CURRICULUM

GCSE Preferences

Subject Choices Booklet

English Language
English Literature
Mathematics
Science
History
Geography
Spanish
PE
PSHE

Art
Computer Science
Dance
Drama
Design Technology
Food and Nutrition
Music
Physical Education
Religious Studies

MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICES

Introduction

Across the NSB Trust, we provide a knowledge-rich curriculum that is both academically rigorous and aspirational for every student, regardless of background or individual need. We embrace the ambition of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) and believe all students should have access to "the best that has been thought and said." Research by the UCL Institute of Education highlights how studying EBacc subjects can open valuable opportunities for further education. While the EBacc is not a qualification in itself, it encompasses a suite of core GCSE subjects: English language and literature, mathematics, the sciences, geography or history, and a modern foreign language.

We are equally proud of how our curriculum achieves breadth and balance through an extensive programme of extra-curricular and super-curricular opportunities. These enable students to contribute to, and thrive within, our rich heritage of sporting, artistic, and academic excellence — a tradition that lies at the heart of the Trust's DNA.
As students progress into Key Stage 4, we are committed to ensuring they continue to receive a broad and balanced education. Alongside the core subjects at the centre of our curriculum, all students study a carefully chosen range of 'enhancement' subjects, spanning additional humanities, expressive arts, sciences, and technology. This approach ensures that every learner benefits from both depth and diversity in their educational journey.

GCSE Options Guide
Choosing your GCSE subjects is an exciting step towards your future. The choices you make now will open doors to opportunities after Year 11—whether that's A-levels, apprenticeships, or other pathways. This guide is here to help you make confident, well-informed decisions.

At Northampton School, all students follow a core curriculum alongside their chosen option subjects.

Core Curriculum (Everyone studies these)
English language
English literature
Mathematics
Science (Combined or Triple*)
History or Geography
Spanish
Core PE (not examined)
PSHE (not examined)

Option Choices

Humanities Option

You must choose either History or Geography

Enhancement Subjects

You will rank your top 5 preferences from the list below:

- Art
- Computer Science *
- Dance
- Drama
- Design Technology
- Food and Nutrition
- Geography (only if not picked as Humanities Option)
- History (only if not picked as Humanities Option)
- Music
- Physical Education
- Religious Studies
- Triple Science *

* Subjects with entry requirements (see points to consider).

💡 Top Tip: Pick a range of subjects that show off different strengths — creative, analytical, and practical — to keep your future options open.

Points to Consider

1. Triple Science
Biology Chemistry Physics.
Three separate GCSEs.
Entry depends on meeting the required standard in your Year 9 Science assessments.

2. Computer Science
A challenging subject with an entry requirement.
Best suited to students in Set 1 or 2 for Maths.
Requires meeting the Computer Science threshold.

3. Keep your options open
Pick a variety—analytical, creative, practical.
A broad mix keeps future pathways flexible.

4. Think ahead
Link your choices to where you want to go after Year 11 (A-levels, vocational courses, apprenticeships).

5. Career requirements
Got a career in mind? Check which GCSEs are essential so you don't limit your options.

6. Choose carefully
Don't rush.
Base your choices on your strengths and interests.
Be aware of the amount of coursework required for your subject choices.
Art, DT and Food and Nutrition have lots of coursework.
Avoid choosing subjects just because your friends are.

💡 Top Tip: Imagine yourself studying each subject for two years - would you enjoy it?

Important Notes

1. Timetabling
We will try to give you your top preferences, but this cannot be guaranteed.
You must rank five subjects (1–5).
Some subjects have limited spaces.

2. Course viability
A GCSE will only run if enough students select it.

3. Deadlines matter
The online preference form must be submitted on time.
Late forms risk not getting your preferences.

💡 Top Tip: Set yourself a reminder for the deadline - don't leave it until the last minute!

What to Do Next

1. Read carefully and explore the subject descriptions in this booklet.

2. Seek advice and talk to:
- Parents/carers
- Subject teachers
- Form Tutor
- Careers Advisor

3. Submit your form. Complete the Online Preferences 2026 form by the deadline.

Final Message
Your GCSEs are more than just subjects - they're building blocks for your future. Take your time, ask questions, and choose with confidence.

Remember: this is your journey. Make choices that reflect your strengths, your interests, and your goals.

We're here to support you every step of the way.

Art

AQA
8202

GCSE Fine Art is an exciting and challenging course where you will develop your creativity, technical skills and personal ideas. We begin with a project exploring natural forms before moving on to a sustained, independent project that forms the majority of your component 1. You will experiment with a wide range of materials and approaches while learning to research and respond to artists. Success requires consistency, organisation, and commitment, but the reward is a rich, personal portfolio that showcases your creative journey.

What will I learn?

- Drawing and painting from observation and imagination
- Printmaking, mixed media, and experimental processes
- How to research, analyse and take inspiration from artists
- How to develop and refine personal ideas into final outcomes
- Independence, resilience, and organisation in managing a creative project

Students will also take part in two visits during the course: an inspiring trip to Kew Gardens in Year 10 to support the Natural Forms project, and a gallery visit later in the course to enrich their contextual research. The course is demanding of time and effort, but the sense of achievement and the quality of work you produce make it incredibly rewarding. Studying Fine Art opens doors to further creative study. Most importantly, it allows you to express yourself and develop a unique visual voice.

