Year 9 GCSE options

A guide to help you choose which subjects to study in year 10 and year 11.

January 2026

Choosing your options in Year 9 is one of the first big decisions in life you will have to make, but don't panic. No one expects you to have all the answers immediately. Key Stage 4 options are an exciting prospect. You can choose to continue with those subjects which interest you the most and you can start some new ones. Take care! Your decisions will lead to a two-year commitment, so a lot of thought and discussion is needed.

WHO CAN HELP ME?

- **Ask your parents/carers, tutors and teachers for advice** as they know you best, and if you have any friends or siblings who have done the course already – ask them about it.

- **Make an appointment with our Careers Adviser.** Contact Mrs Shakya in the Careers Office to book a 1-2-1 appointment with our Careers Adviser Jane Belbin. The Careers Office can be found in the Student Services Block. You can email sindy.shakya@mountbatten.school or call 01794 510260.



Mrs Shakya
Head of Careers



Mrs Belbin
Careers Adviser



Mrs Tatler
Careers Adviser

WHY DO I HAVE TO CHOOSE?

- It is time for you to have a say in what you are going to study.
- There is not enough time to fit in every subject. As work gets harder you will want to concentrate on your strengths.
- You might want to take some of the new subjects available.
- To aid you in making decision about your future career prospects.

GETTING THE BALANCE RIGHT!

Whatever your plans are for the future, the chances are you will probably change your mind a number of times over the next few years and have a number of different jobs/careers in the future. It is therefore important to try and choose a broad range of subjects now.

Choosing the subjects you enjoy, but also getting a good balance of subjects, will leave you with more options when you are choosing your courses and careers for the future.

HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR OPTIONS?

- First of all think for yourself:
  - What are you good at, what are your talents?
  - What are your strengths and weaknesses?
  - Which subjects interest you?
  - Do you need any specific subjects for your future education needs or the careers that you are interested in?
- **Find out what subjects are offered**. These will be advertised on the school website.
- **Watch the Loom videos on the school's options page and read through the subject description.** If you are unclear about anything, make sure you ask questions about what's involved in the subjects and what you'll be learning about. It might be very different to what you have studied so far. Does it sound interesting? Do you think you will enjoy it?
- **Find out how the course is assessed**. Are you someone who does better in coursework than in exams? If so, some of the vocational (work related) courses might be worth considering.

- **Trying to choose between two subjects?** Think about how each option fits with your other GCSEs. Does a subject go well with your other choices? Or does a subject provide a welcome change? If you are taking lots of science and maths-based subjects, it can be good to include one choice which is essay based.

HOW NOT TO CHOOSE!

Don't choose a subject because:

- **You've heard it's easy.** There are no easy subjects.
- **You like the teacher.** Teaching staff change and you may have a different teacher in year 10.
- **Your friends say they're doing it.** Friendship groups can change, and you may find yourself in a different group. Your friends might also not be in the same lesson.
- **Everyone else is doing it.** You need to really enjoy the subject to get the best grades possible.

Don't:

- Think you are expected to know at this stage what you want to do later in life. The curriculum is constructed to keep open as many doors as possible.
- Worry if you can't fit everything in. Some subjects can be picked up again in college. If in doubt, find out.

THINK ABOUT YOUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE!

- **No idea what you want to do after your GCSEs?** Don't worry, choose a mix of GCSE subjects to give yourself as many different options as possible.
- **If you like one of your GCSE subjects** and are looking for ideas of what careers or courses it could lead onto – go to 'Start with a subject'. https://careerpilot.org.uk/job-sectors/subjects
- **Got an idea or a job or job sector you think might suit you** then check out the 'job profiles in the job sectors'. https://www.careerpilot.org.uk/job-sectors/sectors

- Some careers such as architecture, veterinary, working with languages etc. may require a specific degree course.

  In this case work backwards – to get into these degree courses you may need specific A Levels / BTEC qualifications, and to do these you may need certain GCSE subjects and grades. You can check out what GCSE / A Level subjects and grades you need for a particular degree course on UCAS or Informed Choices.
  https://www.ucas.com/explore/subjects
  https://www.informedchoices.ac.uk/degrees

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT GCSE SUBJECTS?

Maths and English are the most important subjects as they are a requirement for most courses, apprenticeships, jobs and university degrees.

You will usually need at least a grade 4 and above in Maths and English before you can get into these. With a grade 4 and above you will have a much greater number of opportunities open to you.

ART

The UK is a global leader in the creative industries and career opportunities in the arts are numerous. GCSE Art & Design is essential for students considering A-level Art courses which are required for higher education courses in any visual arts subjects. Some of the skills you will gain are courage, resolve, self-awareness, the ability to reflect, creativity and collaboration.

The subject provides a strong basis for progression to future Art and Design related qualifications such as architecture, product design, animation, advertising, interior design, curation, design engineering, graphic design, restoration & conservation, medical imaging, publishing, ceramic design, costume, fashion, textile design, film, television and theatre design, illustration, merchandising, print, web design, sculpture, games design, prosthetics, photojournalism, PR and events organisation, video games design, arts education and art therapy, amongst others.

COMPUTING

Skills taught on this course will be the best preparation for students who want to go on to study computer science at A Level and beyond. The qualification will also provide a good grounding for other subject areas that require computational thinking and analytical skills. Future careers include computer games testing, cyber security, web development, teaching, computer aided design, 3D modelling, data scientist, app developer, IT project manager and animation to name a few.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Design and Technology can lead on to an enormous range of design related university courses and careers. Current popular choices include architecture, various types of engineering, graphic design, advertising, product design, interior design, set design, tailoring, garment technology, visual merchandising, fashion design and many more.

