AQA GCSE Biology | 8461

SPECIFICATION POINT 4.6.1.3

Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Past-paper questions

Tier	**Higher**
Question groups	**17**
Available paper years	**2007–2025**

Using this booklet

1. Answer the questions in order and show your working.
2. Original question numbers and marks are retained.
3. Print at actual size (100%) for measuring questions.
4. Use the companion answer booklet to check your work.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Whole questions are retained for context, so some parts assess other specification points. Current and legacy sources are labelled. Continue on extra paper if needed.

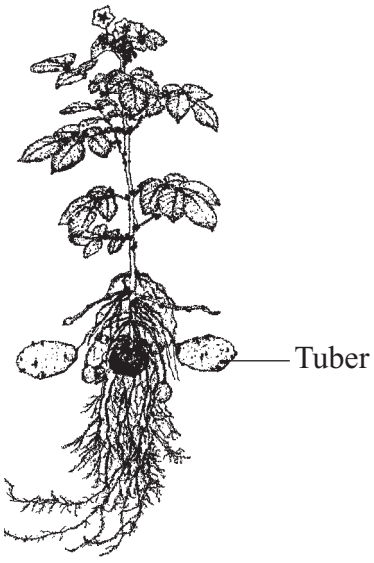
4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 01

March 2007 | BLY1B | Original Q4 | Legacy

QUESTION FOUR

The diagram shows a potato plant.



Potato tubers are produced by cell division. Potato plants can reproduce sexually and asexually.

The tubers can be removed and replanted. This produces more potato plants of the same type.

The masses of the tubers of 15 potato plants of the same type were measured using an electronic balance. The results are shown in the table.

Plant number	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**
Mass of tubers in kg	2.5	1.7	2.3	4.1	2.2	1.9	2.5	3.8	4.6	1.9	3.6	1.3	2.5	2.9	1.2

4A What was the range of the mass of the tubers on the potato plants?

1 1.2 – 2.5 kg

2 1.2 – 4.6 kg

3 1.3 – 4.6 kg

4 1 – 15 kg

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 01 · continued

4B The sensitivity of the balance is . . .

1 0.001 kg

2 0.01 kg

3 0.1 kg

4 1.0 kg

4C Which of the following is **not** a possible reason for the difference in mass of the tubers produced by the potato plants?

1 Some of the plants were growing in the shade.

2 The plants received different amounts of nutrients.

3 The tubers were produced by sexual reproduction.

4 The plants were watered at different time intervals.

4D A plant nursery wants to produce large numbers of young plants quickly and cheaply.

Which technique would be used?

1 growing the seeds produced by sexual reproduction

2 taking cuttings

3 transplanting embryo plants to other plants

4 using genetic engineering

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 02

November 2008 | BLY1BP | Original Q6 | Legacy

QUESTION SIX

Read the passage.

> Trials of genetically-modified (GM) maize crops have been carried out.
> A gene, giving resistance to herbicides, was removed from a bacterium and transferred to maize plants.
>
> The trials involved growing fields of the GM maize next to fields of non-GM maize.
>
> The scientists recorded the number and species of organisms in the fields.
> It was found that in the fields with the GM crops there were fewer species, while in the fields without GM crops the number and species of organisms had increased.

6A The gene giving resistance to herbicides would be removed from bacteria by using . . .

1 small scissors.

2 a chromosome from the bacterium.

3 an enzyme.

4 a nucleus.

6B In the trial, the non-GM maize was used . . .

1 so that the number of organisms could be counted easily.

2 because different species of plants and animals were found in the fields where the two types of maize were grown.

3 to make the results accurate.

4 as a control.

6C Many groups of people are opposed to growing GM crops.

Which of the following is likely to be the main reason for this opposition?

1 GM crops have only been developed for economic reasons.

2 The effect of eating GM crops on human health is not known.

3 There is no evidence that GM crops have better nutritional value.

4 GM crops are resistant to disease.

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

6D Which process would be used to produce large numbers of the new GM maize plants?

1 sexual reproduction

2 the continued transfer of genes to new maize plants

3 asexual reproduction

4 crossing GM maize with non-GM maize

Turn over for the next question

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

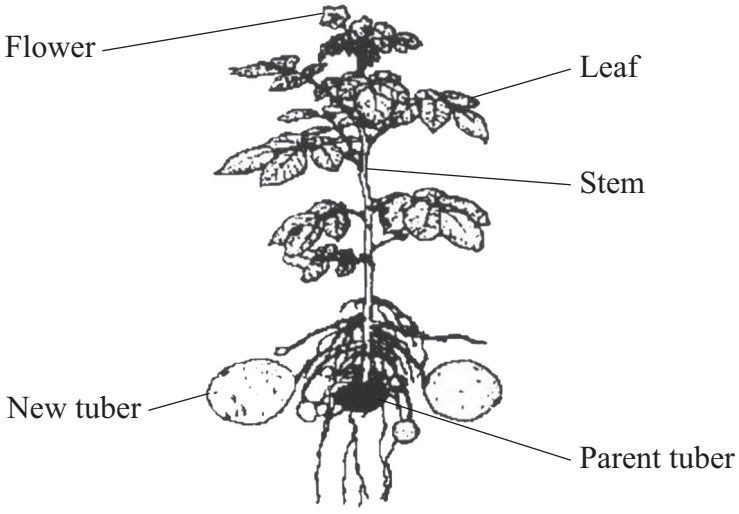
Question 03

March 2009 | BLY1BP | Original Q7 | Legacy

QUESTION SEVEN

There are many varieties of potato plant, producing tubers with different qualities.

