AQA GCSE Biology | 8461

SPECIFICATION POINT 4.1.2.2

Mitosis and the cell cycle

Mark schemes and examiner comments

Tier	**Higher**
Question groups	**11**
Available paper years	**2010–2025**

Using this booklet

1. Booklet answer numbers match the question booklet.
2. Use the original question number within marking tables.
3. Examiner comments are included where available.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Where a precise marking extract is unavailable, the full source document is included in an appendix. Any missing mark scheme is explicitly identified.

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 01 · Mark scheme

June 2019 | BLY2H | Original Q7 | Legacy

Question 7

question	answers	extra information	mark
7(a)	any **one** from • chromosomes in pairs • inherited one of each pair from each parent • one of each pair in egg **and** one of each pair in sperm • so sex cells / gametes can have half the number	allow need to pair during cell division / meiosis	1
7(b)	any **two** from: • <u>code</u> • combination / sequence of amino acids • forming specific / particular proteins / examples	If **no other mark** gained allow reference to controlling characteristics / appearance for **1** mark	2
7(c)(i)	C		1
7(c)(ii)	30		1
7(d)(i)	for growth / repair / replacement / asexual reproduction	do **not** accept incorrect qualification, eg growth *of* cells **or** repair of cells they equals cells therefore do not accept they grow etc	1
7(d)(ii)	44 **or** 22 pairs		1
Total			**7**

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 02 · Mark scheme

January 2013 | BL2HP | Original Q4 | Legacy

Question 4

question	answers	extra information	mark
4(a)(i)	meiosis	allow mieosis	1
4(a)(ii)	testis / testes	allow testicle	1
4(b)(i)	23		1
4(b)(ii)	fuses / joins with cell D / with egg cell **or** used in fertilisation prevents doubling of chromosome number / restores original no. / 46 / diploid no. / normal no. / full no.	allow fuse with another cell accept 23 from each parent / from each gamete	1 1
Total			**5**

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 02 · Mark scheme

January 2013 | BL2HP | Original Q4 | Legacy

BL2HP

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

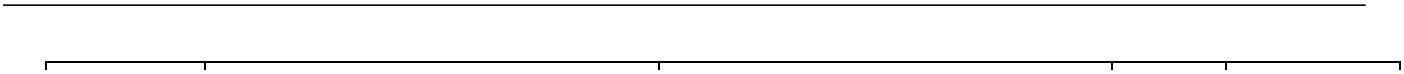
Answer 03 · Mark scheme June 2015 | BL2HP | Original Q3 | Legacy

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
3(a)(i)	in the chromosome(s) in the nucleus	ignore genes / alleles allow nuclei allow mitochondria	1 1	AO1 2.7.2f, 2.7.1b
3(a)(ii)	the DNA / chromosomes / genes are replicated / copied / multiplied / doubled / duplicated	allow DNA is cloned ignore same DNA / chromosomes / genes if unqualified	1	AO1 2.7.1a,c,n
3(b)(i)	1 / one		1	AO2 2.7.2c,e, 2.7.3a,c
3(b)(ii)	2 / two		1	AO2 2.7.2c,d, 2.7.3a,b
3(c)	**B**		1	AO3 2.7.2i
Total			**6**	

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 03 · Mark scheme

June 2015 | BL2HP | Original Q3 | Legacy



4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 04 · Mark scheme

June 2018 | 8461/2H | Original Q5

<table>
<tr><th>Question</th><th>Answers</th><th>Extra information</th><th>Mark</th><th>AO / Spec. Ref.</th></tr>
<tr><td>05.1</td><td>
<table>
<tr><th></th><th colspan="3">statement is true for</th></tr>
<tr><th></th><th>mitosis only</th><th>meiosis only</th><th>both mitosis and meiosis</th></tr>
<tr><td>all cells produced are genetically identical</td><td>✓</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>in humans, at the end of cell division each cell contains 23 chromosomes</td><td></td><td>✓</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>involves DNA replication</td><td></td><td></td><td>✓</td></tr>
</table>
3 correct = 2 marks
2 correct = 1 mark
0 or 1 correct = 0 marks
</td><td></td><td>2</td><td>AO1
4.1.2.2
4.6.1.2</td></tr>
<tr><td>05.2</td><td>any two from:

• many offspring produced
• takes less time
• (more) energy efficient
• genetically identical offspring
• successful traits propagated / maintained / passed on (due to offspring being genetically identical)
• no transfer of gametes or seed dispersal
• not wasteful of flowers / pollen / seeds
• colonisation of local area</td><td>ignore references to one parent only

allow asexual is faster

allow offspring are clones

allow no vulnerable embryo stage
allow no need for animals

must imply local area</td><td>2</td><td>AO3
4.6.1.1
4.6.1.3</td></tr>
</table>

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 04 · Mark scheme

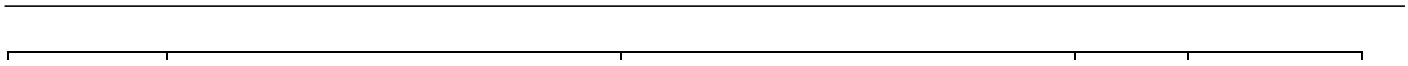
June 2018 | 8461/2H | Original Q5

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
05.3		allow bluebell example described (**max 3** if not bluebell)		
	genetic variation (in offspring)		1	AO1
	(so) better adapted survive	allow reference to natural selection or survival of the fittest	1	AO1
	(and) colonise new areas by seed dispersal **or** can escape adverse event in original area (by living in new area)	must imply new area	1	AO3
	many offspring **so** higher probability some will survive		1	AO3 4.6.1.1 4.6.2.1 4.6.1.3 4.7.1.1
Total			**8**	

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 04 · Mark scheme

June 2018 | 8461/2H | Original Q5



Answer 05 · Mark scheme

November 2020 | 8461/1H | Original Q3

The full source mark scheme begins on page 29. Follow original question 3 in that document.

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 06 · Mark scheme

November 2020 | 8461/2H | Original Q5

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
05.1	any **three** from: • mitosis produces two (daughter) cells but meiosis produces four (daughter) cells • one cell division in mitosis but two cell divisions in meiosis • mitosis produces cells with two of each chromosome, but meiosis produces cells with one of each chromosome • mitosis produces genetically identical cells, but meiosis produced genetically different cells	answers must be comparative allow mitosis produces diploid cells but meiosis produces haploid cells allow mitosis maintains the number of chromosomes **or** mass of DNA **or** mass of genetic material but meiosis halves the number / mass allow mitosis produces cells with 23 pairs **or** 46 chromosomes but meiosis produces cells with 23 chromosomes allow other correct differences between the processes of mitosis and meiosis	3	AO1 4.6.1.1 4.6.1.2 4.1.2.2

