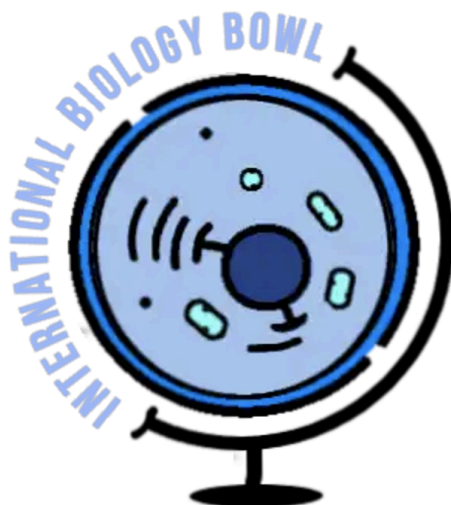


International Biology Bowl

Comprehensive Information Document



<https://biologybowl.org/>

[Last Updated September 30, 2025]

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I. Logistics & Registration

General Information

Designed to foster an interest in biology among high-school students through competition and collaboration, the International Biology Bowl (IBB) hopes to make each competition an enjoyable and enriching experience for all students, regardless of their abilities in the biological sciences. The IBB will hold its 4th annual competition season beginning in October 2024 and lasting until February 2025. All exams, bowl packets, and communication will use English as their primary language. The IBB website can be found at <https://biologybowl.org/>.

Team Composition

Participants have the option of competing individually or in teams of up to four participants. All participants must be students currently enrolled in a **high school or middle school (grades 6-12)** or be enrolled in an institution of equivalent academic level. Team members may be changed up a week before the competition start time for each competition. **If a team advances to the semifinal round of any competition, its members cannot be changed.** Any changes to team composition must be submitted to one of the IBB Tournament Directors through Discord or emailed to internationalbiologybowl@gmail.com.

Academic Integrity

To uphold the academic integrity of the competition as well as provide all competitors with an enjoyable and enriching experience, suspected or attempted cheating, as well as any and all violations of the rules outlined in this document, will result in automatic disqualification of the Competitor/Team for the entire season without an opportunity to appeal. For severe violations, Competitors/Teams may be banned from competing in any and all future IBB tournaments. The IBB Tournament Directors withhold the right to make final decisions regarding this matter.

For all other infractions, Competitors/Teams may appeal their case, which will be reviewed on a case-to-case basis (see [Grievances/Appeals](#)).

Registration

Each region has a unique registration form (Google Form). Only one team member per team should complete the form for his/her entire team. An email showing your responses will be sent to the first email provided on the form immediately after submission. Please check your Spam box if it does not arrive. Teams may register up until 24 hours before the competition start time to be considered registered teams. Late registration forms will not be accepted, however, may be appealed.

2025-26 IBB Tournament Registration Forms	
Tournament	Form
USA Biology Bowl	Link
Asian Biology Bowl	Link
International Open Round	Link

II. Timeline

Regional Competition Timelines - Dec. 1 Signup Deadline

Dates	USA Biology Bowl (EST)	Asian Biology Bowl (EST)
Registration Opens	Sep 17, 2025	Sep 17, 2025
Registration Closes	Dec 1, 2025	Oct 1, 2025
Open Round	Dec 6, 2025	Dec 6, 2025
Semifinals (Dates Tentative)	Dec 14, 2025	Dec 13, 2025

International Competition Timeline - TBD (2025-26 Registration NOT OPEN)

Dates	Novice Division (EST)	Advanced Division (EST)
Registration Opens	TBD	TBD
Registration Closes	TBD	TBD
Open Round	TBD	TBD
Semifinals	TBD	TBD

III. Overall Competition Structure

Regional Competitions (Direct Qualification vs IBB Open Qualification)

Held in November, regional competitions divide the world into two regions. The United States is represented by the USA Biology Bowl (USABB). All international competitors are assigned to compete in the Asian Biology Bowl (ABB). The goal of these regional competitions is to provide all competitors, specifically those not as confident in their abilities in the biological sciences, to receive exposure to the many biological fields.

