WEST BUCKLAND
SCHOOL

GCSE & BTEC Programme





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SCHOOL

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The Year 10 & 11 Curriculum

From Year 10, students will focus on their GCSE subjects. Some of these are compulsory, the remainder are selected by the student. All students must study all three science subjects until 16; we have three pathways for this, to enable everyone to have an option suitable to their need.

Compulsory Subjects:

- Mathematics;
- English: English Language and English Literature;
- Science: Biology, Chemistry and Physics are offered as separate sciences and as a combined single or double award.

We endeavour to give the students as much choice as possible to match their interests and strengths. We would encourage students to select a modern foreign language (French and/or Spanish) and students thinking about a degree course or career in language should consider taking both for GCSE. Most students take 9 subjects, but individual cases for fewer subjects are considered on a case-by-case basis.

We will try to meet individual choices, but sometimes they may not fit the timetable blocks, or there may be too few students choosing the subject to make it viable.

Please bear in mind the following points in coming to a decision:

- The student should be well motivated and interested in the subject.
- Dropping subjects might affect future careers or higher education options.
- A broad range of subjects keeps more career options open.
- Avoid the influence of friends' choices —what may be right for one is not right for all.
- We work closely with students to ensure that their combination of GCSE subjects is right for them and that they are mindful of balancing their academic and extra-curricular load.



The Role of the School in Guiding Students

Through PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Emotional) lessons, the coordinator, supported by the Year 9 tutorial team, assists students in their decision-making processes. The research and discussion topics include:

- Changes in the labour market;
- Factors influencing subject choices;
- Assessment of students' personal strengths;
- Features and requirements of various careers and higher education courses.

Additionally, the Deputy Head, Director of Senior School provides students with a briefing on the GCSE option process, ensuring they are well-informed about the subjects and the implications of their decisions.

Deputy Head - Director of Senior School
Ms K Hill
School Tel: 01598 720284
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Studying a subject at GCSE before pursuing it at A-level is typically required for modern languages and sciences. However, this isn't necessary for A-level courses in social sciences and the arts. A subject not taken at GCSE might later impact a students' career, even if it does not seem related at first. The following examples are given as guidelines.

Chemistry is a key science for many university courses including dentistry, medicine, pharmacy and veterinary science. Geography is preferred for admission to a variety of courses such as town and country planning, cartography, landscape architecture, environmental careers, marine studies and surveying. Foreign languages are important for working in Europe and desirable for careers overseas or any company with international links.

Students will conduct the research independently, with support as needed. The following websites are helpful for career information:

National Career Services

iCould

UCAS

Art & Design

What is the course like?

The art and design course at West Buckland is concerned with the development of the processes involved in visual perception and aesthetic experience. Through a means of expression of ideas and visual communication, the course is designed to encourage the growth of analytical skills, observation, imagination and sensitivity.

Careers

Art may lead on to study in many areas at colleges or university, including architecture, fine art illustration, photography, media studies, textile design, fashion, 3D design, interior design, history of art and archaeology.

Examination Board: OCR
Specification: J171



Course content:

UNIT 1 (A110 – A117) Art and Design Portfolio

Candidates need to produce a portfolio that demonstrates a personal response to starting points set by centres. This portfolio will consist of a sustained project, theme, or course of study and may be presented in various formats such as annotated sketchbooks, mounted sheets, maquettes, prototypes, scaled models, or written work. The focus is on showcasing exploration, research, and the acquisition of techniques and skills. A portfolio and a basic starter kit, including a sketchbook, watercolours and brushes, are available to all students for a small charge. Candidates are given a maximum of 45 hours to complete their Controlled Assessment Portfolio.

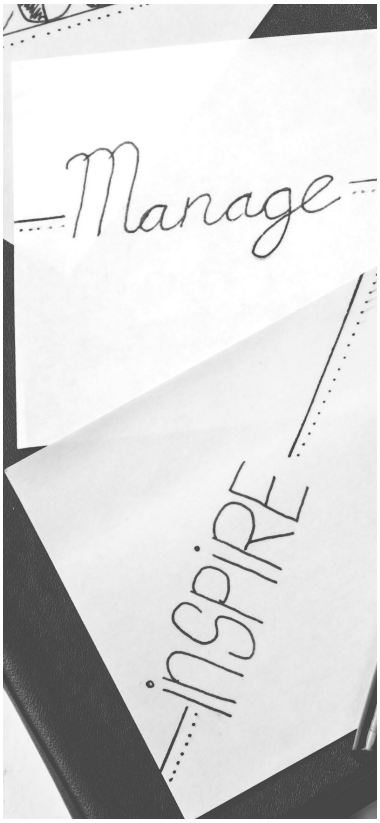
UNIT 2 ((A120 – A127) Set Task

Candidates select one question from an early release question paper and produce a personal response. They are given time to plan and prepare, as determined by the centre, and have 10 hours of controlled time to develop their ideas into outcomes. At least one timetabled session must last a minimum of 3 hours. In the first year of the GCSE course, students follow a structured programme based on coursework units aimed at fulfilling various objectives. They also learn to appreciate art within the context of set projects. Through experimentation with various media, students aim to achieve a good understanding, competence and the confidence to realise their creative intentions. In the second year, students develop their skills through individual projects, which may involve painting, drawing, graphic design, textiles, photography, or three-dimensional studies.

This course suits well-motivated students, as independent study under staff guidance is necessary to complete their portfolio submission, which comprises 60% of the syllabus. Following the distribution of the exam paper in the spring term, there is a trip to London for all art students in Years 10, 11 (and 13) exposing them to modern and traditional art. Year 11 students have opportunities to work in conjunction with A-level students.

Business

Course Overview
Businesses operate in rapidly changing environments and impact us all as consumers, employees, shareholders or citizens. By studying GCSE Business, students will gain an appreciation of the challenges facing UK and global businesses in the 21st century. They will explore how businesses are organised, financed and operated, and understand the political, economic, social and technological factors influencing them.



The Pearson course emphasizes small businesses and entrepreneurship. For example, students learn how housewife Julie Deane started the Cambridge Satchel Company in 2008 with just £600 and grew it into a £13 million business in just five years. Our Business students will discover how businesses recruit, reward and motivate their workers and market their products. They will develop a sound understanding of production choices and how to use financial information in decision-making.