Potato plants can reproduce both sexually and asexually.



7A How could new varieties of potato be produced?

1 taking small groups of cells from a new tuber and growing them

2 taking cuttings from the leaf or stem of the plant and growing them

3 allowing gametes from different potato plants to fuse together

4 allowing new tubers to stay in the ground and to grow next year

7B Scientists wish to create a variety of potato which will tolerate drought conditions.
They have identified the gene which gives a cactus species the ability to survive with very little water.

What would be the best way of producing drought-resistant potatoes?

1 breed ordinary potato plants with cactus plants

2 use enzymes to cut out the gene from the cactus and transfer it to potato cells

3 selectively breed cactus plants which, over many generations, are more like potatoes

4 grow potato plants in low water conditions over many generations

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 03 · continued

7C Some people believe that using genetic engineering to develop potatoes that are tolerant to drought conditions should **not** be allowed.

One reason for this is because . . .

1 the new variety of potato may be susceptible to the same diseases as cactus plants.

2 the cost of the technology required outweighs the possible profits.

3 the native potato may compete with the new variety.

4 there are ethical concerns about interfering with natural processes.

7D Herbicide-resistant potatoes have also been produced.

The advantage of this is that . . .

1 old potato plants can easily be killed to make way for new crops.

2 it is easy to kill insects which might feed on the crop.

3 the growth of wild flowers is encouraged, maintaining biodiversity.

4 competition from other plants can be reduced.

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 04

March 2009 | BLY1BP | Original Q9 | Legacy

QUESTION NINE

There are several theories for the way in which evolution may have happened.

9A Lamarck's theory of evolution was based on the idea that . . .

1 organisms pass on the advantages that they acquire during their lifetime.

2 organisms acquire genes from their parents which may give them advantages.

3 the characteristics that organisms have are controlled by God.

4 offspring have a mixture of their parents' features.

9B In the 1860s there was much opposition to Darwin's theory of evolution.

Which of the following was **not** a reason for this opposition?

1 The theory conflicted with deeply held religious views.

2 Darwin did **not** have sufficient evidence to support his ideas.

3 Darwin was unable to make his ideas known to other scientists.

4 Nobody knew how inheritance worked.

9C When a new island is formed by volcanic action, the environment continues to undergo rapid change for many years. At first there will be no living things present.

A plant seed may be blown to the island by the wind. When this seed begins to grow, the plant may reproduce asexually.

What is the disadvantage of asexual reproduction to the plant species in this case?

1 Only one individual is needed for reproduction.

2 All the offspring will be genetically identical.

3 New plants will be produced quickly.

4 Dense groups of this species will reduce competition from other species.

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 04 · continued March 2009 | BLY1BP | Original Q9 | Legacy

9D Darwin's theory of evolution through natural selection was based on a number of events.

These events are outlined below.

- **P** Those individuals which are most suited to the environment survive.
- **Q** There is an increase in variation between members of the species.
- **R** Genes that improve survival chances are passed on to the next generation.
- **S** Mutation results in new forms of genes.

Which is the correct sequence for these events?

1 **P → R → S → Q**

2 **Q → R → P → S**

3 **S → Q → P → R**

4 **R → S → Q → P**

END OF TEST

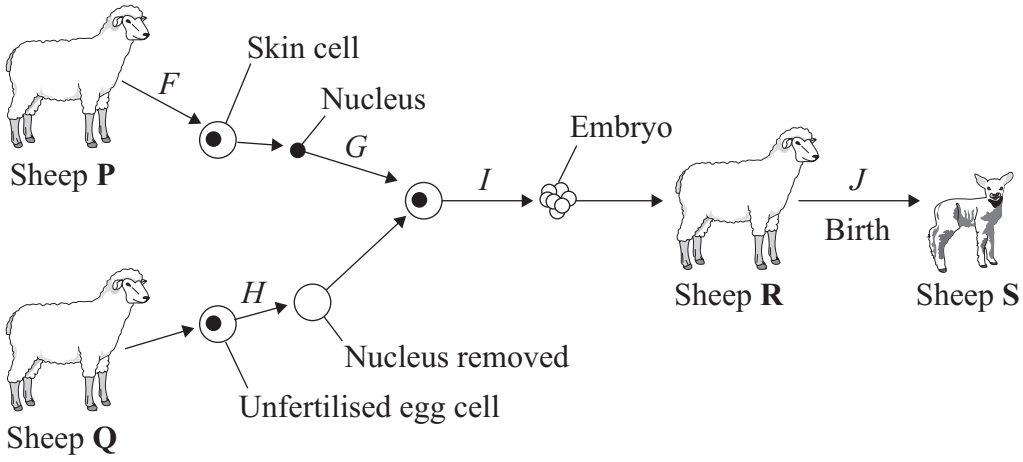
4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 05

June 2009 | BLY1BP | Original Q8 | Legacy

QUESTION EIGHT

The diagram shows one way of producing sheep with the characteristics we prefer.



8A During this process, an electric shock is used in . . .

