GCSE & Options Booklet

March 2023

Climbing the mountain to success

Dear Pupils

As you receive this booklet, you are embarking on the next stage of what will be one of the most important periods in your educational life. Decisions taken today can keep doors open to you and help meet your aspirations – to aspire to go to university, to aspire to contribute to society, to aspire to the best of professions – and help you do justice to your potential, making your family and yourself proud.

'We believe that given the right circumstances, everyone can achieve extraordinary things'

At Bedford Free School we believe that all pupils can achieve extraordinary things, including going to university. Those aspirations must be facilitated by a balanced curriculum. Having balance ensures that you do not close doors too early. Meeting those aspirations requires hard work, focus, and dedication. It also requires that you keep your options open so that you can change your mind.

Over the next two years, you will work with commitment and we will expect great things from you, so that you grow into adults who can enjoy wonderful lives. Even if you don't now, we want you to be able to enjoy the greatest works of literature, to appreciate the beauty of mathematics and to be fascinated by the scientific discoveries that humans have made. These are examples, but we also want you to be engrossed in the stories of history, be creative in playing and producing music or great pieces of drama, and to enjoy art galleries and modern culture and to continue to experience competitive sports. We want you to understand the world – its geography, the awe of languages and linguistics, the fascinating development of the world's religions – and participate in it by designing and making things in design technology or computer science. We want the inside of your head to be an interesting place to be and we want you to be an interesting person to know. And yes, we want you to get great results and have a great life, including being secure financially

Some of the subjects referred to above are part of the 'core curriculum', and everyone studies them. Some of them are 'optional' and you have choices to make about which to study. For some pupils, you may know what you want to do in the future. You may even know which course you want to study at university. You may find choosing your options quite easy. For other pupils, you may have no idea what you want to do, or even if you want to go to university. Both of these situations are fine. In both cases, please reflect on whether, in making your options, you are ensuring doors are kept open so that when you are 16 or 18, or even later in life, you can change your mind or change direction.

Let me reassure you that your life is not mapped out from this day. Which courses you study is important, but we have designed an options process that ensures that you can maintain the balance that I am writing about here. The school is here to support you, and receiving this options booklet and reading it thoroughly is just a small part of the extensive work we are doing to ensure that you are fully prepared for these decisions, and for Key Stage 4.

Please listen to everything that is said in assemblies, at parents' evening, at options evening and by your teachers and parents. Together, we will ensure the subjects you study over the next two years are the right ones.

Best wishes,

Mr. Wood
Deputy Principal, Bedford Free School

The options process:

"My teachers really helped me to decide what I wanted to do. I wasn't really sure what I should study but I found their advice really helpful."

Y10 Pupil

"BFS staff were brilliant. I found the information evening really useful in helping us understand the choices we needed to make for our son. It was really straightforward.

Parent of a Y10 Pupil

The options process: key dates

Options subject assemblies:
Friday 3rd March onwards
Options subject assemblies will run from this date. Subject leaders will give special assemblies outlining their courses and the opportunities on offer.

GCSE & Options info evening:
Thursday 9th March
There will be information session for parents and pupils about the curriculum, the options process and additional guidance and support. **Options booklets** and **options request forms** will be given out.

Options choices deadline:
Friday 17th March
This is the final deadline for options requests to be submitted.

Making the right choices

Pupils should aim to choose a range of subjects across the different curriculum areas. This will help keep your future options and aspirations open. The following points may help your decision making:

DO choose the courses because:

- It gives you a good balance across the curriculum
- You are passionate and enjoy the subject
- You feel you are good at the subject and you try hard in it
- You are aspirational and you want to keep future options open
- You are fully informed about the subject and you know what you will be studying and how you will be examined
- You have discussed it with your subject teachers
- You know you will work hard across the two years in this subject
- You want to achieve and excel in this subject

DO NOT choose courses because:

- Your friends are choosing it – it may not be right for you
- You like a particular teacher- you may have a different teacher next year
- You think it will be easy

The options process:

"You need to think really carefully before choosing your options. Don't just do a subject because your friends want to. Choose something which you are going to really enjoy for two years"

Y10 Pupil

About the Ebacc

The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is a performance measure for schools, which helps to provide a snapshot of how well the school is doing. It is not a qualification for pupils, but a measure of their success across a core of academic subjects. The government wants 90% of pupils to take the EBacc. This means that an increasing number of pupils, against whom BFS pupils will be competing in future, will be taking this selection of subjects.

The following subjects make up the EBacc:

- English or English Literature
- Mathematics
- Two sciences (either Combined Science or two of Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Computer Science)
- History or Geography
- A Modern Foreign Language

These subjects are those most regularly asked for by colleges and universities— worth bearing in mind when pupils are choosing which options to take. Although pupils do not need to have studied all of these to go on to higher education, having a mix of subjects geared towards the EBacc will help keep their options open. In addition, the subjects taken for GCSE will influence those studied at sixth form or college and will therefore influence the degrees which are open to you at university and potentially your future career.

The Russell Group of Universities (a collaboration of 24 leading UK universities) are not only interested in the results that pupils achieve at GCSE and A Level, they are increasingly expecting pupils to have breadth of study as well as rigour in what they study. The EBacc subjects keep options open and are helpful for access to the most selective courses and universities at 18.

For more information and guidance, visit the Informed Choices website (www.informedchoices.ac.uk). Informed Choices is aimed at pupils aged 14 and upwards who are considering university and want information to help them choose the right subjects to study at sixth form or college. The guidance is written by admissions directors from the 24 Russell Group universities and provides information on why subject choice matters.

Understanding GCSEs

From 2018 traditional A*-G grades were replaced in all subjects by a numerical system that score pupils on a scale from 9-1. These GCSE courses are more challenging than ever, with all the exams set at the end of Year 11. Grade 9 is reserved for the very top tier of Y11 pupils nationally. Sometimes as low as 1-5% of pupils will achieve a Grade 9. The courses and exams ensure that young people have the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the 21st Century. They ensure that pupils leave school better prepared for work or further study. They cover more challenging content and are designed to match standards in the strongest performing education systems elsewhere in the world.

Key points:

1. GCSEs in England have a 9 to 1 grading scale, to better differentiate between the highest performing pupils and distinguish clearly between the new and old exams.

2. Grade 9 is the highest grade and is awarded to fewer pupils than the previous A*.

3. The old and new GCSE grading scales do not directly compare but there are three points where they align, as the diagram shows:

   The bottom of grade 7 is aligned with the bottom of grade A
   The bottom of grade 4 is aligned with the bottom of grade C
   The bottom of grade 1 is aligned with the bottom of grade G

4. The Department for Education recognises grade 4 and above as a 'standard pass'; this is the minimum level that pupils need to reach in English and maths, otherwise they will need to continue to study these subjects as part of their post-16 education. There is no re-take requirement for other subjects.

5. Employers, universities and colleges will continue to set the GCSE grades they require for employment or further study. Minimum requirements usually include grade 4 in English and maths.

Old grades	New grades
A*	9
	8
A	7
B	6
	5 STRONG PASS
C	4 STANDARD PASS
D	3
E	2
F	
G	1
U	U

More information:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-new-grading-scale-factsheets
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-40826391

The KS4 Curriculum

The good news is that much of what you study in years 10 and 11 will not change. You will still have PE and electives which means you can still do plenty of sport/exercise each week even if you don't take GCSE PE.

The Key Stage 4 curriculum is comprised of two sections: the 'core' subjects and 'optional' subjects.

Core subjects
These subjects are compulsory and are studied by all pupils. The core curriculum should lead to you coming away with 5 good GCSEs in key subjects.

Options subjects
In addition to the core subjects all pupils need to choose four options subjects. Pupils **MUST** choose a humanities subject, either Geography or History, and a language, either French or Spanish*.

You can find all the details about each course in the back of this booklet – and if you have further questions about any of them, just ask teachers in school, and they will be able to help.

It is really important that you talk to teachers of the subjects that you are considering so that they can advise you on its suitability, so that you can make an informed choice.

*In order to support a **very** small number of pupils access the wider curriculum, some pupils may not take a language. This can only be agreed in consultation and approval of the Senior Leadership team.

Core subjects:

English Language
English Literature
Mathematics
Science (Combined or Triple*)
Core PE
Electives

Options subjects:

Art
Computer Science
Design & Technology
Drama
French
Geography
History
Music
PE
Religious Studies
Spanish

*Triple science will also utilise DEAR or elective sessions for teaching. Triple science is by invitation only.