The course consists of two themes, with two exams corresponding to these themes. Students are encouraged to relate their learning to current business events and use knowledge from news sources to discuss current world topics. Through their studies, students will learn business concepts and techniques and apply related skills such as numeracy and enquiry.

Examination Board: EDEXCEL
Specification: 1BSO



Course content:

Theme 1 - Investigating Small Business.
What makes someone a successful business person, how to develop an idea and spot an opportunity, and turn that into a successful business.

Theme 2 - Building a Business.
How to make a business stand out in a competitive marketplace. Financial decision-making and the complexity of dealing with staff. Environmental, social and ethical issues.

Assessment:
There will be two 90-minute exam papers, each relate to the two themes. These papers will consist of calculations, multiple-choice, short answer and extended-writing questions.

Careers
Beside the transferable skills referred to above, studying GCSE Business will offer insights that are particularly relevant to careers such as management, marketing, banking, fund management and accountancy. It is a clear platform for taking the subject at A-Level, and introduces some concepts used in A-Level Economics. Business will be somewhat relevant in any career the student ends up pursuing. There is a distinct possibility of working for someone or for yourself.

Computer Science

Course overview

Computing education fosters skills such as logical reasoning, algorithmic thinking, design and structured problem-solving. These competencies extend beyond the computing field, equipping students to manage resources and address real-world constraints. To undertake this course, students should possess strong mathematical skills, a keen logical mindset and a genuine interest in programming.

Careers

As many future jobs remain undiscovered, it is anticipated that 90% will require digital and computing skills. Therefore, understanding computing is crucial for professionals across all fields, from arts and entertainment to healthcare and retail, to remain competitive globally. The knowledge gained during this course can be applied in diverse contexts, including science, engineering, humanities and business.

Examination Board: OCR

Specification: J277

Assessment

Unit 01 – Computer Systems

Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes
Weighting: 50%

This unit encompasses the following topics: systems architecture, storage, memory, system security and networks, and ethical, legal, cultural, and environmental concerns. The examination paper will include short and medium-answer questions, as well as one 8-mark extended response question designed to assess the ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning.

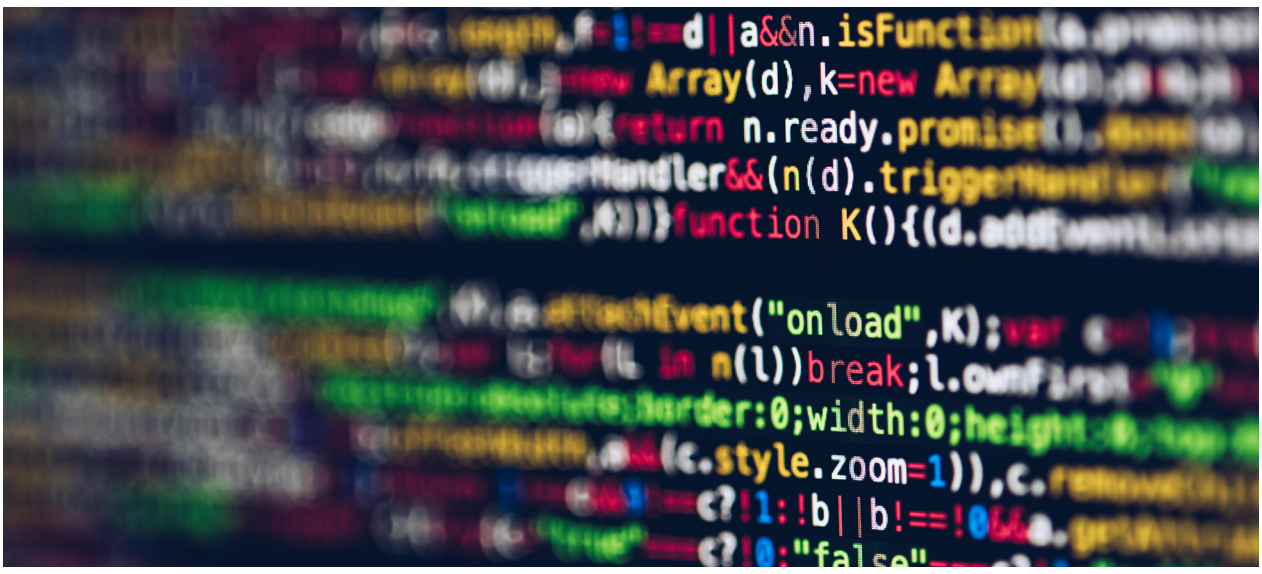
Unit 02 – Computational Thinking, Algorithms, and Programming

Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes
Weighting: 50%

The examination paper is divided into two sections:

Section A evaluates students' understanding of Computer Science concepts and their application to computational problems, including algorithmic approaches.

Section B assesses practical programming skills, such as the design, writing, testing, and refinement of programs. The paper will include short and medium-answer questions.



Design & Technology

Course Overview

West Buckland offers exceptional facilities, allowing candidates to identify and solve problems through creative planning, thinking, and design using various media, a wide range of traditional and modern tools, processes and materials. Students gain technical and design awareness, developing skills such as initiative, resourcefulness, ingenuity and enquiry. This course provides an excellent foundation for further study and prepares learners for a future in a rapidly changing technological society. It also links into the AQA Product Design A-Level offered by West Buckland School.

Examination Board: CIE

Specification: 0979

Course Components

Paper 1: Product design. This compulsory question paper tests 'Part 1' of the syllabus. Candidates must answer one of three open-ended questions that assess their design abilities, completing a pre-printed response sheet with specific space for each element of the chosen question. This paper is 1hr 15 mins. It is worth 50 marks and is marked externally, with a weighting of 25%.

Paper 3: Resistant Materials. This written paper provides a more in-depth look at processes and material covering various aspects of designing and making products. The exam is divided into two sections: Section A, which consists of compulsory questions, and Section B, which includes longer, structured questions that candidates can choose from based on their strengths. This paper is 1 hr. It is worth 50 marks and is externally marked, weighting 25%.

