3 · Practical Skills in Biology I

Pearson Edexcel · International A-Level · Biology · Vocabulary in context

Word	Example
absolute uncertainty /ˈæbsəluːt ʌnˈsɜːtənti/	The **absolute uncertainty** in 25.0 ± 0.1 cm is 0.1 cm. 25.0 ± 0.1 cm 0.1 cm
anomalous result /əˈnɒmələs rɪˈzʌlt/	Repeat the treatment before deciding how to handle an **anomalous result**.
bar chart /bɑː tʃɑːt/	Use a **bar chart** to compare the four named treatments.
colorimeter /ˌkʌləˈrɪmɪtə/	A **colorimeter** measures the light absorbed by this coloured solution.
control treatment /kənˈtrəʊl ˈtriːtmənt/	The solvent-only **control treatment** tests whether the solvent affects growth.
control variable /kənˈtrəʊl ˈveərɪəbl/	The temperature is a **control variable**: we keep it the same.
dependent variable /dɪˈpendənt ˈveərɪəbl/	The **dependent variable** is the one you measure.
error bars /ˈerə bɑːz/	**Error bars** show a stated measure of spread or uncertainty.
gradient /ˈgreɪdɪənt/	An electrostatic field points opposite to the potential **gradient**.
graticule /ˈgrætɪkjuːl/	Calibrate the **graticule** before using it to measure cells.
hypothesis /haɪˈpɒθəsɪs/	Our **hypothesis** predicts more growth in brighter light.

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independent variable /ˌɪndɪˈpendənt ˈveərɪəbl/	The **independent variable** is the one you change.
line graph /laɪn græf/	Use a **line graph** to show how absorbance changes over time.
mitotic index /maɪˈtɒtɪk ˈɪndeks/	If 20 of 100 cells are dividing, the **mitotic index** is 0.2. 100 20 0.2
Percentage uncertainty /pəˈsentɪdʒ ʌnˈsɜːtənti/	**Percentage uncertainty** is the uncertainty divided by the reading, times 100. 100
semi-quantitative /ˈsemi ˈkwɒntɪteɪtɪv/	The colour of Benedict's test is **semi-quantitative**: it shows roughly how much sugar, not the exact amount.
Significant figures /sɪgˈnɪfɪkənt ˈfɪgəz/	Give your answer to the same **significant figures** as your data.
standard deviation /ˈstændəd ˌdiːvɪˈeɪʃn/	A larger **standard deviation** means the values are more spread out.
systematic error /ˌsɪstəˈmætɪk ˈerə/	A scale that reads too high gives a **systematic error**.
uncertainties /ʌnˈsɜːtəntiz/	Show the **uncertainties** of your readings, such as ± 0.5 cm^3. ± 0.5 cm^3

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