1 stage *F* only.

2 stage *G* and stage *H* only.

3 stage *I* only.

4 stage *I* and stage *J* only.

8B This method of producing sheep involves . . .

1 asexual reproduction.

2 sexual reproduction.

3 taking cuttings.

4 tissue culture.

8C Which sheep are genetically identical?

1 **P** and **R**

2 **Q** and **S**

3 **P** and **S**

4 **Q** and **P**

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 05 · continued

8D This process is not carried out on humans because . . .

1 it is unethical to select the characteristics with which a human is born.

2 it is more expensive than treating women with hormones.

3 it would reduce the number of genes in the human population.

4 humans have more complicated genetic information than sheep.

Turn over for the next question

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 06

March 2010 | BLY1BP | Original Q3 | Legacy

QUESTION THREE

This question is about the way in which new varieties of plants are produced.

3A Genetically identical individuals are known as . . .

1 embryos.

2 gametes.

3 species.

4 clones.

People can now buy a purple variety of cauliflower.



These purple cauliflowers have been produced as a result of careful selection.

3B How can new varieties of plants be produced?

1 tissue culture

2 asexual reproduction

3 sexual reproduction

4 cloning

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 06 · continued

3C The purple colour of the first purple cauliflower was due to . . .

1 genetic engineering.

2 a mutation.

3 embryo transplantation.

4 gene transfer.

3D At first there was only one purple cauliflower.

How could large numbers of purple cauliflowers be produced from this first one?

1 interbreeding purple and white cauliflowers

2 taking small groups of cells from the purple cauliflower and then growing them

3 genetic modification of white cauliflowers

4 'cutting out' the gene for the purple colour and transferring it into white cauliflowers

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 07

March 2011 | BLY1BP | Original Q1 | Legacy

QUESTION ONE

We can now produce animals and plants with characteristics we prefer.

Match words, **A**, **B**, **C** and **D**, with the statements **1**–**4** in the table.

A embryo transplants

B sexual reproduction

C taking cuttings

D tissue culture

1	a quick and cheap way of reproducing a plant
2	produces clones of an animal
3	produces offspring using small groups of cells from a plant
4	produces offspring with a variety of different characteristics

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 08

June 2011 | BLY1H | Original Q7 | Legacy

7 Organisms can be produced by asexual reproduction and by sexual reproduction.

7 (a) Give **two** differences between asexual reproduction and sexual reproduction.

1 .....

.....

2 .....

.....

(2 marks)

7 (b) Adult cell cloning is a type of asexual reproduction.

Explain why.

.....

.....

.....

.....

(2 marks)

4

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 09

November 2011 | BLY1BP | Original Q6 | Legacy

QUESTION SIX

In the past, prize bulls used to be transported around the world to mate with cows.
Cattle embryos can now be transported around the world in test tubes.

There are two methods of doing this.

Method 1

- A cow is given drugs that cause her to produce up to 80 eggs at the same time.
- The eggs are fertilised and the resulting embryos removed from the womb.
- The embryos are frozen and sent to other farms around the world.
- Each embryo can then be put into the womb of a different cow.

Method 2

- After fertilisation, one embryo is removed from a cow.
- The embryo is split into several parts.
- The parts are frozen, then sent to other farms around the world.
- Each part can be put into the womb of a cow.

6A Which row in the table describes the calves produced using the two methods?

	Method 1		Method 2	
	Genetically identical	Genetically different	Genetically identical	Genetically different
1	✓		✓	
2		✓		✓
3	✓			✓
4		✓	✓	

6B Which method of reproduction is involved in producing the embryos formed in **Method 1**?

1 embryo splitting

2 genetic modification

3 sexual reproduction

4 tissue culture

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 09 · continued

6C One advantage of the new methods of producing calves rather than by mating cows with a bull is that . . .

1 the calves will all be male.

2 there is no need for a bull.

3 there is more variation between calves.

4 greater numbers of offspring of the bull are produced.

6D One advantage of adult cell cloning over **Method 2** is that the characteristics of the calves . . .

1 are known before.

2 will all be different.

3 will all be the same.

4 can be changed.

