

AP Biology

Mrs. Carmen Austin
Room 222

Dear Parents,

Welcome! I would like to thank you for visiting our AP Biology class. I hope that the information contained in this letter will provide you sufficient information regarding the Advanced Placement Biology course offered at Wharton High School. If you have any additional concerns, comments, or questions, please contact me at your earliest convenience. I may be reached at:

Wharton High School
Phone # 631-4710 ext. 256
Fax # 631-4722
Conference Period: 1:30 - 2:45pm

Mrs. Austin's Email:
carmen.austin@sdhc.k12.fl.us
Mrs. Austin's Web Site
www.austins-apbiology.com

□ COURSE INFORMATION

Biology is one science that touches on all human activity and is most relevant to our daily lives. An understanding of biology is essential if individuals are to make informed decisions about their current and future lifestyles. Although no single discipline provides complete comprehension of the human condition, biology affords opportunities for integration with other natural sciences, as well as the social sciences and the humanities.

The Advanced Placement Biology course provides students with the opportunity to complete college biology at the high school site. A detailed description of the course, including goals, history, topics, required laboratories, and final exam is attached. Please read these pages for a better understanding of the program. Additional information can be downloaded from the College Board website at www.collegeboard.org.

□ TEACHER INFORMATION

Mrs. Austin is a graduate of the University of South Florida with a Natural Sciences double major in both biology and chemistry. Mrs. Austin received her Masters of Science degree in Education and is certified in biology, chemistry, and gifted education. Prior to teaching at Wharton High School, Mrs. Austin taught honors and gifted biology at Hill JHS and Gaither HS. She has been teaching for over 25 years. In addition to teaching, Mrs. Austin has written & published eight laboratory modules (Kemtec Educational's C.L.A.S.S. Kits series), is a contributing author of the N.S.T.A. publication Planning and Managing Dissection Laboratories, has produced three educational videos, and is the Science Department chairperson at Wharton High. Mrs. Austin has been nominee for "Teacher of the Year" five times and has twice been a finalist for the Hillsborough County "Teacher of the Year" honors.

□ MY PHILOSOPHY OF TEACHING

Children are our most important natural resource. I believe that teachers must think of each student not just as a member in a class of many, but also as an individual with specific needs and talents. I believe that as their teacher, I can give them a comprehensive view of modern biology and also provide them with the opportunity to develop skills that will allow them to be successful once they leave my class. Teaching is not just my occupation, it is my avocation. I look forward to the challenging year ahead and to working with your son or daughter.

□ REQUIRED & SUGGESTED SUPPLIES

◆ Students need the following items:

3 ring binder (2" size) w/ dividers
notebook paper (college rule)
index cards (3" x 5")

pens / pencils / coloring pencils
highlighter pens & "whiteout"
calculator

◆ Cliffs [Advanced Placement Biology Preparation Guide](#) by Phillip E. Pack I strongly suggest that this exam prep guide be purchased. Price: \$14.95.

□ GRADING SYSTEM

◆ Students will be graded on TOTAL POINTS using the following:

Tests & Quizzes

Labs

Daily Work (homework / classwork / labs / notebook)

Grades are entered into a computer & are updated after every unit test.

□ WHAT CAN PARENTS DO TO HELP?

- a) Help your child get organized. Students are required to keep a notebook. Periodically, look through this notebook. Have the handouts been completed?
- b) Show interest in your child's homework. Ask to see the latest assignment. Check the "Assignment Sheets" for due dates.
- c) Establish regular study time. Does your child have a quiet place for studying, away from the distractions of the telephone, television, etc? Encourage your child to study regularly (1hr. minimum/day), rather than just the night before the test. The Campbell [Biology](#) text should be brought home and read daily.
- d) Ask your child what he or she did in school that day. Allow time for your child to explain and show your interest.
- e) Assist in studying for a test by offering to read questions from the book.
- f) At least once a week, ask your child if they are having difficulties. If so, make arrangements for them to stay for after-school help sessions offered prior to every unit test (from 3:00-4:30pm).
- g) Make certain that your child attends class every day. Schedule doctor's appointments for after school hours.