

4. Noncyclic electron flow and cyclic electron flow are two major pathways of the light-dependent reactions of photosynthesis. In noncyclic electron flow, electrons pass through photosystem II, then components of a chloroplast electron transport chain, and then photosystem I before finally reducing NADP^+ to NADPH. In cyclic electron flow, electrons cycle through photosystem I and some components of the electron transport chain (Figure 1).

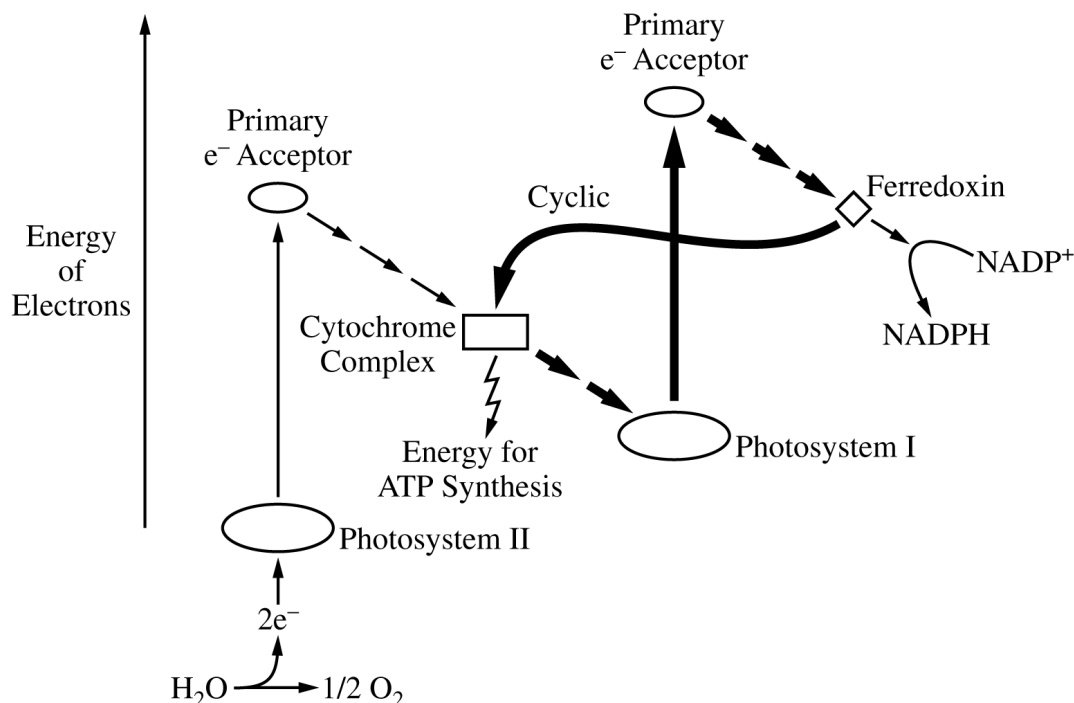


Figure 1. The pathways of noncyclic and cyclic (heavy arrows) electron flow. The cytochrome complex is a component of the electron transport chain between the two photosystems.

- (a) **Describe** the role of chlorophyll in the photosystems of plant cells.
- (b) Based on Figure 1, **explain** why an increase in the ratio of NADPH to NADP^+ will cause an increase in the flow of electrons through the cyclic pathway.
- (c) Using rice plants, scientists examined the effect of a mutation that results in the loss of the protein CRR6. CRR6 is a part of the photosystem I complex, and its absence reduces the activity of photosystem I. **Predict** the effect of the mutation on the rate of biomass (dry weight) accumulation.
- (d) **Justify** your prediction in part (c).