Paper 5: Project. This compulsory school-based assessment involves a single design-and-make activity chosen by the candidate, resulting in a finished product and a concise design folder and/or relevant ICT evidence. The design folder should contain approximately 20 pages of A3 design work or the equivalent in A4. Work can be produced using ICT or traditional methods. Students are expected to spend around 45 hours on this activity. The evidence submitted should include photographs of the finished products as well as photos taken at various stages of the process. The project is worth 100 marks (internally marked and externally moderated), with a weighting of 50%.



Drama

Course Overview

Drama is an excellent subject for those with a keen interest in life and creativity. It develops personal talent, self-discipline, technical skills, confidence and social abilities.

Most students are assessed on their performance skills, however, those interested in technical aspects can also be examined in these areas, as some class time is allocated to lighting, sound, set design, costume and make-up.

Students require a high level of self-discipline and maturity. They will learn to analyse their own performances and those of others, both in writing and orally, using correct drama terminology. The curriculum comprises 70% written work and 30% performance, so students must have a strong command of both spoken and written English.

Examination Overview

Examination Board: AQA
Specification: 8261

1. Written Exam 40%

- Short questions on theatre terminology.
- Questions on an extract from a studied play discussing performance of it.
- One question on a live performance seen.

2. Performance Exams 60%

Devised performance. 20 marks with portfolio, explaining the process of creating it. (60 marks) 40%.
Performance of two extracts from a text different from the examined play text. This will involve performing potentially solo, as a pair or as group. (40 marks) 20%.

Careers

Drama is highly valued in professions requiring personal interaction, such as human resource management, law, advertising, counselling, medicine, teaching and therapy.



EAL

Course Overview:
The ability to use English confidently, accurately, and with precision is essential for academic success across all subjects at GCSE, A-level, and beyond. Regardless of a student's future areas of study or employment, proficiency in English is crucial and establishing a strong foundation will yield long-term benefits.

Throughout the programme, students cover a wide range of topics. These topics, along with associated reading and listening activities, help students expand and consolidate their grammatical knowledge, broaden their vocabulary, and develop their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.

Examination Board: CIE Specification: 0991

This course offers learners the opportunity to acquire lifelong skills and knowledge, aiming to:
Develop learners' ability to use English effectively for practical communication
Establish a solid foundation for the skills required for further study or employment using English
Enhance learners' awareness of the nature of language and language-learning skills
Promote learners' personal development

The language skills acquired during the IGCSE course provide a platform for both Sixth Form study and the IELTS exam, which international students take in Year 12/13 and is essential for university entry.

Assessment

Reading and Writing

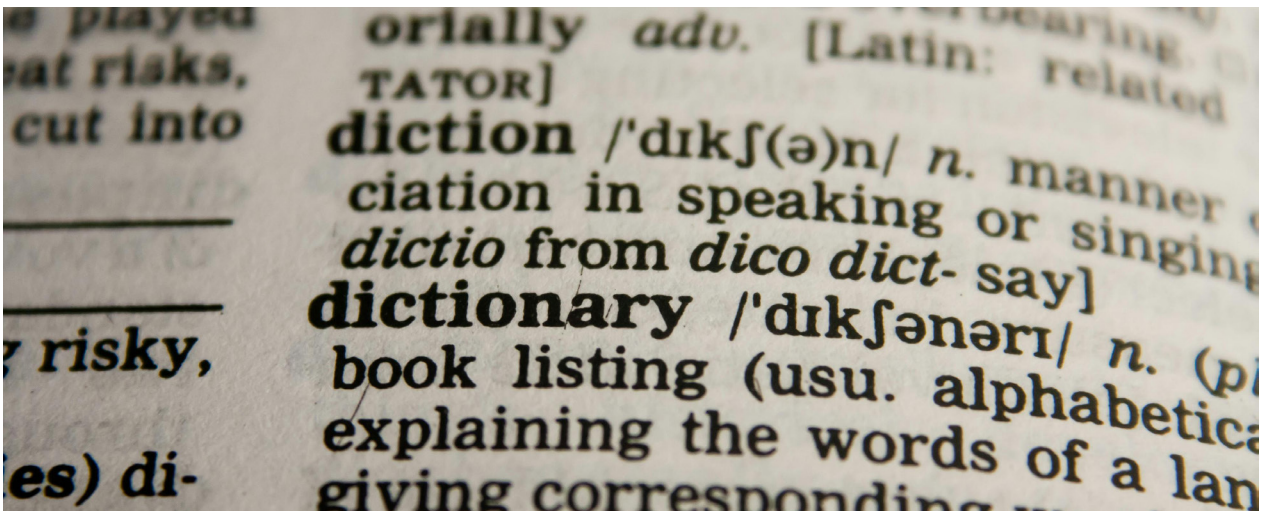
- 2-hour paper
- 60% of total marks
- Students complete 6 exercises testing a range of reading and writing skills

Listening

- 50 minutes (approximately)
- 20% of total marks
- Students listen to several short extracts and longer texts
- Question types include short-answer questions, gap-filling, matching, multiple choice and note-making

Speaking

- 10-15 minutes
- 20% of total marks
- The exam comprises a 2 to 3-minute warm-up conversation followed by a 6 to 9-minute discussion with the examiner on a given topic



English Language

Course Overview

With few exceptions for non-native English speakers, all students take both English Language and English Literature, leading to two GCSEs. English Language GCSE is crucial as it is a mandatory requirement for further and higher education courses and is highly demanded by employers.

The GCSE English Language course involves reading and understanding a wide range of texts from the 19th, 20t and 21st centuries, including journalism, literary non-fiction, literature and reviews. Students will critically evaluate and compare texts, summarise and synthesise information. The course emphasises writing effectively and coherently in Standard English, with correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Students will also expand their vocabulary and understanding of grammatical terminology and linguistic conventions.

Examination Overview

Examination Board: AQA
Specification: 8700

Assessment

English Language is assessed through two terminal examinations, and for the award of the GCSE, students must complete all three assessments.

Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing:

This paper aims to engage students with creative texts, inspiring them to write creatively. In Section A students read a literary fiction text in order to understand how established writers use narrative and descriptive techniques. In Section B, they write their own creative text, demonstrating those techniques in response to a scenario, prompt or image.

Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives:

This paper develops students' insights into how writers convey viewpoints and perspectives on vital issues and themes. In Section A, students read two linked sources from different periods and genres to examine how each presents a viewpoint. In Section B, they produce a written text for a specified form, audience and purpose, giving their own perspective on the theme introduced in Section A.

Non-Exam Assessment:

This assessment allows students to demonstrate their speaking and listening skills by giving a presentation in a formal context, responding to questions and feedback, asking for clarification and using spoken Standard English.



English Literature

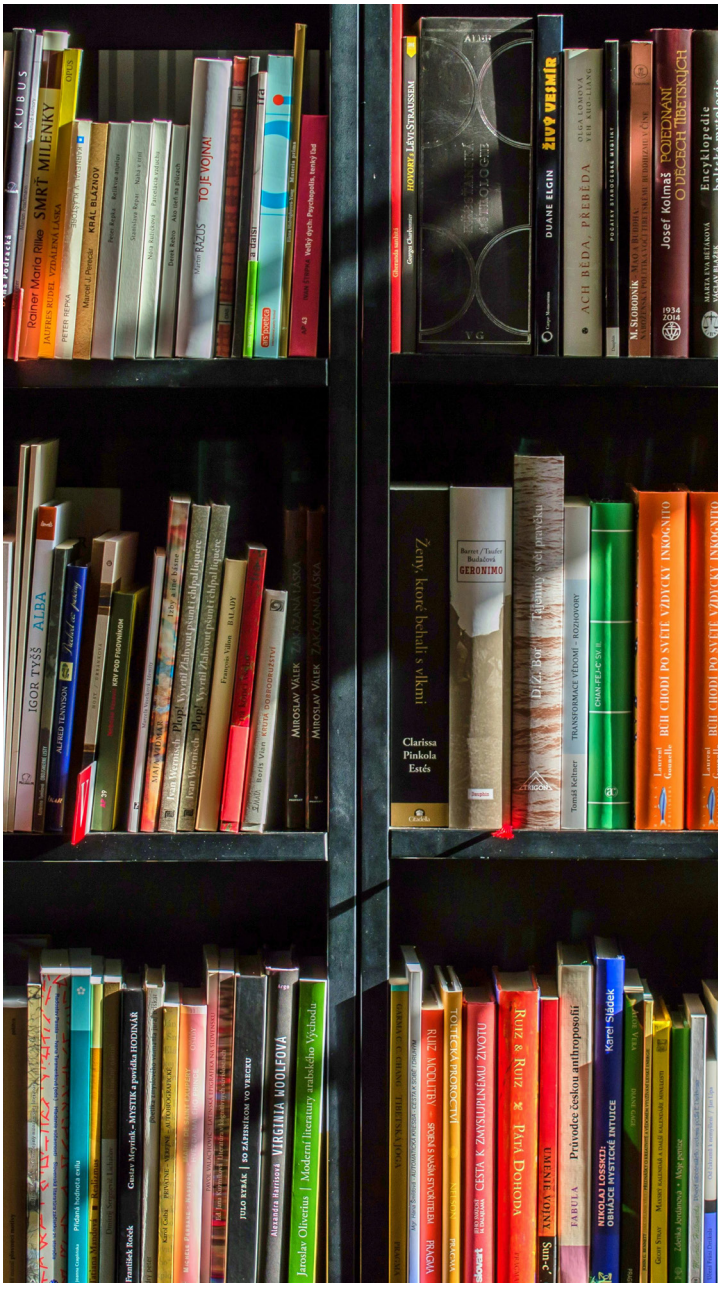
Course Overview

The GCSE English Literature course aims to enhance students' skills in reading, writing, and critical analysis. It provides an opportunity to engage with culturally significant works and to gain insight into distinguished literary achievements. This course encourages extensive reading for enjoyment whilst preparing students for advanced literary studies.

Assessment is conducted through two terminal, closed-book examinations, with all necessary materials provided during the exam. Participation in all assessments is mandatory.

Examination Overview

Examination Board: AQA
Specification: 8702



Assessment

Paper 1: Shakespeare and the 19th-Century Novel

Assessment:
Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes
64 marks
40% of GCSE

Questions:

Section A: Shakespeare - Answer one question on the chosen play, analysing an extract and discussing the play as a whole.

Section B: 19th-Century Novel - Answer one question on the chosen novel, analysing an extract and discussing the novel as a whole.

Paper 2: Modern Texts and Poetry

Assessment:
Written exam: 2 hours 15 minutes
96 marks
60% of GCSE

Questions:

Section A: Modern Texts - One essay question from a choice of two on a studied modern prose or drama text.

Section B: Poetry - One comparative question on a named poem and another from the chosen anthology cluster.

Section C: Unseen Poetry - One question on an unseen poem and one comparative question with a second unseen poem.

Enterprise

Course Overview:
Enterprise is offered as a different approach to business education, but worth the same as a GCSE qualification. Instead of the academic GCSE, this is a much more practical course. There is a real emphasis on preparing students for doing business, as well as studying about it. We have chosen the Pearson BTEC Technical Award because it allows our students to learn from entrepreneurs, small and medium business leaders as well as their teachers. It also encourages a much more professional approach at an earlier age – from the first lesson students are encouraged to see themselves as focused on their customer, not themselves. They are also encouraged to develop their work via video, audio, visual as well as written means. This is definitely no easy option, but if you are willing to do the work then it could be the course for you: selling, marketing, billing, pitching and, yes, how to get paid on time. Not bad at 16.

Examination Overview:
Examination Board: Pearson BTEC Level 1/ 2 Tech Award in Enterprise
Qualification number: 603/7063/4

Assessment:
Coursework is 60%, undertaken entirely in controlled conditions. No AI stress here, which was a factor in us choosing this route. The final examination is worth 40%, taken at the end of the course.

Component 1: Exploring Enterprises - 30%. You will need to research and understand a micro, small and medium sixed business in real-life: what they do, and what things make them successful. You will have to produce a written, audio or verbal report in one of these in February of Year 10. The focus is on research, customers and competitors.