Future study opportunities

A Levels in:	Other Post-16 in:
Fine Art	Illustration & Graphics
Art Craft & Design	Fashion & Textiles
Photography	Interior Architecture

Where could this subject take you?

- Media
- Politics
- Teacher
- Archivist
- Barrister
- Journalist
- Project Management
- Museum Curator

How is the subject assessed?

- Component 1 (Portfolio of work): 60%
- Component 2 (Externally set assignment: 10-hour practical exam): 40%

There are four assessment objectives:

- AO1 – Develop ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources
- AO2 – Refine work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques, and processes
- AO3 – Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses
- AO4 – Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language

Transferable skills

- Initiate & self-motivate
- Learn & be resilient
- Negotiate & network
- Problem solving
- Organisation
- Communicate & listen
- Include & value diversity
- Work smart
- Work as a team
- Numeracy & IT skills

"I found I could say things with colour and shapes that I couldn't say any other way—things I had no words for." — Georgia O'Keeff

Computer Science

OCR
J277

This course offers a hands-on, intellectually stimulating introduction to the world of computing. Students will explore how computers work, how to think like a programmer, and how digital technologies shape our lives. With a strong focus on problem-solving, creativity, and logic, this subject is ideal for curious minds who enjoy challenges and want to understand the technology behind the apps, games, and systems we use every day.

What will I learn?

Core principles of computer systems and networks:

- How to write, test, and debug programs using Python
- Data representation (numbers, images, sound)
- Cybersecurity and ethical issues in computing
- Algorithms and computational thinking
- Legal, environmental, and cultural impacts of technology
- Practical programming skills through real-world tasks.

While the course does include hands-on programming, it is not an IT or app-based course. The focus is on understanding how computers work, mastering core programming concepts, and developing logical thinking. Much of the course is theoretical, involving written work, problem-solving, and learning how systems operate behind the scenes. It's ideal for students who enjoy structured thinking and are ready to engage with challenging ideas - not just those who like using technology.

Future study opportunities

A Levels in:
Computer Science
Further Maths
Physics
Design Technology

Other Post-16 in:
Software Development
Coding
Networking & Support
Digital Security

How is the subject assessed?

Two written exam papers, both externally assessed.*

J277/01 - Computer Systems
50% - written exam (1 hour 30 mins)

J277/02 - Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programming
50% - written exam (1 hour 30 mins)

Students must also complete practical programming tasks, which are not formally examined but are required and essential for understanding and applying key concepts.

*OCR are looking to move towards online assessment (in the future) where exam papers are completed electronically

Transferable skills

- Initiate & self-motivate
- Learn & be resilient
- Negotiate & network
- Problem solving
- Organisation
- Communicate & listen
- Include & value diversity
- Work smart
- Work as a team
- Numeracy & IT skills

Where could this subject take you?

- Technology
- Game design
- Cybersecurity
- Project Management
- Engineering

"Everybody should learn to program a computer, because it teaches you how to think." - Steve Jobs

Dance

AQA
8236

Dance is more than movement: it's a powerful form of self-expression, storytelling, and connection. Whether you've only explored dance in school or have a wealth of dance experience, GCSE Dance builds on your ability and takes it to the next level. With a strong foundation in contemporary dance, you'll also have the freedom to perform and choreograph in any style, provided it allows you to access the full range of assessment criteria. You'll learn to craft performances that captivate; choreograph pieces that inspire; and develop a deep understanding of dance as a vibrant art form. Beyond the studio, dance nurtures your confidence, creativity, and collaboration. It shapes not just skilled performers, but expressive, thoughtful individuals ready to make their mark on the world.

What will I learn?

Performance
You will develop your physical skills and attributes, technical skills, expressive skills and mental skills in solo and group dances.

Choreography
You will learn how to respond creatively to an externally set stimulus, to choreograph your own complete dance. You will learn to manipulate action, dynamics, space, and relationships to portray a choreographic intention.

Dance Appreciation
You will learn to write about the performance and choreography work that you undertake as part of the course. You will learn to describe, analyse, interpret, evaluate and reflect on your own and professional dance work, in response to short answer and extended writing questions.

How is the subject assessed?

Component 1 – Performance and Choreography Performance (60% of GCSE)
Non-exam assessment (NEA) marked by the centre and moderated by AQA

- Solo set phrases and duet/trio performance, equating to 30% of the component, marked out of 40
- Solo or group choreography, equating to 30% of the component, marked out of 40 marks

Component 2 – Dance Appreciation (40% of GCSE)
Written exam (80 marks): 1 hour 30 minutes

- Knowledge and understanding of choreographic processes and performing skills
- Critical appreciation of own work
- Critical appreciation of professional works

Where could this subject take you?

- Media
- Teacher
- Media producer
- Content creator
- Journalism
- Film Production
- Dancer
- Choreographer

Future study opportunities

A Levels in:	**Other Post-16 in:**
Dance	Musical Theatre
Performing Arts	Film Studies
Drama	Media Studies
English	Sports BTEC

Transferable skills

- Initiate & self-motivate
- Learn & be resilient
- Negotiate & network
- Problem solving
- Organisation
- Communicate & listen
- Include & value diversity
- Work smart
- Work as a team

"Dance is for everybody. I believe that the dance came from the people and that it should always be delivered back to the people." — Alvin Ailey

Design and Technology

AQA
8552

Design and Technology is a creative and practical course that allows students to design and make innovative products using a range of materials and techniques. It focuses on problem-solving, critical thinking, and understanding how design impacts the world around us. Students develop key skills such as research, planning, and evaluating, while learning about sustainability, technology, and modern manufacturing processes. This course prepares students for future careers in design, engineering, and related fields, while encouraging them to think creatively and develop solutions to real-world challenges through hands-on projects and practical design work.

