B.Sc. Botany (Hons) – 2ND SEM

by Dr. Raman Kumar Ravi

Enzymes

“Enzymes can be defined as biological polymers that catalyze biochemical reactions.”

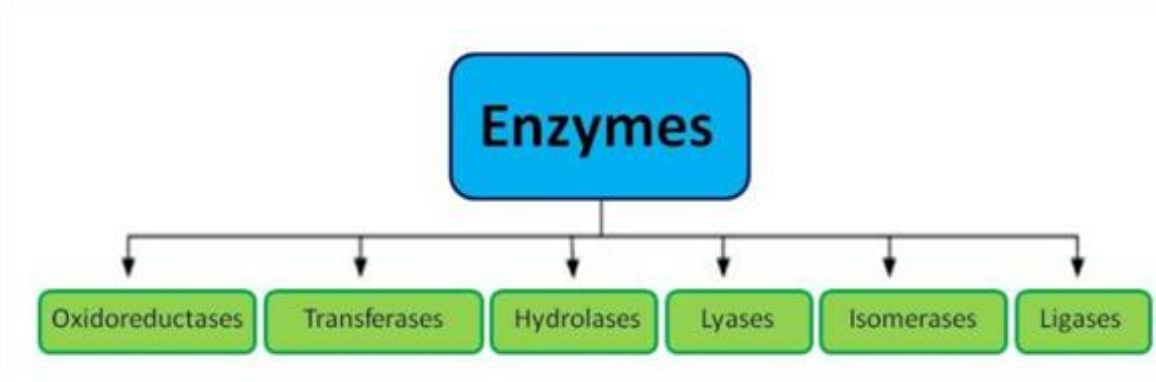
The majority of enzymes are proteins with catalytic capabilities crucial to perform different processes. Metabolic processes and other chemical reactions in the cell are carried out by a set of enzymes that are necessary to sustain life.

The initial stage of metabolic process depends upon the enzymes, which react with a molecule and is called the substrate. Enzymes convert the substrates into other distinct molecules, which are known as products.

The regulation of enzymes has been a key element in clinical diagnosis because of their role in maintaining life processes. The macromolecular components of all enzymes consist of protein, except in the class of RNA catalysts called ribozymes. The word ribozyme is derived from the ribonucleic acid enzyme. Many ribozymes are molecules of ribonucleic acid, which catalyze reactions in one of their own bonds or among other RNAs.

Enzymes are found in all tissues and fluids of the body. Catalysis of all reactions taking place in metabolic pathways is carried out by intracellular enzymes. The enzymes in the plasma membrane govern the catalysis in the cells as a response to cellular signals and enzymes in the circulatory system regulate the clotting of blood. Most of the critical life processes are established on the functions of enzymes.

Enzymes Classification



Earlier, enzymes were assigned names based on the one who discovered them. With further research, classification became more comprehensive.

According to the International Union of Biochemists (I U B), enzymes are divided into six functional classes and are classified based on the type of reaction in which they are used to catalyze. The six kinds of enzymes are hydrolases, oxidoreductases, lyases, transferases, ligases and isomerases.

Listed below is the classification of enzymes discussed in detail:

Types	Biochemical Property
Oxidoreductases	The enzyme Oxidoreductase catalyzes the oxidation reaction where the electrons tend to travel from one form of a molecule to the other.
Transferases	The Transferases enzymes help in the transportation of the functional group among acceptors and donor molecules.
Hydrolases	Hydrolases are hydrolytic enzymes, which catalyze the hydrolysis reaction by adding water to cleave the bond and hydrolyze it.
Lyases	Adds water, carbon dioxide or ammonia across double bonds or eliminate these to create double bonds.
Isomerases	The Isomerases enzymes catalyze the structural shifts present in a molecule, thus causing the change in the shape of the molecule.
Ligases	The Ligases enzymes are known to charge the catalysis of a ligation process.

Oxidoreductases

These catalyze oxidation and reduction reactions, e.g. pyruvate dehydrogenase, catalysing the oxidation of pyruvate to acetyl coenzyme A.

Transferases

These catalyze transferring of the chemical group from one to another compound. An example is a transaminase, which transfers an amino group from one molecule to another.

Hydrolases

They catalyze the hydrolysis of a bond. For example, the enzyme pepsin hydrolyzes peptide bonds in proteins.

Lyases

These catalyze the breakage of bonds without catalysis, e.g. aldolase (an enzyme in glycolysis) catalyzes the splitting of fructose-1, 6-bisphosphate to glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate and dihydroxyacetone phosphate.

Isomerases

They catalyze the formation of an isomer of a compound. Example: phosphoglucomutase catalyzes the conversion of glucose-1-phosphate to glucose-6-phosphate (phosphate group is transferred from one to another position in the same compound) in glycogenolysis (glycogen is converted to glucose for energy to be released quickly).

Ligases

Ligases catalyze the association of two molecules. For example, DNA ligase catalyzes the joining of two fragments of DNA by forming a phosphodiester bond.