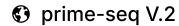


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Version 2



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We use this protocol and it's working

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### Abstract

Cost-efficient library generation by early barcoding has been central in propelling single-cell RNA sequencing. Here, we optimize and validate prime-seq, an early barcoding bulk RNA-seq method. We show that it performs equivalently to TruSeq, a standard bulk RNA-seq method, but is fourfold more cost-efficient due to almost 50-fold cheaper library costs. We also validate a direct RNA isolation step, show that intronic reads are derived from RNA, and compare cost-efficiencies of available protocols. We conclude that prime-seq is currently one of the best options to set up an early barcoding bulk RNA-seq protocol from which many labs would profit.



# Guidelines

- All reagents and plastic-ware can be found in the 'Materials' section.
- Use only RNase free supplies and clean all surfaces and tools with RNase Away prior to working
- Make sure all steps involving cell lysate and RNA before reverse transcription are carried out swiftly and on ice.
- All primer sequences are listed below:

A	В	С	D	Е	F
Oligo	Vendo r	Purificatio n	Working Conc.	Sequence	Notes
Barcoded Oligo-dT (E3V7NEXT)	Sigma	Cartridge	10 μΜ	ACACTCTTTCCCTACACGAC GCTCTTCCGATCT[12 bp BC]NNNNNNNNNNNNNNN VTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTT	
Template Switching Oligo (TSO) (E5V7NEXT)	Sigma	RNase-Free HPLC	100 μΜ	Biotin- ACACTCTTTCCCTACACGAC GCrGrGrG	
Preamp Primer (SINGV6)	Sigma	Standard Desalting	10 μΜ	Biotin- ACACTCTTTCCCTACACGAC GC	
3' enrichment primer (P5NEXTPT5)	Sigma	Standard Desalting	5 μΜ	AATGATACGGCGACCACCG AGATCTACACTCTTTCCCTA CACGACGCTCTTCCGATCT	
i7 Index Primer (Nextera)	IDT	Trugrade	5 μΜ	CAAGCAGAAGACGGCATAC GAGAT[i7]GTCTCGTGGGCT CGG	
i5 Index Primer (TruSeq)	IDT	Trugrade	5μΜ	AATGATACGGCGACCACCG AGATCTACAC[i5]ACACTCTT TCCCTACACGACGCTCTTC CGATCT	
prime-seq Adapter AntiSense	IDT	Standard Desalting	1.5 μΜ	/5Phos/CTGTCTCTTATACAC ATCT	Duplexe d DNA
prime-seq Adapter Sense	IDT	Standard Desalting	1.5 μΜ	GTCTCGTGGGCTCGGAGAT GTGTATAAGAGACAGT	Duplexe d DNA

Specific barcoded oligodT (E3V7NEXT) sequences:



E3V7\_Set1.txt



E3V7\_Set2.txt



### **Materials**

### **MATERIALS**

- DNase | Reaction Buffer 6.0 ml New England Biolabs Catalog #B0303S
- DNase I (RNase-free) 1,000 units **New England Biolabs Catalog #**M0303S
- Deoxynucleotide Solution Mix 40 umol of each New England Biolabs Catalog #N0447L
- 🔯 Exonuclease I (E.coli) 3,000 units New England Biolabs Catalog #M0293S
- X Quant-it™ PicoGreen® dsDNA Assay Kit Life Technologies Catalog #P7589
- 🔯 β -mercaptoethanol Merck MilliporeSigma (Sigma-Aldrich) Catalog #M3148
- QuantiFluor(R) RNA System **Promega Catalog** #E3310
- Proteinase K solution, 20 mg ml 1 Ambion Catalog #AM2546
- 🔯 5 M Sodium chloride (NaCl) Merck MilliporeSigma (Sigma-Aldrich) Catalog #S5150-1L
- Agilent High Sensitivity DNA Kit Agilent Technologies Catalog #5067-4626
- Buffer RLT Plus Qiagen Catalog #1053393
- Maxima H Minus Reverse Transcriptase (200 U/uL) Thermo Fisher Scientific Catalog #EP0752
- NEBNext Ultra II FS DNA Library Prep with Sample Purification Beads 24 rxns New England Biolabs Catalog #E6177S
- 🔯 EDTA Merck MilliporeSigma (Sigma-Aldrich) Catalog #E7889
- Ethanol absolute Carl Roth Catalog #9065.4
- 🔯 Igepal Merck MilliporeSigma (Sigma-Aldrich) Catalog #18896
- X KAPA HiFi 2x RM Kapa Biosystems Catalog #KR0370
- Poly(ethylene glycol) Merck MilliporeSigma (Sigma-Aldrich) Catalog #89510
- W UltraPure DNase/RNase Free Distilled Water Catalog #10977-049
- X Trizma hydrochloride solution Merck MilliporeSigma (Sigma-Aldrich) Catalog #T2694
- Aluminium seals for cold storage Catalog #391-1275
- Filter tips 96 low retention 10 uL Catalog #771265
- PCR Seals **Thermo Scientific Catalog** #AB0558
- 🔯 twin.tec 96-well DNA LoBind Plates Eppendorf Catalog #0030129504
- Sera-Mag Speed Beads **GE Healthcare Catalog** #65152105050250
- Sodium Azide Merck MilliporeSigma (Sigma-Aldrich) Catalog #S2002-100G

