

THE GENESIS INCIDENT: HOW A ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE IS HELPING MY STUDENTS MASTER BIOLOGY (AND LOVING IT... PROBABLY)

By: A Slightly Sleep-Deprived, Caffeine-Fueled Bio Teacher

Let me be honest with you. Teaching biology in 2025 is... a trip.

Between TikTok attention spans, Google autofill, and students thinking mitochondria is a Pokémon move, I knew I needed a better way to teach them the essential interconnected concepts of life science.

So naturally, I did what any sane educator would do: I started a zombie apocalypse.



Welcome to The Genesis Incident – The Ultimate Biology Storyline Project

In a world not-so-distant from our own, a fictional biotech company—Genesis Corporation—accidentally unleashes a virus that turns people into decaying, flesh-hungry, metabolism-melting science experiments. (Yep. Totally not based on any famous monster movie franchises. Please don't sue me.)

As the virus spreads, our students take on the role of young scientists recruited by the mysterious Dr. Cross—a former Genesis researcher turned heroic rogue. Each station of this unit isn't just a worksheet. It's a mission. A puzzle. A desperate plea for humanity's survival. And surprise: they actually cared.

Like, actually. Some of them Googled codons for fun. What is happening.

Concept Integration? Oh Yeah, We Went There.

This wasn't just "a cute zombie unit." No, no. This was a full-on concept super-mash where we connected:

- **Macromolecules**
- **Cells (prokaryotic, eukaryotic, mutated, decaying, etc.)**
- **Cellular transport and homeostasis (RIP osmosis jokes, I hardly knew ye)**
- **DNA, mutations, protein synthesis**
- **Meiosis and inheritance**
- **Gel electrophoresis because SCIENCE IS COOL**
- **Evidence for evolution and natural selection**
- **Immune system responses**
- **And even plant hormones and ecology**
- **Because yes—even the sunflowers are fighting back now.**

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By Station 5, they were yelling things like:

"Subject 47 has a silent mutation at 6p21.3! The protein still works!"

Meanwhile, I cried a single tear of joy behind my copy of Campbell Biology.

Station 5: Where Things Got Scary Smart - This was the turning point.

I introduced the fictional gene LZR-Δ6 (Lazarus Delta Six)—a resistance mutation located on chromosome 6 at 6p21.3.

- We looked at DNA codons.
- We translated them into proteins.
- We ran simulated gel electrophoresis.
- We compared Subject 47 (a walking miracle) to Subject 48 (not so lucky), to bacteria, plants, and even ancient mammals.

And it worked.

They saw evolution happening in real time. They talked about molecular evidence, ancestral homology, and even CRISPR therapy strategies. Some of them wanted to genetically engineer humanity's next generation, while others were designing vaccines and ethical frameworks.

All of them? Engaged!

Why Its Working (and Why You Should Try It Too)

Look. Teaching biology as a list of terms to memorize is like explaining why air is important by handing someone a dictionary definition and holding your breath until they figure it out.

But when you give biology a storyline—something to live in, play in, question, and solve—students become scientists.

And not just worksheet-fillers. Real, curious, thoughtful science sleuths.

This project forced them to:

- Make connections across units
- Justify answers using data
- Apply ethics, problem-solving, and creativity
- And realize that yes, DNA and ecology are on the same team.

Teaching Hack: Storytelling + Science = Actual Learning

Do kids love zombies?

Yes.

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Do they remember weird acronyms like LZR-Δ6 better than “locus on chromosome 6”?

You bet.

Is it more fun for everyone when we build epic story-based, multi-concept science simulations that combine creativity with rigor?

Absolutely.

Final Thought:

If a zombie virus can help your students finally understand transcription, translation, and evolution in the same unit...

Then maybe we should let fiction infect our classrooms a little more.

Science isn't about memorizing facts.

It's about asking questions, following evidence, and staying curious—even when the world's on fire and your mitochondria are malfunctioning.

So go ahead—start your own outbreak.

Science depends on it.



Station Document
Student Document