

# James Clemens High School

11306 County Line Road  
Madison, AL 35756



**Phone: 256-216-5313**

*Extension: 95139*

*Email: [asmckibbin@madisoncity.k12.al.us](mailto:asmckibbin@madisoncity.k12.al.us)*

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## Course Syllabus

**Biology Fall 2025**

**Instructor: Mr. Andrew McKibbin**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am so excited and honored to teach your child this year. I know I am pumped to see all the exciting opportunities and experiences this current school year will bring us. This syllabus is a way to outline the high expectations I have for all my students. These expectations will allow us to nurture a positive learning environment where every student is reaching their full potential.

Feel free to contact me at any time through email with any questions or concerns.

Please review the syllabus and sign the agreement form that will be sent out via schoology. The syllabus can also be found on our class Schoology page. Can't wait for a great year!

Thank you,  
Andrew McKibbin



## **Course Syllabus**

### **Biology Fall 2025**

**Instructor: Mr. Andrew McKibbin**

#### **Course Description:**

**18 weeks/1 credit**

#### **Course Description:**

Biology is a first-year high school biology course. The curriculum is designed as a “hands-on” course relying on specific inquiry-based learning techniques to introduce students to the structure of matter, its changes, and the energy involved in supporting life, the different forms of life, and the interconnections of the abiotic/biotic components of ecosystems.

#### **Course Objectives:**

This course is designed to give students an understanding of all that composes life on Earth. This includes 1) knowledge of various theories and scientific laws; 2) appreciation of the various ways organisms and the environment can affect our world; 3) skills using the scientific method to solve problems and design experiments; 4) knowledge and practical application of laboratory safety and laboratory techniques; 5) skills collecting, processing, and evaluating laboratory data; and 6) application of scientific writing. Please refer to <http://alex.state.al.us/> for a complete listing of the standard objectives for this course.

#### **Classroom Rules and Expectations:**

**General-** Students are expected to report to class fully prepared to participate in and contribute to the scheduled activities and to adhere to the following:

1. Be ready for class each day.
2. Be respectful of yourself, others, the teacher, and the classroom.
3. Be responsible for your own attitude, actions, and assignments.

For more specific information, please refer to the Policies and Procedures Document [here](#)

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### Concerning Laptop Utilization

1. Student laptops should not be hard-wired to the network or have print capabilities.
2. Use of discs, flash drives, jump drives, or other USB devices will not be allowed on Madison City computers.
3. Neither the teacher, nor the school is responsible for broken, stolen, or lost laptops.
4. Laptops and other electronic devices will be used at the individual discretion of the teacher.

### Concerning Electronic Devices Utilization:

Madison City Schools has amended its wireless device policy to comply with the FOCUS Act adopted by the Legislature this year. The Freeing Our Classrooms of Unnecessary Screens for Safety Act required local school boards to adopt policies consistent with the state Act by July 1, 2025. ([See Act. #2025-386](#)).

The mandated policy- with limited exceptions - bans ALL use of cell phones, smart watches, ear buds/headphones, air pods, gaming devices, tablets and other similar devices throughout the ENTIRE school day. Students who bring a wireless device onto school grounds must power it off, store it off of their person (ex: in their car, purse, or backpack) and not turn the device on or use it for the entire school day. Exceptions permitted by the law, and by Board policy, include use required for a student's IEP, individualized health plan or 504 plan, for emergencies threatening the life or safety of the student or another person, or if use is permitted for instructional purposes consistent with guidelines of the Superintendent.

### Accommodations:

Requests for accommodations for this course or any school event are welcomed from students and parents.

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## Grading Policy:

Test grades will account for 70% of the 9-weeks grade, with the remaining 30% being determined by quiz/daily grades. The grading scale is as follows:

Exams, Quizzes, and Projects	70%
Class Assignments	30%
Class Activities, Lab Experiments, Homework, etc.	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>
A	89.5-100 %
B	79.5-89.4 %
C	69.5-79.4 %
D	64.5-69.4 %
F	64.4% and below

Grades will be a reflection of mastery of the standards. **Make sure all absences are excused as class work can be made up and graded for excused absences only.** The Final Exam counts for 1/5 of the student's final grade.

## Tests:

Tests will be every Friday or every other Friday depending on the unit. Test material will be taken from lecture notes, homework assignments, quizzes, textbook chapters, and laboratory work.

## District Exam Exemption Procedures:

Any student in grades 9-12 are eligible to earn an exam exemption for the Spring 2025 Exams for each class. Students are eligible to exempt a final exam if they have earned an **85% or higher** as the final grade for that course.

Any of the following will **EXCLUDE** a student from exempting the exam for that class

- More than five **EXCUSED** absences (including doctors notes)
- Any **UNEXCUSED** absence
- Assignment to In School Suspension (ISS) for 3 days or more
- Any Out of School Suspension (OSS)
- One or more days of Alternative School placement
- Not participating in the state standardized assessment for their grade level including all subtests (10th PreACT, 11th ACT with Writing, 12th WorkKeys)

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Attendance and full participation in reviews and assignments for the class leading up to the day of the final exam are required.

### Classroom Management Plan:

1. Verbal reprimand
2. Conference with student with parent contact
3. Withdrawal of privilege(s) with parent contact
4. Other consequences determined to be reasonable and appropriate by the school administration.

