

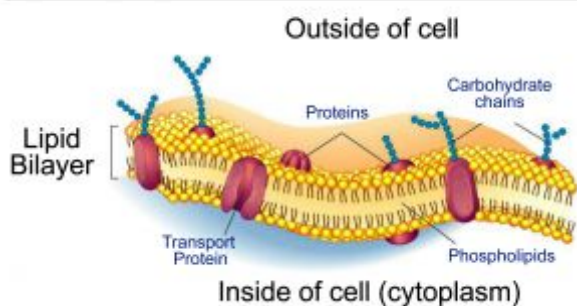
WJEC Biology A-level

Topic 1.3: Cell membrane and transport

Notes



Structure of the Cell Membrane



All cells and organelles are surrounded by a partially permeable membrane composed of a sea phospholipids with protein molecules between the phospholipid molecules. The main function of the membrane is controlling the movement of substances in and out of the cell/organelle. However, it also contains receptors for other molecules such as hormones and enables adjacent cells to stick together. The

fluidity of the membrane and the mosaic arrangement of the protein give the structure of the membrane its name – **fluid mosaic model**.

Three factors affect the permeability of a cell membrane:

- **Heat**
- **Ethanol**
- **pH**

The movement of molecules through cell membrane depends on the properties of the molecule as well as the requirements of the cell. There are several types of movement:

- **Diffusion** is the passive movement of small, non-polar lipid soluble molecules such as carbon dioxide and oxygen from an area of high concentration to an area of low concentration. The molecules move directly through the phospholipid bilayer.
- **Facilitated diffusion** requires a **channel protein** in the cell membrane to transport polar molecules, charged and water soluble molecules across the membrane.
- **Osmosis** is the diffusion of water molecules from an area of low solute concentration to an area to high solute concentration through a partially permeable membrane. **Active transport** can transport all types of molecules through carrier proteins from an area of low concentration to an area of high concentration. However, this process requires energy in the form of ATP.
- **Cytosis** is a form of active transport where parts of the plasma membrane form infoldings or outfoldings. There are two types of cytosis - **exocytosis and endocytosis** which both transport large particles by enclosing them in vesicles made from the cell surface membrane. The vesicles are transported into the cell in endocytosis. In exocytosis, vesicles are fused with the cell surface membrane.

The rate of **gas exchange** by diffusion becomes more rapid as:

- **Surface area** of the surface increases
- **Diffusion distance** decreases
- **Diffusion gradient** becomes more steep



Water potential is the **pressure exerted by water molecules that are free to move in a system**. It is measured in **kPa**. Pure water has a water potential of 0 pKa, the higher the water potential the larger the number of water molecules that are free to move. **A solution's water potential falls as solutes are added** as water molecules cluster around the solute. The contribution of solute to the water potential is called the **solute potential**.

Cyanide is a strong poison which inhibits respiration by inhibiting the enzyme **cytochrome oxidase** which **catalyses the formation of ATP from ADP and inorganic phosphate**. As a result of that, **no ATP is produced and the cell dies**.