# **Troubleshooting**



# Safety warnings



Please follow all Manufacturer safety warnings and recommendations.

# Before start

Wipe bench surfaces with RNAse Away and keep working environment clean.



# Preparation 1 Clean all surfaces and pipettes with RNase Away

2 Thaw frozen buffers and primers on ice 10m

3 Prepare 80% EtOH (approximately 45 mL for 96 samples)

2m

12m

5m

When running the protocol for the first time prepare Cleanup Beads (see end of the protocol)!

45m

prime-seq can be used on lysate or extracted RNA. It is essential, however, that the samples either have the same input or that they are normalized after the RNA is extracted, otherwise sequencing depth per sample will be impacted. Based on your starting material, please follow one of the following cases:

STEP CASE

# Lysate (similar input), Direct Lysis 106 steps

Follow this case if you are testing samples that have **similar input** (i.e. the expected RNA amount is the same between samples). The steps here will guide you in digesting residual proteins in your samples, extracting the RNA, digesting DNA, preparing RNA-seq libraries, and finally sequencing.

Example: investigating the genotype effect on transcription in 5,000 neurons

# First Time Setup

When running the direct lysis protocol for the first time, prepare Bead Binding Buffer (see end of the protocol)!

# Sample Collection

7 Prepare **Lysis Buffer** according to the number of samples.

	Reagent	Well	Plate
--	---------	------	-------



Total	100 μL	11 mL
β- mercaptoethan ol	1 μL	110 μL
RLT Plus Buffer	99 μL	10.89 mL

If sample volume exceeds 25 % of total lysate, use 2x TCL buffer (Qiagen, #1070498) + 1 %  $\beta$ -mercaptoethanol

8 Add  $\perp$  100  $\mu$ L of **Lysis Buffer** to each well of a semi-skirted 96-well PCR plate

1m

9 Add cells or tissue to wells



### Note

### Cells

Minimum: 100 cells, Optimum: 10,000 cells

Make sure that the same number of cells are used for each sample. Large differences between cells will impact distribution of sequencing reads and can potentially affect normalization.



### **Tissue**

If samples are difficult to lyse they should be homogenized using a tissue homogenizer.

Tissue should be a relatively small and not exceed more than 1000 ng of RNA. Tissue samples should be normalized by weight and be the same type of tissue.

Large differences between tissue samples will impact distribution of sequencing reads and can potentially affect normalization.

If you are unsure if the samples will contain the same amount of RNA, it is best to switch to the "Lysate (variable)" case in Step 13.

Transfer  $\Delta$  50  $\mu$ L of **lysate** to a new plate, return one plate immediately to -80 C freezer to save as a backup

### 1m

### Note

Conversely, one can prepare two plates during sorting with 50 µL of lysis buffer.

