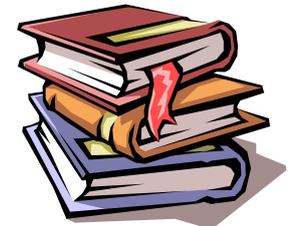
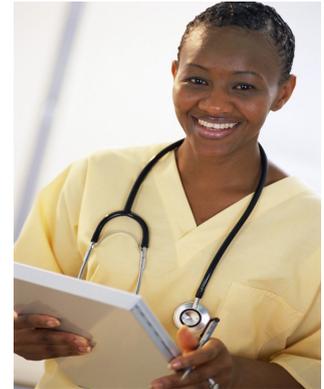


YEAR 9 OPTIONS

2026 - 2028



NAME:

FORM:

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Key Dates and Contacts

Information Events:

- Options Assembly for students on **Wednesday 25th February from 1.50pm-2.20pm.**
- Options Evening for students on **Wednesday 25th February from 3.20pm-4.20pm.**
- Options Evening for parents/carers on **Wednesday 25th February from 6.30pm-8.00pm.** For Y Pop the evening will finish at 8.00pm. If you are a parent/carer of a student in Y population, the teachers and students will be available to discuss the subjects before the presentation.

X Pop

6.30pm Presentation in PA Block / 7.15pm walk round stalls in Dining Halls

Y Pop

6.30pm Walk round stalls in Dining Halls / 7.15pm Presentation in PA Block

- On the **25th February** options forms will be given out. Students should be discussing option choices with their tutors and teachers.
- In person Parents' Evening: **Wednesday 11th March 2026 - X Pop**
Wednesday 25th March 2026 - Y Pop
- Deadlines for the completion and approval of paper Options forms signed by parents/carers and form tutors are: **Friday, 20th March 2026 - X Pop**
Friday, 27th March 2026 - Y Pop

Useful contacts:

- Mrs Percival, Deputy Headteacher in charge of timetabling and options process - vpe@gilberd.com
- Miss Bird, Deputy Headteacher in charge of Curriculum - abi@gilberd.com
- Year 9 Office Year9@gilberd.com
- Year 9 Form Tutors:

Mr Finch	mfi@gilberd.com	Mrs Bishop	jbi@gilberd.com
Mr Karantzis	kka@gilberd.com	Mrs Flynn Haddon	mfy@gilberd.com
Miss Parsonson	epa@gilberd.com	Mrs Barrows	lbw@gilberd.com
Mrs Jackson	kja@gilberd.com	Miss Theobald	sth@gilberd.com
Mrs Penwill	hpn@gilberd.com	Mrs Bush	sbu@gilberd.com
Mr Dennis	bde@gilberd.com	Mr Osborne	mos@gilberd.com

Key Dates and Contacts cont'd

- Subject/Curriculum Leaders

Art	Ms Sayer-Schofield	nsa@gilberd.com
Business	Mrs Cooper	aco@gilberd.com
Computing	Mrs Oldham	mol@gilberd.com
Dance/Drama	Mrs Howard	cho@gilberd.com
DT	Mr Dennis	bde@gilberd.com
English	Mrs Jordan	sjr@gilberd.com
Food/Textiles	Mrs Woodrow	hwo@gilberd.com
French/German	Mrs Gailey	rgl@gilberd.com
Geography	Mrs Quested	kqu@gilberd.com
Health & Social Care	Ms Hughes	khu@gilberd.com
History	Miss Lambert	jlm@gilberd.com
Music	Mr Hanlon	rha@gilberd.com
Maths	Mr McKenzie-Laverty	jmc@gilberd.com
PE	Mrs Pharaoh	cph@gilberd.com
RE	Mrs Buckley	tbu@gilberd.com
Science	Mrs Allen	cal@gilberd.com
STEPS/PACE	Miss Parker	lpa@gilberd.com

- Colchester 6th Form College Admissions 01206 500743 www.colchsfc.ac.uk
- Colchester Institute Admissions 01206 712000 www.colchester.ac.uk
- Universities Course Information www.ucas.com
- Apprenticeship Vacancies www.apprenticeships.gov.uk
- www.notgoingtouni.co.uk/ Alternative paths to going to University, including latest news, Apprenticeship and volunteering opportunities.
- www.unifrog.org The Gilberd has given our students access to Unifrog which brings all available information into one single, impartial, user-friendly platform that helps students to make the best choices. All Year 9 students have login details.

Introduction to Options



This booklet is designed to help you and your parents/carers make important decisions about the **subject options** that you would like to study in Years 10 and 11.

Pages 6-10 in this booklet are designed to help you map out your ideas.

From Page 11 onwards the booklet tells you all about the different subjects you can choose from. It is important that you read this section thoroughly so that you understand what each subject involves. If you are not clear about anything, email your teacher or the Subject Leader (see page 4).

Each subject has a code at the top of the page. This is to help you piece together the right choices for you.

You will choose **4** subjects in order of preference that you would like to study. You then have to add **2** reserves. **YOU MUST BE WILLING TO STUDY ANY OF THESE 6 SUBJECTS.** You will have Year 9 Parents' Evenings before you have to make your choices, ask your teachers if studying their subject for GCSE is a good idea for you.

There is no rush to complete your form. We do not allocate choices until all forms are in, so please do not try and complete it too early. Instead, use the time to research and decide what you want to do.

The final deadline is: **X Pop Friday, 20th March 2026**
 Y Pop Friday, 27th March 2026

On Friday 27th March we will start the process of allocating **4** of your chosen subjects. It cannot be guaranteed that it will definitely be your top 4, so **YOU MUST BE WILLING TO STUDY ANY OF THE 6 SUBJECTS YOU PUT DOWN.** If you hand your form in late, you are less likely to get your top choices. You will be advised of your choices in June/July, once the timetable has been written. If we cannot make any of your choices fit, you will be spoken to by Ms Wren, Mrs Percival or Miss Bird before then.

As a school we try to build the timetable around what students ask for. It is not always possible to accommodate changes after the deadline, so make sure you consider your choices carefully.



