

Options for Year 9/10



***A guide to
choosing your options***

This booklet gives you information about choosing your options for year 9 or 10, so that you can make informed decisions about your choices.

Contents

	Page
Introduction	3
Making choices and what to consider	4
Frequently asked questions	5
Skills and Interests that may relate to subjects	6
Qualifications	
GCSE	7
BTEC	8
Other qualifications	9
GCSE grading structure	10
English Bacculaureate (EBacc)	11
Points to remember	12
What to do next	12
Useful web sites	13
Other resources	14

A careers adviser from 15billionebp is available in your school to help you with your plans. The member of staff responsible for careers in your school will have details of when the careers adviser is available.

Introduction

Until now you will have studied a range of subjects. When choosing your options, you will have the opportunity to have some choice in what you study. This guide is designed to provide advice and information on choosing your options so that you can make an informed decision.

Remember, you will have to study your options until the end of year 11, so it is important that you make considered and informed choices.

Making choices and what to consider

Core subjects

It is important to do the best you can to achieve a grade 4 or above in English and Mathematics or you may have to continue with these after year 11.

Making good choices

- Spend time researching the options available to avoid making a decision that you may later regret! **Read through your school options booklet**, attend the options event and/or parents evening.
- Think about your own **abilities and interests**. What is going to be right for you? Ask yourself, whether the subjects you are choosing will inspire and motivate you for the next two years.
- If you already have a specific career idea in mind, check the suitability of your subject choices. Remember though, your career ideas may change and you may lose interest in the subject you have chosen.
- Your final choice should reflect your **strengths** - what you are good at and think you can **achieve** good grades in.
- **Discuss your choices**: speak with school staff, your careers adviser, form tutor, Head of Year, subject teachers, learning mentors, parents/carers, or students already studying the subject.

What to consider

- Some subjects are compulsory.
- What are your current grades or levels in the subjects you have already been doing?
- How is the subject assessed? Is it mainly exam or coursework? Which assessment method works best for you?
- How will your choices impact on the other subjects you study?
- How will your choices relate to what you intend to do after year 11?
- Year 10 is just as important as year 11. Do not think you can expect to do really well in year 11 if you do not work hard in year 10.
- The qualifications you gain can influence what you do after year 11, in terms of education, training and employment.

Frequently asked questions

Which options should I choose?

Choose subjects you like, know you can do well in and reflect your interests or help you learn in the best way for you.

You may want to think about your future plans but, if you are unsure about this, try and choose a balanced selection.

Do not choose a subject because:

- your friend is planning to do it- your friend may be put into a different group;
- you think it may be easy- the subject may be harder than you think;
- you like your current teacher- you may have a different teacher!

Also, be very careful of choosing a subject which an elder sibling has done- you may have very different abilities and interests.

What should I do if I am unsure about my choices?

Get information, advice and guidance from different sources: your careers advisor, form tutor, Head of Year, current teacher, learning mentors, parents/carers, or students already studying the subject.

You may also want to visit your school website careers page to check for information, 'Newham Sussed' magazine online or other websites (see the back of this booklet)

Will I get the options I choose?

There is no guarantee you will get all your choices.

What if I don't like my choice of subject?

There is no guarantee you will be able to change your choice in September. However, if you have a good reason for changing, speak to the appropriate member of school staff as soon as possible.

Skills & Interests that may relate to subjects

Good with Numbers: Business Studies, Computer Science, Design & Technology (Food Technology, Electronics, Resistant Materials, Textiles), Engineering, ICT, Geography, History, Maths, Science, Sociology, Statistics.

Communicating: Art & Design, Technology, Drama, Business Studies, ICT, English, Languages, Geography, History, Music, PE, Philosophy & Ethics, Psychology, Religious Education/Studies, Science, Sociology, Sport.

Being Creative: Art & Design, Design & Technology (Food Technology, Electronics, Resistant Materials, Textiles), Drama, Dance, English, Engineering, Graphics, History, ICT, Media, Music, Sociology.

Observing: Art & Design, English, Languages, Food, Geography, History, Maths, Music, PE, Psychology, Religious Education/Studies, Science, Sociology, Sport.

Solving Problems: Art & Design, Business Studies, Computer Science, Design & Technology (Food Technology, Electronics, Resistant Materials, Textiles), Engineering, Geography, History, ICT, Maths, Psychology, Science, Sociology, Statistics.

Selecting Materials: Art & Design, Design & Technology (Food Technology, Electronics, Resistant Materials, Textiles), Engineering, Graphics, History, Science, Sociology.

Setting up Experiments: Design & Technology (Food Technology, Electronics, Resistant Materials, Textiles), Engineering, ICT, History, Maths, Psychology, Science, Sociology.

