



GCSE Subject Information  
Guidance & Course Details  
2026/2028



## We are a community forged from innovation, courage, confidence, inspiration and joy.

We inspire a life-long love of learning and provide academic excellence for pupils, staff and support staff. We have a culture of collaboration, coaching and challenge. We are brave in our pursuit of excellence: progress is driven by innovation and reflection.

The co-curriculum supports and enriches the academic curriculum through clubs, societies, trips and publications. We celebrate and explore the relationship between academic excellence and co-curricular participation: at different points in a school career, the focus upon each element will vary. Similarly, we maintain the balance between our focus upon promoting excellence and wide participation. We provide co-curricular opportunities to develop the character of everyone in the school - pupils, staff and support staff. All aspire to become more well-rounded, charming, confident, enthusiastic and independent. We work as a team, creating lasting bonds within our community.

We care for each other in a civilised, collaborative and respectful manner. That spirit creates a safe, inspiring and inclusive environment that promotes self-esteem. Our focus is upon the individual and the community: knowing and caring for everyone in the school, whether pupil, staff or support staff, creates a place in which people feel they belong, have shared purpose and have a role to play. We use our strength to serve the wider community beyond the school.

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# Introduction for Pupils *in the Fourth Form*

In the Spring Term of the Fourth Form, pupils decide which subjects to study for GCSE. Pupils move on to their GCSE curriculum early in the Summer Term of the Fourths. This booklet describes the courses from which pupils can choose. Any decisions made at this stage should be very carefully considered as moving to a different subject is not normally possible at a later date.

Pupils and parents should bear in mind that we cannot forecast with certainty the demand for the courses described in this booklet, thus we cannot absolutely guarantee that every optional course in the booklet will be offered, although we always endeavour to meet each pupil's choices.

Some subjects offer a GCSE course, and others prefer the International GCSE (or IGCSE) course. Both are recognized as being of equal value by universities and employers. Each Head of Department chooses the exam board and syllabus which they feel is most suitable for our pupils and this is reviewed frequently.



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## Compulsory & Optional Subjects

Each pupil has ten academic slots to fill in his timetable and he must fill all of them. There are a number of compulsory subjects: English Language, English Literature, Mathematics and Science must be taken by all pupils. Pupils must also opt for at least one modern foreign language from a choice of French, German or Spanish. The remaining choices can be chosen freely from the final column of the following list, to total ten subjects.

Compulsory	One of	One of	Three from		
English Language	Triple Science (Default option)	French	Art & Design	French	History
		German	Computer Science	Geography	Latin
English Literature	Double Science (with a couple of lessons each week of Learning Enhancement in the Autumn Term of Divisions)	Spanish		German	Music
Mathematics		Design & Technology		Greek	Religious Studies
				Drama	Gratin (Greek & Latin Combined)
					Sports Science
3 GCSEs in total	3 GCSEs (or 2 if taking Double Science)	1 GCSE	3 GCSEs in total		

## Timings for Making Decisions

During the Spring Term, Heads of Department and individual subject teachers have begun to talk to pupils about the courses they offer at GCSE. Pupils will be asked to finalise their choices by the end of the week which begins with the GCSE Options Evening on Monday 9 March.

Pupils should seek advice as to their choices from a variety of sources. Tutors will, of course, be vital, as will older members of their Tutor Group who have gone through the process. Pupils should talk to subject teachers and, very importantly, their parents. There will be an opportunity to ask any final questions at the Options Evening, and thereafter to confirm their choices with their Tutor.

## Planning for the Future

It is important to note that some of the decisions made now may, in some cases, restrict the range of choices available to a pupil in the future. Difficult as it is at this early stage, pupils should try to think of what university or apprenticeship courses they are potentially considering and work backwards through the suitable A Level options to the subjects they will be taking in the Fifth Form and the Divisions.

The following questions may help with the above:

- Are there any areas of university study that particularly interest me at this stage of my academic career?
- Are there any specific entry requirements for those courses, which will necessitate my choosing a particular A Level course?
- Will my selection of GCSE choices allow me to have the right range of choices available at A Level?

It may even be helpful at this stage to consult university prospectuses and websites to ascertain degree entry requirements. Guidance and advice can also be sought from our excellent Careers Department.

Alongside these questions, pupils should also reflect on which subjects they most enjoy and which they would like to spend longer on over the coming years. In almost all cases, pupils tend to achieve better final outcomes in subjects they have enjoyed studying and in which they have a genuine interest. It is for this reason that we ask the pupils to make their choices before their Fourth Form exams. Whilst indicative of progress, these exams only give one snapshot of attainment and their Grades from the whole year, together with their preferences, ought to bear more weight in the decision-making process.

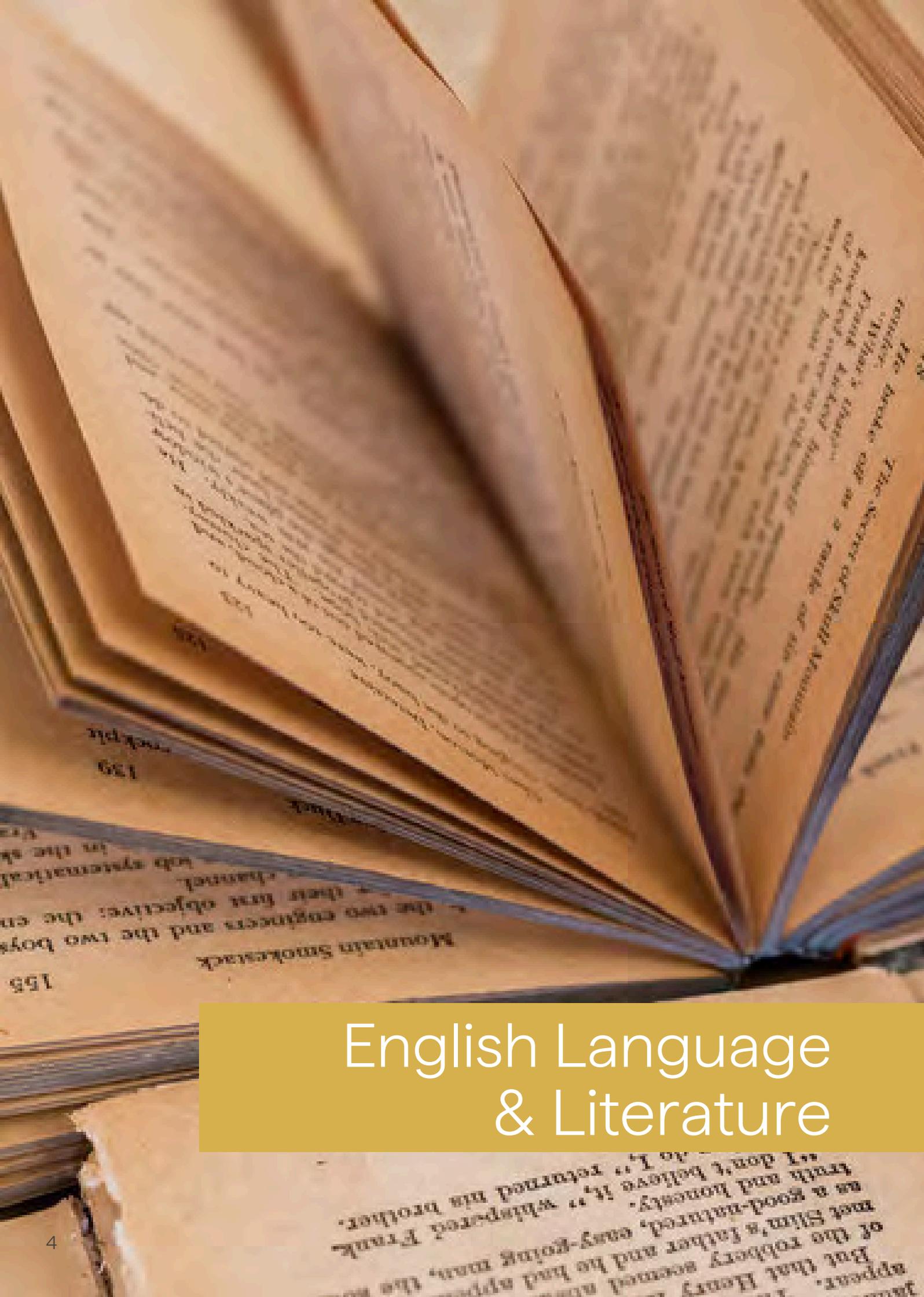
As ever, do please speak to Tutors, Heads of Section, or me if you require any further advice or guidance.

# Checklist to aid the Decision Making Process

Complete box 7 with your choice of French, Spanish or German

Complete boxes 8, 9 and 10 with any three from: Art & Design, Computer Science, Design & Technology, Drama, French, Geography, German, Gratin (Greek & Latin Combined), Greek, History, Latin, Music, Religious Studies, Spanish, Sports Science (PE).

Subject Choices	
1	English Language
2	English Literature
3	Mathematics
4	Triple Science
5	Triple Science
6	Triple Science
7	Modern Language choice:
8	
9	
10	



# English Language & Literature

# English Overview

English at GCSE is a natural development of the curriculum you have been following in the Lower School. You will be writing stories, discussing poetry and prose, reading plays, responding to a variety of texts - including fiction and non-fiction - debating, and presenting a point of view, both in written form and orally. You are studying for two separate qualifications, one called IGCSE English Language, the other IGCSE English Literature. Both are core subjects at MTS and lessons will focus on one or the other throughout each term of study. We follow the Edexcel IGCSE exam syllabus for both qualifications.

