



Biology Week 2017

The title 'Biology Week 2017' is rendered in a large, white, sans-serif font. Each letter of 'Biology' contains a white icon: 'B' has a DNA double helix, 'i' has a microscope, 'o' has a flask, 'l' has a brain, 'o' has a tree, 'g' has a bird, and 'y' has a butterfly. The word 'Week' has a tree icon above the 'e' and a butterfly icon above the 'k'. The year '2017' is in a plain white font.

Event guide for
individuals and
members

This pack includes:

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Introduction to Biology Week

Biology Week is an annual celebration of biology with events all over the UK and beyond for everyone, regardless of background in biology. The week is a great opportunity to share a passion for biology and the natural world.

The week celebrates the whole of biosciences and encompasses events and activities that appeal to all audiences.

Topics covered in the past have included citizen science projects, conservation, dinosaurs, drug development, mental health, biochemistry, physiology, fungi and more.

Around 100 events and activities take place during a typical week. These have included:

- A debate on the implications of using DNA to predict cancer
- Nationwide polls to find the UK's favourite species
- UK Fungus Day
- Bioscience Careers Day
- Starling murmuration survey
- BioArt Attack competitions
- BioBakes competitions
- 24 hour lecturethons
- Workshops on food security and recycling
- Trips to museums, wildlife reserves and zoos
- Biology pub quizzes

This year's Biology Week calendar can be found on the Royal Society of Biology (RSB) website: www.rsb.org.uk/2017calendar.

Why take part in Biology Week?

Biology Week is a great way to share your enthusiasm for biology with friends, family, your local community and beyond.

Your organisation can run a public or outreach event or activity for Biology Week or contribute to an existing event featured on our online calendar: www.rsb.org.uk/2017calendar

We can then help advertise your event, and provide branding and other communication tools if you want to reach out to a wider audience or get the local community involved too.

Through the week, we aim to share your passion for biology with as many people as possible. Your support will allow us to maximise the impact and coverage of events and activities to give people of all ages and backgrounds the chance to learn about the biosciences.

Help us achieve our vision of a world that understands the true value of biology and how it can contribute to improving life for all.



Contact your local branch

You should contact your local RSB branch who can help you run your event and make sure they're aware of the work you are doing.

They are a great source of support and can let you know about any grants that are available to help towards the cost of your event.

They also have a lot of resources already available online to help with event planning, publicising and running, and can also put you in touch with others in the area who are interested in biology and may want to get involved too.

Get in contact with your local branch via email:

Beds, Essex and Herts

bedsessexherts@rsb.org.uk

Devon and Cornwall

devoncornwall@rsb.org.uk

East Anglia

eastanglia@rsb.org.uk

East Midlands

eastmidlands@rsb.org.uk

Kent, Surrey and Sussex

kentsurreysussex@rsb.org.uk

London

london@rsb.org.uk

North Western

northwest@rsb.org.uk

Northern

northern@rsb.org.uk

Thames Valley

thamesvalley@rsb.org.uk

Wessex

wessex@rsb.org.uk

West Midlands

westmidlands@rsb.org.uk

Western

western@rsb.org.uk

Yorkshire

yorkshire@rsb.org.uk

Scotland

scotland@rsb.org.uk

North Wales

northwales@rsb.org.uk

South Wales

northwales@rsb.org.uk

Northern Ireland

ni@rsb.org.uk

Australasia

australasia@rsb.org.uk

Hong Kong

hongkong@rsb.org.uk

Check out regional branch resources online: www.rsb.org.uk/regional-resources

Find out what events are already happening near you: www.rsb.org.uk/regional-events

Find out more about our branches: www.rsb.org.uk/regional-activity

Event ideas

Often the hardest part of organising an event is coming up with an event idea or activity that will simultaneously attract the desired audience and also engage them with the subject.

There are many tried and tested event formats and ideas, and if you find something that works well, it is worth using it again. However, do not be afraid to take a creative and innovative approach, as these are often very likely to generate new interest and attract a diverse and inclusive audience.

Below are some ideas for events you could run during Biology Week:

Biology Quiz

Running a biology quiz is a simple and effective means of engaging an audience with whatever biological topics you want to tackle, and the difficulty of the quiz can easily be tailored to your audience.

Quizzes are suitable for a classroom, pub, or any other place where people can be organised into separate teams. You do not need to adopt a standard quiz format either; instead you could try incorporating problem solving or simple experiments into the quiz to make it more stimulating and challenging.