After the Regional Open Rounds, the 32 top-scoring teams have an opportunity to advance to the Semifinals round of each tournament. The **top 4 placing teams from the USABB Semifinals** and the **top 4 placing teams from the ABB Semifinals** round earn **direct qualification** to the **International Semifinals round** without needing to take the International Open Exam (Though they may choose to do so for additional practice). We choose to hold qualification to the International Semifinals in this multipart way to give competitors more opportunities, regional competition, and exposure to questions of varying difficulties in all fields of the biological sciences.

The Regional Open Rounds will have questions ranging from AP Biology to a country's first/second round biology olympiad level questions (eg. USABO Open Exam/Semifinals or NSEB/INBO).

	USABB Tournaments
# of Open Round Exam Questions	90
Open Round Time Limit	120 minutes
Content Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal Anatomy & Physiology • Cell Biology • Genetics • Botany • Ecology/Ethology • Biosystematics/ Bioinformatics
Difficulty Range	AP Biology to USA Biology Olympiad Open/Semifinals Round
# of Semifinalist Teams	32
Prizes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automatic qualification to the International Semifinals for the top 4 teams • Certificates for all teams <p>Certificate Designations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st - 4th place = Winner • USABB qualifying teams = Semifinalist • TBD = Honorable Mention

	ABB Tournament
# of Open Round Exam Questions	90
Open Round Time Limit	120 minutes
Content Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal Anatomy & Physiology • Cell Biology • Genetics • Botany • Ecology/Ethology • Biosystematics/ Bioinformatics
Difficulty Range	AP Biology to USA Biology Olympiad Open/Semifinals Round
# of Semifinalist Teams	32
Prizes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automatic qualification to International Semifinals for the top 4 teams • Certificates for all teams <p>Certificate Designations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st - 4th place = Winner • USABB qualifying teams = Semifinalist • TBD = Honorable Mention

International Competition

Held in February, the International Competition brings students together from around the world to compete for a cash prize and the title of “Champion.” Regardless of whether or not a Competitor/Team competed in one of the three regional competitions, the International Competition is open to anybody and everybody. The **top 24 teams from the International Advanced Open Round** will advance to the International Advanced Semifinals Round **along with the 8 teams who earned direct qualification**, totaling 32 semi-finalist teams. The **top 28 teams from the International Novice Open Round** will advance to the International Novice

Semifinals Round **along with the 4 teams who earned direct qualification** through the China Biology Bowl, totaling 32 semi-finalist teams.

Due to its international nature, the questions in the International Open Round will be more difficult than in regional rounds. All major biology fields recognized by the International Biology Olympiad will be covered at varying difficulty levels.

Divisions

For the 2024-25 International Tournament, we will be keeping our two divisions: Novice and Advanced. A summary of the two divisions is seen in the table on the next page. **Teams may only register under ONE division.**

Registration and competition dates for the Novice and Advanced divisions may be found under the [Timeline](#) section.

**** We highly recommend that you choose the division that best suits your abilities and needs; however, there are no restrictions to competing in either division.**

	Novice Division	Advanced Division
# of Open Round Exam Questions	50	90
Open Round Time Limit	60 minutes	120 minutes
Content Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Anatomy & Physiology • Cell Biology • Genetics • Ecology/Ethology • Miscellaneous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal Anatomy & Physiology • Cell Biology • Genetics • Botany • Ecology/Ethology • Biosystematics/Bioinformatics
Difficulty Range	Honors to AP Biology	AP Biology to USA Biology Olympiad Open/Semifinals Round NSEB/INBO
# of Semifinalist Teams	32	32
Prizes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificates for all teams <p>Certificate Designations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st - 32nd place = Semifinalist • TBD - TBD place = Honorable Mention • TBD - TBD place = Merit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash prize for top teams • Certificates for all teams <p>Certificate Designations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st - 32nd place = Semifinalist • TBD - TBD place = Honorable Mention • TBD - TBD place = Merit
Purpose	Allows students to explore their interests in biology and practice for the AP/IB Biology exams or other standardized tests.	Challenges students who have taken AP Biology and undergone preparation for their country's Biology Olympiad.

