**The Chemistry of Respiration and Photosynthesis**

**Part 1: Combustion, Respiration and Photosynthesis**

**Objective-** You should be able to write balanced equations for respiration and photosynthesis and explain how the two equations are related.

**Introduction:** The chemistry of RESPIRATION and PHOTOSYNTHESIS are probably two of the most important concepts in biology. In order to understand many of the processes that take place in living organisms, each student will need to have a complete understanding of the details of these processes.

The processes of ANIMAL RESPIRATION and PLANT PHOTOSNYTHESIS are key processes to the understanding of most concepts and processes to follow in this course. It is therefore essential that you take extra time now to thoroughly comprehend these processes

**PROCESS 1: “COMBUSTION”** is the process of burning something. You may be familiar with this term because it is the process that is used all around us to provide us with energy. Combustion of fossil fuels powers our cars, heats our homes, and powers factories.

The generalized equation for combustion is:

O2 + Fuel------------🡪 H 2O + CO2 + C + energy (heat and light)

**PROCESS 2: "CELLULAR RESPIRATION"**

Let’s compare **combustion** with the process of **cellular respiration**.

* Animals require O2 and food for respiration.
	+ In respiration, food acts as a type of “fuel.”
* Animals also produce both CO2 and water vapor.
	+ Breathe onto a cold glass, and watch the condensation, or breathe onto your hand to feel the water vapor to prove this to yourself!
* Animals also produce energy.
	+ This is not light energy, but energy that is the form of heat and muscle energy.
* Humans do not produce carbon (C) in the respiration process.

**Answer the following questions in your journals, using the information above.**

1. Draw the chart below into your journal and fill it out for the process of **cellular respiration**:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Reactants (goes in)**Animals need the following to produce energy: | **Products (comes out/is produced** Animals produce these products during the process: |
|  |  |

1. Using the information in question 1, write an equation for the process of animal respiration. The **reactants** go on the right, and the **products** go on the left. Don’t worry about chemical formulas yet: write everything out in words
2. Compare this respiration equation to the combustion equation.
	* How are they similar?
	* How are they different?

**PROCESS 3: "PHOTOSYNTHESIS:"**

Now, let's think about photosynthesis, the process that plants go through to make food (sugars) using energy from the sun.

1. What would you need to provide a plant in order for it to grow?
	* *NOTE: Soil minerals are plant requirement, but they are not part of this reaction. So they aren’t included in the photosynthesis equation.*
2. Use the information you learned in class and the answer you wrote to #4 to finish the chemical equation for photosynthesis:

H 20 + CO2 + light energy

Plants give off O2. As the plants leaves grow, the new leaf material is “Food” for some animals. The wood produced in trees can be used as “fuel” for burning (a requirement for combustion).

1. This reaction also has a starter. It is the green chlorophyll in the leaves. Rewrite the equation with the chlorophyll above the arrow. It is neither a reactant nor product.

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: "The relationship between CELLULAR RESPIRATION and PHOTOSYNTHESIS:"**

1. What do you notice when you compare the reactants of “respiration” with the products of “photosynthesis”?
2. What do you notice when you compare the products of “respiration” with the reactants of “photosynthesis”?
3. Complete the following sentence: When you compare the RESPIRATION EQUATION to PHOTOSNYTHESIS EQUATION, one thing noticeable is that one is just the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_of the other.

**The Chemistry of Respiration and Photosynthesis**

**Part 2: Modeling Respiration and Photosynthesis**

**Objective-** You should be able to write balanced equations for respiration and photosynthesis and explain how the two equations are related.

**Class Copy**

**Directions**: Title you page then carefully read through this handout and answer all sentence in your lab journal in complete sentences.

**Introduction:** The chemistry of RESPIRATION and PHOTOSYNTHESIS are probably two of the most important concepts in biology. In order to understand many of the processes that take place in living organisms, each student will need to have a complete understanding of the details of these processes.

At the end of this laboratory activity you will be expected to write the equations for combustion, respiration and photosynthesis. You should be able to list differences and similarities between the equations. You will also be expected to understand what processes a chemical equation represents.

**GLUCOSE: “Food” for organisms**

The basic food substances animals use as a source of food is a sugar called **GLUCOSE**. Glucose has the chemical formula C 6H 12O6, and a very specific structure. The best way to learn about a glucose molecule is to build one.

**DON’T START TO BUILD ANYTHING UNTIL ACTUALLY INSTRUCTED TO DO SO.** On your lab table are colored balls that represent atoms.