As you will see from the outlines below, you will be encountering a considerable range of different skills and tasks in these courses. Perhaps the principal change you will come to recognise is the need to respond to what you read more analytically, and to construct an argument surrounding an aspect of a text, such as a theme or character. In short, we want to hear your opinion. We think the courses are rich in content, covering classic and memorable texts, which we hope you will find relevant and connect with on a personal level. The skills you will learn in reading, writing, speaking and analysis will set you up for further study at A Level and university and all the way through your adult life. You must remember that these are two-year courses, and that you are not expected to pick up everything at your first attempt. If you have any further queries, do not hesitate to ask your English teacher, or come and speak with me and I will be happy to answer any questions.

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# IGCSE English Language (9-1)

## *Edexcel*

This is one of the core subjects of Key Stage 4 in the National Curriculum. The course is designed to educate you in the applied use of English language and therefore relevant not only in and of itself, but also to every other subject you take and in your adult and professional lives.

## Component 1: Non-fiction Texts & Transactional Writing

<b>Paper 1: Non-fiction Texts and Transactional Writing</b>	Paper code 4EA1/01
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Externally assessed</li><li>• Availability: January and June</li></ul>	60% of the total International GCSE
<b>Content summary:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The <b>contemporary non-fiction texts</b> from Part 1 of the 'Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology'.</li><li>• Develop skills to analyse how writers use linguistic and structural devices to achieve their effects.</li><li>• Explore links and connections between writers' ideas and perspectives.</li><li>• Develop transactional writing skills for a variety of purposes and audiences.</li><li>• Use spelling, punctuation and grammar accurately.</li></ul>	
<b>Assessment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Section A: Reading - a mixture of short- and long-answer questions related to a non-fiction text from Part 1 of the 'Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology' and one previously unseen extract. Total of 45 marks.</li><li>• Section B: Transactional Writing – one 45-mark writing task, from a choice of two involving a given audience, form or purpose.</li><li>• The total number of marks available is 90.</li><li>• The assessment duration is 2 hours 15 minutes.</li><li>• Students will be provided with the anthology text in the examination.</li></ul>	

# Texts for Component 1: Non-fiction Texts & Transactional Writing

## Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology

### Part 1: Non-fiction Texts

From "The Danger of a Single Story"	Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
From "A Passage to Africa"	George Alagiah
From "The Explorer's Daughter"	Kari Herbert
"Explorers, or boys messing about? Either way, taxpayer gets rescue bill"	Steven Morris
From "127 Hours: Between a Rock and a Hard Place"	Aron Ralston
"Young and Dyslexic? You've got it going on"	Benjamin Zephaniah
From "A Game of Polo with a Headless Goat"	Emma Levine
From "Beyond the Sky and Earth: A Journey into Bhutan"	Jamie Zeppa
From "H is for Hawk"	Helen Macdonald
From "Chinese Cinderella"	Adeline Yen Mah

# Component 2: Poetry, Prose Texts & Imaginative Writing

<b>Component: Poetry and Prose Texts and Imaginative Writing</b>	Paper code 4EA1/02
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Externally assessed</li> <li>Availability: January and June</li> </ul>	40% of the total International GCSE
<p><b>Content summary:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>poetry and prose texts</b> from Part 2 of the 'Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology'.</li> <li>Develop skills to analyse how writers use linguistic and structural devices to achieve their effects.</li> <li>Develop imaginative writing skills to engage the reader.</li> <li>Use spelling, punctuation and grammar accurately.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section A: Reading - one 30-mark essay question on a poetry or prose text from Part 2 of the 'Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology'.</li> <li>Section B: Imaginative Writing – one 30-mark imaginative writing task from a choice of three.</li> <li>The total number of marks available is 60.</li> <li>The assessment duration is 1 hour and 30 minutes.</li> <li>Students will be provided with the anthology text in the examination.</li> </ul>	

## Texts for Component 2: Poetry, Prose Texts & Imaginative Writing

### Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology

#### Part 2: Poetry and Prose Texts

"Disabled"	Wilfred Owen
"Out, Out-"	Robert Frost
"An Unknown Girl"	Moniza Alvi
"The Bright Lights of Sarajevo"	Tony Harrison
"Still I Rise"	Maya Angelou
"The Story of an Hour"	Kate Chopin
"The Necklace"	Guy de Maupassant
"Significant Cigarettes (from The Road Home)"	Rose Tremain
"Whistle and I'll Come to You (from The Woman in Black)"	Susan Hill
"Night"	Alice Munro

# IGCSE English Literature (9-1)

## *Edexcel*

IGCSE English Literature introduces you to a range of celebrated and diverse texts from across the three main literary genres: poetry, prose and drama. You will be exploring texts in terms of the ideas they contain and by getting under the skin of the characters. You will also become aware of the influence of the context of when a text was written, as well as developing an appreciation for the ways in which writers have crafted language and form to convey a deeper meaning and effect.

The majority of the exam papers will focus on the set texts you study over the 2-year course, with one section devoted to Unseen Literature, which will assess your skills in literary analysis when presented with a poem you will not have seen before.

## Component 1: Poetry & Modern Prose

<b>Component 1: Poetry &amp; Modern Prose</b>	Paper code 4ET1/01
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Externally assessed</li><li>• Availability: January and June</li></ul>	<b>60% of the total International GCSE</b>
<b>Content summary:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The <b>poetry collection</b> from Part 3 of the 'Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology'.</li><li>• One <b>modern prose text</b> from the list of set texts (page 8).</li><li>• Develop skills to analyse unseen poetry.</li><li>• Develop skills to analyse how language, form, structure and contextual factors can be used to create meanings and effects.</li><li>• Develop skills to maintain a critical style and informed personal response.</li><li>• Develop comparison skills.</li></ul>	
<b>Assessment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Section A - Unseen Poetry: one 20-mark essay question exploring the meaning and effects created in an unseen poem. The poem will be reproduced in the question paper.</li><li>• Section B - Anthology Poetry: one 30-mark essay question from a choice of two, comparing two poems from Part 3 of the 'Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology'.</li><li>• Section C - Modern Prose: one 40-mark essay question from a choice of two on each of the set texts.</li><li>• The total number of marks available is 90.</li><li>• The assessment duration is 2 hours.</li><li>• Closed book: texts are not allowed in the examination. However, students will be provided with the anthology poems in the examination.</li></ul>	

# Texts for Component 1: Poetry & Modern Prose

Component 1 is **closed book**, which means set texts will **not** be allowed into the examination.

The Section A text will be a previously unseen poem.

The Section B poems will be taken from the 'Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology', which we shall provide you with in advance of your study. These are as follows:

## Part 3 of the Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology

If-	Rudyard Kipling
Prayer Before Birth	Louis MacNeice
Blessing	Imtiaz Dharker
Search For My Tongue	Sujata Bhatt
Half-past Two	U A Fanthorpe
Piano	D H Lawrence
Hide and Seek	Vernon Scannell
Sonnet 116	William Shakespeare
La Belle Dame sans Merci	John Keats
Poem at Thirty-Nine	Alice Walker
War Photographer	Carol Ann Duffy
The Tyger	William Blake
My Last Duchess	Robert Browning
Half-caste	John Agard
Do not go gently into that good night	Dylan Thomas
Remember	Christina Rossetti

The choice of text for Section C - Modern Prose - will be one of the following texts that we shall give to you to read at the end of the Fourth Form so that you can read and consider the text over the summer holiday before you begin your Divisions year:

### One modern prose text from the list below.

To Kill a Mockingbird	Harper Lee
Of Mice and Men	John Steinbeck
The Whale Rider	Witi Ihimaera
The Joy Luck Club	Amy Tan
Things Fall Apart	Chinua Achebe

# Component 2: Modern Drama and Literary Heritage Texts

<b>Component 2: Modern Drama and Literary Heritage Texts</b>	Paper code 4ET1/02
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Externally assessed</li> <li>Availability: January and June</li> </ul>	40% of the total International GCSE
<p><b>Content summary:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One <b>modern drama text</b> from the list of set texts (page 8).</li> <li>One <b>literary heritage text</b> from the list of set texts (page 8).</li> <li>Develop skills to analyse how language form, structure and contextual factors can be used to create meaning and effect.</li> <li>Develop skills to maintain a critical style and informed personal response.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section A - Modern Drama: one 30-mark essay question from a choice of two on each of the set texts.</li> <li>Section B - Literary Heritage Texts: one 30-mark essay question from a choice of two on each of the set texts.</li> <li>The total number of marks available is 60.</li> <li>The assessment duration is 1 hour and 30 minutes.</li> <li>Open book: prescribed editions of set texts are allowed in the examination.</li> </ul>	

## Texts for Component 2: Modern Drama and Literary Heritage Texts

Component 2 is open text, meaning that clean copies of prescribed set texts can be taken into the examination. These we will provide for you.

