



One-Year A level Course Outlines

London

2024/2025



Dear Student

At MPW, we want to help you translate your academic dreams into reality. For nearly fifty years we have been one of the UK's leading independent sixth form colleges, enabling thousands of students to achieve their best in GCSE, A level and examinations, and to advance to the best universities in the world.

Welcome to MPW. We have had many years of experience of successfully teaching students who study A levels over one year. Our individual approach means that we will be able to design a timetable around you so that you are best placed to achieve your goals. Our small classes and expert teaching staff will ensure that you have the ideal environment in which to undertake the demands of an intensive self-contained one-year course.

There are many different reasons why students choose to study A levels in a single year. Most students fall into one of the six categories below:

- Students who have underperformed in their lower-sixth year but who feel they do not need to start the sixth form again;
- Students who have completed a year of their studies but have changed their mind about one of their A level choices;
- Students who need to modify their A level choices to comply with entry requirements for a certain degree course. A common example is the student who wants to study Biology in order to pursue a career in medicine that they did not have in mind when they initially chose their A levels. Students in this position may join us mid-way through the sixth form or during their gap year;

- Students who have completed their A levels but want to try to improve their grades to access top universities;
- Students who have had to relocate during their sixth form studies and do not want to start the sixth form again; and
- Students who are moving to the A level system from another examination system, such as the International Baccalaureate.

We hope that you will find in the pages that follow all the information you need to help you choose the subjects that are right for you. We look forward to welcoming you into MPW's sixth form.

Sally Powell
Principal

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Frequently asked questions

How is it possible to do an A level in a year?

An A level is ordinarily studied over a 21-month period: from September of the lower sixth to June of the upper sixth. A one-year A level is studied over just nine months. Obviously there are challenges condensing all of the work involved into less than half the normal time but these can be overcome if the subjects chosen are suitable and you are prepared to work hard and consistently over the course of the academic year. Before joining, you will have spent time talking to staff so we can assess the suitability of a one-year programme for you.

Can any subject be taken in a year?

In principle, yes. However, whether it is advisable or not will depend very much on your background. For example, it is extremely difficult for a student who has only GCSE-level competency in a foreign language to develop themselves to A level standard in such a short time but this may not be a concern for bilingual students or those who arrive with much greater competency. Similarly, the coursework demands of the Music A level mean that it is not suitable for anyone without an extremely high level of musical proficiency. However, rather than list exceptions, the general rule is that all A levels remain an option and that by working with you, we shall decide which subjects it is in your best interests to pursue.

Can I transfer from one board to another?

It is not possible to transfer from one board to another. The AS is not part of the A level, and so cannot be transferred if you have completed it. It is rather a question of beginning the A level again with a new board. This said, if you have completed an A level in Biology, Chemistry or Physics and therefore completed the practical activities, your marks for this element alone can be carried across if you choose to redo the A level. It is also possible to carry forward coursework marks in a number of subjects as long as you do not change boards.



DEGREE COURSE	A LEVEL COMBINATIONS NORMALLY REQUIRED
ACCOUNTANCY	Some universities require Maths. Business Studies and Economics are also useful.
ANCIENT HISTORY	History is typically essential.
ARCHITECTURE	An arts/science mix is advisable. Art or an Art portfolio plus Maths and/or Physics for some universities.
ANTHROPOLOGY	Sociology is useful. Biology is also useful if the course has a physical/biological anthropology unit.
ARCHAEOLOGY	History, Geography and a science subject are relevant but not necessary.
BIOLOGY	Biology is essential. Chemistry is increasingly becoming essential.
BUSINESS STUDIES	Some universities require Maths.
CHEMISTRY	Chemistry is essential. Maths is essential at some but otherwise desirable. Another science is often desirable as well.
CLASSICS	Latin and Greek are required by many universities.
CLASSICAL CIVILISATION	History, Classical Civilisation, a modern foreign language, and English Literature are useful.
COMPUTER SCIENCE	Some universities require Maths and some Computer Science.
DENTISTRY	Most courses require Chemistry and Biology.
DRAMA	English Literature is essential. Some courses may require Theatre Studies.
ECONOMICS	Maths is usually required. Economics and Business Studies are useful.
ENGINEERING (CHEMICAL)	Maths is essential. Chemistry and Physics are typically expected too.
ENGINEERING (OTHER)	Maths and Physics are essential.
ENGLISH	English Literature. History, RS and a foreign language are useful.
GEOGRAPHY	Geography.
GEOLOGY	Two from Maths, Physics, Chemistry and Biology.
HISTORY	History. English Literature, Philosophy, Politics, RS and a foreign language are useful.
HISTORY OF ART	None. Art, English Literature and a modern foreign language are all useful, though.
LAND MANAGEMENT	Generally no preferred subjects. Maths and Geography are advisable.
LAW	Some courses require English Literature. History, Philosophy and RS are useful.
MATERIALS SCIENCE	Two from Maths, Physics, Chemistry and Biology.
MATHEMATICS	Maths and sometimes Further Maths.
MEDICINE	Chemistry is essential and Biology at the majority of universities. Maths or Physics is highly advisable.
MODERN LANGUAGES	Relevant modern language. (Two languages studied at A level gives more flexibility.)
MUSIC	Music (and Grade VII/VIII).
ORIENTAL LANGUAGES	A modern foreign language.
PHARMACY	Chemistry. Biology is highly desirable along with one from Maths and Physics.
PHILOSOPHY	Philosophy, RS, English Literature and Maths are useful.
PHYSICS	Maths and Physics.
POLITICS	Politics, History, Philosophy, Law, Economics, English Literature, and Religious Studies are all useful.
PSYCHOLOGY	Maths is desirable. A few courses will ask for one of Biology, Chemistry, Maths and Physics.
SOCIOLOGY	Sociology, Psychology and Geography are useful.
THEOLOGY	RS, Philosophy, English Literature and History are all useful.
VETERINARY SCIENCE	Chemistry is essential and Biology at the majority of universities. Maths or Physics is highly advisable.

“When Gorgo had watched the visitor Aristagoras having his shoes put on and laced by one of the servants, she said, “Father, the foreigner hasn’t any hands!””

Plutarch, historian and essayist



ANCIENT HISTORY

What is it about at sixth-form level?

If you think your school life is demanding, spare a thought for the Spartans. At seven, boys left home and entered a public 'boarding-school' educational system to produce warriors. Girls, unusually for the ancient world, also received formal education and would learn how to wrestle, throw the javelin and fight with their fists. To toughen them up, boys were expected to steal their food and to sleep on beds made from reeds they had plucked themselves from the riverbanks. They too then had to pass all-important examinations testing their physical resilience, fighting skills and discipline at the age of eighteen.

By studying Ancient History, you will gain a rich understanding not only of Greece and Rome themselves but the peoples of 'unknown and mysterious worlds' that they encountered. For example, you will look at Celtic Britain with its woad-painted warriors and fire-enchanted Druids and how the Romans subdued it. The course will introduce you to the conflicts between the Greek city-states and between Greece and Persia. You will study the shift from the Roman Republic to the Roman Empire and the complex social changes it brought about.

Autumn term

You will begin by looking at the relationship between Greek states and non-Greek states, such as Persia and Egypt, in the 5th century BC. You will look at politics of various Greek city states and their military engagements with each other and non-Greek powers in the Peloponnesian wars. You will also look at Ancient Rome and the line of emperors that began with Augustus in 31 BC and ended with Nero in AD 68. You will consider the relationship between the emperors and the various social classes of Rome and the political and social challenges they faced.

Spring and Summer terms

You will undertake two in-depth studies. The first will look at the Greek city-state of Sparta. You will consider the structure of Spartan society and troubled relationship with its arch-enemy Athens. In the Roman world, you will look at how Rome ran the remote and foggy island province of Britain after Claudius' invasion in AD 43 through to the construction of Hadrian's wall in the 120s AD.

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

Ancient History is a rigorous academic subject that is respected by every university. It will develop your analytic and evaluative skills through the study of both source material and the competing historical explanations it has led to. It will teach you how to articulate cogent arguments in a clear written form. These are skills that will benefit you across a range of subjects and beyond.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

A GCSE in History is not a prerequisite. You will need the ability to read substantial quantities of text with a critical eye and to write clearly and concisely. It is important to bear in mind that at this level it is not a matter of retaining and deploying a lot of information but rather a matter of drawing upon it selectively to construct a persuasive argument.

How is the course assessed?

The A level will be examined by two papers. The first covers topics relating to Ancient Greece: (i) relations between Greek states and between Greek and non-Greek states in the period 492–404 BC; and (ii) the politics and society of Sparta in the period 478–404 BC. The second covers topics relating to Ancient Rome: (i) the Julio-Claudian emperors in the period 31 BC – AD 68; and (ii) Ruling Roman Britain in the period AD 43–c.128. In each paper, candidates will face a mixture of essay questions and questions asking them to analyse sources and historical interpretations. Each paper lasts 2 hours 30 minutes and is worth 50% of the A level.

Reading

The Athenian Empire 4th Edition

By R. G. Osborne

Published by Lactor 1, ISBN 978-0903625173

The Histories by Herodotus

Translated by J. Marincola

Published by Penguin, ISBN 978-0140449082

Thucydides History of the Peloponnesian War

By Thucydides

Published by Penguin, ISBN 978-0140440393

The Annals of Imperial Rome by Tacitus

Translated by M. Grant

Published by Penguin, ISBN 978-0140440607



“A man's character is his fate.”

Heraclitus, philosopher

ART, CRAFT AND DESIGN

“Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up.”

Pablo Picasso, artist



ART, CRAFT AND DESIGN

What is it about at sixth-form level?

At this level, you will start gaining a more profound understanding of the processes and techniques involved in the production of art. You will want to develop your flair for creativity and we will want to help you channel it by exposing you to new ideas. We will be pushing you beyond your comfort zone so that you can realise your full potential.

Autumn term

Our approach is to support and encourage the development of analytical and expressive skills in appropriately structured projects. You will be encouraged to familiarise yourself with different materials and techniques: line and tone, colour, harmony and composition. We will introduce a range of two-dimensional media: everything from printmaking to painting and figure drawing. You will learn how to develop your ideas through sustained and focused investigations informed by contextual and other sources, demonstrating analytical and critical understanding. You will explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes, and review and refine your ideas as your work develops. You will record your ideas, observations and insights relevant to your intentions, reflecting critically on your work and progress. As a student in the heart of London, you will have access to some of the world's best museums, galleries and exhibitions. This will result in a personal and meaningful response which, where appropriate, makes connections between visual and other elements.

Spring and Summer terms

You will develop your skills and understanding to a higher standard. You will continue to be given close technical instruction and supervision, but you will be required to adopt a much more independent and student-led approach. You will be working on your personal investigation, which is the first of the two components of your final assessment. It has two parts. The first is a major, in-depth, practical, critical and theoretical investigative project or theme-based portfolio and outcomes. The second is an integrated and extended written piece of critical and contextual analysis (1,000 words minimum).

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

An A level in Art, Craft and Design is an excellent basis on which to apply to study the subject further at art college or university as, along with the skills, it will provide you with the portfolio you will need for your application. It is also very useful if you wish to work or study in areas relating to design, fashion and architecture. The course will develop your skills in drawing and visualisation and these have value far beyond courses such as those mentioned already. Engineering and medicine provide two excellent examples of where these skills are of great importance.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

You will need some experience in art that has been formally assessed, such as an (I)GCSE in Art. You will need to be used to working in a drawing and painting medium. Although not essential, it is beneficial to have some experience with photo-editing software such as Photoshop.

How is the course assessed?

There are two components. Component 1 is your personal investigation, which is the coursework component. Component 2 is the externally set assignment. You will be required to develop independently a personal response to one of a varied range of stimuli within specified time constraints. The assignment consists of a series of visual (including moving image) and written stimuli set by the exam board. You will develop your response over a preparatory study period. Following the preparatory study period, you will be allocated a period of 15 hours sustained focus study to realise your response unaided and under supervised conditions. Component 1 is worth 60% of the A level and Component 2 is worth 40% of the A level.

Reading



History of Modern Art

By H. H. Arnason
Published by Thames & Hudson,
ISBN 978-0500237571

The Story of Modern Art

By N. Lynton
Published by Phaidon Press,
ISBN 978-0714824222

The Story of Art

By E. Gombrich
Published by Phaidon Press,
ISBN 978-0714832470

Art of 20th Century

By K. Ruhrberg, M. Schneckenburger
Published by Phaidon Press,
ISBN 978-0714824222

“I dream my painting and I paint my dream.”

Vincent van Gogh, artist

“Reason, observation and
experience – the holy trinity of
science.”

Robert G. Ingersoll,
American political leader



BIOLOGY

What is it about at sixth-form level?

A cell is a miniature marvel of organisation that has been many millions of years in the evolutionary making. What is more impressive still is that cells can coalesce into even more complex structures: tissues, organs and ultimately organisms. The average human body contains 37 trillion cells, enough if laid out end to end to reach to the moon and back. Yet the whole operation is controlled by a genetic code of four simple letters and it can be quickly brought to a standstill by a rogue fragment of DNA in the form of a virus. The scope of biology is enormous and it is an exciting time to be studying it. Advances in technology mean that we can sequence and manipulate genomes, and use computer modelling to help us understand complex systems. At the same time, there is still so much to discover.

Building on the material you have learned at GCSE, an A level in Biology will explore the living world from its micro- to its macro-levels and explore it across a wide range of organisms, from fungi and plants to invertebrates and mammals. You will look at the relationship between the structure and function of cells and organisms and how order is maintained. You will develop your understanding of the processes of development by being introduced to evolution at the molecular level. You will also examine cutting-edge biotechnologies and the issues surrounding genetic modification and cloning.

Autumn term

You will cover four modules. In Module 1 (Development of Practical Skills in Biology), you will learn how to plan and implement experiments and how to analyse and evaluate the results. Module 2 (Foundations in Biology) will cover biological molecules, nucleotides and nucleic acids, enzymes, biological membranes and the cell. In Module 3 (Exchange and Transport) you will look at exchange surfaces, and transport in animals and plants. Finally, in Module 4 (Biodiversity, Evolution and Disease), you will cover communicable diseases and their prevention, the immune system, biodiversity, and classification and evolution.

Spring and Summer terms

You will continue to study Module 1 along with two new modules. In Module 5 (Communication, Homeostasis and Energy) you will look at neural and hormonal communication, plant and animal responses, photosynthesis and respiration and communication and homeostasis, with excretion as an example of homeostatic control. Module 6 (Genetics, Evolution and Ecosystems) will look at cellular control, patterns of inheritance, the manipulation of genomes, ecosystems, cloning and biotechnology, and populations and sustainability. If you are transferring having completed Modules 1 to 4 elsewhere, you will join a class covering Modules 5 and 6, as well as consolidating your practical skills and knowledge.

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

Biology is needed to study the subject at university along with Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science and other related degrees such as Physiotherapy and Ophthalmology. It also prepares you for broader natural sciences courses. By studying Biology, you will develop your understanding of science and the scientific method.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

You will need a GCSE in Biology at grade 6 or above. You will also need to be numerate and have good writing skills as, out of the three A level sciences, Biology requires you to write the most.

How is the course assessed?

Students studying for the A level will sit three papers on Modules 1-6. Paper 1 (Biological Processes) covers Modules 1, 2, 3 and 5. Paper 2 (Biological Diversity) covers Modules 1, 2, 4 and 6. In both papers, at least 15% of the question paper assessment covers knowledge and understanding of practical skills. 10% of the question paper assessment covers mathematical skills. Paper 3 (Unified Biology) covers Modules 1-6 and contains short answer questions and extended response questions. Papers 1 and 2 are worth 37% of the A level and last 2 hours 15 minutes each. Paper 3 is worth 26% and lasts 1 hour 30 minutes.

Practical assessments no longer contribute to the final grade at A Level. However, students must complete a minimum of 12 practical activities to demonstrate practical competence. Performance is reported separately to the A Level grade and will be marked as either pass or fail. If you are resitting the A level, do note that A pass of the practical endorsement (PAG or CPAC) can be carried over from a previous result, even on a different board.

Reading

AS Biology A for OCR

By A. Fullick et al

Published by OUP, ISBN 9780198351917

A Level Biology A for OCR

By A. Fullick et al

Published by OUP, ISBN 9780198351924

A Level Biology A for OCR

By Sue Hocking

Published by Pearson, ISBN 9781447990802



“Biology is the study of complicated things that have the appearance of having been designed with a purpose.”

Richard Dawkins, biologist

“Don’t think what’s the cheapest way to do it or what’s the fastest way to do it. Think ‘what’s the most amazing way to do it?’”

Richard Branson, businessman



BUSINESS

What is it about at sixth-form level?

Business is possibly one of the most practical and topical A level subjects. It demonstrates the interrelated nature of business using business models, theories and techniques to support analysis of contemporary business issues and situations. The content is designed to engage students through topics and issues that are relevant in today's society. In addition to the classic business functions you will study key contemporary developments such as digital technology and business ethics, while the impact of globalisation is covered throughout the topics.

Business is an accessible introduction to the key external and internal issues common to all businesses, which are then applied to a wide variety of businesses in different industries. It aims to develop skills similar to those required by a business analyst; these skills will be useful for further study but will also enable A level graduates to look objectively and analytically at their own or other businesses. Whilst no prior knowledge of business is required or needed, just curiosity about why, for example, Apple is one of the most successful firms in the world, how the independent café near you survives alongside Starbucks or why cigarette manufacturing has left the UK but BMW has not.

Autumn term

In the first term, you will study five different topic areas: Business and its Environment, People in Organisations, Marketing, Operations and Project Management and Finance & Accounting.

Spring and Summer terms

In the second and third terms, you will develop on these areas and add one more topic, Strategic management, which includes analysis, choice and implementation of strategies. Areas of focus include mergers and takeovers, Corporate Social Responsibility and technological change. Meanwhile you will be regularly tested throughout these two terms and there will be chance to review and practise the whole syllabus more intensively in term three.

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

Business is an accessible introduction to the key external and internal issues common to all businesses, which are then applied to a wide variety of businesses in different industries. It aims to develop skills similar to those required by a business analyst; these skills will be useful for further study but will also enable A level graduates to look objectively and analytically at their own or other businesses.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

No prior knowledge of business is required or needed to study Business A level but on a one year course students must be prepared to work fast and do much of the reading and consolidation work outside class.

How is the course assessed?

Students sitting the A level will sit four papers in May/June. Paper 1 (short answer and essay) contains four short answer questions and one essay from a choice of three questions. Paper 2 (data response) contains two data response questions. Both are based on AS level syllabus. Paper 3 contains five questions based on a case study. Paper 4 contains 2 questions based on a case study. Both are based on syllabus from year two but assume knowledge of year one. Paper 1 is worth 40 marks, Paper 2 60 marks, Paper 3 60 marks and Paper 4 is 40 marks. MPW prepare students for CAIE A level Business but there may also be a chance to retake AQA A level Business in one year, according to demand.

Reading

Coursebook: Cambridge International AS and A Level Business for first examination in 2023
By Stimpson & Farquharson
ISBN: 9781108921220

Access to business websites such as BBC Business news, tutor2u, Financial Times.



“It’s fine to celebrate success but it is more important to heed the lessons of failure.”

Bill Gates, entrepreneur and businessman

3D DESIGN/ CERAMICS

*“And the potter said unto the
clay, ‘Be ware’, and it was...”*

George Ohr, ceramic artist



3D DESIGN/CERAMICS

What is it about at sixth-form level?