What will I learn?

Each module will develop and refine the skills that you need to become a successful designer, engineer or technologist suitable for a wide variety of academic and vocational future careers.

- Unit 1: New and Emerging Technologies
- Unit 2: Energy, Materials, Systems & Devices
- Unit 3: Materials & Their Working Properties
- Unit 4: Specialist Technical Principles
- Unit 5: Specialist Technical Principles – Materials etc. (different material types, woods, plastics, etc.)
- Unit 6: Designing Principles (investigating users, work of others, communicating design, drawing)
- Unit 7: Making Principles (tools, techniques, components, surface finishes)

How is the subject assessed?

50% Examination: 2 hours.
• Section A – Core technical principles (20 marks). A mixture of multiple choice and short answer questions assessing a breadth of technical knowledge and understanding.
• Section B – Specialist technical principles (30 marks). Several short answer questions (2– 5 marks) and one extended response to assess a more in-depth knowledge of technical principles.
• Section C – Designing and making principles (50 marks). A mixture of short answer and extended response questions.

50% Non-Examination Assessments: You will select a single design-and-make activity from a choice of tasks set by the examination board. You will design, develop and manufacture a final product and produce a concise design folder and/or appropriate IT evidence recording your progress.

Where could this subject take you?

- Architect
- Web designer
- Set designer
- Engineer
- Interior Designer
- Visual merchandiser
- Trades

Transferable skills

- Initiate & self-motivate
- Learn & be resilient
- Negotiate & network
- Problem solving
- Organisation
- Communicate & listen
- Include & value diversity
- Work smart
- Numeracy & IT skills

Future study opportunities

A Levels in:
Design Technology
Physics
Computer Science
Art
Photography

Other Post-16 in:
Engineering
Design Development
Applied Arts
3D design
Trades/Construction

"Creativity is intelligence having fun." - Albert Einstein

Drama

AQA
8261

This course is designed to ignite creativity, build confidence, and give every student the chance to shine. We've packed in as many opportunities as possible for students to do what they love most: perform, create, and collaborate. During this course, every student becomes a drama-maker, devising original work and exploring powerful texts through practical performance. You'll bring stories to life, challenge established ideas, and discover your unique voice on stage. You'll gain invaluable skills, from teamwork and problem-solving to communication and creative thinking. These are not just theatrical tools: they're life skills that will expand your horizons far beyond the stage.

What will I learn?

Understanding Drama: you explore how theatre works and discover what makes performances exciting and meaningful. You study how you might bring characters, themes and staging to life, while also watching live theatre and discussing what makes it effective. It's a great chance to build confidence in analysing drama and understanding the magic of live performance.

Devising Drama: you get creative by working with others to make your own original performance from a stimulus. You develop ideas through rehearsals, experiment with different techniques, and shape your piece into a finished show, either as a performer or a designer. You also reflect on your journey in a devising log, helping you understand how your skills have grown and how teamwork and imagination come together on stage.

Texts in Practice: you step into the world of scripted drama by performing two extracts from a contrasting play. This is your opportunity to show off your acting or design talents, bring characters to life and experience what it feels like to present polished theatrical work. This component really celebrates your practical abilities and gives you a taste of real performance.

Future study opportunities

A Levels in:	**Other Post-16 in:**
Dance	Arts
Performing Arts	Musical Theatre
Drama	Film Studies
English	Media Studies

How is the subject assessed?

Understanding Drama (40% of GCSE)
Written examination
Variety of multiple choice, long and short answer questions on a play extract and a live theatre performance.

Devising Drama (40% of GCSE)
Practical examination
a. Process of creating devised drama - devising log.
b. Performance of devised drama - performer or designer.

Text in Practice (20% of GCSE)
Practical examination
Performance of two extracts from one play, as a performer or designer

Transferable skills

- Initiate & self-motivate
- Learn & be resilient
- Negotiate & network
- Problem solving
- Organisation
- Communicate & listen
- Include & value diversity
- Work smart
- Work as a team

Where could this subject take you?

- Psychology
- Business Management
- Accounting
- Creative writing
- Drama
- Teaching
- Film production
- Marketing
- Journalism
- Nursing

"Theatre is about sharing. Drama education gives young people the confidence to stand up, speak out, and be heard." Sir Ian McKellen

English Language

AQA
8700

English Language is both creative and analytical, helping you develop your own unique writing voice while exploring a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts. You'll study extracts from the 19th century to the modern day, using them as inspiration for your own writing, including letters, speeches, and opinion articles. The course develops your reading, writing, and critical thinking skills, preparing you for further study and everyday communication.

What will I learn?

- Analyse a range of text types: fiction extracts, letters, articles, speeches, and literary non-fiction
- Evaluate and explain a writer's choices
- Compare two non-fiction texts effectively
- Construct clear, persuasive arguments
- Summarise and link ideas across texts

Transferable skills

- Initiate & self-motivate
- Learn & be resilient
- Negotiate & network
- Problem solving
- Organisation
- Communicate & listen
- Include & value diversity
- Work smart
- Work as a team

How is the subject assessed?

