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A Level Course Outlines



The A level qualification is a two-year process requiring hard work and commitment on the part of both the student and teacher. Students generally take four subjects in Year 12 but can then opt to continue with only three in Year 13.

Choosing which subjects to study at A level is a big decision. It can determine what degree courses you'll be able to study at university and even what professions you will be able to work in afterwards.

Perhaps you have already got a definite career in mind and have your future mapped out. If so, you are in the minority because most 16-year olds do not!

Irrespective of your future plans, you should choose your A levels carefully. Of course, you need to make sure you enjoy the subjects but you also need to think about where those subjects can lead to.

The AS level qualifications are now stand-alone and do not contribute towards the two-year A level.



Your A Level Options

We offer the A levels most sought after by universities. They are based on the list of 'facilitating subjects' in the Informed Choices report created by the Russell Group of leading universities. These subjects are recommended by the top universities, including Oxford and Cambridge, because they give you excellent preparation for further study at these world-class universities.

The courses available are:

- Art
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Computer Science
- Economics
- English Literature
- French
- Geography
- History
- Mathematics
- Further Mathematics
- Spanish
- Photography
- Physics
- Psychology

We cannot guarantee that any particular combination of these A level subjects will be possible, but will do our best to accommodate everybody's choices.



ART

Why study Fine Art at A level?

The creative industries are not to be sniffed at and anyone who thinks you can't get a job studying art is well and truly out of date. Figures published in January 2016 reveal that the UK's creative industries are now worth £84.1 billion per year to the UK economy. That's almost £10 million an hour. British films, music, video games, crafts and publishing take the lead role in driving the UK's economic recovery, according to the latest Government statistics.

The UK's definition of the creative industries - 'those industries that are based on individual creativity, skill and talent with the potential to create wealth and jobs through developing intellectual property' - include thirteen sectors: advertising, architecture, the art and antiques market, crafts, design, designer fashion, film, interactive leisure software (i.e. video games), music, the performing arts, publishing, software, and television and radio.

At A level, you are developing your own creative skills and talents so that you can realise your potential as an arts practitioner.

The course: Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced GCE in Fine Art (9FA0)

The Fine Arts A level is a two-year course through which you study aspects of contextual, experimental and personal response elements to three portfolios.

You will also follow the AS level course in Year 12 (8FA0). The AS level is a stand-alone qualification but the two portfolios produced in Year 12 will be further developed to meet the higher criteria of the final A level.

How is it assessed?

AS level Fine Art: Two portfolios and a 10-hour exam at the end of Year 12.

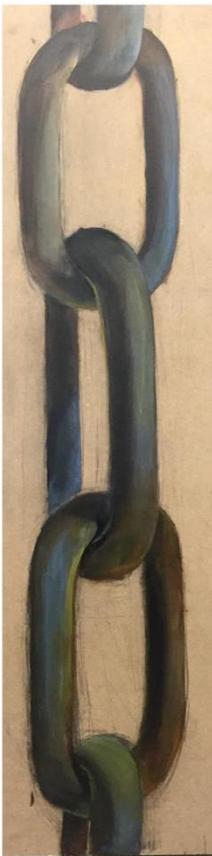
A level Fine Art: Three portfolios and a 15-hour exam at the end of Year 13.

Portfolio 1: Personal Topic	AS content assessed at A level standard 1000 – 3000 word essay (Year 13)	60% of the A level mark
Portfolio 2: AS Exam Topic	Developed and assessed as an AS in Year 12 and developed in Year 13 to reach A level standards	
Portfolio 3: A level Exam Topic	An A level exam topic to produce the third portfolio in the spring and summer of Year 13	40% of the A level mark 15-hour exam

Things to consider

The breadth and depth of degree choices within the arts is incredibly exciting for the next generation: Fashion, Animation, Graphic Design, Illustration, Film, Photography, Visual Effects, Sculpture, Drawing, Painting, Interior Design, History of Arts... there are hundreds of choices available to you. You just have to look.

It is recommended that you take a one-year foundation course after A levels before embarking on a degree to further expand your skill base and your portfolio.





