

Feb 5 - lecture notes

Part I. Categories of Life on Earth – a brief overview

Part II. Cellular respiration and anaerobic respiration (fermentation)

Part III. Proteins reviewed: a precautionary tale (notes taken in lecture...)

Part I. Categories of Life on Earth – a brief overview

Every species on Earth belongs to one of three broad categories called domains. These three domains are: Bacteria, Archaea, and Eukarya.

Bacteria and Archaea: are single-celled organisms called **prokaryotes** (because their cells lack a nucleus: pro = “before” + karyon = “kernel”).

Eukarya : the vast majority of eukaryotic species are multicellular, but some are single-celled. Eukaryotic cells have a nucleus (Eu = “good” + karyon = “kernel”, referring to nucleus). Every eukaryote species belongs to one of four kingdoms:

- The four kingdoms of eukaryotes
- 1) **Kingdom Animalia**
 - 2) **Kingdom Plantae** (we will study in-depth, focus of Bot100!)
 - 3) **Kingdom Fungi** (we will cover in a lecture-lab combo later)
 - 4) **Kingdom Protista** (any eukaryote not animal, plant, or fungus. This is an incredibly diverse group, but it contains an important group for us to consider: **algae**. We’ll discuss algae later in the course in a lecture/lab combo!

Recall the “tree of life” that we drew in class – you should be able to draw it (and visualize it) readily! Can you close your eyes and “see the tree”?!

All species eukaryotes are assigned to one of the four kingdoms of Eukarya (plants, animals, fungi, and protists) based upon properties of their cell structure. We will not belabor these differences in cell structure, but instead we’ll mention any differences that are interesting/important when we discuss each group.

In Botany 100, we will focus our attention to plant kingdom, but we will also discuss fungi and protists (more on those when the time arises).

What do all eukaryotes and nearly all prokaryotes have in common? They all conduct **cellular respiration** (when O₂ is present...see more below!).

Part II. Cellular respiration and anaerobic respiration (fermentation)

Cellular respiration: The process by which organisms break down ‘food’ molecules* (especially glucose) to make ATP:



[Note that this is the reverse of photosynthesis (which we will cover over the next three lectures) except that in cellular respiration lots of ATP is made!]

* FYI: other food molecules include the other carbohydrates, and also fats and proteins that can be broken into the 3-carbon molecule pyruvate...(we will not study this in detail...)

Mitochondrion (pl = mitochondria): eukaryote organelle in which cellular respiration takes place (most of the process, anyways – we won’t delve into the detailed chemistry). For this reason, mitochondria are known collectively as the “powerhouse(s) of a cell”.

ATP (Adenosine triphosphate): A molecule whose bonds have very high potential energy and which serves as the universal, usable energy (E) currency in cells.

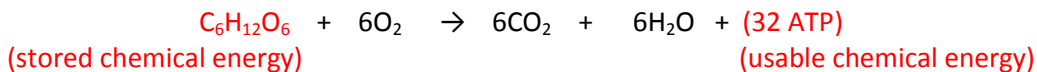
(FYI: The breakdown of ATP to ADP + P produces energy that is used by cells for most processes that require energy: from transmembrane proteins to the twitching of muscle fibers in animals. – I won’t ask this parenthetical material on exams.)

No need to know this information:

NAD and FAD: H⁺ and electron “Shuttle molecules” in cellular respiration.

(NAD and FAD accept hydrogen atoms (and become **NADH / FADH₂**) that are split off of glucose during glycolysis, and off of shorter 3-C chains during the Krebs cycle) and they “shuttle” the H atoms (and their electrons!!) from these first two stages of cellular respiration to the electron transport chain).

So, at its essence, respiration is just the conversion of stored chemical energy in glucose to immediately usable chemical energy of ATP!!



Molecule	Biochemical role	Banking analog
Starch / Fats (triglycerides)*	Medium – long term and stable energy storage	Bank account
Glucose / Sucrose	Short-term and transportable energy storage	Traveler’s check or personal check
ATP	Immediate energy source for cellular processes	CASH!!!

*we’ll discuss fats (triglycerides) in lab

Some toxins act by interfering with cellular respiration – two examples we mentioned in lecture were rotenone (found seeds, stems, and leaves of jicama, *Pachyrhizus erosus* FABACEAE, and relatives), and cyanide (found in many grasses, family POACEAE). How is this an adaptive trait?

Bamboo & panda biology we discussed:

1) Bamboo and cyanide

Bamboo is a type of grass (grass family = POACEAE). It turns out that pandas have an ability to neutralize the cyanide. They do this via an enzyme (rhodanase) found in mitochondria.

Why does this location make sense? Sounds like a good exam question!

