

Manchester Communication Academy

OPTIONS BOOKLET

2025– 2026



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The Year 9 Options Process

As you are half way into Year 9, it's time to make important decisions about the subjects you would like to study in Year 10 and Year 11. These will be the subjects you take for your GCSE or BTEC qualifications. It's important to choose subjects that you enjoy and are likely to succeed in.

This booklet provides all the information you need about the Year 9 options process, including the timeline and details of the courses available in Year 10 and Year 11 at Manchester Communication Academy.

This is an exciting opportunity to shape your future learning. Throughout the process, our staff will be here to support you in making the right choices for your future.

Options Timeline

Options assemblies for Year 9 students during the **week beginning 12th January**.

Year 9 Information Evening, Monday 19th January, for Year 9 students and your parents/carers.

During this event, you will have the opportunity to speak with your subject teachers about the courses they are offering. You can discuss which subjects might suit you best, learn about the type of work involved, and ask any other questions you may have. It is very important that both you and your parents or carers attend this event, as it will help you make well-informed decisions about your options.

You will also be asked to complete a form that outlines your initial choices- these will not be your final options subjects. Gathering this information helps us to look at the timetable for next year.

Selecting your options will happen during the w/b 2nd February.

A senior leader and your progress lead will guide you through the process of selecting your options and address any concerns you may have.

What can I choose?

Some subjects are compulsory which means that you are required to study them to GCSE level. These include English, Maths and Science.

Beyond these subjects, we want you to make choices that are going to help you to build a brilliant future.

We know that colleges and employers look for individuals with a broad range of skills. They value students who demonstrate strong literacy and numeracy skills, an understanding of the world, the ability to research ideas, and effective communication.

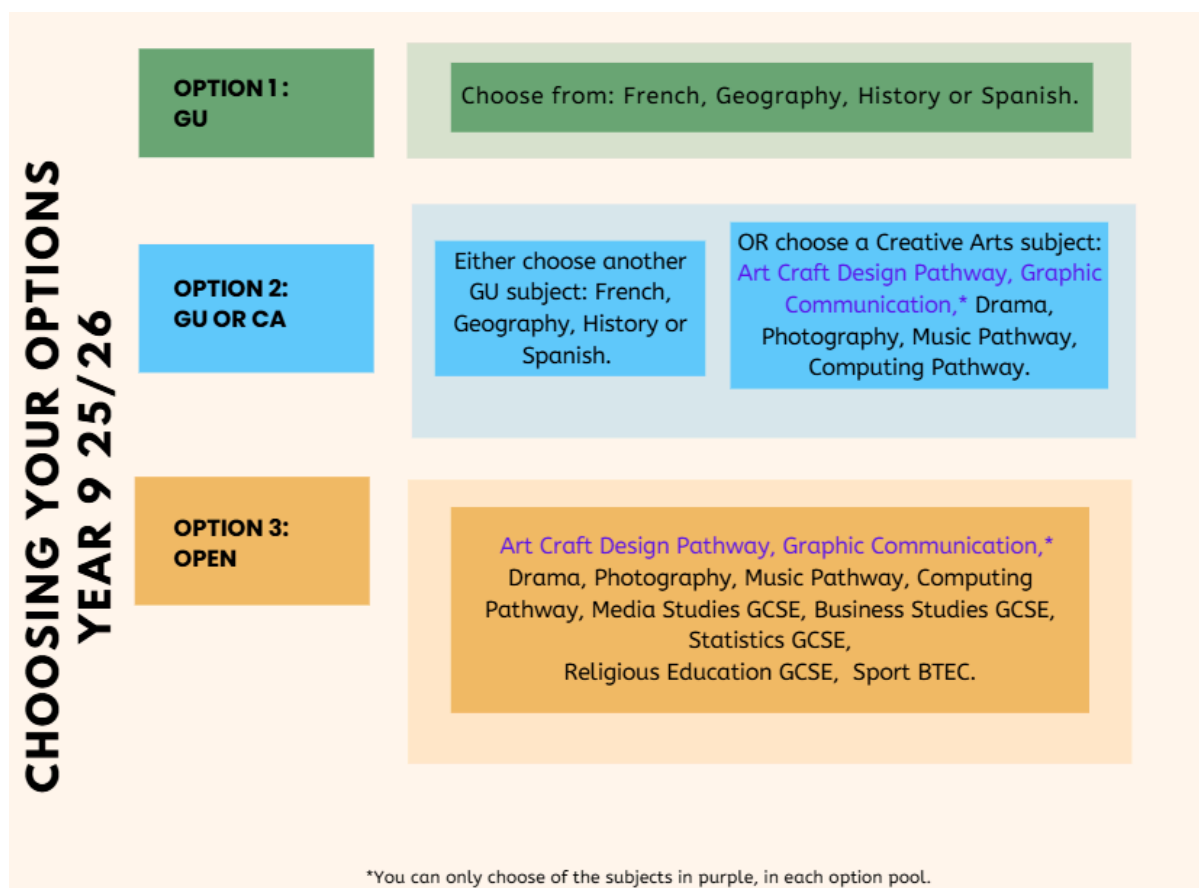
You can gain these skills in lots of ways through the different courses you will study. Subjects such as history, geography, French, and Spanish are widely recognised as being particularly valuable for developing these skills. This is why at least one of these subjects is studied by all students.