DRAMA

GCSE Drama equips you with vital life and transferable skills which will prove to be of great benefit in any future career. Skills include communication, team-work, problem solving, time management, organisation, evaluation, empathy, reflectiveness and

collaboration. It could lead to opportunities in acting, drama therapy, teaching, writing, theatre production and many more.

ECONOMICS

As a subject, economics lends itself to a wide variety of careers and not necessarily those in finance. You can find work in both the public and private sectors and some of the career options you will have include: economist, chartered account, investment analyst, financial risk analyst, management consultant and government officer, amongst others.

ENGLISH

English Language GCSE is a key requirement for a very large number of post-16 courses and careers. Students achieving a grade 4 or lower will be required to repeat their English GCSE once they leave school, regardless if they are going on to further education, employment or work-based training.
More specifically it could lead to careers in journalism, publishing, teaching, advertising and marketing, law, business and finance.

FOOD AND NUTRITION

These courses are best suited to students who have shown flair, skill and independence working with food. The UK hospitality and catering industry is the largest private sector employer accounting for 14% of all the jobs in the UK. GCSE Food courses can be used as a foundation for progression to professional chef diplomas, apprenticeships, BTEC and other vocational courses in catering, hotel management and dietetics, as well as providing valuable lifelong skills. There are also a wide range of personal skills that are developed e.g. problem solving, investigating, organisation, creativity and presentational techniques.

GEOGRAPHY

It is a qualification that employees look very favourably on and is one of the most current and relevant subjects to study. Geography graduates from university are

considered to be amongst the most employable. Students can use this qualification to pursue careers in a broad range of areas. A few examples include ecology, climatology, energy engineering, town planning, surveying, teaching, travel and tourism, environmental education and conservation, geology and archaeology.

HISTORY

History is a very highly regarded academic subject with universities and employers. If you are already interested in a career in business, law, finance or politics, GCSE history will help you to start developing the skills and abilities that these careers will require. The course is also a good option for students who aren't sure what they want to study after GCSE, as it is a rigorous and challenging option, so can be applied to many different vocations and careers in the future. Other careers using history include publishing, teaching, diplomatic services, journalism, archaeology, restoration work, tourism, government and politics, research and academia, and law.

MATHEMATICS

Mathematics is one of the most highly regarded academic subjects and a good GCSE grade is essential for progression into employment or higher education. Students achieving a grade 4 or lower will be required to repeat their Maths GCSE once they leave school, regardless if they are going on to further education, employment or work-based training. Students wishing to pursue future mathematical careers have a wide range to choose from, such as accountancy, actuary and investment banking. Mathematics is also essential for many design, architectural, computing and engineering careers.

MEDIA STUDIES

From television to newspapers, radio, social media and podcasts – the Media plays a big part in our lives. It can alter our perceptions, grow our understanding and inform how we see the world. Media Studies will help you to develop skills that you'll be able use in your other subjects such as critical thinking, analysis, research, planning, practical skills, time management, essay writing skills and more.

There are lots of job opportunities in the creative and media sector including broadcasting, film, sales, advertising, event management and journalism.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

The study of any language is valuable and rewarding. It is a strong academic discipline which, at the same time, opens our minds to other places, peoples and cultures. You will add an international dimension to your choice of GCSE subjects, which is something many future employers and higher education providers look for.

Universities may request or prefer a foreign language at A-level for entry to courses in classical studies, classical civilisation, linguistics, law, European law and European studies which include a foreign language. Furthermore, it is considered a 'facilitating subject' at A Level which means it will help you get into top universities, even if you do not plan to study languages at degree level. You will create greater opportunities for yourself to work abroad, or with companies in the UK with international links.

Career options include aid worker, cabin crew, Civil Service officer, events manager, hotel manager, immigration officer, public relations, teacher, tour guide, translator, transport planner and many more.

MUSIC

GCSE Music is a good subject to have passed when applying for Higher Education in any subject as you will have demonstrated that you are creative, analytical and practical, as well having transferable skills such as the ability to work independently and with others. Music GCSE can lead to further study at A Level or Level 3 equivalent in music, music technology, or performing arts which can in turn lead to musical based studies at university.

Careers in the music industry including session musicians, composers, musical historians, musical therapists, music teachers, music publicists, talent scouts, A&R representatives, studio engineers, and music producers.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Career paths that Physical Education can lead onto include exercise physiologist, physiotherapy, PE teacher, sports psychologist, sports nutritionist, sports coach, sports journalism, sports, personal trainer, performance analyst and uniformed services (Police, Army, Fire Services).

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The wide variety of skills used in this GCSE make it a very widely well-recognised and sought-after qualification. It leads directly into A-levels such as philosophy, religious studies and theology. The skills developed in this subject can be applied much further however. The Russell Group of top universities describes the subject as “suitable preparation for university generally” and 20% of students who took places to read maths at Oxford University in 2011 had a Religious Studies A level (more than had economics, physics, or business!). It is a highly regarded subject at both GCSE and A-level.

Careers using religious studies include social work, social care, youth work, psychology, human resources, law, politics and religious leadership.

SCIENCE

The science course is an excellent foundation for those seeking a science-based career such as medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, engineering, environmental science, marine biology, pharmaceuticals and research and development.

STATISTICS

In an increasingly data-driven world, being able to translate information into meaningful insights that can be used by companies and organisations is a valuable skill to have. There are a number of careers directly linked to statistics, such as data scientist, investment analyst, statistician and market researcher.

TEXTILES

About 1 in 8 UK business is in creative industries. The careers open to artistically minded individuals are nearly infinite. Textiles GCSE, and then later A Level, can lead students into careers such as fashion design, surface design, interior design, textiles design, stylist and many more.