The KS4 Curriculum

We believe that an academic, knowledge-rich curriculum is an entitlement for all our pupils. We have allocated considerable time and resources to ensure pupils achieve well across the core and options subjects. Additional time has also been allocated to PE and the electives. We know pupils and families value these important enrichment opportunities. The table below outlines current allocations for each subject

Subject	Number of periods per two-week cycle
Core Curriculum	
English	9 and Year 11 DEAR
Maths	9
Science (Combined) Science (Triple)	10 10 + Y10 DEAR and Y11 elective slot
PE	2
Electives	2
Options subjects	
All options subjects	7

What is combined science?
Combined science is really two GCSEs rolled into one qualification. Pupils will study biology, chemistry and physics but they won't cover as much content as those pupils sitting separate (triple) sciences. Combined science pupils will get an award consisting of two equal or adjacent grades from 9 to 1 (eg 9-9, 9-8, 8-8 through to 1-1), and it will count as two GCSEs when pupils apply for jobs, sixth form, or to university.

Finalising and confirming options requests

Once all options forms are in and have been checked, we will analyse all the requests carefully and try to accommodate as many preferences as possible. **Please be aware that it is never possible to offer all the possible combinations of subjects** that pupils request and a small number of pupils may be disappointed that they cannot study their first-choice options. This happens because:

- It is not possible to create a timetable to suit all the choices made
- Not enough pupils chose the subject for the course to run
- A subject is oversubscribed and it is not possible or safe for all students who requested it to be in the class. In these situations, we may refer to pupils' progress and effort in the relevant subject to select who is able to take it.

Options forms must be submitted by **Friday 17th March** at the latest.


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The Core Curriculum

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English (Language)

What will I study?
You will investigate and analyse language, experiment and use language creatively and learn functional English to communicate effectively.

You will study the following:

- Paper 1 – Explorations in Creating Reading and Writing.
- Paper 2 – Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives.

How will I be assessed?
Exams are 1hr 45m long. There is no non-examined assessment. In addition, you will be assessed on the quality of your speaking and listening, now referred to as 'Spoken Language'. This will not contribute to your final grade, but will appear on your certificates.

What will I learn?
You will be able to: communicate effectively and confidently, read and write non-fiction, read and explore some modern and heritage texts and learn about the way you speak. The skills gained during the course such as analysing and writing, speaking and listening techniques, organisation skills, developing ideas, evaluation, self-expression and critical awareness, are relevant to all subject areas and future employment.

How will this course help me after my GCSEs?
This course offers excellent preparation for A Level English Language and Literature and can lead to a range of careers and college or university courses. The course is also mandatory for all post-16 courses.

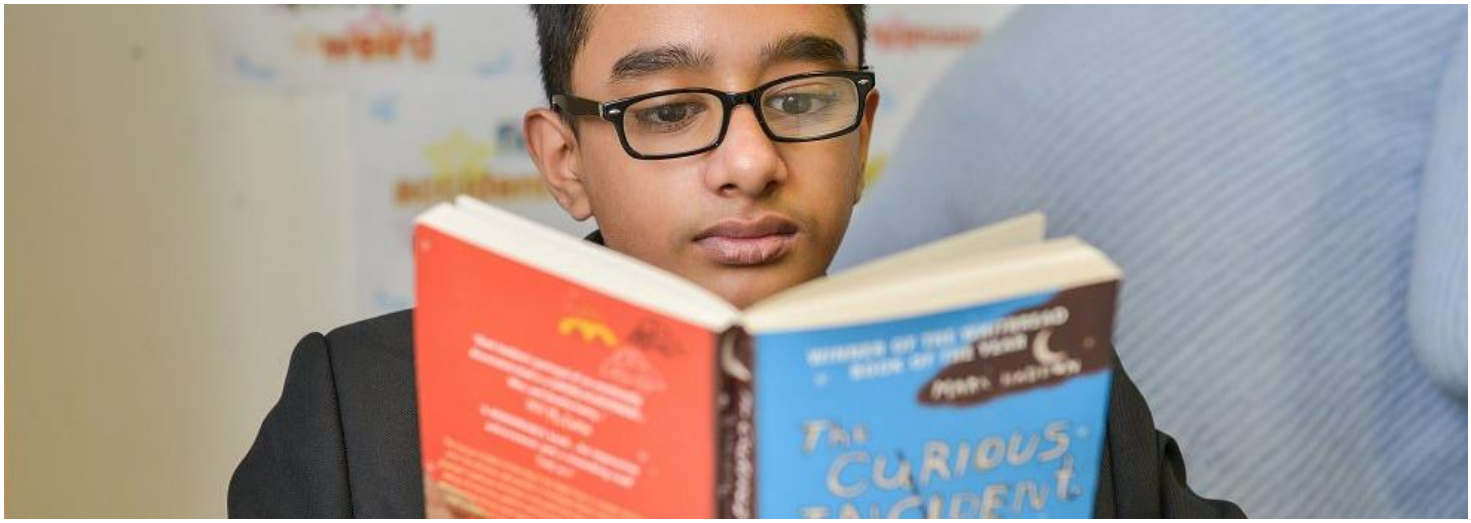
Will there be any extra-curricular opportunities?
There may be opportunities for visits to poetry readings, the theatre (modern and Shakespeare) and for external speakers to come in and talk about the texts studied.

Why should I study this course?

Everybody completes English Language. You will learn how to communicate effectively in both reading and writing. This course will teach you the skills and abilities to take an active and responsible role in your community, in your everyday life, workplace or educational setting.

Where can I find out more?

Talk to your English teacher or Mr Scanlan, Head of English.



Why should I study this course?

Literature is part of our cultural heritage which is freely available to everyone, and which can enrich our lives in all kinds of ways. Once we have broken the barriers that make studying literature seem daunting, we find that literature can be entertaining, beautiful, funny, or tragic. It can convey profundity of thought, richness of emotion, and insight into character. It takes us beyond our limited experience of life to show us the lives of other people at other times. It stirs us intellectually and emotionally, and deepens our understanding of our history, our society, and our own individual lives.

English (Literature)

What will I study?
You will read and explore a range of literature with a wide variety of appeal drawn from contemporary and modern texts, texts from across the globe and texts which have had a significant influence on English literary and cultural heritage. You will study the following:

- Paper 1 – Shakespeare and the 19th Century novel (40% of the final grade).
- Paper 2 – Modern texts and poetry (60% of the final grade).

How will I be assessed?
Two examinations. Paper 1 is 1h45 mins, paper 2 is 2h15 mins.

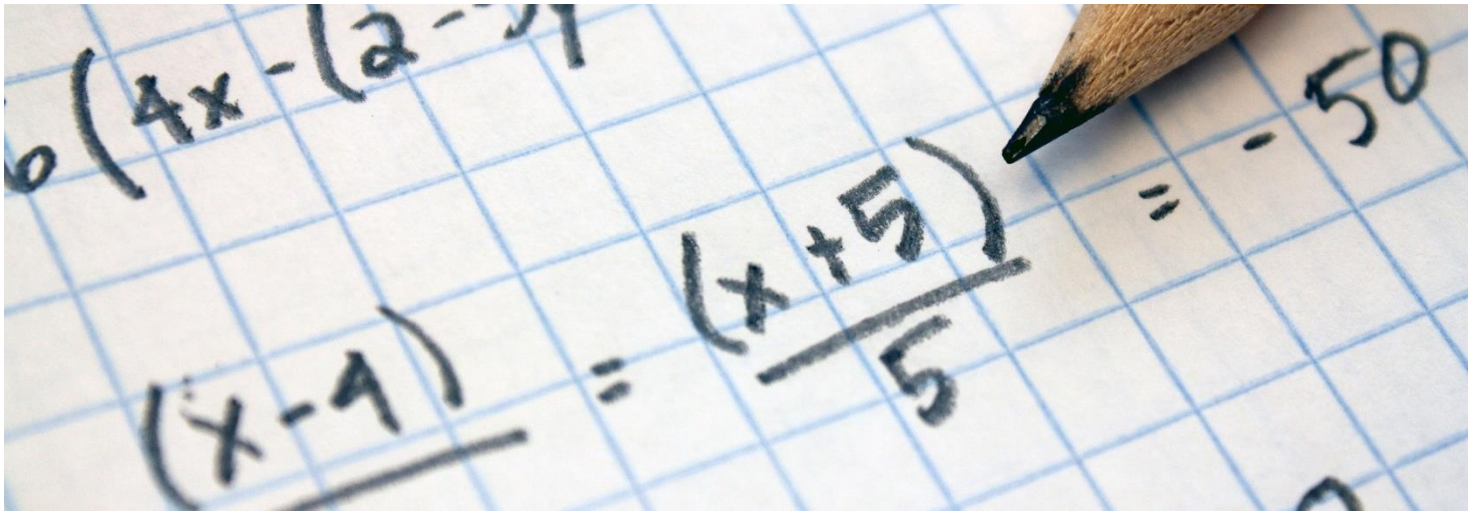
What will I learn?
You will be able to appreciate literature in a sensitive and confident manner. More specifically, you will be able to identify language devices and explore their emotional power, expand your vocabulary, and challenge yourself and your thinking.