This course puts the emphasis placed upon functional and utilitarian considerations as compared to three-dimensional outcomes produced in other disciplines, such as sculpture in Fine Art, where the intentions might be centred upon the aesthetic qualities of expressive form. You will look at functional ceramics and product design, but aspects of craft may also be included, such as items that are concerned with functionality and manual skills as well as aesthetic qualities. Possible areas of study include: ceramics, sculpture and product design.

Autumn term

Our approach is to support and encourage the development of analytical and expressive skills in appropriate, structured projects. The first part of the course is spent developing basic skills in hand-building, mould-making, colour application, and firing and glazing. You will learn how to develop your ideas through sustained and focused investigations informed by contextual and other sources, demonstrating analytical and critical understanding. You will explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes, and review and refine your ideas as your work develops. You will record your ideas, observations and insights relevant to your intentions, reflecting critically on your work and progress. As a student in the heart of London, you will have access to some of the world's best museums, galleries and exhibitions. This will result in a personal and meaningful response which, where appropriate, makes connections between visual and other elements.

Spring and Summer terms

You will develop your skills and understanding to a higher standard. You will continue to be given close technical instruction and supervision, but you will be required to adopt a much more independent and student-led approach. You will be working on your personal investigation, which is the first of the two components of your final assessment. This component consists firstly of a major, in-depth, practical, critical and theoretical investigative project or theme-based portfolio and outcomes. It is accompanied by an integrated and extended written piece of critical and contextual analysis (1000 words minimum).

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

An A level in Ceramics is an excellent basis on which to apply to study the subject further at art college or university as, along with the skills, it will provide you with the portfolio you will need for your application. It is also very useful if you wish to work or study in areas relating to design, fashion and architecture. The course will develop your skills in modelling and visualisation and these have value far beyond courses such as those mentioned already.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

A background in art such as a GCSE or IGCSE is preferred.

How is the course assessed?

There are two components. Component 1 is your personal investigation, which is the coursework component. Component 2 is the externally set assignment. You will be required to develop independently a personal response to one of a varied range of stimuli within specified time constraints. The assignment consists of a series of visual (including moving image) and written stimuli set by the exam board. You will develop your response over a preparatory study period. Following the preparatory study period, learners will be allocated a period of 15 hours sustained focus study to realise their response unaided and under supervised conditions. Component 1 is worth 60% of the A level and Component 2 is worth 40% of the A level.

Reading

The Potter's Manual

By K. Clark

Published by Chartwell Books Inc.,
ISBN 978-0890096741

Tableware in Clay:

From Studio and Workshop

By K. A. Wood

Published by Crowood, ISBN 978-1861261984

Ceramic Review Magazine

Bi-monthly subscription



“The urge to see a form, incompletely planned, undrawn, but stepping forward, is the final stimulus.”

Alison Britton, ceramic artist

“The chemists are a strange class of mortals, impelled by an almost insane impulse to seek their pleasures amid smoke and vapour, soot and flame, poisons and poverty; yet among all these evils I seem to live so sweetly that may I die if I were to change places with the Persian king.”

Johann Joachim Becher, chemist

CHEMISTRY

What is it about at sixth-form level?

Over two thousand years ago, the Greek philosopher Democritus claimed that the familiar world of colours, tastes and smells is a world of appearances. Reality is atoms in empty space colliding and coalescing by means of hooks and barbs on their surfaces. Today, quite a different story is told about how atoms bond to one another and we no longer think they are indivisible but Democritus was fundamentally correct: from the small to the large, things are made up of atoms. Chemistry is the study of the elements and the compounds that they produce. Its aim is to explain, at an atomic level, the physical and chemical properties of these substances and to discover, by investigation, new substances that may be of benefit or be potentially harmful to mankind. It can thus have a huge impact on modern society and the resources available to our society.

Building on the concepts covered at GCSE, A level Chemistry will introduce you to a broad range of advanced topics. It will get you to think like a chemist, by putting the emphasis on the need to provide explanations of chemical phenomena rather than on the ability merely to remember chemical facts.

Autumn term

You will cover four modules. In Module 1 (Development of Practical Skills in Chemistry) you will learn how to plan and implement experiments and how to analyse and evaluate the results. Module 2 (Foundations in Chemistry) covers atomic structure and bonding. Acid-base and redox reactions are studied as well as equation writing and the concept of amount of substance. Module 3 (Periodic Table and Energy) looks at the idea of periodicity, Group 2 and the halogens, qualitative analysis, enthalpy changes, reaction rates and qualitative equilibrium. Finally, in Module 4 (Core Organic Chemistry), you will look at hydrocarbons, alcohols, halogenoalkenes, organic synthesis and the analytic techniques of infra-red and mass spectroscopy.

Spring and Summer terms

You will study two more modules. Module 5 (Physical Chemistry and Transition Elements) looks at reaction rates and quantitative equilibrium, pH and buffers, enthalpy, entropy and free energy, redox and electrode potentials, and transition elements. In Module 6 (Organic Chemistry and Analysis), you will cover aromatic, nitrogen and carbonyl compounds, carboxylic acids and esters, polymers, organic synthesis, chromatography and nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy.

“By convention sweet and by convention bitter, by convention hot, by convention cold, by convention colour; but in reality atoms and void.”

Democritus, philosopher

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

Chemistry is a well-respected and challenging academic subject. Studying it will develop your analytical and numerical skills. Problem-solving skills are developed as well as how to apply knowledge in unfamiliar contexts. An A level in Chemistry is prerequisite for gaining entry onto degree courses in Chemistry, Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary science. It is a valuable subject to have if applying for broader natural sciences courses but also will be welcome in applications to study subjects such as Law and Philosophy because of the critical skills it teaches you.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

A sound GCSE background is extremely useful but not essential. A minimum of grade 7 at (I)GCSE is desirable. You should have an inquisitive mind and a desire to make discoveries through investigation. You should also have the ability to follow a logical sequence of instructions and to be able to recall factual information.

How is the course assessed?

Students studying for the A level will sit three papers on Modules 1-6. Paper 1 (Periodic Table, Elements and Physical Chemistry) covers Modules 1, 2, 3 and 5. Paper 2 (Synthesis and Analytical Techniques) covers Modules 1, 2, 4 and 6. In both papers, at least 15% of the question paper assessment covers knowledge and understanding of practical skills. 40% of the question paper assessment covers mathematical skills. Paper 3 (Unified Chemistry) covers Modules 1-6 and contains short answer questions and extended response questions. Papers 1 and 2 are worth 37% of the A level and last 2 hours 15 minutes each. Paper 3 is worth 26% and lasts 1 hour 30 minutes.

Practical assessments no longer contribute to the final grade at A Level. However, students must complete a minimum of 12 practical activities to demonstrate practical competence. Performance is reported separately to the A Level grade and will be marked as either pass or fail.

Reading

A Level Chemistry A for OCR Year 1 and AS

By D. Gent, R. Ritchie

Published by OUP, ISBN 978-0198351962

A Level Chemistry A for OCR Year 2

By D. Gent, R. Ritchie

Published by OUP, ISBN 978-0198357650



“I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.”

In the School of Confucius



CHINESE

What is it about at sixth-form level?

Learning a modern language for GCSE is a matter of taking your first steps to learn rudimentary grammar and vocabulary that leave real conversations still beyond your reach. It is at the sixth form level that you will deepen your grammatical competence and broaden your vocabulary so that you can converse about and debate real-world issues, and immerse yourself into the culture, literature and arts of the country. Even though we live in an age where it seems English is spoken everywhere and where Google Translate will help you where it is not, there is nothing like the experience and satisfaction of being able to step inside a different way of speaking and seeing the world.

Learning a language spoken by one fifth of the world's population will open the door to one of the world's oldest and richest cultures. Exposure to Chinese, a language which is entirely different to all European languages, will provide one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences of your life. By looking at media, books and film you will develop the knowledge and skills to enable you to understand the unique values, struggles, sensibility, joys and sorrows of the Chinese people.

Autumn term

You will begin developing your oral fluency and accuracy in a range of predictable and unpredictable situations, as well as your ability to produce long essays and reports. You will also be increasing your intercultural knowledge and understanding of contemporary Chinese society. You will focus on two themes. Theme 1 (Changes in Contemporary Chinese society) looks at firstly at family structure and the generation gap, family planning and China's ageing population. It then takes in education, the world of work, and how to maintain a good work-life balance. Theme 2 (Chinese Culture) looks at traditions and customs. You will look at the importance place of festivals, such as the Spring festival and Dragon boat festival. You will also look at film, music, books alongside social issues and trends.

Spring and Summer terms

You will keep working on your oral and written skills whilst enlarging your knowledge of Chinese society through the study of two more themes. Theme 3 (Evolving Chinese Society) looks at economic, political and social issues, ranging from communications and the use of the internet to economic policies and environmental protection. Theme 4 (post-1978 China on the World Stage) looks at key political figures in the last fifty years, the changes to and contrast between urban and rural life, and China's relationships with Europe and America. You will also broaden your knowledge of Chinese through looking at more books and films.

“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”

Laozi, philosopher

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

Knowledge of a foreign language is ever more valuable in an increasingly connected world. Many employers look for knowledge of at least one other language across a wide range of jobs. Understanding a language is a first step to understanding a people and a culture. Another language enables you to enjoy everything from a casual conversation to a classic novel as it was meant to be read. It also provides a means by which to reflect upon your own culture and gain a deeper understanding of your mother tongue. An A level is typically a prerequisite for studying the language at university.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

You should ideally have an A or A* at GCSE. If it is your mother tongue or a second language, you will need to be able to speak and write it proficiently. You will also need an interest in other cultures and a willingness to work hard on a language which is totally different to all European languages.

How is the course assessed?

There are three exams. The Paper 1 exam (Listening, Reading and Translation into English) will test your listening comprehension skills, your ability to read and respond to a variety of texts. It is worth 40% of the A level and lasts 1 hour 50 minutes. The Paper 2 exam (Written Response to Works and Translation) will test your understanding of two works you will study in Chinese (either two books or a book and a film). It is worth 30% of the A level and lasts 2 hours 40 minutes. The Paper 3 exam (Speaking) will test your ability to analyse and summarise research findings, elaborating on key points of interest, through oral presentation and discussion. It is worth 30% of the A level and lasts about 21-23 minutes.

Reading

Edexcel Chinese for AS

By M. Tate et al

Published by Hodder Education,
ISBN 978-0340967843

Cheng Nan Jiu Shi

By H. Lin

Published by Contemporary China
Publishing House, ISBN 978-7801703071



CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

“It is a Thinkery for intellectual souls. That’s where the people live who try to prove that the sky is like a baking pot all around us and we’re the charcoal inside it.”

Strepsiades,

in Aristophanes’ *The Clouds*



CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

What is it about at sixth-form level?

The classical world of the Greeks and the Romans is the bedrock of our civilisation today. They have provided us with everything from plays and philosophy to art and aqueducts. Like our immediate predecessors, we find it hard not to look back upon their times without a sense of awe at what they achieved. We bear the fruits of the Greeks' enquiries into the world around us in the names of the subjects we study today, such as mathematics, history, and physics. We have the Romans to thank for the urban and social infrastructure we take for granted, such as our streets, sanitation and law courts.

By studying Classical Civilisation at A level, you will become familiar with many aspects of the ancient world. You will look at them as they saw themselves, through epic poems, tragedies, and art and architecture. In studying them, you will come to understand the historical, political and social context in which they are set. Even though you will not be working in Latin or Greek, you will also come to appreciate the beauty of the language in which they wrote.

Autumn term

You will study two components. In Component 1 (The World of the Hero), you will study Homer's *Iliad*, one of the founding texts of Greek culture. You will examine the concept of a hero through the values and behaviour that they displayed. You will look at the wider social, cultural and religious context and the relationships between gods, men, women and slaves. In Component 2 (Culture and the Arts), you will look at either the 'Imperial Image' of Augustus or 'Greek Theatre'. In 'Imperial Image' you will look at how Augustus carefully crafted his public image to embody and transmit specific messages to the Roman people and the people of the empire. In 'Greek Theatre' you will look at Attic drama in its religious and social context and will read 'Oedipus the King', 'Bacchae' and 'Frogs'.

Spring and Summer terms

You will study two more components. You will study a second text in Component 1 (The World of the Hero): Virgil's *Aeneid*. Drawing upon your knowledge of Homer, you will consider the influence of the Greek epic on the Roman epic. In Component 3 (Beliefs and Ideas), you will study the political thought from the period of Sulla's retirement in 79BC to the death of Cicero in 43BC. This fascinating period in history will involve you studying the thought and character of Cato, Julius Caesar and Cicero. You will look at how they reconciled high principle with practical politics in a world of parties, policies and shifting alliances that will seem surprisingly modern.

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

An A level in Classical Civilisation represents a broad portfolio of skills and knowledge. The course is focused on classical works but in coming to understand them, you will have learned about the history of the ancient world along with political, social and philosophical ideas. You will develop a sensitivity to language and the art of literary criticism. The essay-based nature of the course means that you will develop your writing skills.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

There are no formal entry requirements. You will need a love of literature, art and history. It is an essay-based course, so you will need to have good writing skills.

How is the course assessed?

There are three examinations. The first is on Component 1 (The World of the Hero), in which you will answer questions on Homer's *Iliad* and Virgil's *Aeneid*. The second is on Component 2 (Culture and the Arts) in which you will answer questions on the imperial image. The third is on Component 3 (Beliefs and Ideas), you will answer questions on the politics of the Late Republic. All papers contain a range of questions, from those requiring short answers to longer essay questions. Paper 1 is worth 40% of the marks and lasts 2 hours 20 minutes. Papers 2 and 3 are each worth 30% of the marks and last 1 hour 45 minutes.

Reading

Iliad by Homer

Translated by M. Hammond

Published by Penguin, ISBN 978-0140444445

The Aeneid by Virgil

Translated by D. West

Published by Penguin, ISBN 978-0140449327

Ancient Rome: Using the Evidence

By P. Bradbury

Published by CUP, ISBN 978-0521793919

Selected Letters (Classics)

By Cicero, edited by D. Bailey

Published by Penguin Classics, ISBN 978-0140444582



“Do Greeks come this stupid?”

Socrates, in Aristophanes' *The Clouds*

“The main purpose in studying economics is to avoid being fooled by economists.”

Joan Robinson, economist



ECONOMICS

What is it about at sixth-form level?

We have finite resources. What should we produce? How should we produce it? For whom should it be produced? Economics seeks to answer these basic but vital questions about the creation and allocation of goods. The familiar and dominant paradigm today is the market. Where there is free trade and a free flow of information, the laws of supply and demand will ensure optimum pricing. Such is the theory. Some would argue that the manifest disparities between rich and poor across the world show that it does not work in practice. Nor too, they would add, does it address the 'side effects' of production and consumption. The phone-maker may find a happy market of phone-buyers but what should be done about the pollution the phone factory produces? Ought governments to intervene? If so, to what degree?

By studying Economics at A level, you will consider issues such as these in depth. You will look at the operation of markets on a national and international scale and think about their advantages and disadvantages. You will consider how businesses function and the role of the financial sector in a society. The course will leave you with a clear understanding of the complex forces that shape our society in the context of wider social and political themes.

Autumn term - Microeconomics

You will look at two themes. Theme 1 (Markets and Market Failure) focuses on microeconomic concepts. You will look at: the nature of economics; how markets work; market failure; and government intervention. In Theme 3 (Business Behaviour and the Labour Market) you will look at: business growth and objectives; revenues, costs and profits; market structures; the labour market; and government intervention.

Spring and Summer terms - Macroeconomics and exam preparation

You will look at two more themes. Theme 2 (UK Economy – Performance & Policies) focuses on macroeconomic concepts. You will examine: measures of economic performance; aggregate demand; aggregate supply; national income; economic growth; and macroeconomic objectives and policy. In Theme 4 (A Global Perspective) you will look at: international economics; poverty and inequality; emerging & developing economies; the financial sector; and the role of the state in the macro economy.

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

Economics is a challenging academic subject that will develop your analytical and evaluative skills. It will almost certainly challenge your preconceptions and therefore develop your skills of self-criticism. You will be required to criticise and construct arguments and to convey them in clear prose with appropriate technical vocabulary. Although not a prerequisite for studying Economics at university, the A level is excellent preparation for it. It is also a good subject to have studied if you are applying for any humanities course and links particularly well to a range of subjects including Geography and Politics.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

Although you will need to have good mathematical skills, the course requires you to understand economic concepts in their socio-political context and is predominately assessed by written answers which include essay-length responses. You will therefore need to be able to write clearly and concisely. You should have an interest in UK current affairs and interests in political and social issues from a global perspective.

How is the course assessed?

The A level is composed of three papers. Paper 1 is on Themes 1 and 3. Paper 2 is on Themes 2 and 4. The format of both papers is the same. Each paper comprises three sections. You answer all questions from Section A and Section B, and one from Section C. In Paper 3, you will be required to apply your knowledge and understanding, make connections and transfer higher-order skills across all four themes. The paper comprises two sections. Each section comprises one data response question broken down into a number of parts, including a choice of extended open-response questions; students select one from a choice of two. Papers 1 and 2 are worth 35% of the A level and Paper 3 is worth 30%. All papers last 2 hours.

Reading

Essentials of Economics, 3rd Edition

By J. Sloman

Published by Pearson, ISBN 978-0273783794

A Short History of Economic Thought

By B. Sandelin et al

Published by Routledge, ISBN 978-1138780200

Edexcel A Level Economics Book 1

By P. Smith

Published by Hodder Education,
ISBN 978-1471830006

Edexcel A Level Economics Book 2

By P. Smith

Published by Hodder Education,
ISBN 978-1471830051



“Economics is a subject that does not greatly respect one's wishes.”

Nikita Khrushchev, First Secretary of the
Communist Party of the Soviet Union

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

“A language is a dialect with an
army and a navy.”

unattributed but popularized

by Max Weinreich



ENGLISH LANGUAGE

What is it about at sixth-form level?

We develop a methodology for the analysis of language and apply it to language as it occurs in a wide range of contexts, from children's spoken and written language to the language of advertisements and the mass media. We also look at how language has changed from 1550 to the present day.

Autumn term

We will recap on what many one-year students may well already be familiar with, the word classes and the "language methods". So, we will revise grammatical understanding and the ways language can be approached. Two examples of the "language methods" would be the differences between spoken and written language and how we choose our vocabulary. We will then look at the requirements of the examination, looking at how language changes according to its context and has changed over time and at how children acquire spoken language and learn to write. Towards the end of the term the examination board issues the topic that we use as a basis for our language investigation. A recent example was the language of motivational speech. We also make a start on the coursework. Students produce two pieces of text based on a chosen genre, e.g. a story for children and a story for adults. (They also write an analysis which describes how they varied their language according to the audience.)

Spring term

We complete the coursework pieces by half-term. We study lots of examples of language in different contexts and examples of language change and of children's language. We look at the books and articles specified for the language investigation. Students need to learn quotations as they will have to write an essay on the topic.

Summer term

Having covered the syllabus by the end of the second term, we dedicate the final weeks of the course to revision based on the examination requirements across the three examined units: Language Variety, Child Language, Language Investigation.

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

English Language A level is a challenging academic course which is respected by universities. It enables you to look under the surface of language and to see how meaning is often conveyed in ways that are not explicit. It is a subject that matches up well with other humanities subjects.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

You will need at least a 6 (B) in English Language GCSE. Many students on the one-year course will already have a good knowledge of the subject from previous study. A love of reading is essential, including texts from previous eras, e.g. Dickens and Shakespeare. As the qualification is based largely (70%) on unseen material you will need to know the basic methodologies very well indeed.