BIOLOGY

Why study Biology at A level?

Biology involves the study of a wide range of exciting topics, ranging from molecular biology to the study of ecosystems and from microorganisms to mammoths. Biology is never far from the headlines either! The A level biology course is a both challenging and rewarding. It helps students develop skills and knowledge necessary for a successful career not only in biology, but also law, computing, accounting and teaching. Throughout the course the topics studied will be related to real-life applications, with an emphasis on the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

The course: AQA A level Biology (7402), and AS level Biology (7401)

The biology A level is a two-year course through which you study the following:

1. Biological molecules 2. Cells 3. Organisms exchange substances with their environment 4. Genetic information, variation and relationships between organisms	AS and A level
5. Energy transfers in and between organisms 6. Organisms respond to changes in their internal and external environments 7. Genetics, populations, evolution and ecosystems 8. The control of gene expression	A level only

How is it assessed?

Two AS level papers are taken at the end of Year 12.

Three A level papers are taken at the end of Year 13.

Practical skills are examined in every paper.

Unit Title	Description	Assessment and Weighting
Paper 1	Any content from topics 1-4 including practical skills	2-hour exam 35% of the total A level
Paper 2	Any content from topics 5-8 including practical skills	2-hour exam 35% of the total A level
Paper 3	Any content from topics 1-8 including practical skills	2-hour exam 30% of the total A level

Things to consider:

To study biology A level, you need to be highly competent in maths and chemistry. 20% of the overall marks available are for mathematical content, and while the examined part does not extend beyond GCSE, an understanding of percentages, graphs and statistics is helpful for your understanding. The course also requires an understanding of organic chemistry, and so A level chemistry and maths are worth considering as subjects to complement the biology A level.



CHEMISTRY

Why study Chemistry at A level?

From forensic to veterinary science, medicine to metallurgy, chemistry provides an important foundation for a vast array of scientific disciplines and careers. It is a requirement for many university courses.

During the A level course, you will learn about how pharmaceutical companies design drugs, alter scents and how to make a mirror. You will find out more about the structure of atoms and a more detailed view of electronic structure. You will study GCSE topics, such as acids and bases and Avogadro's concept of a mole, in much greater detail and learn more advanced chemical reactions. You will also look in-depth at thermodynamics, chemical bonding and organic chemistry.

The A level trains you to become more methodical and think scientifically. There is a required practical element in which you get the chance to improve experimental techniques and develop skills in analysing data and evaluating research. The emphasis is on curiosity and scientific enquiry.

The course: AQA A level Chemistry (7405), and AS level Chemistry (7404)

The chemistry A level is a two-year course through which you study key facets of organic, inorganic and physical chemistry. You will follow the AS course in Year 12 and A level course in Year 13. There is no coursework element but there are required experiments to carry out.

How is it assessed?

AS level papers are sat at the end of Year 12, but are superseded by A level papers sat at the end of Year 13. Practical skills are examined in every paper.

AS level Chemistry: Two papers taken at the end of Year 12

Paper 1:	Physical chemistry, inorganic chemistry Relevant practical skills	1.5 hours 50% of AS level
Paper 2:	Physical chemistry, organic chemistry Relevant practical skills	1.5 hours 50% of AS level

A level Chemistry: Three papers taken at the end of Year 13

Paper 1:	Physical chemistry, inorganic chemistry Relevant practical skills	2 hours 35% of A level
Paper 2:	Physical chemistry, organic chemistry Relevant practical skills	2 hours 35% of A level
Paper 3:	Any content Any practical skills	2 hours 30% of A level

Things to consider:

The chemistry A level course is a demanding course. Only those who enjoy the course are likely to do well. Chemistry is a required A level to study the following at university: medicine, veterinary science, biochemistry, dentistry, pharmacy, materials science and metallurgy. Chemistry lends itself well to being studied alongside biology, physics or maths, and for those wishing to study an environmental sciences-based degree, geography, or similar.



COMPUTER SCIENCE

Why study Computing at A level?