How do I choose?

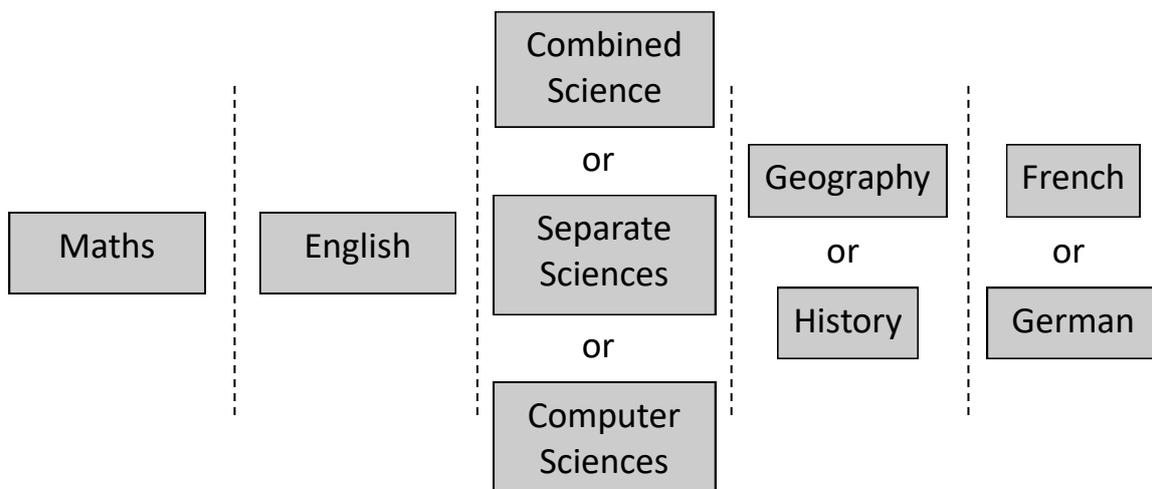
You can not really get it wrong!

Remember you are not choosing your future career at this point, you are choosing a range of subjects suited to your interests and abilities that will allow you access to all future opportunities. We have set up the options process to try and make sure that no doors are closed to you in the future. You might be surprised at how many 6th form courses do not require a GCSE in that subject, so do not feel you have to specialise too early. (Check with your tutor who has a copy of the 6th form and institute prospectuses, you can also check the demands of courses using the links to prospectuses in this booklet). Good grades in English and Maths and a range of subjects are generally the key to any future study.



English Baccalaureate (EBacc):

You may have heard of the EBacc standard. If you study all EBacc subjects it suggests to colleges and employers that students have a good breadth of academic study. The 5 key components are below:



The government is keen for students to embark on the EBacc suite of subjects. We would encourage academically able students to study the full EBacc. Other students may also choose this option if they wish. Students choosing this route will then have **2** further options to study subjects of their choosing.



Useful Information regarding Options Course

GCSEs are graded from 9 (highest) to 1 (lowest). This year we are offering 1 technical award which is equivalent to a GCSE. Health & Social Care is a Cambridge National and has grades of Pass, Merit and Distinction.

The majority of GCSEs have exams which are sat at the end of Year 11 (or Year 10 for short course RE) and most do not contain any coursework. The only subjects with “higher” or “foundation” papers are Mathematics, Science, French and German.

Technical awards offer more variety in the type of assessment, but are not called GCSEs. We will keep students and parents informed about any changes to their assessment and any changes made to their content. The basics of the subjects won't change.

With all subject courses, we may alter exam boards or courses if we feel it is in the best interests of our students, or in response to any further curriculum changes made by the government or Ofqual. We will keep students and parents informed about any changes to their assessments and any changes made to their content. The basics of the subjects won't change.

STEPS Course

Our STEPS Course had been designed for a small number of our students who we feel would benefit from a modified curriculum.

This course is for those students in **lower sets** who have been identified as benefiting from a mix of Core subjects and an alternative programme of study. Students will study Maths, English, English Literature and Combined Science and **any 2 subjects of their choice** (7 GCSEs in total).

If Miss Parker (SENCO) believes that your son or daughter would benefit from the STEPS course you will be contacted by her.



The areas studied include: IT, Mountain Biking, Mountain Bike Maintenance, Kayaking, Team work, Orienteering, First Aid, Job Preparation, Food Hygiene, Care, Health & Safety in the Workplace and Personal Finance.



PACE Course

The PACE Course leads to one fewer GCSE than our standard GCSE pathway.

It is designed for those students who may benefit from some additional support with life/study skills to enhance their 8 GCSEs.

Students study the core of Maths, English Literature, English Language, Combined Science (2 GCSEs), History or Geography and **2 other subjects of their choice** (8 GCSEs in total).

If Miss Parker (SENCO) believes that your son or daughter would benefit from the PACE course you will be contacted by her.

PACE will not lead to a GCSE but time will be spent working on Communication skills, Independent Living and the World of Work.



*For more information on either of the above courses please contact:
Miss Parker - tel: 01206 842211 email: lpa@gilberd.com*

In Year 11, students have additional English and Maths to support their GCSEs.

Subjects Studied at KS4



Compulsory Subjects:

All students will study the following subjects:

English

English Literature

Mathematics

Science

Physical Education

Future Skills

Religious Studies (Short course)



Universal:

Suitable for all students



Higher:

Subjects with this code are suitable for the more able.



Technical Awards (formerly known as vocational subjects):

All students can choose these subjects but the qualifications are not a GCSE, they are an equivalent if studied as a level 2 course.

Option Choices:



Humanities Subject Choice:

All students must study either:

History or

Geography



MFL Subject Choice:

Students wishing to study the full EBacc should pick a language either:

French or

German

However, all students can opt to study a language.

Students then choose other subjects from the list below until they have selected 6 in total (including the Humanities and Language subjects).