How will this course help me after my GCSEs?
English Literature is highly respected and offers excellent preparation for A Level English Literature and can lead to a range of careers and college or university courses.

Will there be any extra-curricular opportunities?
There will be opportunities for visits to the theatre and for external speakers to come in and talk about the texts studied.

Where can I find out more?

Talk to your English teacher or Mr Scanlan, Head of English.



Mathematics

What will I study?

Number –	22-28% Foundation,	12-18% Higher
Algebra –	17-23% Foundation,	27-33% Higher
Ratio & proportion –	22-28% Foundation,	17-23% Higher
Geometry & measures –	12-18% Foundation,	17-23% Higher
Statistics & Probability –	12-18% Foundation and Higher	

How will I be assessed?

The Edexcel qualification consists of **three equally-weighted written examination papers** at either Foundation tier or Higher tier. All three papers must be at the same tier of entry and must be completed in the same assessment series. Paper 1 is a non-calculator assessment and a calculator is allowed for Paper 2 and Paper 3. Each paper is 1 hour and 30 minutes long and has a total of 80 marks.

What will I learn?

In year 10 and 11, students will build upon their mathematical knowledge from Key Stage 3. You will learn to:

- Problem-solving strategies
- How to select and apply mathematical techniques and methods in mathematical, every day and real-world situations ('functional mathematics')
- How to reason mathematically, make deductions and inferences and draw conclusions
- How to interpret and communicate mathematical information in a variety of forms appropriate to the information and context
- How to use your knowledge and understanding to make connections between mathematical concepts.

Additional information:
You will need to be fully equipped with a geometry set and a scientific calculator. You also have the option to purchase a revision guide and work book to supplement what you learn in school.

Why should I study this course?

Studying maths will equip you for success as a creative problem solver, with mathematical competency and logical thinking skills. You will gain confidence in being able to use the mathematics you learn outside the classroom. You will learn to use logical thinking skills to break down a problem and create a solution.

Where can I find out more?

Talk to your Maths teacher, or Mr Lemmon

Why should I study this course?

Science is important because it is useful for everyday life as well as being a compulsory requirement for many courses. Science helps to explain the wonders of the world and also develops problem solving and thinking skills. Many careers require Science such as Medicine, Marine Biology, Sports Science and Physiotherapy.

Where can I find out more?

Talk to your Science teacher or Miss McPherson-George, *Head of Science*

Science (Combined)

What will I study & learn?
Combined science is made up of a combination of Biology, Physics and Chemistry modules:

- Natural Selection and Genetic Modification
- Health, Disease and the Development of Diseases
- Plant Structures and their Functions
- Ionic Bonding, Covalent Bonding and Types of Substances
- Acids and Alkalis
- Calculations Involving Masses
- Motion
- Forces and Motion
- Conservation of Energy
- Waves
- Animal Coordination, Control and Homeostasis
- Exchange and Transport in Animals
- Ecosystems and Material Cycles
- Electrolytic Processes, Obtaining Useful Materials, Reversible Reactions
- Groups in the Periodic Table, Rates of Reaction, Heat Energy Changes
- Fuels, Earth and Atmospheric Science
- Light and the electromagnetic Spectrum
- Radioactivity
- Energy – Forces Doing Work, Forces and Their Effects
- Electricity and Circuits
- Magnetism and the Motor Effect
- Particle Model, Forces and Matter

How will I be assessed?
Pupils will study all three sciences and will be awarded two GCSEs at the end of the course. All exams will be sat at the end of the course and pupils will sit a total of six, 1hr 10min exams. As part of the new structure of GCSE Science a percentage of the questions in the exams will be based on the 18 core practical experiments that will be carried out in lessons throughout the remaining two years of study.

Science (Triple)

What will I study & learn?
Pupils who show a particular aptitude for Science and have achieved high scores in English, Maths and Science by the end of Year 9 will be invited to study all three Sciences individually. They will be awarded three separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Due to increased subject content Triple science will also utilise DEAR in Y10 and electives in Y11 for additional teaching time.

- Natural Selection and Genetic Modification
- Health, Disease and the Development of Diseases
- Plant Structures and their Functions
- Ionic Bonding, Covalent Bonding and Types of Substances
- Acids and Alkalis
- Calculations Involving Masses
- Electrolytic Processes, Obtaining Useful Materials, Reversible Reactions, Transition Metals, Alloys and Corrosion
- Motion and forces
- Conservation of Energy
- Waves
- Light and the electromagnetic Spectrum
- Animal Coordination, Control and Homeostasis
- Exchange and Transport in Animals
- Ecosystems and Material Cycles
- Quantitative Analysis, Dynamic Equilibria, Calculations involving Volumes and Gases
- Groups in the Periodic Table, Rates of Reaction, Heat Energy Changes
- Fuels, Earth and Atmospheric Science
- Hydrocarbons, Alcohols and Carboxylic Acids and Polymers
- Qualitative Analysis: Test for Ions, Bulk and Surface Properties of matter including Nanoparticles
- Radioactivity
- Astronomy
- Energy – Forces Doing Work, Forces and Their Effects
- Electricity, Circuits and Static Electricity
- Magnetism and the Motor Effect, Electromagnetic Induction
- Particle Model, Forces and Matter

Why should I study this course?

Triple Science offers pupils an advantage when studying any separate science at A-level. It will also cultivate any general scientific interest pupils may presently have. The course is suitable (but not essential) for any pupil wishing to follow a career in Science, Technology or Engineering. It is an ideal stepping stone to A-level and is looked favourably upon by top universities.

How will I be assessed?
Pupils will sit six, 1hr 45min exams. As part of the structure for GCSE Science a percentage of the questions in the exams will be based on the 24 core practical experiments that will be carried out in lessons throughout the remaining two years of study.

Options subjects

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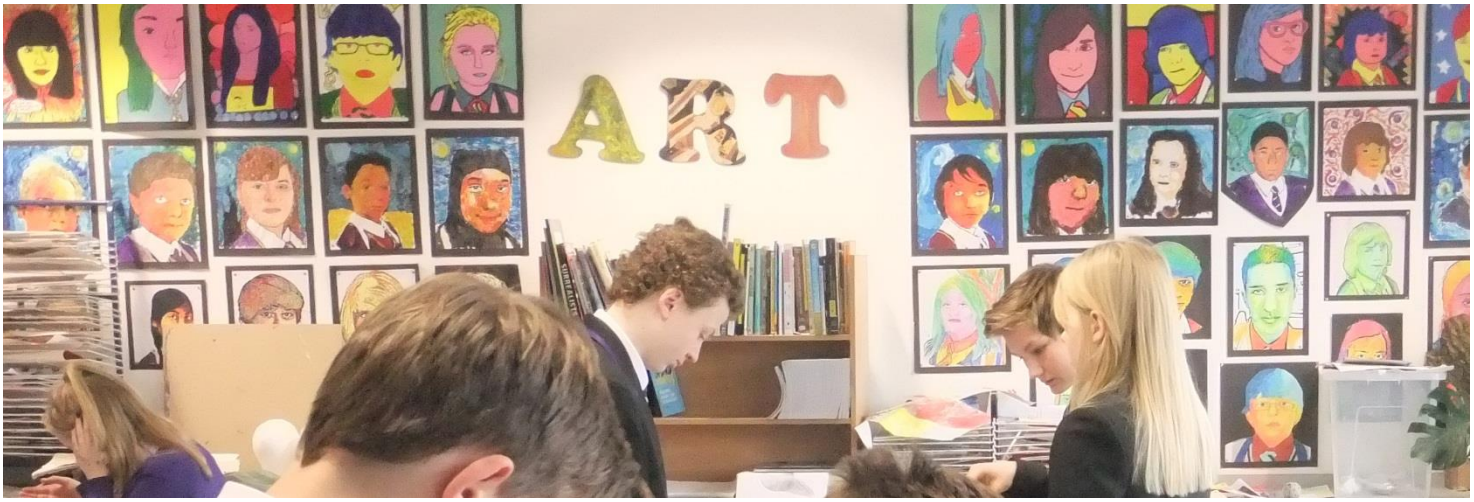


Why should I study this course?