05.2	any **one** from: • DNA doubles / copies / replicates (once) • increase in the number of mitochondria / ribosomes / sub-cellular structures	 allow chromosomes **or** genetic material **or** genetic information double / replicate / are copied ignore mitochondria / ribosomes are copied / duplicated allow chromosomes / chromatids pulled to side (of cell) allow other correct similarities between the processes of mitosis and meiosis	1	AO1 4.6.1.1 4.6.1.2 4.1.2.2
05.3	Dd / dD has **D** because has Dupuytren's **and** has **d** because child / person 6 is homozygous recessive **or** does not have Dupuytren's **or** is **dd**	allow heterozygous allow has **D** because has Dupuytren's **and** person 1 and person 2 both passed **d** to child / person 6 allow has **D** because has Dupuytren's **and** cannot be homozygous / **DD** or all the children would have Dupuytren's	1 1	AO3 4.6.1.6 4.6.1.7
05.4	male / person 7 gametes correct: **D** and **d** female / person 8 gametes correct: **d** and **d** correct derivation of offspring genotypes: **Dd Dd dd dd** offspring with Dupuytren's identified probability correct from the correct identification given	allow **1** mark for both sets of gametes correct if parents not identified allow correct derivation of offspring genotypes from incorrect gametes allow correct for genotypes stated in mp3 allow probability correct from offspring genotypes if identification not given	1 1 1 1 1	4.6.1.6 4.6.1.7 AO2 AO2 AO2 AO2 AO3

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

05.5	female(s) / person(s) 3 / 11 / 12 have Dupuytren's females don't have Y chromosome **or** Dupuytren's is passed from fathers / 1 / 7 to daughters / 3 / 12, (so is not on the Y chromosome)	allow some females have Dupuytren's allow only males have Y chromosomes allow females are XX allow Dupuytren's is passed from mothers / 11 to children / 15, (so is not on the Y chromosome)	1 1	AO3 4.6.1.6 4.6.1.7 4.6.1.8
Total			**13**	

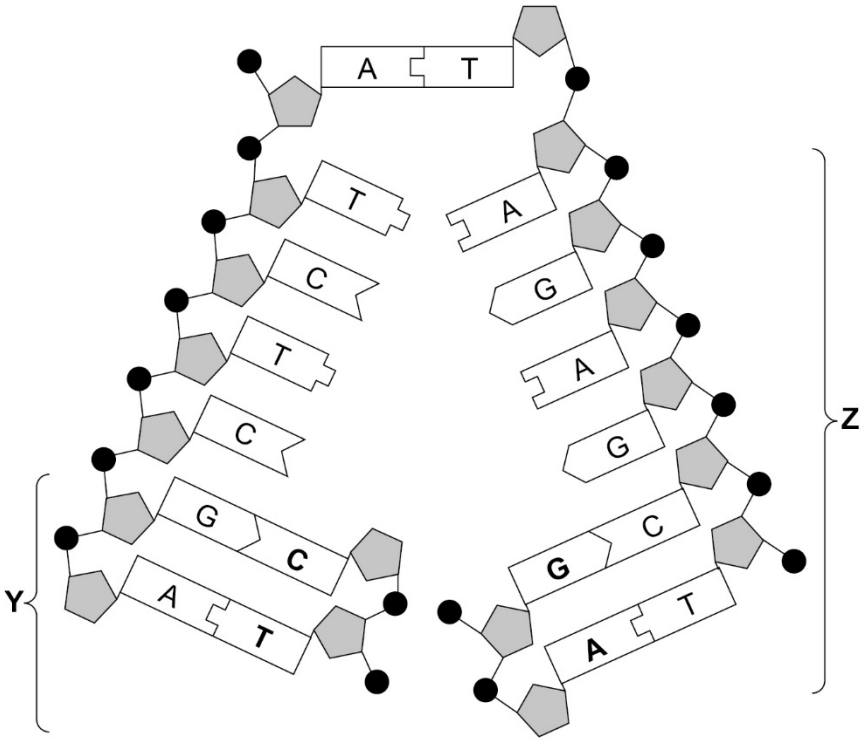
4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 06 · Mark scheme

November 2020 | 8461/2H | Original Q5

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 07 · Mark scheme

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
01.1	chromosome(s)	allow chromatid(s) / gene(s) / allele(s)	1	AO1 4.6.1.4
01.2	sugar	allow deoxyribose allow pentose do **not** accept ribose	1	AO1 4.6.1.5
01.3	base(s)	allow nitrogenous base(s) allow adenine **and** cytosine **and** guanine **and** thymine	1	AO1 4.6.1.5
01.4	 all four required for the mark		1	AO3 4.6.1.5

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

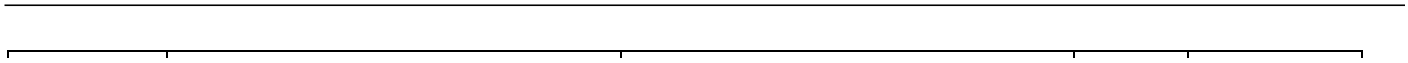
Answer 07 · Mark scheme

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
01.5	replication		1	AO3 4.6.1.5 4.1.2.2
01.6	protein	allow polypeptide	1	AO1 4.6.1.4
01.7	3×10^{-12} grams		1	AO2 4.6.1.2
01.8	meiosis		1	AO1 4.6.1.2
Total			**8**	

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 07 · Mark scheme

November 2021 | 8461/2H | Original Q1



4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 08 · Mark scheme

June 2022 | 8461/1H | Original Q4

Question 4

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
04.1	Thick, waxy layer on leaf surface: ✓ Berries that are poisonous: ✓ Bark on trees that falls off: ✓ all three rows correct = **2** marks two rows correct = **1** mark one row correct = **0** marks		2	AO1 4.3.3.2

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
04.2	(it looks like the hornet so) predators / animals are tricked / deceived (by the colouring) **and** so avoid eating it	allow (it looks like the hornet so) predators / animals are warned off **and** so avoid eating it allow correctly named predators eg birds	1	AO2 4.3.3.2

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 08 · Mark scheme

June 2022 | 8461/1H | Original Q4

Question	Answers	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
04.3	**Level 3:** Relevant points (reasons / causes) are identified, given in detail and logically linked to form a clear account.	5–6	AO2 4.2.3.1 4.2.3.2 4.4.1.1 4.4.1.3 4.3.3.1
	Level 2: Relevant points (reasons / causes) are identified, and there are attempts at logical linking. The resulting account is not fully clear.	3–4	
	Level 1: Points are identified and stated simply, but their relevance is not clear and there is no attempt at logical linking.	1–2	
	No relevant content	0	

	Indicative content
	
	• less absorption of water
	  ○ less water so lower rate of photosynthesis
	  ○ so less glucose produced
	  ○ for respiration / energy release
	  ○ so less cellulose produced so fewer cells walls / cells made
	  ○ so fewer amino acids produced to make new proteins
	  ○ cells lose turgidity
	
	• less absorption of (named) ions / minerals
	  ○ fewer nitrates so fewer proteins made for growth
	  ○ fewer magnesium ions so less chlorophyll produced
	  ○ so lower rate of photosynthesis
	
	• damage to phloem
	  ○ less transport of sugars to root cells
	  ○ for respiration / energy release
	
	• damage to xylem
	  ○ less water transported (to cells)
	  ○ fewer nitrates reach cells
	  ○ so fewer proteins made for growth
	  ○ fewer magnesium ions reach cells
	  ○ so less chlorophyll produced
	  ○ less magnesium / chlorophyll so lower rate of photosynthesis
	
