

7-11 October 2024

Bi**o**logy Week

Help us to Celebrate Biology Week!

Innovation in biology will help us to support all life on Earth now and in the coming decades. Biology Week aims to raise the profile of these achievements and the important work that bioscientists are doing, and to highlight this to all public audiences.

Biology is an incredibly wide field – the broad range of disciplines that our member organisations cover demonstrates this. Research in these fields will be instrumental in overcoming some of our most pressing global issues, including climate change, developing sustainable food and fuel, and diagnosing and treating diseases.

We would love to see every biologist celebrating their work with events and activities that appeal to all audiences. Help us to achieve our vision of a world that understands the true value of biology and how it can contribute to improving life for all.

#BiologyWeek

Event Ideas

To Inspire Excitement about Biology in a Younger Public Audience:

Craft Night

Take inspiration from the RSB's [BioArtAttack 2D](#) and [3D Competitions](#), and celebrate the convergence of science and art! Teach anatomical drawing, the structure of the cell, build papier mache animals, or paint the digestive system. Whatever your area of biology, there's a fun and artistic way of communicating the core concepts to children.

Supplies can be inexpensive, made up of materials your audience would have around the house, or sent in a kit ahead of the event. Make sure to publicise the details ahead of the event for parents and guardians and STEM/art clubs to prepare!

Book Reading

Is there a book that teaches important lessons about the natural world, or explores fundamental biology concepts in an engaging way? Ask the author along to do a live reading! The event can be recorded and posted on your social media for those who didn't tune in live.

Trivia Night

A trivia night can be tailored to any age group/expertise level, but it's a particularly fun and interactive activity for children. Websites such as [Kahoot](#) will allow you to build an online quiz. You could host a zoom session and send a unique pin to your audience, allowing them to answer from their device.

Escape Room

You can create a virtual escape room online using the ability to lock pdfs. Create 5-10 biology-related puzzles that are catered to your target audience's abilities, and then use the answers as the password to unlock the next task. The University of York created a [biology-themed escape room](#) that you could use for inspiration.

For the wider public, biologists and anyone interested in the biosciences:

Panel Discussions

Build a panel around a key topic, bringing together a mix of speakers from industry, research, education or other backgrounds in biology. Choose an engaging host to pose questions to panellists. Keep participants muted, but provide room for discussion with a Q&A session.

Lectures

Host a lecture using a video conferencing software like Zoom, which allows you to share your screen to deliver an engaging presentation. These can be pitched to different audiences, depending on your objectives, platform and invitees. This method works particularly well for communicating recent research or project outcomes.

Interview

An interview is a relatively inexpensive event to run, and it can allow you to deep-dive into an interesting topic or personality within the biosciences. You could conduct this live over social media and ask viewers to send their own questions.

Channel Take-Over

Have an established presence on a social media channel? Hand it over to an interesting researcher, industry professional, or bioscience communicator. Let your audience ask questions, and they will answer. This is a fun way to engage the public with your chosen topic.

Or post in the 'r/IAmA' subreddit page on Reddit. Here, anyone can post a description of themselves and then say 'AMA' or 'ask me anything'. This is an incredible way to connect with a large audience who are interested to learn more about your subject area.

Virtual Tour

If you hold any collections that the public may not have seen, or have premises that they may like to see – host a virtual tour! Many museums, galleries, [gardens](#) and zoos have online tours to guide the public through their exhibits and grounds without leaving the comfort of their own home.

Choosing Your Platform

- When choosing your platform it can be helpful to ask yourself who your target audience are, and where they tend to be present online.
- You must also decide whether your event will be open to anyone, or closed to a specific group.

Social Media

If you decide to use social media, consider your following and audience engagement on each platform that you are present.

Consider the demographic of your following on each platform, and you can use this information to decide which is best suited to reaching your target audience.

Also think about the types of content that perform well on each platform, and any available features. You may wish to host a live interview on YouTube because viewers can also engage via the chat function. Even if you don't have a large following there, you can channel followers across from other platforms.

Hootsuite have many useful guides for social media, including a guide on [going live](#) on each platform, and ideal [video sizes](#).

Video Calling Platforms

Using video calling platforms like Zoom, Teams and Skype can allow you to limit the number of participants, and address a select audience.

If you would like to film the event then let your audience know in advance, after which you can use in-built recording software to create a video – allowing you to share to socials post event.