This is the Digital Age. Computer programmes have infiltrated almost every aspect of our lives. Computer scientists theorise, design, develop, and apply the software and hardware for the programmes we use day in day out – sounds pretty important to us.

Every industry uses computers, so naturally computer scientists can work in virtually any field they choose. Problems in science, engineering, health care, and so many other areas can be solved by computers. It is up to the computer scientist to figure out how, and design the software to apply the solution.

Through the A level, students will develop an ability to analyse, critically evaluate and make decisions. The project approach is a vital component of ‘post-school’ life and is of particular relevance to Further Education, Higher Education and the workplace.

The course: OCR A level Computer Science (H446)

Computer science at GCE A level is a two-year course in which the fundamental concepts are introduced. These include binary arithmetic, boolean algebra, the basic search and sort algorithms as well as simple machine code. Programming experience runs throughout the course and is applied in an end of course coding project. Coding is taught in OOP using Python and C#.

Applied aspects of computer science taught include: network protocols, database structures, distributed computing, games programming and robotics.

Topics covered:

1. The characteristics of contemporary processors, input, output and storage devices
2. Software and software development
3. Exchanging data
4. Data types, data structures and algorithms
5. Legal, moral, cultural and ethical issues
6. Elements of computational thinking
7. Problem solving and programming
8. Algorithms to solve problems and standard algorithms

How is it assessed?

Two papers taken at the end of Year 13 and a programming project

Paper 1: Computer systems	2.5-hour written paper	140 marks, 40% of total A level
Paper 2: Algorithms and programming	2.5-hour written paper	140 marks, 40% of total A level
Programming project	Non-exam assessment	70 marks, 20% of total A level

Things to consider:

The course is quite demanding and some experience of coding in a high-level language would be essential, a GCSE in Computer Science is recommended. Mathematics A level is not required for success in Computer Science, but would be important if considering a degree in the subject.



ECONOMICS

Why study Economics at A level?

While studying the Economics A level, you will learn about how the economy works and how individuals and firms make decisions. You will examine the social, financial and cultural factors that affect wealth and human well-being, recognising that the infinite wants of society must be met with only limited resources at our disposal. You will evaluate policies adopted by governments to help improve society, both nationally and internationally. Examples of economic issues include unemployment, inflation (rising prices), economic growth, government spending and taxation, markets and commodity exchanges, international trade and poverty.

Economics is the perfect combination of numbers and words, problems and essays, calculations and interpretations. It is both a social and a science subject and is often controversial. Should a government raise taxes or cut spending? Should we invest in our armed forces or our hospitals? Is the minimum wage a good thing for society? Economics allows you the opportunity to debate these issues and form your own opinions.

The course: Pearson Edexcel A level Economics (9EC0)

The Economics A level is a two-year course structured around four themes. In Year 12 you will study core microeconomic and macroeconomic concepts and principles before moving on to business growth and profitability, the labour market, financial sector and global economics in Year 13.

How is it assessed?

Paper 1: Markets and business behaviour	Three sections focusing on microeconomics including multiple-choice, data response and open-response questions.	2 hours 100 marks
Paper 2: The national and global economy	Three sections focusing on macroeconomics including multiple-choice, data response and open-response questions.	2 hours 100 marks
Paper 3: Microeconomics and macroeconomics	Two long-form data-response and open-response questions blending microeconomics and macroeconomics.	2 hours 100 marks

Things to consider:

Economics is a rigorous and rewarding academic subject which is well respected by universities and employers.

Students who take Economics might go on to study Economics, Politics, Law, Business, Management Studies, International Development, Public Finance, Public Policy, Accounting, or Land Economy. An understanding of Economics can also add to studies in History, Geography, Psychology, Science, Sociology, Mathematics, Statistics and Banking or Finance. Economics lends itself to a wide variety of careers. You can find work in both the public and private sectors for a range of different companies. Career options might include accountancy, investment analysis, government officer, insurance, consultancy, banking, NGO, charity or business management.



ENGLISH LITERATURE

Why study English Literature at A level?