Administration

The USABB/ABB Open Rounds are characterized by a completely multiple-choice exam with some multi-select. The International Open Round will consist of a 90-question multiple-choice exam with some multi-select. The time limit is 120 minutes for all exams except the Novice Division, which will feature a 60-minute long exam.

The multiple-choice exams are online using Google Forms with a timer software that tracks your time outside of the testing browser. You will be emailed an exam link prior to the competition; however, beginning before the official start time will result in disqualification. **All team members must open the form, turn their webcam and screen recording permissions on, and designate, among themselves, which submission from the team will be scored. All team members must submit the form regardless of whether it is the scored form or not.** You may use screen sharing via Discord, Google Meet, Zoom, or FaceTime so that all members are able to view the exam and communicate with each other. The exam does **not** auto-submit, so please be mindful of your time. Any attempt to modify the identification code at the end of the exam may result in disqualification.

Each Semifinals round is characterized by a Quizbowl-style competition. Beginning and ending on the same day, teams will go head-to-head in rounds of increasing difficulty until a team is victorious. Each round will have a packet containing 40 questions (20 tossups and 20 bonuses), with the final packet containing 25 tossups and 25 bonuses, totaling 50 questions. Teams are REQUIRED to have some sort of secondary or workspace camera.

Question Types

Of the four question formats, three may be present on any and all IBB tournament exams. The last is only specific to the ABB Open Round. For all types of questions, there is no penalty for incorrect answers so it is encouraged to attempt every question.

1) Multiple Choice

- a) A question, which may be aided with a stimulus, followed by a series of five answer choices.
- b) These questions may have one or more correct answer choices

- i) Those with one or more correct answer choice(s) will be labeled as “Select ALL that apply.”
- c) Partial credit is given to multiple-choice questions with more than one correct answer according to this scale:
For 5 / 4 / 3 / 2 / 1 / 0 correctly chosen answers:
 - i) 1 / 0.7 / 0.4 / 0.2 / 0 / 0 relative to the question’s point value will be awarded

2) Selecting Correct Statements

- a) A question, followed by three to five statements, followed by a series of five answer choices
- b) You will be asked to indicate which combination of statements, as listed in the answer choices, aligns with the question (i.e. which are true statements / 1.4 which are false statements)
- c) There is only one correct answer for this type of question

3) Multiple True/False

- a) A question followed by a series of four or five statements
- b) You will be asked to indicate whether each statement is true or false. These questions will follow an International Biology Olympiad question format, requiring you to draw conclusions based on the information given and your current knowledge of the topic at hand.
- c) Partial credit is given according to the following scales
For 5 / 4 / 3 / 2 / 1 / 0 correctly chosen statements:
 - i) 1 / 0.7 / 0.4 / 0.2 / 0 / 0 relative to the question’s point value will be awarded
For 4 / 3 / 2 / 1 / 0 correctly chosen statements:
 - ii) 1 / 0.7 / 0.2 / 0 / 0 relative to the question’s point value will be awarded

4) Open-Ended (ABB Open Round Only)

- a) A written, and possibly visual stimulus, followed by a series of open-ended questions
- b) You will be asked to draw conclusions based on your own knowledge as well as information provided in the stimulus to answer the open-ended questions for each stimulus
- c) All graders will have access to an answer key with specific point values attached to each concept that is elaborated on in the team's answer
 - i) Ex. Q: What is the powerhouse of the cell and why is it called that?
A: The powerhouse of the cell is the mitochondria because it provides ADP, which allows for the presence of cellular processes
Answer key: Mitochondria (+1); it provides ATP (+1), which powers vital cellular processes (+1)

The team's answer would receive 2 points because it correctly identified the mitochondria as the powerhouse of the cell and said that it powers cellular processes, however, because the team said ADP instead of ATP, it would not get the last point for this question.