Paper 1: Fiction (1 hour 45 minutes) - 50%
Section A: Answer 4 questions on a single fiction extract, analysing the writer's choices and impact
Section B: Use a visual stimulus to write either a descriptive or narrative piece, assessed on writing quality and technical accuracy (spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence variety etc.)

Paper 2: Non-fiction (1 hour 45 minutes) – 50%
Section A: Analyse and compare two non-fiction sources (letters, articles, blogs) on a shared theme, looking at language, structure, and opinions
Section B: Produce a written text for a specified audience, purpose, and form (e.g. letter, speech, article), giving your own perspective on the theme

Where could this subject take you?

- Journalism
- Copywriting
- Social Media Manager
- Lawyer
- Public Relations
- Marketing and advertising
- Politics
- Author
- Teacher
- Editor
- Publisher

Future study opportunities

A Levels in:
English Language
English Literature
History
Geography

Other Post-16 in:
Creative and Digital Media
Multimedia Journalism
Social Media Production
Media
T Level in Production

"Language is the road map of a culture. It tells you where its people come from and where they are going."
- Rita Mae Brown

English Literature

AQA
8702

English Literature is an engaging and rewarding course, offering students the opportunity to study a range of the best poems, plays and novels written in the English language. Students develop their ability to analyse a writer's craft; they hone their essay and argument skills whilst developing their own sense of personal voice and textual interpretation.

What will I learn?

- How to construct an essay
- How to analyse a writer's methods
- How to support ideas with evidence
- How to critically read and interpret information
- The importance of context (social, historical and political) when reading a text

Transferable skills

- Initiate & self-motivate
- Learn & be resilient
- Negotiate & network
- Problem solving
- Organisation
- Communicate & listen
- Include & value diversity
- Work smart
- Work as a team

Where could this subject take you?

- Journalism
- Copywriting
- Social Media Manager
- Lawyer
- Public Relations
- Author
- Teacher
- Editor
- Publisher

How is the subject assessed?

Paper 1: Shakespeare and the 19th century novel (1hour, 45 minutes).

- Section A: Students will be provided with an extract from *Macbeth* and will write an essay in response to a question
- Section B: Students will be provided with an extract from *A Christmas Carol* and write an essay in response to a question

Paper 2: Modern texts and poetry (2 hours, 15 minutes)

- Section A: Students will be required to write an essay on a character or theme in *An Inspector Calls*
- Section B: Students will be provided with a copy of one of the fifteen poems they have studied which they will compare with another poem of their choice from the 'Power and Conflict' anthology
- Section C: Students will be provided with two unseen poems. They will write an analytical response and a comparison

Future study opportunities

A Levels in:
English Language
English Literature
History
Geography

Other Post-16 in:
Creative and Digital Media
Multimedia Journalism
Social Media Production
Media
T Level in Production

"Literature is the study of what it means to be human" - Anon.

Food and Nutrition

AQA
8585

Food Preparation and Nutrition is an exciting and practical course that explores the science of food, cooking skills, and the impact of food on health and wellbeing. Students learn how to prepare a wide range of dishes while developing essential life skills and understanding nutrition, food provenance, and sustainability. The course combines creativity with scientific knowledge, encouraging problem-solving and innovation in the kitchen. It provides a strong foundation for anyone interested in careers in hospitality, health, or food science, while also helping students make informed choices about the food they eat and its effect on their bodies and the environment.

What will I learn?

The topics covered throughout the course are:

1. **Food, Nutrition and Health** – understanding macro and micronutrients and what makes a healthy diet.
2. **Food Science** – understanding and demonstrating a range of cooking methods to show functional and chemical properties of ingredients.
3. **Food Safety** – food spoilage, contamination (e.g. enzymes and bacteria) and food safety principles in storing and handling foods.
4. **Food Choice** – the wide range of reasons for dietary choices e.g. moral or ethical; medical; religious or cultural; lifestyle etc.
5. **Food Provenance** – the environmental impact and sustainability of ingredients, food processing, and production.

You also need to have some basic kitchen skills already: general practical skills; knife skills; preparing fruit and vegetables; use of the cooker; use of kitchen equipment; basic cooking methods; ability to prepare, combine and shape; sauce making; ability to tenderise and marinade; making dough; knowledge of raising agents and setting mixtures.

How is the subject assessed?

50% Examination: 1 hour 45 minutes

- Section A (20 marks) a range of multiple choice questions
- Section B (80 marks) five longer response questions to show your understanding of the five topics

50% Non-Examination Assessments: Both of the tasks below will involve practical evidence and a portfolio of work to support this. These will be set by the exam board during Year 11:

1. **Food Investigation Task** – a science-based experiment to show understanding of chemical and functional properties of ingredients. Assessed out of 30 marks. (15%)
2. **Food Preparation Task** – to plan, prepare, cook and present three dishes in three hours (dietary needs/life-stages/culinary traditions). Assessed out of 70 marks (35%)

Future study opportunities

A Levels in:
Food Science
Biology
Business Studies

Other Post-16 in:
Hospitality & Catering
Travel & Tourism
Professional Chef

Transferable skills

- Initiate & self-motivate
- Learn & be resilient
- Negotiate & network
- Problem solving
- Organisation
- Communicate & listen
- Include & value diversity
- Work smart
- Numeracy & IT skills

Where could this subject take you?