Art & Design: Fine Art *

Business

Computing

Dance

Design Technology

Drama

Food Preparation & Nutrition

French

Geography

German

Health & Social Care (Cambridge Nationals)

History

Music

PE

Religious Studies (Full course)

Separate Sciences

Textiles (Art & Design Textiles) *

* **Note: Students cannot study the subject combinations shown below:**

- Art & Design: Fine Art and Textiles (Art & Design Textiles)

Further Information and Advice for Students



You should raise any concerns/queries you may have about courses you have not studied before with your subject teachers and form tutors. Your class teachers will talk to you this term about courses in their subjects/face to face lessons.

Before making a decision:

- read the course outlines in this booklet
- email/talk to your tutor if you would like further support
- discuss your progress with your subject teachers
- make sure you read this booklet carefully and ask your teachers about subjects you have not studied yet
- think about further education at 16+
- find out the entry requirements for the 6th Form College, the Institute and other post 16 providers for courses you might want to study
- consider future career aspirations
- ignore what your friends are choosing, you may not be in the same class
- do not choose a subject because you like the teacher, you may not be taught by them
- balance the subjects you need with subjects you enjoy.

Please note: Subjects will only run if they attract viable numbers. It may not be possible to accept all the students who wish to opt for a given subject. We may have to modify courses or make changes if we have sudden staffing changes. The school will also respond to any government curriculum changes where necessary by providing best fit courses.



Introduction

Art and Design: Fine Art explores creating artwork that is influenced by the world around us. This GCSE will help develop your own skill and creativity and connect it with ideas, thoughts and imagination. Your own artwork can be inspired by personal experiences, feelings and emotions and the way in which we represent people, places and things through a variety of media and materials.

What will it be like?

You will explore a range of processes and techniques, work in a variety of different media and styles, as well as being inspired by the work of other artists.

You will explore creative skills including mark-making, drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, printmaking, mixed media and textiles.

You will need to be prepared to work independently to develop ideas and skills, using visual communication to thoughtfully document your artistic journey, in a sketchbook.

In addition to work produced in class, homework and the mock exam in Year 11 also form an integral part of the final coursework percentage (60%).

Assessment

Component 1: Personal Portfolio (60%)

Component 2: Externally Set Assignment (40% - marked out of 96)

Exam Board: AQA

Further information can be found at: <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/art-and-design/gcse/art-and-design-8201-8206>



Note:

Students cannot study both Art & Design: Fine Art AND Textiles (Art & Design Textiles).

Textiles GCSE (Art & Design Textiles)

Introduction

Art & Design Textiles GCSE is a great subject for both creative and academic students. If you are arty and creative but also love hands on making, this is a perfect subject for you. It is an ideal balance of practical exploration, creative designing, problem solving and analytical study. This course is excellent for students considering careers in fashion, costume design and interior design, as well as a vast range of other exciting career opportunities.



What will it be like?

The course is quite flexible and you will study and learn a wide range of skills including: fashion design and construction, costume design, surface textiles, product design, fashion illustration, interior design, applied textiles and embellished textiles. You will then have the option to specialise in your favourite area of study to refine and develop your skills.

Projects

You will draw inspiration from a range of themes and other artists to independently develop creative ideas and produce personal outcomes using one or more of the many textiles disciplines available for study.

You will build a portfolio of work during Years 10-11 and select your best pieces to exhibit at the end of Year 11. This will also form part of your final assessment along with an externally set task given by the examining board.

As part of the course you will be required to collect primary research and will therefore attend trips to exhibitions or fashion shows as part of your learning.

Assessment

Unit 1: Personal portfolio including controlled assessment (60%)

Unit 2: Externally set assessment and Practical Exam (40%)

Exam Board: AQA

Further information can be found at: <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/art-and-design/gcse/art-and-design-8204/specification>

Note: Students cannot study both Art, Craft & Design AND Textiles (Art & Design Textiles).

Introduction

GCSE qualifications in business subjects enable students to:

- actively engage in the study of business and economics to develop as effective and independent students.
- use an enquiring, critical approach to distinguish facts and opinions, to build arguments and make informed judgements.
- develop and apply their knowledge, understanding and skills to contemporary issues in a range of local, national and global contexts.
- appreciate perspectives of different stakeholders in relation to business and economic activities.
- consider the extent to which business and economic activity can be ethical and sustainable.



What will it be like?

While studying the 2 themes of this course you are likely to learn a lot of new things. Theme 1 concentrates on the key business concepts, issues and skills involved in starting and running a small business. In Theme 2 you will be introduced to national and global business contexts and will develop an understanding of how these impact business behaviour and decisions. You will develop an understanding of the interdependence nature of business activity through interaction between business operations, finance, marketing and human resources, as well as the relationship between the business and the environment in which it operates.

Students need strong literacy and numeracy skills for this course and a commitment to Business reading material (news articles) and Business TV programmes.

Assessment

THEMES	%	MARKS	TIME
Theme 1 - Investigating Small Businesses	50%	90	Externally assessed exam
Theme 2 - Building a Business	50%	90	Externally assessed exam

Exam Board: EDEXCEL

Further information can be found at: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/business-2017.html>

Introduction

Computing is of enormous importance to the UK economy. This challenging course teaches students a broad range of skills and technical terminology. Students should be prepared to work independently and be active in their use of resources. Students will be introduced to different data representation methods, networking and ethics. They will also learn algorithmic and computational thinking skills plus develop their programming techniques.



Who will want to do this course? Those who are logical; computational thinkers; those confident in numerical work and who enjoy solving challenging problems.

Computer Science GCSE is recognised as an **EBacc subject**.

What will it be like?

Component 1 - Computer systems

- Systems Architecture
- Memory
- Storage
- Wired and wireless networks
- Network topologies, protocols and layers
- System security
- System software
- Ethical, legal, cultural and environmental concerns
- Data representation

Component 2 - Computational thinking, algorithms and programming

- Algorithms
- Programming techniques
- Producing robust programs
- Computational logic
- Translators and facilities of languages
- Programming Skills - Design, write, test & refine

Assessment

100% written examinations (no calculators) at the end of Year 11.

