



# CHOOSING YOUR GCSE OPTIONS?

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE

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## Which GCSEs should I take?

This is really down to a combination of things, including your own interests, which optional subjects your school allows you to choose, and your future plans.

You're in the driving seat now, and you're beginning to shape your own education! This is the first time you can focus on the subjects you like the most and feel you will do well at.

## How many GCSEs should I take?

You should expect to take around nine subjects.

Most courses and jobs you might want to apply for in the future require you to have grades between 9 and 4 in a minimum of five subjects.

## **Which GCSE options are compulsory?**

Maths, English and Science are the core subjects everyone must take at GCSE in England.

English Language is compulsory in all schools, and so is English Literature in the majority of schools, but there are exceptions, so do check.

Science may be split into the three separate sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) or into two combined Science GCSEs.

Check with your teachers to find out what rules your school has.

## **When do I have to pick my GCSE subjects?**

In England, you will choose the subjects you want to study for GCSE in Year 9, but in some schools this might happen in Year 8, so even if you're in Year 7 it's not too early to start thinking about your options!

Different schools will ask students to pick their options at different times, but you'll get plenty of notice and information from your teachers.

## **Can I change my GCSE subjects?**

You might be able to, but it's likely to depend on whether changing will cause subjects clashes on your personal timetable.

Remember: choosing your GCSE subjects is also choosing your timetable, so think hard and ask your teachers about the planned schedule for the subjects you are keen on.

## **What GCSE options are there?**

To help you make up your mind, ask your teachers about subjects that you might choose be interested in but haven't taken yet, so they can explain what will be taught on the course.

You will have the option to choose:

A modern foreign language. The most commonly taught are French, German and Spanish, but some schools also offer languages like Mandarin and Russian. Some schools require you to take a modern foreign language, so check with your teachers whether these are part of your options or compulsory.

A humanity subject like History, Geography, or Religious Studies.

An arts subject like Music, Drama, Art and Design or Media Studies.

A technical subject such as Design and Technology, Food Technology or Computer Science.

All students have to do PE in years 10 and 11, but you can also take it as a GCSE option.

# All GCSE subjects



**Art and Design**



**Biology (Single Science)**



**Business**



**Chemistry (Single Science)**



**Combined Science**



**Computer Science**



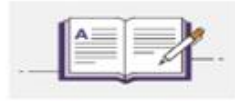
**Design and Technology**



**Digital Technology (CCEA)**



**Drama**



**English Language**



**English Literature**



**French**



**Geography**



**German**



**History**



**Home Economics: Food and Nutrition (CCEA)**



**Hospitality (CCEA)**



**ICT**



**Irish - Learners (CCEA)**



**Journalism (CCEA)**



**Learning for Life and Work (CCEA)**



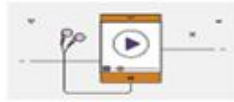
**Mandarin**



**Maths**



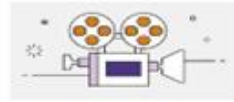
**Maths Numeracy (WJEC)**



**Media Studies**



**Modern Foreign Languages**



**Moving Image Arts (CCEA)**



**Music**



**Physical Education**



**Physics (Single Science)**



**PSHE and Citizenship**



**Religious Studies**



**Science**



**Sociology**



**Spanish**



**Welsh Second Language (WJEC)**

## How am I assessed/graded?

In most cases the new GCSEs are assessed by exams taken at the end of the course (end of Year 11).

But in some subjects there are important skills that it's impossible to assess in an exam. This is where non-examination assessment comes in.

GCSE's are graded with the new 1-9 grading system.

Department for Education

GCSE Grading	
New Grading Structure	Old Grading Structure
9	A*
8	
7	A
6	
5	B
4	C
3	D
2	E
1	F
	G
U	U

Standard Pass →

## Advice from students

Don't just pick a subject because your mates are doing it - it's your life!

Don't pick a subject on the spur of the moment or because it sounds new and fun, as it could wear off.

Don't presume you know everything about how a subject will be taught and ask your teachers for as much information as possible.

Don't avoid a subject that you may want to take onto further education, as you may need a secondary school qualification. for it first

And, perhaps, most importantly: don't stress out too much; pick subjects you feel you will enjoy doing for the next two years. Good luck!

Don't pick a subject just because it is taught by your favourite teacher. Likewise, try not to avoid a subject just because you're not too keen on a teacher: there are no guarantees that you'll be taught by the same person.