitors for people with average blood pressure.

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [3]

Many candidates did not appear to understand the term 'evaluate'. Many were given a mark for the risk of side effects, but candidates did not seem to recognise the idea that it was cheaper to prevent it rather than treat it. Many felt that £30 was too expensive to use the medication, despite getting the previous answer correct. Candidates did not seem to realise the benefit to families as a whole.

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Question 7 (a)

- 7 Cellular respiration provides ATP for cellular processes.

- (a) Which processes need a supply of ATP?

Tick (✓) **two** boxes.

Absorption of water in the gut

☐

Breakdown and synthesis of molecules

☐

Muscle contraction

☐

Movement of oxygen into the blood from the lungs

☐

Movement of carbon dioxide into the air from the lungs

☐

[2]

Many candidates were not given a mark for this question as the understanding of ATP was not strong.

Question 7 (b)

(b) Substances involved in cellular respiration are transported by the blood.

Complete the sentences about the transport of these substances by the blood.

Use words and phrases from the list.

plasma

platelets

red blood cells

white blood cells

Carbon dioxide is transported by the

Glucose is transported by the

Lactic acid is transported by the

Oxygen is transported by the

[4]

Selecting words and phrases from lists

Candidates do not seem to be aware that they can use the words and phrases from the list more than once. Most candidates seemed to select every answer, this generally resulted in most candidates being given 2 marks for red blood cell. Few candidates correctly gave plasma in their answers with most marks being given from red blood cells.

Question 7 (c) (i)

- (c) An athlete uses both aerobic and anaerobic respiration when they run a 400m race.

The sketch shows changes in the athlete's body as their running speed increases during the race.

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- (i) What evidence from the sketch shows that anaerobic respiration increases as running speed increases?

.....
..... [1]

Most candidates correctly identified the increase in lactic acid and did so concisely. Candidates were able to explain the line on the graph and link to the increase.

Question 7 (c) (ii)

- (ii) Give **one** disadvantage of increasing anaerobic respiration for the athlete.

.....
..... [1]

Most candidates were able to identify lactic acid and its effects on the body, particularly relating to muscle pain or fatigue. Some candidates did relate to just pain or fatigue, leaving out reference to muscles, which was not given any marks.

Question 7 (c) (iii)

- (iii) Explain the changes shown on the sketch when the athlete's running speed is higher than **X**.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [4]

Candidates were generally given 2 marks for this question. Most candidates could identify and describe trends within the data given but could not explain why or link the trends to aerobic respiration.

Question 7 (d)

- (d) Explain why the athlete's body temperature increases as they run.

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

More successful responses did explain that respiration is exothermic, but most didn't identify that the temperature increase comes from respiration. Many answers referred to the heart beating faster and friction in muscles generating the heat. Many thought the heat was from blood moving faster.

Question 7 (e)

- (e) Explain why it is important that responses such as sweating reduce the temperature of the body and its cells back to normal.

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

Many candidates linked this question to sweating. Successful responses were able to link the increased temperature to the denaturing of enzymes.

Question 8 (a)

- 8 Humans have a gene that instructs cells how to make an enzyme called lactase.

- (a) Mutations can happen in the lactase gene.

Give **two** reasons why most of these mutations will have no effect on the lactase protein.

1

.....

2

.....

[2]

Candidates were aware that genes code for protein but were unable to link the mutations to the actual function of the protein.

Question 8 (b)

- (b) The probability of someone having the lactase mutation is 0.3.

In 2021 the human adult world population was estimated to be 5.85 billion.

Calculate the number of people **without** the mutation in 2021.

Number of people = billion [3]

This question was well answered by candidates with many scoring full marks. Most errors in this question were when candidates did not know the correct number of zeros in a billion, so many errors carried forward marks were given (it was pleasing to see working out shown allowing the ECF marks to be given.)

Question 8 (c)

- (c) The enzyme lactase allows humans to digest milk.

Approximately 10 000 years ago:

- the lactase gene in most humans was switched on when they were a baby but then switched off permanently after that
- some humans had a mutation that caused the lactase gene to remain switched on
- humans started farming animals for milk.

Now, many humans have the mutation that causes the lactase gene to remain switched on.

Describe the evidence that suggests the spread of this mutation was an example of evolution by natural selection.