How is the course assessed?

The A level is a linear assessment in the Summer term of the one-year course. The assessment consists of three examined units and one centre-assessed unit (coursework). The examined units are: Unit 1, Language Variety, two hours and fifteen minutes, 35% of the qualification, comprising a question on two 21st century unseen texts and a question on two unseen texts from different historical periods; Unit 2, Child Language, one hour and fifteen minutes, 20% of the qualification. There is one question on unseen data, either written or spoken; Unit 3, Language Investigation, one hour and forty-five minutes, 25% of the qualification. One question is on unseen data and there is an essay question drawing on the student's acquired knowledge of the topic; Unit 4, Crafting Language, 20% of the qualification, comprising two written pieces (1500-2000 words in total) and a commentary on the written pieces (1000 words maximum).

Reading

Working with texts:

A Core Introduction to Language Analysis"

By Maggie Bowring, Ronald Carter, Angela Goddard, Danuta Reah and Keith Sanger
Published by Routledge, ISBN 978-0415234658

Pragmatics

By George Yule
Published by Oxford University Press,
ISBN 978-0194372077

How Children Learn Language

By William O'Grady
Published by Cambridge University Press,
ISBN 978-0521531924



“Language disguises the thought....”

Ludwig Wittgenstein

ENGLISH LITERATURE

“Literature is news that stays
news.”

Ezra Pound, poet and critic



ENGLISH LITERATURE

What is it about at sixth-form level?

The pleasure of seeing what is under the surface of a literary text is something that all of you will have experienced at GCSE, while most of you will have already studied the subject to A level and developed a methodology that you can apply to the texts the Centre is teaching.

Autumn term

You will study five texts in this term. Three of them pertain to the coursework option: we will be comparing and contrasting Ted Lewis' *Jack's Return Home* to and with Harold Pinter's *The Homecoming* but will begin the course by studying a recent collection of poems concerning the witch trials and entitled *Witch*. After the October half term our focus falls on the comparison and contrast of *The Merchant's Tale* in relation to *The Duchess of Malfi*, preparation for the exams to be sat in the second year of A level studies. We will also make a start on *The Tempest*.

Spring term

We will complete our study of *The Tempest* and devote the rest of term to the study of the Gothic genre in general, while also focusing specifically on Bram Stoker's *Dracula* in relation to Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*.

Summer term

With all the texts completed by the end of second term, the third term can be focused entirely on revision of the texts studied and the refining of your essay and exam technique.

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

English Literature is a challenging and rigorous academic subject that will be well-respected by any university. It will develop your skills of textual analysis and critical interpretation. You will understand how to look beneath the surfaces of texts to draw out layers of meaning and how to express your thoughts in a clear and precise written form. It is a perfect complement to other essay-based subjects.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

You will need at least a B in GCSE English. Most students on the one-year A level course will have A level experience of English Literature but A level experience in other subjects may justify the studying of English in a year course. You will need a love of literature and the desire to study it in depth.

How is the course assessed?

The A level is assessed in a linear way in the Summer term of the one-year course by two exams and the submission of a coursework folder. The exam for Part 1 (Shakespeare and Poetry pre-1900) has two sections. Section 1 is on *The Tempest*. You will answer a question on the whole play. Section 2 will examine your understanding of *The Duchess of Malfi* in relation to *The Merchant's Tale*. The exam for Part 2 (Drama and Prose post-1900) will examine your understanding of *The Bloody Chamber* and *Dracula*. You will be asked to compare and contrast them. Part 3 is a coursework unit requiring you to engage in a close reading totalling 1,000 words of a passage chosen from one text in the first instance and in the second instance to compare and contrast two texts which have connected themes with one another in an essay totalling 2,000 words. The two exams are 2 hours 30 minutes in duration and are each worth 40% of the A level. The Part 3 coursework component is worth 20%.

Reading



The Tempest and its Travels

By P. Hulme, W. Sherman

Published by Reaktion Books,
ISBN 978-1861890665

The Duchess of Malfi

By J. Webster, edited by L. Marcus

Published by Methuen, ISBN 978-1904271512

Flesh and the Mirror:

Essays on the Art of Angela Carter

Edited by L. Sage

Published by Virago, ISBN 978-1844084715

“A classic is a book that has never finished saying what it has to say.”

Italo Calvino, writer

“Photography is truth. Cinema is truth 24 times a second.”

Jean-Luc Godard, director



FILM STUDIES

What is it about at sixth-form level?

At the turn of the 20th century, Hollywood was a small and recently-named town that had begun as an agricultural community only fifty years earlier and film was a newly established industry whose pioneers worked in Europe and America. Today, Hollywood is at the centre of a multi-billion dollar global industry and film is rightly recognised as a form of art in itself.

Film Studies is an academic A level designed to equip you with the critical skills and knowledge to understand film both as an industry and an art form. You examine different genres of film and the film-makers and technology behind them. Study ranges across American, British and world cinema, including documentary and silent cinema, experimental and mainstream film. The coursework will involve your writing a screenplay for a short film and making a digital-photo storyboard for one sequence from it, followed by an evaluative analysis.

Autumn term

You will begin your academic examination of film with a focus on contemporary British and American cinema. You will be introduced to the workings of the film industry and learn how to analyse films with reference to genre, representation, narrative structure and historical context. There are films for close study (all set by the exam board) in each topic. You will look at Hollywood films from 1930 to 1990, contemporary American independent film, recent British cinema and a non-English language European film. You will also work on coursework skills and tasks.

Spring and Summer terms

The course broadens and deepens, with study of world-cinema and silent film, together with documentary and experimental film, alongside a further US independent film. For coursework you will submit cross-media production pieces that develop skills first practised in the lower sixth.

“*Film as dream, film as music. No art passes our conscience in the way film does, and goes directly to our feelings, deep down into the dark rooms of our souls.*”

Ingmar Bergman, director

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

Film Studies will develop your critical skills of analysis, your creative powers of expression, and your capacity to articulate your thoughts on paper in well-written and clear prose. It is a valuable and respected academic course that makes a good companion to other analytical subjects, such as English Literature and History of Art, and prepares you well for further study in any humanities subject at degree level.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

You must have a wide-ranging interest in cinema and a desire to learn more. You must have an open mind, as you will be introduced to a broad range of material that covers different genres, periods and industries. You must have a good grade in English GCSE to meet the comprehension and writing demands of the course.

How is the course assessed?

The A level is assessed by two written exams, plus a coursework component. Paper 1 (Varieties of Film and Filmmaking) assesses your understanding of a number of American and British films from different periods of cinema. It is worth 35% of the A level and lasts 2 hours 30 minutes. Paper 2 (Global Filmmaking Perspectives) examines you on different types of film: global films, documentary films, silent cinema and experimental films. It is worth 35% of the A level and lasts 2 hours 30 minutes. Component 3, “Production”, involves coursework and is internally assessed. You will write a 1600-1800 word screenplay for a short film, create a digitally photographed storyboard of a key section from the screenplay and write a 1700-2000 word evaluative analysis of your work. It is worth 30% of the A level.

Suggested Reading

WJEC Eduqas Film Studies for A Level & AS Paperback

By Wardle, Cheshire, Ramey and Stewart (2018)
Illuminate Publishing ISBN-13: 978-1911208440

Film Art (10th Edition)

By D. Bordwell, K. Thompson
Published by McGraw Hill,
ISBN 978-1259253317

Understanding Film Texts

By P. Phillips
Published by BFI, ISBN 978-0851707990

Hitchcock's Films Revisited

By R. Wood
Published by CUP,
ISBN 978-0571162260

Film/Genre

By R. Altman
Published by BFI, ISBN 978-0851707174

Genre and Hollywood

By S. Neale
Published by Routledge,
ISBN 978-0415026062



FRENCH

“The most intimate temper of a people, its deepest soul, is above all in its language.”

Jules Michelet, historian



FRENCH

What is it about at sixth-form level?

Learning a modern language for GCSE is a matter of taking your first steps. You learn rudimentary grammar and vocabulary that enable you to get by but real conversations are still beyond your reach. It is at the sixth form level that you will deepen your grammatical competence and broaden your vocabulary so that you can converse about and debate real-world issues, and immerse yourself into the culture, literature and arts of the country. Even though we live in an age where it seems English is spoken everywhere and where Google Translate will help you where it is not, there is nothing like the experience and satisfaction of being able to step inside a different way of speaking and seeing the world.

The French A level will introduce you to French society, history and culture. You will read the French press, listen to the French news and watch French films so as to develop your knowledge not just of the language, but of the countries where it is spoken.

Autumn term

You will focus on two major topic areas, grammar and translation, and the study in depth of a film. The first topic is *Aspects of French-speaking Society: Current Trends*, which will cover everything from traditional family values to the cyberspace. The second is *Artistic Culture in the French-speaking World* where you will be talking about French culture music and heritage. The film you will study will be one taken from this list: *Au revoir les enfants*, *La Haine*, *L'auberge espagnole*, *Un long dimanche de fiançailles*, *Entre les murs* and *Les 400 coups*.

Spring and Summer terms

You will cover two more topics, as well as undertaking a detailed study of a literary text and its themes and context. You will also be required to research a French topic for your speaking exam. The new topics are *Aspects of French Society* in which you will look at various issues such as discrimination, a diverse society and integration; and *Aspects of Political Life in the French-speaking World*, where you will look at political issues, the right to vote and immigration. The study of a literary text will be a short novel or play drawn from the AQA prescribed list.

“Light, refined, learned and noble, harmonious and orderly, clear and logical, the cooking of France is, in some strange manner, intimately linked to the genius of her greatest men.”

Marcel Rouff, journalist and writer

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

Knowledge of a foreign language is ever more valuable in an increasingly connected world. Many employers look for knowledge of at least one other language across a wide range of jobs. Understanding a language is a first step to understanding a people and a culture. Another language enables you to enjoy everything from a casual conversation to a classic novel as it was meant to be read. It also provides a means by which to reflect upon your own culture and gain a deeper understanding of your mother tongue. An A level is typically a prerequisite for studying the language at university.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

You should ideally have an A or A* at GCSE. If it is your mother tongue or a second language, you will need to be able to speak and write it proficiently. You will also need an interest in other cultures and a logical mind to cope with the grammar.

How is the course assessed?

For the A level, there are three exams that cover all four general topic areas together with the film and literary text. Unit 1 (Listening, Reading and Writing) will check your comprehension of a variety of texts and extracts, with all the questions being in French. You will also have two translations of 100 words each: one into French and one into English. Unit 2 (Writing) consists of two 300-word essays in French with questions set on the film and the text studied. Unit 3 (Speaking) will be a discussion of a theme based on a stimulus card followed by a presentation and a discussion of an individual French research project. Unit 1 lasts 2 hours 30 minutes and is worth 40% of the A level. Unit 2 lasts 2 hours and is worth 30% of the A level. Unit 3 lasts 21-23 minutes and is worth 30% of the A level.

Reading

French Grammar for A level

By P. Turk, G. Garcia Vandale
Published by Hodder Education,
ISBN 978-0340968529

AQA A Level Year 1 and AS French Student Book

By R. Pike, C. Povey, P. Shannon
Published by OUP, ISBN 978-0198366881



“Geography is an earthly subject,
but a heavenly science.”

Edmund Burke,
statesman and philosopher



GEOGRAPHY

What is it about at sixth-form level?

Geography is a constantly changing discipline that reflects, describes and explains the dynamic world around us. It examines the interaction between people and the places in which they live in the context of technological change and social upheaval. Geographers have to think about social, economic and physical issues and how they conspire to shape the different environments and ecosystems on earth. They are involved in trying to think, understand and work towards the resolution of problems of global concern. Are the most socio-economically deprived societies best helped with aid or trade? Do we have a moral imperative to ensure genetic diversity or can we permit extinction and the destruction of environments if it raises our standards of living? When does tourism change from being an economic benefit to an environmental blight?

These are deep and fascinating questions. The subject will be particularly attractive to those who wish to find out more about them and issues others of their kind raise, such as the development gap, the effects of globalisation on national economies, global warming and the severe risks to human activity posed by natural events.

Autumn Term - Human Geography

You will study core and optional topics in Human Geography. Core Human Geography comprises three sub-topics: population, migration, and settlement dynamics. In Advanced Human Geography we study two options: Economic Transition and Global Interdependence.

Spring and Summer terms - Physical Geography and exam preparation

Core Physical Geography comprises three sub-topics: hydrology and fluvial geomorphology, atmosphere and weather, and rocks and weathering (which includes plate tectonics). In Advanced Physical Geography we study two options: Hazardous Environments and Hot Arid and Semi-Arid Environments.

“Next to ignorance of the grammar of one’s native language, nothing betrays want of information so soon as ignorance in matters of geography, without which it is almost impossible to carry on conversation long on any general subject.”

William Playfair, engineer and political economist

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

Geography is a broad subject which asks students to see connections and explore links between social, political, economic and geographical factors. These synoptic skills will be extremely valuable across a wide range of university subjects and careers beyond.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

A grade B or above at (I)GCSE Geography is desirable. You should also have an interest in a broad range of geographical issues. To perform well in Geography, students must be able to write fluently, manipulate numerical information and interpret maps, charts, photographs and satellite imagery. The acquisition and development of these skills is therefore a primary focus of the teaching. A key feature of the examination is evaluating arguments and management techniques.

How is the course assessed?

AS level (worth 50% of the A Level)

For the AS, there are two papers: Paper 1 (Core Physical Geography) and Paper 2 (Core Human Geography). These have the same format. In Section A, students have three compulsory data response questions worth 10 marks each (one question on each of the three subtopics of study). In Section B, students choose one structured question from a choice of three (one question per subtopic of study). The question is worth thirty marks, divided into 7, 8 and 15 mark questions (the 15-mark question being an essay). Each paper lasts 1 hour 30 minutes, is marked out of 60 and is worth 25% of the A Level.

A level

For the A level, students combine the AS papers with two further papers. Paper 3 (Advanced Physical Geography) and Paper 4 (Advanced Human Geography) have the same format. In each paper, students will answer questions on the two optional topics they have studied. Each topic will consist of one structured question (10 marks) and a choice of two essay questions (20 marks). Each paper lasts 1 hour 30 minutes, is marked out of 60 and is worth 25% of the A level.

Reading

Cambridge International A and AS Level Geography

By G. Nagel, P. Guinness

Published by Hodder Education,

ISBN 13: 978-1444123166



Exam Board and Specification Codes

A level: CAIE A level 9696

Head of Department

Duncan Chamberlain

GERMAN

“I found my smattering of German very useful here; indeed, I don't know how I should be able to get on without it.”

Jonathan Harker,

character in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*



What is it about at sixth-form level?

Learning a modern language for GCSE is a matter of taking your first steps. You learn rudimentary grammar and vocabulary that enable you to get by but real conversations are still beyond your reach. It is at the sixth form level that you will deepen your grammatical competence and broaden your vocabulary so that you can converse about and debate real-world issues, and immerse yourself into the culture, literature and arts of the country. Even though we live in an age where it seems English is spoken everywhere and where Google Translate will help you where it is not, there is nothing like the experience and satisfaction of being able to step inside a different way of speaking and seeing the world.

The German A level will introduce you to real German in real situations. You will develop the knowledge and skills to enable you to step inside another culture and enjoy the long and rich history of German art, literature and cinema.

Autumn term

You will focus on two major topic areas, grammar and translation, and the study in depth of a film. The first topic is *Aspects of German-speaking Society*, which will cover everything from family values to the digital world and youth culture. The second is *Artistic Culture in the German-speaking World* where you will be talking about Berlin's cultural life, art and traditions. The film you will study will be one taken from this list: *Good bye, Lenin!*, *Das Leben der Anderen*, *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei*, *Almanya – Willkommen in Deutschland*, *Sophie Scholl* and *Lola rennt*.

Spring and Summer terms

You will cover two more topics, as well as undertaking a detailed study of a literary text and its themes and context. You will also be required to research a German topic for your speaking exam. The new topics are *Multiculturalism in German-speaking Society* in which you will look at various issues such as immigration, racism and integration; and *Aspects of Political Life in the German-speaking World*, where you will look at political issues; the re-unification of Germany and its consequences. The study of a literary text will be a short novel or play drawn from the AQA prescribed list.

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

Knowledge of a foreign language is ever more valuable in an increasingly connected world. Many employers look for knowledge of at least one other language across a wide range of jobs. Understanding a language is a first step to understanding a people and a culture. Another language enables you to enjoy everything from a casual conversation to a classic novel as it was meant to be read. It also provides a means by which to reflect upon your own culture and gain a deeper understanding of your mother tongue. An A level is typically a prerequisite for studying the language at university.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

You should ideally have an A or A* at GCSE and at least an A at IGCSE. If it is your mother tongue or a second language, you will need to be able to speak and write it proficiently. You will also need an interest in other cultures and a logical mind to cope with the grammar.

How is the course assessed?

For the A level, there are three exams that cover all four general topic areas together with the film and literary text. Unit 1 (Listening, Reading and Writing) will check your comprehension of a variety of texts and extracts, with all the questions being in German. You will also have two translations of 100 words each: one into German and one into English. Unit 2 (Writing) consists of two 300-word essays in German with questions set on the film and the text studied. Unit 3 (Speaking) will be a discussion of a theme based on a stimulus card followed by a presentation and a discussion of an individual German research project. Unit 1 lasts 2 hours 30 minutes and is worth 40% of the A level. Unit 2 lasts 2 hours and is worth 30% of the A level. Unit 3 lasts 21-23 minutes and is worth 30% of the A level.

Reading

German Grammar for A level

By J. Klapper, T. McMahon
Published by Hodder Education,
ISBN 978-0340968536

Collins German Grammar & Practice

By Collins Dictionaries
Published by Collins, ISBN 978-0007456017

AQA A Level Year 1 and AS German Student Book

By E. Klingler, D. Sauer, K. Sydenham,
C. Schicker
Published by OUP, ISBN 978-0198366898

Details of the text(s) to be purchased will be specified at the beginning of the upper sixth.



“How charmed I am when I overhear a German word which I understand!”

Mark Twain, author and humourist

“Graphical excellence is that which gives to the viewer the greatest number of ideas in the shortest time with the least ink in the smallest space.”

Edward R. Tufte, statistician

GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION

What is it about at sixth-form level?

Graphic Communication may be defined as the process by which ideas are communicated through the use of symbols, drawings, photographs and typography to convey concepts and/or emotions. This option encompasses a wide and developing area of study, incorporating a variety of related disciplines and utilising traditional skills, such as hand-formed lettering, alongside cutting-edge digital technologies. The boundaries between related graphic processes are becoming increasingly blurred but aspects, such as advertising, illustration and typography provide an indication of what might be covered within the option. Possible areas of study include: illustration, typography, advertising and branding, book covers and record covers.

Autumn term

Our approach is to support and encourage the development of analytical and expressive skills in appropriate, structured projects. We introduce a range of two-dimensional media: everything from printmaking to painting and electronic media. You will learn how to develop your ideas through sustained and focused investigations informed by contextual and other sources, demonstrating analytical and critical understanding. You will explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes, and review and refine your ideas as your work develops. You will record your ideas, observations and insights relevant to your intentions, reflecting critically on your work and progress. As a student in the heart of London, you will have access to some of the world's best museums, galleries and exhibitions. This will result in a personal and meaningful response which, where appropriate, makes connections between visual and other elements.