Turn over for the next question

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 10

June 2013 | BL1HP | Original Q5 | Legacy

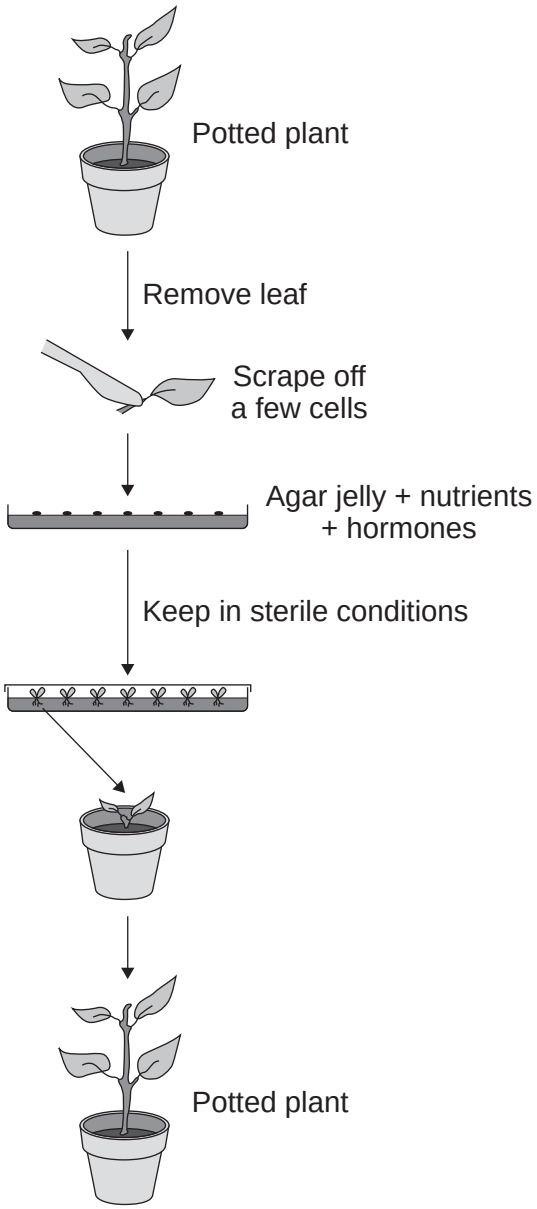
5 Plant hormones are used in horticulture.

5 (a) Name **one** plant hormone.

.....

(1 mark)

5 (b) The diagram shows how new plants are produced using tissue culture.



4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 10 · continued

5 (b) (i) Tissue culture is a type of *asexual reproduction*.

Give the main features of *asexual reproduction*.

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.....

(3 marks)

5 (b) (ii) Another method of producing new plants is by taking cuttings.

Suggest **one** advantage of using tissue culture and **not** using cuttings to produce plants.

.....

.....

.....

(1 mark)

5

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 11

June 2013 | BL3HP | Original Q3 | Legacy

3 There are many ways to increase the efficiency of food production.

3 (a) The table shows the energy available to humans from two different food chains.

Food chain	Energy transferred to humans in kJ per hectare of crop
Wheat → humans	900 000
Wheat → pigs → humans	90 000

3 (a) (i) Compare the amount of energy the two food chains transfer to humans.

.....

.....

(1 mark)

3 (a) (ii) Give **one** reason for the difference in the amount of energy the two food chains transfer to humans.

.....

.....

(1 mark)

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 11 · continued

3 (b) *In this question you will be assessed on using good English, organising information clearly and using specialist terms where appropriate.*

Give methods used in the factory farming of animals.
Explain the advantages and disadvantages of these methods.

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(6 marks)

8

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 12

June 2017 | BL1HP | Original Q7 | Legacy

7 Reproduction may be sexual or asexual.

7 (a) Describe **one** advantage to a species of sexual reproduction rather than asexual reproduction.

[1 mark]

_____

_____

7 (b) Mitochondria contain genes. The genes control some of the reactions in respiration.

In a person with mitochondrial disease, genes in the mitochondria are faulty. The person may have muscle weakness, blindness and heart failure.

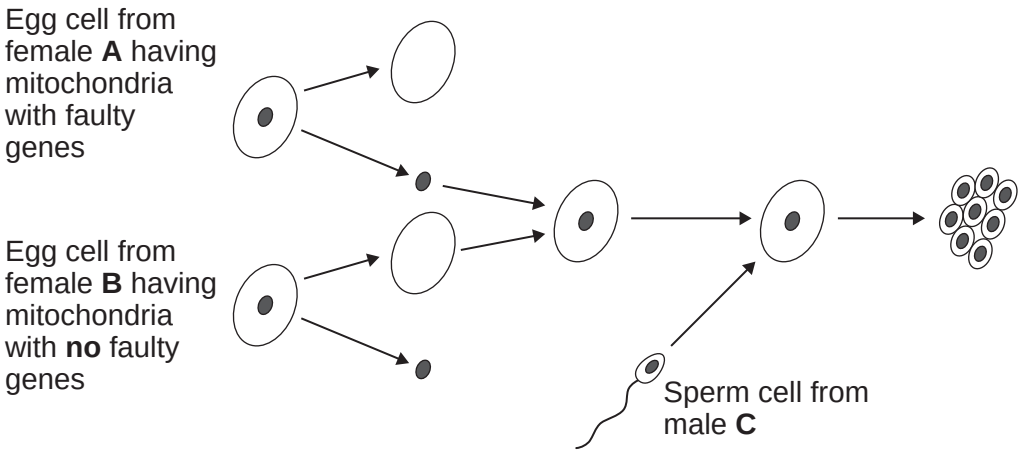
In human reproduction, an embryo will have mitochondria from the cytoplasm of the mother's egg cell.

Scientists have developed a way of solving the problem of a child inheriting mitochondrial disease.

Figure 6 shows the process.

The cells involved come from three different people, **A**, **B** and **C**.

Figure 6



4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 12 · continued

7 (b) (i) Describe the process shown in **Figure 6**.

Use your knowledge of sexual reproduction and adult cell cloning.

[4 marks]

7 (b) (ii) Explain why the embryo formed from the process shown in **Figure 6** will **not** have mitochondrial disease.

[2 marks]

7 (b) (iii) Suggest **one** ethical objection to this process being used for reproduction in humans.

[1 mark]

8

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 13

0 5 Cell division is needed for growth and for reproduction.

0 5 . 1 **Table 3** contains three statements about cell division.

