

CHOOSING YOUR GCSE OPTIONS

Year 9 is an important year as you have to choose your GCSE options. These are the subjects that you will choose to study in year 10 and 11, and the subjects that you will get GCSE qualifications for at the end of year 11.

What does the options process involve?

At GCSE, everybody will have to study core subjects such as English, Maths and Science. However, you will get the opportunity to choose some of the other subjects that you will be taking at GCSE.

Why does this matter?

You will be selecting the subjects that you want to study for the next two years, so you want to choose subjects that you are interested in.

It is also a good idea to think ahead and consider what you might like to do in the future, after year 11. Exploring future study and career options will be useful as it may be that you need to choose particular subjects to go on to your next step. Furthermore, it may be that certain subjects will help you in your future studies/ careers, as the subjects may be related to the job that you are interested in.

It's important to note that most post-16 courses require certain grades though, rather than asking you to have taken certain option subjects. Therefore, the most important thing is to choose subjects that you feel like you will enjoy and do well in.

How do you decide what subjects to study for your GCSEs? Click on this short video [here](#) to see clips of people reflecting on their GCSE options choices and how they influenced their future direction.

Things to consider when choosing your options:

- **Take time to think your decisions through.** These decisions will affect what you study in year 10 and 11.
- **Consider taking the subjects that you are most interested in/ enjoy.** Keep in mind that you will be taking these subjects for two years.
- **Look at how courses are assessed.** If you feel that you perform better in exams, you may wish to pick subjects that are 100% examined. If you perform better when completing coursework, you may wish to choose subjects with a coursework element.
- **Research what you want to do after year 11.** Explore the different pathways into careers that you're interested in – e.g. A-Levels, Apprenticeships, Traineeships etc. What subjects and grades do these courses/ careers need? If you need to take a particular subject, you could choose this as an option.
- **Choosing a balance of subjects can help to keep your options open.** If you choose a range of different subjects then you will learn lots of different skills that you can apply to most post-16 courses/ careers.
- **Think about how well the subjects that you have chosen, go together.** Does a subject go well with your other choices? Or does a subject provide a welcome change? If you are taking lots of essay-based subjects, it can be nice to include one choice with a more practical focus.

Who can help?

Talk to a range of people to get different views.

- Ask your subject teachers, form tutor, or careers teachers for advice.
- Speak to your parents, carers or relatives.
- Look out for special options assemblies or evenings at school.
- Read any information or handouts you are given.



How to choose your options:

- ✓ Because you enjoy the subject.
- ✓ Because you have researched the subject and you think you will be good at it.
- ✓ Because the subject interests you.
- ✓ Because the subject will help you after year 11 – e.g. to get on to a course or in your future career.

How **NOT** to choose your options:

- × Because you like the teacher.
- × Because you think it will be easy.
- × Because your friend is taking it.
- × Because it is a new subject but you don't really know what it involves.



How to make the decision:

Research that I have carried out (e.g. research into post-16 choices – study and career options):

Subjects that I enjoy	Subjects that I am interested in	Subjects that will help me after year 11

Questions that I have for my teachers:

Useful websites:

[BBC Bitesize – Everything that you need to know about GCSE options](#)

[icould – Choosing your GCSE options](#)

[National Careers Service](#) and [Prospects](#) – explore careers and career pathways

[BBC Bitesize careers](#) – explore a range of careers

[Start profile](#) and [Unifrog](#) – online careers platforms where you can investigate a range of study and career options.

[Amazing apprenticeships](#) – find out more about apprenticeships and traineeships.