Literature is truly a wonderful thing. It allows us to make sense of the world around us and the curious creatures called human beings who inhabit it; it allows us to fully formulate and express ideas, emotions and stories we experience within us; and it allows us to listen to, learn from and enjoy the ideas, emotions and stories of others.

Literature is an essential tool for understanding the world around you whether in a social, historical, political, or emotional context.

The course: OCR A level English Literature (H472)

The English Literature qualification will build on the knowledge, understanding and skills you established at GCSE, introducing you to the discipline of advanced literary studies, and requires reading of all the major literary genres of poetry, prose and drama. You are required to study a minimum of eight texts at A level, including at least two examples of each of the genres of prose, poetry and drama across the course as a whole.

You will learn to structure and write extended analytical essays involving editing and re-drafting, write formally and eloquently to express your views and write creatively in order to demonstrate your understanding of texts. You will develop a wide range of skills, such as the ability to read critically, analyse, evaluate and undertake independent research which are valuable for both further study and future employment.

How is it assessed?

Paper 1: (2 hours 30 minutes, 40% of total A level)

- Drama and poetry pre-1900: Written paper 60 marks, closed text
- Shakespeare: *Coriolanus*
- Drama and poetry pre-1900: John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* and John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (Books 9 & 10)

Paper 2: (2 hours 30 minutes, 40% of total A level)

- Comparative and contextual study: Written paper 60 marks, closed text
- Focus on the Gothic genre – Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*, and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

Component/Paper 3: (Non-exam assessment, 20% of total A level)

Literature post-1900: Written coursework, 40 marks. **Two** essays looking at poetry, prose and drama

- Close reading or re-creative piece with commentary - an analysis of the poetry of Philip Larkin.
- Comparative essay - Julian Barnes' *Sense of an Ending* with Harold Pinter's *Betrayal*.

Things to consider:

Studying English Literature is useful for the following degrees:

Advertising; Classics; Creative Writing; Drama and Performing Arts; English Literature; Film Studies; History; Journalism; Languages; Law; Librarianship; Linguistics; Marketing; Media and Communications; Philosophy; Theatre Studies; even Teaching.



FRENCH

Why study French at A level?

Students will concentrate on developing oral fluency and conversation skills. The course will provide a range of stimulating and absorbing study topics with contemporary, literary and cultural content. It will give them a lasting appreciation of language and learning, an ability to comprehend French in a range of contexts and an ability to communicate readily in French for a variety of purposes.

They will gain useful knowledge of and insights into French - speaking cultures, both contemporary and historic. It will also be an opportunity to discover Francophone literature and cinematography. Studying French at A level will provide valuable skills for foreign travel, further education and employment.

The course: AQA A level French (7652)

How is it assessed?

Paper 1: Listening, reading and writing.

Written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes. 100 marks - 50% A level.

- Listening and responding to spoken passages (30 marks)
- Reading and responding to a variety of texts written for different purposes (50 marks)
- Translation into English: a passage of minimum 100 words (10 marks)
- Translation into French: a passage of minimum 100 words (10 marks)

Paper 2: Writing

Written exam: 2 hours. 80 marks - 20% of A level.

- Students will need to answer one question in French on a set text from a choice of two questions and one question in French on a set film from a choice of two questions
- All questions will require a critical appreciation of the concepts and issues covered in the work and a critical and analytical response. Students are advised to write approximately 300 words per essay.

Paper 3: Speaking

Oral exam: 21-23 minutes (including 5 minutes preparation time). 60 marks - 30% of A level

Students will need to present an individual research project. They will also be assessed on one of four sub-themes:

- aspects of French - speaking society: current trends
- aspects of French - speaking society: current issues
- artistic culture in the French-speaking world
- aspects of political life in the French-speaking world

Things to consider:

Studying a language for A level is a good stepping stone towards further education. The use of another language is varied. For sure, being fluent in two or three languages will be an asset in whichever career one might choose as nowadays we are competing in a world where most graduate students speak English on top of their own mother tongue. French remains a language for diplomacy and an official language for many international organisations. It is also useful in fields such as the foreign civil service, advertising, the film industry, event management, sommelier, import/export, tourism, and in the army just to mention a few.