Complete **Table 3**.

[2 marks]

Tick **one** box for each statement.

Table 3

Statement	Statement is true for		
	Mitosis only	**Meiosis only**	**Both mitosis and meiosis**
All cells produced are genetically identical			
In humans, at the end of cell division each cell contains 23 chromosomes			
Involves DNA replication			

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 13 · continued

Bluebell plants grow in woodlands in the UK.

- Bluebells can reproduce sexually by producing seeds.
- Bluebells can also reproduce asexually by making new bulbs.

0 5 . 2 One advantage of asexual reproduction for bluebells is that only **one** parent is needed.

Suggest **two** other advantages of asexual reproduction for bluebells.

[2 marks]

1

2

0 5 . 3 Explain why sexual reproduction is an advantage for bluebells.

[4 marks]

8

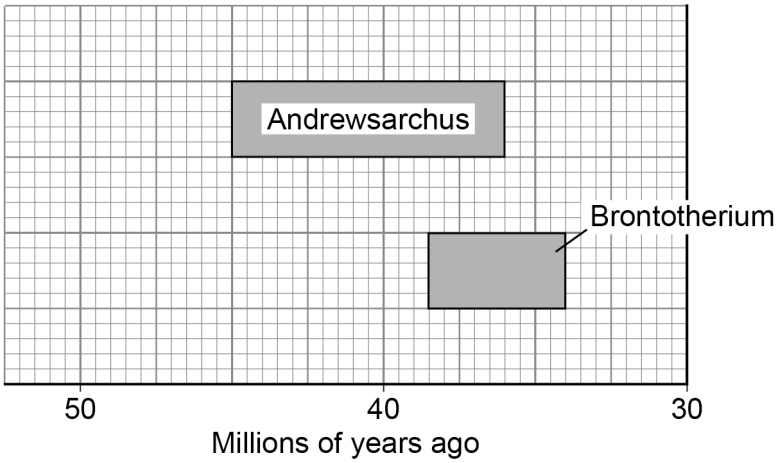
4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 14

November 2020 | 8461/2H | Original Q8

0 8 **Figure 8** shows when two mammals existed in Asia.

Figure 8



0 8 . 1 Determine the number of years both Andrewsarchus and Brontotherium existed together.

[2 marks]

Time = _____ years

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 14 · continued

November 2020 | 8461/2H | Original Q8

0 8 . 2 The oldest fossils of human ancestors found in this area are 700 000 years old.

Andrewsarchus was a carnivore and Brontotherium was a herbivore.

Suggest how the extinction of Andrewsarchus could have resulted in the extinction of Brontotherium.

[3 marks]

0 8 . 3 Information about extinct animals is often **not** clear because the fossil record is incomplete.

Give **three** reasons why the fossil record is **not** clear for older species.

[3 marks]

1

2

3

Question 8 continues on the next page

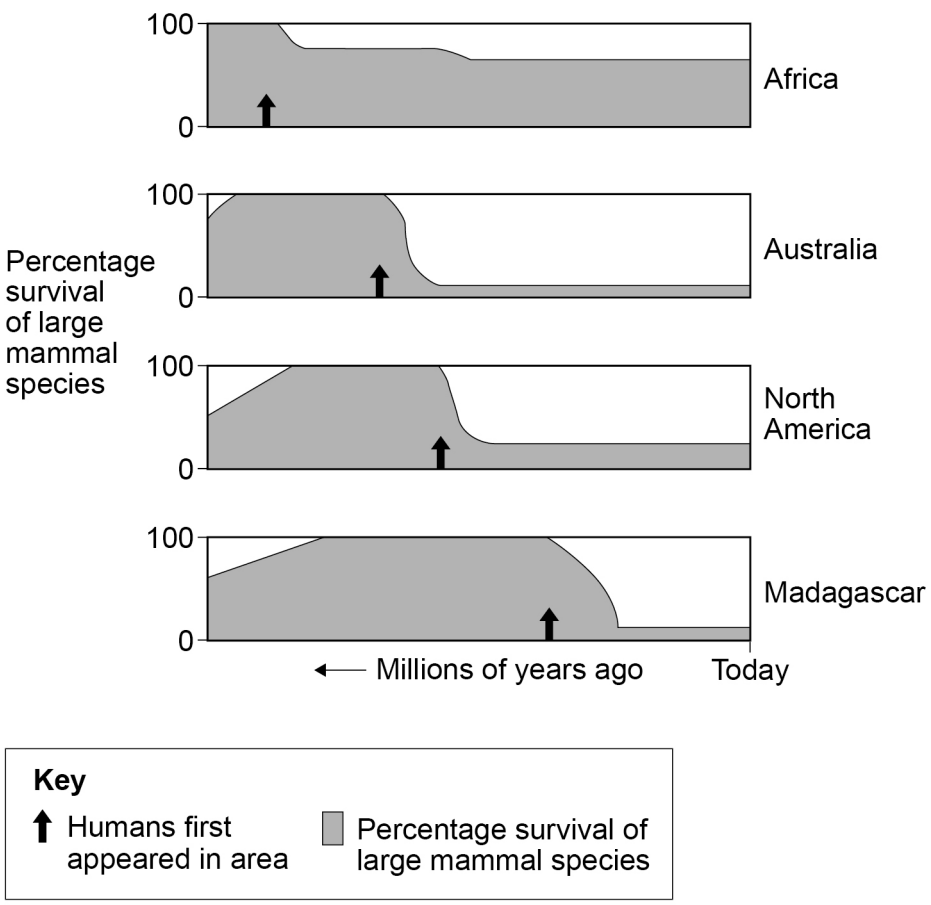
4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 14 · continued

Figure 9 shows the percentage (%) survival of large mammal species in four areas of the world.

