



VDLHS Biology of the Living Earth Course Syllabus 2023-2024

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Course Description:

Biology of the Living Earth is a college prep science class that provides a foundation in general biology. Students will participate in a number of lab activities to develop their understanding of biology. Our units of study are the following:

Unit 1: Early Earth

Unit 2: Photosynthesis

Unit 3: Cellular Respiration/Carbon Cycle

Unit 4: Ecology

Unit 5: Homeostasis/Feedback Mechanisms

Unit 6: DNA, Protein Synthesis, and Cell Specialization

Unit 7: Heredity

Unit 8: Natural Selection and Evolution

Unit 9: Climate Change and Human Impacts on Ecosystems

Biology is a FCUSD graduation requirement. The course also fulfills [A-G requirements for eligibility to attend a UC or CSU](#) admission eligibility. Students must earn a D- or better to earn graduation credit. Students who earn less than a D- will be required to retake the course in order to fulfill graduation requirements.

Students must earn a C- or better to be A-G eligible (eligible to attend a CSU or UC directly from high school).

Biology will be a challenging course that will be different from other classes that you have taken in the past. Our focus will not be on memorizing facts, but on skills that you will be able to apply to this and future courses. We will practice skills in class and you will apply your understanding to graphs, data sets, scenarios, and making predictions; frequently to unfamiliar or novel applications.

Classroom Rules: (These rules are in addition to school rules)

1. You are expected to be in your assigned seat and prepared to work when the bell rings or a late will be given.
2. You are expected to bring all needed materials to class. *Recommended Items:* Three ring binder with dividers, college ruled binder paper, #2 pencil and blue/black pen, highlighters, ruler, colored pencils.
3. California Law mandates that no student shall bring food into a science classroom. NO FOOD OR DRINKS IN CLASS.
5. At the end of class the teacher will dismiss you, not the bell.
6. Any cheating will be subject to the Vista del Lago's Science Department's and the [school wide academic dishonesty policy](#).
7. No cellphones out during instruction without approval from the teacher or phone may be confiscated. All cell phones should be placed in the cell phone caddy during the instructional period.

Textbook:

The digital version of *HMH California Science Dimensions, The Living Earth* is available through the Clever portal and a hard copy is available in the classroom or can be checked out from the library. The book is a school set and ***although it appears that you can write in it, it is not to be altered.***

Make-up work:

- It is your responsibility to make up the work. Please refer to Google Classroom.
- Any work/tests/quizzes assigned before the student's absence or due on the day of the absence is due the first day the student returns to school unless other arrangements have been made.
- For any new work assigned during the student's absence, the student has a minimum of one day for each day absent to make up the work.

Communication:

Grades will be communicated through PowerSchool. Assignments, Announcements, and Course Materials will be available through Google Classroom.

Grades

Grades will be calculated in PowerSchool and will reflect the [four-point scale](#).

No extra credit will be offered.

- **Formative Assessments** (Assessments *for* Learning) include: quizzes, in class work, practice problems, discussions, exit tickets, study guides, etc.
 - ◆ 10% of the student's overall grade
- **Summative Assessments** (Assessments *of* Learning) include:
 - ◆ 70% Unit Tests, projects, presentations, etc
 - ◆ 20% Semester Final
- All summative assessments will be based on proficiency scales that students can access in advance. These 4-point scale and outline what students must demonstrate to earn a 4, 3, 2, or 1.

Letter grades align with levels of understanding based on the Proficiency Scale	Average Scale Score Across Multiple Learning Goals (Overall Grade)	Letter Grade	Percentage Cutoff in PowerSchool (NOT the percentage earned on an assignment)
A 3 → 4	3.75 - 4.0	A+	96 - 100%
	3.0 - 3.74	A	75 - 95%
B 2.5 → 3	2.5 - 2.99	B	62.5 - 74%
C 2 → 2.5	2.12 - 2.49	C	54 - 62.4%
	2.0 - 2.12	C-	50 - 53%
D 1 → 2	1.33 - 1.99	D	33 - 49 %
	1 - 1.32	D-	25 - 33%
F 0 → 1	0 - 1	F	0 - 25%

Retake Policy:

- All summative assessments can be retaken or redone, with proof of test review and reflection.
- Test review and reflection occurs during FlexTime and the student must complete a test reflection form.
- In order to be eligible for a retake students must complete all formative assignments before the date of the original summative assessment. Students must demonstrate sufficient preparation for the retake and complete the unit study guide in order to qualify to complete the retake.
- Retakes will be scheduled in advance with your teacher. There are no special exceptions for athletic practices, club meetings, appointments, etc. If a student does not show up for their scheduled retake they will lose the opportunity for their retake.

Late Policy

Late work will be accepted until the unit summative is complete. Work submitted late will be graded as time permits and may take longer to be entered into the gradebook, please be patient.

Links to School Policies/Info - [Link to Vista del Lago Student and Parent Handbook](#)

- [Flinn Safety Contract \(PLEASE READ\)](#)