GEOGRAPHY

Why study Geography at A level?

Geography is ever-changing; this course will cover engaging contemporary issues such as tectonic hazards, globalisation and water security. It covers themes such as changing landscapes and human development as well as dynamic landscapes and places, physical systems, sustainability and human systems and geopolitics.

There are many specialist fields that A level geography students can progress in such as: environment and risk planning, geo-engineering, local/national government and map making.

The course: Pearson Edexcel A level Geography (9GE0)

You will examine four study areas:

- Dynamic Landscapes looking at tectonic processes and hazards
- Dynamic Places looking at globalisation and shaping places
- Physical Systems and Sustainability looking at the water cycle and water insecurity, the carbon cycle and energy security and climate change futures
- Human Systems and Geopolitics looking at superpowers and global development and connections.

How is it assessed?

Paper 1: Dynamic Landscapes and Physical Systems and Sustainability	30%	2 hours 15 minutes
Paper 2: Dynamic Places and Human Systems and Geopolitics	30%	2 hours 15 minutes
Paper 3: Synoptic investigation of a contemporary geographical issue	20%	2 hours 15 minutes
Non-Examination Assessment A level Independent Investigation	20%	3000-4000 words

Things to consider:

Fieldwork is a compulsory component. It has a number of functions but in particular supports the independent investigation.



HISTORY

Why study History at A level?

The study of history not only allows us to revel in the achievements, contradictions and misdeeds of our forebears, but it also teaches us many of the requisite skills for success in modern society, namely the ability to think critically and communicate effectively.

At A level, you will study some of the defining events, individuals and movements that have helped shape the history not only of our own island nation, but also the wider world. The fascinating narrative that underpins all of the topics you will learn about is in itself a fine reason to study history at this level. However, it is the skills that you will learn to develop in order to make sense of the past that make this such a challenging and rewarding course of study.

We inhabit a world in which we have continual access to a mass of information and opinion, and where political news is so often skewed by manipulative spin. The study of history through primary and secondary source material warns us against taking things at face-value, and encourages us to consider how and why a particular interpretation of events, for example, has been put forward, before arriving at our own reasoned judgement.

Many professions require the ability to make use of detailed information in order to provide analysis. The skill of being able to analyse and explain the reasons why things in the past happened lies at the very heart of history as a subject. Furthermore, many of the topics you will study have caused great division and controversy, meaning that you will inevitably be drawn into the debates that exist and feel compelled to develop your own ability to articulate well-informed and persuasive lines of argument.

The course: AQA A level History (7042)

The History A level is a two-year course through which you study the significance of historical events, the role of individuals in history and the nature of change over time. The course enables you to gain a deeper understanding of the past through political, social, economic and cultural perspectives.

How is it assessed?

Two papers taken at the end of Year 13 and one piece of coursework to be completed by the Spring Term of Year 13.

Component 1: Breadth Study	Stuart Britain and the Crisis of Monarchy, 1603–1702.	2 hours 30 minutes 80 marks (40%)
Component 2: Depth Study	The Cold War, c1945–1991.	2 hours 30 minutes 80 marks (40%)
Component 3: Historical Investigation (3500 – 4000 words)	The African American Civil Rights Movement, 1865-1980.	40 marks (20%) Marked by teacher and moderated by AQA

Things to consider:

History A level is strongly recommended or sometimes required for degrees in: Politics, Philosophy, Law, English Literature, Economics, Sociology, Theology and, of course, History.



MATHEMATICS

Why study Mathematics at A level?

Mathematics is tremendously important. It provides a firm foundation for all scientific, technical, engineering and mathematical careers and a flying start for many others such as medicine, computing, finance, game design, retail and business.

At A level, you will study some of the tools that are used in real-world applications. You meet the areas of maths that allow you to make sense of the economy, help you understand how planes fly and explain how the internet is kept secure.

The A level is interesting, relevant and challenging. If you already enjoy maths at GCSE then you will definitely enjoy taking it to the next level. You build your reasoning and problem-solving skills and you will also develop the logic required to tackle everyday issues like planning projects, managing budgets and even debating effectively. Studying mathematics at A level develops a resilience and curiosity that is desirable in any situation.