Hands-on activities at other events

Setting up stands and running simple but exciting demonstrations at larger events such as fairs, festivals or fetes is a great way to reach an audience with which normally you may not interact.

Our Gopher Science Lab activities offer a number of activities that are easy to demonstrate in front of a younger audience: www.rsb.org.uk/gopher-science

Our 21st Century BioChallenges Activity Kits also contains a number of activities suited for school pupils of all ages: www.rsb.org.uk/activity-kits

All of the experiments are easy to use and easy to resource as most of the equipment can be found around the classroom, home or local supermarket.

Science busking

This is the art of using simple science tricks to entertain and educate people and can be

performed anywhere, from the corner of a street, in a school classroom, or at a science festival.

These are more likely to add to an event rather than serve as a standalone event, but can be fun to do in public locations with high footfall, such as on the high street or at train stations – just make sure you get permission to do so.

Theatre production

Theatre can be a powerful and effective means of engaging with a new audience. Although the time and effort involved is significant in such a project, it can have a high impact.

Joining forces with a local Dramatic Society is a great way to share resources and skills, and also tap into a wide audience.

Guided walks / visits

Organise a visit to a local area of scientific interest. This might be a local nature reserve or protected area, or could be a laboratory or research facility nearby.

Citizen science projects

Gather together volunteers to do some scientific research by taking part in a citizen science project. This can include collecting data about when and where different species can be found in a local park, or sifting through camera trap footage online.

Some opportunities you can take part in include:

- Britain Breathing – this citizen science project aims to engage the UK public to act as ‘citizen sensors’ to help scientists discover more about seasonal allergies such as hay fever or asthma. Find out more online: www.britainbreathing.org
- The National Bat Monitoring Programme – this project is looking to find out more about how bats are doing in the UK. Bat surveys involve counting bats and help the Bat Conservation Trust work out how bats are faring and identify changes in bat populations. You don't need to have specialist skills or equipment to take part with surveys suitable for bat beginners as well as experts. Find out more online: www.bigbatmap.org

Run a Big Biology Day

There are numerous science festivals in the UK that occur throughout the year. These are a perfect opportunity to talk to and engage with large numbers of people in a very short period of time.

It needn't be on a large scale, and could just involve a handful of exhibitors. Local schools, professional biology related organisations, STEM ambassadors, natural history societies / community groups might all be suitable exhibitors.

For more information on how to run your own mini-festival, check out our Big Biology Day page on our website: www.rsb.org.uk/big-biology-day

Take part in our first ever social media campaign

The RSB is running a social media campaign called #iamabiologist on Twitter on 13th October. Get a picture of yourself in action as a biologist, or your lab or research group and share with the hashtag and tag @RoyalSocBio account and we'll share our favourites.

Get baking with the Physiology Society #BioBakes competition

If you love biology and baking, this is a great way to embrace both! Submit a picture of your biology-inspired bake and let the public decide which biology-inspired baked good is the best.

Find out more about the competition online: www.physoc.org/biobakes2017



Choosing an event venue

Finding an appropriate venue for an event can sometimes be a challenge, and room and facility hire can be very costly. It is always worth shopping around for venues, making use of contacts you might have or approaching potential new venues.

The following are good starting points:

Village halls and community centres

These have the benefit of offering very cheap hire rates and also serve as a natural hub for the local community. They often have more than enough space and basic facilities available as well.

Find details of your nearest village hall or community centre online: www.hallshire.com

Local science centres or museums

These are often able to provide an event for free or at a discounted rate. The National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement has advice online on working with museums and science centres: www.publicengagement.ac.uk

Find your nearest centre on the UK Association for Science and Discovery Centre's online map: www.sciencecentres.org.uk/centres

Local parks or communal green space

If the weather permits, take your event outside, where you can engage with the local community too. Contact the local authority for more information on organising an event in a local park or other public space.

Schools / sixth form colleges

Local schools or sixth form colleges often have suitable facilities for events and are worth approaching to hire a space for an evening or weekend event. If your audience is school children or young people, these venues may also be made available to you for free.

Somewhere completely different!

Anywhere with high footfall will ensure you have a large potential audience, so think about setting up a science busking point or carrying out demonstrations in shopping centres, train stations, the high street or outside of sporting events.