# **Proteinase K Digest**



11 Add  $\perp$  1  $\mu$ L **Proteinase K** (20 mg/mL) and  $\perp$  1  $\mu$ L **EDTA** (25 mM) to each well



Incubate for 00:15:00 at 50 °C and then heat inactivate the Proteinase K for 00:10:00 at 75 °C

25m

# Bead Clean Up





13 Mix each bulk sample (50  $\mu$ L per well) with  $\Delta$  100  $\mu$ L of Cleanup Beads (22% PEG) 1m 14 Incubate for 00:05:00 at 20 °C (Room Temp) 5m Note While binding, prepare **DNase I Mix** (Step 28) 15 Place on magnet stand until clear (~3 min) and then discard supernatant 3m 16 Wash with  $\perp$  100  $\mu$ L of **80% EtOH** while the plate is on the magnet. Discard the 2m supernatant Note After adding EtOH, incubate for 30 s so that all beads are bound to magnet. 17 Repeat wash step once more 2m 18 Air dry beads for 00:03:00 3m Note Depending on temperature and humidity, the beads may dry faster. Therefore it is important to regularly check the beads and avoid over-drying.

# **DNAse I Digest**



19 Add Δ 5 μL H2O and resuspend beads by vortexing vigorously

2m

### Note

If you encounter bead clumping at this step, try to resuspend the beads by vigorously pipetting the samples. We have generated high quality prime-seq libraries despite heavy clumping.

20 Prepare **DNase I Mix** 

3m

Reagent	Well	Plate
DNase I	1μL	110 μL
DNase I Buffer (10x)	2 μL	220 μL
Bead Binding Buffer (2x)	10 μL	1.1 mL
H2O	2 μL	220 μL
Total	15 μL	1.65 mL

21 Add  $\perp$  15  $\mu$ L of **DNase I Mix** and mix by pipetting

2m

22 Incubate DNase I Mix and beads for 👏 00:10:00 at 🖁 20 °C (Room Temp)

10m

Heat inactivate the DNase I by adding  $\perp$  1  $\mu$ L of **EDTA (100 mM)** and incubating for

6m

♦ 00:05:00 at \$ 65 °C



24 Place plate on magnet stand until clear (~3 min) and discard the supernatant.

3m

Wash with  $\Delta$  100  $\mu$ L of **80% EtOH** while the plate is on the magnet. Discard the supernatant

2m

26 Repeat wash step once more

2m

27 Air dry beads for 00:05:00

5m

### Note

Depending on temperature and humidity, the beads may dry faster. Therefore it is important to regularly check the beads and avoid over-drying.

### Note

While drying, prepare **Reverse Transcription Mix**.