For Section A - Modern Drama - you will study one of the following texts:

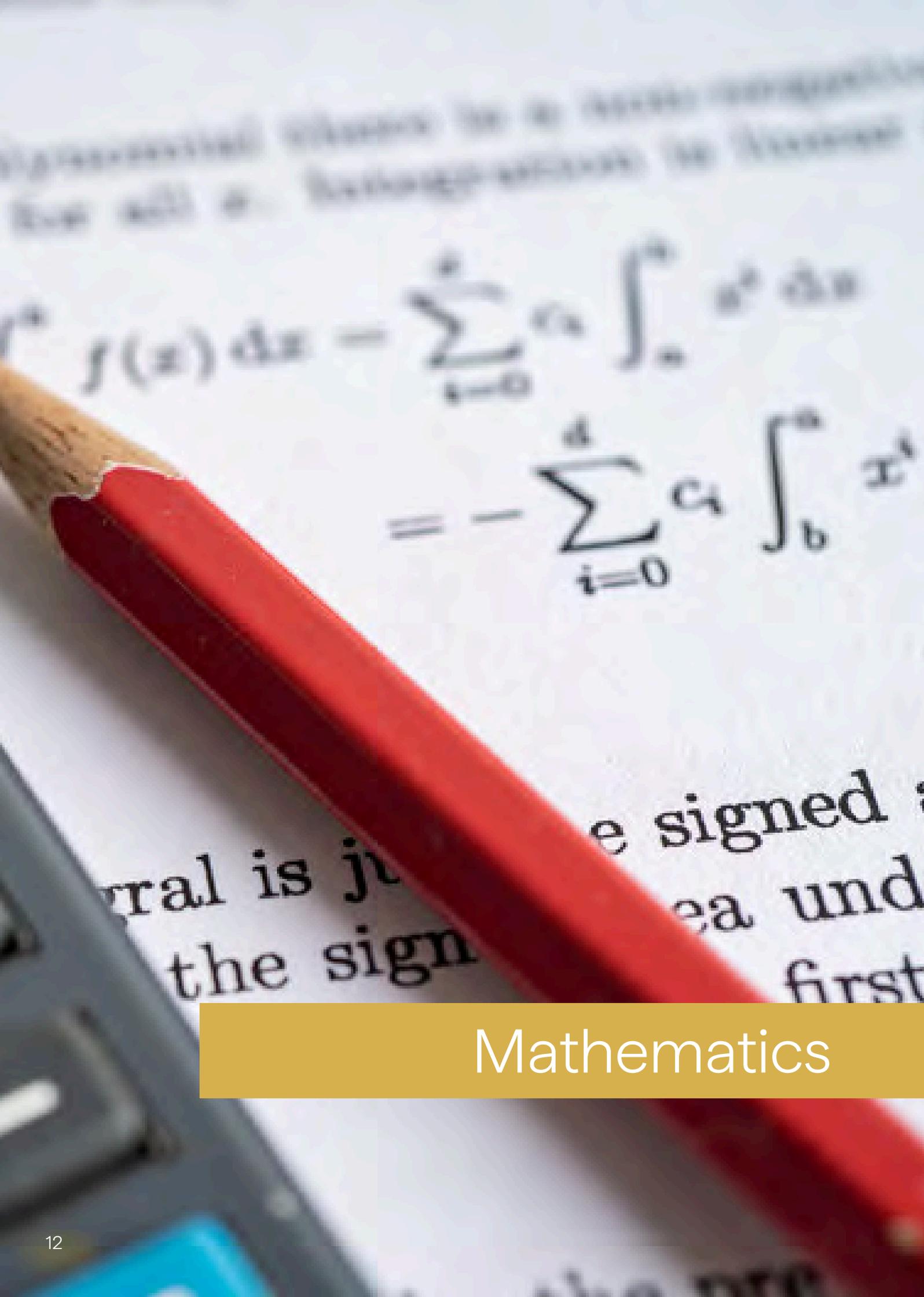
**One modern drama text from the list below.**

A View from the Bridge	Arthur Miller
An Inspector Calls	J B Priestley
The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time	Mark Haddon (adapted by Simon Stephens)
Kindertransport	Diane Samuels
Death and the King's Horseman	Wole Soyinka

For Section B - Literary Heritage Texts – you will study one of the following:

**One literary heritage text from the list below.**

Romeo and Juliet	William Shakespeare
Macbeth	William Shakespeare
The Merchant of Venice	William Shakespeare
Pride and Prejudice	Jane Austen
Great Expectations	Charles Dickens
The Scarlet Letter	Nathaniel Hawthorne



# Mathematics

# Mathematics

## *Edexcel*

Mathematics is a core subject in the National Curriculum and is studied by all pupils throughout the Fourth Form, Divisions and Fifth Form. The subject is taught in ability bands from the second half of the Autumn term in the Fourth Form based on a test taken at the end of the first half term. It is then continually refined on the basis of progress, tests and examinations.

All our pupils follow the Pearson Edexcel IGCSE Mathematics (Specification A) syllabus. It is assessed by two written papers. Calculators are permitted in both. All our pupils enter IGCSE Mathematics at Higher Level, where grades 9-4 are available. Topics within the areas of number, algebra, geometry and statistics are covered in the IGCSE course.

From November in the Divisions, pupils in the top band of sets will be taught at an accelerated pace with the intention of studying and sitting examinations in both Mathematics IGCSE and the more advanced FSMQ Additional Mathematics course at the end of the Fifth Form; the remainder will sit the IGCSE only. The FSMQ course builds upon the IGCSE and prepares boys for further study of Mathematics at A Level, providing a higher level of rigor and introducing further topics such as integration, exponentials and logarithms and numerical methods.

Successful completion of the FSMQ course is a requirement to study A Level Further Mathematics, though it is not necessary for A Level Mathematics.

At all stages of the course there is an emphasis on not only the learning of typical skills and techniques but also understanding gained through problem-solving. In addition, a variety of extra-curricular mathematics activities are available for all.

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# Science

# Science

## *Edexcel*

Science is studied by all students in Middle School. Subject specialists teach Biology, Chemistry and Physics in the relevant Departments. We teach the Edexcel International GCSE syllabus. This specification offers the best opportunities for students at Merchant Taylors' to study a broad curriculum that is relevant and challenging, and the Triple Award offers suitable preparation for the demands of A Level study. The material is stimulating, there is plenty of opportunity for practical work, and we use a range of multimedia publications that have been designed to complement work in the laboratory.

In the Fourth Form, there is a choice to opt for Double Science or study for the Triple Award. This choice will very much depend on future career aspirations, a genuine passion for the Science subjects and natural ability in the Sciences. The Edexcel IGCSE specification, based on the 9-1 grading system, has been modified considerably, our advice therefore is, if you are considering studying Biology, Chemistry or Physics at A Level, then Triple Science would be the best foundation IGCSE course.

At the start of the Divisions, sets are decided largely on performance in the Fourth Form examinations, though work throughout the year is also considered. Students will normally remain in the same set, taught by the same teachers, throughout the Divisions and Fifth Form, but a change of set may be considered at the end of the Divisions year. This arrangement has proved to be the best way to enable candidates to achieve the best grades possible.

Students entered for the Double Award will sit a two-hour Core paper examination in each of the three Sciences and be awarded two IGCSE grades. Pupils entered for the Triple Award will take an additional Extension in each subject and be awarded separate IGCSEs in each of Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

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# Biology

The Biology GCSE course follows the Edexcel International GCSE (IGCSE) specification (4BI1). Though demanding, the course provides students with an applied, practical, and engaging snapshot of basic mammalian physiology, ecology and plant science whilst also providing a solid foundation for further study of Biology at A Level.

The course is terminally examined, and all students sit either one (for Double Award scientists) or two GCSE examinations in the summer term of the Fifth Form.

- Paper 1 (110 marks) 2 hours
- Paper 2 (70 marks) 1 hour and 15 minutes

There is no coursework component to the syllabus as such, though examination questions on both written papers will draw on candidates' knowledge and understanding of various core practical skills. Broadly speaking, questions on both written papers assess the candidate's knowledge and understanding of theory and investigative skills. Candidates will be assessed by a mixture of different question styles, including multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions, calculations and extended open-response questions.

Topics covered are included below:

## Nature & Variety of Living Organisms

- Characteristics of living organisms
- Variety of living organisms

## Structures & Functions in Living Organisms

- Organisation
- Cell Structure
- Biological molecules
- Movement in & out of cells
- Nutrition
- Respiration
- Gas exchange
- Transport
- Excretion
- Co-ordination & response

## Reproduction & Inheritance

- Reproduction
- Inheritance

# Ecology & the Environment

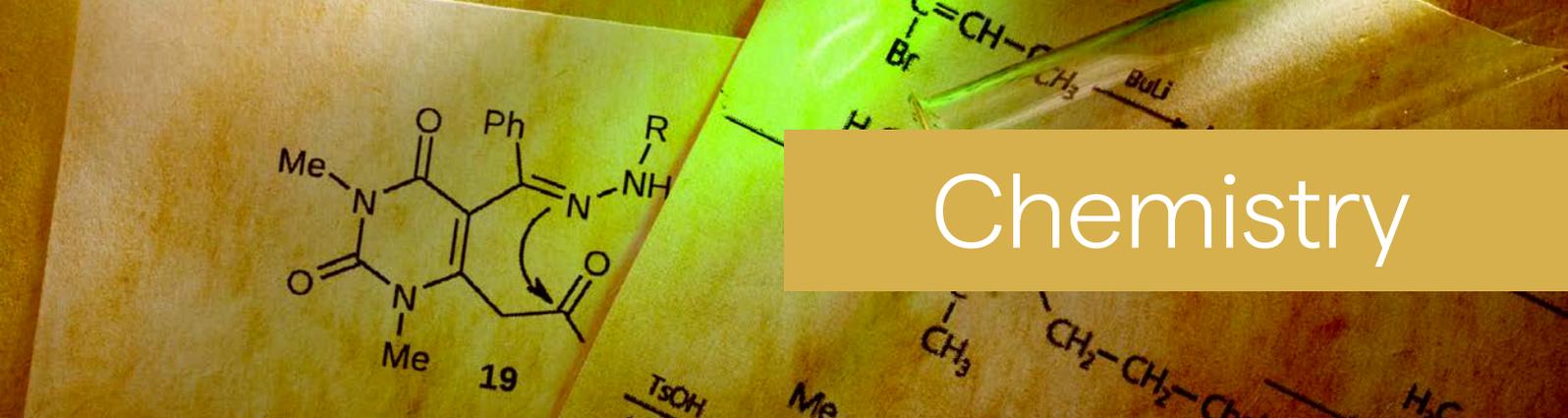
- Organisms in the environment
- Feeding relationships
- Cycles within ecosystems
- Human influences on the environment

# Use of Biological Resources

- Food production
- Selective breeding
- Genetic modification
- Cloning

The IGCSE course runs for three years, starting in the Fourth Form. Although partially hierarchical, the syllabus is topic based, and work covered in the early part of the course is commonly repeated in the extensive revision sessions that occupy the last 'spare' weeks of the Fifth Form.

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# Chemistry

The course in Chemistry follows the Edexcel IGCSE specification. This is a demanding course that covers a wide variety of material and is excellent preparation for A Level study.