	• less anchorage		

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 08 · Mark scheme

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
04.4	genetic material / DNA / chromosomes is doubled / replicated / copied / duplicated		1	AO1 4.1.2.2
	the (replicated) chromosomes are pulled / moved apart	the (replicated) chromosomes are separated	1	
	cytoplasm divides into two (cells) **or** cell membrane divides to form two cells	allow two new nuclei form allow the nucleus divides (into two)	1	
	the set of chromosomes in each new cell are identical (to one another)	allow each new cell has the same set of DNA / alleles / genes (as the other)	1	

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
04.5	differentiation	ignore specialisation	1	AO1 4.1.2.3 4.1.1.4

Total Question 4		14

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 09 · Mark scheme

June 2023 | 8461/1H | Original Q5

Question 5

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec Ref.
05.1	vector		1	AO1 4.3.1.5

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec Ref.
05.2	any **three** from: • protist / it has mitochondria • protist / it has (a) nucleus **or** protist DNA / genetic material is not free in the cytoplasm • protist / it does not have a single loop of DNA / genetic material • protist / it does not have <u>plasmid</u>s • protist / it does not have a cell wall	allow converse for prokaryotic cells allow eukaryotic for protist if neither mark awarded, allow **1** mark for protist has membrane-bound structures ignore genetic information ignore genetic information do **not** accept eukaryotic cell does not have a cell wall allow protist / it does not have a slime capsule ignore cilia / flagellae / ribosomes ignore size / shape	3	AO2 4.1.1.1 4.3.1.5

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 09 · Mark scheme

June 2023 | 8461/1H | Original Q5

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec Ref.
05.3	less oxygen carried (in blood) less energy released from <u>respiration</u>	allow less oxygen carried (to cells) ignore reference to number of red blood cells unqualified do **not** accept no oxygen carried do **not** accept energy produced / made / created	1 1	AO2 4.4.2.3 4.4.2.1 4.2.2.3

Question	Answers	Mark	AO / Spec Ref.
05.4	any **three** pairs from:	3	AO1 4.6.1.1 4.1.2.2

Sexual reproduction	Asexual reproduction
involves two parents	involves one parent
involves gametes joining / fusing **or** involves fertilisation	involves no (fusion of) gametes **or** does not involve fertilisation
there is mixing of genetic material / information **or** there is genetic variation **or** offspring are genetically different	there is no mixing of genetic material / information **or** there is no genetic variation **or** offspring are genetically identical ignore reference to clones
involves (only) meiosis	involves mitosis **or** does not involve meiosis
more energy required	less energy required
slower	faster

if no other mark awarded allow **1** mark for asexual reproduction produces many offspring

pairs of answers can be in any order

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 09 · Mark scheme

June 2023 | 8461/1H | Original Q5

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec Ref.
05.5	(no bases so) DNA replication cannot occur	allow copying / duplicating / doubling for replication ignore cannot make DNA unqualified	1	AO2 4.1.2.2

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec Ref.
05.6	(after DNA replication) one set of chromosomes is pulled to each end of the cell	allow one (member) of each pair of chromosomes is pulled to each end of the cell ignore (half the) chromosomes are pulled to each end of the cell	1	AO1 4.1.2.2
	nucleus divides	allow two (new) nuclei form	1	
	cytoplasm **or** cell membrane divides to form two cells	allow cytokinesis	1	

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec Ref.
05.7	having disorder **S** reduces incidence / percentage of malaria	allow having disorder **S** reduces chance of getting malaria allow having disorder **S** protects against malaria	1	AO3 4.2.2.5 4.3.1.5
	as age increases a lower percentage of children with disorder **S** get malaria until age 10, then the percentage increases	allow protection against malaria increases with (increasing) age until age 10, then it decreases	1	

Total Question 5	15

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 10 · Mark scheme

June 2024 | 8461/1H | Original Q8

Question 8

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec Ref.
08.1	any **one** from: • (cell **or** sub-cellular structures) grows • increase in (number of) sub-cellular structures • increase in (number of) mitochondria • increase in (number of) ribosomes	do **not** accept nucleus ignore increase in cell parts / components allow increase in respiration allow increase in protein (synthesis) do **not** accept changes that occur as the cell divides	1	AO1 4.1.2.2

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec Ref.
08.2	(cell) membrane		1	AO1 4.1.2.2 4.1.1.2

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 10 · Mark scheme

June 2024 | 8461/1H | Original Q8

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec Ref.
08.3		allow use of π button on calculator for 3.14 allow use of $\frac{22}{7}$ for 3.14		AO2 4.1.1.5
	substitution length = $\frac{24\ 500\ 000}{3.14 \times 125^2}$		1	
	(length =) 499.363 (nm)	allow 499 (nm)	1	
	recall of equation magnification = $\frac{\text{image size}}{\text{real size}}$		1	
	correct conversion of mm to nm **or** nm to mm (4 mm = 4 000 000 nm)	allow conversion at any point	1	
	$\frac{4\ 000\ 000}{499.363}$	allow use of correctly rounded calculated value for length	1	
	×8010	allow ×8010.205 do **not** accept if unit given allow an answer consistent with an incorrectly rounded / calculated value for length	1	

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 10 · Mark scheme

June 2024 | 8461/1H | Original Q8

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec Ref.
08.4	chromosomes cannot be pulled (by the fibres) to each end of the cell (so) nucleus cannot divide	ignore chromosomes cannot be separated unqualified allow **two** (genetically identical) cells cannot be formed ignore cytokinesis ignore the cell cannot divide	1 1	AO3 4.1.2.2

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec Ref.
08.5	tumour cannot grow / proliferate / spread	allow stops secondary tumours forming allow stops metastasis ignore stops uncontrolled cell division do **not** accept the cancer / tumour cannot become malignant	1	AO2 4.1.2.2 4.2.2.7

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec Ref.
08.6	testing the drugs on live tissues in a laboratory		1	AO1 4.3.1.9

Total Question 8	**12**

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 11 · Mark scheme

June 2025 | 8461/2H | Original Q6

Question 6

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
06.1	cell division **1**		1	AO2 4.1.2.2 4.6.1.1 4.6.1.2

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
06.2	**A** and **C**		1	AO2 4.1.2.2 4.6.1.1 4.6.1.2

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
06.3	23 **or** twenty three	do **not** accept 23 pairs	1	AO2 4.6.1.2 4.6.1.8

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
06.4	5 / five **or** 6 / six	ignore reference to letters	1	AO2 4.6.1.2 4.6.1.8

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
06.5	(only) mitosis (so) **all** cells receive a copy of every allele / gene	do **not** accept meiosis / meitosis / metosis allow (so) **all** cells receive a copy of every chromosome **or** (so) **all** cells receive a copy of all the DNA **or** (so) **all** cells receive a full set of chromosomes	1 1	AO1 AO2 4.6.1.1 4.1.2.2 4.6.1.3

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 11 · Mark scheme

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
06.6	gametes are produced by meiosis (so) offspring have unique / different / random combinations of alleles / genes / chromosomes from each parent / gamete	 allow (so) gametes fuse creating unique / different / random combinations of alleles / genes / chromosomes in offspring	1 1	AO1 AO2 4.6.1.1 4.6.1.2

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
06.7	any **two** from: • faster than sexual • many offspring produced to colonise local area **or** many offspring produced to out-compete other species • genetically identical offspring so well adapted to current conditions / environment • only one parent needed so no need for pollinators / bees • offspring receive water **and** sugars / minerals / ions / salts from parent • less energy / materials required as no need to produce gametes / flowers / seeds / fruits		2	AO1 4.6.1.1 4.6.1.3