- Food technologist
- Food critic
- Restaurateur
- Baker or Chef
- Food author

""You don't have to cook fancy or complicated masterpieces – just good food from fresh ingredients."
— Julia Child

Geography

Edexcel B
1GB0

Geography helps make sense of the world around you. From natural disasters and climate change to global development and urban issues, Geography allows you to explore the connections between people, places and environments. Studying Geography will give you the skills to investigate big global challenges, understand current affairs, and think critically about the future. It's a subject for the curious - if you want to know why the world is the way it is and how we can shape it for the better, Geography is the place to start.

What will I learn?

Global Geographical Issues

- Hazardous Earth: tectonic hazards, climate and global warming
- Development dynamics: global inequalities, case study of an emerging country
- Challenges of an urbanising world: city growth, urban challenges in a developing/emerging country

UK Geographical Issues

- UK's evolving physical landscape: rivers and coasts
- UK's evolving human landscape: population, economy, rural/urban changes
- Geographical fieldwork in contrasting UK environments

People and the Environment Issues

- People and the biosphere: ecosystems and biomes
- Forests under threat: tropical rainforests and taiga
- Consuming energy resources: sustainable futures and energy security

Transferable skills

- Initiate & self-motivate
- Learn & be resilient
- Negotiate & network
- Problem solving
- Organisation
- Communicate & listen
- Include & value diversity
- Work smart
- Work as a team

How is the subject assessed?

Students will complete three 1 hour 30 minute examinations:

Paper 1: Global Geographical Issues
Units covered: Hazardous Earth, Development Dynamics, Challenges of an Urbanising World
Raw marks awarded: 94 marks (37.5% of GCSE)

Paper 2: UK Geographical Issues
Units covered: UK's Evolving Physical Landscape (coasts & rivers), UK's Evolving Human Landscape, Geographical Fieldwork (fieldwork is exam-focused and is not coursework)
Raw marks awarded: 94 marks (37.5% of GCSE)

Paper 3: People and Environmental Issues – Making Geographical Decisions
Units covered: People and the Biosphere, Forests Under Threat, Consuming Energy Resources (based on a pre-release resource booklet)
Raw marks awarded: 64 marks (25% of GCSE)

Future study opportunities

A Levels in:
Geography
History
Politics
Economics

Other Post-16 in:
Global Logistics & Business
Accountancy
L3 Management & Administration

Where could this subject take you?

- Sustainability management
- Environmental management
- Law
- Business
- Data Analyst
- Teaching
- Geographical Information Systems
- Planning
- Disaster management
- Journalism
- International development
- Marketing Executive

"Geography is the subject which holds the key to our future." — Michael Palin

History

AQA
8145

Unlock the past with the AQA GCSE History course. This exciting subject brings history to life through fascinating topics like the Cold War in Asia, the impact Germany had on the world from 1890-1945, and Elizabethan England. You'll develop critical thinking, analysis, and essay-writing skills that are valued in many careers. History helps you understand how past events shape the world today. If you enjoy stories, debates, and discovering how people lived and changed the world, History is the subject for you. Make the past your future.

What will I learn?

Germany 1890-1945

- Creation of Germany
- Impact of WW1
- Rise of Hitler
- World War Two

Conflict and Tension in Asia

- The Cold War set in Asia
- The Korean War
- The Vietnam War
- The impact on the USA

Elizabethan England

- Elizabeth's court and Parliament
- Life in Elizabethan times
- Troubles at Home and Abroad
- Historic Environment - The Globe, the Spanish Amada or Kenilworth Castle.

Power and the People

- Challenging authority and feudalism
- Challenging royal authority
- Reform and reformers
- Equality and rights

Trip to WW1 Battlefields, including visits to the Somme, Arras and Ypres. Visits to historic environments.

How is the subject assessed?

Paper 1: Understanding the Modern World

- Germany 1890-1945
- Conflict and Tension in Asia

50% of total GCSE - 2 hour paper

Paper 2: Shaping the Nation

- Elizabethan England
- Power and the People

50% of total GCSE - 2 hour paper

Transferable skills

- Initiate & self-motivate
- Learn & be resilient
- Negotiate & network
- Problem solving
- Organisation
- Communicate & listen
- Include & value diversity
- Work smart
- Work as a team
- Numeracy & IT skills

Future study opportunities

A Levels in:
History
Politics
Economics
Geography

Other Post-16 in:
Global Logistics & Business
Accountancy
L3 Management & Administration

Where could this subject take you?

- Media
- Politics
- Teacher
- Archivist
- Barrister
- Journalist
- Project Management
- Museum Curator

"We are not makers of history. We are made by history" - *Martin Luther King Jr.*

Maths

Edexcel
1MA1

Mathematics is a 'core subject', so all students study it to GCSE. The syllabus consists of topics students have already met and many new ones too. The qualification is split into two tiers of entry, higher and foundation. Both tiers contain questions designed to test whether a student can:

- Use & apply standard techniques.
- Reason, interpret & communicate mathematically.
- Solve problems within Mathematics and in other contexts.

Foundation tier covers content from grade 1 to 5.
Higher tier covers content from grade 4 to 9.

What will I learn?

Students will further their mathematical knowledge in the following areas:

- Number
- Algebra
- Ratio & Proportion
- Geometry
- Statistics
- Probability

They will develop their problem-solving skills to combine mathematical methods, solving both real life and abstract problems.