Exam Board: OCR

Further information can be found at: <https://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse/computer-science-j277-from-2020/>

Introduction

GCSE Dance is a practical and theoretical course designed for students who are enthusiastic about dance. It is open to all students, regardless of their dance background.

Dance is an empowering and powerful form of non-verbal communication which enables the development of creative, physical, emotional and intellectual capacities, which are essential skills to develop confidence in the wider world.



What will the course involve?

The course is split into 2 components, Performance & Choreography and Dance Appreciation

Component 1: Performance & Choreography

Students will be required to perform 3 dances in front of a visiting examiner.

Performance:

- You will learn 6 set phrases and perform 3 as a solo (approx. 1 minute)
- Either a duet or a trio based on the set phrases (approx. 3-3½ minutes)

Choreography:

- Either a solo or group choreography, of between 2-3 minutes. Choreographed in response to a range of stimuli chosen by the exam board.

Component 2: Dance Appreciation

The following knowledge and understanding is assessed through a 90 minute written exam

- Knowledge and Appreciation of choreographic processes and performing skills
- Critical Appreciation of your own work
- Critical Appreciation of professional dance works

To support their studies GCSE Dance students have been involved in opportunities to work with professional dance companies through workshops and wider performance opportunities. Students can also opt to get involved in a wide range of extra curricular dance activities including theatre trips and the annual Dance Showcase.

Assessment

[AQA / Dance / GCSE / GCSE Dance](#)

Practical Examination 60% Component 1—Performance and Choreography

Written Examination 40% Component 2—Dance Appreciation

Introduction

The aim of the GCSE Drama course is to provide students with a broad range of experiences watching, making and performing theatre. Whilst the subject is largely practical, there is also an important emphasis on students having a sound theoretical understanding behind the practical work they explore.

What will it be like?

Drama is an exciting and fulfilling GCSE course where students will develop their:

- Creativity
- Devising Skills
- Communication and Teamwork
- Literacy
- Analytical and Evaluative skills



Students will explore a range of genres, styles, playwrights and practitioners. Although the course has a strong focus on practical work, students will need to complete a written exam in the summer of their final year as well as a piece of written coursework. Students will develop the necessary skills to explore script work and learn how to devise their own performances. The course also requires students to analyse and evaluate live theatre performances. This is a crucial part of the written exam and it is expected that students attend theatre trips set up by the department.

Assessment

Component 1—Understanding Drama—Students will complete a 1 hour 45 minute written exam in the summer of their final year. The written exam will explore a set text and a performance which the class have seen and studied. This is externally assessed and worth 40% of the overall GCSE course.

Component 2—Devising Drama—Students will create a performance based on stimulus and will complete a written journal exploring the process of their ideas. This is internally assessed and worth 30% of the overall GCSE course.

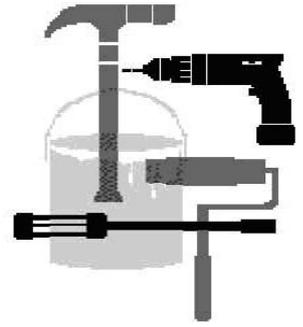
Component 3—Texts in Practice—Students will perform 2 extracts from another set play given to the class. They will also need to complete a written analysis to go alongside their performance. This is externally assessed by a visiting examiner and is worth 30% of the overall GCSE course.

Exam Board: AQA

Further information can be found at: <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/drama/gcse/drama-8261>

Introduction

This course is aimed at students who like problem solving and developing working products predominately out of wood but also out of various other materials. The course is divided into three overlapping areas of study: core technical principles; designing and making principles; specialist technical principles.



What will it be like?

During the course we will cover knowledge and practical applied skills in: shaping and joining materials by hand and machine, knowledge of papers and card technology, textiles, plastics and metals, use of structures and mechanisms, Computer-Aided Design (CAD) and Manufacture (CAM), industrial production methods and an awareness of how design influences society and the environment we live in. The students need to have a general understanding of all types of materials such as textiles and electronics to fulfil the core element of the course.

Projects covered include a storage unit and other various multi material focused tasks. Students will be required to research and develop prototype products using drawing and a variety of presentation techniques.

General advice: ICT is a core element of the course and will be used for research, data presentation, and Computer-Aided Design and Manufacture throughout the course and especially in Year 11. It would be useful, but not essential, for students to have access to a computer at home. The department has free student licences for software packages used throughout the course which are also available for use at home.

Assessment

Coursework = 50%

(Split 72% designing, developing a solution and evaluating/28% making)

Students will be expected to research, develop and manufacture a full-size working prototype product selected from a list set by the exam board.

Examination = 50%

Students will be tested on their understanding of design and manufacture.

The exam includes 15% Maths based questions and 10% Science based questions.

Exam Board: EDEXCEL

Further information can be found at: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/design-and-technology-9-1-from-2017.html>

English Language GCSE and English Literature GCSE

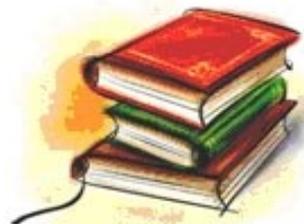


Introduction

During Year 9, students will work on developing the skills needed for the English Language and Literature GCSE that will begin in Year 10.

Course Outline

Over the course of Year 9, students will be assessed in 5 different units. Each unit leads into topics that they will cover at GCSE.



Worlds and Lives Literature —novel and/or anthology of texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will have to study a world literature text or compilation of short stories in this unit. Students will explore the social and historical context of the text or texts and analyse the methods used by the writer to create the narrative.
Creative Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creative writing is worth 25% of the English Language examination with a focus on spelling, grammar and punctuation in all English GCSE examinations.• Students will engage with and practise different creative writing structures and techniques.• Techniques and effect will be covered which links to both the analytical and the written part of the Language GCSE.
Non-fiction and writing for different purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analysis of different types of texts appears on the Language examination.• Writing for different purposes and audiences will be a skill required in the Language examination.
Spoken Language Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will specifically focus on speech writing.• Students will complete an individual presentation which will form the spoken element of their Language GCSE.
Shakespeare text	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will study a Shakespeare text that will appear in their English Literature GCSE.• Students will cover the plot, characters and literary techniques used within the play.