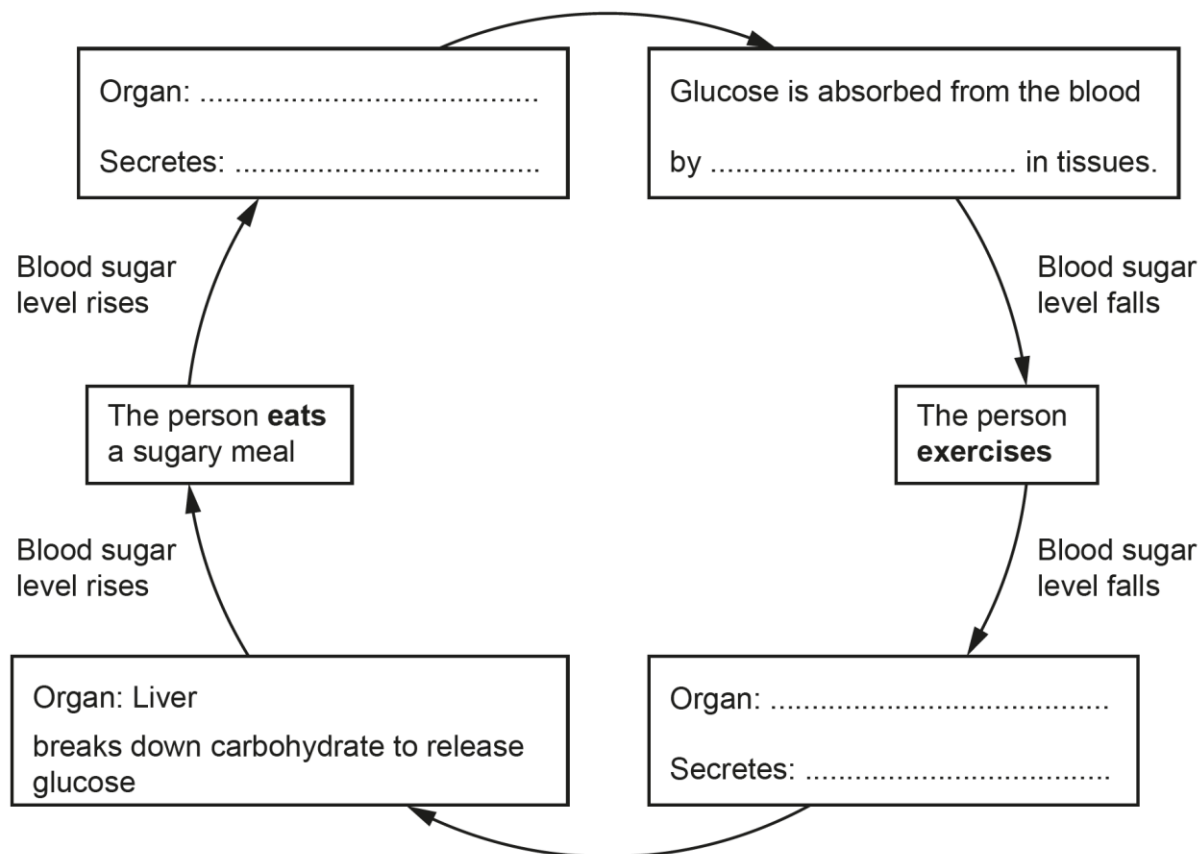
.....
.....
.....
..... [2]

Candidates scored well on this question. Common responses were 'likely to survive as mutation was advantageous' and the idea of being passed through generations. Ideas surrounding natural selection appeared to be well understood by candidates.

Question 9 (a)

9 Hormones have important roles in humans.

(a) Complete the diagram to explain how hormones control blood sugar level after a person eats a sugary meal and after they exercise.



[4]

Selecting words and phrases from lists

Candidates were likely to score one mark for insulin from the pancreas but did not identify the pancreas again (the pancreas needed to be identified twice for the mark to be given.) It appeared that candidates were reluctant to use the same word more than once. Many candidates did not know the hormones and they were frequently linked to the incorrect body system.

Question 9 (b)

(b) Explain the role of adrenaline in the human body.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [4]

Candidates generally understood that adrenalin controlled the 'fight or flight' response and could link it to physiological responses. The responses to adrenalin were also well known along with the knowledge that adrenalin was released from glands. This was a well attempted question and candidates showed a good knowledge of the role of adrenalin, although the mechanism for the release of adrenalin was less understood.

Question 9 (c)

(c) Explain the role of the hormone thyroxine in the body.

Include the role of negative feedback in your answer.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [4]

The most commonly given mark for this question was linking thyroxine to metabolism. Many candidates were not able to explain negative feedback. The role of THS and the pituitary gland was not understood. Many candidates linked this question to the previous question about adrenalin and many seemed to have the idea that thyroxine controlled the menstrual cycle.

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