Topics studied are divided into four main components:

1. Principles of chemistry: States of Matter, Chemical Formulae, Structure and Bonding.
2. Inorganic chemistry: Alkali Metals, Halogens, Reactivity, Acids & Bases, Chemical Analysis.
3. Physical chemistry: Energetics, Rates of Reactions, Chemical Equilibria.
4. Organic chemistry: Crude Oil, Hydrocarbons, Esters, Synthetic Polymers.

Whilst there is no coursework element, practical work forms a major part of the course, and 20% of the written examinations test candidates' practical understanding.

Two exams are set at the end of the Fifth Form:

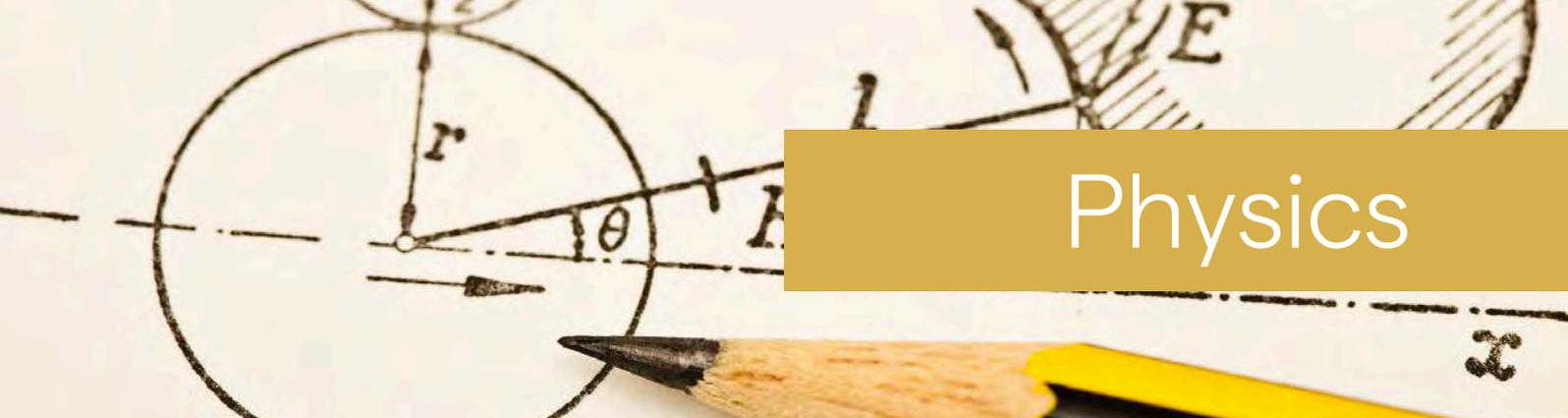
Paper 1 tests core topics and, taken alongside papers in Biology and Physics, leads to an IGCSE Double Award in Science.

Paper 2 tests extension topics and candidates taking papers 1 and 2 qualify for an IGCSE in Chemistry.

Paper 1: Chemistry	Paper 2: Chemistry
2-hour written examination	1 hour and 15-minute written examination
The total number of marks is 110, 61.1% of the total International GCSE.	The total number of marks is 70, 38.9% of the total International GCSE.

Anyone thinking of studying for an A Level in Chemistry should opt for Triple Science at IGCSE as this provides the best foundation for further study. The IGCSE course runs for three years, starting at the beginning of the Fourth Form. The course is cumulative and content from the early part of the course is required for full understanding of the later topics.

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# Physics

Studying Physics encourages you to look at the world around you with an inquiring and open mind, to explain why physical phenomena happen. Problem solving, experimental work and forming explanations are key parts of the study of Physics. You will develop your ability to apply your understanding to unfamiliar situations, a useful skill for life in general.

The Edexcel IGCSE Physics course introduces all the fundamental topics which you need in order to understand the subject and then develops these by further study and investigation. You will apply Physics to many everyday situations such as keeping your home heating bills low or using electricity safely. There are many tougher areas too, such as understanding what makes a nuclear reactor work and the principles on which an electrical generator works.

The examination consists of a two-hour and a one-hour paper which are taken during the Summer Term of the Fifth Form. Both of these papers include questions on the practical aspects of the subject and there is no coursework. Candidates aiming for Double Award Science only sit the first paper.

The topic sections are Forces and Motion; Electricity; Waves; Energy Resources and Energy Transfer; Solids, liquids and Gases; Magnetism and Electromagnetism; Radioactivity and Particles and Astrophysics. Most of the topics will be examined in paper 1; the sub-topics which are not in paper 1 are specified in the syllabus. Questions in paper 2 may assess any area in the whole syllabus.

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Modern Languages

# Modern Languages

## *Edexcel*

Modern Languages are core subjects for GCSE/IGCSE in nearly all leading independent schools in the UK. At Merchant Taylors' we lay considerable importance on the necessity to reach at least a competent level in a minimum of one foreign language. In addition to language skills, you will acquire knowledge of contemporary issues gleaned through the study of multimedia resources and short literary extracts and you will gain a study skillset that is different to all other subjects taught in the school. Languages are recommended by the DoE (Department of Education) as facilitating subjects for university entry. Recent government initiatives have also sought to counteract the desperate shortage of linguists in the UK and, needless to say, your university and career prospects are considerably enhanced with a language qualification. If you have enjoyed your Fourth Form French course and/or your introduction to German or Spanish, you are already very well-placed to explore a second language further and acquire a second, increasingly valuable, qualification.

At Merchant Taylors' you will study the IGCSE syllabus (we currently use Edexcel) which we consider to be a better preparation for Sixth Form study and beyond. This syllabus is used by a large number of independent schools in the country. This requires candidates to demonstrate competence in the four linguistic skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. We use the same syllabus for all three main languages so that you have the security of following the same exam syllabus: you can concentrate on the language rather than on a different set of skills and papers. The speaking is tested by your teacher at the end of the course, and the test involves the discussion of a picture prepared in advance and a discussion of specified conversation topics covered during the course. The other three skills are tested in individual papers at the end of the course in a very similar format to your 13+ examination or your forthcoming end-of-year examination.

We use a mixture of authentic materials (texts, films, video clips, short literary extracts) and textbook materials that are directly relevant to the syllabus and there are opportunities for film analysis, acting, film-making, fiction reading and debating. In the Fifth Form and often in the Divisions Year, a language assistant provides conversation practice in small groups.

We organise numerous trips and exchanges to France, Germany, Austria and Spain and we also run excursions into London and host regular Panglossia (the MFL Society) events, which you are most welcome to attend.

By the end of the IGCSE course, you should be in a position to cope with everyday situations with confidence. The emphasis placed on speaking and listening activities facilitates the process of language acquisition and encourages self-expression, as well as the ability to understand the gist of what is said by native speakers. Reading is another important feature of the course and a wide range of materials is made available. You will learn how to extract relevant pieces of information, a skill which will continue to be of practical use later in life.

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# French

Have you noticed that the words ‘Dieu et mon droit’ and ‘Honi soit qui mal y pense’ - both in French - appear on the cover of your UK passport? These enduring expressions reflect the deep historical and cultural ties between England and France, and the long-standing influence of French on British institutions and traditions.

French remains one of the most widely studied and influential languages in the world. According to the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, French is the fifth most spoken language globally and the second most widely taught foreign language after English (Ministère de l’Europe et des Affaires étrangères, 2022). Moreover, the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) estimates that there are currently over 320 million French speakers worldwide, a figure projected to rise significantly by 2050 due to demographic growth in Africa, making French one of the fastest-growing global languages (OIF, *La langue française dans le monde*, 2022).

French is a very popular subject at Merchant Taylors’. Not only is it an integral part of our national heritage and culture, but it also provides an excellent foundation for learning other modern languages, whether during a pupil’s time at Merchant Taylors’ or later in life. Employers consistently recognise the value of French: the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and Pearson Education have repeatedly identified French as one of the most valuable languages for UK businesses, particularly in sectors such as finance, diplomacy, engineering, and international trade (CBI/Pearson Education and Skills Survey, 2019; British Council, *Languages for the Future*, updated 2023).

As highlighted by the insights shared by many of our speakers at the inaugural MTS Careers Languages Convention in May 2025, a qualification in French opens doors to a wide range of rewarding and internationally focused careers. French is highly valued in law, finance, diplomacy and international relations, where it is used daily in organisations such as the United Nations, the European Union, NATO and international courts. It is also a key language in business and commerce: many multinational companies operate across Europe, Canada and Africa, and actively seek employees who can negotiate, build relationships and work confidently in French. Sectors such as engineering, energy, medicine, pharmaceuticals, technology and global development increasingly operate in francophone markets, particularly in rapidly growing African economies where French is often the main working language. French is equally valuable in creative and cultural industries - including journalism, publishing, film, fashion and art history - as well as in tourism, hospitality and international education. Crucially, even where French is not used every day, employers consistently value language graduates for their analytical skills, cultural awareness, precision in communication and adaptability. For pupils entering an increasingly global job market, French is therefore both a practical professional asset and a marker of academic breadth that strengthens applications for competitive university courses and careers.

In French, we follow the Edexcel specification, as in other modern languages, allowing pupils - particularly double linguists - to transfer essential skills and learning strategies across languages.

The subject is taught in sets from the beginning of the Fourth Form, with some resetting at the end of the year. Our aim is to develop highly competent linguists with strong proficiency across all four core skills: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening.

The IGCSE course provides a rigorous and well-regarded foundation for further study in French at Sixth Form level. France has a distinguished intellectual and academic tradition: historically, French authors have received more Nobel Prizes in Literature than any other country, and France ranks second globally for Fields Medals in Mathematics, behind the United States (Nobel Prize official database; International Mathematical Union, 2024).

The IGCSE therefore represents an excellent stepping stone to French at A Level and, alongside other subjects, forms a powerful and intellectually coherent academic combination. French is particularly valuable for pupils with interests in Economics, English, Fine Arts, History, Law, Mathematics and Engineering, Medicine, and Music, where linguistic precision and intercultural understanding are essential.