Showing an interest in the environment: Art & Design, Design & Technology (Food Technology, Electronics, Resistant Materials, Textiles), English, Engineering, Geography, History, Languages, Religious Education, Science, Sociology.

Showing an interest in living things: Geography, Religious Education, Science

Using a language other than English: Business Studies, Computer Science, ICT, Languages, Maths.

Work independently: Art & Design, Business Studies, Computer Science, Design & Technology (Food Technology, Electronics, Resistant Materials, Textiles), Drama, Geography, History, ICT, Languages, Maths, Music, PE, Sociology, Sport, Statistics.

Remembering: Business Studies, Computer Science, Dance, Design & Technology (Food Technology, Electronics, Resistant Materials, Textiles), Drama, English, Geography, History, ICT, Languages, Maths, Music, Psychology, Religious Education/Studies, Science, Sociology, Statistics.

Understanding yourself and others: Business Studies, Design & Technology (Food Technology, Electronics, Resistant Materials, Textiles), English, PE, Psychology, Religious Education/Studies, Sociology, Sport.

Qualifications

Depending on your abilities, interests, strengths and current grades or levels, your school will offer GCSE and may also offer some other types of qualifications:

GCSE

Highly valued by schools, colleges, universities and employers, GCSEs give access to a range of careers, further study or an apprenticeship.

They mainly involve studying the basic theory of a subject combined with some investigative work and are usually studied full-time at a school or college.

All GCSEs contain exams. You may also be assessed through coursework which can include research, essays, projects, investigations, artwork, fieldwork, orals, experiments or other practicals.

- Study over 2 years;
- In-depth study, intensive reading and assessed by exams and limited coursework;
- New GCSEs are linear, the exam at the end of two years will determine your final grade;
- New GCSEs are graded 9-1;
- You may be studying a mix of new GCSE (grade 9-1) and old GCSE (grade A*-G);
- Many GCSE students go on to sixth form or college.

Note:

- September 2016 will be the mid-phase introduction of changes to GCSE.
- Prior to the changes, GCSEs were modular and graded A* - G.
- From Sep 2016, only Business, Design & Technology, Economics, Electronics, Engineering, Film Studies, Media Studies, Psychology, Sociology and Statistics will remain unchanged with the new reformed GCSE for these subjects being introduced in Sept 2017.

The new GCSE grades explained can be viewed at:

<https://youtu.be/JiKFNcklg6M>

or, you can go on to YouTube and type in 'New GCSE Grades Explained'

Further information on the reforms to GCSE can be obtained at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/timeline-of-changes-to-gcses-as-and-a-levels/changes-to-gcses-as-and-a-levels-that-will-affect-each-current-school-year-group>

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/465873/your_qualification_our_regulation.pdf

IMPORTANT:

Check with your school on how they are approaching the changes and reforms to GCSE.

BTEC

Developed in consultation with employers and higher education experts, BTECs are **work-related** qualifications. They demonstrate high standards of knowledge and develop practical, interpersonal and thinking skills essential for professional, working life.

Mainly assessed through assignments, some BTECs contain externally marked tests which may be paper-based or taken on a computer. Assignments can include tests, research, essays, projects, investigations, artwork, fieldwork, experiments and often link theory with practical exercises.

BTECs are graded Pass, Merit or Distinction. They are also offered at different levels, the two levels which may be offered in your school are:

BTEC Level 2 Diploma

- ▣ Usually takes 1 year to complete;
- ▣ Successful completion can lead on to a BTEC Level 3 at sixth form/college or allow entry into employment.

BTEC Level 1 Certificate

- ▣ Usually takes 1 year to complete;
- ▣ Successful completion can lead on to BTEC Level 2.

Subjects that your school may offer as a BTEC qualification are: Business, Construction, Health & Social Care, Information Technology, Science or Sport.

Other Qualifications

In your school, there may be a range of other qualifications available, examples may include:

OCR Cambridge National qualifications

Cambridge Nationals are industry-relevant, **work-related** qualifications. They cover a broad range of learning styles and abilities and are an excellent start for further study. OCR Nationals can also enable progression on to a Level 3 qualification at a sixth form/college.

OCR Cambridge Nationals are available at Level 1 and 2 and as an Award, Certificate or Diploma.

Subjects that your school may offer as an OCR qualification are: Business, Creative iMedia, Engineering, Health & Social Care, ICT, Science or Sport Science.

ASDAN

ASDAN is a qualification that helps young people to grow skills for learning, skills for employment and skills for life. They are flexible and can support GCSE study.