Spring and Summer terms

You will develop your skills and understanding to a higher standard. You will continue to be given close technical instruction and supervision, but you will be required to adopt a much more independent and student-led approach. You will be working on your personal investigation, which is the first of the two components of your final assessment. This component consists firstly of a major, in-depth, practical, critical and theoretical investigative project or theme-based portfolio and outcomes. It is accompanied by an integrated and extended written piece of critical and contextual analysis (1000 words minimum).

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

An A level in Graphic Communication is an excellent complement for other art courses at A level. It is also an excellent basis on which to apply to study the subject further at art college or university as, along with the skills, it will provide you with the portfolio you will need for your application. It is also very useful if you wish to work or study in areas relating to design, fashion and architecture. The course will develop your skills in drawing and visualisation and these have value far beyond courses such as those mentioned already.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

A background in art such as a GCSE or IGCSE is preferred.

How is the course assessed?

There are two components. Component 1 is your personal investigation, which is the coursework component. Component 2 is the externally set assignment. You will be required to develop independently a personal response to one of a varied range of stimuli within specified time constraints. The assignment consists of a series of visual (including moving image) and written stimuli set by the exam board. You will develop your response over a preparatory study period. Following the preparatory study period, learners will be allocated a period of 15 hours sustained focus study to realise their response unaided and under supervised conditions. Component 1 is worth 60% of the A level and Component 2 is worth 40% of the A level.

Reading

End of Print

By D. Carson

Published by Cinko Press,
ISBN 978-1856692168

The A-Z of Visual Ideas

By J. Ingledew

Published by Laurence King,
ISBN 978-1856697149

AGI: Graphic Design Since 1950

Edited by B. Bos

Published by Thames & Hudson,
ISBN 978-0500513422

History of Graphic Design (4th Edition)

By P. Meggs, A. Purvis

Published by John Wiley & Sons,
ISBN 978-0470168738



“Graphic design will save the world right after rock and roll does.”

David Carson, graphic designer

GREEK (CLASSICAL)

“All men by nature desire to know.”

Aristotle, philosopher



GREEK (CLASSICAL)

What is it about at sixth-form level?

Europe has long looked to Greece for its roots. Seemingly out of nowhere, nearly three thousand years ago, an epic poem from Homer appears and within just a few centuries, we are in the world of Socrates, Sophocles and Pericles, a world in which there is an outpouring of novel ways of thought. It was witness to the birth of the theatre and comedies and tragedies that are still read and performed today for the insights they give us into the human condition. It is there that we look for the wellspring of the philosophy and science that remains with us in the names of the very disciplines they have yielded: history, biology, ethics, physics, mathematics, psychology and so on. The Greeks bequeathed us art, architecture, poems, myths and gods whose presence can still be felt today everywhere from the palatial houses of England to blockbuster films from Hollywood. Ancient Greece was also of course the source of the democratic idea of government that most people aspire to today. (Though you may be surprised by just how undemocratic Athenian democracy really was!)

The study of Greek will also involve you in the study of a beautiful and complex language, mastery of which will sharpen your mind and give you a greater appreciation of your mother tongue.

Autumn term

In the Autumn term, you will build on the grammar and vocabulary you acquired at GCSE so that you can address increasingly difficult unseen translations and become confident at translating from Latin into English and vice versa. You will look at Euripides, *Hippolytus* (lines 284–361, 391–524, 601–624, 627–633, 638–662, 664–668, 682–731, 885–911, 914–1028, 1030–1035). You read about how the punishment meted out by Aphrodite on the young hero Hippolytus, Theseus' illegitimate son, who insolently refuses to worship her by making his step-mother lust after him, leads to disastrous consequences for the family. You will also look at Herodotus, *Histories* Book 1 (chapters 1–6, 8–13, 19–22, 29–45). This looks at the origin of the long running conflict between Europe and Asia, with the story of Lydian kings Gyges and Alyattes and with the interaction between the Lydian Croesus and the Athenian statesman Solon.

Spring and Summer terms

In the Spring and Summer terms, you will deepen your knowledge of grammar and range of vocabulary through studying a greater quantity of text. You continue your study of both Euripides and Herodotus.

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

The study of Greek has long been a respected part of an education and it develops a wide range of skills. In order to master the complex grammar, you will have to develop a logical mind. Alongside learning linguistics, you will be exploring historical, philosophical and literary ideas and making connections between them and the modern world. Close analysis of texts will develop a careful eye for detail and an appreciation of literary form. Classicists have long been admired for the measured and beautiful powers of oral and written expression such study yields. These universally-respected attributes means that Greek works well with any combination of academic subjects.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

An A or A* at Greek is desirable with a B as a minimum as the jump from GCSE to A level is considerable. You will also need an interest in literature, history and politics.

How is the course assessed?

There are four exams. The Unit 1 exam (Unseen Translation) will test students' ability to translate unseen prose and verse. The Unit 2 exam (Prose Composition or Comprehension) will test their ability to understand more advanced unseen passages or to translate into Greek. The Unit 3 exam (Prose Literature) will test students' knowledge and understanding of Thucydides' *Histories*. The Unit 4 exam (Verse Literature) will test their knowledge and understanding of Sophocles' *Ajax*. Paper 1 is worth 33% and lasts 1 hour 45 minutes. Paper 2 is worth 17% and lasts 1 hour 15 minutes. Papers 3 and 4 are worth 25% each and last 2 hours each.

Reading

OCR Anthology for Classical Greek AS and A Level: 2024–2026

Edited by Charlie Paterson
Published by Bloomsbury Academic
ISBN-13: 978-1350156630

The Oxford Illustrated History of the Classical World

By J. Boardman
Published by OUP,
ISBN 978-0198721123



“I am bound to tell what I am told,
but not in every case to believe it.”

Herodotus, historian

Exam Board and Specification Codes
OCR H444

Head of Department
Robert Heggie

GREEK (MODERN)

“I felt once more how simple and frugal a thing is happiness: a glass of wine, a roast chestnut, a wretched little brazier, the sound of the sea. Nothing else.”

Nikos Kazantzakis



GREEK (MODERN)

What is it about at sixth-form level?

Learning a modern language for GCSE is a matter of taking your first steps. You learn rudimentary grammar and vocabulary that enable you to get by but real conversations are still beyond your reach. It is at the sixth form level that you will deepen your grammatical competence and broaden your vocabulary so that you can converse about and debate real-world issues, and immerse yourself into the culture, literature and arts of the country. Even though we live in an age where it seems English is spoken everywhere and where Google Translate will help you where it is not, there is nothing like the experience and satisfaction of being able to step inside a different way of speaking and seeing the world.

The Greek (Modern) A level will introduce you to real modern Greek in real situations. You will look at the media, literature and film to acquaint you with and develop your knowledge of Greece, her language and culture from past to present.

Autumn term

You will focus on two major topic areas. The first is *Developing Greek Society* which will focus society in. The second is *Political and Artistic Culture in Greece and Cyprus* where you will learn about media, festivals and traditions. As part of the course you will study the film “Ouzeri Tsitsanis” in Greek.

Spring and summer terms

You will cover two more topic areas as well as undertaking a detailed study of another collection of poems by Kavafis. The first of the new topics is based on Cyprus only and on its society and events in the 70s and 80s. The second theme is based in Greece only and it covers its past and present key historical events. Finally, you will have to work through improving your translation skills in a range of texts covering the four main themes.

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

Knowledge of a foreign language is ever more valuable in an increasingly connected world. Many employers look for knowledge of at least one other language across a wide range of jobs. Understanding a language is a first step to understanding a people and a culture. Another language enables you to enjoy everything from a casual conversation to a classic novel as it was meant to be read. It also provides a means by which to reflect upon your own culture and gain a deeper understanding of your mother tongue. An A level is typically a prerequisite for studying the language at university.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

You should ideally have an A or A* at GCSE. If it is your mother tongue or a second language, you will need to be able to speak and write it proficiently. You will also need an interest in other cultures and a logical mind to cope with the grammar.

How is the course assessed?

A level

For the A level, there are three exams. All exams test your competency with respect to the topics you have learned. The Paper 1 exam (Writing, Reading and translation into English) will test your reading comprehension skills, your ability to read and respond to a variety of texts. It lasts 2 hours 30 minutes and is worth 40% of the A level. The Paper 2 exam (Written response to works and translation into target language) examines you, in Greek, on the film and book. It lasts 2 hours 40 minutes and is worth 30% of the A level. The Paper 3 exam (Listening, Reading and Writing) is a written exam that lasts about 2 hours and 15 minutes and is worth 30% of the A level.

Reading

Details of the textbooks to be purchased will be specified at the beginning of the lower sixth.



“If you deconstruct Greece, you will in the end see an olive tree, a grapevine, and a boat remain. That is, with as much, you reconstruct her.”

Odysseas Elytis, writer

“America will never be destroyed from the outside. If we falter and lose our freedoms, it will be because we destroyed ourselves.”

Abraham Lincoln, American president



HISTORY

What is it about at sixth-form level?

History is fundamentally the study of the past: of the individuals, societies, cities and other structures that once were and the causes and explanations of that shaped their development and demise. The A Level History course examines the rise of America from the divisions of the Civil War to its global dominance in the twentieth century. This is investigated in relation to the decline of European economic, political and global power. The themes of ideology and imperialism are considered during this tumultuous period. Focus will also be given to social and cultural aspects, so that students acquire a comprehensive understanding of these pivotal years. The course will also concentrate on source-evaluation and the importance of presenting clear and defined arguments in a coherent and concise fashion.

The study of these topics will allow students to understand Mark Twain's famous comment that "History does not repeat itself, but it rhymes." History allows us to understand the context in which events happened, and – through knowledge of the historiography of the era – to analyse how interpretations have been subsequently altered or validated.

Autumn term

You will be studying two units. Unit 1 is a source paper on American history that analyses a precise topic taken from the era between the origins of the American Civil War and the New Deal policies of President Roosevelt. Unit 2 is an essay paper that covers the same era and investigates slavery and the divisions between North and South, Reconstruction, the Gilded Age and the economic conditions of the 1920s that led to the New Deal.

Spring and Summer terms

You will be studying two more units. In Unit 3 (The Origins and Development of the Cold War, 1941–1950) you will consider the factors that led to a post-war divided Europe. You will look at the tensions amongst the Alliance powers with respect to the Axis powers and how this affected peace-making at the end of the war. This will lead onto a consideration of the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and the Berlin Blockade and Airlift. In Unit 4 (International Relations post-1945) you will look at the different phases of the relationship between east and west. How did relations between the USA and the USSR change and develop in the 1950s and 1960s? The impact of nuclear weapons, Détente and the reasons for the end of the Cold War. Unit 4 will also investigate events in Asia after the Second World War.

“Revisionism is a healthy historiographical process, and no one, not even revisionists, should be exempt from it.”

John Lewis Gaddis, historian

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

History is a venerable and rigorous academic subject that is respected by every university. It will develop your analytic and evaluative skills through confrontation with both source material and the competing historical explanations it has led to. It will teach you how to articulate cogent arguments in a clear written form. These are skills that will benefit you across a range of subjects and beyond.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

A GCSE in History is not a prerequisite. You will need the ability to read substantial quantities of text with a critical eye and to write clearly and concisely. It is important to bear in mind that at this level it is not a matter of retaining and deploying a lot of information but rather a matter of drawing upon it selectively to construct a persuasive argument.

How is the course assessed?

AS level

For the AS, there are two exams on Units 1 and 2 respectively. The Unit 1 exam will contain a series of two-part questions. In the (a) part, you will consider two sources on one aspect of the material. In the (b) part, you will use all the sources and their knowledge of the period to address how far the sources support a given statement. The Unit 2 exam will likewise contain a series of two-part questions. The (a) part question will ask for a causal explanation and the (b) part will require consideration of significance and weighing the relative importance of factors. The Unit 1 exam is worth 40% (20% of the A level) of the AS and lasts 1 hour 15 minutes. The Unit 2 exam is worth 60% of the AS (30% of the A level) and lasts 1 hour 45 minutes.

A level

For the A level, there are four exams on Units 1–4 respectively. The Unit 1 and Unit 2 exams are as specified above, though they are now worth 20% and 30% of the A level respectively. In the Unit 3 exam, you will be given an extract from an unidentified historian's writing. One extract will be set on each of the topics. The question will ask what can be learned about the interpretation and approach of the historian who wrote it. The Unit 4 exam will require you to complete two essays covering relations between America and the USSR and events in Asia post-1945. The questions will focus on the reasons for tensions post-World War Two, why the Cold War had such a global impact and ultimately why the conflict was resolved. The Unit 3 exam is worth 20% of the A level and lasts 1 hour 15 minutes. The Unit 4 exam is worth 30% of the A level and lasts 1 hour 45 minutes.

Reading

The Penguin History of America

By H. Brogan

Published by Penguin, ISBN 978-0140252552

America, Empire of Liberty

By D. Reynolds

Published by Penguin Books

ISBN: 978-0141033679

The Cold War

By J. L. Gaddis

Published by Penguin, ISBN 978-0141025322

The Cold War: A History in Documents and Eyewitness Accounts

By J. M. Hanhimaki, O. A. Westad

Published by OUP, ISBN 978-0199272808



Exam Board and Specification Codes

AS: CAIE AS 9489, A level: CAIE A level 9489

Head of Department

Robert Heggie

“Great nations write their autobiographies in three manuscripts, the book of their deeds, the book of their words and the book of their art. Not one of these books can be understood unless we read the two others, but of the three the only trustworthy one is the last.”

John Ruskin, art critic and artist



HISTORY OF ART

What is it about at sixth-form level?

Consider the image on the previous page. What do you see? Who are these men? What are they doing? What are these objects? What do they reveal to us about their personalities? What has the image to do with politics, religion, science and music? Why is there a cross in the top left hand corner? All of these questions and more are of interest to us as well as how it was made and what it tells us about friendship in the Renaissance. As we investigate further we will address issues concerning contemporary politics, religious division and even why the work is in the format of a marriage portrait.

Works of art are layered and structured things like poems and stories, built out of symbols whose significance is not always obvious. By studying History of Art A level, you will learn how to decode them. You will look at their differing styles and the particular techniques, materials and processes that have gone into their construction. Alongside this traditional approach, you will also learn about new perspectives from which to evaluate works of art, such as considering the social context in which they existed and the gender and ethnicity of the people that created them. History of Art is a wide-ranging subject that raises many questions as it is a point of intersection between history, sociology, psychology and philosophy. It is where all the different pieces of the academic puzzle start to make sense.

Autumn, Spring and Summer terms

Students will begin by studying formal aspects of art and architecture and how they contribute to meaning. They will study in detail two topics from the following three: (i) Nature in Art; (ii) Identities in Art; and (iii) War in Art.

They will then study two art historical periods from a choice of the following five: (i) Invention and Illusion (The Renaissance in Italy 1420-1520); (ii) Power & Persuasion (The Baroque in Catholic Europe 1597-1685); (iii) Rebellion & Revival (The Avant-Garde in Britain & France (1848-1899); (iv) Brave New World (Modernism in Europe 1900-1939) and (v) Pop Life (Contemporary Art & Architecture in Britain & the USA 1960-2015).

“History has remembered the kings and warriors, because they destroyed. Art has remembered the people, because they created.”

William Morris, textile designer, poet and activist

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

A History of Art A level is excellent preparation for degree-level study in the subject. It is also of benefit to those wishing to pursue studies in or careers in the media, art and advertising. It develops skills of analysis and interpretation that are of great value to a very wide range of subjects. Art historians are much sought after for their analytical and evaluative skills in the art market as well as the museum, heritage and cultural tourism industries.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

You should be interested in both art and history as well as philosophy and religion. You should be interested in ideas, as the course is about learning to understand the meaning of works of art in their historical and social context as well as issues such as style, gender, and patronage.

How is the course assessed?

A level

Paper 1: Themes. 3 hours i) Visual analysis; ii) Identity; iii) War

Paper 2: Periods. 3 hours - The Renaissance in Italy; The Baroque in Catholic Europe

Reading



The Story of Art

By E. H. Gombrich

Published by Phaidon Press,
ISBN 978-0714832470

Painting in Renaissance Venice

By P. Humfrey

Published by Yale University,
ISBN 978-0300067156

A World History of Art

By Honour, Fleming

Published by Laurence King,
ISBN 978-1856695848

Learning to Look at Paintings 2nd Edition

By M. Acton

Published by Routledge, ISBN 978-0935738957

Art in Renaissance Italy

By Paoletti, Radke

Published by Laurence King,
ISBN 978-1856697972

Thinking About Art: A Thematic Guide to Art History

By P. Huntsman

Published by Wiley-Blackwell,
ISBN 978-1118904978

“You may have the universe if I may have Italy.”

Giuseppe Verdi, composer



ITALIAN

What is it about at sixth-form level?

Learning a modern language for GCSE is a matter of taking your first steps. You learn rudimentary grammar and vocabulary that enable you to get by but real conversations are still beyond your reach. It is at the sixth form level that you will deepen your grammatical competence and broaden your vocabulary so that you can converse about and debate real-world issues, and immerse yourself into the culture, literature and arts of the country. Even though we live in an age where it seems English is spoken everywhere and where Google Translate will help you where it is not, there is nothing like the experience and satisfaction of being able to step inside a different way of speaking and seeing the world.

The Italian A level will introduce you to Italian society, history and culture. You will read the Italian press, listen to the Italian news and watch Italian films so as to develop your knowledge not just of the language, but of the country where it is spoken.

Autumn term

You will focus on two major topic areas. The first is *Changes in Italian Society*, which will cover family, education and work. You will cover the changes affecting family, study the Italian education system and the world of work. The second is *Politics and the Arts*, where you will look at the media, society and politics, music and its impact. You will also cover a detailed analysis of the Oscar-awarded film by Roberto Benigni "Life is Beautiful" ("La vita è bella"). Interesting for both its links to Italy's recent past, this comedy is also admired for its beauty and cinematographic techniques.

Spring and Summer terms

You will cover two more topics, as well as undertaking a detailed study of a play. The first of the new topics is *Italy: A Society in Evolution* in which you will look at immigration and the north-south divide. The second topic is *From Fascism to the Present Day*. This will give you an insight into Italy's recent past from the Mussolini's regime to the second world war and its impact on the contemporary political scene. This will lead to a focused piece of research entailing the reading of Luigi Pirandello's play "Six Characters in Search of an Author" ("Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore").

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

Knowledge of a foreign language is ever more valuable in an increasingly connected world. Many employers look for knowledge of at least one other language across a wide range of jobs. Understanding a language is a first step to understanding a people and a culture. Another language enables you to enjoy everything from a casual conversation to a classic novel as it was meant to be read. It also provides a means by which to reflect upon your own culture and gain a deeper understanding of your mother tongue. An A level is typically a prerequisite for studying the language at university.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

You should ideally have an A or A* at GCSE. If it is your mother tongue or a second language, you will need to be able to speak and write it proficiently. You will also need an interest in other cultures and a logical mind to cope with the grammar.

How is the course assessed?

For the A level, there are three exams. All exams test your competency with respect to the topics you have learned. The Paper 1 exam (Listening, Reading and translation into English) will test your listening comprehension skills, your ability to read and respond to a variety of texts. It lasts 2 hours and is worth 40% of the A level. The Paper 2 exam (Written response to works and translation into target language) examines you, in Italian, on "Life is Beautiful" and "Six Characters in Search of an Author." It lasts 2 hours 40 minutes and is worth 30% of the A level. The Paper 3 exam (Speaking) is an oral exam that lasts about 20 minutes and is worth 30% of the A level.

Reading

Azione Grammatica

By D. Aust, M. Zolb

Published by Hodder Education,
ISBN 978-0340915271

Details of the textbooks to be purchased
will be specified at the beginning of the
lower sixth.



