

Your Guide to the New Jersey Biology Competency Test, May 2016

New Jersey Department of Education

This pamphlet answers the most frequently asked questions about the New Jersey Biology Competency Test (NJBCT). It explains its importance to your child's education. The information describes what the test measures, why the assessment is given, how the results are reported, and why it is important for your child to do well on the assessment.

Questions and Answers

What is the New Jersey Biology Competency Test (NJBCT)?

The NJBCT is a state test given to students to measure whether they have gained the knowledge and skills identified in the Biology section of the Science Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS). The CCCS, adopted by the State Board of Education, identify what students should know and be able to do at the end of various benchmark years. The NJBCT will help determine whether your child is making satisfactory progress toward mastering Biology skills. All New Jersey public high school students, regardless of grade level, who are enrolled in a first-time Biology course or content equivalent during the 2015–2016 school year must take the test, regardless of prior testing exposure and experience.

2. In what other ways are the test results used?

Local school districts use the results to determine the appropriateness and strength of the local curriculum and to develop remedial programs to help students improve their knowledge and skills. The results are also used to satisfy federal requirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

3. Are children classified as special education required to take the test?

The NJBCT is designed to measure how well all high school students have mastered the Biology content standards, including students with learning disabilities. Special education students will be working to achieve the standards at levels appropriate for them and with accommodations or modifications they may need. These accommodations are defined in their Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). The accommodations or modifications should be the same as those used by these students in other classroom testing, and may include Braille, extended testing time, or a different testing site.

While most special education students will take the test, there will be a small percentage of students with the most severe disabilities for whom some of the content standards are not appropriate. The New Jersey Department of Education has identified those standards that are appropriate for students with severe disabilities. The department developed a different kind of tool to measure the achievements of special education students who are exempt from taking the NJBCT. The Alternate Proficiency Assessment (APA) was taken by students for the first time in November 2001. The portfolio assessment documents student performance in Mathematics, Language Arts Literacy, and Biology. Every student with a learning disability must take the NJBCT unless the IEP team determines that your child will participate in the APA. Parents and guardians of disabilities should discuss swittle. participation in the test, and any necessary accommodations, at the child's IEP meeting.

4. Can accommodations or modifications be made to the testing environment to accommodate my special education child?

Yes. Accommodations and modifications might include such aids as a Braille or large-print version, a different testing site, an extended amount of time for testing, or similar types of accommodations. You should meet with the child study team in your district to discuss necessary accommodations or modifications for your child. All accommodations and modifications must be specified in your child's IEP.

Biology Competency Test Study Guide

Rachel Sandford

Biology Competency Test Study Guide:

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Table of Contents Biology Competency Test Study Guide

- 1. Understanding the eBook Biology Competency Test Study Guide
 - The Rise of Digital Reading Biology Competency Test Study Guide
 - Advantages of eBooks Over Traditional Books
- 2. Identifying Biology Competency Test Study Guide
 - Exploring Different Genres
 - Considering Fiction vs. Non-Fiction
 - Determining Your Reading Goals
- 3. Choosing the Right eBook Platform
 - Popular eBook Platforms
 - Features to Look for in an Biology Competency Test Study Guide
 - User-Friendly Interface
- 4. Exploring eBook Recommendations from Biology Competency Test Study Guide
 - Personalized Recommendations
 - Biology Competency Test Study Guide User Reviews and Ratings
 - Biology Competency Test Study Guide and Bestseller Lists
- 5. Accessing Biology Competency Test Study Guide Free and Paid eBooks
 - Biology Competency Test Study Guide Public Domain eBooks
 - Biology Competency Test Study Guide eBook Subscription Services
 - Biology Competency Test Study Guide Budget-Friendly Options

- 6. Navigating Biology Competency Test Study Guide eBook Formats
 - o ePub, PDF, MOBI, and More
 - Biology Competency Test Study Guide Compatibility with Devices
 - Biology Competency Test Study Guide Enhanced eBook Features
- 7. Enhancing Your Reading Experience
 - Adjustable Fonts and Text Sizes of Biology Competency Test Study Guide
 - Highlighting and Note-Taking Biology Competency Test Study Guide
 - Interactive Elements Biology Competency Test Study Guide
- 8. Staying Engaged with Biology Competency Test Study Guide
 - Joining Online Reading Communities
 - Participating in Virtual Book Clubs
 - Following Authors and Publishers Biology Competency Test Study Guide
- 9. Balancing eBooks and Physical Books Biology Competency Test Study Guide
 - Benefits of a Digital Library
 - o Creating a Diverse Reading Collection Biology Competency Test Study Guide
- 10. Overcoming Reading Challenges
 - Dealing with Digital Eye Strain
 - Minimizing Distractions
 - Managing Screen Time
- 11. Cultivating a Reading Routine Biology Competency Test Study Guide
 - Setting Reading Goals Biology Competency Test Study Guide
 - Carving Out Dedicated Reading Time
- 12. Sourcing Reliable Information of Biology Competency Test Study Guide
 - Fact-Checking eBook Content of Biology Competency Test Study Guide
 - Distinguishing Credible Sources
- 13. Promoting Lifelong Learning
 - Utilizing eBooks for Skill Development
 - Exploring Educational eBooks
- 14. Embracing eBook Trends
 - Integration of Multimedia Elements

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