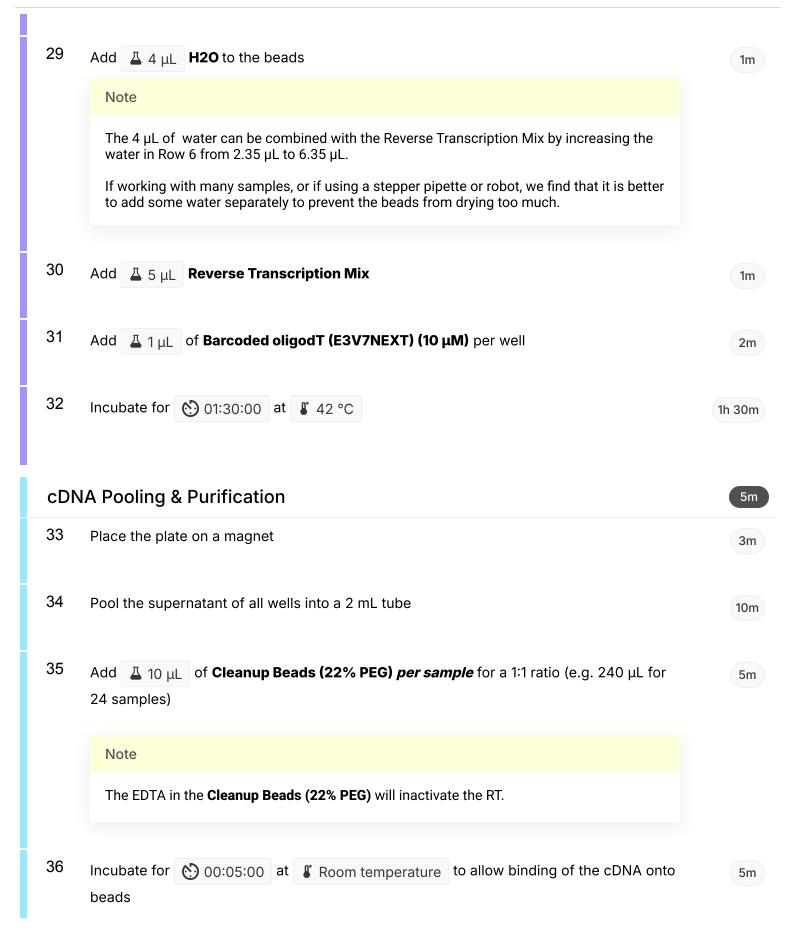
# **Reverse Transcription**

5m

28 Prepare Reverse Transcription Mix

Reagent	Well	Plate
Maxima H Minus RT	0.15 μL	16.5 μL
Maxima RT Buffer (5x)	2 μL	220 μL
dNTPs (25 mM)	0.4 μL	44 μL
TSO (E5V7NEXT) (100 uM)	0.1 μL	11 μL
UltraPure Water	2.35 μL	258.5 μL
Total	5 μL	550 μL







Place the tube on the magnet stand until clear (~3 min) and discard supernatant

3m

Wash with 1 mL of **80% EtOH** while the tube is on the magnet, discard the supernatant

1m

### Note

Volume of EtOH should be adjusted depending on the number of samples. More samples will require more EtOH to cover the beads completely.

39 Repeat wash step once more

1m

40 Air dry beads for (5) 00:05:00

5m

### Note

Depending on temperature and humidity, the beads may dry faster. Therefore it is important to regularly check the beads and avoid over-drying.

41 Elute the beads in  $\perp$  17  $\mu$ L of **UltraPure Water** 

1m

42 Incubate for 60 00:05:00 at RT and transfer to a new PCR tube or plate

5m

# **Exonuclease I Treatment**

35m

Add  $\Delta$  2  $\mu$ L of **Exol Buffer (10x)** and  $\Delta$  1  $\mu$ L of **Exonuclease I**. Incubate as follows:

Step	Temperature	Time
Incubation	37 C	20 min

^	1
C.	le.
1	

	Heat Inactivation	80 C	10 min
	Storage	4 C	∞

44 Mix each sample (20 μL per well) with  $\underline{\bot}$  16 μL of **Cleanup Beads (22% PEG)** for a 1:0.8 ratio

1m

Incubate for 00:05:00 at Room temperature to allow binding of the cDNA onto beads

5m

Place the tube on the magnet stand until clear (~3 min) and discard supernatant

3m

Wash with  $\Delta$  50  $\mu$ L of **80% EtOH** while the tube is on the magnet, discard the supernatant

1m

48 Repeat wash step once more

1m

5m

### Note

Depending on temperature and humidity, the beads may dry faster. Therefore it is important to regularly check the beads and avoid over-drying.

50 Elute the beads in  $\triangle$  20  $\mu$ L of **UltraPure Water** 

1m

Incubate for 00:05:00 at RT and transfer to a new PCR tube or plate

5m

# Full length cDNA Amplification

1m

52 Prepare **Pre Amplification Mix** 



Reagent	1x
KAPA HiFi 2x RM	25 μL
Pre-amp Primer (SINGV6) (10 uM)	3 μL
UltraPure Water	2 μL
Total	30 μL

53 Add  $\perp$  30  $\mu$ L **Pre Amplification Mix** to sample

1m

54 Incubate the Pre Amplification PCR as follows:

1h 30m

Step	Temperatur e	Time	Cycles
Initial Denaturation	98 C	3 min	1 cycle
Denaturation	98 C	15 sec	10 cycles*
Annealing	65 C	30 sec	
Elongation	72 C	4 min	
Final Elongation	72 C	10 min	1 cycle
Storage	4 C	∞	



Adjust the number of cycles based on input (sample number, cell number, or concentration).