“Tell me about your Italian journey I am not ashamed I wept in that country beauty touched me.”

Tadeusz Różewicz, poet

“Fortune favours the brave.”

Terence, playwright



LATIN

What is it about at sixth-form level?

The Roman world empire may have fallen over fifteen hundred years ago but until then Rome had been a continuous presence and a power for over a thousand years. No modern-day nation can rival it for longevity. The legacy of Rome continues to be felt in many ways today. It is to them we owe town-planning, sanitation, viticulture, great architecture, the law and, across much of Europe, the languages we speak. By studying Latin at A level, you will develop the linguistic skills necessary for you to penetrate the Roman world and discover just how complex and surprisingly familiar a world it was. Through studying Cicero, for example, you will be able to understand just how true the claim is that to understand modern politics, you need to start in the Roman Forum.

Alongside Ciceronian politics and rhetoric, you will look at history, poetry and prose and develop a profound sense of the richness of the Roman world and the debt we owe them. You will also learn to appreciate the beauty of the language and, through mastering its complexities, come to better understand your own.

Autumn term

In the Autumn term, you will look at Virgil's Aeneid 2 (lines 40–249). In the Latin section, you will be reading of the demise of the lofty city of Troy at the hand of the brutal and deceitful Greeks, and of Aeneas escaping through flames and swords to lead his father Anchises and son Ascanius to safety. In studying it, you will begin to learn the crafts of scansion and literary criticism. You will also study Tacitus' Annals 12 (chapters 25–26, 41–43, 52–53). This discusses events in the late years of Claudius's reign (book 12).

Spring and Summer terms

In the Spring and Summer terms, you will deepen your knowledge of grammar and range of vocabulary through studying a greater quantity of text. You will continue studying Virgil's Aeneid 2 (lines 268–317, 370–558). In these sections, you will read about the death of Priam at the hands of Achilles' son. You will also continue to study Tacitus' Annals 12 (56–59, 64–69) & Annals 14 (chapters 1–13) which cover the early years of Nero's reign (book 14) with great attention paid to the character of Agrippina the younger.

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

The study of Latin has long been a respected part of an education and it develops a wide range of skills. In order to master the complex grammar, you will have to develop a logical mind. Alongside learning linguistics, you will be exploring historical, philosophical and literary ideas and making connections between them and the modern world. Close analysis of texts will develop a careful eye for detail and an appreciation of literary form. Classicists have long been admired for the measured and beautiful powers of oral and written expression such study yields. These universally-respected attributes means that Latin works well with any combination of academic subjects.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

An A or A* at Latin is desirable with a B as a minimum as the jump from GCSE to A level is considerable. You will also need an interest in literature, history and politics.

How is the course assessed?

For the A level, there are four exams. The Unit 1 exam (Unseen Translation) will test students' ability to translate seen prose and verse. The Unit 2 exam (Prose Composition or Comprehension) will test their ability to understand more advanced prose unseen passages or their ability to translate into Latin. The Unit 3 exam (Prose Literature) will test students' knowledge and understanding of Tacitus. The Unit 4 exam (Verse Literature) will test their knowledge and understanding of Virgil. Paper 1 is worth 33% of the A level and lasts 1 hour 45 minutes. Paper 2 is worth 17% and lasts 1 hour 15 minutes. Papers 3 and 4 are worth 25% each and last 2 hours each.

Reading

Tacitus Annals XII: A Selection

By Simon Allcock

Published by Bloomsbury Academic
ISBN: 978-1350156388

Tacitus Annals XIV: A Selection

By John Storey

Published by Bloomsbury Academic
ISBN: 978-1350162358

Virgil Aeneid II: A Selection

By Dominic Jones

Published by Bloomsbury Academic
ISBN: 978-1350156470



“We think a happy life consists in tranquillity of mind.”

Cicero, orator, politician and philosopher

“Good people do not need laws to tell them to act responsibly, while bad people will find a way around the laws.”

Plato, philosopher



LAW

What is it about at sixth-form level?

What would it be like to live free of laws in a state of nature? A state of bliss in which we are free to do as we choose? According to the philosopher Hobbes, in this state life would be “nasty, brutish and short.” It is through a system of law that we ensure order and obtain rights which enable us to live safely and productively. As a student of law, you will look at where our rights come from and the institutions that supervise and maintain them. You will look at some of your rights and whether or not they are well-motivated. For example, we may consider police powers and whether police on behalf of the state should have the authority to stop and search you and how that might be balanced against your rights as an individual. You will study criminal law in detail and look at actual cases. You will be required to advise on fictional scenarios. You will visit the courts to see the criminal law at work and we will invite legal professionals to visit the college to give you an insight into their professional world.

An A level in Law will give you a profound understanding of the complex mechanisms that maintain this pillar of democracy and an insight into the complexities of legal argumentation. It is a challenging but well-respected and very rewarding subject.

Autumn term

You will study the English legal system (the courts, the magistracy and the jury system), the criminal process, the legal profession (solicitors, barristers, judges and legal executives) as well as the process of law reform. You will be introduced to where law comes from in the United Kingdom (statute, European law, human rights law and case-law). You will also look at two areas of substantive law. The first is criminal law, which includes criminal liability and non-fatal offences. The second is the law of tort, which includes personal injury and negligence claims.

Spring and Summer terms

You will complete your study of criminal law by looking at murder and manslaughter. You will then take one of two optional subjects: (i) contract law, which is the basic law that underpins all transactions in this country from buying a newspaper to a car, to a house; or (ii) human rights law, which involves the study of rights such as the right to free speech and the right to a private family life, and how these rights are protected. You will also analyse some of the philosophical issues that underpin the law – what is the nature of law? How does law relate to morality and justice? How does the law operate to balance conflicting interests in society?

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

It is not necessary to study A Level Law in order to study law at university or to qualify as a lawyer. It does however provide a very useful grounding. You will have a clear idea as to what is involved in the study of law; and you will have covered a lot of the subject material that you would expect to encounter on the first year of a law degree course. The A level will develop the skills of rational analysis and evaluation and the ability to put together and present a well-structured argument. There is a focus on written work, so your ability to communicate clearly and with the proper use of technical language will significantly improve. The subject works well with History, Politics and Psychology or any other subject that demands logical thinking and analysis.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

You will need at least a C in English as there will be a lot of writing.

How is the course assessed?

The A level is assessed by three examinations. Paper 1 deals with the English legal system and criminal law. Paper 2 covers law-making and the law of tort. Paper 3 and 4 examine the nature of law and either the law of contract or human rights law, depending on option chosen for study. Each paper contains essay or problem questions of varying lengths, lasts 2 hours and is worth 33% of the A level.

Reading

The current OCR text book produced to support the course is:

OCR A Level Law Second Edition

By Richard Wortley, Nicholas Price

Published by Hodder Education

ISBN: 9781398326477



“Justice cannot be for one side alone,
but must be for both.”

Eleanor Roosevelt, politician, diplomat and activist

181. *To find the relations between the mean, the true, and the eccentric anomalies.*

Let m , v , and u be the three angles.

Since the mean angular velocity in the ellipse is 2π divided by the periodic time, or $\frac{\mu^{\frac{1}{2}}}{AC^{\frac{3}{2}}}$,

$$m = u - e \sin u, \text{ Art. 179,}$$

and if a , e be the semi major axis and eccentricity

$$SP \cos v = a \cos u - ae;$$

$$\therefore \cos u = \frac{(1 - e^2) \cos v}{1 + e \cos v} + e = \frac{e + \cos v}{1 + e \cos v};$$

$$\therefore \frac{1 - \cos u}{1 + \cos u} = \frac{1 - e}{1 + e} \frac{1 - \cos v}{1 + \cos v};$$

$$\therefore \tan \frac{u}{2} = \sqrt{\frac{1 - e}{1 + e}} \tan \frac{v}{2}.$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Also } SP &= AC + e \cdot CM \\ &= a (1 - e \cos u). \end{aligned}$$

182. *To find the time of describing any angle from the vertex, in a parabolic orbit.*

Let P be any point in a parabolic orbit whose axis is ASM , S being the center of force; draw PM an ordinate to ASM .

Then $\sqrt{2\mu} \cdot AS$ is twice the area described in an unit of time.

“The pleasure we obtain from music comes from counting, but counting unconsciously. Music is nothing but unconscious arithmetic.”

Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibnitz,
philosopher and mathematician

MATHEMATICS

What is it about at sixth-form level?

Maths at A level deals with abstract and sometimes difficult concepts, but it always examines the knowledge and understanding of these concepts by means of practical questions. Two-thirds of the A level involves the study of Pure Maths, which greatly extends the Geometry and Trigonometry and particularly the Algebra studied at GCSE or IGCSE, as well as introducing a new topic called Calculus which deals with finding the gradients of curves and areas between curves and lines, and with solving what are known as differential equations. The other one-third of the A level involves the study of Statistics and Mechanics. Statistics involves studying the idea of sampling, the presentation and interpretation of data, probability, statistical distributions (essentially patterns) and hypothesis testing. The Statistics part of Maths A level builds on the Handling Data and Probability sections of GCSE or IGCSE Maths. Mechanics involves studying kinematics (including the SUVAT equations), Newton's laws of motion and forces and moments. The Mechanics part of Maths A level will be familiar to students who have studied or are studying Physics or the Physics part of Combined Science. Students need to study both Statistics and Mechanics in Maths A level.

Autumn term

Much of the autumn term of the course builds the foundations of the subject, starting with familiar topics from IGCSE such as indices, quadratic functions, trigonometry and coordinate geometry. Later the fundamentals of calculus (differentiation and integration) are introduced together with some of its applications. Students also study Statistics in the autumn term. We look at probability, at the binomial and normal distributions and at using hypothesis tests to explore the likelihood of statements (the null hypotheses) being true.

Spring and Summer terms

Calculus is covered in considerable depth with the emphasis on extended problem- solving which draws on a wide range that draws on a range of mathematical concepts. Various methods of proof are also looked at – we consider met which can be used to answer some interesting questions such as why must there must be infinitely-many an infinite number of prime numbers and why the square root of 2 cannot be equal to any fraction. Students also study Mechanics in the spring and summer terms. We look at the SUVAT equations and Newton's laws of motion, and at the motion of projectiles and the topic of moments – anybody who has ever been on a see-saw will instinctively know about moments.

“The miracle of the appropriateness of the language of mathematics for the formulation of the laws of physics is a wonderful gift which we neither understand nor deserve.”

Eugene Wigner, physicist

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

Maths is a highly-respected subject that develops students' ability to analyse problems and to think logically about solving them. Maths A level is a prerequisite for the study of a wide variety of disciplines at university, including Architecture, Computer Science, Economics, Engineering, Finance, Geography, Psychology and Physics. Maths A level is highly valued by employers across a wide range of jobs.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

A minimum of Grade 7 at GCSE or IGCSE Mathematics.

How is the course assessed?

The course is assessed entirely by written examinations: two Pure Maths papers (each carrying 100 marks) and one Statistics paper and one Mechanics paper (each carrying 50 marks).

Reading

Mathematics for A-Level The Textbook
Exam Board: Edexcel
 Published by CGP Books
 CGP Product Code: MHN72
 ISBN 9781782947233

Students will get both a physical textbook and an online version of the book. Note that MPW can provide this book at well below the cost listed on Amazon or on the CGP website



FURTHER MATHEMATICS

What is it about at sixth-form level?

Further Maths is another complete A level, above and beyond Maths A level. The combination of Maths and Further Maths is called “Double Maths”, and for many university courses Double Maths is either compulsory or strongly preferred. Further Maths at A level extends the Algebra and Calculus studied in Maths A level. In Algebra we study complex numbers (which involve i , the square root of -1), hyperbolic functions (which have many similarities to trigonometrical functions yet are fundamentally different) and matrices. In Calculus we greatly extend the range of functions we can integrate by using hyperbolic and trigonometrical and inverse hyperbolic and inverse trigonometrical substitutions. The level of abstraction here is indicative of the progression towards study at undergraduate level, whether as part of a Maths degree or as part of a degree in one of the many subjects that require the study of Maths as part of a university course.

Autumn, Spring and Summer terms

This course builds on the skills and knowledge developed in the Maths A level. Students take four modules: two compulsory units of Core Pure Mathematics and two optional units which this year are Further Pure Mathematics 1 and Further Mechanics 1. Further Pure Mathematics 1 includes further calculus, inequalities, vectors and numerical methods. Further Mechanics 1 extends the basic ideas met in the Mechanics part of Maths A level to include momentum and impulse, collisions and elastic potential energy stored in strings and springs.

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

Further Maths A level is a second A level in Maths and is a subject in its own right. The aim is to build upon the skills developed in Maths A level and to increase both the depth and the breadth of subject knowledge. Further Maths an academically rigorous and demanding subject suited to students who are considering university courses in Computer Science, Engineering, Maths, Physics and other highly numerate disciplines or simply for those who really enjoy Maths!

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

Students should have, or be on target for, at least a grade B in Maths A level before considering A level Further Maths.

How is the course assessed?

The course is assessed entirely by four written examinations: two Core Pure Maths papers and one paper on each of the two option optional units. All papers are equally weighted and are 1 hour 30 minutes long.

Reading

AS & A-Level Further Maths Complete Revision & Practice Exam Board: Edexcel

Published by CGP Books
CGP Product Code: MFER71
ISBN 9781782948698

Students will get both a physical textbook and an online version of the book. Note that MPW can provide this book at well below the cost listed on Amazon or on the CGP website



“Perfect numbers like perfect men are very rare.”

René Descartes, philosopher



“All of us who professionally use the mass media are the shapers of society. We can vulgarise that society. We can brutalise it. Or we can help lift it on to a higher level.”

William Bernbach,

American advertising executive

MEDIA STUDIES

What is it about at sixth-form level?

We are immersed in the products of the mass media on a daily basis. Figures vary wildly, but it is estimated that the average individual is exposed to at least a good few hundred advertisements a day. The best of them – or worst, depending on your point of view – can stay with us for years. Just as it is necessary today to have numeracy and literacy skills, it is increasingly important to have the critical abilities to engage with the media so that we are able to understand the designs it has on us and so that we are able to avoid being naively manipulated.

By studying Media Studies A level, you will develop the knowledge and skills needed to analyse the products of the media. You will look at all aspects of their design from their audio-visual presentation to the rhetorical devices and connotations of the language they use. You will examine a wide range of material and media forms, ranging from television and film to online media, music, print and advertising. Case studies on a selection of products will be used to support essay answers in the exams.

Autumn term

In the Autumn term, you will begin looking at media forms and media platforms, using case studies. You will develop your abilities to apply practical skills creatively and to analyse your own and published media products critically. The coursework also develops skills in research and evaluation, information management and project management. This year will introduce and develop knowledge and understanding relating to the key concepts of Language, Representation, Industry and Audience. This involves studying media texts and contexts and understanding technical elements, which are applied to case studies, coursework tasks and also an unseen audio-visual extract in the exam.

Spring and Summer terms

In the Spring and Summer terms, you deepen your study of Media Language, Representation, Audiences and Industries. There are further coursework tasks. The understanding of the media broadens and deepens to include at least two of the following topics: Media regulation, Postmodern media, and Power and the media. There is also a study of Media ecology.

“Television knows no night. It is perpetual day. TV embodies our fear of the dark, of night, of the other side of things.”

Jean Baudrillard, philosopher

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

An A level in Media Studies provides a good foundation for further study in the humanities. It will develop your analytical skills and develop your ability to express complex ideas in a clear written form. It combines well with other subjects requiring verbal and visual analysis, such as English Literature and History of Art, though the creative coursework element (although smaller than in the previous syllabus) means it makes a good partner for Art, Photography and Graphic Design too. The coursework will develop some photographic and video skills and the use of digital manipulation and editing software.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

You will need a good level of English, preferably including English Language GCSE, because of the comprehension demands and the written nature of the assessments.

How is the course assessed?

AS level

The AS part of the A level is half coursework and half exam. Component 1 is a Foundation Portfolio of coursework, worth 50 marks. Candidates produce a media product that includes digital evidence of the process of their work and a creative critical reflection. Internally assessed and externally moderated, this is worth 50% of the AS Level and 25% of the A Level. Component 2 is a 2-hour exam (Media texts and contexts), worth 50 marks. Candidates answer one question analysing an unseen moving-image extract and one essay question from a choice of two on Media contexts. Externally assessed, this is worth 50% of the AS Level and 25% of the A Level.

A Level

The A2 part of the A level is half coursework and half exam. Component 3 is an Advanced Portfolio of coursework, worth 50 marks. Candidates produce a campaign of media products that includes digital evidence of the process of their work. They also reflect upon their finished products, in the form of an evaluative essay of around 1000 words. Internally assessed and externally moderated, this is worth 25% of the A Level. Component 4 is a 2-hour exam (Media texts and contexts), worth 60 marks. Candidates answer two from a choice of three essay questions on Media debates and one essay on Media ecology. Externally assessed, this is worth 25% of the A Level.

Suggested Reading

Mythologies (Vintage Classics)

By Roland Barthes (2009)
Published by Vintage Classics
ISBN-13: 978-0099529750

Media, Gender and Identity: An Introduction

By David Gauntlett (2008)
Published by Routledge
ISBN-13: 978-0415396615

Introduction to Media Ecology:

Thinkers, schools of thought, key concepts
By Paolo Granata
ISBN-13: 979-8766469889



“Without music, life would be a serious mistake.”

Friedrich Nietzsche, philosopher

MUSIC

What is it about at sixth-form level?

The importance of music has been long recognised by great minds. It is said that Pythagoras discovered the relationship between music and mathematics by investigating why, when hammers of different weights were struck, the combinations of notes produced were consonant or dissonant. Music is also considered to be a language that expresses the soul as much as the mind, and an art form that can create sonic architecture paralleling the most spectacular cathedrals.

By studying the Music A level course, you will develop a greater understanding of how music works. You will study its creation (composing), animation (performing), perception (listening skills) and appreciation (knowledge and understanding). You will learn to analyse it, to understand how notes are structured into chords and into melodies, and chords and melodies into structures spanning minutes and even hours. In so doing, you will also discover how music intersects with other subjects, such as physics, geography, history and art.

Autumn term

You will develop your current skills in performance, composition and musical appreciation. You will study set works, encountering music ranging from the classical to the popular and from around the world. You will create compositions in response to briefs set by the exam board, including practical work within traditional harmonic practices. You will demonstrate progress in performing skills, developing a coherent plan for a solo recital towards the end of the year.

Spring and Summer terms

All three components of the course continue to be extended and developed. Your composing will extend into work either on a new brief from the exam board or into an area of your own choice. Performance will develop a coherent plan for a solo recital towards the end of the course. New set works are studied.

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

Music provides an ideal counterpart to either an arts- or science-based sixth form curriculum, developing skills of analytical thinking and close textual study as well as in the creation and performance of music. It offers a sound intellectual training that will be useful in itself, as well as providing a firm foundation for music courses in Further Education.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

You should ideally have a good GCSE in Music, and a music theory qualification (eg Grade 5) is highly desirable. You need to have an active and wide-ranging interest in listening to and studying music of all kinds, as well as the self-motivation to carry out independent study. It is important to note that MPW is not able to offer instrumental tuition; you should arrange your own tuition as a vital part of your preparation for the performance exams, and it is helpful if you are also regularly involved in some form of group music-making, eg at a Saturday music school or in a band.

How is the course assessed?