Component 2: Planning & Presenting a Micro-Enterprise Idea - 30%. You will need to do exactly this. You will have to do this verbally, and it will have to be something that you could legally do as a 14 or 15 year old. eg You can't get a bank loan, you can't employ staff. You'll also be assessed on how well you review your performance afterwards. This will be early October of Year 11. There will be more of a financial and production focus here, as well as marketing.

Component 3: Promotion & Finance for Enterprise - 40% - this gives you the technical knowledge, skills and strategies to run a business once it has begun - for example how to bill customers (very important!) and how to avoid running out of cash (very, very important!)



Careers:
There is plenty of stretch and challenge in this course to benefit students at all levels of academic ability. The nature of coursework means that students who benefit from extra teacher support towards their assessments can flourish here. Students wishing to take Business GCSE may not also take this course. This course is perfectly suited to students who may wish to go onto Business A-level. It will strengthen any application after school towards a professional apprenticeship or a business degree: perhaps even providing the initial exposure for a young entrepreneur. However, there are many possible paths supported by IGCSE Enterprise.

Geography

Course Overview

Geography offers an engaging study of the physical and human worlds, exploring their interactions and addressing contemporary issues such as population growth, climate change, and urbanisation. The course provides a balanced focus on both physical and human geography, appealing to a range of learners. Students develop insights into geographical issues relevant to both the UK and globally, through case studies from the UK, Kenya, Brazil, India and Australia.

Examination Overview

Examination Board: OCR
Specification: J383

Course Content

At GCSE Geography, students explore the following topics:

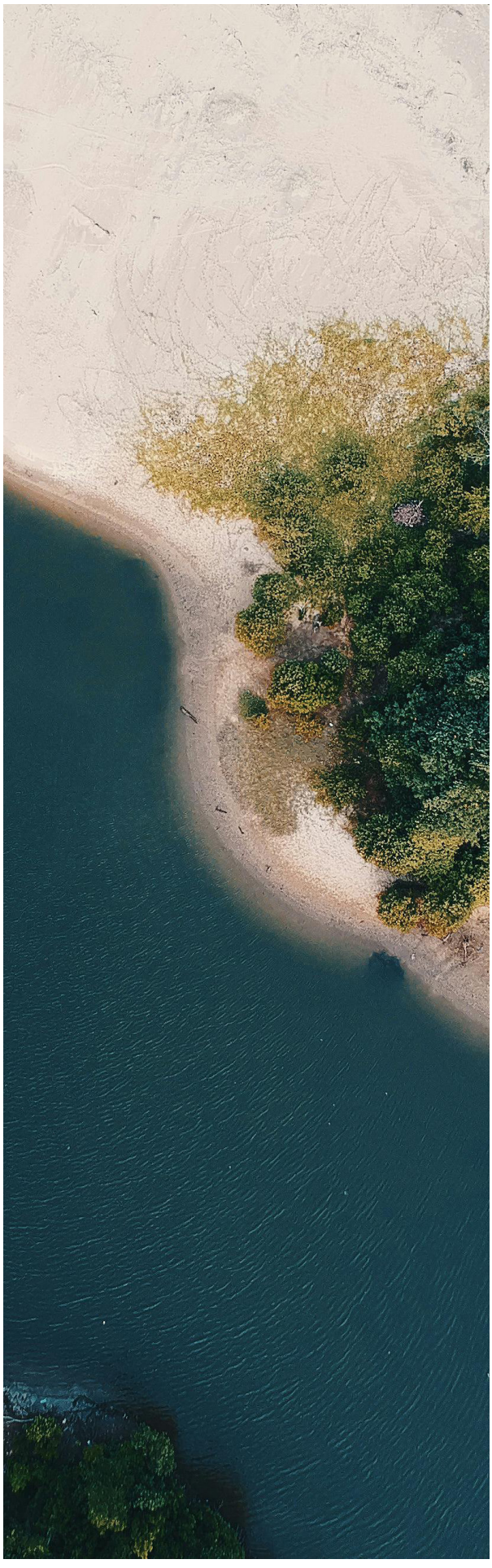
- Landscapes of the UK: River and coastal landscapes.
- UK Environmental Challenges: Issues like flooding, farming practices and energy concerns.
- People of the UK: Development, population trends and urban challenges.
- People of the Planet: Development, aid and urban challenges in the developing world.
- Ecosystems of the Planet: Tropical rainforests and coral reefs.

Assessment

- Living in the UK Today: This 1-hour exam in June of Year 11, accounts for 30% of the assessment and includes short and extended writing tasks.
- The World Around Us: This 1-hour exam, also in June of Year 11, represents 30% of the assessment and features short and extended writing tasks.
- Geographical Skills: This 1½ hour exam, held in June of Year 11, constitutes 40% of the assessment. It tests skills in fieldwork and geographical thinking.

Careers

Geographers are valued for their global awareness, analytical abilities, and skills in literacy, numeracy, and ICT. They thrive in various fields including travel and tourism, international charities, retail, the armed forces and environmental management. Gained expertise in data analysis, map interpretation and fieldwork, makes geographers highly sought-after by a diverse range of employers.



Global Perspectives

Course Overview

The Global Perspectives course encourages learners to think critically and explore solutions to significant global issues. The syllabus enhances learners' ability to consider these issues from various perspectives and promotes both collaborative and individual work, applying knowledge in diverse contexts.

Global Perspectives develops transferable skills that complement learning in other subjects. While there is a single written exam, the majority of the assessment is based on coursework, which includes an individual report and a team project. Unlike most other GCSE courses, Global Perspectives allows students, with guidance, to choose their focus areas. There is no specific content to memorise; instead, the course emphasises developing skills and attributes. Students can select up to four topics from a provided list.

Examination Overview

Examination Board: Cambridge IGCSE
Specification: 0457

Course Content

- Some of the topics available include:
- Arts in society
- Conflict and peace
- Digital world
- Education for all
- Globalisation
- Health and wellbeing
- Law and criminality
- Media and communication
- Migration and urbanisation
- Political power and action
- Poverty and inequality
- Social identity and inclusion
- Sport and recreation
- Technology, industry, and innovation
- Values and beliefs



History

How can one fully comprehend the contemporary world without a thorough understanding of history? Current crises in Ukraine, the Middle East, and Afghanistan have origins rooted in past events. Moreover, history offers critical insights into future developments. For instance, over the past 3,000 years, China has periodically been the most advanced and prosperous nation globally. Could China be poised to regain this status?