Art will help you to develop your own way of looking at, and interpreting the world around you. You will learn how to communicate ideas visually, verbally and in writing. You will learn how to independently research artists and contextual sources and how to critically analyse them. But most importantly you will improve your observational skills and learn how to draw paint and sculpt.

Where can I find out more?

Talk to Mrs Burbridge, Head of Department

Art

What will I study?

- Portfolio project 1 – Formal Elements - Foundation project (12 weeks)

We will work exploratively, learning a variety of expressive methods for creating art, as well as good studio practice.
We will study the work of the Bauhaus and discuss it critically, before practically exploring how it was made.

- Portfolio project 2 – Townscapes – painting skills (12 weeks)

We will learn how to use and manipulate a range of 2D materials focusing on the skill of painting using acrylic. We will study the work of a variety of important artists, including Ian Murphy & Delaunay, discuss it critically, before practically exploring how it was made.

- Portfolio project 3 – Natural Forms - Sustained Investigation (24 weeks)
-

We will combine all of our new-found skills in drawing, painting and researching in to a sustained artistic investigation in to Natural Forms. This will allow you to further develop your own artistic ideas independently.

Across all portfolio projects we will learn how to draw, paint, print making techniques, plaster casting, before producing a response to our investigations.

How will I be assessed?

Component 1 – Portfolio (Coursework) - 60% (96 marks)
Component 2 - Externally set assignment (Exam) – 40% (96 marks)
The exam unit begins in January of Y11.
All elements of the art GCSE are non-examined assessments.

There are four main criteria on which GCSE Art is marked; 1, art history and contextual studies, 2, drawing and observational skills, 3, the ability to use and explore a range of media and 4, the ability to bring all these skills together to create a personal and meaningful response to a given theme.

Computer Science

What will I study?

- Problem solving
- Programming
- Data
- Computers
- Networks
- Social and ethical issues

How will I be assessed?

- Computer systems (exam) 50%
- Computational thinking, algorithms and programming (exam) 50%
- Programming project NEA (Compulsory, but not graded)

What will I learn?

- Learn more about how computers work, including hardware and how instructions are coded
- Design and write more useful computer programs to solve problems (and for fun!)
- Further develop IT skills, to become a discerning user of computer systems
- Understand how data is represented on computers, including text, image, video and sound files
- Store and search data in databases
- Understand computer networks, including the internet
- The impact of computer science on society and the environment
- Ethics and the law relating to computer systems

How will this course help me after my GCSEs?

Computer Science is particularly relevant to STEM industries including Engineering, Science, Medicine and IT

Why should I study this course?

Computer Science has become a very high-profile subject over the last few years. The ability to program computers is a very valuable skill. Computing is of enormous importance to the economy, and the role of Computer Science as a discipline itself and as an 'underpinning' subject across Science and Engineering is growing rapidly.

Where can I find out more?

Talk to Mr Moore, Head of Computer Science

Design & Technology

Why should I study this course?

This is an academic subject and is the first step available to pupils who seek a career in the design based industries. Pupils will learn to analyse and evaluate the made world around them and become more discerning consumers of products and users of technology. In year 11 pupils will have the opportunity to undertake a major design project where through research of the products intended context, target user profiling, and evaluation of similar products, pupils will inform their own ideas and designs before iteratively producing a fully working final product, which solves a design challenge.

Where can I find out more?

Talk to Mr Hogg, Head of DT

What will I study?

- How design is applied to solve problems
- How to investigate contexts and create imaginative design proposals
- Learn about material's properties, their environmental impact and how to process them
- Develop graphic communication skills including Computer Aided Design
- Practice making skills including the use on Computer Aided Manufacture
- How to manage project work and deliver quality products to cost and on time
- Learn to use key terminology, including those related to designing, innovation and communication; materials and technologies; making, manufacture and production; critiquing, values and ethics

Project work will be used where possible to strengthen the link between theory, materials and processes. Pupils will demonstrate safe working practices in Design and Technology.

How will I be assessed?
Written examination: 1 hour and 45 minutes (50%)

- **Section A** - Core Knowledge
- **Section B** - Papers and Boards

Non Examined Assessment (50%)
Substantial design and make challenge 30 - 35 hours approx. The main sections are investigation, design, making and evaluation.

How will this course help me after my GCSEs?
This course would be suitable for pupils considering a career in engineering, architecture, product design, graphic design, illustration/book design, computer graphics, or interior design.

Additional Information
You can only choose this subject if you took it in year 9. Pupils may be asked to contribute to the cost of materials for their final GCSE project.

Drama

What will I study?

- Acting
- Script study
- Practitioners
- A variety of styles and genres of theatre
- Devising
- Improvisation
- Playwrights

How will I be assessed?

- Devised Practical Performance **(40%)**
  Performance from a Text **(20%)**
- Written Examination **(40%)**

What will I learn?

- expressing yourself in an active and exciting way
- working in a group
- contributing your ideas and taking on board those of others
- playing many parts in different imaginary situations
- creating your own drama work
- develop a personal interest in why Drama matters and be inspired, moved and changed by studying a broad, coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study

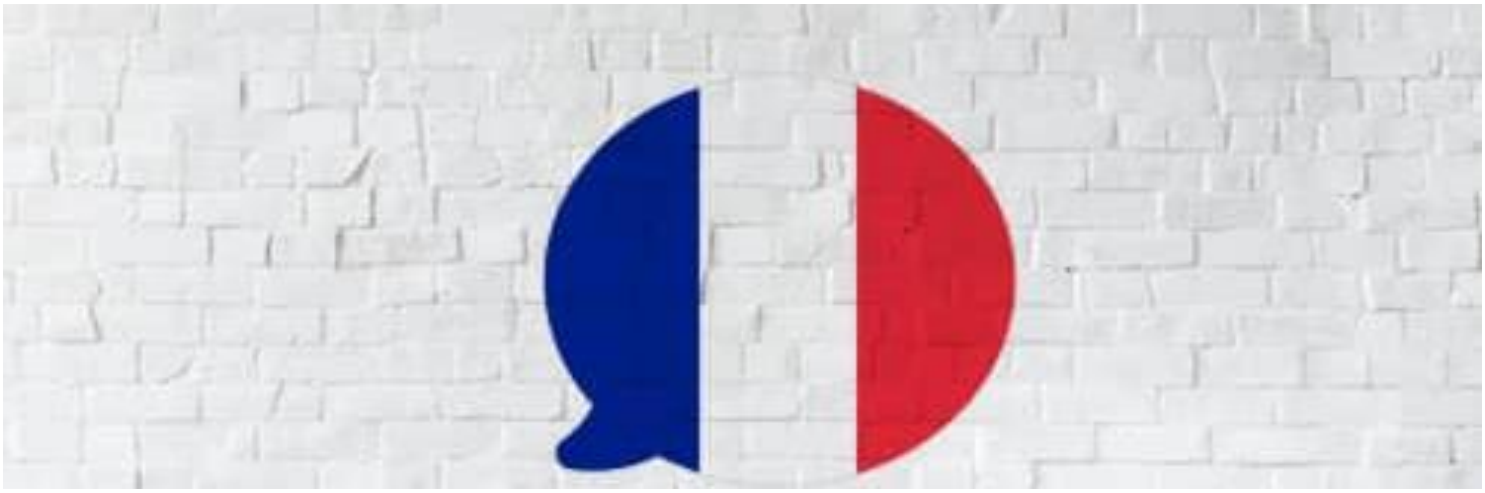
How will this course help me after my GCSEs?
The skills gained during the course such as presentation techniques, organisation skills, developing ideas, evaluation, self-expression, and critical awareness, are relevant to all subject areas and future employment.

Why should I study this course?

If you have an interest in the performing arts. You may be enthusiastic about Drama and have some interest in the others arts. You do not have to have taken part in much outside school in the field of Drama (although that might help), but you do have to be prepared to work as a team and to be part of performances throughout the course

Where can I find out more?

Talk to your Mrs Abrahamson, Head of Drama



French

What will I study?

GCSE French is a multi-skill GCSE involving the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing and it is based around the themes of:

- Theme 1: Identity and Culture
- Theme 2: Local, National, International and Global Areas of Interest
- Theme 3: Current and Future Study and Employment

Through the study of these themes the course encourages you to express yourself including your likes, dislikes, ideas and opinions. The course also builds on your learning at Key Stage 3 and introduces you to a wider range of language, structures and vocabulary.

How will I be assessed?

The GCSE French course is assessed with an examination in each of the four skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking) at the same tier at the end of Year 11. All of the skills are equally weighted and worth 25% each.