As a rule of thumb we assume big cells like embryonic stem cells to contain 10 pg of total RNA and small cells like T-cells  $\sim$  1-2 pg

As a general guide we recommend:

Total RNA Input	Cycl es
10 ng	16
50 ng	14
100 ng	12
500 ng	10
1000 ng	9

# **cDNA** Bead Purification 1m 55 Mix sample with $40 \mu$ Clean Up Beads (22% PEG) for a ratio of 1:0.8 1m 56 Incubate for 00:05:00 at 20 °C (Room Temp) 5m 57 Place the tube on the magnet stand until clear (~3 min) and discard supernatant 3m 58 Wash with $\perp 100 \,\mu$ l of **80% EtOH** while the tube is on the magnet, discard the 1m supernatant 59 Repeat wash step once more 1m 60 Air dry beads for 00:05:00 5m



Depending on temperature and humidity, the beads may dry faster. Therefore it is important to regularly check the beads and avoid over-drying.

- 61 Elute cDNA in 🚨 10 μL UltraPure Water
- 62 Incubate for 00:05:00 at RT and transfer to a new PCR tube or plate

Note

**Stopping Point.** Samples can be safely stored at \$\infty\$ -20 °C and protocol can be continued at a later date.

- 63 Quantify the cDNA using the Quant-iT PicoGreen dsDNA assay kit or equivalent Qubit following the manufacturer's protocol. Use 1 µl of clean cDNA for quantification.
- 64 Quality check the cDNA using the Agilent 2100 Bioanalyzer with High Sensitivity DNA Analysis Kits.

### Note

Passing the cDNA quality check does not guarantee that the data will be of high quality, however, if the cDNA fails the quality check it will usually not yield good libraries and will therefore generate lower quality data.



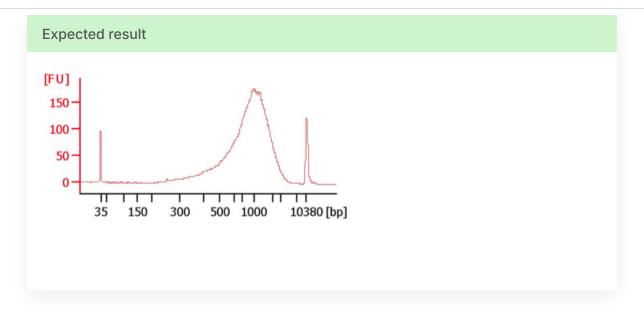
45m

1m

5m

10m





# **Library Preparation**

65

### Note

Before starting, read the library preparation section carefully as there are a few steps that are very time sensitive.

### 66 Prepare Fragmentation Mix

Reagent	1x
Ultra II FS Reaction Buffer	1.4 μL
Ultra II FS Enzyme Mix	0.4 μL
cDNA (4-8 ng/μL)	2.5 μL
TE	1.7 μL
Total	6 μL



Ensure that the Ultra II FS Reaction Buffer is completely thawed. If a precipitate is seen in the buffer, pipette up and down several times to break it up, and quickly vortex to mix. Place on ice until use.

### Note

Vortex the Ultra II FS Enzyme Mix for 5-8 seconds prior to use for optimal performance.

67 Vortex the **Fragmentation Mix** for 00:00:05 and immediately proceed to step 67

10s

68 Incubate the Fragmentation reaction as follows:

40m

Step	Temperatu re	Tim e
Pre-Cool	4 C	$\infty$
Fragmentation	37 C	5 min
A Tailing and Phosphorylation	65 C	30 min
Storage	4 C	$\infty$

### Note

Set heated lid to 75° C. Make sure the lid is at the correct temperature before you start the

Skip the first incubation step once you have added your samples.

# **Adapter Ligation**

20m

69 Prepare Adapter Ligation Mix



Reagent	1x
NEBNext Ultra II Ligation Master Mix	6 μL
NEBNext Ligation Enhancer	0.2 μL
prime-seq Adapter (1.5 μM)	0.5 μL
Total	6.7 μL

70 Add  $\triangle$  6.7  $\mu$ L **Adapter Ligation Mix** to each replicate

1m

71 Incubate for 600:15:00 at \$20 °C

15m

### Note

Turn off heated lid

72 Add  $\perp$  37.3  $\mu$ L Buffer EB to Samples

1m

73 Mix Sample with  $\Delta$  26  $\mu$ L SPRI select beads

1m

### Note

We use SPRI Select Beads here instead of our home made 22% Clean Up beads for their guaranteed QCed size selection properties.

### Note

The volume of SPRI select beads used during library size selection can be adjusted based on desired library size. Optimization for your samples may be required.