2) Bamboo is largely cellulose

Pandas live almost exclusively off of bamboo. Bamboo is mostly cellulose, and as you know (or should know!) animals cannot digest cellulose. So, how do pandas survive on this relatively low calorie diet? Two possible explanations are: 1) they *might* have gut bacteria that digest cellulose – this is a relatively new and controversial finding. 2) They simply eat a LOT of bamboo (by some estimates, up to half of their body weight every day)! Pandas spend most of their waking hours sitting around eating bamboo, and they do not hibernate in part because this low calorie food does not provide the energy required to store enough fat to carry pandas through a winter hibernation.

3) Bamboo mass flowering

Bamboo (and all grasses) are flowering plants. Most species of bamboo flower very infrequently – often times not flowering for up to many decades at a time. Amazingly in some species of bamboo, all individual plants flower at all locations across the globe. How do they “know” to do so? This is a mystery! Not mysterious is the impact on panda survival: species of bamboo plants eaten by pandas die off after flowering. Because of mass flowering, the ensuing mass die-offs place pandas at risk of starvation in large areas.

OK, back to cellular respiration:

Why is this process called cellular “respiration” – isn’t respiration “breathing”? It is referred to as respiration because the process requires O_2 and generates CO_2 – and this is exactly why we need to breathe – to provide cells with O_2 and get rid of the CO_2 waste product!!

So, what happens when we can’t breathe, or can’t breathe fast enough to supply the O_2 needed for cellular respiration?

If O_2 is not available for cellular respiration, some organisms have evolved a mechanism for making ATP when O_2 is absent – fermentation!

Anaerobic respiration (a.k.a., fermentation) – a way of making ATP in the absence of O_2 .

- There are two types of fermentation (that we will study...and these are the prominent in nature), and each named after the principal waste product that is generated
 - 1) Lactic acid fermentation
 - 2) Alcohol fermentation
- Fermentation only yields 2 ATP per molecule of glucose

Lactic acid fermentation

Waste product: lactic acid

ATP produced per glucose molecule: 2 ATP

Happens in:

- A) Animals deprived of O₂ – such as you when fleeing from your older brother or other authority figure!!
- B) Some bacteria (used in production of dairy products such as cheese and yogurt – why some yogurt says “contains live cultures”). In fact, this is where the term *Lactic acid fermentation* (as in *Lactose*) comes from. The bacteria in cheese and yogurt ferment lactose (milk sugar – contains glucose) into lactic acid, which gives this process its name. Lactic acid also gives yogurt and cheese its tangy flavor.
- C) A small number of fungi. We did not discuss these.

The Biochemistry of Cheese making (as relevant to Botany 100!)

We briefly discussed the process of cheese making. You should know that many cheeses are aged through fermentation by bacteria and/or fungi, many of which conduct lactic acid fermentation. The following won't be covered on exams in detail (extra credit?), but here is a general overview:

- 1) Milk is allowed to curdle (form solids, curds). Curdling is due to denaturing of casein proteins in the milk. In some cases, these proteins are denatured by lactic acid produced by bacteria, but more typically by the enzyme rennin (which, until very recently, has been obtained from the stomachs of calves at slaughter houses).
- 2) Cheese curds are strained, water and the whey (the other major class of proteins in milk, which are not denatured and remain liquid) are eliminated.
- 3) Curdles are pressed in a mold.
- 4) Cheese is aged with bacteria or fungi (or both!). Lactic acid produced by these organisms helps flavor the cheese, imparting a “sour” or “tangy” flavor. Other microbes produce wastes that impart other flavors – such as the *Penicillium* spp. used in “blue cheeses” and brie, among others.
...and in swiss cheese...
- 5) In “Swiss cheese”, fermentation occurs in (at least) two stages: 1) one guild of bacteria converts sugars to lactic acid (lactic acid fermentation), and; 2) other bacteria convert the lactic acid to other acids and CO₂. As the CO₂ is trapped in the cheese, it forms air pockets that causes “holes” in Swiss cheese.

Alcohol fermentation

Waste products: ethanol, and CO₂.

ATP produced per glucose molecule: 2 ATP

Happens in: Yeasts and some bacteria.

- Yeasts in anaerobic conditions are what generate ethanol and CO₂ in production of alcoholic beverages.
- In wine the CO₂ is allowed to escape, in beer it is contained...hence bubbles...).
- In wine, the sugar source is glucose and fructose in grapes.
- In beer, the story is a bit more complicated, but the sugar source (mostly) is glucose locked up as starch...we'll discuss further in lab and future lectures.
- We will discuss this more in lab during week 3 or 4.

Part III. Proteins reviewed: a precautionary tale (notes taken in lecture...)

Were you present? Did you take any notes or recall important concepts such as:

- 1) How are common names often misleading?
- 2) Why does it make sense for a legume to manufacture a toxin that is an amino acid?
- 3) What molecules are made up of long chains of amino acids?
- 4) The amino acid in question here is toxic because it causes proteins to lose their 3D shape. Why does this matter?