Question Content

Question content and point distribution will be the same for all IBB Open Round exams. All questions are written by the IBB Content Team. Question content will primarily follow Appendix I of the MIT IBO Guide. It must be noted that this guide is only directive and not binding; the IBB Content Team may write questions on topics not covered in the appendix.

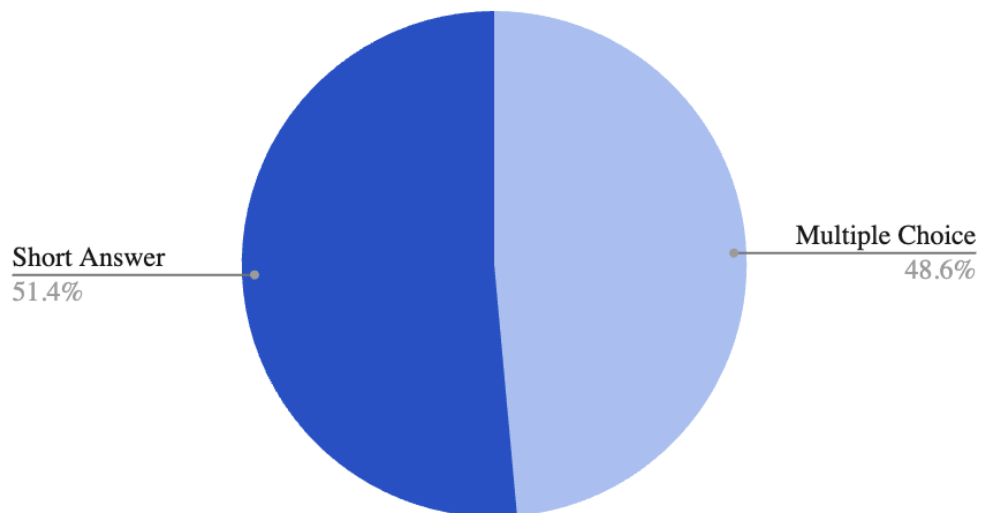
[MIT IBO Guide Appendix I Link](#)

2023-24 Regional Open Round (USABB) Exam Breakdown

Topic Category	Number of Questions (out of 90)	Point Value (out of 200)
Human Anatomy and Physiology	22	50
Cell Biology	22	50
Genetics and Evolution	18	40
Ecology and Ethology	14	30
Miscellaneous	10	20

2023-24 Regional Semifinals Round (USABB) Question Breakdown

2023-24 USABB Bowl Question Breakdown



****The ratio of short answer to multiple choice bowl questions will near 1:1**

2025-26 Regional Open Round (ABB) Exam Breakdown

Topic Category	Number of Questions (out of 90)	Point Value (out of 200)
Animal Anatomy and Physiology	22	50
Cell Biology and Biochemistry	22	50
Genetics and Evolution	18	40
Botany	14	30
Ecology and Ethology	10	20
Biosystematics and Bioinformatics	4	10

2025-26 International Open Round (Novice Division) Exam Breakdown

Topic Category	Number of Questions (out of 46)	Point Value (out of 100)
Human Anatomy and Physiology	11	24
Cell Biology	11	24
Genetics and Evolution	10	22
Ecology and Ethology	10	20
Biosystematics and Bioinformatics	4	10

2025-26 International Open Round (Advanced Division) Exam Breakdown

Topic Category	Number of Questions (out of 90)	Point Value (out of 200)
Animal Anatomy and Physiology	22	50
Cell Biology and Biochemistry	22	50
Genetics and Evolution	18	40
Botany	14	30
Ecology and Ethology	10	20
Biosystematics and Bioinformatics	4	10