Course Content

Examination Board: EDEXCEL
Specification: 4HI1

The GCSE History curriculum covers modern European and World History, building on the knowledge gained in Year 9. Specifically, the course includes the study of Tsarist and Communist Russia, the Cold War, and China (including the fall of the Qing dynasty, the Chinese Civil War and Maoist China).

Assessment

GCSE History course does not include a controlled assessment component. Instead, it is assessed through two examinations, each lasting 1½ hour, contributing 50% to the final grade.

- Paper One: This exam covers two topics: Stalin's Russia (1924–1953) and Cold War relations (1943–1972).
- Paper Two: This exam covers Russia and the Soviet Union (1905–1924) and China: Conflict, Crisis and Change (1900–1989).

Careers:

History cultivates a range of skills highly valued by employers. For example, the ability to analyse data, construct well-reasoned arguments and cross-reference information are all developed through the GCSE History curriculum. These skills are transferable to various career paths, including law, government, finance, journalism, teaching and beyond.



Maths

Course Overview
Mathematics is a core subject in our GCSE curriculum, designed to develop students' confidence and positive attitudes towards the subject.

Key objectives of this course include:
- Develop a thorough understanding of mathematical methods and concepts;
- Acquire, select and apply mathematical techniques to solve problems;
- Engage in mathematical reasoning to make deductions and draw conclusions;
- Comprehend, interpret, and communicate mathematical information effectively in a variety of forms.

Examination Overview
Examination Board: EDEXCEL
Specification: 1MA1

Assessment
The final grade is determined by three equally weighted written papers. Paper 1 is a non-calculator paper, while Papers 2 and 3 allow the use of a calculator. Papers are entered at either the Foundation or Higher Tier. Foundation Tier awards grades ranging from 1 to 5, while Higher Tier awards grades from 4 to 9.

Students are grouped in classes by ability based on prior assessments, with group placements reviewed regularly, especially at the end of Year 10. This ensures optimal opportunities for success. Typically, students in the lowest set are entered for the Foundation Tier, while those in other sets take the Higher Tier in the summer of Year 11.

Please note:
A small number of students will be selected to study a different course that provides candidates with an introduction to the mathematics studied in AS and A-level GCE modules. It is designed for those students who have a thorough knowledge of the content of the Higher Tier of the National Curriculum for Mathematic.

Examination Overview (Further Maths)
Examination board: OCR
Additional Mathematics (FSMQ)
Specification: 6993



MFL

Course Overview

Open the door to the world. Learning French or Spanish is about far more than mastering a language. It gives you the chance to travel with confidence, connect with people from different cultures and stand out to future employers. Alongside being enjoyable and rewarding, language learning develops valuable communication, problem-solving and memory skills that will benefit you throughout your life.

There are currently two languages available. GCSE French and GCSE Spanish. Students are strongly encouraged to take at least one and they can choose to take both languages.

The GCSE French and Spanish courses enable students to communicate across a range of engaging and relatable thematic contexts, which are relevant to their current and future needs. The themes are:

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

Examination Overview

Examination board: Pearson
French specification: 1FR1
Spanish specification: 1SP1

Assessment

There are 4 exams, each accounting for 25%: Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing. Exams can be taken at either Foundation of Higher Tier.

Careers

Speaking a second language is one of the top skills requested by employers in today's job market, regardless of job sector or skill level. Having a second or third language under your belt will solidify your competitive edge over other candidates when you are looking for your future dream job, not to mention the higher salary rates you can look forward to!



Music

Course Overview
The GCSE Music offered by WBS is varied and challenging, designed to inspire and encourage young musicians in their composing and music-making.
The GCSE Music course is indispensable for those who enjoy music-making and wish to deepen their understanding and appreciation of this fascinating and ancient discipline.

Examination Overview
Examination Board: EDUQAS
Specification: 601/8131/X

Course components
- Area of Study 1: Musical Forms and Devices. Focuses on forms and devices originating from the Western Classical Tradition, including the set work “Badinerie” by J.S. Bach for Flute and String Orchestra with Harpsichord.
- Area of Study 2: Music for Ensemble. Students explore how music is composed for small groups of instruments and voices through diverse styles such as jazz, blues, musical theatre and chamber music.
- Area of Study 3: Film Music. Examines the roles of musicians in the film industry, including composers, arrangers orchestrators, performers, music editors, and producers. Students study film scoring for motion pictures and television, encompassing dramatic underscore, thematic music and popular songwriting.
- Area of Study 4: Popular Music. This industry provides numerous opportunities for composers and performers, such as singers, songwriters, music producers and arrangers. This area includes the set work “Africa” by Toto.

Students will also study a variety of related pieces to broaden their musical repertoire. Understanding these topics and their extensive implications for a performing musician is essential for their overall development as well-rounded musicians. A practical ability of Grade 4 by the end of Year 11 is necessary to attain the higher grades.

Combines traditional and modern composition techniques, which allows students to explore both classical (e.g., string quartets, romantic piano pieces) and modern styles (e.g., musical theatre, pop songs, jazz); Covers Historical Aspects of Classical Music, offering a comprehensive understanding of its development and influence; Offers GCSE coursework credit to students involved in the school’s bands, choirs and orchestras for their musical contributions.



Physical Education

Course overview

This course combines theoretical knowledge with practical performance to develop a deep understanding of physical activity and health. Students explore anatomy and physiology, movement analysis, physical training, and socio-cultural influences on sport. Assessment includes two written exams (60%) and practical performance in three activities plus a written analysis and evaluation (40%). The course promotes critical thinking, personal fitness, and lifelong engagement in physical activity.

Examination Overview

Examination Board : AQA
Specification: GCSE Physical Education 8582

Course content

- Theory (60%) – Topics include applied anatomy and physiology, movement analysis, physical training, health and fitness, and socio-cultural influences on sport. Students also study sports psychology and the impact of technology in physical activity.
- Practical (40%) – Students are assessed in three physical activities (one team, one individual, and one other) and complete an analysis and evaluation of performance to improve skills.