Assessment

5 main unit assessments and a GCSE Spoken Language assessment.

2 Language examinations and 2 Literature examinations are sat at the end of Year 11. There is no coursework in English Language or English Literature.

Exam Board: AQA

Further information can be found at:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-8700/specification>

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-8702/specification>

Introduction

The GCSE in Food Preparation and Nutrition gives students the knowledge, understanding and skills required to cook and apply the principles of food science, nutrition and healthy eating.

It encourages students to cook, enables them to make informed decisions about food and nutrition and allows them to acquire knowledge in order to be able to feed themselves and others affordably and nutritiously, now and later in life.



This course will appeal to those who are interested in careers such as working in a professional kitchen, new product development, nutritionist, dietitians, sports nutrition, teaching, marketing, food photography, hotel/restaurant manager plus many more.

What will it be like?

Students will be expected to cook every week and will be given 1 week's notice to prepare and source ingredients. Every week a new skill will be introduced and students will be encouraged to be creative and challenge themselves by adapting traditional recipes. Each student will have the opportunity to design and present their ideas and showcase their skills. During theory lessons students will enhance their knowledge by researching, investigating and discussing issues about food manufacturing, nutrition and the science of food.

Students will use up to date resources and technological aids to explore all aspects of food in the UK and all over the world. The use of Instagram, Pinterest, nutritional analysis software, costing of recipes and online cookbooks will be encouraged as we feel students should be able to use technology to enhance creativity and their presentation skills.

Assessment

Component 1: Principles of Food Preparation and Nutrition

Written exam: 1 hour 45 mins

This will consist of 2 sections both containing **compulsory questions** and will assess the 6 areas of content:

1. Food commodities
2. Principles of nutrition
3. Diet and good health
4. The science of food
5. Where food comes from
6. Cooking and food preparation



Assessment continued

Component 2: Food Preparation and Nutrition in Action

Non-examination assessment: internally assessed, externally moderated.

Assessment 1: The Food Investigation Assessment (8 hours) 15% of overall mark.

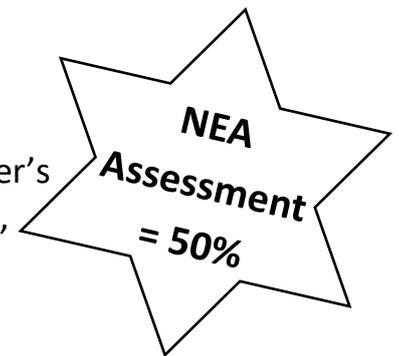
A scientific food investigation which will assess the learner's knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to scientific principles underlying the preparation and cooking of food.

Assessment 2: The Food Preparation Assessment (12 hours) 35% of overall mark.

Prepare, cook and present a menu which assesses the learner's knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to the planning, preparation, cooking and presentation of food.

Exam Board: EDUQUAS

Further information can be found at: <https://www.eduqas.co.uk/media/4zjdq104/eduqas-gcse-food-preparation-nutrition-spec-from-2016.pdf>



Do you speak another language at home?

If your child speaks a language at home other than English or has lived in another country and become proficient in another language, it may be possible for them to take a GCSE in this language. This is usually done in Year 10.

These exams are assessed in the four skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing and all exams must be taken to gain the GCSE qualification.

Due to the number and diversity of languages on offer, we are unable to offer teaching, but we will run a revision session prior to the exams, so students are aware of the structure of each exam.

Practice papers, mark schemes and audio files are available from the MFL department in school.

In recent years, students have taken GCSE exams in the following languages: Turkish, Spanish, Japanese, Italian, Polish, Russian, Greek, Mandarin Chinese, Portuguese and Arabic. Other languages are available.

If you would like any more information, please contact Mrs Jackson (kja@gilberd.com) who organises the entries for Home Languages.

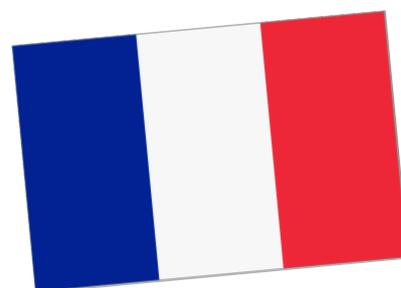
Introduction

We will teach and help you to understand and use useful, everyday French in a variety of real life situations. The skills acquired through learning a language are lifelong and can be used in many aspects of a student's study during Years 10 and 11 and not purely in Modern Foreign Languages. Learning a language gives students the ability to communicate effectively and understand how language is formed, skills which underpin study elsewhere. Acquisition of a foreign language develops these skills as well as deepening awareness of other cultures and life.

What will it be like?

The course will allow students to develop their skills in Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing across the following thematic contexts:

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



This is a new specification of the GCSE and has been designed to be more relevant and accessible to learners than it has been in the past.

Methods of study

You will learn the sort of French which will help you in a variety of situations you might come across as a tourist, as a visitor in a French-speaking family or if you meet French-speaking people in this country. You will listen to recordings of native speakers and to your teacher. You will read from text books, authentic materials and study resources. You will also use ICT revision materials and dictionaries to help expand your knowledge. You will speak, write and translate French individually, in pairs, in groups and as a class.

Independent learning of vocabulary and grammatical structures is essential for success in this course and these aspects will be tested on a regular basis.

Assessment

The 4 skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing are assessed separately at the end of the course. Each exam is given an equal weighting of 25% and students are assessed at either Foundation or Higher tier.

Exam Board: EDEXCEL

Further information can be found at: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/french-2024.html>

Introduction

We will teach and help you to understand and use useful, everyday German in a variety of real life situations. The skills acquired through learning a language are lifelong and can be used in many aspects of a student's study during Years 10 and 11 and not purely in Modern Foreign Languages. Learning a language gives students the ability to communicate effectively and understand how language is formed - skills which underpin study elsewhere. Acquisition of a foreign language develops these skills as well as deepening awareness of other cultures.

What will it be like?

