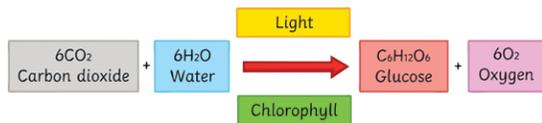


AQA GCSE (Combined Science) Unit 4: Bioenergetics Higher

Photosynthesis

Photosynthesis is a chemical reaction which takes place in plants. It converts **carbon dioxide** and **water** into **glucose** and **oxygen**. It uses **light** energy to power the chemical reaction, which is absorbed by the green pigment **chlorophyll**. This means that photosynthesis is an example of an **endothermic** reaction. The whole reaction takes place inside the **chloroplasts** which are small organelles found in plant cells.

Plants acquire the carbon dioxide via diffusion through the **stomata** of their leaves. The water is absorbed from the soil through the **roots** and transported to the cells carrying out photosynthesis, via the **xylem**.



The glucose made in photosynthesis is used for respiration, stored as starch, fat or oils, used to produce cellulose or used to produce amino acids for protein synthesis.

The Rate of Photosynthesis and Limiting Factors

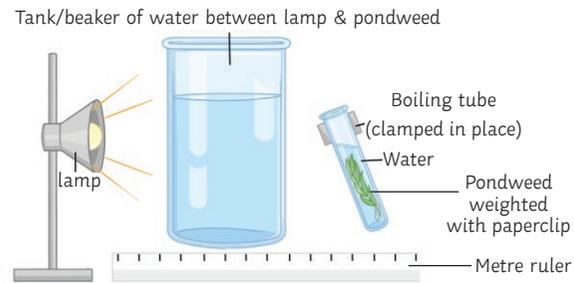
A **limiting factor** is something which stops the photosynthesis reaction from occurring at a faster rate. **Temperature**, **light intensity** and **carbon dioxide** level are all limiting factors.

Increasing the temperature of the surroundings will increase the rate of reaction, but only up to around 45°C. At around this temperature, the enzymes which catalyse the reaction become denatured.

Increasing the light intensity will increase the rate of reaction because there is more energy to carry out more reactions. Increasing the carbon dioxide concentration will also increase the rate of reaction because there are more reactants available.

The Effect of Light Intensity on the Rate of Photosynthesis (RPI)

The amount of light a plant receives affects the rate of photosynthesis. If a plant receives lots of light, lots of photosynthesis will occur. If there is very little or no light, photosynthesis will stop.



Method

1. Measure 20cm³ of sodium hydrogen carbonate solution and pour into a boiling tube.
2. Collect a 10cm piece of pondweed and gently attach a paper clip to one end.
3. Clamp the boiling tube, ensuring you will be able to shine light onto the pondweed.
4. Place a metre rule next to the clamp stand.
5. Place the lamp 10cm away from the pondweed.
6. Wait two minutes, until the pondweed has started to produce bubbles.
7. Using the stopwatch, count the number of bubbles produced in a minute.
8. Repeat stages 5 to 7, moving the lamp 10cm further away from the pondweed each time until you have five different distances.
9. Now repeat the experiment twice more to ensure you have three readings for each distance.

The **independent** variable was the light intensity.

The **dependent** variable was the amount of bubbles produced. Counting the bubbles is a common method, but you could use a gas syringe instead to more accurately measure the volume of oxygen produced.

The **control** variables were same amount of time and same amount of pondweed. A bench lamp is used to control the light intensity and the water in the test tube containing the pondweed is monitored with a thermometer to monitor and control the temperature.

Interaction of Limiting Factors (HT only)

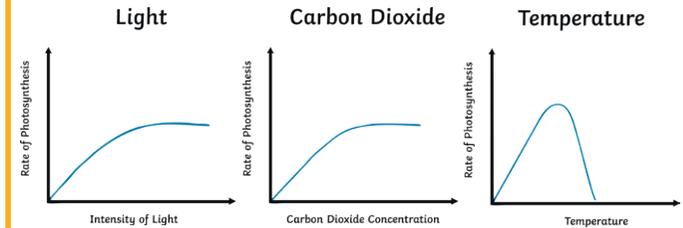
The limiting factor for the reaction will depend on the environmental conditions.

For example:

At night, light intensity is the limiting factor.

In winter, temperature is the limiting factor.

In other conditions, carbon dioxide is usually the limiting factor.



From the graph, you can see that increasing one of the factors will also increase the rate of reaction, but only for so long before it plateaus. This is because another factor will have then become the limiting factor. E.g. you could increase the supply of carbon dioxide, but if there is not enough chlorophyll to absorb the sunlight, then the sunlight will become the limiting factor instead.