IV. Rules

A. Open Rounds

General Rules

- Each team will have one opportunity to complete the USABB/ABB/International Open Round exam
 - The exam must be done in one sitting, as the timer cannot be paused when started
- Only one individual from each team should open the exam and submit it as the graded copy to avoid repeat submissions. All other copies should still be submitted but **NOT** marked as the graded copy

Timing

- Each team will have up to 120 minutes to complete the exam
 - Extra time will be given on a case-by-case basis
- The exam must be completed in the 24-hour competition period
 - Any exam started before or submitted after the period will not be considered for the Semifinal round

Scoring

- All questions will have the point value associated with them listed in the exam
 - A team's total score in the ABB Open Round exam will be the total of their multiple-choice section score added with the total of their open-ended section score

Allowed Materials

- Laptop with an internet connection (Required)
- Scratch paper with a writing utensil
- Non-programmable calculator

Prohibited actions

- Search engine use (i.e. you may not look up answers)
- Exchanging or discussing questions/answers with other teams during the competition period
- Artificial Intelligence

Those suspected to have, or have violated these rules will be automatically disqualified without a chance for appeal.

B. Semifinal Rounds

General Rules

- Each team will have only one opportunity to answer a toss-up question
 - If they do not answer a tossup question correctly, their team will be locked out, leaving the question open to the other team
 - No collaboration between team members is allowed during tossups
- Bonuses
 - Bonuses will be read to the team who answered the associated tossup correctly and allow for collaboration between team members
 - Only the team leader may answer for the team
 - The answer must be preceded or ended by saying “final answer”
- Questions will only be re-read in the following scenarios:
 - Both teams were unable to hear the question
 - One team interrupted and gave an incorrect answer
- 2 Cameras must be on at all times, one showing the competitor’s head/shoulders, and the other showing the competitor’s workspace
 - If only one camera is able to be used, it should show the competitor’s workspace
- Teams not present after five minutes of the round start will be counted as a “No Show”
 - Their opposing team will automatically win the round
- Each team must change their team name to either “Blue” or “Red” as well as a number (eg. Blue 2)

- The team's leader must be designated as "Blue 1" or "Red 1"
 - Only the team's leader may answer bonuses

Buzzing

- All IBB tournaments will use BuzzIn.live (<https://buzzin.live/>) as their buzzing software for all matches
 - This is to negate the issue of latency through buzzing with Zoom
 - The final decision for buzzer races is made solely by the moderator and what he/she sees on his/her screen
- The individual who buzzed must be verbally recognized by the moderator before answering the question
- Answering during another individual's buzz will result in a neg as well as forfeiting his/her team's ability to answer the question
- Each team is allowed one accidental buzz per match
- Buzzing before a moderator is finished reading the question is known as an "interrupt"

Timing

- After each tossup is read, team members will have 8 seconds to buzz in to attempt to answer the question
 - Once buzzed, the recognized individual will have 2-3 seconds to answer the question
 - Any answers given after the 2-3 seconds will be considered a stall and not be recognized
- After each bonus is read, teams will have 23 seconds to collaborate together and give a final answer

Scoring

Gains		Losses		Neutral	
Action	Point Value	Action	Point Value	Action	Notes
Correctly answer the tossup	+5	Neg (Interrupt and answer incorrectly)	-5	Answering the tossup incorrectly	Must not have interrupted and must have been recognized by the moderator
Correctly answer the bonus	+10	Blurt (answering before being recognized)	-5	Answering the bonus incorrectly	
		Answer for somebody else on your team	-5		

****Moderators are required to announce scores upon player request.**

Challenges

- Must be made before the moderator asks the next tossup
- There are two possible scenarios regarding challenges:
 - If the challenge decides the outcome of the match (i.e. the challenge can decide the winner of the match):
 - Then the challenge will be held and the correct answer to the question will be verified at the end of the match
 - If the challenge does not decide the outcome of the match:
 - Then the challenge will be negated, however, the challenging team may still ask for an explanation after the match
- In the event a conflict arises in which a team has a reasonable claim of a score discrepancy, the scoresheet will be revealed and will be gone through question by question to determine and fix the error

Allowed materials

- Scratch paper
- Writing utensil
- Non-programmable, non-graphing calculator

V. Results & Prizes

Results

All results for Open Rounds will be posted at most a week after the conclusion of the competition period. Those who have advanced to the Semifinal round will be contacted via email. A histogram along with score analysis will be released for public access along with the teams advancing to the Semifinals round.