Transferable skills

- Initiate & self-motivate
- Learn & be resilient
- Problem solving
- Organisation
- Communicate & listen
- Include & value diversity
- Work smart
- Numeracy & IT skills

How is the subject assessed?

The GCSE Mathematics course will be examined through three terminal examination papers each 90 minutes in length:

- Paper 1 – Non Calc 80 marks
- Paper 2 – Calc 80 marks
- Paper 3 - Calc 80 marks

Each paper is equally-weighted for marks, the overall grade is calculated from a score out of 240. Any topic can be examined on any paper.

Each examination will consist of a mixture of question styles, from short, single-mark questions to multi-step problems. The mathematical demand increases as a student progresses through the paper

The weightings of topics over the whole examination series should meet the following approximate guidelines.

- Number (Foundation 25%, Higher 15%).
- Algebra (Foundation 20%, Higher 30%).
- Ratio, proportion and rates of reaction (Foundation 25%, Higher 20%).
- Geometry (Foundation 15%, Higher 20%)
- Probability & Statistics (Foundation 15%, Higher 15%)

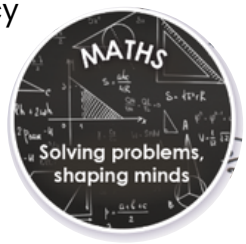
Where could this subject take you?

- Engineer
- Architect
- Data analyst
- Accountant
- Market research
- Statistician
- Financial analyst

Future study opportunities

A Levels in:
Maths
Further Maths
All Sciences
Economics

Other Post-16 in:
T Level Accountancy
Business and Economics
Engineering



"There is no branch of mathematics, however abstract, which may not some day be applied to phenomena of the real world." – Nikolai Lobachevsky

Music

Eduqas

GCSE Music is your chance to turn your interest in sound, creativity, and performance into something purposeful and rewarding. Building on your Key Stage 3 studies, this course gives you the space to engage with a wider variety of musical genres in greater depth, express your ideas through performing and composing tasks, and experience what it means to work as a developing musician. Whether you enjoy playing, singing, composing, or exploring new styles, this course helps you develop expertise in all these areas and build genuine musical confidence. It is a subject that gives you real freedom to grow as a musician and take your abilities further than ever before.

What will I learn?

In GCSE Music you will develop your skills in performing, composing, and listening. Throughout the course, you will continue to grow as a performer, working both individually and as part of an ensemble to develop your technical control, fluency, and expressive confidence. You will also strengthen your composing skills by shaping your own musical ideas and exploring how different styles and techniques can influence your work. As you make connections between performing, composing, and listening, you will gain a clearer understanding of how music is created and how its different elements fit together.

A key part of the course is exploring a wide range of contrasting genres and musical traditions, helping you understand how music has evolved across different cultures, contexts, and time periods. You will investigate how instruments are used, how different approaches to performing and composing shape the way music sounds, and how musical choices communicate ideas to an audience. To support this, you will develop the vocabulary needed to describe and analyse these features clearly, and strengthen your ability to engage with musical analysis. You will also explore how music technology can support both the creation and presentation of music. Throughout the course, you will refine your ability to evaluate your own work and the work of others, helping you grow into a confident and capable musician who can apply performing, composing, and listening skills with purpose.

How is the subject assessed?

Component 1: Performing – 30%

- Two pieces lasting 4–6 minutes in total
- At least one ensemble piece; the second may be solo or ensemble
- Performances can be on any instrument or voice

Component 2: Composing – 30%

- Compose two pieces lasting 3–6 minutes in total
- One free choice composition
- One composition in response to a brief

Component 3: Appraising – 40%

- Listening exam
- Questions will address the four areas of study (Musical Forms and Devices; Music for Ensemble; Film Music; Popular Music)

Transferable skills

- Initiate & self-motivate
- Learn & be resilient
- Negotiate & network
- Problem solving
- Organisation
- Communicate & listen
- Include & value diversity
- Work smart
- Work as a team

Future study opportunities

A Levels in:

- Music
- Music Technology
- Performing Arts
- Drama
- Dance
- Media Studies
- Film Studies
- English

Other Post-16 in:

- Music Performance
- Music Production
- Musical Theatre
- Creative Arts pathways

Where could this subject take you?

- Performer (instrumentalist, vocalist, ensemble musician)
- Composer or Songwriter
- Music Therapist
- Music teacher (instrumental/vocal tuition, school, higher education)
- Music Producer or Recording Engineer
- Sound Designer
- Music Technician (live sound, studio support, theatre sound)
- Music Editor (for media, film, or games)
- Arts or Artist Manager
- Broadcaster or Presenter
- Acoustic Consultant

"The arts have the power to change lives. Music taught me discipline, creativity, and how to dream big." - Beyonce

Physical Education GCSE

AQA
8582

Physical activity and sport is an essential part of our health, fitness and wellbeing in day-to-day life. GCSE PE will allow students to develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of the benefits of physical activity and be able to apply this to practical situations. Students can develop theoretical knowledge as well as understanding how physiology and psychological state affects performance. Furthermore, they will have the opportunity to explore how socio-cultural factors affect participation.

What will I learn?