* The white tubes represent the bonds which will hold the atoms together.
* Each colored ball represents a type of atom.
1. In your journal, identify which atom each color ball represents:

Blue =

White =

Black =

**STOP AND GET A STAMP THAT YOU HAVE COMPLETED QUESTION 1**

**RESPIRATION:** **Remember, do not begin building the glucose molecule until actually instructed to do so!**

Remember that the chemical formula for glucose is **C 6H 12O6**. The structural formula for glucose is ----------------------------------------------🡪

An important thing to notice is **that the molecule has a “ring” structure composed of 5 C atoms and one O atom**. The 6th atom is seen sticking up from the ring. (See the drawing).

1. Please draw both the chemical and structural formula for glucose in your journal.

Remember, in actual molecule there are no tubes to hold atoms together. Instead, the atoms are held together by electrons shared between two atoms. Each **single bond** **represents 2 shared electrons**. This kind of bond is called a COVALENT BOND.

1. How many electrons would be shared in a **double bond**?

The following part of this lab activity will require most of the laboratory period. **Do not start to build the glucose molecule unless half or more of the period remains.**

**BUILTING GLUCOSE**: Follow the steps below to build glucose.

* You may work in pairs or individually if you have no partner.
* Be sure to study the structural formula for glucose before you begin building!

**First** make the basic “ring” of 5 C atoms and 1 O atom as shown to the left.

**Second**, add the remaining atoms. No prongs should be left open. Also **count the number of C, H, and O atoms** to be sure you have includes all of them from the chemical formula.

When the molecule is complete, feel free to admire your work!

* This is what scientists accept the molecules of glucose to look like, even though no one has ever seen a glucose molecule.
* If you were to connect this glucose molecule to hundreds of others, in the chain, the result would be starch.

**Save this glucose molecule**

**BUILDING ATMOSPHERIC OXYGEN:** Construct six molecules of O2.

* O2 contains double bonds!
* Save the O2 molecules for the next step.
1. Write the words “**One Glucose Molecule”** and “**6 O2 Molecules”** in your journal



**STOP AND GET YOUR TEACHERS STAMP ON THE MOLECULES YOU JUST BUILT**

Remember that the equation for respiration included food as a requirement, and that the “specific” food involved is **GLUCOSE**.

1. Write the equation for **respiration**, with C 6H 12O6 substituting for “food”
	* You will write the equation this way from this point on.
2. Write the equation for **photosynthesis**.
3. The molecules of O2 and C 6H 12O6 that you have just constructed are the requirements for which process?

With the molecules you just built, you can demonstrate what happens when O2 and C 6H 12O6 react during respiration! This will show you where the products CO2, H2O and energy come from. It should help you understand the respiration reaction much more clearly.

**DEMONSTRAITING CELLULAR RESPIRATION:** The equation for respiration tells us that the O2 and C 6H 12O6 will break apart and become rearranged as CO2 and H 2O. .

1. **To form these products, what will you have to do with your glucose molecule?**

This process is occurring in your cells at the moment! The glucose in you is carried to each cell by your blood stream. The O2 entering your lungs is carried to each cell by the blood stream. There the glucose molecules are pulled apart by enzymes and the parts of the glucose molecule rearranged into CO2 and H 2O.

1. **In making CO2 and H 2O from C 6H 12O6, is it necessary to break every bond in the glucose?**
2. The cells do not go through any extra work. They conserve their energy. Proceed to break apart both C 6H 12O6 and the O2 when needed, to form CO2 and H 2O molecules.
	* Break apart only those bonds needed to create the CO2 and H 2O!
	* Use all the O2 and form as many CO2 and H 2O molecules as you can.
	* When you have completed the reaction, count the number of CO2 molecules and H 2O Molecules that you have.

**Complete the following sentence in your journal: There are\_\_CO2 molecules and \_\_\_H 2O molecules**.

**STOP AND GET YOUR TEACHERS SIGNATURE ON THE MOLECULES YOU JUST BUILT**

1. **You have just demonstrated which process?**
	* When you pulled apart the glucose molecule and O2 molecules with your hands, that represented what the cell accomplishes using enzymes.

The energy that is shown as a product in the respiration equation is stored in the bonds that hold the glucose molecule together. When these bonds are broken by enzymes, the energy will be released and can be available to heat the animal or can be used for muscle energy.

1. How many molecules of glucose did you start with?
2. How many molecules of O2 did you start with?
3. How many molecules of CO2 did you end up with?
4. How many molecules of H2O did you end up with?

