DRAWING IN BIOLOGY

Drawing is still a very important skill in biology. Drawings help to record data from specimens. Drawings can highlight the important features of a specimen. Photographs can be very useful for recording data but they are not very selective - they show more detail of a specimen than you might want.

Photographs of small specimens and photomicrographs cannot show the whole specimen in focus at once. A drawing is the result of a long period of observation at different depths of focus and at different magnifications. One drawing can show features that would take several photographs.

Some guidelines for drawing from specimens in biology

- Move the specimen around, **do not just concentrate on one part**. Observe the general appearance first.
- Identify the most significant features (only include detail which is necessary in your drawing).
- Determine which part or parts you are going to draw.
- Use a **sharp** HB (medium grade) pencil.
- Use **white, unlined paper** for drawing.
- Make a **large**, clear drawing, it should occupy at least half a page
- **Keep looking back at your specimen** whilst you are drawing. When drawing from a microscope it is useful to look down the eye piece with one eye and at the drawing paper with the other - it takes practice but it is possible.
- Whilst you are observing increase the magnification to observe more details and reduce the magnification to get a more general view. Use the focusing controls on the microscope to observe at different depths of the specimen.
- A drawing is incomplete without **a full title** and **a scale or magnification**. **Annotations** are particularly important, they permit you to put your observations where they will have the most impact.