Throughout the IGCSE course, pupils benefit from a wide range of multimedia resources, including personalised online language-learning platforms, regular speaking sessions with the French Assistants, and structured exposure to French culture through film extracts, video clips, songs, and literary texts. These resources are designed to enhance both linguistic competence and cultural awareness.

We are also pleased to have maintained our linguistic and cultural programme, including a joint exchange initiative with the academically renowned École Alsacienne in Paris. In addition, pupils have access to a variety of private exchange opportunities, holiday courses, and work-experience placements. Given our proximity to central London, pupils are regularly offered opportunities to attend cultural and educational events - such as study days and screenings at the British Film Institute (BFI) - and are strongly encouraged to engage fully in these experiences to encounter French language and culture first-hand.

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Head of French  
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# German

Studying German to IGCSE level gives students the opportunity to explore a language closely related to English. Speaking German is desired not only by some employers, but it should also be viewed as a skill which a well-rounded and educated individual offers. Germany is a highly modern and advanced country which recognises the value of those outside its borders who speak its language. It should also be remembered that German is an official language in no fewer than seven countries as well as a second language for much of Eastern Europe. As German is related to English, learning German represents an excellent chance to gain a solid grounding in a more straightforward language, the skills of which might be applied to the learning of other more complex languages at tertiary level and beyond.

Our Edexcel IGCSE course in German is an accelerated one, based on the fact that many of the generic language-learning skills have been covered in the Lower School French course. Boys have the chance to work equally on their speaking, reading, writing and listening skills, and this will prepare them appropriately to make those initial visits to German-speaking countries, be it on exchange or some other form of travel.

Our students soon become confident in using complex linguistic structures, and by the end of the IGCSE German course pupils should be in a position to talk and write about a variety of everyday situations, whether it be their hometown, a film they have seen, topical issues such as the environment, or their future plans and career choices. They can offer opinions on a variety of issues and communicate meaningfully with another German speaker.

The IGCSE course is a strong foundation for success at future German study in the Sixth Form. It is important that the study of German be viewed as complementary to a student's other chosen subjects, and not necessarily as a means to an end; German is especially useful to those with an interest in mathematics & engineering, economics & finance, medicine, history, the law, the fine arts and music. The German Government readily makes funds available to students who wish to pursue their studies in Germany.

The German Department organises an exchange programme for boys in the Divisions and the Fifth Form with a grammar school in northern Germany as well as the chance to complete both work-experience and language courses in Klagenfurt, Austria. Such opportunities are clearly only open to those who study German.

Looking further ahead, the German Department has seen a rise in universities offering German as part of their degrees, e.g. International Business and German. The Erasmus programme is, once again, available to UK residents as well. Becoming a competent speaker of German is an achievable and desirable skill which can only make our students stand out more from the pack for all the right reasons and help to address the large lack of linguists across government and industry.

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# Spanish

Why bother learning a foreign language now that the UK has left the EU and we can translate everything on our phones? Whilst technology has an important place in our lives, most of us would agree that face-to-face interaction and interpersonal skills are indispensable (think virtual learning vs. classroom learning). One thing about Brexit is certain, we are going to have to work a lot harder in future to do business abroad. If you have a decent command of a foreign language, you will be more marketable and have more career choices than your monolingual counterpart.

In terms of number of native speakers, Spanish is number two language in the world, ahead of English. Recent CBI surveys indicate that Spanish is also one of the most valued languages for UK businesses, not just to trade with Spain, but also with the emerging markets of South America, so there is certain to be an increased need for good Hispanists in future job markets.

The Spanish Edexcel IGCSE course gives candidates the oral and aural skills necessary to cope with a variety of everyday situations in Spanish and enables pupils to read simple literary and non-literary texts for pleasure. Without the ability to communicate and understand a culture on its own terms, true access to that culture is impossible. Alongside the course we aim to provide a snapshot of Hispanic culture via films and articles and videos on music, sport, and general current affairs.

Spanish is generally used in the classroom and a range of activities is maintained right up to IGCSE. A real focus is on being able to speak the language. We organise a language trip to Granada and an exchange with a Spanish school in Málaga for Fifth Form and Sixth Form pupils and this has proved extremely popular and successful. Those who participate in these trips find them a motivating experience which brings to life the language they have learned in school in a real context. In addition, we employ a native speaker for conversation practice, and you will have the benefit of oral exam practice in small groups in the Divisions and Fifth Form during some of your lesson time.

As with any language, Spanish will require a willingness to acquire vocabulary and master grammar but with regular and consistent application, you will find the demands of the course well within your capabilities.

Spanish can be combined successfully with many subjects to IGCSE and beyond. As a language, it offers a different skillset and approach and, besides degree courses in Modern Languages, some of our best Hispanists have gone on to read Medicine, Law, Business/Economics as well as many of the other Humanities.

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# Art & Design

# Art & Design

## *OCR*

### Introduction

GCSE Art & Design offers an exceptional opportunity for those fascinated by the visual world to expand and develop their understanding. The course is an opportunity for self-expression and each student's projects will be led by their own specific interests.

### Rationale

We promote and develop transferable skills applicable to any artistic discipline: imagination, creativity, lateral thinking and invention are all prized assets of the artist. These skills are first developed and encouraged through a structured, non-assessed course in the autumn term of the Divisions, in which you will learn all the essentials of drawing, painting, Photoshop, and sculpture - the skills needed for your GCSE coursework. This course is accompanied by weekly homework. From then on, pupils choose their own projects, deciding for themselves what to do in each lesson and for their homework.

### Contents

The course contains one major coursework project (60%) and an exam project (40%). For each of these, students make a range of preparatory studies and experiments, recorded in sketchbooks and which lead up to a 'final piece'. The final piece for the exam project is made over two days under exam conditions. There are lots of options available within the course, as once coursework begins in the Divisions, pupils choose their own themes to explore, setting their own classwork and homework. This means you can encounter painting, drawing, sculpture, printmaking, and photography throughout. In all cases boys direct their work in accordance with their personal motivations and enthusiasm.

The culminating Summer Show is a chance to exhibit the best of boys' productions to an invited audience. The unique environment of the Life Class (working from the figure) provides a forum for serious and sophisticated young artists to engage with a long established discipline.

### Beyond the Course

The course offers a unique experience in itself by making a rich and imaginative contribution to your studies, but it is an essential requirement for those wishing to pursue the subject into the Sixth Form and beyond. Artists work in a vast number of fields and the number of courses on offer is phenomenal, reflecting the growth of an image conscious world – it is imperative that we have intelligent and talented people leading the way. For example, Architecture or Product Design provide a genuinely interesting blend of the creative, visual, and mathematical, to help shape the way we live; Art is the preferred way of evidencing creative thinking in applicant portfolios for most of those subjects.

GCSE Art & Design is a hugely rewarding subject, the sense of engagement and wonder that boys enjoy from making Art balances the time and effort required to secure a top grade. If you have any further queries, do speak to me or to your teacher – we will be happy to show you some examples of GCSE work.

J R Gosden  
Head of Art & Design  
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The background of the slide is a close-up, slightly blurred photograph of ancient Greek inscriptions carved into stone. The text is arranged in horizontal lines, and the lighting creates a sense of depth and texture. A solid yellow horizontal bar is positioned in the lower third of the image, containing the title text.

# Classical Languages



# Latin *OCR*

In 19BC, the greatest Roman poet, Virgil, died, with his greatest work, the Aeneid, almost completed. He left instructions in his will that it had to be burned. The Emperor Augustus intervened and saved the work. For GCSE Latin, you will read Virgil's very words.

Reading Latin literature - some of the greatest poetry, oratory, and historical writing ever created - is where your study of Latin has been leading for the past few years. You will spend the first half of the Divisions year consolidating your understanding of the language, and becoming acquainted with all of the features of the language that are needed for the GCSE. Most of these features have been covered by the end of the Fourth Form.

You will then begin to explore the poetry and prose written by the likes of Caesar, Cicero and Ovid, before studying in real depth the passages that are set for the GCSE exam. Your study of the set texts will continue through the Fifth Form. One of these texts will be a section of Virgil's Aeneid, the tale of Aeneas' journey from Troy to Italy, and the consequent beginnings of the Roman race.

The GCSE involves three exams: one language exam - that is, translation and comprehension - and two literature exams. You will have studied the texts for the literature exam in detail in the course of class. The exam requires you to answer questions on these texts and to translate sections.

There have been trips for GCSE Classicists to Italy, Sicily, and Greece in recent years. Such trips provide the opportunity to see Classical remains in their defiant splendour.

In the course of your lessons, you will make discoveries about the history, art, and everyday life of the Roman world, and behold its legacy through frequent digressions into other literature, art and politics. Latin is highly regarded by universities and employers and has been a crucial part of the school syllabus for hundreds of years. It is now available at a dwindling number of schools, but continues to flourish at Merchant Taylors'.

M J Bull  
Head of Classics  
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# Greek *OCR*

The epic poems of Homer are often regarded as the cornerstone of Western literature. In the course of Greek GCSE, you will discover why this is. You will be studying canonical texts, which have been read for over two thousand years, and which have formed the minds and shaped the culture of Europe.

Before beginning the study of this literature, you will strengthen the understanding of the language that you developed during the Fourth Form. By the end of the Divisions, you will have covered all of the GCSE language work and so can begin to focus on the set texts.

The study of Greek literature in the Fifth Form provides an exciting challenge, and a true insight into the Classical world: after only two years of learning the language, you can read some of the finest literature ever written. The authors vary from year to year, but recent texts have included courtroom speeches declaimed in the Athenian courts about murder and adultery, or accounts from the Father of History, Herodotus, on the cultural differences between tribes at the edges of the world. You will also read Homer or Euripides. Reading Homeric Greek, magnificent and dignified, and enjoyed for the last two and a half thousand years, is an experience available to few nowadays, and is an experience that will prove memorable and rewarding. Reading Euripides, who created some of the most terrifying yet humane characters in literature, will allow you to encounter one of the world's great tragedies.