74 Incubate for 00:05:00 at 20 °C (Room Temp) 5m 75 Place the plate on the magnet stand until clear and transfer  $\Delta 76 \mu L$  supernatant to 3m clean well. Note Be careful not to discard! This is your sample! 76 Mix supernatant with  $\perp$  10  $\mu$ L SPRI select beads 1m Note The volume of SPRI select beads used during library size selection can be adjusted based on desired library size. Optimization for your samples may be required. 77 Incubate for 60000:05:00 at 20000 (Room Temp) 5m 78 Place the plate on the magnet stand until clear and discard supernatant 3m 79 Wash with  $\perp$  150  $\mu$ L of **80% EtOH** while the plate is on the magnet, discard the 1m supernatant 80 Repeat wash step once more 1m 81 Air dry beads for (5) 00:05:00 5m Note Depending on temperature and humidity, the beads may dry faster. Therefore it is important to regularly check the beads and avoid over-drying.



82

Elute samples in 4 11 µL 0.1X TE (dilute 1X TE Buffer 1:10 in water) for 6 00:05:00



5m

# **Library PCR**

45m

- 83 Transfer  $\perp$  10.5  $\mu$ L of samples to clean wells
- 84 Add 4 1 µL of Index Primer (Nextera i7, 5 uM) to each well

### Note

This is the unique index that will be used for demultiplexing libraries.

85 Add 4 1 µL of Index Primer (TruSeq i5, 5 uM) to each well

### Note

Alternatively the universal primer P5NEXTPT5 can be used in case the second index will not be sequenced.

86 Prepare **Library PCR Mix** by adding Δ 12.5 μL

### Note

Although scaled down, there will not be sufficient Q5 Master Mix (M0544L) in the kit. This item will have to be ordered separately.

87 Incubate the **Library PCR** reaction as follows:

Step	Temperat ure	Time	Cycles
Initial Denaturation	98 C	30 sec	1 cycle



Denaturation	98 C	10 sec	10 cycles *
Annealing/Elongation	65 C	1 min 15 sec	
Final Elongation	65 C	5 min	1 cycle
Storage	4 C	$\infty$	

Adjust the number of cycles based on cDNA input.

As a general guide we recommend:

cDNA Input	Cycl es
20 ng	10
10 ng	11
5 ng	12

# **Double Size Selection**

25m

88 Add  $\stackrel{\bot}{\Delta}$  25  $\mu L$  Buffer EB to Index PCR

89 

### Note

We use SPRI Select Beads here instead of our home made 22% Clean Up beads for their guaranteed QCed size selection properties.



The volume of SPRI select beads used during library size selection can be adjusted based on desired library size. Optimization for your samples may be required.

- 90 Incubate for 00:05:00 at 20 °C (Room Temp)
- 91 Place the plate on the magnet stand until clear and transfer 4 76 µL supernatant to clean well.

### Note

Be careful not to discard! This is your library.

92 Mix supernatant with  $\perp$  10  $\mu$ L | SPRI select beads

### Note

The volume of SPRI select beads used during library size selection can be adjusted based on desired library size. Optimization for your samples may be required.

- 93 Incubate for 00:05:00 at 20 °C (Room Temp)
- 94 Place the plate on the magnet stand until clear and discard supernatant.
- 95 Wash with  $\perp$  150  $\mu$ L of **80% EtOH** while the plate is on the magnet, discard the supernatant
- 96 Repeat wash step once more
- 97 Air dry beads for 00:05:00



Depending on temperature and humidity, the beads may dry faster. Therefore it is important to regularly check the beads and avoid over-drying.

- 98 Elute in  $\perp$  15  $\mu$ L UltraPure Water.
- 99 Incubate for 00:05:00 and then place on magnet until clear. Transfer eluted library to new well.

### Note

Stopping point. The libraries can be safely stored at \[ \cdots -20 \cdots \] until they will be QCed and sequenced.