Accessibility and Inclusion

To ensure that as many people as possible can get involved in Biology Week, so it is important that the events organised are accessible and inclusive.

Arrangements should be made in order to make events accessible so that everyone, regardless of their ability, is able to attend and enjoy the event.

It is also important to consider the cost of the event, so as to avoid excluding people on economic grounds.

Here are a few things to consider when choosing a venue for your event (although this is by no means exhaustive):

- Does the venue have an accessible entrance or is the entrance step-free? If not, do the steps have handrails and ramps?
- If there are stairs inside the venue, is there a lift?
- Are there accessible toilets in the venue, and facilities that are family friendly?
- Is there disabled parking at the venue? Is this located close to the entrance of the venue?
- Are there appropriate evacuation methods in place for disabled attendees?
- Is catering provided? Ensure that dietary and cultural requirements are catered to and ensure there are appropriate options that are vegan, vegetarian, halal, kosher and all have potential allergen content clearly marked.
- Some environments may be overwhelming and stressful for those with autism or other developmental or learning disabilities, so make sure environments are suitable if you know those who will be attending may be affected by these issues.

If you are producing resources for your event, also consider:

- If audio-visual materials are used, do they contain subtitles or is there a transcript available?
- Is the font easy to read? Sans serif fonts are easier for people with dyslexia to read, and a minimum of 12 point font should be used if you are producing literature around your event.

Representation is also important, so consider:

- If you are inviting external speakers, do they represent the diversity of the community? Consider characteristics including age, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation and ability.
- In imagery used, a suitable representation of the community is presented

Potential collaborations and partnerships

Collaborative projects enable the sharing of ideas, resources, efforts and funds.

When organising an event, establishing partnerships early on will increase the chances of your event being a success. It is important however, to agree at the start of the process what is expected from the various parties involved.

It might be possible to seek collaborations with the following:

Your workplace or organisation

If you work for a organisation that is affiliated with biology, co-workers may be interested in helping out with your event or aiding with the running or planning of the event too. There may also be a possibility for your organisation to help with resources; they may be able to supply materials needed or even sponsor the event and help cover costs.

Local schools

School and universities can be potential collaborators. The Society has contacts at a number of universities around the country who we can contact to see if they would be happy to collaborate with you. Local authorities will often have a means of contacting local schools in the area to promote an event or to send out a request for collaboration too.

STEM Learning

STEM Learning is an educational charity in the UK that seeks to encourage participation at school and college into science and engineering-related subjects and work. Their STEM Ambassadors connect with schools to engage and inspire potential young scientists.

If you want to run an event that you think would benefit from the involvement of STEM Ambassadors, then contact the relevant regional coordinator online:

www.stem.org.uk/stem-ambassador-hub-contacts

Natural History Societies and Wildlife Trusts

The UK has an extensive network of natural history organisations, within which an impressive array of specialist skills and knowledge exists. Natural history groups are a source of potential speakers for events and may be able to lead guided walks and visits to sites of interests.

The Natural History Museum has a database of many UK nature groups online: www.nhm.ac.uk/take-part/nature-groups-near-you

Local businesses

Commercial organisations in the area may be able to offer skills, resources, advice, or sponsorship for an event if it is relevant and beneficial for them to do so. Those with a link to the life sciences are the most obvious option; however, other organisations may also consider supporting your event if it meets their corporate social responsibility aims.

Local community groups

If you are looking to put on an event open to the local community, then it would be worth seeking to collaborate with other local community groups. Local authority websites should have details of groups and organisations that exist in your area. These can include community centres, religious groups, Scouting or Girl Guide patrols, residential homes, foster housing or nurseries and playgroups.



Funding your event

There are a number of ways to ensure you can afford to run your event, with many grants and schemes available that offer financial support.

Public engagement grants and bursaries

There are a number of public engagement grant schemes ran by organisations including the RSB. Some grants have annual deadlines, whilst others offer money on a rolling basis.

The RSB regional grant scheme is available to any member that wishes to run a Biology Week event. Grants are available up to £500, and the grants go towards a large range of activities and events.

You can apply for the RSB regional grant scheme online: www.rsb.org.uk/regional-grant-scheme

A list of public engagement grants offered by other organisations is also regularly updated online: www.rsb.org.uk/public-engagement-grants

Sponsorship

Some businesses and companies are often willing to sponsor an event. Depending on their size and budgets they may be willing to cover some of the costs, help with resources, or both, potentially in return for often logos on communications, banners or more.