How will this course help me after my GCSEs?

A GCSE in French offers a progression route to further study of a foreign language at A Level or IB. A GCSE confirms your ability to learn a foreign language and facilitates the learning of other languages. Employers are always asking for candidates with language skills and a GCSE in French will place you in a strong position for interesting employment with plenty of career opportunities. Journalism, media, law, engineering, business, marketing, ICT, sport, leisure, travel and tourism, customer service, civil service and teaching are all examples of careers where language skills are particularly valued.

Additional Information

You can only choose this subject if you took it in year 9.

Why should I study this course?

The world has become a much smaller place. It is crucial that we learn to speak and understand each other. This can only be done effectively by learning other languages and appreciating associated cultures. Studying French rewards practical communication skills and adds an international dimension to your studies. Learning French can enhance your employment and mobility prospects whether you are looking for a career in business, engineering, fashion or world-class football.

Where can I find out more?

Talk to Mr Brown, Head of MFL

Geography

What will I study?
Through the study of GCSE geography pupils will develop a thorough understanding of current global issues such as climate change, be able to identify and think critically about the social, economic and environmental impacts of processes and events ranging from urbanisation to natural disasters, and form educated opinions on topics such as deforestation. Pupils will learn about how the physical and human environments interact and interconnect with each other through various units divided into physical or human geography topics.

- **Paper 1: Physical geography (35% of GCSE): 1 exam – 1 hour 30 mins:** 1 The challenge of natural hazards 2 The living world 3 Living with the physical environment – rivers and coasts
- **Paper 2: Human geography (35% of GCSE): 1 exam - 1 hour 30 minutes:** 1 Urban issues and challenges 2 The changing economic world 3 Resource management
- **Paper 3: Geographical skills (30% of GCSE): 1 exam - 1 hour 15 mins** 1 Issue evaluation 2 Fieldwork 3 Geographical skills

How will I be assessed?
There are three externally examined papers. Pupils must complete all assessment in May/June at the end of Y11.

What will I learn?
Geography is amongst one of the most employable subjects due to the plethora of transferable skills taught, ranging from extended writing to statistical analysis, interpreting graphs and data to fieldwork collection and decision-making exercises. Geographers develop the ability to view relevant and current issues from a range of perspectives.

Additional information:
There is a **compulsory residential fieldwork trip**. Fieldwork is collected across a three-day period and pupils will receive tuition by experts who help them to gather and analyse data. In November 2023 the Year 11 geography pupils are going to PGL Osmington Bay in Dorset and will complete their physical fieldwork at Durdle Door! Historically the trip costs approximately **£250**, so this is something that needs careful consideration before you choose GCSE Geography (financial support is available where needed).

Why should I study this course?

As a result of the strong work ethic of our geographers, pupils tend to perform very well in geography and as a result achieve brilliant results. Geography is extremely relevant and studying this course will develop pupil's ability to fully understand what is happening in the world and how that will impact their future. Due to the versatility of geography, pupils who take it have the option of many different career paths including economics and finance (linked with development), medicine and health care (linked with global health), policy, government and law (linked with urbanisation) and sustainability (linked with global biomes and climate change).

Where can I find out more?

Talk to Miss Fulham, Head of Geography

Why should I study this course?

Spanning more than one thousand years, this course offers both breadth and depth. We will ask some of the big questions of political history – How and why does power change hands? What forces shaped the international order in the twentieth century? – as well as immersing ourselves in particular historical moments – from England teetering on the brink of the Reformation to the wreckage of Kenilworth Castle after the Civil War.

Where can I find out more?

Talk to Mr Hayes or Mr Normanton

History

What will I study?

- **Paper 1: Period Study and non-British depth study:** International Relations: The Changing International Order 1918-c.2001 & Germany 1925 - 1955: The People and the State
- **Paper 2: British Thematic Study:** Power: Monarchy and Democracy in Britain c.1000 to 2014
- **Paper 3: British Depth Study and Study of the Historic Environment:** The English Reformation c.1520-c.1550 & Castles: Form and Function c.1000 - 1750

How will I be assessed?

- **Paper 1: Period Study and non-British depth study:** 50% (Written examination: 1 hour and 45 minutes)
- **Paper 2: British Thematic Study:** 25% (Written examination: 1 hour)
- **Paper 3: British Depth Study and Study of the Historic Environment:** 25% (Written examination: 1 hour and 15 minutes)

What will I learn?

You will develop an awareness of how the past has been represented and interpreted. You learn to ask relevant questions about the past and to investigate them critically using a range of sources in their historical context.

How will this course help me after my GCSEs?

History GCSE is highly regarded by Sixth Form colleges and Universities. The OCR course, specifically is excellent preparation for History A level, and also for other humanities subjects.

History A-levels are highly-valued by employers and businesses, and are an excellent pathway to studying History or Law, in particular, at university.
University.

Music

What will I study?
The Music GCSE course enables pupils to engage in performing, composing, arranging, listening and appraising. The four areas of study that pupils will be examined on are:

- Instrumental Music (1700-1820)
- Vocal Music
- Music for Stage and Screen
- Fusions

How will I be assessed?

- Performing music – two performances are submitted to the exam board (solo **and** ensemble) – **30%**
- Composing music – two compositions are submitted to the exam board – **30%**
- Appraising music – there will be one 1hour 45mins written examination, answering questions about the 8 set works that we study (plus some appraising of unfamiliar pieces) – **40%**

What will I learn?

- Develop your performance skills and learn to communicate musically with fluency and control.
- Develop an awareness of a variety or instruments, styles and approaches to performing and composing.

How will this course help me after my GCSEs?
Music develops so many life skills and transferable skills that many employers view as valuable. These include things like: critical and creative thinking, self-discipline, self-confidence, self-motivation and emotional awareness.

Additional information:
Please note that pupils who choose GCSE Music **must take instrumental or singing lessons at school or privately.**

Why should I study this course?

You will want to study this subject if you have a love of music in all its forms. You will have learnt much from your lessons in Key Stage 3 and want to take that on further. You may have instrumental or vocal skills, this is an advantage, or you may wish to take up individual lessons. This course is aimed at anyone who enjoys performing, composing and listening to music of any genre.

Where can I find out more?

Talk to Mrs Rick, Head of Music

Physical Education

Why should I study this course?

Pupils with a passion for sport both practically and the theory of P.E. Pupils should have a good all round sporting pedigree and should represent the school in a range of sports. Taking part in sports clubs outside of school is a major advantage to accessing the higher grades.

Where can I find out more?

Talk to your PE teacher or Mr Cox, Head of PE

What will I study?

- Fitness and body systems
- Health and performance
- Practical performance
- Personal Exercise Plan

How will I be assessed?

- 60% Theory made up of two exams. Component 1 is a 1hr 45 minute exam. Component 2 is 1hr 15 minute exam.
- 30% Practical internally marked and externally moderated. One team activity, one individual activity and a free choice from the DfE approved list.
- 10% Personal Exercise Plan. Plan and analyse a personal fitness plan over a six week period.

What will I learn?

Applied anatomy and physiology, movement analysis, physical training, health, fitness and well-being, sport psychology, socio-cultural influences and the use of data in sport.

Opportunity to join the Leadership Academy managed by Bedford School Sports Partnership.

How will this course help me after my GCSEs?

The blend of scientific and social knowledge positions candidates to access a range of qualifications. Pupils who enjoy GCSE PE can progress to BTEC Nationals in Sport and Exercise science or AS/A level Physical Education.

Additional information:

Please note that pupils who choose GCSE PE should have an established record of playing sports or representing the school or a significant involvement in sporting clubs locally.

Religious Studies

What will I study?
All pupils study the beliefs, teachings and practices of Christianity and Islam. Pupils will study the following topics from a philosophical and ethical perspective, with a focus on Christianity:

- Relationships and Families
- Existence of God
- Religion, Peace and Conflict
- Dialogue between religious and non-religious beliefs and attitudes

How will I be assessed?
Pupils will take four examinations at the end of Year 11, which will cover everything studied:

- Belief and Teachings & Practices: Christianity 1 hour exam (25%)
- Belief and Teachings & Practices: Islam 1 hour exam (25%)
- Religion, Philosophy and Ethics in the Modern World: Christianity 2hour exam (50%)

What will I learn?
You will study two religions – Christianity and Islam – and this will include a study of the Bible and the Qur'an, and a range of scholarship that has been written about each. You will learn about the variety of ways in which followers of Christianity and Islam practice their faiths. You will also study the many ways in which religion impacts on the society we live in – how ethics and philosophy shape our views on subjects such as families, war and conflict, and medical ethics. You will study classical arguments made by philosophers for the existence of God, and learn about why atheism is becoming an increasingly common world view.

