2.3 Energy systems

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 18 marks**

KEY WORDS ATP–PC system • anaerobic glycolysis • aerobic system • energy continuum • running economy • EPOC

Objective

Build the skills to answer exam questions on **energy systems**: how ATP is resynthesized by the **ATP–PC**, **anaerobic glycolysis** and **aerobic** systems, the energy continuum, $\dot{V}O_2$max and running economy.

You must be able to:

- explain why ATP must be resynthesized and describe the three energy systems
- relate energy systems to the duration and intensity of activities
- calculate percentage of maximum oxygen uptake and compare economy

1 Key knowledge and worked examples

Energy systems

Muscles use **ATP** for contraction, but they store only enough for a few seconds. ATP is constantly **resynthesized** by three systems that work together; the one that **dominates** depends on intensity and duration.

system	fuel	where	speed of ATP supply	dominant in	by-products
ATP–PC	phosphocreatine (PC)	cytoplasm	fastest	up to about 10 s, maximal (100 m, jump)	none harmful
anaerobic glycolysis	glucose or glycogen	cytoplasm	fast	about 10 s to 2 min (400 m)	**lactate** and H^+ (acidity)
aerobic	glucose, fats (and some protein)	**mitochondria**	slow	over about 2 min (10 km, marathon)	CO_2 and water

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Anaerobic glycolysis gives 2 ATP per glucose; full aerobic breakdown gives about 30–32. At low intensity more **fat** is used; as intensity rises, more **carbohydrate** is used.

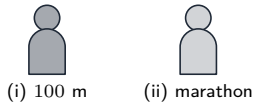
Energy continuum: all systems work at the same time; their shares change with time. Aerobic and anaerobic supply are about equal at about 1–2 minutes of maximal exercise.

$\dot{V}O_2$**max** is the maximum rate of oxygen uptake (ml kg^{-1} min^{-1}). **Movement economy** is the oxygen cost of moving at a given speed: a more economical runner uses a smaller **percentage** of $\dot{V}O_2$max at the same speed.

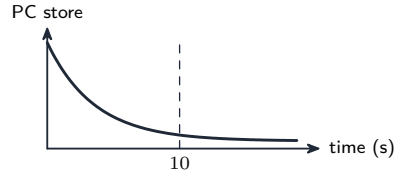
Answer shapes: name the system, its fuel, how fast it works and how long it lasts.

2 Practice

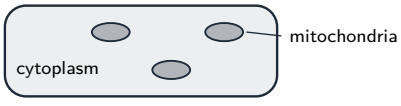
2.1 Identify the energy system that supplies most of the ATP in (i) a 100 m sprint and (ii) a marathon. [2]



2.2 Explain why the ATP–PC system can supply energy for only about 10 seconds of maximal work. [3]



2.3 Compare anaerobic glycolysis with the aerobic system. [3]

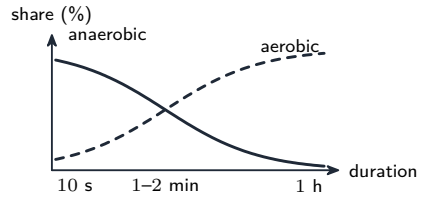


3 Exam-style questions

3.1 The graph shows the share of energy from aerobic and anaerobic systems in maximal exercise of different durations.

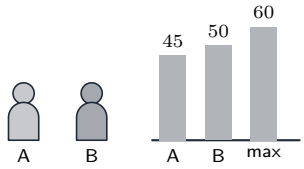
(a) Estimate the duration when the two shares are equal. [1]

(b) Explain why all three energy systems contribute in an 800 m race (about 2 minutes). [3]



3.2 Two runners both have a $\dot{V}O_2$max of 60 ml kg^{-1} min^{-1}. At 16 km h^{-1}, runner A uses 45 ml kg^{-1} min^{-1} and runner B uses 50 ml kg^{-1} min^{-1}.

(a) Calculate the percentage of $\dot{V}O_2$max each runner uses at this speed. [2]



(b) Explain which runner is likely to run faster in a 10 km race. [2]

(c) Suggest **two** factors that improve running economy. [2]

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