The course: OCR A level Mathematics (H240)

The maths A level is a two-year course through which you study aspects of pure mathematics, statistics and mechanics. You will also follow the AS level course in Year 12 (H230). This is a stand-alone qualification and the examinations do not contribute to the final A level.

How is it assessed?

A level Mathematics: Three equally weighted papers taken at the end of Year 13

Paper	Marks	Time
Paper 1: Pure Mathematics (01) A mix of short and long questions.	100	2 hours
Paper 2: Pure Mathematics and Statistics (02) 50 marks each: pure mathematics and statistics.	100	2 hours
Paper 3: Pure Mathematics and Mechanics (03) 50 marks each: pure mathematics and mechanics.	100	2 hours

AS level Mathematics: Two papers taken at the end of Year 12

Paper	Marks	Time
Paper 1: Pure Mathematics and Statistics (01) 50 marks of pure mathematics and approximately 25 marks of statistics.	75	1 hour 30 mins
Paper 2: Pure Mathematics and Mechanics (02) 50 marks of pure mathematics and approximately 25 marks of mechanics.	75	1 hour 30 mins

Things to consider:

Maths A level is a requirement for degrees in: Physics, Engineering, Actuarial Science, Economics and, of course, Maths.

Maths is recommended or sometimes required for: Computer Science, Accounting, Chemistry, Biology and Life Sciences, Medicine, Nursing, Dentistry, Business Studies, Management Studies, Finance, Architecture, Geology, Psychology, Surveying and even Philosophy.



FURTHER MATHEMATICS

Why study Further Maths at A level?

The overwhelming majority of students taking further mathematics find it to be an enjoyable, rewarding, stimulating and empowering experience. It is a challenging qualification, which both extends and deepens your knowledge and understanding beyond the standard A level mathematics.

Further maths makes the transition from sixth form to university courses which are mathematically rich that much easier as more of the first-year course content will be familiar. It also enables students to distinguish themselves as able mathematicians in their applications for university and future employment.

Further maths qualifications are highly regarded and are warmly welcomed by universities; students who take the course are really demonstrating a strong commitment to their studies, as well as learning mathematics that is very useful for any mathematically rich degree. If you are not planning to study for mathematically rich degrees but are keen on mathematics you will find further mathematics a very enjoyable course and having a further mathematics qualification identifies you as having excellent analytical skills, whatever area you are considering for a career.

The course: OCR A level Further Mathematics (H245)

Further maths A level must be chosen in combination with the mathematics A level so you end up with two qualifications.

How is it assessed?

Students will take all of the A level mathematics examinations in Year 12, but not the AS exams, enabling them to progress on to the further maths course in Year 13.

Four written examinations, each 1 hour 30 minutes. All four papers taken at the end of Year 13.

Content	Assessment	
Mandatory Pure Core All learners will study the content of the Pure Core. Papers Y540 and Y541 both assess content from the whole of the Pure Core and all of the Overarching Themes.	Pure Core 1 (Y540)	75 marks 90 minutes
	Pure Core 2 (Y541)	75 marks 90 minutes
Optional Papers Learners will study any two areas chosen from Statistics, Mechanics, Discrete Mathematics and Additional Pure Mathematics. These papers assess the relevant content area and all of the Overarching Themes.	Statistics (Y542) Mechanics (Y543) Discrete Mathematics (Y544) Additional Pure Maths (Y545)	75 marks 90 minutes
		75 marks 90 minutes

Things to consider:

To study a further maths A level, you should really enjoy maths. You will be spending a large proportion of your week in maths lessons. The course moves quickly which is exciting as you are learning new things all of the time, but can also be challenging so you must be the type of person who can remain motivated and keep plugging away. You should be finding the GCSE fairly straightforward and be eager to take maths to the next level.



SPANISH

Why study Spanish at A level?

