



What A-levels  
should you take?

# What A-levels should you take?

Choosing a handful of subjects to take at A-level isn't a decision you should take lightly. The A-levels you pick now can impact what you do later, namely the courses you can apply to at university (and which universities will consider you) - <https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/courses> is a helpful site.

If you don't know what you want to do in the future, you can still make smart choices now that will leave you in the best position in two years' time – read about the facilitating subjects below.

## 1. Taking certain A-level subjects will open up more university course options

Your teachers or careers adviser may talk to you about facilitating subjects; but what are they exactly?

Facilitating subjects are a handful of A-level subjects commonly asked for in universities' entry requirements, regardless of the course you're applying to – this makes them a good choice to keep your degree options open.

The facilitating subjects are:

|                                |           |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Biology                        | Chemistry |
| English                        | Geography |
| History                        | Maths     |
| Modern and classical languages | Physics   |

If you don't know what you will want to study at university, it can pay off later to take one or two of these. Be aware, some universities openly discourage students from taking [certain combinations of A-level subjects](https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/advice/a-level-choices/are-certain-a-level-combinations-too-narrow) (<https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/advice/a-level-choices/are-certain-a-level-combinations-too-narrow>), particularly when subjects are very similar like business studies and economics – something to bear in mind when you're making A-level choices.

As you'll see below, some degree subjects or specific universities will ask for certain A-level subjects in their entry requirements...

<https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/advice/ucas-application/what-are-university-entry-requirements>

## 2. Certain university courses will look for specific A-levels

This is really important if you have a particular degree in mind. You won't be able to apply to some degree courses without having taken some specific A-levels (and scored the right grades in them too, of course).

Below are a few examples to give you an idea of what to expect (some are quite obvious)...

**Pharmacy must have:** chemistry, plus at least one from biology, maths and physics

**English must have:** usually English literature, maybe English literature and language or English language

**Geology/earth sciences must have:** at least two from maths, physics, chemistry and biology

**Economics sometimes need:** maths, very rarely do you need economics

For more guidance on what to study at A-level to go on to particular degree subjects, see the full list of university subjects for more information about their typical A-level requirements:

<https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/advice/a-level-choices/what-a-levels-do-you-need-for-the-degree-you-want-to-study>

**Tip:** check out the full entry requirement details for a handful of courses across different unis to make sure you're ticking all the boxes within your subject.

### 3. Many universities and courses will consider you whatever you choose

**Question:** Accountancy, anthropology, archaeology, banking, business studies, classical civilisations, hospitality, information science, law, management, marketing, media studies, philosophy, politics, psychology, public relations, religious studies/theology, retail management, social work, sociology, surveying, television, travel and tourism...

What do these subjects have in common?

**Answer:** They will all consider a very wide range of A-level choices and do not normally have essential subject requirements! So don't get too bogged down in essential A-levels you have to take.