In the course of the study of literature, you will come to see why these works are regarded as masterpieces. The literature exam makes up 50% of the GCSE, and through your answers to questions you will demonstrate your understanding and appreciation of the texts. The remaining 50% of the exam is translation of unseen Greek into English, and comprehension questions on a passage of unseen Greek.

There have been trips for GCSE Classicists to Italy, Sicily, and Greece in recent years. Such trips provide the opportunity to see Classical remains in their defiant splendour.

Greek has been studied at Merchant Taylors' since its foundation, and the school has produced many distinguished Classicists. It is a highly-respected subject, which is generally regarded as a serious and rigorous academic discipline. If you have enjoyed your study of Greek so far and wish to understand and to appreciate the Classical world in a setting that will encourage discussion and independent thought, then GCSE Greek will prove an enjoyable and a rewarding undertaking.

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# Gratin - Greek & Latin Combined *OCR*

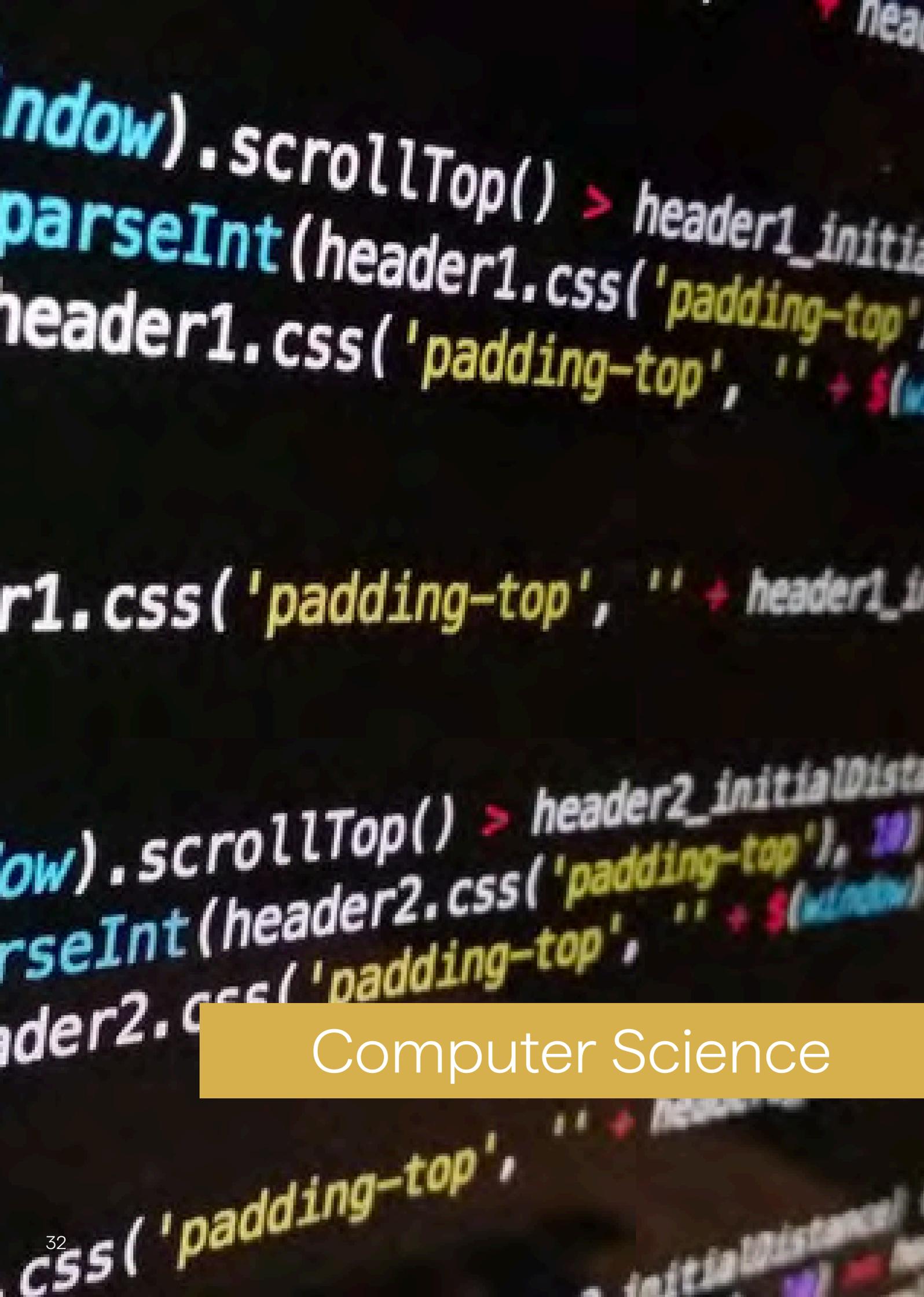
The Classical Greek and Latin combined course is aimed at those pupils who took up the second Classical language in the Fourth Form and should enable them to gain two GCSEs in one timetable slot. The course is only for those who show the correct combination of aptitude and attitude in their prior studies and is realistically only for the most linguistically able. Progression on to the course is not automatic and will involve consultation with their current teacher, the Head of Department and the Deputy Head (Academic).

The intense nature of the course means that it will be primarily linguistic, as there will be less time available for the discussion of history and culture than there is in the straight Latin or Greek GCSEs. This is not to say that the course will not be varied. Pupils will be introduced to literature in both languages, with the set text selection being taken from a number of different genres. The study of this will form the basis of much of the Fifths. For the range of authors studied, please see the information provided in the Latin and Greek individual subject details.

In Divisions, pupils will continue to develop their knowledge of the language, studying Greek and Latin grammar, vocabulary and syntax using the Latin/Greek to GCSE textbooks. Towards the middle of the Divisions year, once their Latin language prescription is complete, they will begin to study the Latin prose set text, whilst also completing the Greek language prescription. In Fifths, the students will complete their literature studies whilst also consolidating their linguistic knowledge with a range of vocabulary tests, unseen translations and past papers.

The course offers a unique opportunity to study two of the most prestigious, well respected and challenging subjects at GCSE level on a reduced timetable provision. Students will need to be well organised, motivated and academically ambitious to succeed.

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# Computer Science

# Computer Science

## AQA

The Computing department offers a two-year GCSE course in Computer Science from AQA (8525).

Computer Science is about problem solving and making things work. Its mixture of the theoretical and the practical appeals to those who enjoy working through solutions for themselves and seeing their ideas come to life on screen. The course covers C# programming, the analysis of complex systems, algorithms, Boolean logic, and explores how computer devices work in some detail, considering a range of hardware and software in use today. The course is examined in two written papers at the end of the two years and there is no coursework. Studying GCSE Computer Science will provide a solid introduction to current and future technology, problem-solving and computer programming, which is becoming increasingly important for those who go on to study science, engineering and computing at A Level and beyond.

## Computer Science includes the study of:

- Problem-solving: algorithm design, problem-solving, structure diagrams, flow charts, pseudo-code, testing
- Programming in C#: sequence, selection, repetition, subroutines, data structures; the second examination includes pre-release material and questions released in advance
- Data representation: binary, hexadecimal, logic gates, error detection, data compression
- Databases: tables, keys and SQL queries
- Communication and internet technologies: data transmission, security, HTML & CSS
- Hardware and software: logic gates, computer architecture, the fetch-execute cycle, input and output devices, storage devices, operating systems, computer languages
- Security: data corruption, passwords, firewalls, SSL, encryption, hacking
- Ethics: copyright, plagiarism, licensing, malware

If you choose GCSE Computer Science, you will develop your programming and problem-solving skills and learn more about how computers work. Programming and computation are important skills in many mathematical, engineering, scientific, technical and computing courses and careers. The GCSE will prepare you well for any STEM pathway, as well as for A Level Computer Science.

## Examinations

The course has two written examinations and no coursework. Paper 1 (2 hours) covers problem solving and programming (50% of the total marks). Paper 2 (1 hour 45 minutes) covers theory (50% of the total marks).

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# Design & Technology

# Design & Technology

## AQA

Design Engineering Technology is the ideal route into engineering. It is a highly creative subject where you are free to explore a number of avenues, from Mechanical Systems, Robotics, Traditional Craft and Engineering to name but a few. Students who study in our facility have gone on to win national awards and many to read courses in Aeronautical, Civil and Design Engineering Architecture, Motorsports, Product Design and Robotics at university.

The GCSE course follows the AQA Design and Technology 8552 Specification and half of the overall mark comes from the coursework aspect, the other from a theory based exam.

Coursework begins in the summer of the divisions year and can be any project you can conceive within some broad AQA guidelines. This extensive portfolio documents the whole process, from finding a client, taking some initial sketches into top quality CAD models, prototyping and testing finally to manufacturing your project in the well-equipped workshops. An iterative approach to design is essential, constantly improving upon failures and amending prototypes as a result.

We run weekly theory lessons to prepare for the exam on topics such as materials & properties, manufacturing processes and the environmental impact of industry. Students will be required to use applied mathematics over the course as all D&T exams must contain at least 15% mathematics content in them, highlighting the link between D&T and other STEM subjects.

No prior knowledge is necessary when choosing D&T and boys who joined MTS in the Fourth Form should feel confident in their ability to succeed due to the support of our fantastic staff and facilities. The Department will however expect boys who opt for D&T to be both good at organising their time and be self-motivated. Divisions year we take on two projects marked in the GCSE format and introduce 3D printing and metal joining with welding and brazing in preparation for the coursework.

Should you have any further queries about Design and Technology at GCSE feel free to talk to either your Design Engineering Technology teacher or to me directly.