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 11 · Mark scheme

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
06.8	any **two** from: • new combinations of alleles gives genetic variation **or** genetic variation gives selective advantage • seeds dispersed to new / wider area so less vulnerable to habitat loss **or** seeds dispersed to new / wider area so not competing with (parent / offspring) plants for space / water / minerals • larger number of offspring produced so will increase the population quickly	allow genetic variation provides the opportunity for evolution allow genetic variation enables species to adapt to new / changed environments allow larger number of offspring produced will improve survival of the species	2	AO1 4.6.1.1 4.6.1.3 4.6.2.2 4.6.3.1

Total Question 6	12

AQA

GCSE
BIOLOGY
8461/1H

Paper 1 Higher Tier

Mark scheme

June 2020

Version: 1.0 Final

206G8461 1H/MS

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

MARK SCHEME – GCSE BIOLOGY – 8461/1H – JUNE 2020

Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from aqa.org.uk

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4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Information to Examiners

1. General

The mark scheme for each question shows:

- the marks available for each part of the question
- the total marks available for the question
- the typical answer or answers which are expected
- extra information to help the Examiner make his or her judgement
- the Assessment Objectives, level of demand and specification content that each question is intended to cover.

The extra information is aligned to the appropriate answer in the left-hand part of the mark scheme and should only be applied to that item in the mark scheme.

At the beginning of a part of a question a reminder may be given, for example: where consequential marking needs to be considered in a calculation; or the answer may be on the diagram or at a different place on the script.

In general the right-hand side of the mark scheme is there to provide those extra details which confuse the main part of the mark scheme yet may be helpful in ensuring that marking is straightforward and consistent.

2. Emboldening and underlining

2.1 In a list of acceptable answers where more than one mark is available 'any **two** from' is used, with the number of marks emboldened. Each of the following bullet points is a potential mark.

2.2 A bold **and** is used to indicate that both parts of the answer are required to award the mark.

2.3 Alternative answers acceptable for a mark are indicated by the use of **or**. Different terms in the mark scheme are shown by a / ; eg allow smooth / free movement.

2.4 Any wording that is underlined is essential for the marking point to be awarded.

3. Marking points

3.1 Marking of lists

This applies to questions requiring a set number of responses, but for which students have provided extra responses. The general principle to be followed in such a situation is that 'right + wrong = wrong'.

Each error / contradiction negates each correct response. So, if the number of error / contradictions equals or exceeds the number of marks available for the question, no marks can be awarded.

However, responses considered to be neutral (indicated as * in example 1) are not penalised.

Example 1: What is the pH of an acidic solution?

[1 mark]

Student	Response	Marks awarded
1	green, 5	0
2	red*, 5	1
3	red*, 8	0

Example 2: Name two planets in the solar system.

[2 marks]

Student	Response	Marks awarded
1	Neptune, Mars, Moon	1
2	Neptune, Sun, Mars, Moon	0

3.2 Use of chemical symbols / formulae

If a student writes a chemical symbol / formula instead of a required chemical name, full credit can be given if the symbol / formula is correct and if, in the context of the question, such action is appropriate.

3.3 Marking procedure for calculations

Marks should be awarded for each stage of the calculation completed correctly, as students are instructed to show their working. Full marks can, however, be given for a correct numerical answer, without any working shown.

3.4 Interpretation of 'it'

Answers using the word 'it' should be given credit only if it is clear that the 'it' refers to the correct subject.

3.5 Errors carried forward

Any error in the answers to a structured question should be penalised once only.

Papers should be constructed in such a way that the number of times errors can be carried forward is kept to a minimum. Allowances for errors carried forward are most likely to be restricted to calculation questions and should be shown by the abbreviation ecf in the marking scheme.

3.6 Phonetic spelling

The phonetic spelling of correct scientific terminology should be credited **unless** there is a possible confusion with another technical term.

3.7 Brackets

(…..) are used to indicate information which is not essential for the mark to be awarded but is included to help the examiner identify the sense of the answer required.

3.8 Allow

In the mark scheme additional information, 'allow' is used to indicate creditworthy alternative answers.

3.9 Ignore

Ignore is used when the information given is irrelevant to the question or not enough to gain the marking point. Any further correct amplification could gain the marking point.

3.10 Do <u>not</u> accept

Do **not** accept means that this is a wrong answer which, even if the correct answer is given as well, will still mean that the mark is not awarded.

4. Level of response marking instructions

Extended response questions are marked on level of response mark schemes.

- Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor.
- The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level.
- There are two marks in each level.

Before you apply the mark scheme to a student's answer, read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. You can then apply the mark scheme.

Step 1: Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer.

When assigning a level you should look at the overall quality of the answer. Do **not** look to penalise small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level.

Use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, ie if the response is predominantly level 2 with a small amount of level 3 material it would be placed in level 2 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the level 3 content.

Step 2: Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this.

The exemplar materials used during standardisation will help. There will be an answer in the standardising materials which will correspond with each level of the mark scheme. This answer will have been awarded a mark by the Lead Examiner. You can compare the student's answer with the example to determine if it is the same standard, better or worse than the example. You can then use this to allocate a mark for the answer based on the Lead Examiner's mark on the example.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do **not** have to cover all of the points mentioned in the indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

You should ignore any irrelevant points made. However, full marks can be awarded only if there are no incorrect statements that contradict a correct response.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
01.1		allow correct chemical symbols ignore any attempt at balancing equation ignore light / chlorophyll		AO1 4.4.1.1
	before arrow carbon dioxide **and** water	either order	1	
	after arrow glucose	ignore sugar / carbohydrate do **not** accept starch	1	
01.2		ignore description of subsequent parts of the photosynthesis reaction		AO1 4.1.1.2 4.4.1.1
	<u>light</u>	allow sun<u>light</u> ignore sun	1	
	(light) is captured / trapped / absorbed by chlorophyll / chloroplasts	allow (light) is used by chlorophyll / chloroplasts	1	
01.3	$\frac{18.5 + 19.3 + 19.5}{3}$ **or** $\frac{57.3}{3}$		1	AO2 4.4.1.2 RPA 6
	19.1 (cm^3/hour)	allow an answer correctly calculated using only two correct values	1	
01.4	a ring around 14.2	allow clear indication of correct result	1	AO3 4.4.1.2 RPA 6

01.5	any **one** from: • scale / value was misread • there was air / oxygen in the syringe / measuring cylinder / apparatus • the lamp / light was moved • temperature changed • had different mass / length of pondweed • pondweed had not acclimatised	ignore human error ignore references to counting bubbles or time allow measurement error allow light intensity changed ignore different bulb / lamp unqualified	1	AO3 4.4.1.2 RPA 6
01.6	did not use it in calculation (of mean)		1	AO3 4.4.1.2 RPA 6
01.7	any **one** from: • light (intensity) • carbon dioxide (concentration) • pondweed size / amount • pondweed species	do **not** accept temperature ignore time allow distance / power / colour of lamp / light allow same (piece of) pondweed	1	AO3 4.4.1.2 RPA 6
01.8	enzyme(s) lose the shape of the active site	allow enzyme(s) (start to) denature allow enzyme(s) destroyed / damaged do **not** accept enzyme(s) killed	1	AO2 4.2.2.1