The course comprises the same three components: performing, composing and appreciation/understanding. For Component 1, you must perform a prepared programme of music as a soloist to a small audience. The programme must last a minimum of 8 minutes and will be recorded for submission to an external examiner. For Component 2, you must have composed two pieces lasting a total of at least 6 minutes. At least one of the pieces must be in response to a brief set by the exam board and both will be assessed by an external examiner. For Component 3 you will take a written exam in which you will be required to convey your knowledge and understanding of the set works, placing them in context and identifying their musical features. The exam lasts 2 hours. Components 1 and 2 are each worth 30% of the A level and Component 3 is worth 40% of the A level.

Reading

Scores and CDs, as required by the specification (see <https://qualifications.pearson.com>).



“Music expresses that which cannot be put into words and that which cannot remain silent.”

Victor Hugo, poet, novelist, and dramatist

“Philosophy is like trying to open a safe with a combination lock: each little adjustment of the dials seems to achieve nothing, only when everything is in place does the door open.”

Ludwig Wittgenstein, philosopher



PHILOSOPHY

What is it about at sixth-form level?

What is real? How should we live? What can we really know? Questions as broad and deep as these have fascinated people for centuries. As a philosophy student, you will start thinking about them and explore ideas and thinkers from across the ages. In one lesson, you might be walking with Socrates in ancient Athens as he argues that we are born with knowledge; in another, you might be back in the modern day wondering whether computers could ever experience love or sadness. You will meditate with Descartes on what sort of thing you are and you will address in detail what philosophers have said about the perennial puzzle of whether God exists.

Philosophy attracts those who like journeys, not destinations. This does not mean that philosophical questions have no answers. For whether they do or do not is itself a philosophical question! The questions are fascinatingly simple yet profound and they invite us to explore what they mean and what the 'philosophical landscape' looks like in which we would hope to find the right path.

Autumn term

You will study two units. In Unit 1 (Epistemology) you will look whether, when we perceive the world, we see it as it is or just how our mind makes it appear. You will consider a question first raised by Plato about how knowledge differs from belief. You will then consider where our ideas and knowledge come from: are they gained from experience or are we born with them? In Unit 2 (Moral Philosophy), the central issue is how to decide what the right thing to do is. Three theories will be considered and how they relate to some interesting real-life issues, such as telling lies, crime and punishment and violence in computer games. We will then ask what it means to say that something is wrong or right.

Spring and Summer terms

You will study topics in two other areas of philosophy. In Unit 3 (Metaphysics of God), you will start by examining the concept of God. You will then consider famous arguments for God. You will finish by considering whether it is even possible to talk meaningfully about God. In Unit 4 (Metaphysics of Mind) we will try to explain how the subjective conscious mind fits into the objective physical world. Is the mind nothing more than the brain? Could there be 'zombies' who are physically identical to us but lack consciousness?

“The point of philosophy is to start with something so simple as not to seem worth stating, and to end with something so paradoxical that no one will believe it.”

Bertrand Russell, philosopher, mathematician

and political activist

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

Philosophy is an old and much-respected discipline. It will introduce you to new ideas and new ways of thinking. You will quickly discover how it makes connections with almost every other subject you will be studying. For example, mathematicians assume we know mathematical truths but the philosopher will ask how, if numbers are not sensible things. Historians will look at the causes of past events and the philosopher will ask what it is for one thing to cause another. A physicist will talk of particles that cannot be seen with the naked eye. The philosopher will ask whether we are entitled to believe in such 'non-observables'.

As you pursue the course, you will learn the important art of how to construct and analyse arguments. You will learn how to make your way through challenging texts. You will learn how to express difficult ideas clearly in both speech and writing. These are all invaluable skills for the study of any subject at university and beyond.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

No particular qualifications are required. You should be aware that the course requires a lot of reading, a lot of writing and a capacity for logical thought.

How is the course assessed?

The A level is assessed by two three-hour examinations. The first is on the Epistemology unit and the Moral Philosophy unit. The second is on the Metaphysics of God unit and the Metaphysics of Mind unit. For each unit, there will be a set of compulsory questions requiring answers of different length: three short-answer questions, one medium-answer question and one long-answer question. Each paper is worth 50% of the A level.

Reading

Philosophy for AS and A Level: Epistemology and Moral Philosophy

By M. Lacewing
Published by Routledge,
ISBN 978-1138690394

Philosophy for A Level: Metaphysics of God and Metaphysics of Mind

By M. Lacewing
Published by Routledge,
ISBN 978-1138690400

AQA A-level Philosophy Year 1 and AS: Epistemology and Moral Philosophy

By J. Hayward, G. Jones, D. Cardinal
Published by Hodder Education,
ISBN 978-1510400252

AQA A-level Philosophy Year 2: Metaphysics of God and Metaphysics of Mind

By J. Hayward, G. Jones, D. Cardinal
Published by Hodder Education,
ISBN 978-1510400269



PHOTOGRAPHY

“To me, photography is an art of observation. It's about finding something interesting in an ordinary place... I've found it has little to do with the things you see and everything to do with the way you see them.”

Elliott Erwitt, photographer



PHOTOGRAPHY

What is it about at sixth-form level?

The course covers a broad and changing area of study with light-based imagery spanning almost two centuries. You will engage with early light-based images and rudimentary technology, such as a pinhole camera, as well as the most contemporary, which may include the use of digital cameras, photocopiers, scanners and mobile phones. You may also work with film based or digital technology or with both. Outcomes can be screen or print based, comprise still or moving images and might be particular to the subject area or combined with other art forms. Possible areas of study include: photographing people, photographing places, still-life photography, documentary photography, photojournalism, experimental imagery, photographic installation, fashion photography and digital imaging.

Autumn term

You will begin with instruction in the various techniques of camera use, printing and Adobe Photoshop. You will learn about the language of photography and how to ‘read’ and to analyse photographs. You will begin to photograph a variety of themes including landscape, portrait, architecture, photojournalism and abstract. You will learn how to develop your ideas through sustained and focused investigations informed by contextual and other sources, demonstrating analytical and critical understanding. You will explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes, and review and refine your ideas as your work develops. You will record your ideas, observations and insights relevant to your intentions, reflecting critically on your work and progress. As a student in the heart of London, you will have access to some of the world’s best museums, galleries and exhibitions. This will result in a personal and meaningful response which, where appropriate, makes connections between visual and other elements.

Spring and Summer terms

You will develop your skills and understanding to a higher standard. You will continue to be given close technical instruction and supervision, but you will be required to adopt a much more independent and student-led approach. You will be working on your personal investigation, which is the first of the two components of your final assessment. This component consists firstly of a major, in-depth, practical, critical and theoretical investigative project or theme-based portfolio and outcomes. It is accompanied by an integrated and extended written piece of critical and contextual analysis (1000 words minimum).

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

An A level in Photography is an excellent basis on which to apply to study the subject further at art college or university as, along with the skills, it will provide you with the portfolio you will need for your application. It is also very useful if you wish to work or study in areas relating to design, fashion and architecture. More generally, it will teach you the skill of ‘reading images’. You will also become adept in the use of Adobe Photoshop.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

You will need some experience in art that has been formally assessed, such as an (I)GCSE in Art. Although not essential, it is beneficial to have some experience in photo-editing software such as Adobe Photoshop.

How is the course assessed?

There are two components. Component 1 is your personal investigation, which is the coursework component. Component 2 is the externally set assignment. You will be required to develop independently a personal response to one of a varied range of stimuli within specified time constraints. The assignment consists of a series of visual (including moving image) and written stimuli set by the exam board. You will develop your response over a preparatory study period. Following the preparatory study period, learners will be allocated a period of 15 hours sustained focus study to realise their response unaided and under supervised conditions. Component 1 is worth 60% of the A level and Component 2 is worth 40% of the A level.

Reading

The Photograph

By G. Clarke

Published by OUP, ISBN 978-0192842008

Art and Photography

By A. Scharf

Published by Penguin, ISBN 978-0140131321

Photography: A Critical Introduction

By L. Wells

Published by Routledge, ISBN 978-0415460873

20th Century Photography

By S. Klotz

Published by Tashen, ISBN 978-3822886489

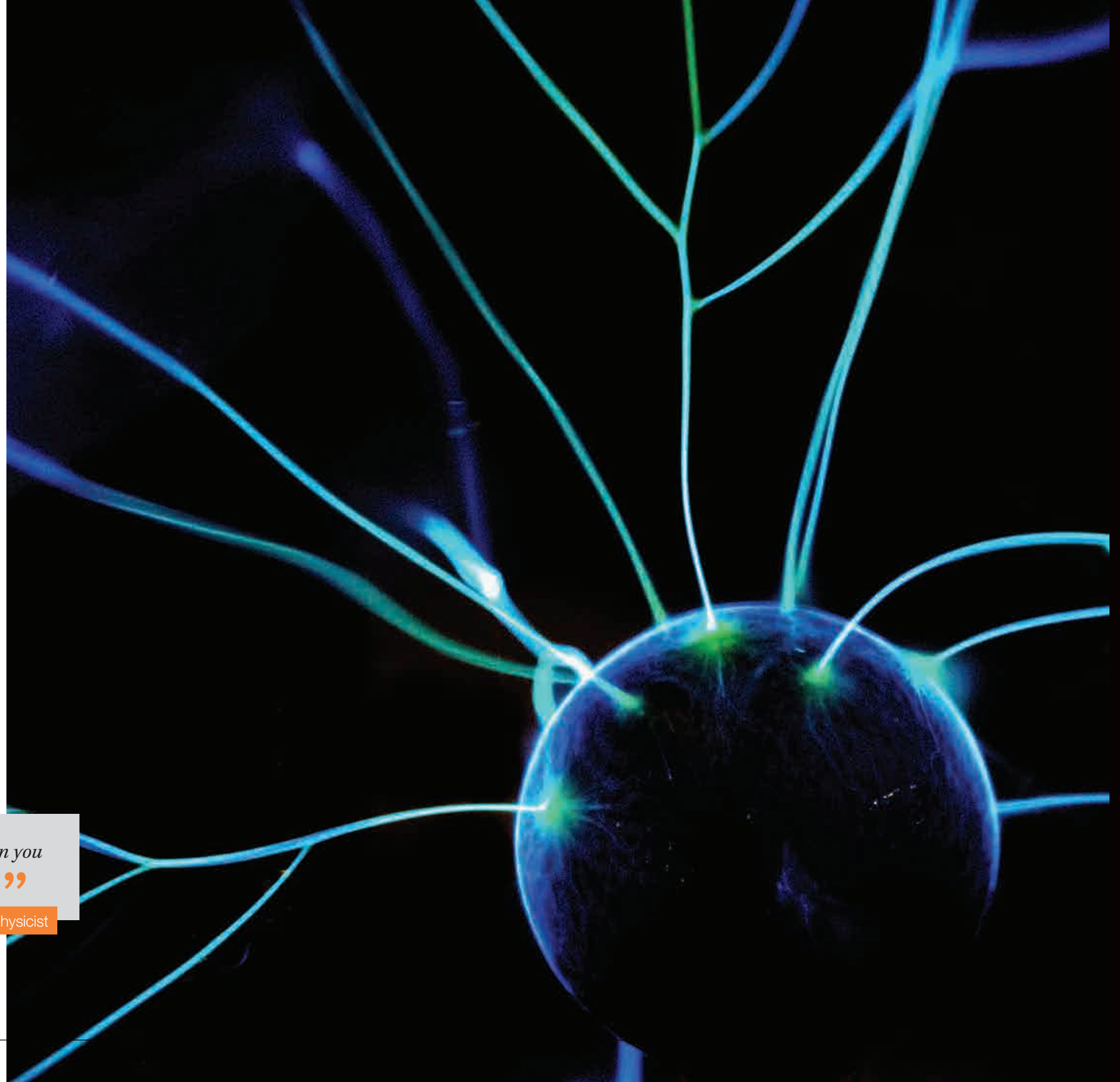


“If a photographer cares about the people before the lens and is compassionate, much is given. It is the photographer, not the camera, that is the instrument.”

Eve Arnold, photojournalist

“Look deep into nature and then you will understand everything better.”

Albert Einstein, theoretical physicist



PHYSICS

What is it about at sixth-form level?

According to Rutherford, discoverer of the proton, physics is the only real science and the rest are just stamp-collecting. Whilst a good many would balk at so blunt a statement, it is easy to understand his thinking. It is the physicist who examines reality at its most fundamental level and with the greatest breadth: from sub-atomic particles to the galaxies and ultimately the universe itself. In the 20th century, these two extremes have led to quantum physics and general relativity and today the search continues for a grand theory of everything to unite them in a single theoretical framework.

An A level in Physics will introduce you to key areas of the subject that reflect its depth and range. You will consider Newtonian classical mechanics and modern cosmological phenomena, such as star formation, Hubble's law and the Big Bang theory. You will look at fields, waves and particles and the puzzling behaviour of the world of the very small. We also study some practical applications of physics, such as electric circuits and medical physics. Physics presents challenges to fascinate the inquiring mind and it is an extremely rewarding subject to study. You should be aware that it is a highly conceptual subject and not one to be taken lightly.

Autumn term

You will cover four modules. In Module 1 (Development of Practical Skills in Physics) you will learn how to plan and implement experiments and how to analyse and evaluate the results. Module 2 (Foundations of Physics) covers physical quantities and units, how to make measurements and analyse data and the nature of quantities. Module 3 (Forces and Motion) looks at motion, forces in action, work, energy and power, materials and Newton's laws of motion and momentum. Finally, Module 4 (Electrons, Waves and Photons) covers charge and current, energy, power and resistance, electrical circuits, waves and quantum physics.

Spring and Summer terms

You will study Module 5 (Newtonian World and Astrophysics) where you will look at thermal physics, circular motion, oscillations, gravitational fields and astrophysics. Module 6 (Particles and Medical Physics) covers capacitors, electric fields, electromagnetism, medical imaging, and nuclear and particle physics. You will also continue to develop your knowledge and practical skills from Modules 1 and 2.

If you are transferring having completed Modules 1 to 4 elsewhere, you will join a class covering Modules 5 and 6, as well as consolidating your practical skills and knowledge.

“If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.”

Isaac Newton, physicist and mathematician

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

An A level in Physics is a prerequisite for studying the subject at university level and for studying related subjects such as Engineering. It also prepares you for broader natural science courses. However, A level Physics is often chosen by many students who go on to study seemingly unrelated degrees, such as Finance or Economics. By studying it, you will develop the ability to understand abstract models and use them to solve problems in real life, skills that are highly regarded by many kinds of employers. You will develop the practical skills necessary to carry out experiments and how to analyse and evaluate the results. You will become able to write clearly and precisely using appropriate technical vocabulary.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

You should have at least a B grade in both GCSE Physics and Mathematics. In addition to strong algebraic skills, you will also need good writing skills as you will have to explain and describe complex situations.

How is the course assessed?

Students studying for the A level will sit three papers on Modules 1-6. Paper 1 (Modelling Physics) covers Modules 1, 2, 3 and 5. Paper 2 (Exploring Physics) covers Modules 1, 2, 4 and 6. In both papers, at least 15% of the question paper assessment covers knowledge and understanding of practical skills. 40% of the question paper assessment covers mathematical skills. Paper 3 (Unified Physics) covers Modules 1-6 and contains short answer questions and extended response questions. Papers 1 and 2 are worth 37% of the A level and last 2 hours 15 minutes each. Paper 3 is worth 26% and lasts 1 hour 30 minutes.

Practical assessments no longer contribute to the final grade at A level. However, students must complete a minimum of 12 practical activities to demonstrate practical competence. Performance is reported separately to the A level grade and will be marked as either pass or fail. If you are resitting the A level, do note that A pass of the practical endorsement (PAG or CPAC) can be carried over from a previous result, even on a different board.

Reading

A Level Physics A for OCR Year 1

By G. Bone et al
Published by OUP,
ISBN 978-0198352174

A Level Physics A for OCR Year 2

By G. Bone et al
Published by OUP,
ISBN 978-0198357667

Six Easy Pieces

By R. Feynman
Published by Basic Books,
ISBN 978-0465025275

The Most Important Scientific Discovery of All Time and Why You Need to Know About It

By S. Singh
Published by Harper Perennial,
ISBN 978-0007152520





“One of the penalties for refusing to participate in politics is that you end up being governed by your inferiors.”

Plato, philosopher

POLITICS

What is it about at sixth-form level?

In the General Election of 2015, the SNP won just under 1.5 million votes and won 56 seats. The Liberal Democrats obtained nearly 2.5 million seats and won eight seats. UKIP won close to 4 million votes and a single seat. Many hold this result up as a sign of the bankruptcy of the 'old system', one in which power would swing between two parties. Issue-based politics and the rise of nationalism mean that people are identifying with newer parties or not with any one party at all. At the same time, one in three eligible voters didn't vote. What does this say about politics and the health of our democracy in Britain in the 21st century?

By studying Politics at A level, you will become equipped to address questions like these with the care that they deserve. Politics is an academically rigorous subject in which you will learn both political concepts and the structure of the British political system. You will look at a range of political ideologies and political issues that are of global concern. The course will leave you with a clear understanding of the importance of politics in a time when political apathy is on the rise.

Autumn term

You will be studying the first two units. In Component 1 (UK Politics and Core Political Ideas), you will start by looking at democracy and participation. Can we enhance participation, perhaps by lowering the voting age? You will then look at political parties: their changing identities and role in our political system. The role of pressure groups will be discussed and, finally, you will also look at the electoral systems used in the UK and how they work. The core political Ideas of socialism, Liberalism and Conservatism will also be studied. In Component 2 (UK Government & Optional Political Idea) students will be introduced to the major governmental processes in the UK. You will be encouraged to develop a critical understanding of the role and effectiveness of key institutions and the relationship between them. Key topics are: The Constitution, Parliament, Prime Minister and the Executive and the relationship between the branches.

Spring and Summer terms

In the second term you will study your non-core ideology of Nationalism before studying Component 3: Comparative Global Politics. In this topic you will be studying key issues in recent global politics and how these issues are dealt with at a global level. This will include: Theories of Global Politics, sovereignty and globalization, global governance: political and economic, global governance: human rights and the environment, power and developments, regionalism and the European Union.

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

Whilst not a prerequisite, an A level in Politics is excellent preparation for pursuing the subject at degree level. It fits well with other humanities subjects, especially PPE, English, and Politics and International Relations. It develops your analytical and critical skills and will teach you how to write essays in which you explain and assess complex ideas through constructing clear and precise arguments. It will enhance your knowledge of the world around you and give you a deeper understanding of what it is to be a citizen.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

You should have a strong interest in current affairs. The course involves a lot of reading and writing, so you should have good communication skills. All students are expected to read widely, including a daily newspaper as well as periodicals such as The Politics Review and the New Statesman.

How is the course assessed?

The A level is assessed by three examinations on the three units. Each paper is lasts 2 hours and is worth 33% of the A level.

Reading

Essentials of UK Politics and Government

By A. Heywood et al.

Published by Red Globe Press, 2021,
ISBN: 978-1352012309

Global Politics for A level

By Robert Murphy and John Jefferies

Published by Hodder Education, 2022,
ISBN-13: 978-1398345065

Political Ideologies

By A. Heywood

Published by Palgrave Macmillan,
ISBN: 978-0230367258



“Democracy is the government of the people, by the people, for the people.”

Abraham Lincoln, American president

“A human being is a being who is constantly ‘under construction,’ but also, in a parallel fashion, always in a state of constant destruction.”

José Saramago

PORTUGUESE

What is it about at sixth-form level?