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# Drama

# Drama

## AQA

Students follow the AQA GCSE Drama course (8261). 70% of the final grade is assessed through written work. 30% of the final grade is assessed through practical work.

## Why study the subject?

Drama offers students the opportunity to explore a range of creative and critical thinking skills. They are encouraged to become imaginative and confident performers. The subject enables students to develop key skills applicable to a variety of careers as they learn to present themselves in public with confidence. They also learn to collaborate, communicate and negotiate with others, to think analytically and evaluate effectively. Whatever the future holds, a GCSE Drama student will emerge with a toolkit of transferable skills invaluable for study at university and in the workplace. Drama students have gone on to pursue careers in Politics, Media, Medicine, Events Management, Teaching, as well as in the Entertainment Industry.

## Aim of the course

- To encourage exploration and active engagement in a wide range of creative and stimulating activities
- To promote independent learning and critical, reflective enquiry
- To develop a range of practical, creative and performance skills
- To facilitate imaginative and contemporary work in a collaborative context

## Course Content

The course offers students the opportunity to explore drama as a practical art form in which ideas and meaning are communicated to an audience through choices of form, style and convention. Students will be introduced to key practitioners, theoretical influences and influential playwrights whilst developing and building their core practical performance skills. The content for GCSE Drama is divided into three components:

1. Understanding drama (written examination)
2. Devising drama (practical process/performance and written coursework portfolio)
3. Texts in practice (practical performance)

## Methods of Assessment

**Component 1 (40%)** consists of the written paper – an open book exam of 1¾ hours

Section A: multiple choice questions on knowledge and understanding of drama and theatre (4 marks)

Section B: four questions on a given extract from the set play (chosen from a choice of six) (46 marks)

Section C: one question on the work of theatre makers in a single live theatre production (30 marks)

**Component 2 (40%)** consists of creating and performing devised drama (20 marks). Students will analyse and evaluate their own work with the creation and development of a written coursework portfolio (60 marks).

**Component 3 (20%)** consists of an exploration and performance of two extracts from a play (40 marks in total)

All practical examination assessments will be in the form of Acting. There are likely to be opportunities to work on design and technical aspects of production during the course although this will not be part of the formal examination assessment.

Students taking GCSE Drama have the opportunity to take part in exciting theatre visits. In recent years, students have also enjoyed excellent practical workshops with internationally renowned theatre companies including Frantic Assembly. GCSE Drama students also often audition for roles in our major School Productions. The department supports GCSE students preparing for National Youth Theatre auditions.

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# Geography

# Geography

## AQA

Do you have an inquisitive mind and are you fascinated by the world around you? Geography is part of everyday life: urban change, quality of life, flooding, volcanic eruptions, deforestation, globalisation and energy provision. These are all issues that make headline news regularly and form part of our GCSE course. We teach the AQA specification, and you will take three exam papers which will assess Human and Physical Geography as well as a range of geographical skills including fieldwork experience. Our teaching team is fully committed to supporting you throughout your course to ensure you both enjoy it and are ultimately successful in your exams.

All students will be able to enjoy exploring Geography in the real world through fieldwork trips to Coal Drops Yard in King's Cross, and the River Chess near Amersham, as well as optional expeditions abroad at some stage in their GCSE or A level careers. The current Fourth Form students have already started their GCSE course by studying the 'Challenge of Natural Hazards' topic, and so should be aware of the engaging lesson activities, interesting contemporary content, and wide range of revision and exam technique support available on Teams.

The course is split roughly into 50% Human Geography and 50% Physical Geography. In the Divisions students will build on their knowledge and understanding from the Natural Hazards Topic studied in the Fourth Form and will start the year studying Urban Issues and Challenges before moving on to the Physical Landscapes of the UK and the Changing Economic World modules. Towards the end of the Divisions, students will begin work on the fieldwork preparation which will include visits to the River Chess and King's Cross' recently regenerated Coal Drops Yard. The modules studied in the Divisions focus on human interaction with their natural and built environment as well as consider ways in which to manage society and landscape. The focus for the Fifth Form is on geography as a tool for sustainable management of global and regional issues. Students will start the year focusing on the Living World module and then move on to Challenge of Resource Management before completing the Geographical Skills and Applications module in preparation for Paper 3. Further details on the course components can be found here:

<https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/geography/specifications/AQA-8035-SP-2016.PDF>

At the end of the Fifth Form, all students will sit three papers. Paper 1 is worth 35% of the total marks and will assess students' knowledge and understanding of the physical modules (Natural Hazards, Living World and Physical landscapes in the UK). Paper 2 will assess the human geography modules (Urban Issues, Economic World and Resource Management). This is also worth 35% of the total mark. The remaining 30% is assessed in Paper 3, which will draw on students' geographical skills and will include a problem-solving activity based on pre-released material provided by the exam board. It will also ask questions relating to fieldwork, both generally and in relation to two individual studies. Candidates will also be assessed on a range of practical skills including basic numeracy, data interpretation, and map skills.

Geography provides a strong bridge between Arts and Sciences and it is a respected and popular choice at A Level. It complements many other subjects and allows for a degree of individualism in answers to examination questions. It is particularly useful in supporting subjects like Economics and Politics at A Level. It also provides the analytical, numerical, literacy and ICT skills that employees look for and this is why Geographers are known to be highly employable.

Our expanded programme of expeditions will provide you with the opportunity to experience geographical processes and landforms first-hand in such locations as Iceland, Switzerland, California, Morocco, China and the Azores.

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# History

# History

## *Cambridge International*

IGCSE History will enable you to:

- Acquire knowledge and understanding of the periods studied - International Relations 1919-1989 and Germany 1918-1945.
- Investigate key historical events, changes, people and issues from this period.
- Develop an understanding of how the period has been represented and interpreted.
- Explore historical concepts such as cause and consequence, change and continuity, and similarity and difference.
- Use historical sources, both primary and secondary, critically in their historical context.
- Organise and communicate your knowledge and understanding of the period.
- Draw conclusions and appreciate that these and other historical conclusions are liable to reassessment in the light of new or reinterpreted evidence.
- Develop an interest in and enthusiasm for History.

You will consider the following historical questions:

- Were the peace treaties of 1919–23 fair?
- To what extent was the League of Nations a success?
- Why had international peace collapsed by 1939?
- Was the Weimar Republic doomed from the start?
- Why was Hitler able to dominate Germany by 1934?
- How effectively did the Nazis control Germany, 1933–45?
- What was it like to live in Nazi Germany?
- Who was to blame for the Cold War?
- How effectively did the USA contain the spread of Communism?

In 2028, you will sit:

**Component 1** = 40% (2 hours)

Written paper - Candidates answer three questions, split into three parts: (a: 4 marks), (b: 6 marks) and (c: 10 marks). (60 marks)

**Component 2** = 30% (1 hour 45 minutes)

Written paper - Candidates answer five questions on one prescribed topic taken from the Core Content. There is a range of source material relating to each topic. (40 marks)

The department is reviewing the following components, and a decision should be reached shortly after half term:

**Component 3** = 30% (5 lessons + homework)

One piece of extended writing, up to 2000 words in length, based on the Germany Depth Study. (40 marks)

**OR**

**Component 4** = 30% (1 hour)

Written paper and an alternative to Coursework - Candidates answer one question on the Germany Depth Study. All questions are in the form of structured essays, split into two parts: (a) and (b).

(40 marks)

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# Music

# Music

## *Edexcel*

Musicians have long-enjoyed the benefits of bringing together a wide range of inter-related and transferable skills and abilities forged through active and progressive music-making. This course is aimed at those who are interested in expanding their musical knowledge, understanding and skills, and in forming personal and meaningful relationships with music, while also fostering their creativity and imagination, developing their self-belief and confidence, nurturing an ability to communicate expressively, and simply learning to learn.

Edexcel's GCSE Music emphasises practical elements through performing and composing, and also encourages you to engage critically and creatively with a wide range of music, to develop an understanding of the place of music in different cultures and contexts, and to reflect on how music is used in the expression of personal and collective identities. During this course you will study music by composers spanning nearly 400 years, from Bach and Beethoven to Queen and John Williams (Star Wars).

There are three components to this course:

### Component 1: Performing (30%)

This is a coursework element worth 30% of the total mark. You will have ample opportunities to perform at school and should take advantage of these to perform as often as possible.

In the second year of the course, **you will record two performances** for submission: **one as a soloist** and **one as part of an ensemble**. The full range of marks in this component are possible for anyone who performs at Grade 4 standard or above. Don't worry if you are not already part of an established ensemble at school – there will be time to choose appropriate repertoire and form the necessary ensembles to rehearse with during the first year of the course.

Performing coursework is assessed by teachers in the Music Department and moderated by the exam board.

### Component 2: Composing (30%)

This is also a coursework element and is worth a further 30% of the total mark. Developing the skills to become a successful composer requires practice just as much as learning an instrument, and you should set aside regular time to do this outside of lessons as part of your weekly routine.

You will **compose two pieces of music**, **one to a brief of your own devising** agreed with your teacher, and **one to a brief set by the exam board** published at the start of the second year of the course. You will develop your composing skills through regular assignments that form part of the research phase for each piece. In the second year of the course, you will write up scores and make recordings of each composition under the supervision of your teacher.

Composing coursework is assessed by teachers in the Music Department and moderated by the exam board.

## Component 3: Listening & Appraising (40%)

This is a written paper which you will sit in the summer exam session at the end of the course and is worth the remaining 40% of the total mark. You will study music across a wide variety of styles and genres grouped into four Areas of Study, each of which contains two set works. In the paper you will respond to questions on recorded extracts of music taken from these set works, as well as unfamiliar but related music, and also answer one extended response question comparing musical features between a set work and another unfamiliar extract.