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

01.9	y-axis labelled '(rate of) photosynthesis in cm^3/hour'		1	AO2 4.4.1.2 RPA 6
	suitable scale on y-axis	must take up half or more of grid provided	1	
	all points plotted to within ± ½ small square	allow 3 or 4 correct plots for **1** mark ignore any attempt to plot a point at 20 °C	2	
	correct curved line of best fit	ignore line joined point to point with straight lines ignore extrapolation	1	
Total			**16**	

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
02.1	movement / spreading out of molecules / particles	allow movement / spreading out of (named) substances / chemicals / gases / liquids ignore reference to membranes / cells	1	AO1 4.1.3.1
	from (an area of) high(er) concentration to (an area of) low(er) concentration	allow down / with the concentration gradient ignore along / across the concentration gradient do **not** accept movement from / to a concentration gradient	1	
02.2	increased carbon dioxide concentration in the air		1	AO2 4.1.3.1 4.2.3.2
	increased number of stomata that are open		1	

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

02.3	**Level 3:** Relevant points (reasons/causes) are identified, given in detail and logically linked to form a clear account.	5–6	AO1 4.1.3.1 4.2.2.2 4.2.2.3
	Level 2: Relevant points (reasons/causes) are identified, and there are attempts at logical linking. The resulting account is not fully clear.	3–4	
	Level 1: Points are identified and stated simply, but their relevance is not clear and there is no attempt at logical linking.	1–2	
	No relevant content	0	

	Indicative content
	• (many) alveoli
	  • provide a large(r) surface area (**:** volume)
	
	• capillaries are thin
	  or alveoli / capillary walls are thin **or** one cell thick
	  or capillaries are close to the alveoli
	  • which provides short diffusion path (for oxygen / carbon dioxide)
	
	• breathing (mechanism) moves air in and out
	or lungs are ventilated
	  • to bring in (fresh) oxygen
	  • to remove carbon dioxide
	  • to maintain a concentration / diffusion gradient
	
	• large capillary network (around alveoli)
	or good blood supply
	  • to remove oxygen(ated blood) quickly
	  • to bring carbon dioxide to the lungs quickly
	  • to maintain a concentration / diffusion gradient		

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

02.4	osmosis	allow diffusion	1	AO1 4.1.3.1 4.2.3.2 4.1.3.2
02.5	active transport (because) energy is needed (to move nitrate ions) from a low(er) concentration (in the soil) to a high(er) concentration (in the root / cell)	 allow (to move nitrate ions) against / up the concentration gradient allow (because) there is a lower concentration (of nitrate ions) in the soil **or** (because) there is a higher concentration (of nitrate ions) in the root / cell ignore reference to amount / number of nitrate ions ignore along / across the concentration gradient do **not** accept if reference to molecules / atoms moving	1 1 1	AO3 AO2 AO2 4.1.1.3 4.2.3.2 4.1.3.3
Total			**14**	

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
03.1	any **two** from: (both have) • cytoplasm • (cell) membrane • DNA / genetic material • ribosomes	ignore reference to shape allow RNA ignore genetic information if no other mark awarded allow sub-cellular structures for **1** mark if no other mark awarded allow correct cellular process, e.g. respiration for **1** mark	2	AO2 4.1.1.1 4.1.1.2 4.1.2.1
03.2	any **three** from: • prokaryotic cell is smaller • prokaryotic cell has no mitochondria • prokaryotic cell has no nucleus **or** DNA is free in the cytoplasm **or** genetic material is free in the cytoplasm • prokaryotic cell has a single loop of DNA **or** prokaryotic cell has a single loop of genetic material • prokaryotic cell has plasmids	allow converse for eukaryotic cells allow reference to bacterium instead of prokaryotic cell ignore reference to features not shown in Figure **5** if neither mark awarded, allow prokaryotic cell has no membrane-bound organelles ignore genetic information ignore genetic information ignore circular / rings of DNA allow prokaryotic cells have smaller ribosomes	3	AO2 4.1.1.1 4.1.1.2 4.1.2.1

03.3	1 µm = 0.001 mm **or** 1 mm = 1000 µm **or** 0.05 mm = 50 µm **or** 0.05 × 1000 (1:) 50	 do **not** accept if a unit is given	1 1	AO2 4.1.1.1 4.1.1.2
03.4	mitosis	correct spelling only	1	AO1 4.1.2.2
03.5	35%		1	AO2 4.1.2.2
03.6	 (stage 1) DNA / chromosomes replicate / duplicate mitochondria / ribosomes / sub-cellular structures increase in number **or** mitochondria / ribosomes / sub-cellular structures replicate (stage 2) one set of chromosomes is pulled / moved to each end of the cell (stage 3) the cytoplasm **and** cell membrane divides (to form two cells)	ignore names of the stages of the cell cycle ignore genetic material ignore DNA / chromosomes double / reproduce allow cytoplasm increases ignore cell grows unqualified allow one of each chromosome is pulled / moved to each end of the cell ignore nucleus divides allow cytoplasm divides **and** (new) cell membranes form ignore nucleus divides	 1 1 1 1	AO1 4.1.2.2
Total			**13**	

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
04.1	fatty acids glycerol		1 1	AO1 4.2.2.1 4.4.2.3
04.2	enzyme binds to the substrate because they are complementary (shapes) (so) substrate is broken down (into products) (so) products are released **or** enzyme is not changed	allow enzyme joins to the substrate because they fit together exactly allow enzyme joins to the substrate because the substrate fits the active site ignore reference to specificity do **not** accept same shape allow (so) substrate splits (into products) ignore products are formed, unqualified allow enzyme is not used up allow reference to activation energy for either marking point 2 **or** marking point 3	1 1 1	AO2 4.2.2.1
04.3	each active site has a specific shape (so only fits one type of lipid molecule)	allow each active site is a different shape do **not** accept reference to the substrate having an active site	1	AO2 4.2.2.1
04.4	add Benedict's (solution / reagent to the liquid) boil / heat (if glucose is present the blue) colour changes to yellow / green / orange / brown / (brick)red	 allow any temperature of 65 °C or above	1 1 1	AO1 4.2.2.1 RPA 4

04.5	add iodine solution / reagent (to the liquid) (if starch is present) it changes colour to blue / black (from yellow / orange / brown)	allow add a drop of iodine ignore iodine unqualified	1 1	AO1 4.2.2.1 RPA 4
04.6	glucose from photosynthesis (excess) glucose converted to starch	do **not** accept starch made in photosynthesis allow (excess) glucose is stored as starch	1 1	AO2 4.2.2.1 4.4.1.1 4.4.1.3 4.4.2.3
04.7	starch (stores) have been converted to glucose (so the glucose can be) used for respiration / (named) metabolic reactions **or** (so the glucose can be) used to release energy (because) there is no light to make (new / more) glucose by photosynthesis	ignore reference to residual glucose from previous photosynthesis do **not** accept idea of energy being produced / created / made	1 1 1	AO3 4.4.1.1 4.4.2.1 4.4.1.3
04.8	any **one** from: • test roots / stems of plants (in the light and dark) • test other species of plant • measure the concentrations of glucose **and** starch • vary the time in the dark / light • test variegated leaves	do **not** accept reference to changing the independent variable allow test other parts of the plants allow test other types of plant ignore mass / amount allow any other valid extension ignore repeats	1	AO3 4.4.1.2 4.4.1.3
Total			**17**	