The course will allow students to develop their skills in Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing across the following thematic contexts:

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



This is a new specification of the GCSE and has been designed to be more relevant and accessible to learners than it has been in the past.

Methods of study

You will learn the sort of German which will help you in a variety of situations you might come across as a tourist, as a visitor in a German-speaking family or if you meet German-speaking people in this country. You will listen to recordings of native speakers and to your teacher. You will read from text books, authentic materials and study resources. You will also use ICT revision materials and dictionaries to help expand your knowledge. You will speak, write and translate German individually, in pairs, in groups and as a class.

Independent learning of vocabulary and grammatical structures is essential for success in this course and these aspects will be tested on a regular basis.

Assessment

The 4 skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing are assessed separately at the end of the course. Each exam is given an equal weighting of 25% and students are assessed at either Foundation or Higher tier.

Exam Board: EDEXCEL

Further information can be found at: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/german-2024.html>

Introduction - GCSE Geography (AQA): Understanding the World We Live In

GCSE Geography is a broad, engaging subject that helps students develop a clear understanding of the world around them. It encourages learners to explore the relationship between people and the environment, examine current global issues, and understand how physical and human processes shape places at a local, national, and global scale. Geography is a well-respected GCSE that supports both academic progression and the development of essential life skills.

What will it be like?

The AQA GCSE Geography course provides a balanced study of **physical geography** and **human geography**, ensuring students gain a strong understanding of both the natural environment and human activity.

Teaching and learning go beyond textbook study. Lessons involve the use of videos, maps, geographical data, photographs, and case studies from around the world. Students are encouraged to discuss, analyse, and evaluate real-world issues, helping them to develop informed opinions and decision-making skills. The course also includes two pieces of **fieldwork**, allowing students to carry out geographical investigations and apply classroom learning in a practical context.



GCSE Geography develops a wide range of transferable skills, including **analysis, evaluation, data interpretation, problem-solving, and extended writing**. These skills are highly valued by colleges, universities, and employers and support future pathways in subjects such as science, economics, business, environmental studies, and social sciences.

Assessment

Assessment for AQA GCSE Geography takes place through **three written examinations**, all sat at the end of Year 11. There is **no coursework**, although students are required to complete **two pieces of compulsory field work** during the course, which is examined in the final assessments.

- **Paper 1: Living with the Physical Environment (35% of overall grade)** Focuses on natural hazards, ecosystems, glaciers, and coastal landscapes.
- **Paper 2: Challenges in the Human Environment (35% of overall grade)** Examines urban issues, global development, and resource management.
- **Paper 3: Geographical Applications (30% of overall grade)** Assesses fieldwork knowledge, geographical skills, and decision-making using unfamiliar resources.

The examinations include a range of question styles, from multiple-choice and short-answer questions to extended written responses.

Why Choose GCSE Geography?

GCSE Geography equips students with a strong understanding of key global challenges and develops skills that are essential for further education and future careers. It supports progression into a wide range of academic and vocational pathways and helps students become informed, responsible, and globally aware individuals.

Health and Social Care Cambridge Nationals



Introduction

This subject is about issues facing the general population, and how to meet the demands society places upon the health and social care industry.

Students who chose this subject are interested in human behaviour, and will want to improve the lives of others. This course will especially be relevant to those students who are interested in a career working in the health care, social care, early years and public service professions, or any profession where a knowledge of working with others is important.



What will it be like?

The course is made up of 1 exam unit, and 2 coursework units. You need to be hardworking to develop excellent research skills, complete study independently and meet deadlines.

R032: Principles of care in health, social care and early years settings (exam). In this unit you will learn about the key topics that are important when caring for and protecting people in health, social care and early years settings. Topics include: The rights of individuals in care settings; person-centred values of care; effective communication in health, social care and early years settings; protecting individuals in health, social care and early years settings.

R033: Supporting individuals Through Life Events (coursework). You will learn about growth and development through the life stages. You will also learn how to understand the needs of individuals who have been affected by life events and how to recommend support to meet their needs. Topics include: life stages; impacts of life events; sources of support.

R035: Health Promotion Campaigns (coursework). You will have the opportunity to explore the various public health challenges the country faces, the approaches used to encourage health and wellbeing and the importance of this to society. You will investigate the factors affecting a healthy lifestyle and how to plan and your deliver your own small-scale health promotion campaign.

Assessment

- Unit 1 (40%) - **Assessment** External Exam
- Unit 2 and 3 (60%) - **Assessment** Coursework - 2 different pieces assessed using reports, posters, booklets, role plays and practical assessments.

PLEASE NOTE THAT OVER 60% OF THIS COURSE IS COURSEWORK, THEREFORE 60% OF LESSONS WILL BE SPENT ON THIS.

Exam Board: OCR

Introduction

Through the study of History, students are better able to understand how the present came to be. History gives us a sense of our roots. Knowledge of History is vital for the understanding of key issues in the world today. Students will study some of the most critical events of the past whilst gaining invaluable skills of communication, research and analysis. History opens many doors to a wide range of careers as it is a highly respected and valued qualification.



What will it be like?

The intention of the course is to study a range of time periods at local, national and international level.

- **Medicine in Britain, c.1250– present** - a thematic study exploring factors that helped and hindered progress, medical treatment and their impact upon British society. **The British Sector of the Western Front 1914-1918:** Students will study the environment of trench warfare, conditions, injuries and treatments.
- **Henry VIII and his Ministers, 1509-1540** - a British depth study looking at the importance of Thomas Wolsey, Thomas More and Thomas Cromwell and their turbulent relationship with Henry. This unit will also involve studying the impact the Reformation had on England.
- **American West, c.1835-c.1895** - a period study of migration, settlement and conflict across America. Studying the indigenous peoples and their way of life, as well as the conflict and tension between the new settlers.
- **Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918-39** - a modern depth study of the reasons for and the impact of dictatorship on Germany. Including the establishment of the Weimar Republic following the First World War, the 'Golden Years' of Weimar Germany, life under the Nazi regime and persecution.