Subjects that your school may offer as an ASDAN qualification are: Certificate of Personal Effectiveness, Diploma in Life Skills, Employability, Personal and Social Development (PSD) or PSHE, Personal Progress.

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)

NVQs are designed to demonstrate a learner's skills, knowledge and understanding needed to do a particular job, e.g. hairdressing, childcare, beauty therapy, construction. However, they can also be offered in what are traditionally known subjects such as Mathematics or modern foreign languages such as French, German and Spanish.

Assessment is based on practical activity and a portfolio of evidence to show that you meet occupational standards. A qualified assessor will observe you and question you to test your knowledge and understanding.

Offered at levels 1 and 2, further NVQ levels are available as post-16 qualifications.

New GCSE grading structure

Ofqual

New GCSE grading structure

New grading structure	Current grading structure
9	A*
8	
7	
6	B
5	
4	C
3	
2	D
1	
U	E
	F
	G
	U

GOOD PASS (DfE)
5 and above = top of C and above

AWARDING
4 and above = bottom of C and above

For more information on the new grading structure, visit:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/460142/new_gcse_grading_structure.pdf

English Baccalaureate(EBacc)

Introduced by the Department for Education (DfE) in 2010, the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is a school performance measure. It allows people to see how many pupils get a grade 4 or above in the core academic subjects at key stage 4 in any government-funded school. The EBacc is not a qualification and is also not required for gaining a place on a Further or Higher Education course. However, it can improve sixth form/college and university place offers.

EBacc subjects

English

Mathematics

History or Geography

the sciences

a modern foreign language

English

To pass the English element of the EBacc, pupils need to get one of the following:

- a grade 4 or above in English GCSE
- a grade 4 or above in English Language GCSE and any grade in English Literature GCSE

Science

To pass the science element of the EBacc, pupils need to do one of the following:

- get a grade 4 or above in core and additional science GCSE (in core and additional science, pupils take 2 modules in each of the 3 main sciences: biology, chemistry and physics)
- take 3 single sciences at GCSE and get a grade 4 or above in at least 2 of them (the single sciences are biology, chemistry, computer science and physics)
- get a grade 4 or above in GCSE science double award (in science double award, pupils take 2 GCSE exams that cover the 3 main sciences: biology, chemistry and physics)

Further information can be obtained on the government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-baccalaureate-ebacc/english-baccalaureate-ebacc>

Points to Remember

- Some subjects are compulsory.
- How is the subject assessed? Is it mainly exam or coursework? Which assessment method works best for you?
- You will have to study your options until the end of year 11, so it is important that you make the right choices.
- The qualifications you gain can influence what you do after year 11, in terms of education, training and employment.

What to do next?

- Read through your school options booklet.
- Attend the school options event and/or open evening.
- Check on your current progress with school staff.
- Speak with school staff about the subjects available.
- Research the subjects available: how will they be assessed? How will they develop your skills and knowledge?
- Talk through your choices with school staff, your careers adviser and parents/carers.
- Finally, make sure you meet the school deadline for submitting your choices (if you don't, you may be automatically given a subject that you do not want)

USEFUL WEBSITES

Choosing options

Local information about options and careers

www.newhamsussed.co.uk

Careers information, advice and guidance

www.plotr.co.uk

www.icould.com

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>

www.careerpilot.org.uk

www.careersteer.org

www.notgoingtouni.co.uk

<http://university.which.co.uk/advice/gcse-choices-university/how-important-are-gcse-choices-when-it-comes-to-university>

Other

www.thestudentroom.co.uk

Forum for students to share their own experience, it includes study help, choosing a university and careers.

Planning further ahead

Researching schools, colleges and qualifications

Check details of open events, advice sessions, closing dates, specific course details, entry requirements and progression routes:

www.ucasprogress.com

www.londoncolleges.com

Note: a list of local schools and colleges is available separately from this booklet. Please ask your careers adviser for a copy of this list and the current open events list.

Choosing A Levels

Advice and guidance on essential and preferred A level subjects required by universities:

www.russellgroup.ac.uk/informed-choices

Higher Education

If you want to attend a specific university and take a particular course, it is important that you check what they consider acceptable e.g. the likely grades sought at GCSE, A level subjects required and alternative qualifications:

www.ucas.com

<http://university.which.co.uk/course>

Free and independent way to search and compare UK degree courses and universities from Which?

OTHER RESOURCES

Publications

Check your school or public library for:

[“Choosing your A levels”](#) by Cerys Evans

[“Which A levels? The guide to choosing A Levels and other post-16 qualifications”](#)
by Alison Dixon

“Job file” (a careers book with job profiles that includes details of entry requirements, skills and experience required)