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
05.1	mechanical	allow physical allow structural	1	AO3 4.3.3.2
05.2	any **one** from: • to deter herbivores • to prevent animals damaging it	ignore to injure animals, unqualified allow to deter animals eating it do **not** accept to deter predators	1	AO2 4.3.3.2
05.3	chemical		1	AO3 4.3.3.2

05.4	any **two** from : • lack of magnesium (ions) (1) (so) not enough chlorophyll for (efficient) photosynthesis (1) (so) not enough glucose to make proteins for growth **or** not enough glucose to release energy for growth (1) • infection by pathogen / bacteria / virus / fungus (1) (so) leaves become discoloured / yellow so less photosynthesis (1) (so) not enough glucose to make proteins for growth **or** not enough glucose to release energy for growth (1) • infected by aphids (1) (which) remove sugars from phloem (1) (so) not enough glucose to make proteins for growth **or** not enough glucose to release energy for growth (1) • lack of (available) light (1) (so) chlorophyll breaks down (1) (so) not enough glucose to make proteins for growth **or** not enough glucose to release energy for growth (1)	allow (so) lack of chlorophyll produced causes yellow leaves (1), (so) not enough photosynthesis to produce glucose which is used to make proteins for growth (1) allow correctly named pathogen allow has rose black spot / TMV allow other symptoms of named pathogens / disease award once only award once only award once only	5	AO2 4.3.3.1 4.3.1.1 4.3.1.2 4.3.1.4 4.4.1.1 4.4.1.2 AO1 4.4.2.3 4.4.1.3

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

05.5	(bacteria) obtain glucose / sugar (from the plant) (glucose used) for respiration **or** (glucose used) for making other named substances	 allow (glucose used) to release energy	1 1	AO3 AO2 4.2.3.2 4.4.1.3
05.6	(gorse plant) obtains nitrate (ions) needed for amino acids / proteins	 allow needed to make chlorophyll / DNA	1 1	AO2 4.1.3.3 4.4.2.3 AO1 4.3.3.1
05.7	willow bark		1	AO2 4.3.1.9
Total			**13**	

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec. Ref.
06.1	any **two** from: • BMI / morphology / obesity level • smoking habits • diet • medication • family history of liver disease • fitness levels • ethnicity • area of UK they live in	ignore genetic factors allow mass / weight **and** height allow previous drinking habits allow medical conditions allow drug use allow level of exercise allow race	2	AO3 4.2.2.6
06.2	2.55 – 1.60 (= 0.95) $\left(\frac{0.95}{2.55} \times 100 = \right)$ 37 (.2549019608…) (%)	allow 1.60 – 2.55 (= –0.95) allow value for with meals in range 1.60 to 1.65 (for 1.60) allow answer correctly calculated from values in ranges 1.60 to 1.65 and 2.50 to 2.60 allow – 37(.2549019608...)(%)	1 1	AO2 4.2.2.6
06.3	12 × 2 × 7 = 168 (g/week) 1.8	 allow in range 1.8-1.9 allow correct reading from a calculation that omits the 2 **or** the 7 do **not** accept if a unit is given	1 1	AO2 4.2.2.6

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

06.4	any **two** from: • consuming alcohol increases the RR (with / without meals) **and** supporting data • consuming less than 50 g/week of alcohol with meals does not increase the RR • even (small amounts of alcohol at) 25 g/week increases the RR if not with meals	allow risk for RR throughout allow data in terms of number of glasses of wine allow increasing alcohol consumption increases the RR at an increasing rate allow any value between 35 and 60 g/week	2	AO3 4.2.2.6
06.5	any **two** from: • large number in survey • long term / 15 year survey • well controlled	allow 800 000 in survey if neither mark awarded allow large study allow many controls	2	AO3 4.2.2.6
06.6	any **one** from: • people underestimate / overestimate alcohol consumption • people may change (lifestyle / drinking) habits over time • some people may drink all their weekly alcohol at once	allow people lie about alcohol consumption **or** people lie about other named control variables ignore survey only tested women	1	AO3 4.2.2.6

06.7	**Level 2:** Scientifically relevant facts, events or processes are identified and given in detail to form an accurate account.	3-4	AO2 4.4.2.3 4.2.2.1
	Level 1: Facts, events or processes are identified and simply stated but their relevance is not clear.	1-2	AO1 4.4.2.2 4.2.2.6 4.2.2.5 4.5.3.3
	No relevant content	0	
	Indicative content Responses may refer to either total or partial liver failure • no bile made (in the liver) ○ fats / lipids are not emulsified ○ surface area of fats / lipids not increased ○ pH of small intestine will not be alkaline / neutralised ○ enzymes (in small intestine) will not work effectively **or** (named) food not digested / absorbed ○ so may lose weight • lactic acid not broken down / oxidised ○ accumulation of lactic acid in blood / body ○ lactic acid is toxic **or** body will be poisoned ○ oxygen debt higher / prolonged ○ so muscle pain / fatigue • proteins / amino acids will not be broken down (in liver) ○ (amino acids) not deaminated ○ amino acids not made into urea **or** will not form ammonia ○ (however) any ammonia formed is toxic ○ so accumulation of amino acids in blood / body • liver does not break down / remove other toxins (like alcohol) ○ toxins accumulate in blood / body ○ body will be poisoned ○ so pain **or** jaundice **or** swollen liver **or** portal hypertension occurs • glycogen stores will not be formed ○ cannot control blood glucose ○ so hyperglycaemia / hypoglycaemia / diabetes / coma may occur		

Total			**15**

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Question	Answers	Extra information	Mark	AO / Spec.Ref.
07.1		ignore add mAbs and dye to slide (unbound)		AO2 4.3.2.2
	bind fluorescent dye to mAbs		1	
	put (bound) fluorescent mAbs on the slide (and rinse off)		1	
	mAbs will bind to Candida albicans / pathogens and show up under the microscope	allow mAbs will bind to Candida albicans / pathogens and show up under UV (lamp)	1	
07.2	more Candida albicans / pathogens will be engulfed / killed by phagocytes / white blood cells	allow Candida albicans / pathogens will be engulfed / killed by phagocytes / white blood cells more quickly do **not** accept white blood cells produce antibodies do **not** accept lymphocytes engulf Candida albicans	1	AO2 4.2.2.3 4.3.1.6 4.3.1.7
	therefore less damage to cells / tissues / organs	ignore less toxin released (by Candida albicans)	1	

07.3	**Level 2:** Scientifically relevant facts, events or processes are identified and given in detail to form an accurate account.		4-6	AO1 4.3.1.9
	Level 1: Facts, events or processes are identified and simply stated but their relevance is not clear.		1-3	
	No relevant content		0	
	Indicative content • given first to healthy volunteers ○ at (very) low dose ○ to test it is safe **or** to test for toxicity **or** to check for any side effects • then to some patients (with the disease) **or** people with the disease ○ to test for the correct / optimum dose ○ to check for any side effects ○ to test for efficacy **or** to test if it works ○ in a double blind trial ○ where neither patients nor doctors know who has the mAbs and who has a placebo (or alternative treatment) • reference to large trial **or** long duration **or** control variables			
07.4	any **one** from: • (the body will) not reject the mAbs **or** (the body is) less likely to reject the mAbs • mouse mAbs are (more likely to be) rejected • the human lymphocytes have already responded to that infection / cancer cell so they are known to work against the disease	do **not** accept idea of rejection of cells	1	AO3 4.3.2.2 4.3.2.1 4.3.1.6
Total			**12**	

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 05 · Examiner comments November 2020 | 8461/1H | Original Q3

Question 3 (standard, standard/high & high demand)

Several students thought that prokaryotic cells lacked ribosomes in **03.2** and there was a lot of confusion regarding the description of the prokaryotic DNA. Many students described this as 'strands' and a loop in the same sentence.

