

## Decision Making for GCSEs

Have you started to think about your GCSE options? This is probably the first big decision that has an impact on your future since choosing your secondary school.

How will you decide what options to take? What is the impact they might have on your future?

Imagine you were told you could choose any subjects or activities to fill 10 slots available to you for your GCSE choices. What would you choose to do? How would you decide?

Give it a go – write down 9 subjects and activities that you would love to carry on studying or working on.

Here is an example:



### TASK 1

- Design your own dream list of subjects and activities for your GCSE options
- Choose 9 things

Wouldn't that be great, to not have to study things you find difficult or don't enjoy?

Unfortunately, it doesn't quite work like that, but you can use the same principles of choosing things you enjoy as part of the process.

### What am I required to take?

Everyone is required to take Maths, English and Science.

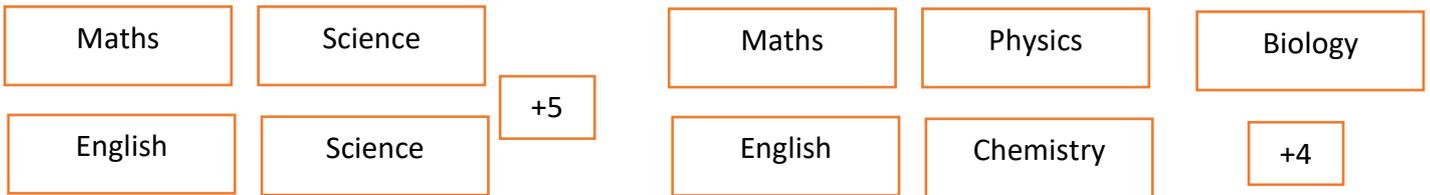
Why? Well they provide a good foundation for future study and employment. Learning about the world around you through experimentation in Science; learning how to solve problems in different ways in Maths; understanding how language works and how you can use it for different purposes in English.

Science can be chosen to fill different numbers of slots in your choices. For most young people you will do either a single or dual award in science, covering elements of all 3 subjects (Physics, Biology, Chemistry).

If you really enjoy science and are good at it then you may be given the option of doing single sciences, so individual Physics, Chemistry and Biology (taking up 3 of your choices). This is recommended if you are hoping to study subjects such as Medicine in the future.

So now your options probably look something like this:

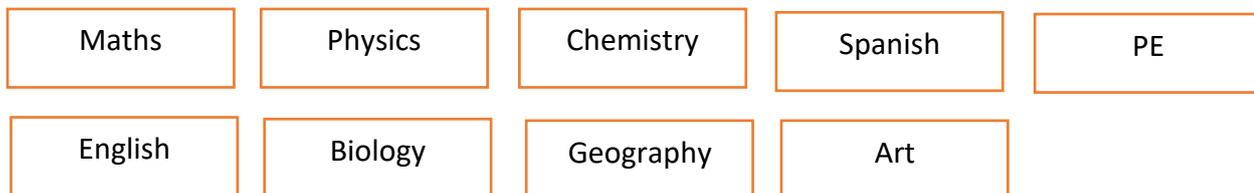
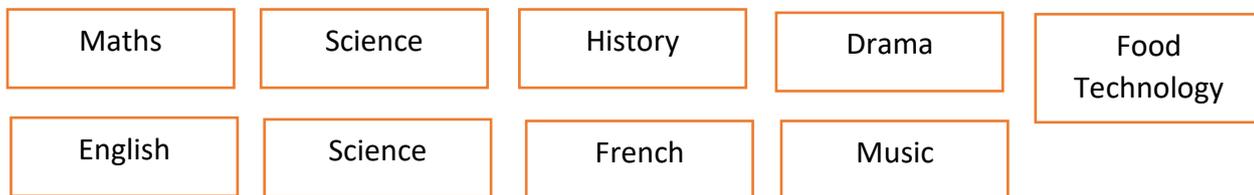




Next, the chances are you will be required to add a Humanities subject such as Geography, History or RE. These subjects are really good for enhancing your understanding of the world around you. They help you develop your research skills as well as your ability to analyse source information to reach a conclusion.

The rest of your options will probably depend on what your school offers and whether they put the subjects into blocks, require you to do a language or perhaps a technology subject.

Here are some examples of how your options might then look:



## Looking ahead

If you are not sure how to fill your options slots, then it can be useful to start to think ahead. If you have a particular career path in mind, then choosing your GCSE subjects might have an impact on that path.

For example:

You are considering working as a Lawyer or Barrister.

- Most degree courses in Law have no specific entry requirements, however you have done some research and noticed that subjects preferred at A level include History and English. Therefore you might choose History as your Humanities subject.

You have always loved dinosaurs and fossil hunting and can see yourself making a career out of this (maybe becoming a Palaeontologist).

- You initially think History would be a good option. However, more research leads you to realise that although it is about the past, it is a much more scientific career than you expected.





- Further research shows that separate sciences leading into Science A levels would be useful.
- You also discover that a knowledge of Geography is expected so you change your Humanities choice.

## TASK 2

- Start to explore your future options.
- If you have a career in mind, find out the path to achieve that goal.
- If you don't, then see what paths you can take from different subjects to give you an idea of what is out there.

## If you don't know what the future holds

There will be some of you who already have a clear picture in your mind of your future and can research the course needed to achieve your goal, or a subject you love that you want to carry on studying. If you don't then the best option is always to start by considering what you enjoy the most and what you are good at.

You will be most successful in things you are happy to work on and enjoy.

## What Next?

Your school will give you an indication of how you will choose your options. You may have to choose from pre-defined lists (in blocks) or you may get a wider choice. It might be useful, however, to already have an idea of what you might choose and start some research in advance.

Your school will probably help you with your research and you will have the chance to talk to different subject teachers to find out about individual GCSEs. Make the most of this support and ask any questions you need to help with these decisions.

## TASK 3

- Based on the above information, can you choose what your ideal GCSE options would be, including those subjects required?