Assessment

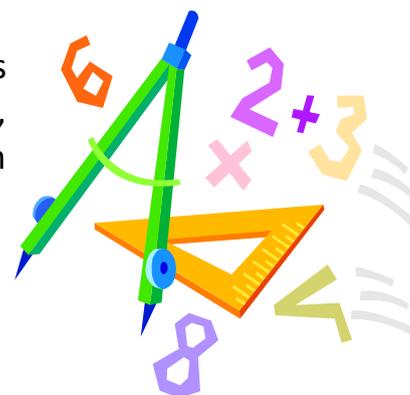
All 3 papers will be externally examined at the end of Year 11.

Exam Board: EDEXCEL

Further information can be found at: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/history-2016.html>

Introduction

The work in Mathematics will develop students' life skills through the study of number, ratio and proportion, algebra, geometry and measures, probability and statistics and problem solving.



What will it be like?

Students will study all main branches of Mathematics.

They will develop:

- Communication skills and team skills, through both individual and group work.
- Thinking and problem solving skills through investigations and puzzles.
- Planning, analysis and interpretation skills through data handling projects.

All students will be entered for Maths GCSE and will sit this in May/June of Year 11.

A small number of students will also be assessed for Entry Level Maths (8992) during Year 11.

Other selected students will be invited to study OCR Free Standing Maths Qualification: Additional Mathematics – 6993 which is examined in June of Year 11.

Assessment

Mathematics GCSE - 3 final written examinations.

Entry level Maths - Assessments in lessons.

OCR FSMQ: Additional Maths - 1 Final Exam

Exam Board: EDEXCEL (Maths), and OCR (FSMQ)

Further information can be found at: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/mathematics-2015.html>

Introduction

The work in music will develop your listening, **composing and performing** skills through a variety of practical activities and through the study of the elements of music.



What will it be like?

During the course, you will learn about a wide variety of musical styles explored through the 4 areas of study below:

- a) **Western Classical Music 1650-1910**
- b) **Popular Music**
- c) **Traditional Music**
- d) **Western Classical Music since 1910**

Composition - You will learn to compose music in a variety of styles and will complete 2 pieces of composition coursework, 1 in Year 10 and 1 in Year 11 for your GCSE. Compositions will be sequenced using Soundtrap.

Performing - You are required to perform for 4 minutes either on an instrument or voice. The school provides individual instrumental or vocal lessons free of charge to prepare you for this element of the exam. **Attendance at these lessons is compulsory and daily practice is expected as part of regular homework. A minimum of 1 hour of practice is required per week and students should aim to be at a Grade 3 standard by Year 11.**

Understanding Music (Listening) - The exam is 1½ hours long and you will answer questions based upon music from the 4 areas of study above.

Assessment

Composition coursework 30%

Performing coursework 30%

Understanding Music exam 40% (externally examined)

Exam Board: AQA

Further information can be found at:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/music/gcse/music-8271>



Introduction

CORE PE is not a part of the option process, which means that regardless of the option choices you make you will still take part in CORE PE. You will complete 3 hours of Physical Education every 2 week cycle.

During your core PE time we continue to extend your understanding, skills and knowledge in a broad variety of activities. The emphasis is on preparation for healthy active lifestyle beyond school and on maximising achievement whilst you are still here.

What will it be like?

Your core PE lessons will be very much like your lessons now. You will continue to have the opportunity to choose from the three pathways; Competition and Performance, Leadership, and Health and Fitness.

We will reshare information about each of the options with you during your PE lessons over the next few weeks and your groups will be sorted out in the summer term, so you do not need to worry about it now. Your only immediate concern is whether to take **PE as an option!**

(See GCSE PE).

Assessment

These will continue to take place at the end of each block of activity and will be a combination of self, peer and teacher assessment using the Gilbert School PE Assessment Policy and Attitude to Learning scores.



Introduction

In PE you will cover a wide range of practical and theoretical aspects of this subject. If you have a genuine interest and enjoyment of sport and PE, and you like the practical element but are also interested in learning out about Anatomy and Physiology and Socio Cultural issues this is the course for you.

What will it be like?

The GCSE PE course is split between theoretical knowledge & understanding and practical sport & performance, so practical ability is important.

The activities on offer for GCSE PE cover a range of activities both on the school site and out and about. There is no requirement to be participating in out of school sport but involvement in sport at club level will have a positive impact on your sports grades. We have many opportunities in school for you to work on your sporting ability plus 2 practical lessons in each 2 week rotation of GCSE PE, as well as a full co-curricular offering. Participation in these clubs is important.

The theory content helps you to understand how your body works in order to be the best at your sport. For example, this includes studying fitness and training, where we will look at the effects of exercise on our bodies and develop an understanding of how different training methods can improve performance in sport, as well as the anatomy and physiology of our bodies, drugs in sports and the reasons why people participate in sport, to name a few.

Assessment

60% of the final grade will be written exam based

Paper 1: Physical factors affecting performance

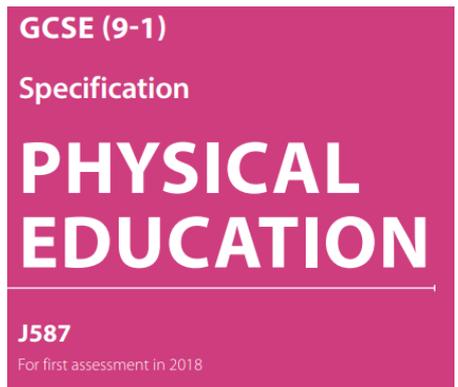
Paper 2: Socio-cultural issues and sports psychology

10% of the final grade will be coursework based

30% of the final grade will be based on practical performance and ability

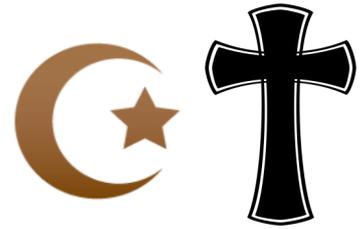
Exam Board: OCR

Further information can be found at: <https://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse/physical-education-j587-from-2016/>



Introduction

This exciting course looks specifically at topics that are relevant to students' lives today. We look at ethical topics from a variety of viewpoints.