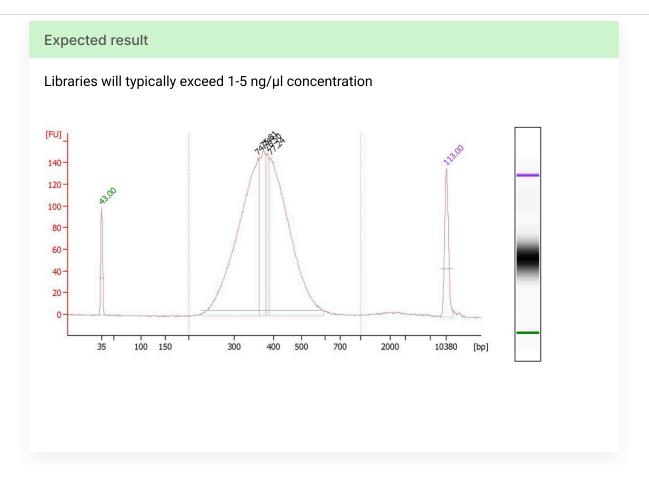
# QC and quantification

45m

100 Quantify and quality control the library using the Agilent 2100 Bioanalyzer with **High**Sensitivity DNA Analysis Kits.

### Note

Bulk libraries often yield high concentrations, which should be diluted to get accurate molarity measurements on the Bioanalyzer. Ideally, do not load more than 2 ng onto the chip.



# Sequencing

1m

Samples should be submitted according to your Sequencing Facility specifications. prime-seq is compatible with Illumina Sequencing.

At least 8 cycles are required for the Index Read (i7) and 28 cycles for the Read 1 (BC+UMI). Dual index sequencing can be done when using patterned flowcells. Read 2 (DNA) should be adjusted based on the quality of the genome being mapped to, but for human and mouse 50 cycles is sufficient.

Some potential sequencing options:

А	В	С	D	Е	F
Sequen cer	Read 1	Read 2	Index Read (i7)	Index Read (i5)	Kit
NovaSe q	28	94	8	8	NovaSeq SP v1.5 100 cycle



А	В	С	D	Е	F
NextSe q 500/55 0	28	56	8	0	NextSeq 500/550 HiOut v3 75 cycle
NextSe q 1000/2 000	28	94	8	8	NextSeq 1000/2000 P2 100 cycle
NextSe q 2000	28	52	8	0	NextSeq 2000 P3 50 cycles
HiSeq	28	114	8	0	HiSeq 3000/4000 150 cycles

# Prepare Cleanup Beads (22% PEG)

10m

102 Prepare **PEG Solution (22%)** by adding all ingredients to a 50 mL falcon tube

10m

Reagent	Amount
PEG 8000	11 g
NaCl (5M)	10 mL
Tris-HCI (1M, pH 8.0)	500 μL
EDTA (0.5M)	100 μL
IGEPAL (10% solution)	50 μL
Sodium Azide (10% solution)	250 μL
UltraPure Water	up to 49 mL
Total	49 mL

### Note

Do not add the total amount of water until after PEG is completely solubilized



103	Incubate at 40 °C and vortex regularly until PEG is completely dissolved	10m
104	Resuspend <b>Sera-Mag Speed Beads</b> carefully and pipette $\Delta$ 1000 $\mu$ L of bead suspension into a 1.5 mL tube	1m
105	Place on magnet stand and remove storage buffer	1m
106	Add $\mbox{\mbox{$\m$	30s
107	Place on magnet stand and remove supernatant	30s
108	Repeat wash step one more time	1m
109	Add $\perp$ 900 $\mu$ L <b>TE Buffer</b> (10 mM Tris-HCI, pH 8.0, 1 mM EDTA) and resuspend beads	30s
110	Add the washed Sera-Mag Speed Beads to the PEG Solution (22%) and mix well	1m 30s
	Note	
	The final <b>Cleanup Beads (22% PEG)</b> can be aliquoted and stored at 4 °C for up to six months	
Dro	nara Road Dinding Duffor	10
	pare Bead Binding Buffer	10m
111	Prepare Bead Binding Buffer (2x)	10m

Reagent	
PEG 8000	1.1 g



NaCl (5 M)	1 mL
Tris-HCI (1 M, pH 8.0)	50 μL
Igepal (10% solution)	5 μL
Sodium Azide (10% solution)	25 μL
H2O	to 5 mL
Total	5 ml

The **Bead Binding Buffer (2x)** can be stored at **\$\mathbb{E}** Room temperature for up to six months.