In **03.6**, weak use of language in expressing the movement of the chromosomes in stage 2 led to very few students gaining high marks in this question (36% scored zero marks). Many talked about chromosomes moving to different ends of the cell without making it clear that one chromosome **set** goes each way. In stage 1, many students stated that the subcellular structures simply 'divided' or 'increased'.

Answer 06 · Examiner comments November 2020 | 8461/2H | Original Q5

Question 5 (standard/high & high demand)

This question was about cell division and genetics. In **05.1** many students confused the two types of cell division, mitosis and meiosis: 1 in 10 students were able to give 3 correct differences between the two. Some described only one type of division rather than giving the comparison demanded by the question; others fell short of giving sufficient detail – eg describing the daughter cells as 'identical / non-identical' rather than being *genetically* identical / non-identical'; many included irrelevant points about where in the body the cell division occurred (the question asked for differences in the 'processes'). Two common misunderstandings were that meiosis occurred 'in gametes' and that meiosis required two parents whereas mitosis required only one.

For **05.3** explanations of how students derived the genotype of person1 were frequently insufficient. Since this person had the condition Dupuytren's, he must have had either one or two of the dominant alleles. The fact that he had an unaffected child (person 6), showed he must also have had the recessive allele – hence his genotype was Dd or heterozygous. Most students mentioned only the children as evidence and did not relate person 1's genotype to his phenotype.

Students had to draw a Punnett square diagram in **05.4** to find the probability that persons 7 and 8 in could produce another child with Dupuytren's. Since persons 7 and 8 had *different* phenotypes, it was surprising how many students assigned the *same* genotype to each of them (usually both being Dd). Other common errors were not identifying which parent was which (ie gametes D and d from person 7, and only d gametes from person 8) and not assigning phenotypes to the offspring genotypes.

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 06 · Examiner comments November 2020 | 8461/2H | Original Q5

In **05.5** explanations of the evidence in the pedigree diagram that the D allele is *not* on the Y chromosome, it was evident that many students did not know that males are XY and females XX as many thought the female had a Y chromosome. Those that did know this were able to point out that some females had Dupuytren's despite not having a Y chromosome, or that the condition can be passed from fathers to their daughters, or that an affected mother and unaffected father can have an affected son. Many students insisted, erroneously, that the allele must have been on the X chromosome.

Answer 07 · Examiner comments November 2021 | 8461/2H | Original Q1

Question 1 (standard demand)

This question was about DNA and its replication. Answers to most parts of this question were satisfactory, with most students knowing that DNA was found in chromosomes, recognising the term replication with respect to a diagram showing this process, being able to assign symbols for bases on the same diagram, and knowing that meiosis was the type of cell division used in sperm production.

The names of specific parts of the DNA molecule (sugar and base) and the substance coded for by a gene (protein) were less well known – but success here might have been limited by the fact that the questions were open rather than being multiple choice.

More than half of the students were able to deal with numbers in standard form, showing understanding that a sperm cell has half the usual amount of DNA and that half of 6×10^{-12} is 3×10^{-12}.

One-fifth of the students did not attempt **01.4**. This was probably due to there being no answer lines, and the answer having to be written on the diagram (Figure 2).

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 08 · Examiner comments

June 2022 | 8461/1H | Original Q4

Question 4 (Standard, standard/high and high demand)

04.1 Nearly 90% of students gained full marks in this question.

04.2 At standard/high demand, there were multiple parts needed in the response to this question, which only 19% of students achieved. Most students understood the idea that animals avoid eating the hornet moth because it looks like a hornet, but the higher level idea that the animals have 'learned' that they get stung was missed by most.

04.3 The most common score in this extended response question was 2 marks out of 6. Students were required to provide a response detailing the reasons why a tree might die if moth larvae damaged the roots, with a link(s) to the impact the reason(s) would have on the tree. Although there are clear mark points on the mark scheme, the list was not exhaustive, so non-listed appropriate indicative content was also acceptable. The impact of less absorption of water and mineral ions was more commonly cited compared to damage to xylem or phloem, with numerous students referencing support and anchorage for the tree. Many students understood the consequence of a lack of magnesium ions and nitrates and these were common responses seen. However, on occasion, some students confused the two or did not make it clear which ion linked to which consequence they were writing about. To achieve marks in both levels 2 and 3, correct linking was required, hence why many students limited themselves to level 1, as they failed to make the link between the effect of the damage and the consequence.

04.4 Only 1% of students gained full marks in this question, highlighting several misconceptions or surface levels of understanding of the events of mitosis. The majority of students who gained marks on this question did so with MPs 1 and 3, although a number of students continue to use the term 'genetic information' which is not sufficient at this level. As seen in previous years, students continue to find the idea of the separation of the chromosomes difficult and many failed to obtain MP2 because of messy written language, sometimes describing all of the chromosomes moving to one side of the cell. Many answers also clearly confused the arrangement of the chromosomes at the centre of the cell between mitosis and meiosis for this mark point. Very few students were able to access MP4, with most simply repeating the stem of the question, that two genetically identical daughter cells are produced

04.5 Over three quarters of students answered this question correctly, and on the whole, spelling was correct. Of the incorrect answers, many were erroneous biological terms. Specialisation was ignored as it was given in the question stem.

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 09 · Examiner comments June 2023 | 8461/1H | Original Q5

Question 5 (Standard, standard/high and high demand)

05.1 The majority of students answered this question correctly with just over 68% of students gaining credit. A number of students referred to ‘communicable disease’ or ‘carrier’ which were not creditworthy.

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 09 · Examiner comments

June 2023 | 8461/1H | Original Q5

05.2 Students were told in the stem of the question that the malarial protist is a eukaryotic cell, and clearly most students processed this information and just under 95% of student gained some marks. Incorrect responses were seen often when students mixed up protist and prokaryote structures or had misconceptions regarding prokaryote structure suggesting a lack of cell membrane or cytoplasm.

05.3 Most students gained credit for stating that lesson oxygen could be carried by the blood, if red blood cells burst. Only around 20% of students linked this idea to respiration and energy release for the second marking point. Some students suggested that as a result 'no oxygen would be carried' which was not creditworthy. We again this year saw the usual incorrect idea of energy being produced or created which lost students this second marking point.

05.4 Over 70% of students were able to gain some marks on this question, with 8% gaining the full 3 marks available. Many students knew that sexual reproduction involved 'gametes' but they failed to include the idea of fusion and missed out on the first marking point. A pleasing number of students gave the idea of genetic variation for the second marking point, but when 'genetic' was omitted or students simply referred to 'clones' credit was not awarded. The full array of possible creditworthy ideas were seen, as well as the fallback mark.