When obtaining sponsorship, consider:

- What sort of sponsors you would like to be associated with and if there is criteria that would make a sponsor an inappropriate choice
- Whether you will offer exclusive sponsorship; some sponsors may prefer and will provide more funds for an exclusive partnership but bear in mind if this is appropriate
- What you can provide in return for sponsorship, such as logos or artwork on banners, posters, email footers, a speaker slot etc

Consider putting a sponsorship package together, detailing different levels of funding companies could offer you in return for different benefits. Offering packages means a company can then clearly what they'll receive in return for their sponsorship.

If you are able to secure sponsorship, draw up a contract that details the exact agreement, to ensure there are no misaligned expectations on either side.

Event checklist

The following list includes a number of key considerations to take into account when organising and delivering a successful event:

Why are you holding the event?

- What audience do you want to reach with your event?
- What do you consider to be a successful event, and how are you going to measure if the event is a success?

Who is involved in organising and delivering the event?

- How are you going to delegate tasks needed to be done to those running the event?
- Are there any other useful partners or collaborators you can or should approach?

What resources will be required?

- Are these resources available and where are they coming from?
- What are the costs of the resources, and can they be reused or returned after the event?
- If funding is required, where can this be secured from?
- Are you going to seek funding for your event? Will this pose any conflicts of interest?
- Do you require specific technical or practical equipment?

Who is in your target audience(s)?

- Are you hoping to see a range of people at your event, or a more specific group of people?
- Why are you keen to engage with this specific audience?
- How will you market your event to ensure you reach this audience?

When should you hold the event?

- Will it clash with any other similar events or any popular national events?
- Will it be easy for those who work or need to secure childcare to attend?

Where should you hold the event?

- What locations are easily accessible by your target audience?
- How big does the space need to be?

- Will it require an entry fee for attendees?
- Is it easy to get to via public transportation routes?
- Do you have a budget to pay for a venue?

How will you reach your audience?

- What communication channels does your target audience favour?
- Are you collaborating with anyone who can help with the communication of the event?
- Is your audience online? Can they get involved with some or part of the event through digital channels?

Safety, security and back-up plans

- Do you need to complete a risk assessment for your event? Your student union or department should be able to help you with this.
- Do you have relevant insurance for your event if it is required?
- Will you need DBS checks for those involved?
- If the event involves working with children, young people or vulnerable adults, have you taken all the reasonable steps needed to ensure their safety?
- Will you be taking photos or video on the day? If children are involved, are the necessary notices and permissions in place to take their photos?
- Do you have a contingency plan in place if the weather isn't ideal or if other external circumstances makes holding the event difficult?



Publicising your event

We are hoping to have as many people as possible involved in Biology Week, and we are able to help advertise your events where possible to reach out to your chosen audience.

You can let us know if you are running an event by filling out our event details form on the Biology Week calendar page: www.rsb.org.uk/2017calendar

We will then advertise your event through our own channels, including:

- Online Biology Week events calendar: www.rsb.org.uk/2017calendar
- Monthly e-newsletters which goes out to our members and Member Organisations
- Social media platforms using the hashtag #BiologyWeek where appropriate

You can download a digital media pack online, which includes:

- High resolution files of the Biology Week logo
- Sample posters to display at your organisation / event

For more logo variations and branding material: www.rsb.org.uk/biology-week-branding

A press and communications pack can also be downloaded online, which includes:

- Advice on contacting local press, radio, and television outlets
- Sample press releases
- Sample press invites

For more social media and communications advice: www.rsb.org.uk/biology-week-comms

Contact us

You can find more resources on how to run events in Biology Week online:

More about Biology Week

www.rsb.org.uk/biologyweek

Our 2017 Events Calendar

www.rsb.org.uk/2017calendar

Guidance on how to run a Biology Week event

www.rsb.org.uk/organise-an-event

Biology Week logos and branding

www.rsb.org.uk/biology-week-branding

Press and communications help

www.rsb.org.uk/biology-week-comms

You can also contact the RSB on our social media channels if you need help promoting or sharing your content:

Twitter

@RoyalSocBio

Instagram

@RoyalSocBio

Facebook

facebook.com/RoyalSocBio

Flickr

flickr.com/RoyalSocBio

For further information on Biology Week or advice on running an event please contact:

Philippa Skett AMRSB

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