How will this course help me after my GCSEs?
This subject will open a door to a lifetime of interest in some of life's most fascinating areas of thinking. Developing knowledge of religion helps you to show tolerance, respect and understanding of those people you will meet in the work place. It will equip you with the knowledge to make a more informed judgement about some of the debates and controversies currently provoked by religion and extremism. It will give you a more powerful voice to counteract misinformed ideas when you come across them.

Why should I study this course?

Any pupil with a fascination for deep philosophical discussion and an interest in spiritual development will find it rewarding. This course is designed to help pupils make up their own minds and justify their opinions about religious ideas and moral and ethical issues (issues of right and wrong). They will do this by studying the beliefs and practices of two religions in depth.

Where can I find out more?

Talk to Mrs Lehain, Head of RE

Why should I study this course?

The world has become a much smaller place. It is crucial that we learn to speak and understand each other. This can only be done effectively by learning other languages and appreciating associated cultures. Studying Spanish rewards practical communication skills and adds an international dimension to your studies. Learning Spanish can enhance your employment and mobility prospects whether you are looking for a career in business, engineering, fashion or world class football.

Where can I find out more?

Talk to Mr Brown, Head of MFL

Spanish

What will I study?
GCSE Spanish is a multi-skill GCSE involving the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing and it is based around the themes of:

- Theme 1: Identity and Culture
- Theme 2: Local, National, International and Global Areas of Interest
- Theme 3: Current and Future Study and Employment

Through the study of these themes the course encourages you to express yourself including your likes, dislikes, ideas and opinions. The course also builds on your learning at Key Stage 3 and introduces you to a wider range of language, structures and vocabulary.

How will I be assessed?
The GCSE Spanish course is assessed with an examination in each of the four skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking) at the same tier at the end of Year 11. All of the skills are equally weighted and worth 25% each.

How will this course help me after my GCSEs?
A GCSE in Spanish offers a progression route to further study of a foreign language at A Level or IB. A GCSE confirms your ability to learn a foreign language and facilitates the learning of other languages. Employers are always asking for candidates with language skills and a GCSE in Spanish will place you in a strong position for interesting employment with plenty of career opportunities. Journalism, media, law, engineering, business, marketing, ICT, sport, leisure, travel and tourism, customer service, civil service and teaching are all examples of careers where language skills are particularly valued.


BEDFORD
FREE SCHOOL
Student Planner
2016 - 2017

Options requests form

Please complete the form attached indicating your preferred options subjects. Please note the following:

Humanities:

- Every pupil **MUST** pick at least one from History or Geography (you can select both if you wish)

Languages*:

- Every pupil **MUST** pick at least one from Spanish or French. If you have only studied Spanish so far you must pick Spanish. If you are considering requesting both languages, you should speak to Mr. Brown first.

Triple Science:

- You should ***only*** request this if you are invited by the Science Department as they have identified that this would be a suitable course for you

*In order to support a **very** small number of pupils access the wider curriculum, some pupils may not take a language. This can only be agreed in consultation and approval of the Senior Leadership team. Please contact Mr. Wood to discuss this.

Please remember that these are options ***requests*** at this stage. Once all options forms are in and have been checked, we will analyse all the requests carefully and try to accommodate as many requests as possible. **Please be aware that it is never possible to offer all the possible combinations of subjects** that pupils request and a small number of pupils may be disappointed that they cannot study their first-choice options. This happens because:

- It is not possible to create a timetable to suit all the choices made
- Not enough pupils chose the subject for the course to run
- A subject is oversubscribed and it is not possible or safe for all students who requested it to be in the class. In these situations, we may refer to pupils' progress and effort in the relevant subject to select who is able to take it.

Options forms must be submitted by **Friday 17th March** at the latest.

Options requests 2023

EXAMPLE ONLY

BEDFORD FREE SCHOOL
SERVING BEDFORD & KEMPSTON

Instructions:
1. Choose your **FOUR** requests below in order of preference by numbering them 1, 2, 3 and 4 (pupils must pick a **humanities**- History or Geography - and a **language**) 2. Choose **TWO** reserve subjects – subjects you wouldn't mind doing if you couldn't have all of your top four. Number these 5 and 6 3. If you have been invited to study Triple Science and wish to take it instead of doing Combined Science please indicate this using the tick box 4. Please check your options choices carefully

Pupil name	**Form group**
Example Pupil	*9CW*

Subject	Preference number (1-4 and 5-6 reserve choices)
Art	*4*
Computing	
Design Technology	
Drama	*1*
French	
Geography	*2*
History	*5 (reserve choice)*
Music	
PE	
Religious Studies	*6 (reserve choice)*
Spanish	*3*

Triple Science	Please tick in this box if you have been invited to take triple science AND would like to accept this offer: ☑

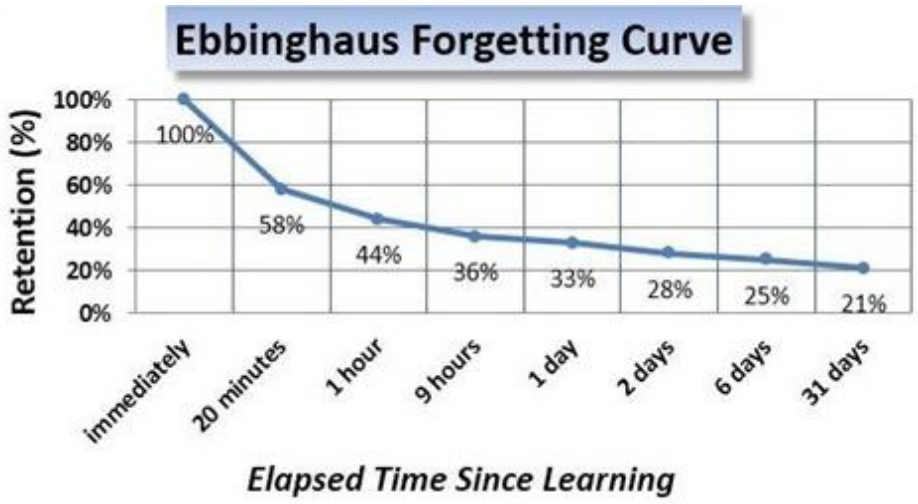
Check:

- Have you included at least one language and one humanities subject?
- Have you listed four options subjects (1-4) and indicated two reserve choices (5-6)?

Parents/Carers please sign to confirm that: ▪ The above requests have been discussed with me and I am happy that they are appropriate for my child	Parent signature:

Options forms must be completed and returned to student reception by Friday 17th March

Revision techniques:



The forgetting curve demonstrates the decline of memory retention in time – how information is lost over a period when there is no attempt to retain it. This is a big challenge for pupils. A typical forgetting curve shows that humans tend to halve their memory of newly learned knowledge in just a matter of days unless they consciously review the learned material.

Pupils will be used to using a number of key revision strategies in school to enhance their learning and support long-term memory retention. These strategies have been identified by cognitive psychologists as having the most evidence to back their effectiveness at improving learning. The following pages outline these in more detail.

1) Spaced Practice – space out your learning over time. Start planning early for exams, and set aside a little bit of time every day. Five hours spread out over two weeks is better than the same five hours all at once. After you review information from the most recent class, make sure to go back and study important older information to keep it fresh.