Greenhouse Economics (HT only)

To grow plants in the most suitable conditions, a greenhouse can be used.

A greenhouse traps the sun's radiation as heat inside the greenhouse, so that temperature is not a limiting factor for the rate of photosynthesis.

Artificial lighting can be installed in the greenhouse to provide constant light energy and prevent light intensity being a limiting factor.

A paraffin heater can be used in the greenhouse to not only maintain a suitable temperature, but the by-product of the combustion of the paraffin is carbon dioxide.

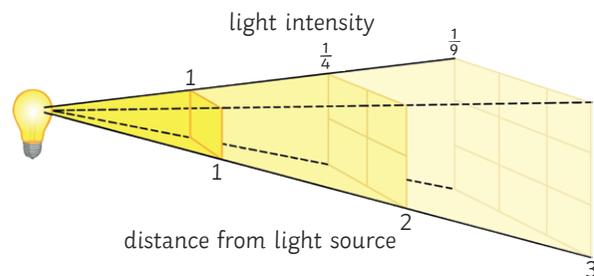
Enclosing the crops in a greenhouse and regulating all the conditions in this way can be expensive; however, it is often outweighed because the harvest of the crop is much healthier, faster-grown crops. Furthermore, the enclosed conditions mean that disease and pests can be easily controlled and prevented.

AQA GCSE (Combined Science) Unit 4: Bioenergetics Higher

Inverse Square Law and Light Intensity

The **inverse square law** is used to describe the light intensity at different distances from the source.

The inverse square law states that: **the intensity of light is inversely proportional to the square distance from the source.**



Light intensity is calculated by the following equation:

$$\text{light intensity} \propto \frac{1}{\text{distance}^2}$$

- The symbol, \propto , means 'is proportional to'.
- Distance is measured in metres, m.

In other words, if an object is moved twice as far away from the light source, the light intensity received is reduced to just one quarter.

Worked example:

If the light source is 10cm from a plant, calculate the light intensity reaching the plant.

$$\begin{aligned} 1 \div (\text{distance}^2) \\ 1 \div (0.10 \times 0.10) \\ 1 \div 0.01 \\ = \mathbf{100 \text{ arbitrary units}} \end{aligned}$$

If the light source is moved 25cm from the plant, calculate the light intensity reaching the plant.

$$\begin{aligned} 1 \div (\text{distance}^2) \\ 1 \div (0.25 \times 0.25) \\ 1 \div 0.0625 \\ = \mathbf{16 \text{ arbitrary units}} \end{aligned}$$

Respiration

Respiration is the chemical reaction which occurs inside the **mitochondria** of all living cells to release energy for living functions and processes, e.g. movement, warmth and building larger molecules for growth and repair. The reaction is **exothermic**, meaning that energy is released to the surroundings.

Respiration can be either **aerobic** (using oxygen) or **anaerobic** (without using oxygen).



In anaerobic respiration, the glucose is not completely oxidised. This means that there is less energy released than in aerobic respiration.



In plants and yeast, anaerobic respiration makes some different products. The reaction is also called fermentation and is used in bread-making and beer-brewing.



Effect of Exercise

When a person exercises, their body (specifically their **muscles**) need much more energy. To release more energy, the amount of respiration reactions occurring has to increase.

The **heart** pumps faster and the **breathing** rate and breath volume all increase to supply more **oxygen** to the muscles via the bloodstream.

If the muscles are not receiving enough oxygen to keep up the demand needed by the respiration reactions, then **anaerobic** respiration begins to occur. This incomplete oxidation of the glucose produces **lactic acid**, which can build up in the muscles and results in an **oxygen debt**.

After long periods of exercise, the muscles can become fatigued and stop contracting. You might experience a pain commonly called a **stitch**.

Metabolism

Metabolism is the combination of all the reactions in a cell or in the body.

Energy released during respiration is used during metabolic processes to synthesise new molecules:

- Glucose is converted to starch, glycogen and cellulose.
- Glycerol and three fatty acids are joined to form a lipid molecule.
- Glucose and nitrate ions are joined to form amino acids.
- Amino acids are joined to form proteins.
- Excess proteins are broken down and released as urea during excretion.

Respiration itself is also a process which is included in metabolism.

Oxygen Debt (HT only)

During vigorous exercise, the body can begin to carry out **anaerobic respiration** and produces **lactic acid**.

Lactic acid is transported via the bloodstream to the **liver**. The liver converts the lactic acid back into **glucose**. However, **oxygen** is needed to carry out this reaction.

The **oxygen debt** is the amount of the oxygen required by the body to convert the built-up lactic acid back into glucose and remove it from the respiring cells.