05.5 Only around 37% of students gained this mark. Those that did not, often lacked detail in their answer. Students were required to specifically refer to DNA, and terms such as 'chromosome' or 'genetic material' were ignored. Furthermore, references to DNA 'multiplying' or 'reproducing' did not gain credit.

05.6 This was a high demand question, and in particular the first marking point proved a good discriminator with very few students referring to 'one set of chromosomes' being pulled to each end of the cell, and instead giving vague references to 'chromosomes pulling apart', or 'DNA halves' which are insufficient at this level. While the process of mitosis is undoubtedly familiar to most students, they struggled to articulate their ideas clearly in their responses. Less than 3% of students gained all 3 marks as a result. Almost 37% gained 1 mark for references either the 'nucleus dividing' or 'the cell membrane / cytoplasm dividing' to form 2 cells.

05.7 The majority of students got muddled with the data in this question or misinterpreted it due to misreading the information provided in the stem informing them that 'the incidence of malaria in children with disorder S was calculated as a percentage of the incidence in children without disorder S'. Consequently, most students concluded that that having disorder S *increased* the chances of children getting malaria and therefore only a minority gained credit, with only 1% of students gaining 2 marks. The trend was however described correctly by around 27% of students for the whole age range obtaining 1 mark.

Question 8 (standard, standard/high demand and high demand)

08.1 59% of students achieved the mark in this question, with most stating that the cell grows in size or increases its number of organelles. The increase in number was expressed in many different ways (replication, duplication, multiplication, etc.), all of which were creditworthy.

The most common incorrect answers contained descriptions of what happens during mitosis, such as the chromosomes being pulled to either end of the cell, or of the cell membrane and cytoplasm dividing.

08.2 78% of students answered this question correctly. The most common incorrect answers seen were cell wall and nucleus/nuclear membrane.

08.3 There were many ways in which students achieved a variety of marks in this question. 34% of students achieved 6 marks, and 33% achieved 5 marks, with the conversion from nm to mm being the difference between them. The conversion method was not well understood, with both divisions and multiplications with a large range of factors of 10 seen. Some students began by trying to convert the volume given in the question, which often led to further mistakes later on. Many students were able to substitute the numbers from the question into the equation given and calculate an answer, thus gaining two marks if they went no further (13% of students). Answers using any representation of *pi* (3.1, π or $^{22}/_{7}$) were accepted and seen, despite students being told to use 3.14 in the question.

Students could gain credit for quoting the magnification equation or for showing its use without writing it out in words. However, just quoting the triangular representation of the equation was not creditworthy. A significant minority of students gave the equation upside down and so were not awarded marking point 3 and, if they used it in that incorrect form, were not able to access marking point 5 or marking point 6, either.

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4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 10 · Examiner comments June 2024 | 8461/1H | Original Q8

08.4 47% of students scored no marks in this question, with 11% scoring full marks and 40% scoring one mark. A simple description of what normally happens during mitosis was not creditworthy, yet was seen regularly. Of the two marking points, marking point 1 was achieved more commonly than marking point 2. Where the mark for marking point 1 was not achieved, the most common errors included: a simple description of chromosomes not being pulled apart with no destination described; vague references to the edges/sides of the cell; or an implication that chromosomes were unable to move (unaided), rather than be moved. Attempts at marking point 2 were often too vague to be creditworthy, with a large number of answers just repeating that the cell couldn't divide, as was given in the question stem.

08.5 16% of students gained credit in this question and, as in question 08.4, a reference to what would be unable to happen in the situation described was required. Many students gave a simple statement linking cancer to uncontrolled cell division and those that went on to say that this could not happen often just paraphrased what had been written in the question, which was not creditworthy. Those that did score the mark mainly mentioned the prevention of the tumour growing, with a minority stating that secondary tumours would be stopped from forming. References to individual cancer cells rather than tumours were seen frequently and were not creditworthy. Some answers referred to preventing the formation of tumours rather than stopping the spread of tumours that were already there and thus did not answer the question.

08.6 83% of students answered this question correctly.

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4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

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Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results Statistics page of the AQA Website.

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Answer 11 · Examiner comments

June 2025 | 8461/2H | Original Q6

Question 6 (Standard, Standard/high and High demand)

06.1
Over 70% of students identified the correct cell division that represented mitosis.

06.2
Over half of students identified cells A and C as being genetically identical.

06.3
Just over 85% of students gained the marking point here, knowing that cell J had 23 chromosomes. The most common incorrect response was '23 *pairs*'.

06.4
Students appeared to struggle with the high demand of this question, with only around 15% of students gaining the mark. Knowledge of the *stages* of meiosis is not required for this specification – as such the exact point that the reduction in chromosome numbers happens is not needed, hence, it was reasonable for students to give an answer of 5 or 6 depending on their interpretation.
The most common correct answer was '6', and there was a range of incorrect responses, with '4' being the most common. Some responses gave a list of letters without a number which did not answer the question.

06.5
Students struggled to clearly explain why offspring produced using runners are genetically identical. While many students correctly identified mitosis as being involved for mark point 1, simply stating that offspring were 'clones' was not sufficient without mentioning mitosis. 30% of students gained 1 mark – overwhelmingly for mark point 1. Mark point 2 was rarely awarded due to ineffective articulation at this level of demand. Even answers containing pertinent details often struggled to fully meet the mark scheme requirements. Additionally, many students focused on describing asexual reproduction, with answers such as 'only one parent is required' or 'no gamete fusion,' rather than explaining **why** the offspring were genetically identical. Some described mitosis as producing two genetically identical cells, but this was insufficient to explain why the whole plant was genetically identical.
Despite detailed attempts by most students, only 1% of students gained both available marks.

06.6
Only 10% of students managed to gain any marks in this question. Again, features of sexual reproduction were given, with little additional detail explaining why the offspring produced using flowers, fruits and seeds are not genetical identical. To earn mark point 1, students needed to explicitly link meiosis with the production of gametes, a connection rarely seen in responses that typically mentioned one without the other. Mark point 2 proved highly demanding due to its strict detail requirements. Many good attempts were seen but

4.1.2.2 Mitosis and the cell cycle

Answer 11 · Examiner comments

unfortunately lacked the precision needed at this level of demand. A very common error was the suggestion that meiosis actually produced the flowers, fruits and seeds which is incorrect.

06.7

One fifth of students were able to describe at least one advantage of asexual reproduction to the survival of the strawberry plants. For bullet point 1, a direct comparison to sexual reproduction had to be made, but many responses did not use this comparative language. However, if awarded bullet point 1 was by far the most common correct response seen.
For bullet points 2 through to 6, a clear link to a survival advantage was required. Many responses stated that 'less energy was needed', or 'only one parent needed' but then did not link it to the appropriate survival advantage and as such could not be awarded credit.

06.8

This question was set at very high demand with only a quarter of students gaining at least 1 mark. Bullet point 1 was the most common advantage of sexual reproduction given – articulated in many ways to match the variety of options on the mark scheme. Responses such as, 'genetic variation will decrease the chance of a disease killing all the plants' was most commonly awarded – which equated to 'genetic variation gives selective advantage' gaining one mark. Several good answers were seen but sadly students had only referred to 'variation' and not 'genetic variation' and so could not be credited. In addition, some responses correctly stated that 'seed dispersal would lead to less competition' but then didn't qualify this with any of the required examples from the mark scheme and as such were not credited.