Prizes

As an incentive in the Regional Competitions, the top four teams from the USABB and the top four teams from the ABB Semifinals round will gain direct qualification into the International Semifinals Round (see [Regional Competitions](#)). This is the award for the top-scoring teams in the regional tournaments.

A **cash prize** will be issued to the top three placing teams from the International Semifinals Rounds. The award will be distributed as evenly as possible and sent via Paypal to all team members. **Details on how to receive the prize will be explained to the winning teams at the conclusion of the tournament. The cash prize will be forfeited by the winning teams in the event that payment details are not sent to the IBB Logistics Director within four weeks of the competition's conclusion.**

2024-25 Competition Season Cash Prize Amounts (Tentative)

2024-25 Competition Season Team Cash Prizes (in USD)	
Placement	International Semifinals
1st Place	\$100
2nd Place	\$75
3rd Place	\$50

VI. Chapters - Currently being reworked

Chapter Initiation

An IBB chapter is any school club or organization that has been initiated with the IBB. It may be created at any time in the year, even during the offseason, as long as a valid initiation form is completed. A chapter may be created as part of an existing biology club, or as a new biology bowl club. Creating a chapter prioritizes the growth of all of its members in the biological sciences through competition and most importantly, collaboration.

If you wish to create a chapter at your school, please fill out the Chapter Initiation Form (TBA). The person who filled out the form will be designated as the Chapter Captain.

Chapter Expectations

- Chapter Captains should teach and train the rest of their team/chapter in the biological sciences to allow for the overall growth of all members
- Chapter Captains should promote IBB events and/or competitions to its members and within the school as a whole through means including, but not limited to, social media, physical flyers, word-of-mouth, etc.

Chapter Benefits

- Access to unused and unreleased USABB and IBB Bowl Round questions along with answers
- Access to online presentations about various topics from biology clubs across the nation in the material tested
- Access to online handouts about various topics in the material tested
- The chapter will be featured on the IBB website

Benefits may be increased as the IBB progresses through future years

VII. Grievances/Appeals

Reporting Grievances

In the event that a grievance needs to be reported from any of the IBB tournaments, please use the format below and send it to the designated contact individuals via Discord (see [Contact Information](#)).

Format (Grievances)

Team name: [Your team name]

Team members (list all): [Your team members' Discord tags]

IBB tournament: [IBB tournament in which the grievance is described]

Nature of grievance: [Describe your grievance using as much detail as possible]

Effect of grievance: [Describe the effect of your grievance on you and/or your team]

Filing Appeals

In the event that an appeal needs to be filed regarding any infraction, please use the format below and send it to the designated contact individuals via Discord (see [Contact Information](#)).

Format (Appeals)

Team name: [Your team name]

Team members (list all): [Your team members' Discord tags]

Infraction: [The infraction you are appealing against]

Reason for appeal: [Explanation of why you believe the infraction should be lifted]

***All grievances and appeals will be reviewed on a case-to-case basis**

VIII. Contact Information

IBB Email: internationalbiologybowl@gmail.com*

IBB Discord: <https://discord.gg/sFETzRbjMR>

IBB Director of Content: warren.wang@biologybowl.org

IBB Director of Logistics: hongyi.wei@biologybowl.org*

IBB Tournament Directors: daniel.liu@biologybowl.org, tess.chan@biologybowl.org,
bob.zhou@biologybowl.org

(*) denotes individuals to contact in the event of reporting a grievance or filing an appeal