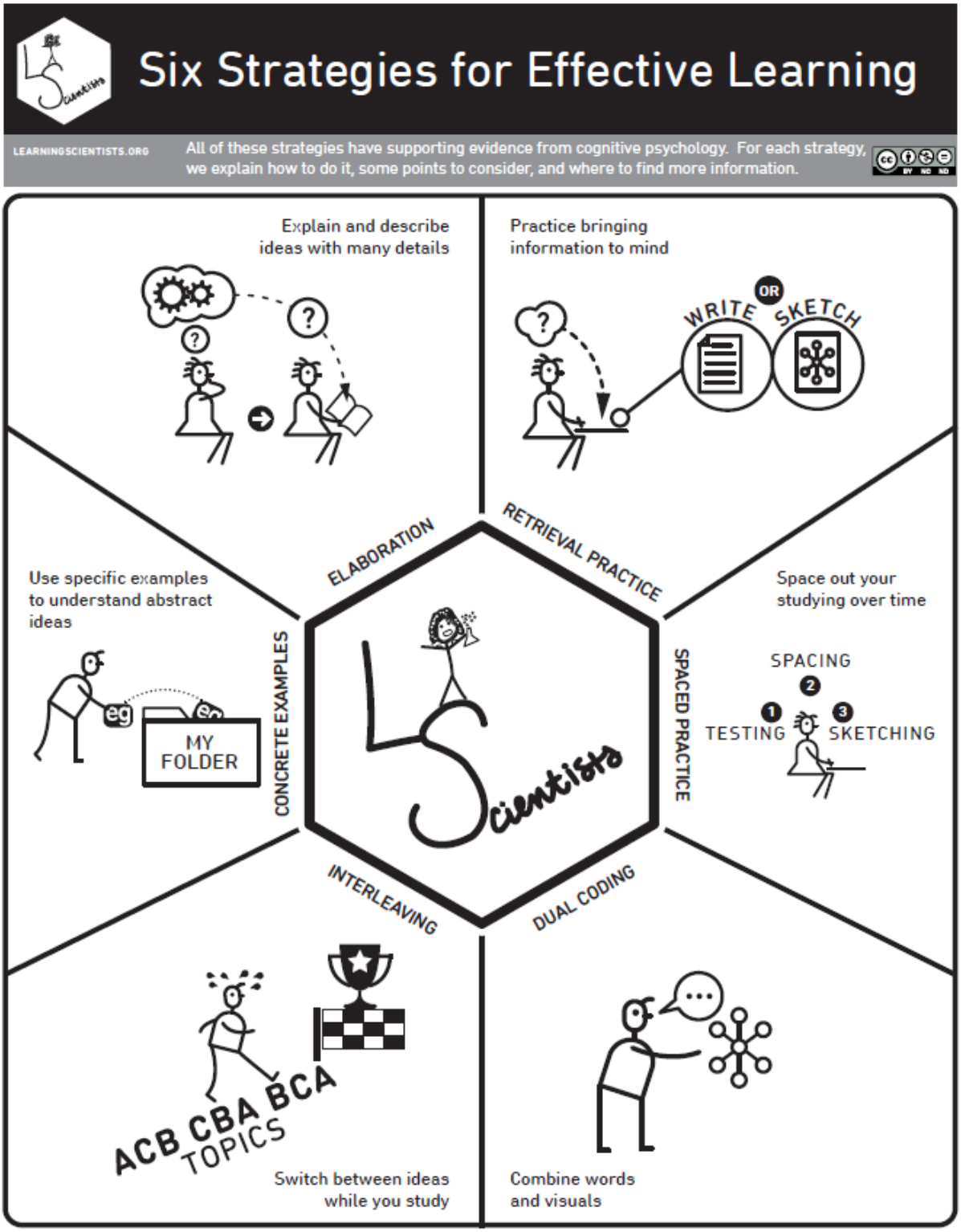
2) Retrieval Practice- Practice bringing information to mind without the help of materials. Recalling information without supporting materials helps us learn it much more effectively. Take as many knowledge quizzes or practice tests as you can get your hands on. You can also make flashcards to test yourself on key concepts, words or ideas

3) Elaboration – Explain and describe key ideas and concepts with many details. Make connections between different ideas to explain how they work together. Take two ideas and think of ways they are similar and different. Elaboration reinforces knowledge and retention of information

4) Interleaving – Switching between ideas and subjects when you study. Switch between ideas during a study session. Don't study one idea for too long. Go back over the ideas again in different orders to strengthen and consolidate your understanding.

5) Concrete Examples – Use specific examples to understand abstract and complex ideas. Link ideas to specific real-life examples as this will help reinforce your understanding.

6) Dual Coding – Combine words and visuals. Pupils will find it useful to represent ideas alongside drawings, tables, diagrams, timelines and pictures. These help pupil remember and learn key conceptions.



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Watch a video summarising the six strategies here:
http://www.learningscientists.org/videos/

LEARN TO STUDY USING...

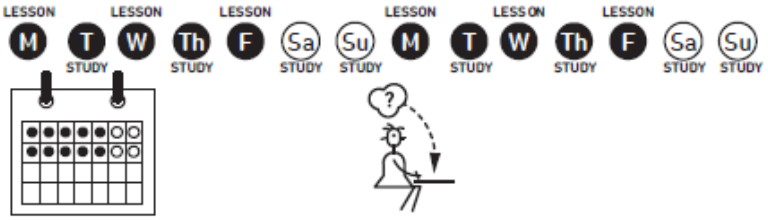
Spaced Practice

SPACE OUT YOUR STUDYING OVER TIME

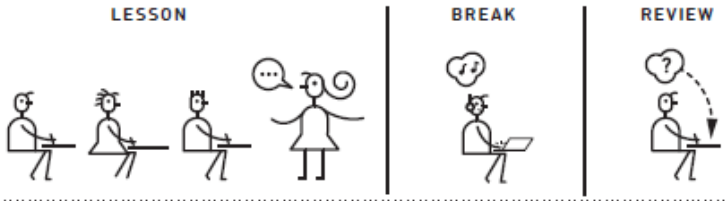
LEARNINGSCIENTISTS.ORG

HOW TO DO IT

Start planning early for exams, and set aside a little bit of time every day. Five hours spread out over two weeks is better than the same five hours all at once.



Review information from each class, but not immediately after class.



After you review information from the most recent class, make sure to go back and study important older information to keep it fresh.

HOLD ON!

When you sit down to study, make sure you are using effective study strategies rather than just re-reading your class notes.

This may seem difficult and you may forget some information from day to day, but this is actually a good thing! This forces you to retrieve information from memory (see Retrieval Practice poster).

Create small spaces (a few days) and do a little bit over time, so that it adds up!

RESEARCH

Read more about spacing as a study strategy

Benjamin, A. S., & Tullis, J. (2010). What makes distributed practice effective? *Cognitive Psychology, 61*, 228-247.

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LEARN TO STUDY USING...

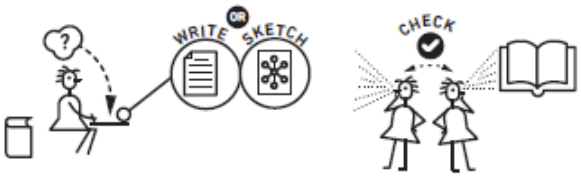
Retrieval Practice

PRACTICE BRINGING INFORMATION TO MIND

LEARNINGSCIENTISTS.ORG

HOW TO DO IT

Put away your class materials, and write or sketch everything you know. Be as thorough as possible. Then, check your class materials for accuracy and important points you missed.



Take as many practice tests as you can get your hands on. If you don't have ready-made tests, try making your own and trading with a friend who has done the same.

You can also make flashcards. Just make sure you practice recalling the information on them, and go beyond definitions by thinking of links between ideas.

HOLD ON!

Retrieval practice works best when you go back to check your class materials for accuracy afterward.

Retrieval is hard! If you're struggling, identify the things you've missed from your class materials, and work your way up to recalling it on your own with the class materials closed.

Don't only recall words and definitions. Make sure to recall main ideas, how things are related or different from one another, and new examples.

RESEARCH

Read more about retrieval practice as a study strategy

Roediger, H. L., Putnam, A. L., & Smith, M. A. (2011). Ten benefits of testing and their applications to educational practice. In J. Mestre & B. Ross (Eds.), *Psychology of learning and motivation: Cognition in education*, (pp. 1-36). Oxford: Elsevier.

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LEARN TO STUDY USING...

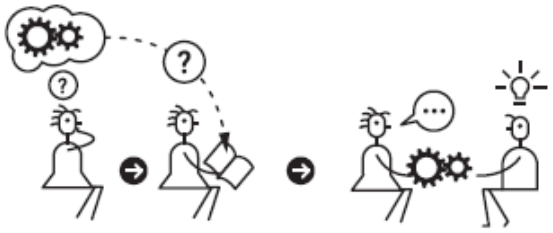
Elaboration

EXPLAIN AND DESCRIBE IDEAS WITH MANY DETAILS

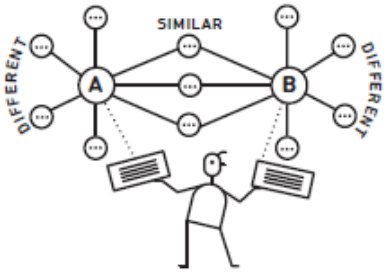
LEARNINGSCIENTISTS.ORG

HOW TO DO IT

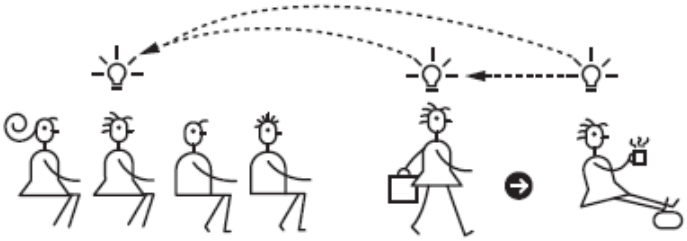
Ask yourself questions while you are studying about how things work and why, and then find the answers in your class materials and discuss them with your classmates.



