# 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.<br>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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| Word | Example |
|---|---|
| **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.<br>100 20<br>0.2 |
| **Percentage uncertainty** /pəˈsentɪdʒ ʌnˈsɜːtənti/ | **Percentage uncertainty** is the uncertainty divided by the reading, times 100.<br>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 $cm^3$.<br>±0.5 $cm^3$ |