The time at which humans first appeared in each of the four areas is also shown.

Figure 9



4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 14 · continued

A mass extinction is a rapid decrease in biodiversity on Earth.

0 8 . 4 A student stated:

'The data in **Figure 9** shows that humans caused mass extinctions.'

Evaluate the student's statement.

[6 marks]

Question 8 continues on the next page

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 14 · continued

November 2020 | 8461/2H | Original Q8

0 8 . 5 Give **one** disadvantage and **one** advantage of mass extinction events.

Answer in terms of evolution.

[2 marks]

Disadvantage _____

_____

Advantage _____

_____

16

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 15

June 2022 | 8461/2H | Original Q1

0 1 There are two types of reproduction:

- sexual reproduction
- asexual reproduction.

0 1 . 1 Complete **Table 1** to compare sexual reproduction with asexual reproduction.

Write a tick (✓) in the box if the statement is true.

The first row has been completed for you.

[2 marks]

Table 1

	Sexual reproduction	Asexual reproduction
Cell division occurs	✓	✓
Fertilisation occurs		
Genes are passed on from parent to offspring		
Offspring are genetically identical to each other		

0 1 . 2 Gametes are formed in sexual reproduction.

Name the male gamete formed in flowering plants.

[1 mark]

_____

Question 1 continues on the next page

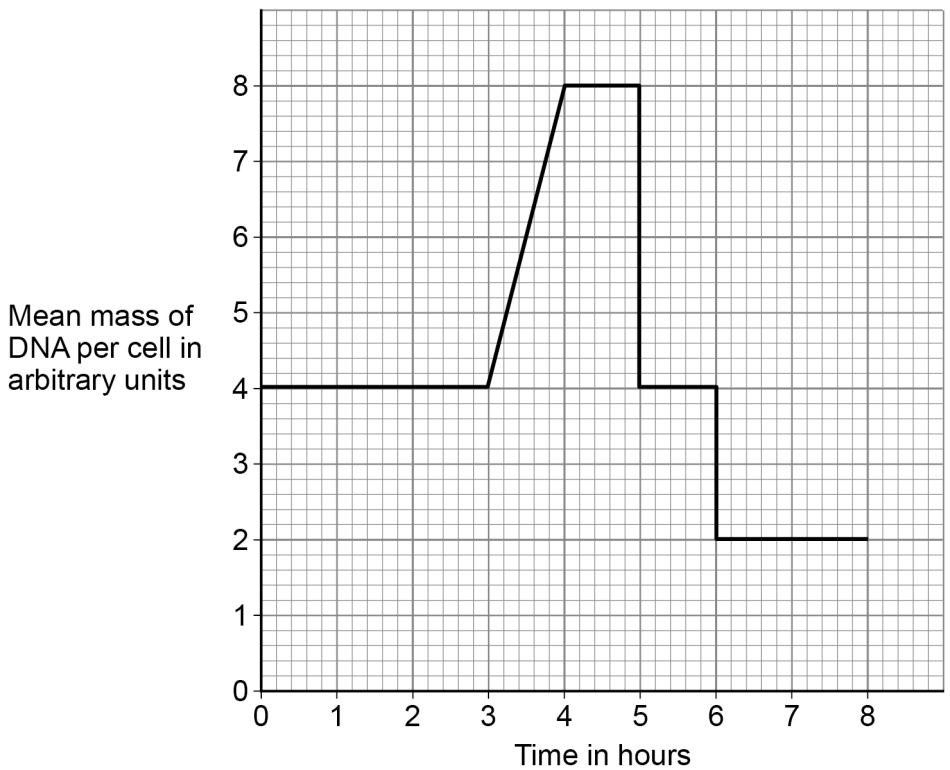
4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 15 · continued

Cell division by meiosis forms gametes.

Figure 1 shows the mean mass of DNA per cell before, during and after meiosis.

Figure 1



Use information from **Figure 1** to answer questions **01.3** to **01.6**.

0 1 . 3 When is the DNA in the chromosomes being copied?

[1 mark]

Tick (✓) **one** box.

Between 0 and 3 hours ☐

Between 3 and 4 hours ☐

Between 4 and 5 hours ☐

Between 5 and 6 hours ☐

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 15 · continued

0 1 . 4 Cells divide twice during meiosis.

Which **two** times in **Figure 1** show one cell dividing into two cells?

[2 marks]

Tick (✓) **two** boxes.

- 3 hours ☐
- 4 hours ☐
- 5 hours ☐
- 6 hours ☐
- 8 hours ☐

0 1 . 5 What is the mean mass of DNA in arbitrary units in a sperm cell?

[1 mark]

Tick (✓) **one** box.

2 ☐ 4 ☐ 8 ☐ 16 ☐

0 1 . 6 What is the mean mass of DNA in arbitrary units in each cell in an embryo?

[1 mark]

Tick (✓) **one** box.