- Applied anatomy and physiology
- Movement analysis
- Physical training
- Use of data
- Sports Psychology
- Socio-cultural influences
- Health, fitness and wellbeing

Transferable skills

- Initiate & self-motivate
- Learn & be resilient
- Negotiate & network
- Problem solving
- Organisation
- Communicate & listen
- Include & value diversity
- Work smart
- Work as a team

Where could this subject take you?

- Sports scientist
- Sports psychologist
- Personal trainer
- Physiotherapy
- Sports coach
- Teacher
- Professional athlete

Future study opportunities

A Levels in:
PE
Business
Science

Other Post-16 in:
Sports BTEC
Sports Coaching
Sports Massage
Personal Training

How is the subject assessed?

Students will be examined across 2 papers (60% of GCSE) and will complete a practical assessment and a NEA (40% of GCSE):

Paper 1: The human body and movement in physical activity and sport.
Written exam
1 hour and 15 mins
78 marks
30% of GCSE

Paper 2: Socio-cultural influences and wellbeing in physical activity and sport.
Written exam
1 hour and 15 mins
78 marks
30% of GCSE

Non-exam assessment: Practical performance in physical activity and sport
Assessed by teacher and moderated by AQA

- Practical performance in three different physical activities in the role of player/performer (one in a team activity, one in an individual activity and a third in either a team or in an individual activity)
- Analysis and evaluation of performance to bring about improvement in one activity
- 100 marks
- 40% of GCSE

"I really think a champion is defined not by their wins but by how they can recover when they fall" - Serena Williams

Religious Education

OCR
J625

Our aim is to encourage students to be thoughtful, responsible and aware members of society. The syllabus explains some of the key British values formed from our country's connection to Christianity. It also allows us to encourage student engagement with a major faith, Islam, which has such an important role to play in the world today.
In the second half of the course, students will study major philosophical and ethical issues. These will include topics like relationships, war, as well as medical ethics. Students will examine these issues from both a Christian perspective and from a secular/atheistic point of view.

What will I learn?

Christianity:
- Beliefs (such as the nature of God, the afterlife and who was Jesus)
- Practices (such as worship, pilgrimage and celebrations)

Islam:
- Beliefs (such as core principles, prophets and angels)
- Practices (such as festivals, the five pillars and prayer)

Themes:
- Human relationships including marriage, divorce and equality
- War and conflict including Pacifism, types of warfare and peace-making
- Existence of God including arguments for God's existence and religious experiences
- Religious dialogue including secularism, medical ethics and the interfaith dialogue.

Future study opportunities

A Levels in:
Philosophy, Ethics and Theology
Politics
Classics
Sociology
Psychology

Other Post-16 in:
L3 Applied Psychology
Applied Law
Public Services
Childcare

How is the subject assessed?

3 written papers:
- Paper 1

Christianity - 1 hour – 63 marks
- Paper 2

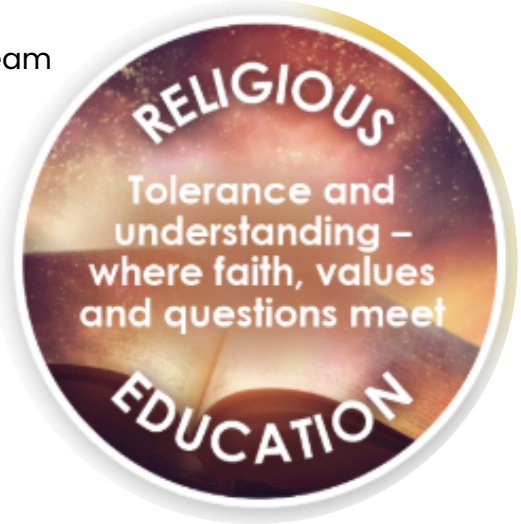
Islam - 1 hour - 63 marks
- Paper 3
- Themes - 2 hours - 126 marks

Where could this subject take you?

- Lawyer
- Civil servant
- Human Rights Officer
- Diplomatic Service
- Charity Work
- Teacher
- Public Services
- Youth Worker

Transferable skills

- Initiate & self-motivate
- Learn & be resilient
- Negotiate & network
- Problem solving
- Organisation
- Communicate & listen
- Include & value diversity
- Work smart
- Work as a team



"Philosophy is a great and necessary light, without which human society cannot exist or prosper." — Francis Bacon

Science- Combined (2 GCSEs)

AQA
8464

All students study Combined Science: Trilogy unless they choose Triple Science. The Combined Science course introduces Biology, Chemistry, and Physics, providing a broad understanding of how science explains the world around us. Through experiments, real-world applications, and problem-solving, students develop both scientific knowledge and transferable skills such as critical thinking and analysis. From exploring how the body works to uncovering the building blocks of matter and investigating the forces that shape the universe, Combined Science inspires curiosity and equips students with a strong foundation for further study and a wide range of future careers.

What will I learn?

- **Biology:** Key topics include cells, organisation, infection and response, bioenergetics, homeostasis, inheritance, variation and evolution, and ecology.
- **Chemistry:** Students study atomic structure, bonding, the periodic table, quantitative chemistry, chemical changes, energy changes, rates of reaction, organic chemistry, chemical analysis, the Earth's resources, and atmospheric chemistry.
- **Physics:** Covers energy, electricity, particle model of matter, atomic structure, forces, waves, and magnetism and electromagnetism.
- **Practical Skills:** 21 required practical activities across Biology, Chemistry, and Physics develop hands-on investigation and analytical skills.

How is the subject assessed?

