

4.3 Signal Transduction Pathways

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 10 marks

KEY WORDS amplification 放大 • receptor 受体 • signal transduction 信号转导

Objective

Build the skills to answer exam questions on **signal transduction pathways**.

You must be able to:

- describe a pathway as a **cascade** of activated molecules
- explain **amplification** 放大 of the signal
- explain how the same signal can give different responses in different cells

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a question type used later — follow the steps and you can do the Practice and Exam-style questions yourself.

■ A cascade

A transduction pathway is a **cascade**: molecule A activates B, which activates C, and so on, each step relaying the signal toward the response.

■ Amplification

At each step one active molecule can activate **many** of the next, so a **small** signal produces a **large** response — the signal is **amplified**.

■ Second messengers

Small molecules (like cyclic AMP or Ca^{2+}) can spread the signal quickly through the cell as **second messengers**, reaching many targets.

■ Different responses

The **same** signal can cause **different** responses in different cell types, because each cell has a different set of internal proteins and genes to act on.

2 Practice

Now apply the methods above.

2.1 What is a signal cascade? [1]

2.2 How does a small signal cause a large response? [1]

2.3 Give an example of a second messenger. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Signal amplification means that one signal molecule can lead to [1]

A	B
C	D

A no response

B exactly one product

C many activated molecules

D the receptor breaking down

3.2 The same hormone triggers different responses in two cell types.

(a) Explain how this is possible. [2]

(b) State one advantage of amplifying a signal. [1]

3.3 Describe how a cascade relays and amplifies a signal from the receptor to the response. [3]