The Spanish A level course will enable students to engage critically with intellectually stimulating texts and films, developing an appreciation of sophisticated and creative uses of the language and understanding them within their cultural and social context. Students will also develop control of the language system to convey meaning, using spoken and written skills, including an extended range of vocabulary, for both practical and intellectual purposes. Moreover, students will develop as independent researchers through the language of study.

The course is demanding and challenging and will require students to work independently for about 5 or 6 hours per week.

The course: Pearson Edexcel A level Spanish (9SP0)

The Spanish A level is a two-year course through which you study 4 themes:

- Theme 1: Spanish Civil War, Spain under Franco, dictatorship and transition to democracy.
- Theme 2: Evolution of Spanish society.
- Theme 3: Immigration and multicultural Spanish society.
- Theme 4: Politics, culture and art in the Hispanic world.

Students will also study a literary text and a film chosen from a list, which includes authors like Lorca, García Márquez, Allende, Borges, Ramón J Sender or Almudena Grandes, and film directors like Pedro Almodóvar, Andrés Wood, Guillermo del Toro, Icíar Bollaín or Alejandro Amenábar.

How is it assessed?

Paper	Details	Weighting
Paper 1: Listening, reading and translation	2 hours 80 marks	40%
Paper 2: Written response to works and translation	2 hours 40 minutes 120 marks	30%
Paper 3: Speaking	Between 21 and 23 minutes, which includes 5 minutes of formal preparation time 72 marks	30%

Things to consider:

The course will prepare students for future opportunities in many areas of employment. The course will open doors around the world given the influence of the Spanish language, while linguists in general enjoy good career prospects because of employers' perceptions of their ability and general communications skills. Studying Spanish is recommended in areas of employment such as journalism, law, international business, finance, civil service, translation, tourism and teaching.

The best universities to study a degree in Iberian Languages include Oxford, Cambridge, Durham, St Andrews, Bath and UCL. Entry standards are generally high – you will need AAB, including A in Spanish to study at UCL and Southampton and ABB for Newcastle or Leeds, for example.



PHOTOGRAPHY

Why study Photography at A level?

Creative thinking, broadening the mind and feeding the soul are obvious reasons for taking this subject but photography is also rich in career opportunities. Digital media and design is an industry that is undergoing unprecedented growth, companies need online content and digital advertising so being an artist, photographer, designer, illustrator, animator, video producer for example, means your skills are sought-after and can bring you both creative fulfilment and financial stability.

At A level, we teach you a huge range of highly transferable skills; how to gather visual source material, how to critically reflect on your work and generate new ideas and how to develop your practical skills in photography, animation and film making

Visual analysis and evaluation are required skills for both A level Art and Photography so a good grade at English GCSE is desirable.

The course: Pearson Edexcel A level Photography (9PY0).

The Photography A level is a two-year course and every piece of work you make will be submitted as coursework. Your coursework books will explicitly show how you as an artist, start with a given stimuli and develop your ideas to reach a final product. You will develop your ideas through historical and contextual research, experimenting with new materials and processes, analysing and evaluating your own work.

You will also follow the AS level course in Year 12 (8PY0). The AS level is a stand-alone qualification but the two portfolios produced in Year 12 will be further developed to meet the higher criteria of the final A level.

How is it assessed?

Three portfolios and a 15-hour exam at the end of Year 13.

Portfolio 1: Personal Topic	AS content assessed at A level standard 1000 – 3000 word essay (Year 13)	60% of the A level mark
Portfolio 2: AS Exam Topic	Developed and assessed as an AS in Year 12 and developed in Year 13 to reach A level standards	
Portfolio 3: A level Exam Topic	An A level exam topic to produce the third portfolio in the Spring and Summer of Year 13	40% of the A level mark 15-hour exam

Things to consider:

An A level portfolio will be very valuable when applying for any of these creative degree level courses. Fashion, Animation, Graphic Design, Illustration, Film, Photography, Game Design, Visual Effects, Sculpture, Drawing, Painting, Interior Design, History of Art, Architecture, Art Journalism, Set Design, Curation... and many more! All of these courses require a student to show an understanding of composition, colour and style.