**Do not take apart these molecules.**

1. Rewrite the respiration equation with the number of molecules needed, substituted for the blanks below

\_\_\_\_\_O2 + C6H12O6----🡪 \_\_\_\_\_CO2 + \_\_\_\_\_H2O + energy

The above is what is called a BALANCED EQUATION, because it accounts for every molecule required and shows exactly how many molecules of CO2 and H2O are produced. In any chemical equation, the number appearing before the molecule’s formula tells how many molecules are involved.

**Review:**  When one sees a formula as follows: 6 CO2 . The number 6, which precedes the molecule, tells the reader the number of CO2 molecules. The subscript 2, tells the number of atoms of O in 1 CO2 molecule.

**PHOTOSYNTHESIS**

If you had to disassemble your products of respiration, remake them. **Make 6 H20 molecules and 6 CO2 Molecules.**

1. In nature, what happens to the products of respiration given off by you and by other animals?
2. Examine the drawing to the right. What happens to these products of respiration after they enter the plants? What process do they get involved in?
3. Write the balanced equation for photosynthesis.

In plant leaf cells, where photosynthesis occurs, the CO2 and H2O react. The light energy is absorbed by chlorophyll and is used for breaking apart the molecules of CO2 and H2O. Enzymes aid in this break up, and other enzymes put the pieces of CO2 and H2O together into 1 large glucose molecule. The remaining oxygen atoms combine as O2. The sun provides the energy used to bond the atoms together into glucose molecule. This energy becomes stored in the BONDS of glucose molecule.

**DEMONSTRATING PHOTOSYNTHESIS:**

Break just enough bonds in your 6 CO2 and 6 H2O molecules to be able to construct 1 C6H12O6 molecule with the CO2 and H2O parts. Form the ring portion first, and then add the other parts until you have a glucose molecule.

When your glucose molecule is complete, count the C, H and O atoms to be sure you have not missed any atoms.

1. Are there any empty prongs in any of the atoms of your glucose molecule? How many oxygen atoms remain on the table?

The O atoms remaining react to form atmospheric oxygen, O2. Combine all of them into a number of distinct O2 molecules.

1. How many O2 molecules are produced?
	* This O2 leaves the leaf and can be taken in by an animal.

It’s interesting to contemplate that what you just performed during this class period is taking place in a plant leaf. It takes only seconds in the cells of the plant.

1. Write the number of molecules of each kind involved in the photosynthesis reaction below:

\_\_\_\_CO2+\_\_\_\_H2O + E---🡪 \_\_\_\_C6H12O6 + \_\_\_\_O2

Notice that the products of photosynthesis are the (products or requirements) of the respiration process. [select the appropriate word in the parentheses and write this on your paper]. Also notice that when the products of photosynthesis have completely formed, the requirements for photosynthesis no longer exist.

**STOP AND GET YOUR TEACHERS SIGNATURE ON THE MOLECULES YOU JUST BUILT**

Notice that the energy from the sun is now locked back into the glucose molecule. When an animal eats the leaf, it takes in glucose. Through the respiration process, the animal breaks the bonds of glucose again and obtains energy to move. And so the process of respiration repeats itself again, and the SAME ATOMS of C, H and O are shuttled back and forth between plants and animals for as long as this planet exists. A brief summary follows.

6 O2 + C6H12O6 6 CO2 + 6 H2O +E

This “reversible” reaction continues; respiration in animals cells and photosynthesis in plant cells.

**Dismantle your molecules and place the atoms and tubes in their appropriate containers.**

**ANSWER THE FOLLOWING REVIEW QUESTIONS:**

1. Write the balanced equation for respiration
2. Write the equation for combustion.
3. a) Write the balanced equation for photosynthesis.

b) What type or form of energy is required by plant cells to put the glucose molecule together?

c) A substance that helps put the atoms together and arrange them as glucose is called\_\_\_.

d) The carbon atoms in the photosynthesis product, C6H12O6. Come from what reactant molecule?

e) All hydrogen atoms found in glucose come from what reactants?

1. In photosynthesis, how many oxygen molecules are produced for every 1 glucose molecule produced?

What “type” of formula is CO2? What “type” of formula is O=C=O?

1. What kinds of bonds are seen in the CO2 molecule? (O=C=O)
2. The chlorophyll need for photosynthesis is found in what plant cell structure?

1. The definition for compound is: A substance that is composed of \_\_\_\_. It (can or cannot be) separated into simpler substance.
2. a) An element (can or cannot be) separated into simpler substances.
3. A molecule is composed of\_\_\_
4. The “products” of photosynthesis are the \_\_\_\_for respiration. The energy that an animal obtains from respiration comes from\_\_\_\_\_.