For more information on hosting a Zoom online event, and for tips on managing attendee participation, you can download our [Zoom instructions for hosts](#).

If you are planning a smaller event with audience interaction (e.g. topical talk and Q&A) a webinar platform would be useful. If you want a larger event with limited interaction (e.g. lecture), a live streaming platform may be preferable.

Accessibility and inclusion

To ensure that as many people as possible can get involved with your event it is important that it is accessible and inclusive. There are many questions to consider, including:

- Is the platform free to use?
- Could captioning be provided for video footage?
- If there are slides, is the font easy to read?
- Have you ensured a range of demographics are represented across your speakers?

Event Promotion

#BiologyWeek

The success of your event relies in large part on successful marketing and promotion. During Biology Week, we want to advertise as many events as possible to help increase your audience! Let us know if you're running an event, and we will use all available platforms to promote it.

This includes retweeting and posting on social media. We will monitor the hashtag #BiologyWeek – feel free to use it for all biology related content, events and conversations over the week!

We will also advertise your event on the official Biology Week calendar. To add your event to the calendar, submit your event details to the RSB via our [online form](#). If you wish to include any Biology Week branding in your marketing, you can [download Biology Week Logos](#) on our website.

Contact your local branch

Contact your local RSB branch to inform them of your event and they will support it in any way possible - whether that's helping to run it, raising awareness, or letting you know of any available grants to help towards the cost of your event.

They also have a lot of [resources already available](#) 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. Find your [local branch on our website](#) or find out what events are already [happening near you](#).

Many of the RSB branches also have their own social media channels. You can find their Facebook, Instagram or Twitter pages by searching their branch name.

The Event

Setting up the event

If you are running an online meeting or discussion, begin the session five to ten minutes before the scheduled start time. This will give you time to check your audio and video settings. Use computer audio rather than phone audio, and headphones wherever possible.

When broadcasting live consider running pilot broadcasts set to private for YouTube broadcasts, or setting up dummy accounts for Instagram Live or Twitter.

For larger meetings, having someone other than the chair or presenters look after the technical running of the meeting, muting people, keeping an eye on raised hands or chat messages will make for a smoother experience.

Hosting or chairing online

Prepare to wait 5 minutes after beginning to allow for latecomers or joining issues.

Following this, notify guests whether they are muted or not, and highlight ways they are able to communicate with hosts – raising a hand, writing in chat etc. Muting all participants that aren't talking will greatly improve the audio.

Following the event

Ensure you remind participants how they can leave feedback or find out further information. Double check that you have ended any livestreams or meetings.

You can evaluate your online events using a poll or post-event feedback form. Ask questions about accessibility, topics covered or joining information. Include space for suggestions and improvements.

Take the time to note any technical or other improvements that you personally think would improve a future event.

Risk assessments

It is advisable to complete a risk assessment for your event to ensure you have considered all possible risks, who they may effect and how this may occur.

The main risk when holding an online event is being able to maintain control over participants (i.e. capacity to mute/hide cameras), and manage any technical difficulties that may occur.

Ensure that only those who have registered are able to access private events – this can be done by sharing URLs or login details only once an audience member has registered on the day of the event.

It is also important to check your internet connection and familiarity with the platform to mitigate any reputational risk.

Some other considerations:

- Do you have relevant insurance, 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 recording on the day? If children are involved, are the necessary notices and permissions in place to take their photos?
- Do you have contingency plans in place should a technical error occur?

An [example risk assessment form](#) can be found on our branch resources page.

Guest lists

Depending on the platform you choose to use, you may need to keep a secure list of people who have registered for your event if applicable. Some platforms, such as Zoom, and Skype's Meet Now, do not require attendees to create an account, and all guests will need to join the online event is a joining link.

Some platforms have the functionality to take bookings for you, and will automatically generate a post-event email for you, meaning you do not have to handle people's personal data yourself.

For broadcasting platforms that do not allow guests to register, other platforms like EventBrite can allow people register their interest or even purchase tickets. Those who register can then be contacted with details of the event nearer the time.

For events not openly being broadcasted to the public, this contact is essential to let guests know what platform to use and any passwords or access codes they will need to join the event.

Need more help or information?

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

Amanda Hardy | amanda.hardy@rsb.org.uk

We can offer advice and guidance from our outreach and engagement team.