As you elaborate, make connections between different ideas to explain how they work together. Take two ideas and think of ways they are similar and different.



Describe how the ideas you are studying apply to your own experiences or memories. As you go through your day, make connections to the ideas you are learning in class.



HOLD ON!

Make sure the way you are explaining and describing an idea is accurate. Don't overextend the elaborations, and always check your class materials or ask your teacher.

Work your way up so that you can describe and explain without looking at your class materials.

RESEARCH

Read more about elaboration as a study strategy

McDaniel, M. A., & Donnelly, C. M. (1996). Learning with analogy and elaborative interrogation. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 88*, 508-519.

Wong, B. Y. L. (1985). Self-questioning instructional research: A review. *Review of Educational Research, 55*, 227-268.

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LEARN TO STUDY USING...

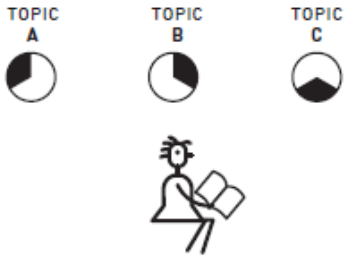
Interleaving

SWITCH BETWEEN IDEAS WHILE YOU STUDY

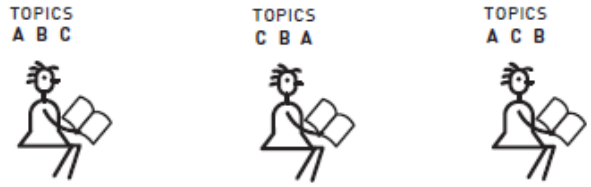
LEARNINGSCIENTISTS.ORG

HOW TO DO IT

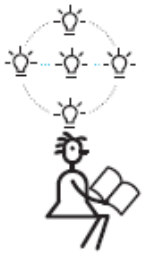
Switch between ideas during a study session. Don't study one idea for too long.



Go back over the ideas again in different orders to strengthen your understanding.



Make links between different ideas as you switch between them.



HOLD ON!

While it's good to switch between ideas, don't switch too often, or spend too little time on any one idea; you need to make sure you understand them.

Interleaving will feel harder than studying the same thing for a long time. But don't worry - this is actually helpful to your learning!

RESEARCH

Read more about interleaving as a study strategy

Rohrer, D. (2012). Interleaving helps students distinguish among similar concepts. *Educational Psychology Review, 24*, 355-367.

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LEARN TO STUDY USING...

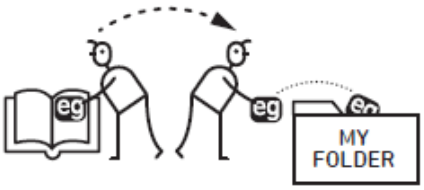
Concrete Examples

USE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES TO UNDERSTAND ABSTRACT IDEAS

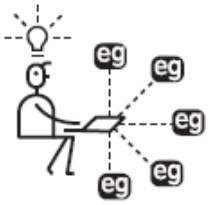
LEARNINGSCIENTISTS.ORG

HOW TO DO IT

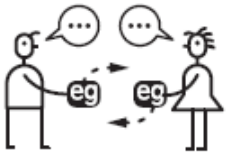
Collect examples your teacher has used, and look in your class materials for as many examples as you can find.



Make the link between the idea you are studying and each example, so that you understand how the example applies to the idea.



Share examples with friends, and explain them to each other for added benefits.



HOLD ON!

You may find examples on the internet that are not used appropriately. Make sure your examples are correct - check with your teacher.

Ultimately, creating your own relevant examples will be the most helpful for learning.

RESEARCH

Read more about concrete examples as a study strategy

Rawson, K. A., Thomas, R. C., & Jacoby, L. L. (2014). The power of examples: Illustrative examples enhance conceptual learning of declarative concepts. *Educational Psychology Review, 27*, 483-504.

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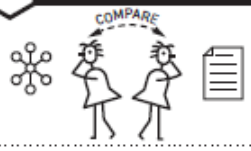
LEARN TO STUDY USING...

Dual Coding

COMBINE WORDS AND VISUALS

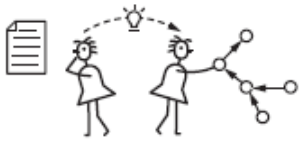
LEARNINGSCIENTISTS.ORG

HOW TO DO IT



Look at your class materials and find visuals. Look over the visuals and compare to the words.

Look at visuals, and explain in your own words what they mean.

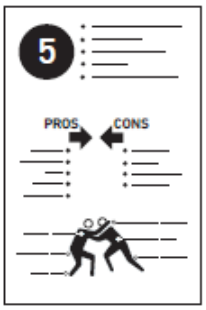


Take information that you are trying to learn, and draw visuals to go along with it.

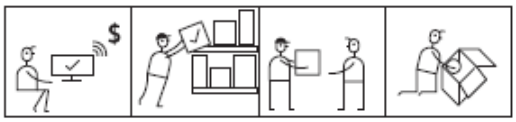
HOLD ON!

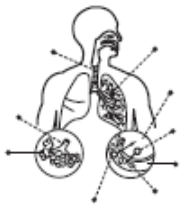
Try to come up with different ways to represent the information visually, for example an infographic, a timeline, a cartoon strip, or a diagram of parts that work together.

INFOGRAPHIC



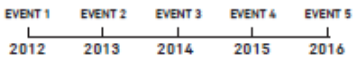
CARTOON STRIP

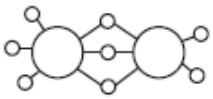




DIAGRAM

TIMELINE





GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

Work your way up to drawing what you know from memory.

RESEARCH

Read more about dual coding as a study strategy

Mayer, R. E., & Anderson, R. B. (1992). The instructive animation: Helping students build connections between words and pictures in multimedia learning. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 4*, 444-452.

Content by Yana Weinstein (University of Massachusetts Lowell) & Megan Smith (Rhode Island College) | Illustrations by Oliver Caviglioli (teachinghow2s.com/cogsci)
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The Science of Learning

How to do Retrieval Practice

1. Study the material you are trying to learn first. Take about 20 minutes the first time BUT this will get less and less each time as you get to know the material.

   You can study the material by:
   - Reading it again
   - Asking yourself questions as you go: how would I explain this in my own words? How does this link to other parts of the course?
   - Creating flashcards that you can test yourself on afterwards

2. Pick up and use a **black pen**.
   Put away all your answers/flashcards and test yourself, writing everything you remember. **Do not cheat** – retrieval practice is **supposed** to **feel hard** at first, but this means it is working. It will get easier each time you test yourself on the same material.

3. Now pick up and use a **green pen**.
   Check your answers:
   - Tick all of your correct answers
   - Amend any incorrect answers (even if they are slightly wrong)
   - Fill in any blank spaces with the correct answer copying the answer word for word
   - Check all spellings are correct

4. Repeat the process as many times as you need to, paying special attention to your previous green pen answers (as these are the bits you need to learn!)

Tips

- *Lay blank pieces of paper over the answers in order to re-use the quiz again*
- *Even if you think you know it test yourself a week or so later to check you do.*
- *Do not leave it until the last minute – do some every week, including holidays*
- *Once you think you know it test yourself on everything AGAIN*

Contacts:

Please do not hesitate to get in contact if you have any questions or queries. For subject related questions please speak to your son / daughter's teacher or Head of Department.

Deputy Principal for curriculum	Mr T Wood	twood@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk
Key Stage Leader	Mr M Cox	mcox@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk

Subject	Staff	Email
English	Mr G Scanlan	gscanlan@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk
Maths	Mr R Lemmon	rlemmon@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk
Science	Miss C McPherson-George	cmcpherson-george@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk
MFL (French & Spanish)	Mr A Brown	abrown@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk
History	Mr H Normanton	hnormanton@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk
Geography	Miss C Fulham	cfulham@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk
Computer Science	Mr J Moore	jmoore@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk
Design & Technology	Mr J Hogg	jhogg@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk
RE	Mrs J Lehain	jlehain@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk
Art	Mrs F Burbridge	fburbridge@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk
Music	Mrs S Rick	srick@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk
Drama	Mrs C Abrahamson	cabrahamson@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk
PE	Mr M Cox	mcox@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk

GCSE & Options Booklet

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