Assessment

Written Exams (60%)

- Paper 1 (30%): The human body and movement in physical activity and sport. Covers anatomy, physiology, movement analysis, and physical training.
- Paper 2 (30%): Socio-cultural influences and well-being in physical activity and sport. Includes health, fitness, sports psychology, and socio-cultural factors.

Non-Exam Assessment (40%)

Practical Performance: Students are assessed in three activities (one team, one individual, and one other).
Analysis & Evaluation: A written task analysing performance and suggesting improvements.

Careers

GCSE Physical Education provides a strong foundation for careers in sport, health, and fitness. It develops knowledge of anatomy, physiology, and training principles, supporting progression to CTEC, A-level PE or vocational courses. Skills gained are relevant to roles such as sports coach, physiotherapist, personal trainer, PE teacher, and sports scientist. The course also builds transferable skills like teamwork, communication, and analysis, valuable in many professional fields.



The Sciences

Overview
In England, students must now study all three sciences until the age of 16. This is part of a growing emphasis on STEM education and ensures all young people have a strong foundation in science.

To enable choices that meet the needs of every student, we offer three pathways: Combined Science Single Award, Combined Science Double Award, and the three distinct Physics, Chemistry and Biology GCSEs.

The GCSE science curriculum thoroughly covers key concepts in the material world, combining theory with practical applications. Students will develop skills in critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and experimental design, while gaining an understanding of science's technological and environmental impact.

Careers
For those considering a career in medicine or veterinary science, taking all three sciences is essential. Physics and mathematics are crucial for fields such as engineering and technology, with a solid foundation in chemistry being highly beneficial. Biology is relevant for health-related professions and agriculture. GCSE Chemistry programme prepares the students for further studies in physical sciences, geological sciences, engineering, medicine, dentistry, environmental sciences, biological sciences, nutrition and veterinary science.

Combined Science (Single Award)

Course Overview

Cambridge IGCSE Combined Science gives learners the opportunity to study Biology, Chemistry and Physics, each covered in separate syllabus sections. It is a single award qualification, earning one grade.

The syllabus:

- Helps learners to understand the biological and technological world in which they live, and take an informed interest in science and scientific developments
- Includes the basic principles and concepts that are fundamental to science, some current applications of biology, chemistry and physics, and a strong emphasis on practical skills
- Helps learners also develop an understanding of the scientific skills essential for progression to Cambridge International AS & A Levels.

Examination Board: Cambridge iGCSE

Specification: 0653

Combined Science (Double Award)

Combined Science introduces key aspects of science and its methodology, covering topics such as cells, atomic structure and waves. Students will gain knowledge of scientific facts, terminology, concepts, practical techniques and principals. They will apply these principles and concepts to various contexts. Students will also learn to evaluate scientific information and make informed judgments. This is a double award qualification, earning two grades.

The programme combines three subjects into two GCSEs. The qualification offers a broad, practical course. It prepares them for related vocational or academic studies, particularly benefiting those who seek a broad understanding of science without focusing exclusively on Biology, Chemistry or Physics. The course is appropriate for those intending to pursue either A-levels in the separate sciences or BTEC Applied Science in the Sixth Form.

Please note, students taking Combined Science cannot also take Biology, Chemistry or Physics separately.

Examination Board: AQA

Specification: 8464

Physics

Course Overview

Physics is the study of matter and energy, providing the foundation for understanding both natural phenomena and man-made devices. As the cornerstone of science, physics underpins all other scientific and technological disciplines. For instance, the principle of energy conservation is crucial across fields ranging from atomic bonding and radiotherapy to weather forecasting. Modern technology owes much to discoveries in physics.