Learning a modern language for GCSE is a matter of taking your first steps. You learn rudimentary grammar and vocabulary that enable you to get by, but real conversations are still beyond your reach. It is at the sixth form level that you will deepen your grammatical competence and broaden your vocabulary so that you can converse about and debate real-world issues, and immerse yourself into the culture, literature and arts of the country. Even though we live in an age where it seems English is spoken everywhere and where Google Translate will help you where it is not, there is nothing like the experience and satisfaction of being able to step inside a different way of speaking and seeing the world.

The Portuguese A level will introduce you to Portuguese society, history and culture. You will read the Italian press, listen to the Portuguese and Brazilian news and watch Portuguese films so as to develop your knowledge not just of the language, but of the country where it is spoken.

Autumn term

You will focus on two major topic areas. The first is Changes in Portuguese Society, which will cover family and family issues. You will cover the changes affecting family, study the Italian education system and the world of work. The second is Media and the Arts, where you will look at the media, society and politics, music and its impact in Portugal or Brazil. You will also cover a detailed analysis of the awarded film by Anna Muilaert "Que horas ela volta?". This comedy is admired for its beauty and cinematographic techniques.

Spring and summer terms

You will revise your knowledge of last term's topics and cover two more, as well as undertaking a detailed study of book, "Capitães da Areia". The first of the new topics is Portugal: Society: past and present in which you will look at immigration and the multicultural society in the 21st century. The second topic is Politics and dictatorship of Salazar. This will give you an insight into Portugal's recent past from Salazar's regime to the 70s and the transition to democracy. This will lead to a focused piece of research entailing the reading of the life of Vasco da Gama and his discoveries.

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

Knowledge of a foreign language is ever more valuable in an increasingly connected world. Many employers look for knowledge of at least one other language across a wide range of jobs. Understanding a language is a first step to understanding a people and a culture. Another language enables you to enjoy everything from a casual conversation to a classic novel as it was meant to be read. It also provides a means by which to reflect upon your own culture and gain a deeper understanding of your mother tongue. An A level is typically a prerequisite for studying the language at university.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

You should ideally have an A or A* at GCSE. If it is your mother tongue or a second language, you will need to be able to speak and write it proficiently. You will also need an interest in other cultures and a logical mind to cope with the grammar.

How is the course assessed?

A level

For the A level, there are three exams. All exams test your competency with respect to the topics you have learned. The Paper 1 exam (Writing, Reading and translation into English) will test your reading comprehension skills, your ability to read and respond to a variety of texts. It lasts 2 hours 30 minutes and is worth 40% of the A level. The Paper 2 exam (Written response to works and translation into target language) examines you, in Portuguese, on the film and book. It lasts 2 hours 40 minutes and is worth 30% of the A level. The Paper 3 exam (Listening, Reading and Writing) is a written exam that lasts about 2 hours and 15 minutes and is worth 30% of the A level.

Reading

Details of the textbooks to be purchased will be specified at the beginning of the lower sixth.

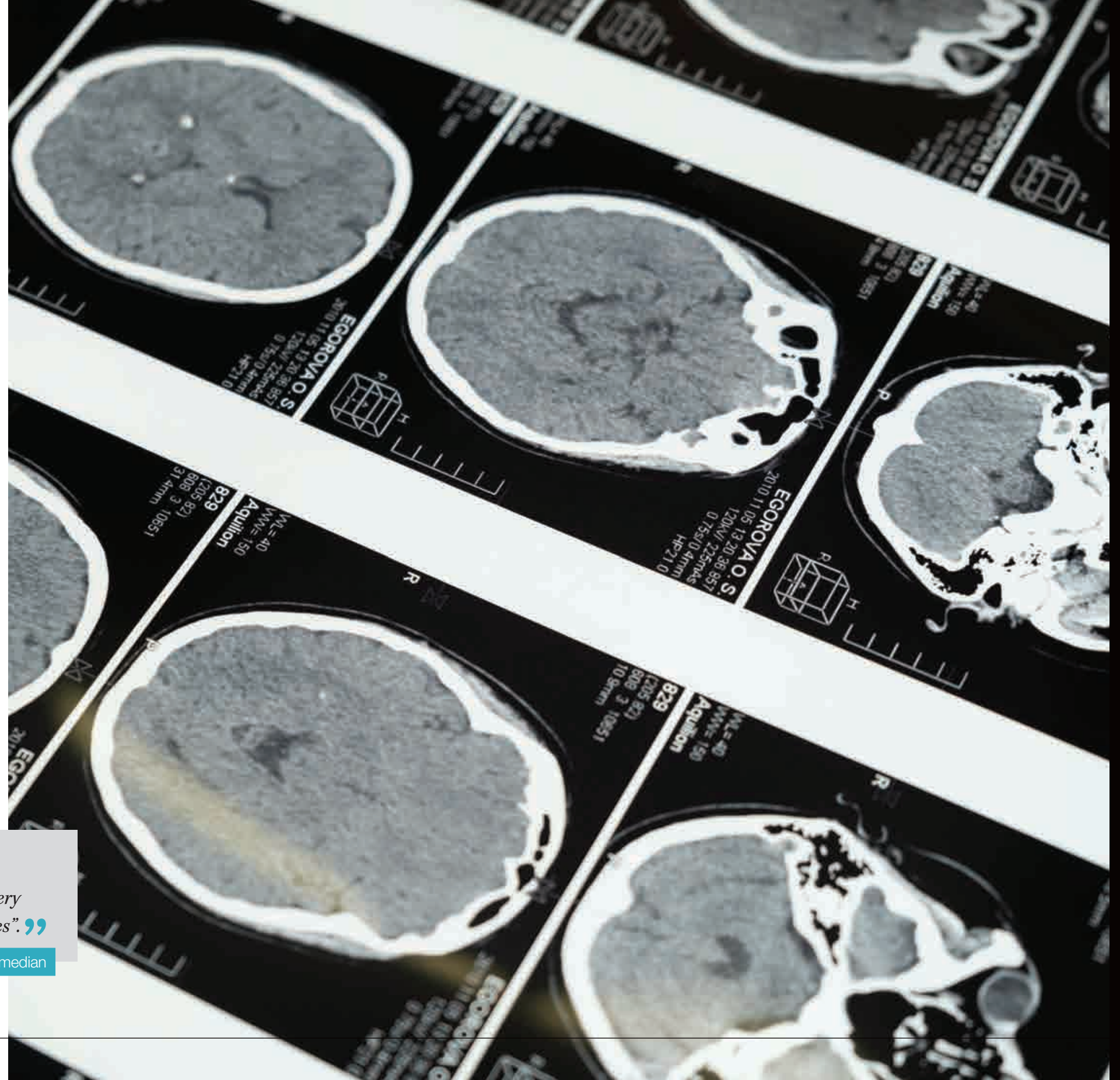


“Waiting is painful. Forgetting is painful. But not knowing which to do is the worse kind of suffering.”

Paulo Coelho

“After ten years in therapy, my psychologist told me something very touching. He said, “No hablo ingles”. ”

Dennis Wolfberg, comedian



PSYCHOLOGY

What is it about at sixth-form level?

The mind is the most sophisticated thing we know of in the universe. For many centuries the province of philosophers, the scientific study of mind and behaviour that we call psychology emerged relatively recently and remains one of the most exciting areas of human inquiry as there is still so much to learn. People talk of our minds being shaped by our genes, our upbringing and our social groups but how accurate is this? You will not only learn in depth about what has been found but also learn about how to conduct the research itself: how to design an experiment and how to analyse results. You will consider how memory works and how it is far from the simple recording device we take it to be. You will be surprised how easily eyewitness 'memory' can be corrupted by seemingly irrelevant factors! You will also look at explanations of criminal behaviour, how we form relationships and attachments, explanations of schizophrenia as well as a range of abnormalities from compulsive behaviours to phobias.

It is important to remember that psychology is a science. You will be involved in studying the biology of the brain in detail. You will also need to develop the complex mathematical skills needed to interpret experimental data. Psychology is not about the interpretation of dreams or learning how to develop a healthier mind. This said, by learning more about how the mind works, you may well find it gives you a healthier conception of how humans work.

Autumn term

You will study two papers. In Paper 2 (Psychology in Context), you will begin by studying research methods. You will then study the origins of psychology and all six major approaches: the biological, the behaviourist, social learning theory, the cognitive, the psychodynamic and the humanistic approach. You will also look at biopsychology, which examines the structure and functioning of the nervous system, ways of investigating the brain and its functions and how biological rhythms affect human behaviour. In Paper 3 (Issues and Options in Psychology), first you will explore the different explanations for how human beings develop their gender. You will then look at schizophrenia: how to define it, explain it and treat it.

Spring and Summer terms

You will study additional topics under Paper 3 and a third paper, Paper 1 (Introductory Topics in Psychology). In Paper 3, you will continue with the different issues and debates in psychology and psychological research. Then you will look at different explanations of human and animal aggression, why aggression occurs in prisons and how media can influence human aggression. Lastly, in Paper 1, you will begin with social influence. You will then consider different kinds of and theories of memory and its fallibility. You will also look at theories of attachment. Finally, you will look at topics in psychopathology, such as obsessive compulsive disorders depression and phobias.

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

Psychology is a challenging and rigorous subject which is well respected by universities. It will prepare you well to pursue the subject undergraduate study but also provide you with skills that will be invaluable in across both sciences and humanities courses. It will teach you about scientific methodology and you will put this into practice when designing your own experiments. This aspect of the course will also help you develop the ability to work independently and in groups. You will develop the valuable and difficult skill of interpreting statistics. The focus on essays will mean that you will learn how to write clearly and concisely.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

You should have at least a B (or GCSE 6) in Maths (Higher Tier) and a B (or GCSE 6) in English because of the importance of understanding how to analyse scientific data and of writing essays. On top of that, you should be curious to find out more about how why humans and animals behave as they do.

How is the course assessed?

The A level is examined by three examinations on Papers 1, 2 and 3 respectively. In each paper, there is a mixture of multiple choice, short answer and extended writing questions. The questions require students to demonstrate their ability to draw together their skills, knowledge and understanding from across the full course of study. 'Extended response' questions allow students to demonstrate their ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured. Each exam lasts 2 hours and is worth 33% of the A level.

Reading

Psychology A Level Year 1 and AS: The Complete Companion Student Book for AQA (Complete Companions Fifth Edition for AQA)

By Mike Cardwell and Cara Flanagan
Published by OUP Oxford; 5th edition;
ISBN-13: 978-0198436324

Psychology A Level Year 1 and AS: Revision Guide for AQA (Complete Companions Fifth Edition for AQA)

By Mike Cardwell, Rachel Moody
Published by OUP Oxford;
ISBN-13: 978-0198444893

Psychology A Level Year 2: The Complete Companion Student Book for AQA (Complete Companions Fifth Edition for AQA)

By Mike Cardwell and Cara Flanagan
Published by OUP Oxford; 5th edition
ISBN-13: 978-0198436331

Psychology A Level Year 2: Revision Guide for AQA (Complete Companions Fifth Edition for AQA)

By Mike Cardwell, Rachel Moody
Published by OUP Oxford;
ISBN-13: 978-0198444886



“The good life is a process, not a state of being. It is a direction, not a destination.”

Carl Rogers

“Theological religion is the source of all imaginable follies and disturbances; it is the parent of fanaticism and civil discord; it is the enemy of mankind.”

Voltaire, philosopher



RELIGIOUS STUDIES

What is it about at sixth-form level?

Is there a God? How should we live? These two fundamental questions underlie everything you will be looking at in the Religious Studies A level. You will be approaching them in a distinctively philosophical way. You will be exploring many arguments for God's existence and problems that argue for atheism. You will be comparing different theories of ethics from across the ages and looking at what they have to say about some very modern ethical problems. The importance of religious belief is being questioned today like never before and you will develop the skills to look at the issues in a sophisticated and critical way.

Many of the arguments and views have emerged within the Judaeo-Christian tradition, and studying the New Testament will enrich and give context to these debates. However, the fundamental questions we started with transcend any one faith and this is not a course that tries to get you to make up your mind. Wherever you stand, there is much to be learned and admired from the complexity and subtlety with which theists, agnostics and atheists have addressed the sorts of questions that fascinate everyone.

Autumn term

In Paper 1 (Philosophy of Religion) you will begin by looking at the philosophical concept of God, tracing its roots back to the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, and famous arguments for the existence of God: the design, cosmological and ontological arguments. You will also consider religious experiences and the problem of evil. In Paper 2 (Religion and Ethics) you will study four ethical theories: utilitarianism, situation ethics, natural moral law and Kantian deontology. You will then consider how they inform thinking about euthanasia and ethics in business. In Paper 3 (Developments in Religious Thought: Christianity) you will study Augustine's teachings on human nature, the afterlife, and faith and grace. You will also look at the person and moral teachings of Christ.

Spring and Summer terms

You will continue with all three papers. In Paper 1 (Philosophy of Religion), you will look at God's attributes and whether they are coherent along with the questions of whether and how religious language is meaningful. In Paper 2 (Religion and Ethics), you will look at meta-ethics and the objectivity of moral discourse. You will also examine religious and non-religious views on the concept of conscience and apply the ethical theories you have studied to topics in sexual ethics. In Paper 3 (Developments in Religious Thought: Christianity) you will look at religious pluralism, gender and theology, the challenge of secularism and liberation theology.

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

Religious Studies is a much-respected subject. It introduces perennially fascinating theological and philosophical problems that will engage you and develop your critical and analytical skills. You will learn to think in abstract ways and to challenge your own beliefs. You will develop the ability to read and understand complex ideas and the ability to articulate them clearly in essays. All of these are valuable skills across a wide range of disciplines, making it a subject universities look favourably on.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

You do not need Religious Studies GCSE or indeed any other particular qualifications to study the subject at A level. You should be aware that the course requires a good deal of reading and writing and a capacity for logical thought.

How is the course assessed?

All three A level papers are written exams. Each exam lasts 2 hours and is worth 33% of the A level. In each paper, you answer three questions from a choice of four.

Reading

OCR Religious Studies A Level Year 1 and AS

By Hugh Campbell, Michael Wilkinson, Michael Wilcockson

Published by Hodder Education,
ISBN 978-1471866692

An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion

By B. Davies

Published by OUP, ISBN 978-0199263479

OCR Religious Studies A Level Year 2

By Michael Wilkinson, Michael Wilcockson

Published by Hodder Education,
ISBN 978-1471866746

Christianity:

An Introduction 3rd Revised Edition

By A. McGrath

Published by Wiley-Blackwell,
ISBN 978-1118465653



“I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us with sense, reason, and intellect has intended us to forgo their use.”

**Galileo Galilei, philosopher, astronomer,
and mathematician**

“ You will not grasp her with your mind
Or cover with a common label,
For Russia is one of a kind –
Believe in her, if you are able... ”

Fyodor Tyutchev, poet



RUSSIAN

What is it about at sixth-form level?

Learning a modern language for GCSE is a matter of taking your first steps. You learn rudimentary grammar and vocabulary that enable you to get by but real conversations are still beyond your reach. It is at the sixth form level that you will deepen your grammatical competence and broaden your vocabulary so that you can converse about and debate real-world issues, and immerse yourself into the culture, literature and arts of the country. Even though we live in an age where it seems English is spoken everywhere and where Google Translate will help you where it is not, there is nothing like the experience and satisfaction of being able to step inside a different way of speaking and seeing the world.

The Russian A level will introduce you to real Russian in real situations. You will look at the media, literature and film to acquaint you with and develop your knowledge of Russia, her language and culture from past to present.

Autumn term

You will focus on two major topic areas. The first is *Developing Russian Society* which will focus society in post-Soviet Russia. The second is *Political and Artistic Culture in Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan* where you will learn about media, festivals and traditions. As part of the course you will study Pushkin's novel "The Queen of Spades" in Russian.

Spring and Summer term

You will cover two more topic areas as well as undertaking a detailed study of another short novella, "A Week Like Any Other", by Natalia Baranskaya. The first of the new topics is "Moscow and St. Petersburg: Changes in the Life of the Big Russian City" in which you will look at population changes, life in the city and problems such as homelessness and crime. The second new topic is "The Last Years of the USSR: Gorbachev (1985-1991)" in which you will study the causes and consequences of perestroika and glasnost along with the events of 1991. Finally, you will have to work through improving your translation skills in a range of texts covering the four main themes.

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

Knowledge of a foreign language is ever more valuable in an increasingly connected world. Many employers look for knowledge of at least one other language across a wide range of jobs. Understanding a language is a first step to understanding a people and a culture. Another language enables you to enjoy everything from a casual conversation to a classic novel as it was meant to be read. It also provides a means by which to reflect upon your own culture and gain a deeper understanding of your mother tongue. An A level is typically a prerequisite for studying the language at university.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

You should ideally have an A or A* at GCSE. If it is your mother tongue or a second language, you will need to be able to speak and write it proficiently. You will also need an interest in other cultures and a logical mind to cope with the grammar.

How is the course assessed?

For the A level, there are three exams. All exams test your competency with respect to the topics you have learned. The Paper 1 exam (Listening, Reading and translation into English) will test your listening comprehension skills, your ability to read and respond to a variety of texts. It lasts 2 hours and is worth 40% of the A level. The Paper 2 exam (Written response to works and translation into target language) examines you, in Russian, on "The Queen of Spades" and "A Week Like Any Other". It lasts 2 hours 40 minutes and is worth 30% of the A level. The Paper 3 exam (Speaking) is an oral exam that lasts about 20 minutes and is worth 30% of the A level.

Reading

A Comprehensive Russian Grammar

By T. L. B. Wade

Published by Blackwell, ISBN 978-1405136396

Ruslan Russian 3

By J. Langran

Published by Ruslan Ltd, ISBN 978-1899785407

Compact Oxford Russian Dictionary

Published by OUP, ISBN 978-0199576173

Details of the text(s) to be purchased will be specified at the beginning of the lower sixth.



“The Iron Curtain may be a thing of the past, but Mother Russia is as mysterious as ever.”

Robert Gottlieb, writer

“Our whole social environment seems to us to be filled with forces which really exist only in our own minds.”

Emile Durkheim, sociologist



What is it about at sixth-form level?

Why does the average man living in Blackpool live 12 years less than a man living in the City of London? Why are there more young black men in prison in the USA than in college? Why do the richest 80 people in the world have the same amount of wealth as the poorest half of the world's population? These are the kinds of questions that a sociologist seeks to answer.

Sociology is extremely diverse in its content and at A level students will get a real taste of the range of different topic areas. You will study topics as varied as educational inequality, mental illness and crimes committed by the state. The key to success at A level, however lies in developing a 'sociological imagination'; that is, to develop an appreciation of the unique perspective sociologists adopt when attempting to explain human behaviour and human societies. This will involve delving beyond common sense and through adopting a rigorous methodological and theoretical analysis of social issues. As a sociologist you need to be able to appreciate the limits of your own experiences and to construct explanations which are appreciative of the strengths and weaknesses of different viewpoints.

Autumn term

You will study two units. Unit 1 (Education with Theory and Methods) involves studying issues such as the structure and functions of education, the relationship between social class, gender and educational achievement as well as the impact of educational reform on educational inequality. In addition, you will study the process of designing and implementing sociological research, the strengths and weaknesses of different methods of data collection and their relationship to sociological theory. In Unit 2 (Topics in Sociology: Health or Families and Households), you will examine issues such as sociological explanations of systematic variations in patterns of health by social class, gender, ethnicity and age. You will also study the structure of these institutions, variations in health care and family life as the social construction of health and relationships.