2 ☐ 4 ☐ 8 ☐ 16 ☐

8

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 16

June 2023 | 8461/1H | Original Q5

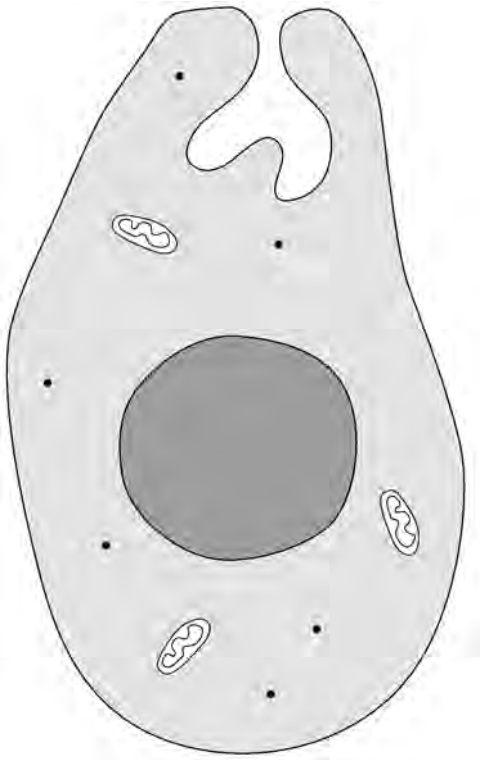
0 5 The protist that causes malaria is passed from one person to another person by mosquitos.

0 5 . 1 What term describes an organism that passes a pathogen from one person to another person?

[1 mark]

0 5 . 2 **Figure 7** shows the malarial protist.

Figure 7



4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 16 · continued

The malarial protist is a eukaryotic cell.

Describe **three** ways the structure of the malarial protist is different from the structure of a prokaryotic cell.

Do **not** refer to size in your answer.

[3 marks]

1 _____

_____

2 _____

_____

3 _____

_____

0 5 . 3 During one stage of malaria infection, the malarial protists enter red blood cells and cause them to burst.

Explain why the bursting of red blood cells causes tiredness.

[2 marks]

_____

_____

_____

_____

Question 5 continues on the next page

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 16 · continued

0 5 . 4 The malarial protist reproduces sexually and asexually during a life cycle.

Complete **Table 3** to give **three** differences between sexual reproduction and asexual reproduction.

[3 marks]

One difference has been completed for you.

Table 3

	Sexual reproduction	Asexual reproduction
	Involves two parents	Involves one parent
1		
2		
3		

0 5 . 5 One drug for treating malaria prevents mitosis occurring in the malarial protist.

The drug stops the synthesis of new DNA bases in the cell.

Suggest how the drug prevents mitosis occurring.

[1 mark]

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 16 · continued

0 5 . 6 Describe the process of cell division by mitosis.

[3 marks]

Question 5 continues on the next page

Question 16 · continued

0 5 . 7 Different types of disease may interact.

Scientists studied the incidence of malaria infections in children:

- with disorder **S**
- without disorder **S**.

The incidence of malaria in children with disorder **S** was calculated as a percentage of the incidence in children without disorder **S**.

Table 4 shows the results.

Table 4

Age in years	Calculated percentage (%) incidence of malaria in children with disorder S
2 to < 4	69
4 to < 6	63
6 to < 8	50
8 to 10	45
> 10	73

Describe what the results in **Table 4** show about the interaction between disorder **S** and malaria.

[2 marks]