The four Areas of Study cover a wide range of musical styles and genres, each featuring two set works:

### **AOS1 Instrumental Music 1700–1820**

Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 by J. S. Bach  
Piano Sonata Op. 13 No. 8, 'Pathétique' by Beethoven

### **AOS2 Vocal Music**

Music for a While by Henry Purcell  
Killer Queen by Queen

### **AOS3 Music for Stage and Screen**

Defying Gravity from the Broadway Musical Wicked by Stephen Schwartz  
Music from Star Wars: Episode IV A New Hope by John Williams

### **AOS4 Fusions**

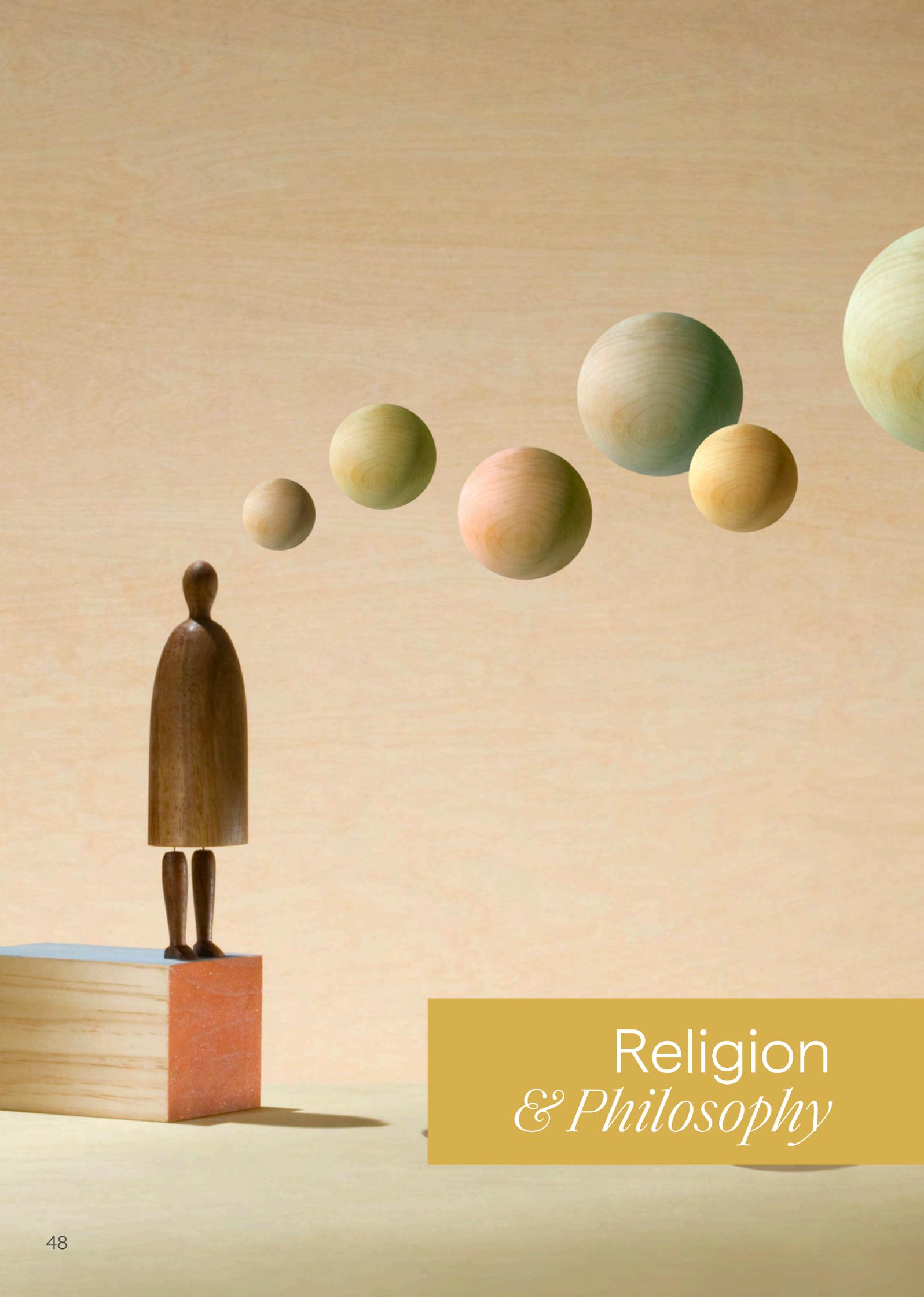
Release by the Afro Celt Sound System  
Samba em Prelúdio by Esperanza Spalding

Those who opt for GCSE Music **must** be taking instrumental or singing lessons either at School or privately and will continue these lessons throughout the course. All pupils will be expected to participate in as much music as possible at School, to perform, and take every opportunity to listen to both live and recorded performances.

During the course you will be expected to attend a trip to see the live theatrical production of Wicked as a group which the Music Department will organise.

Those pupils who haven't already passed the ABRSM Grade 5 Theory exam are expected to take this exam before the start of the course, or during the first term in the Divisions year at the very latest.

**D T Tonks**  
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Religion  
& *Philosophy*

# Religion, philosophy and ethics explored through Western and Eastern philosophy as well as non-religious views

## *AQA Religious Studies*

This GCSE course provides a vital understanding of the central ideas of both Western and Eastern philosophies. Explored through the figures of Jesus Christ and the Buddha, these teachings profoundly influence human thought, shaping ethics, politics, history, law, and personal belief systems globally. Exploring these perspectives and their immeasurable impact on society, we gain insight into the very core of moral and political dilemmas, helping navigate modern challenges. The GCSE fosters critical thinking, empathy, and cultural awareness, building intellectual tools to engage with diverse worldviews and contribute meaningfully to ethical and political debate.

## Is this course for you?

This GCSE course is for all, regardless of religious (or non-religious) practice or persuasion. It develops key communication, presentation, reasoning, questioning, creativity, analysis, and critical thinking skills, all of which are incredibly sought after at university and in future employment.

Studying Religious Studies (RS) will broaden and enrich your mind and empower you as an intellectual. However, GCSE RS would perhaps more accurately be described as a GCSE in Religion, Ethics and Philosophy. Approximately half the course focuses on ethical and philosophical issues. This makes it a relevant qualification for any career which involves working with other people – that's all careers! Aside from acting as an excellent basis for progressing to A Level Philosophy, it complements Humanities, Arts and Science subjects alike. Human beings continue to debate these issues in an ongoing attempt to understand the world around us, where physics, mathematics and politics reach their limits.

GCSE RS students explore both philosophical, religious and non-religious views on some of the most fundamental questions of human existence. In doing so, students learn how to interpret and evaluate information, then communicate and apply this knowledge to real world issues. Students are encouraged to form their own opinions on these issues and to actively engage with those who may challenge these views.

While discussion and debate are key, this course also offers extensive enrichment outside the classroom; The department plans to invite GCSE RS students to join them on a trip to explore the spiritual, cultural, and social life of Asia.

## Key course and assessment information

The course consists of two components. Each represents 50% of the total GCSE mark and is examined at the end of the Fifth Form.

You can find further information on the course on the [AQA subject content page here](#).

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# Sports Science

# Sports Science (Physical Education)

## AQA

The course is aimed at any boy who has a keen love for sport. It is designed to enable students to enjoy and understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and to provide a route to further study within Sports Science. It is not necessary to have studied Sports Science in the Fourths to access this course. The course is ideal for anyone who wants to learn more about how the body works and to look at how they can improve their own personal performance in sports. The course will complement anyone looking to do Biology, Psychology and of course, Sports Science at A Level.

The course addresses a wide range of topics that relate to optimising performance in sport including what to eat and when, injury prevention, the different components of fitness and how we can improve them. It also focuses on the cultural aspects of sport that influence an individual's involvement in healthy physical activities including: the role of the media, the establishment of the National Curriculum and its aims for school sport as well as social factors that influence sporting participation.

## Subject Content

1. Applied anatomy and physiology
2. Movement analysis
3. Physical training
4. Use of data
5. Sports psychology
6. Socio-cultural influences
7. Health, fitness and well-being

The theory part of the course makes up 60% of the GCSE. This is tested through two written exams. The rest of the marks available are made up from practical assessments (40%) in three sporting activities as well as an analysis and evaluation task.

## Non-Examined Assessment (practical component & coursework)

- Pupils are assessed in three sports made up of at least one individual sport and one team-based sport.
- As a guide, pupils must be proficient in at least two sports from the specification and pupils with a comprehensive level of competence in a variety of sports (from the specification) tend to perform well in this part of the course.
- The minimum standard of proficiency would be to the equivalent of a B team level in our school sports.
- Sports pursued outside of school (e.g. skiing, rock climbing etc) can contribute to the overall marks as well. We would recommend that students choose sports that they are playing regularly in or out of school.

- Pupils must maintain their performance levels outside of the GCSE lessons (through games activities or clubs) across the 2 years of study.
- Practical assessment for GCSE will be ongoing over the 2 years and then final mark submission is conducted in late spring/early summer term in the Fifth Form.
- A short piece of written coursework will be completed immediately after their trials in Fifth form.
- You do not need to have studied Sports Science at Fourth form to study it at GCSE.

**Please note, that it is essential that if you are unsure if you meet the practical performance requirements that you have a conversation with Mr Davies and Dr Evans before making your choices to discuss your suitability for the course.**

Team Activity List		Individual Activity List	
Acrobatic gymnastics	Ice hockey	Amateur boxing	Sailing
Association football	Inline roller hockey	Athletics	Sculling
Badminton	Lacrosse	Badminton	Skiing
Basketball	Netball	Canoeing/kayaking (slalom)	Snowboarding
Camogie	Rowing	Canoeing/kayaking (sprint)	Squash
Cricket	Rugby League	Cycling	Swimming
Dance	Rugby Union	Dance	Table tennis
Figure skating	Sailing	Diving	Tennis
Futsal	Sculling	Equestrian	Trampolining
Gaelic football	Squash	Figure skating	Windsurfing
Handball	Table tennis	Golf	
Hockey	Tennis	Gymnastics	
Hurling	Volleyball	Rock climbing	

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