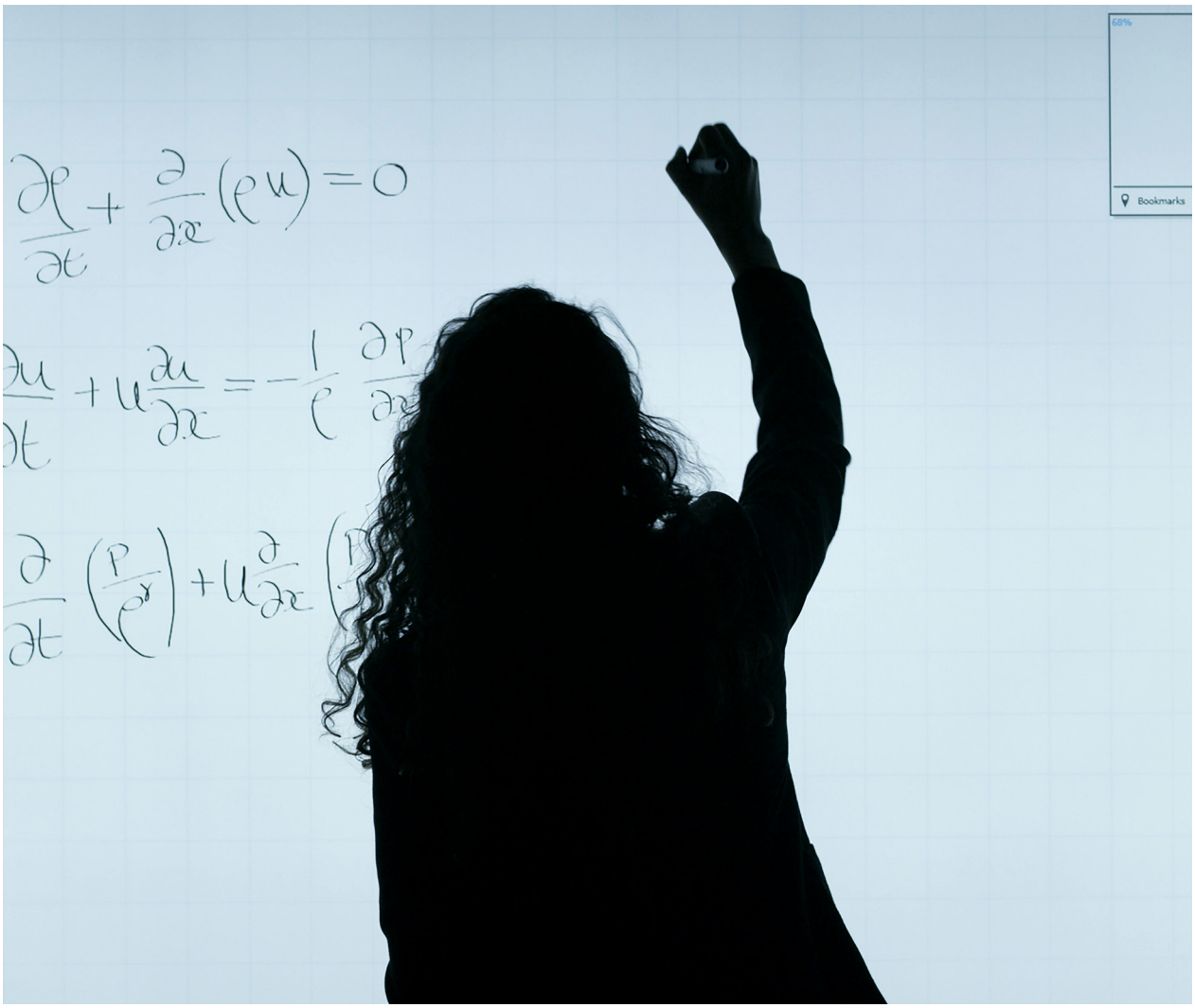
Examination Overview

Examination Board: AQA
Specification: 8463

At GCSE, we explore:

- Electric circuits, magnetism, and electronics
- Light, waves, and sound
- Force, motion, momentum, and collisions
- Energy transfer and global energy resources
- Radioactivity and atomic structure
- Astronomy and the universe

These topics cover devices and phenomena ranging from the atomic to the cosmic scale. Regardless of your future career, the skills and knowledge gained from studying physics will be invaluable.



Chemistry

Course Overview

Chemistry is the study of materials, their properties, interactions, and methods of creation. This GCSE Chemistry course provides students with a foundational understanding of key chemical principles. Practical work is emphasized wherever possible.

The topics covered include:

- Atomic structure and the periodic table
- Bonding, structure, and properties of matter
- Quantitative chemistry
- Chemical changes
- Energy changes
- The rate and extent of chemical change
- Reactions of alkenes and alcohols
- Chemical analysis
- Chemistry of the atmosphere
- Using resources

Assessment

The course content, as well as the scientific and mathematical skills gained, are assessed in two 1h 45 min exams featuring multiple-choice, structured, short answer and open response questions. While there is no separate assessed practical activity, exam questions will incorporate knowledge and understanding from required practical activities.

Examination Overview

Examination Board: AQA
Specification: 8462

Biology

Course Overview

Biology is an engaging and highly relevant subject in today's scientific world. It equips students with essential skills and a comprehensive understanding of both traditional and contemporary topics such as cloning, genetic modification and human disease. Students will develop mathematical and scientific skills.

The GCSE Biology course includes:

- Cell biology
- Organisation
- Infection and response
- Bioenergetics
- Homeostasis and response
- Inheritance, variation, and evolution
- Ecology

Assessment

Assessment consists of two 1-hour 45-minute exams, featuring multiple-choice, structured, short answer, and open response questions. These will test knowledge and understanding gained while carrying out practical activities and include at least 15% of the overall marks.

Examination Overview

Examination Board: AQA
Specification: 8461

Religious Studies

Course Overview

Religious Studies is a rigorous academic subject that develops the critical evaluation and assessment of world views, encourages students to understand belief systems and ethical values and teaches them to develop arguments succinctly and accurately. All of these are transferable skills both for university and employment. There are trips to a Catholic Monastery, a visit from a Buddhist monk and the opportunity to take part in whole school overseas cultural trip to the Birthplace of the Buddha.

Examination Overview

Examination Board: EDUQAS
Specification: C120QS Route A

Course Content

The GCSE Religious Studies course involves the study of the beliefs and practices of Christianity and Buddhism - both Major world religions, with similar fundamental teachings, but very different practices, and key beliefs, making for interesting and lively debate. Christianity encourages Philosophical debate around the Western Judeo-Christian thought. Whilst Buddhism offers students an insight into a Dharmic religion, encompassing culture and values associated with the belief in Samsara and Enlightenment – We study the philosophical and ethical themes below from both religious perspectives, and secular views.

These themes, many of which are directly relevant to the lives of students, include:

- Theme 1:Issues of Relationships
- Theme 2:Issues of Life and Death
- Theme 3:Issues of Good and Evil
- Theme 4:Issues of Human Rights

The exam consists of Three separate written papers, 2 hours for the Themes Paper, 1 hour for Christianity and 1 hour for Buddhism.

Candidates will study the following four themes. All questions are compulsory.



Higher Project Qualification

Course Content

The AQA Level 2 Higher Project Qualification (HPQ) is a standalone qualification equivalent to half a GCSE, designed to help students develop independent learning and research skills. It's ideal for students aged 14–16 and can be taken alongside GCSEs or vocational qualifications.

This provides an opportunity for students to gain an additional half a GCSE.

Key Features of the HPQ:

- Independent Research: Students choose a topic of personal interest that is not covered by their other qualifications. This encourages deeper engagement and exploration.
- Project Output: The final submission includes a written report and, if applicable, an artefact or production (e.g. a model, performance, or creative piece).
- Guided Learning: AQA recommends 30 guided learning hours, with the rest of the time dedicated to independent work.
- Assessment: There is a single comprehensive mark scheme applied to all project types, ensuring fairness and consistency.
- Production Log: Students maintain a log throughout the project, documenting their planning, research, and reflection. This supports the development of academic and organisational skills.
- Supervision: Each student is supported by a project supervisor who guides them through the process.
- The HPQ is often used as a stepping stone to the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) at Level 3, which is equivalent to half an A-level and carries UCAS points.
- Areas for research include Sustainability, AI, Internationalism, Black Lives Matter, Careers and Personal Development.

Examination Overview

Examination Board: AQA
Specification: 7992



Notes

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