It is recommended that you take a one-year foundation course after A levels before embarking on a degree to further expand your skill base and your portfolio.



PHYSICS

Why study Physics at A level?

Physics is a challenging and rewarding subject to study at advanced level. You will study the latest developments in physics, including the fundamentals of particle theory and quantum physics. You will discover that, rather than being made from 3 particles, matter is actually made up from a whole range of exotic particles, which are so varied that they are known as the 'zoo of particles'. You will also develop your understanding of the mathematics of forces, electricity and motion and you will learn how to predict the behaviour of many complex physical systems.

As well as developing your logical and problem-solving abilities, physics will also prepare you for a range of degree courses. It is required for many physical science and engineering courses and is a favoured subject for entry to many academic courses.

The course: AQA A level Physics (7408), and AS level Physics (7407)

How is it assessed?

Students will take all A level examinations at the end of Year 13.

Unit Title	Description	Assessment and Weighting
Paper 1	Measurements and their errors, Particles and radiation, Waves, Mechanics and materials, Electricity, Periodic motion.	2-hour exam 34% of the total A level
Paper 2	Thermal physics, Fields and their consequences, Nuclear physics.	2-hour exam 34% of the total A level
Paper 3	Practical skills and data analysis. Astrophysics, Medical physics, Engineering physics, Turning points in physics, Electronics.	2-hour exam 32% of the total A level

Things to consider:

To study physics A level, you should really enjoy maths. There is a lot of mathematical content, and while the examined part does not extend beyond GCSE, an understanding of calculus, trigonometry and logarithms is helpful for your understanding. There is also a lot of overlap with the mechanics module of A level maths and so it is advisable to choose this as your optional module alongside your core maths at A level.



PSYCHOLOGY

What is Psychology... and what is it not?

“It’s all about thoughts and feelings... isn’t it?”

This is a phrase that is regularly heard when the topic of psychology arises. Psychology may be a new subject for some of the students going into Year 12, and there exist a number of misconceptions about what it is.

Simply put, psychology is the study of people, behaviour and the mind. It has recently been reclassified as a science subject, and this is reflected in the A level curriculum.

It is a broad subject, with many different areas and a number of different approaches towards explaining behaviour. Not all psychologists agree with each other!

Psychologists observe human behaviour, create theories to explain the behaviour, and then carry out research to test these theories. For this reason, a good GCSE maths grade is needed as psychology does involve a considerable amount of statistics.

Ultimately though, the greatest rewards of the subject are a deeper understanding of people, society, and perhaps even yourself.

The course: AQA A level Psychology (7182)

How is it assessed?

Students will take all A level examinations at the end of Year 13. Each paper carries the same weighting.

Unit Title	Topics	Assessment
Paper1: Introductory Topics in Psychology	Social Influence, Memory Attachment Psychopathology	2 hour written exam Four compulsory sections all requiring written answers.
Paper 2: Psychology in Context	Approaches in Psychology Biopsychology Research Methods	2 hour written exam Three compulsory sections all requiring written answers.
Paper 3: Issues and Options in Psychology	Issues and Debates in Psychology Relationships; Gender; Cognition and Development Schizophrenia; Eating Behaviour; Stress Aggression, Forensic Psychology; Addiction	2 hour written exam One compulsory section. Three sections each offering a choice of three topics. Students answer one question from each section.

Things to consider:

Psychology can lead to specific careers in clinical, developmental or forensic psychology, counselling and therapy; but it is also a useful qualification to have if you are thinking of any career that involves dealing with people (almost everything!). An understanding of psychological procedures and principles would also be useful in careers such as teaching, health service related occupations, law (including police) and social work.

Contact

Admissions

Registrar

Rachel Bowles

020 8614 0857

Hampton Court House

Hampton Court Road

East Molesey

Surrey, KT8 9BS

020 8943 0889

reception@hchnet.co.uk

 facebook.com/hamptoncourthouse

 [@HCHSchool](https://twitter.com/HCHSchool)

 [@GuyHolloway_HCH](https://twitter.com/GuyHolloway_HCH)

www.hamptoncourthouse.co.uk