15

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

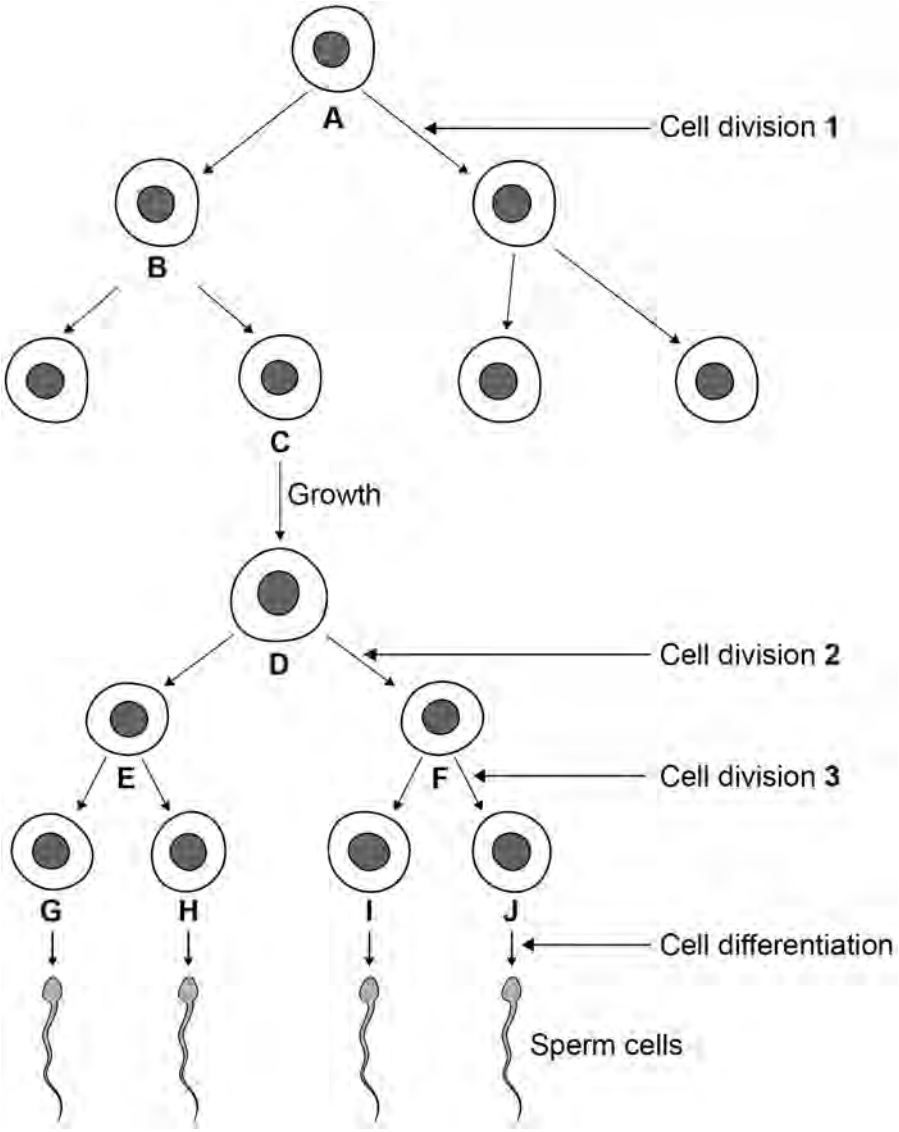
Question 17

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0 6 New cells are produced by cell division.

Figure 5 shows sperm formation in a human.

Figure 5



4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 17 · continued

0 6 . 1 Which cell division in **Figure 5** represents mitosis?

[1 mark]

Tick (✓) **one** box.

Cell division **1** ☐

Cell division **2** ☐

Cell division **3** ☐

0 6 . 2 Which two cells in **Figure 5** are genetically identical?

[1 mark]

Tick (✓) **one** box.

A and **C** ☐ **B** and **I** ☐ **F** and **J** ☐ **G** and **H** ☐

0 6 . 3 How many chromosomes are there in cell **J** in **Figure 5**?

[1 mark]

0 6 . 4 How many of the cells **C**, **D**, **E**, **F**, **G**, **H**, **I** and **J** contain a Y chromosome?

Use **Figure 5**.

[1 mark]

Question 6 continues on the next page

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

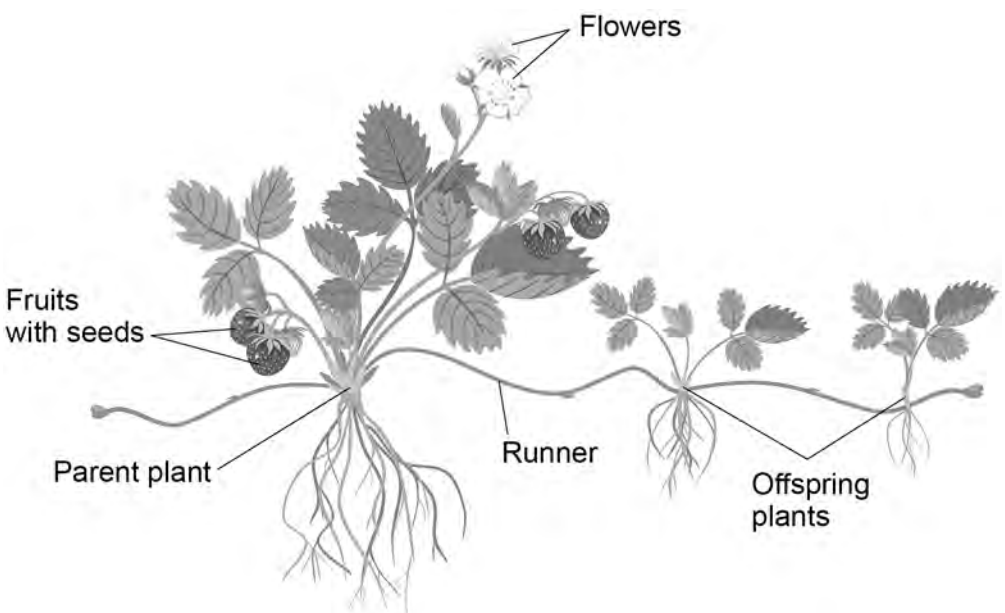
Question 17 · continued

Strawberry plants can reproduce both sexually and asexually.

Figure 6 shows a strawberry plant reproducing:

- sexually using flowers, fruits and seeds
- asexually using horizontal stems called runners.

Figure 6



0 6 . 5 Explain why the offspring produced using runners are genetically identical.

[2 marks]

4.6.1.3 Advantages and disadvantages of sexual and asexual reproduction (biology only)

Question 17 · continued

0 6 . 6 Explain why the offspring produced using flowers, fruits and seeds are **not** genetically identical.

[2 marks]

0 6 . 7 Describe **two** advantages of **asexual** reproduction for the survival of strawberry plants.

[2 marks]

1

2

0 6 . 8 Describe **two** advantages of **sexual** reproduction for the survival of strawberry plants.

[2 marks]

1

2

12