Spring and Summer term

You will study the second half of Unit 2 and Unit 3. Unit 2 (Topics in Sociology: Global Development, Beliefs in Society or the Media) examines issues such as sociological explanations of global inequalities, variations in global patterns of wealth, New Religious Movements and purpose of religion for society, as well as the media representations of age, social class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and disability in their presentations and in different audiences. In Unit 3 (Crime and Deviance with Theory and Methods), you will look at issues such as different sociological explanations of the causes of crime, the social distribution of criminality by social class, sex, ethnicity and age and associated sociological explanations. In addition, you will examine methods of data collection when studying crime and will develop a more in depth understanding of the major sociological theories.

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

Sociology is a rigorous academic subject with a broad range of content. It will involve you thinking about the political and historical context of the issues you study but with the social scientist's eye for statistical and quantitative analysis. It will develop your ability to think through abstract ideas and develop your essay-writing skills. It will provide you with a mature and sophisticated understanding of real issues that affect the society you live in. It works well with any subjects. The focus on health issues means it is a subject that will be of use to those applying to study medicine or related areas and the focus on crime and deviance will likewise be of use to those interested in the law or social work.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

You need a good knowledge of and interest in contemporary British current affairs and social issues. You must have good analytical and evaluative skills that you can demonstrate on paper. It is an academic subject with a lot of content to learn (it is not all about airing your opinions!) and so you will need to have a mind able to organise and draw connections between a lot of complex information.

How is the course assessed?

The A level is assessed by three examinations on Units 1-3 respectively. The Unit 1 exam has short answer and extended writing questions on Education, a question on methods in context (on Education) and an extended written answer on Theory and Methods. The Unit 2 exam has two extended writing questions on Health or Families, and on Global Development or Beliefs in Society. The Unit 3 exam has short answer and extended writing questions on Crime and Deviance and an extended written answer on Theory and Methods. Each paper is worth 33% of the A level and lasts 2 hours.

Reading

AQA A Level Sociology: Book One

By Rob Webb
ISBN 10 0954007913

AQA A Level Sociology: Book Two

By Rob Webb
ISBN 10 0954007921

Revise AQA A level Sociology Revision Guide and Workbook

By Steve Chapman AQA

Sociology for AQA: Volume 1: AS and 1st-Year A Level (5th Edition)

By K. Browne
Published by Polity Press,
ISBN 978-0745655512

Sociology for AQA Volume 2: 2nd-Year A level

By K Browne Blundell and Law



“We are social creatures to the inmost centre of our being. The notion that one can begin anything at all from scratch, free from the past, or unindebted to others, could not conceivably be more wrong.”

Karl Popper, philosopher

“He who reads much and walks much
sees much and knows much.”

Miguel de Cervantes,
novelist, poet and playwright



SPANISH

What is it about at sixth-form level?

Learning a modern language for GCSE is a matter of taking your first steps. You learn rudimentary grammar and vocabulary that enable you to get by but real conversations are still beyond your reach. It is at the sixth form level that you will deepen your grammatical competence and broaden your vocabulary so that you can converse about and debate real-world issues, and immerse yourself into the culture, literature and arts of the country. Even though we live in an age where it seems English is spoken everywhere and where Google Translate will help you where it is not, there is nothing like the experience and satisfaction of being able to step inside a different way of speaking and seeing the world.

The Spanish A level will introduce you to real Spanish in real situations. You will look at the media, literature and film to acquaint you with and develop your knowledge of Spain, her language and culture from past to present.

Autumn term

You will focus on two major topic areas, grammar and translation, and the study in depth of a film. The first topic is *Aspects of Hispanic Society*, which will cover everything from traditional family values to the cyberspace. The second is *Artistic Culture in the Hispanic World* where you will be talking about Spanish regional identity, music and culture. The film you will study will be one taken from this list: *Volver*, *El laberinto del Fauno*, *Ocho apellidos vascos*, *Maria llena eres de gracia*, *El bola* and *Las 13 rosas*.

Spring and Summer terms

You will cover two more topics, as well as undertaking a detailed study of a literary text and its themes and context. You will also be required to research a Hispanic topic for your speaking exam. The new topics are *Multiculturalism in Hispanic Society* in which you will look at various issues such as immigration, racism and integration; and *Aspects of Political Life in the Hispanic World*, where you will look at political issues and the modern Spanish state. The study of a literary text will be a short novel or play drawn from the AQA prescribed list.

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

Knowledge of a foreign language is ever more valuable in an increasingly connected world. Many employers look for knowledge of at least one other language across a wide range of jobs. Understanding a language is a first step to understanding a people and a culture. Another language enables you to enjoy everything from a casual conversation to a classic novel as it was meant to be read. It also provides a means by which to reflect upon your own culture and gain a deeper understanding of your mother tongue. An A level is typically a prerequisite for studying the language at university.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

You should ideally have an A or A* at GCSE. If it is your mother tongue or a second language, you will need to be able to speak and write it proficiently. You will also need an interest in other cultures and a logical mind to cope with the grammar.

How is the course assessed?

For the A level, there are three exams that cover all four general topic areas together with the film and literary text. Unit 1 (Listening, Reading and Writing) will check your comprehension of a variety of texts and extracts, with all the questions being in Spanish. You will also have two translations of 100 words each: one into Spanish and one into English. Unit 2 (Writing) consists of two 300-word essays in Spanish with questions set on the film and the text studied. Unit 3 (Speaking) will be a discussion of a theme based on a stimulus card followed by a presentation and a discussion of an individual Hispanic research project. Unit 1 lasts 2 hours 30 minutes and is worth 40% of the A level. Unit 2 lasts 2 hours and is worth 30% of the A level. Unit 3 lasts 21-23 minutes and is worth 30% of the A level.

Reading

AQA AS/A-level Spanish Student e-book

By M. Thacker, T. Weston, J.A. García Sánchez
Published by Hodder Education,
ISBN 9781471858123

A copy of the literary text to be purchased will be specified at the beginning of the course.

AQA A Level Year 1 and AS Spanish Student Book

By M. Bond, I. Kendrick, F. Mejias-Yedra, F. Villatoro
Published by OUP, ISBN 9780198366904



“I don’t know if education can save us, but I don’t know of anything better.”

Jorge Luis Borges, writer and poet

“If the statistics are boring, then you’ve got the wrong numbers.”

Edward Tufte, statistician

STATISTICS

What is it about at sixth-form level?

A fair coin is tossed nine times in a row and lands heads each time. Will it land heads the next time? Many people feel that it is quite unlikely and would bet on tails. That run of luck surely has to end! Yet it is statistically just as likely to land on heads as on tails. Chance, as they say, has no memory. Now suppose that you read that scientists have just discovered that if you eat chocolate regularly, the risk of your skin turning bright orange increases by a factor of 100. That's enough to worry many people. Indeed, "shock" headlines of this kind can be found across the "science" pages of many national newspapers. By itself, it should not worry anyone. Perhaps the underlying odds of developing orange skin are astronomically small. If so, a hundredfold increase will pose a negligible absolute increase in risk.

When it comes to statistics, our intuitions often lead us astray. In a world where we are bombarded with ever more data, it is increasingly important to have a good understanding of how to interpret patterns and probabilities. The emphasis of the course is on developing a rigorous understanding of how to approach and interpret data. You will learn how to decide which tests are appropriate to determine which kinds of patterns and how to evaluate the results. Although you will have proper grounding in the mathematics, the course is designed to show you how to use statistics across a wide range of real-world situations.

Autumn term

The course begins with simple data analysis that builds on concepts met at GCSE and extends these ideas to the analysis of bivariate data using correlation and regression. Probability starts with a recap of simple principles from GCSE and explores the idea of conditional probability and the use of Bayes' theorem. The binomial probability distribution allows us to find, for example, the probability of obtaining three sixes if 10 dice are rolled. The normal distribution lays the foundations for much of the remainder of the course and can be used to answer questions such as "how tall are the tallest 5% of men in the UK?"

Spring and Summer terms

Much of the latter part of the course is concerned with statistical inference, the process of drawing conclusions about a population based on data obtained from a sample. You will meet ideas of experimental design used, for example, in testing a subject's reactions times before and after consuming alcohol or the effect of a drug versus a placebo two similar groups of patients. These ideas can be extended to three or more groups using ANOVA, a technique widely used in social sciences at undergraduate level. Most of the course is focussed on hypothesis testing and the skills needed to analyse and interpret the results of these tests.

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

Using and understanding data is becoming increasingly important in many areas of study and employment. Understanding of statistics is a crucial skill, and this course gives students the tools needed to help them prepare for higher education and the workplace. A Level Statistics is suitable for students seeking to pursue the study of a numerate post-16 subject but not wishing to study pure mathematics. It sits well with subjects such as A level Biology, Psychology, Geography, Business and Economics. A qualification in statistics is valuable if you wish to pursue study in the social sciences and in medicine. The emphasis is on using and applying statistics; appropriate interpretation of contexts and the outcomes of statistical procedures will be required. The course will also develop your skills of analysis and abstract thinking, sharpen your sensitivity to patterns and teach you how to overcome misleading intuitions and cognitive biases.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

You should have at least grade 6 in Maths GCSE or IGCSE. Emphasis is on interpreting data and subsequent analysis: a good grasp of English language is therefore essential.

How is the course assessed?

There are three two-hour papers and all questions are compulsory. Topics are specific to Papers 1 and 2 but Paper 3 is synoptic and can assess any content on the other two papers. There is no coursework.

Reading

There is no textbook specifically designed for this course. Students will be given material from a wide variety of sources during the course.



**“Facts are stubborn things,
but statistics are pliable.”**

Mark Twain, author and humourist

TEXTILE DESIGN

“Fashion is not something that exists in dresses only. Fashion is in the sky, in the street, fashion has to do with ideas, the way we live, what is happening.”

Coco Chanel, designer



TEXTILE DESIGN

What is it about at sixth-form level?

Textile Design encompasses a very broad range of materials, techniques and processes, including a growing number of interdisciplinary approaches. These comprise woven, embroidered, knitted, printed, painted, dyed, manipulated, embellished and constructional methods which are utilised to produce a great variety of textile outcomes that include costume and fashion design, accessories and body adornment. The range is increasing as new materials and technologies emerge. Possible areas of study include: fashion, costume, digitally or traditionally printed and/or dyed fabrics, garments and materials, constructed textiles, textile installation and accessories.

Autumn term

Our approach is to support and encourage students to explore, analyse and develop their skills by introducing them to a wide range of traditional crafts and contemporary techniques including batik, indigo dyeing, printing and machine embroidery. Disciplines include constructed, dyed or printed textiles, fine art or fashion textiles. You will learn how to develop your ideas through sustained and focused investigations informed by contextual and other sources, demonstrating analytical and critical understanding. You will explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes, and review and refine your ideas as your work develops. You will record your ideas, observations and insights relevant to your intentions, reflecting critically on your work and progress. As a student in the heart of London, you will have access to some of the world's best museums, galleries and exhibitions. This will result in a personal and meaningful response which, where appropriate, makes connections between visual and other elements.

Spring and Summer terms

You will develop your skills and understanding to a higher standard. You will continue to be given close technical instruction and supervision, but you will be required to adopt a much more independent and student-led approach. You will be working on your personal investigation, which is the first of the two components of your final assessment. This component consists firstly of a major, in-depth, practical, critical and theoretical investigative project or theme-based portfolio and outcomes. It is accompanied by an integrated and extended written piece of critical and contextual analysis (1000 words minimum).

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

Textile Design is an art subject and will count towards meeting the entry criteria for any Art and Design course at a higher level. It is also an excellent basis for studying and working in the textile or fashion industry.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

A background in art such as a GCSE or IGCSE is preferred. You should have an interest in textiles and be keen to learn the techniques for how to manipulate them.

How is the course assessed?

There are two components. Component 1 is your personal investigation, which is the coursework component. Component 2 is the externally set assignment. You will be required to develop independently a personal response to one of a varied range of stimuli within specified time constraints. The assignment consists of a series of visual (including moving image) and written stimuli set by the exam board. You will develop your response over a preparatory study period. Following the preparatory study period, learners will be allocated a period of 15 hours sustained focus study to realise their response unaided and under supervised conditions. Component 1 is worth 60% of the A level and Component 2 is worth 40% of the A level.

Reading

5000 Years of Textiles

By J. Harris

Published by British Museum Press,
ISBN 978-0714150895

World Textiles

By M. Schoeser

Published by Thames and Hudson,
ISBN 978-0500203699

Basics Fashion Design 01 Research and Design

By S. Seivewright

Published by Ava, ISBN 978-2940411702

Basics Fashion Design 02 Textiles and Fashion

By J. Udale

Published by Ava, ISBN 978-2940373642



“Civilizations are not remembered by their business people, their bankers or lawyers. They're remembered by the arts.”

Eli Broad, philanthropist and entrepreneur

“We should show life neither as it is,
nor as it should be, but as we see it in
our dreams.”

Treplev, in Anton Chekov's *The Seagull*



THEATRE STUDIES

What is it about at sixth-form level?

Plays and performance have long been part of human culture. The theatre is a unique space in which the world, society and the human condition can be explored. It is a public place where the voices of ordinary people can be heard raising questions about the forces that shape our lives. It is furthermore an exciting place. The playwright invites the audience to observe the action whilst asking for their intellectual participation. In the Theatre Studies A level you will take a close and critical look at the playwright's art. You will consider how different styles and social contexts can shape the interpretation of a script, influence a rehearsal and achieve a successful performance. You will learn how to look at a play from different angles: as a spectator, as an actor and as a director. The course will enable you to develop a deep appreciation of what is involved in a successful piece of theatre.

Autumn term

You will begin with the study of Lorca's "Yerma" and Sophocles "Antigone". This will involve both theoretical and practical exploration. You will also attend a variety of live productions which will be discussed and explored in terms of theatrical merits and style. You must also prepare a portfolio of work to accompany a practical examination of an extract of a play.

Spring and Summer terms

You will deepen your study of both "Yerma" and "Antigone". You will be encouraged to continue attending as many theatre excursions as possible which could be used to answer Section C of the written paper. You will complete a 3 hour written exam answering questions on both studied texts and a live production of your choice. You will perform in both devised and scripted pieces of practical work which will be assessed as part of the A level course. To accompany the practical work you must collate a working notebook and a reflective report which will act as the coursework portion of the course.

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

Through the detailed study of plays and their presentation, Theatre Studies develops your analytical and interpretative skills along with your ability to articulate your ideas clearly in a written form. It will of course also develop your creative abilities and your understanding of the workings of theatre. It has a natural affinity with degree courses such as English and Drama at university but works well with subjects such as History and Politics. It also provides a basis on which to pursue acting at a drama school or for a career "backstage" in theatre design and management.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

Theatre Studies is an academic subject with a performance element and not a drama course based solely on performance! You will be studying plays both practically and theoretically to examine the social and political themes they raise. Commitment is a must, as you will be in a group devising a piece for performance and thereby contribute to determining everyone's final grade for the practical elements.

How is the course assessed?

For Component 1 (Interpreting Drama), students will be assessed on their knowledge and understanding of drama and theatre. The exam will be an open-book written exam on the plays "Yerma" and "Antigone" that they will have studied. In Component 2 (Creating Original Drama), students will be assessed on the process of creating devised drama and its performance (students may contribute as performer, designer or director). In Component 3, students undertake a practical exploration and interpretation of three extracts each taken from a different play. Extract 3 will be performed as a final assessed piece (students may contribute as performer, designer or director). A reflective report will be written which analyses and evaluates the theatrical interpretation of all three extracts. Component 1 lasts 3 hours and is worth 40% of the A level. Components 2 and 3 are worth 30% each.

Reading

Yerma

By Federico Garcia Lorca, trans.
Gwynne Edwards.
Methuen Student Edition,
ISBN: 978-0-7136-8326-4

Antigone

By Sophocles, trans. Don Taylor,
edited by Angie Varakis.
Methuen Student Edition,
ISBN: 978-0-4137-7604-4



“One must let the play happen to one; one must let the mind loose to respond as it will, to receive impressions, to sense rather than know, to gather rather than immediately understand.”

Edward Albee, playwright

EXTENDED PROJECT QUALIFICATION



“The educated person is one who knows how to find out what he does not know.”

George Simmel,

sociologist and philosopher

EXTENDED PROJECT QUALIFICATION

What is it?

The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) is designed to teach you how to plan, research and deliver a project. The project normally takes the form of an essay (of between 4-5,000 words) though it can also be a creative piece (such as a short play or short story), an artefact (such as a model) or a presentation (such as a portfolio of photographs or a performance). At MPW, the essay is the option we pursue. In principle, you can choose to research anything you like. As an indication of the range of possibilities, titles have included “What are numbers?”, “What was the cause of the Rwandan genocide?”, “Why do people join cults?” and “How does early Victorian literature portray female insanity and how accurate is the representation of ‘mad women’?”

This said, it is important to grasp that the EPQ is not an extended essay by another name. The focus is the delivery of and development of research skills. You will have lessons on how to draw up a plan, how to structure a timeline for research, how and where to look for resources, how to organise your ideas into a thesis and how to deliver a presentation. You will have to detail your progress as you go in the form of the EPQ production log. You will be required to spell out your research plans and later to reflect upon them, along with the challenges you faced and the skills you have developed as an independent researcher. The majority of the marks reflect the quality of the log.

Whereas in your other subjects you are taught the content of what you need to know, the distinctive and valuable feature of the EPQ is that you research and develop your project largely by yourself. You will have a supervisor with whom you can discuss ideas, who will teach you research skills and who will provide advice on the structure and form of the essay.

The EPQ is a special Level 3 qualification that is neither an A level nor an AS level. It is worth 50% of an A level in terms of UCAS points.

“If I go out into nature, into the unknown, to the fringes of knowledge, everything seems mixed up and contradictory, illogical, and incoherent. This is what research does; it smoothes out contradictions and makes things simple, logical, and coherent.”

Albert Szent-Gyorgyi, biochemist

Why study it and what skills does it develop?

An ever-growing number of universities are becoming aware of the attractions of the EPQ. It is an excellent way of developing a broad range of study skills that you will find invaluable at university, where you will increasingly be required to be an independent learner, and in the world of work beyond. It adds particular value to applications to Russell Group universities. This is especially so for Oxbridge applications, as it may become a discussion point in an interview. You will learn how to manage your time, how to prepare a professional-looking project and how not to get lost in the vast amounts of material in libraries and on the internet when undertaking research.

What prior knowledge and skills are required?

No prior knowledge is required. The most important skill you will need to have is self-motivation. This is a project you will be mainly managing yourself. Although your supervisor will provide an over-arching structure, you will need to set and keep to your own deadlines!

How is the course assessed?

The EPQ is internally assessed and externally moderated. Your project is assessed on the basis of four criteria. The first is how well you managed to identify, design and carry out your projects and the methods you used to do this. The second is the extent of the resources you used and how well you used them. The third relates to how the project was developed and realised: the problems you identified and decision you took that enabled you to produce the final outcome, this being the essay. Finally, the fourth criterion concerns how well you could review and reflect on the project. You will be asked to present your findings to an audience and also write about what you have learned about becoming a researcher. You will notice that there is no criterion that relates specifically to the academic quality of the essay. This is because, to echo what was said earlier, the EPQ is not about producing a university-style dissertation but about learning how to do research.

Reading

The reading will be specific to your chosen project.





LONDON **020 7835 1355**

90-92 Queen's Gate
London SW7 5AB

london@mpw.ac.uk

BIRMINGHAM **0121 454 9637**

16-18 Greenfield Crescent
Birmingham B15 3AU

birmingham@mpw.ac.uk

CAMBRIDGE **01223 350158**

3-4 Brookside
Cambridge CB2 1JE

cambridge@mpw.ac.uk

www.mpw.ac.uk