### Preparedness:

Students are expected to be prepared for class. This includes things such as paper and pencils for notes but also bringing a charged and operational school laptop. A school issued chromebook is required to be used on all assignments, quizzes and tests in the classroom. Failure to bring a school chromebook will result in the test or quiz being done on paper. If students have lost their chromebook, they are expected to promptly let me know so that I can put in a lost ticket and get them a replacement charger/chromebook. This needs to be done well before the test or quiz though as I do not have any extra laptops and cannot permit them to take the test without a school issued chromebook. If the student does not wish to carry a chromebook around in addition to their personal laptop, I have a locked and charging cart at the back of my room for storage of these devices which they may leave them in. If students choose to leave them in the cart, the teacher will not be held responsible for damages or loss of property.

### Projects/Homework:

Students should have ample time to complete assignments/projects in class. However, if a student is unable to complete the assignment/project, it should be completed at home. This should be the exception and not the norm.

### Lab Reports:

Lab report work will be graded on scientific methods, precision and accuracy of results, accuracy of calculations, laboratory techniques, report format (for formal lab reports), and the ability to reach sound conclusions.

**It is the student's responsibility to schedule any makeup lab work missed due to absence. Labs are especially time-sensitive!**

Most labs will be completed in groups; however, conclusions must be written in your **own** words.

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## Project Presentations:

Projects and presentations will be graded using a rubric, which will be provided to students. Some projects are completed in groups. All students in the group are expected to participate and contribute to the final product.

If you have a concern about productivity within your group, you must bring it to Mr. McKibbins attention ASAP.

## Academic Dishonesty Policy:

There is a zero tolerance policy in this classroom in regards to cheating. Cheating is but not limited to the following: Phone usage during a quiz or test, using an ai platform to plagiarize your written work, sharing work and homework with other students to copy, talking or communicating during a test/quiz when you or classmates are still working or any other example as outlined by the schools code of conduct. The discovery of cheating will result in a zero on the test, assignment or project and a parent contact. Subsequent cheating incidents will be filed with the administrators and may result in further disciplinary actions.

## AI Policy:

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to complete assignments without prior disclosure and approval is strictly prohibited. Any undisclosed use of AI tools will be considered academic dishonesty and will result in an automatic grade of zero for the assignment in question. All assignments are subject to verbal review.

## Turnitin and ZeroGPT Policy:

The majority of writing assignments in this course will be submitted to Turnitin via the Schoology learning platform and Zero GPT. The primary focus of these softwares is to help students become better writers and scholars. Both these softwares generate a report on the originality of student writing by comparing it with a database of periodicals, books, online content, student papers, and other published work. If the program detects plagiarized work, the student will be subject to the academic dishonesty policy above. **If the essay is above a 25% similarity to other sources according to Turnitin, the resulting grade will be a zero due to the violation of policy.**

## Make-Up Work Policy:

If you miss class, all assignments will be on Schoology. **It is your responsibility to get that work turned in!** Students are permitted to make up work, tests, and other assignments, activities, etc., when absences are excused. Under normal circumstances, it is expected that students will submit previously assigned work upon return to school after an excused absence. All work missed on the day(s) of excused absence(s) must be made up within **three school days** after returning to school, including tests. If the tests are not made up in 3 days, it will result in a zero. However, for extended excused absences when homebound services are not

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necessary, the teacher may grant additional time, but **not to extend beyond two weeks** past the return to school. It is the joint responsibility of student and parent to ensure a student makes up work following excused absences. Teachers may alter assignments, tests, work, activities, etc., as necessary to ensure an accurate evaluation of the student's performance after an excused absence.

### Missing work:

All work should be completed and turned in on time. If work is not completed, it will be put in as a zero in PowerSchools. The due date is hard and final.

### Course Materials:

Students will need to bring the following Materials with them to class Every Day:

- 2" or 2 ½" Binder with dividers
- 2 Composition notebooks, one for lab, one for Bellringers
- Notebook paper
- Writing utensil (pencils are preferred but pens are allowed)
- Blue, Yellow and Green Highlighters
- Set of Colored Pencils

### My wish list:

These are not required but would be very helpful for my classroom!

- Copy paper, Pencils/ Pens
- Tissues
- Lysol wipes
- Paper towels

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<b>18 - WEEK PLAN*</b>	
<b>Week 1-2</b>	Intro to Biology: Nature of Science, Experimental Design and Safety
<b>Week 3</b>	Unit #1- Characteristics of Living Things and Chemistry of Life
<b>Week 4-5</b>	Unit #2- The Macromolecules
<b>Week 6-7</b>	Unit #3- The Working Cell (Organelles and Cell Transport)
<b>Week 8-10</b>	Unit #4- Bioenergetics (Cellular Processes)
<b>Week 11-12</b>	Unit #5- The Cell Cycle, Genetics and Inheritance Patterns
<b>Week 13-14</b>	Unit #6- Evolution and Speciation
<b>Week 15-17</b>	Unit #7- Ecology and Ecosystems
<b>Week 18</b>	Exam Review

**\* This syllabus serves as a guide for both the teacher and student; however, during the term it may become necessary to make additions, deletions or substitutions.**