Assessment is through six written examinations at the end of Year 11, two each in Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. Each paper is 1 hour 15 minutes in duration, worth 70 marks, and includes a combination of multiple-choice, short-answer and extended response questions. Students are awarded two GCSE grades to reflect their overall performance across all three sciences.

Future study opportunities

A Levels in:
If you are thinking about A Levels in any of the Sciences we recommend Triple Science

Other Post 16 in:
Environmental Sciences
Applied Sciences
Forensic & Criminal Investigation

Where could this subject take you?

- Engineer
- Architect
- Environmental Science
- Forensic Science
- Web developer
- Accountant
- Market research
- Statistician
- Financial analyst
- Motor Sport Engineer
- App or Games Developer
- Teaching
- Nursing

Transferable skills

- Initiate & self-motivate
- Learn & be resilient
- Negotiate & network
- Problem solving
- Organisation
- Communicate & listen
- Include & value diversity
- Work smart
- Work as a team
- Numeracy & IT skills

"The important thing is to never stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing." – Albert Einstein

Science- Triple (3 GCSEs)

AQA
8461, 8462, 8463

Students who opt for Triple Science (AQA) study Biology, Chemistry, and Physics as separate GCSEs, allowing them to explore each discipline in greater depth. This pathway provides an extended curriculum that builds on the foundations of Combined Science, offering additional topics and more detailed study. Through practical experiments, critical analysis, and real-world applications, students develop a deeper understanding of how science explains, predicts, and shapes the modern world. Triple Science is an excellent choice for those with a strong interest in science, supporting progression to A-level sciences and a wide range of future careers in scientific, medical, and technological fields.

What will I learn?

In **Triple Science (AQA)**, students study all of the Combined Science content plus additional topics that provide greater depth and challenge.
These extra areas include:

Biology:

- The nervous system in greater detail, including the brain and eye.
- Plant hormones and their commercial uses.
- The role of the kidney and homeostasis in greater depth.

Chemistry:

- The transition metals and their characteristic reactions.
- Nanoscience and the properties of nanoparticles.
- Advanced organic chemistry, including alcohols, carboxylic acids, and esters.

Physics:

- The motor effect, generators, and transformers.
- Space physics, including the life cycle of stars and the expanding universe.

Where could this subject take you?

- Engineer
- Architect
- Environmental Science
- Forensic Science
- Law
- Medicine
- Veterinary Science
- Web developer
- Accountant
- Food Science
- Market research
- Statistician
- Financial analyst
- Motor Sport Engineer
- Dentistry
- App or Games Developer
- Teaching
- Nursing

How is the subject assessed?

You will receive one GCSE in each of the three sciences, giving you three separate science GCSEs in total.

For each science (Biology, Chemistry, and Physics), you will sit two exams, each lasting 1 hour 45 minutes and worth 50% of the total grade.

This ensures that both papers together determine your final grade for each subject, fully recognising your achievement in all three sciences.

Future study opportunities

A Levels in:
Chemistry
Biology
Physics
Environmental Sciences

Other Post-16 in:
Applied Sciences
Forensic Science
Physiotherapy

Transferable skills

- Initiate & self-motivate
- Learn & be resilient
- Negotiate & network
- Problem solving
- Organisation
- Communicate & listen
- Include & value diversity
- Work smart
- Work as a team
- Numeracy & IT skills

"Success comes from curiosity, perseverance, and a willingness to challenge the impossible." – Marie Curie

Spanish

Edexcel
1SP1

In Spanish, you learn to communicate confidently and understand others, using both written and spoken language accurately. You also learn transferable skills that will benefit future careers such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and organisational skills, as well as becoming a more empathetic, curious, and confident young person. You explore different topics related to young people, and learn about the differences and similarities with other Spanish-speaking countries. This cultural awareness will help you to become a more rounded citizen of the world. Learning Spanish opens new doors to global opportunities and future careers as one of the most widely spoken languages in the world.

What will I learn?

Thematic contexts:

- My personal world
- Media and technology
- Travel and tourism
- Lifestyle and wellbeing
- Studying and my future
- My neighbourhood

This content will be taught through different skills such as: Speaking, Reading, Listening, Writing, Dictation, Translation, Read Aloud.

How is the subject assessed?

Spanish has a Foundation (maximum grade 5) and a Higher (maximum grade 9) paper. All exams are sent by the exam board, Edexcel.

For both tiers, there are 4 skills each worth 25% of the final grade:
Paper 1: Speaking
Teacher assessed and recorded - marked by the exam board
Paper 2: Listening
Paper 3: Reading
Paper 4: Writing

Transferable skills

- Initiate & self-motivate
- Learn & be resilient
- Negotiate & network
- Problem solving
- Organisation
- Communicate & listen
- Include & value diversity
- Work smart
- Work as a team
- Numeracy & IT skills

Future study opportunities

A Levels in:
Spanish
English Literature
Politics
Art History

Other Post 16 in:
Travel & Tourism
Hospitality & Tourism
International Business

Where could this subject take you?

- Interpreter
- Diplomacy
- International Relations
- International Business
- Flight Attendant
- Translator
- Marketing Coordinator
- Tourism industry
- Hospitality

"Un idioma te coloca en un pasillo de por vida. Dos idiomas abren todas las puertas en el camino."

"One language sets you in a corridor for life. Two languages open every door along the way." - Frank Smith