What will it be like?

Students will study a variety of topics to gain a deeper understanding of religious and non-religious perspectives.

These will include:

- **Christian and Muslim Beliefs** – What are the most important things Christians and Muslims believe?
- **Christian and Muslim Practices** – What do Christians and Muslims do because of their beliefs?
- **Relationships and Families** – How do our beliefs affect our views on family and relationships?
- **Religion and Life** – Are humans special and how valuable is human life? Should abortion and euthanasia be allowed?
- **Religion, Peace and Conflict** – Is it ever right to go to war and if so how should this be fought?
- **Religion, crime and punishment** – What are the causes and consequences of crime and how do our beliefs affect our opinions on this?

Students will debate these topics and look at them from a range of religious and non-religious viewpoints.

Assessment

Students will sit 2 written papers at the end of the course totalling 3½ hours.

Marks will be gained for knowledge, understanding, and critical thinking.

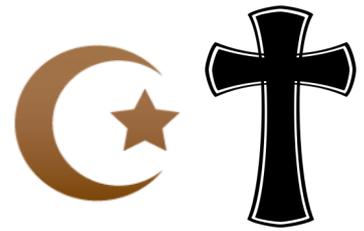
The course prepares students well for post 16 courses such as Sociology, Citizenship and Philosophy. Career links include: journalism, counsellors, social worker, civil service and teaching.

Exam Board: AQA

Further information can be found at: [AQA | Religious Studies | GCSE | GCSE Religious Studies](#)

Introduction

This exciting course looks specifically at topics that are relevant to students' lives today. This course looks at ethical topics from a variety of viewpoints.



This course will be studied by all students.

What will it be like?

Students will study a variety of topics to gain a deeper understanding of religious and non-religious perspectives.

These will include:

- **Christian and Muslim Beliefs** – What are the most important things Christians and Muslims believe?
- **Relationships and Families** – How do our beliefs affect our views on family and relationships?
- **Religion, Peace and Conflict** – Is it ever right to go to war and if so how should this be fought?

Students will debate these topics and look at them from a range of religious and non-religious viewpoints.

Assessment

Students in sets 1-6 will sit a GCSE Short Course. Students will sit one paper at the end of the course in Year 10 totalling 1 hour and 45 minutes. Marks will be gained for knowledge, understanding and critical thinking.

Exam Board: AQA

Further information can be found at: [AQA | Religious Studies | GCSE | GCSE Religious Studies](#)

ASDAN Beliefs and Values

Students in set 7 will study an equivalent qualification. This is assessed via a portfolio of work that is completed in class and students receive a qualification certificate at the end of the course. Students in set 7 will not sit an RE exam.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.asdan.org.uk/beliefs-and-values-short-course/>

Combined Science GCSE (double award)

Introduction

All students in Key Stage 4 follow a broad balanced Science course.

Students who do not opt to study the separate Sciences in Biology, Chemistry and Physics will study **Combined Science**.



What will it be like?

Edexcel **Combined Science** (Double Award) gives students a good knowledge of a wide range of science, by studying units from each of the Sciences: Chemistry, Physics and Biology. They gain 2 GCSEs at the end of the course.

- Combined Science will have a 17 point grading scale from 9-9, 9-8 through to 2-1, 1-1.

Combined Science will cover the following topics:

- **Biology** - Key concepts in Biology, Cells and Control, Genetics, Natural Selection and Genetic Modification, Health, Disease and the Development of Medicines, Plant Structures and their Functions, Animal Coordination, Control and Homeostasis, Exchange and Transport in Animals and Ecosystems and Material Cycles.
- **Chemistry** - Key concepts in Chemistry, States of Matter and Mixtures, Chemical Changes, Extracting Metals and Equilibria, Groups in the Periodic Table, Rates of Reaction and Energy Changes and Fuels and Earth Science.
- **Physics** - Key concepts of Physics, Motion and Forces, Conservation of Energy, Waves, Forces and their Effects, Electricity and Circuits, Magnetism and the Motor Effect, Electromagnetic Induction, Particle Model and Forces and Matter.

Assessment

Combined Science is assessed by 100% examination.

The course is linear and assessed by a total of 6 examinations (1 in Biology, 2 in Chemistry and 2 in Physics). Each examination is 1 hour 10 minutes and all 6 are taken at the end of Year 11.

Exam Board: EDEXCEL

Further information can be found at: [GCSE Combined Science](#)

Separate GCSE Courses in Biology, Chemistry and Physics (1 option)



Introduction

Those students with an aptitude for Science are encouraged to choose the more challenging Separate Sciences route in Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

This will take up 1 of their option choices, as well as being taught in core Science time.



What will it be like?

The **separate GCSEs in the Biology, Chemistry and Physics** course gives students an excellent knowledge of a wide range of Science, by studying units from each of the Sciences: Chemistry, Physics and Biology. Students gain **3 GCSEs** at the end of the course (9-1).

- The 3 separate Sciences at GCSE are challenging courses and only open to those students who have an interest in Science and who are working at a high level in their Key Stage 3 course.
- The separate Science programme is an ideal preparation for any student considering any or all of the Sciences at Key Stage 5. It is also a solid foundation for students who wish to move on into a Science, Technology, Engineering or Maths degree at University but also has a broader appeal to employers.

The 3 separate Science GCSE courses will cover the same topics from the combined Science route. Some of these, however, will be in more depth. There are also extra topics such as Quantitative Analysis, Dynamic Equilibria and Fuel Cells within Chemistry, as well as Particle Model and Astronomy in Physics.

Assessment

The separate Sciences are assessed by 100% examination.

The course is linear and assessed by a total of 6 examinations (1 in Biology, 2 in Chemistry and 2 in Physics). Each examination is 1 hour 45 minutes and all 6 are taken at the end of Year 11.

Exam Board: EDEXCEL

Further information can be found at: [GCSE Biology](#) [GCSE Chemistry](#) [GCSE Physics](#)



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