Your Options

The following subjects are compulsory for all students:

- GCSE English Language
- GCSE English Literature
- GCSE Mathematics
- GCSE Combined Science or GCSE Triple Science
- Core PE (Not assessed through any formal qualification)
- Aspire (Not assessed through any formal qualification)

The rest of your options:



Additional Language GCSE

At MCA we are keen to celebrate cultural and language diversity, therefore we offer a range of languages beyond French and Spanish taught by specially trained language tutors. If you have an interest in learning a new language or developing your fluency in a language, then speak to Ms Bibi for further information. There will be a section on the options form where you can note down which language you are interested in studying.

Combined Science & Triple Science

There are two pathways available for GCSE science – combined science or triple science. Most students will follow the combined science route where they will study biology, chemistry and physics and be awarded two GCSEs. This is a common pathway for GCSE students.

Some students will be offered the opportunity to study triple science, which involves being taught more GCSE content covering biology, chemistry and physics and being awarded three GCSEs in science at the end of the course.

It is important to know that you will be accepted into A Level sciences with good grades in either combined science or triple science GCSEs.

How to Choose

You will study your chosen subjects for two years, so it's important to select subjects that you enjoy. To give yourself the best chance of achieving success, we recommend choosing subjects where you already have a strong understanding and are performing well at Key Stage 3.

When deciding which GCSE subjects to choose, it's important to think about what will be best for you. Here are some questions to help you make your decision:

- 1. Do you enjoy the subject?**
 - Think about your time in the classroom or when you're doing homework. Do you feel excited and motivated to do the work?
- 2. Are you doing well in this subject?**
 - Consider the feedback you get from your teacher. Are you consistently working hard and receiving positive comments from your teachers?
- 3. Do you have an interest in this subject outside of the classroom?**
 - Do you participate in any extra-curricular activities (ESAs) related to this subject? Do you attend clubs outside of school or read about topics related to this subject?
- 4. What do you want to study after you leave MCA?**
 - Think about your future plans. Does choosing this subject help you get into a college course you're interested in?
- 5. Does your preferred way of working fit with the demands of the subject?**
 - If you enjoy reading and writing essays, you might prefer subjects like History or Religious Education (RE). If you like hands-on work and creating projects, consider subjects that involve coursework. Talk to your teachers about what each course involves.

Remember, the assessment section in your course booklet provides information on how each course is assessed. Use this to help you understand what will be expected of you.

Information About the Courses you Can Study

The remainder of this booklet details information about each of the courses you may study at KS4. You should pay particular attention to the knowledge that you will learn, how the course will be assessed and what future courses and careers you can go onto study if you pick this course.

Glossary:

Tiered entry – Some courses have two levels at which you can be entered – Foundation and Higher. Students entered into Foundation can achieve up to a grade 5 whilst students entered into higher can achieve up to a grade 9. Tiered entry applies for only some subjects.

Core Subjects

English Language

Why should I choose this subject?	<p>English Language introduces you to a diverse range of descriptive and rhetorical texts to allow you to interpret their meaning and purpose. We will investigate news articles, historical accounts, fictional texts, speeches and more.</p> <p>During the course you will begin to explore questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How can we assess whether news reports are biased?• How are the most effective and persuasive arguments structured?• What makes a powerful spoken presentation?• How and why do certain adverts, texts and media influence the masses so strongly?• How do authors use language devices to inspire our collective imagination and influence people to feel the same way as us?
What will I learn about?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifying and analysing specific language features• The impact of specific descriptive language• How rhetoric is used to sway opinion• The way that narratives are structured to engage and excite readers• How we weigh up peoples' ideas and viewpoints.• How to scan for key information• Justifying your point of view and using evidence from the text to support your ideas
How will this be examined?	<p>100% final written exam</p> <p>Paper 1 - Explorations in creative writing and reading</p> <p>Paper 2 - Writers' viewpoints and perspectives</p>
Exam board	AQA

Is the course tiered?	No
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English Literature

Why should I choose this subject?	<p>English Literature enables us to engage with the power of words and the messages behind them. It helps us to see texts as windows to experiences outside of our own and as vehicles to help articulate our own emotions and beliefs.</p> <p>Literature also gives us a space to examine the messages we encounter in canonical texts. Students can reflect on the power that these texts wield in society and begin their journey of critiquing on how that influence impacts on our collective consciousness.</p>
What will I learn about?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shakespeare Play – Macbeth • 19th Century Novel - A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens • Modern Play - DNA by Dennis Kelly • Power and Conflict Poetry: collected poems • Unseen Poetry - How to analyse and interpret a previously untaught poem • Close analysis of different literary forms • Analytical and academic writing styles
How will this be examined?	<p>100% final written exam</p> <p>Paper 1 - Shakespeare and 19th Century Novel</p> <p>Paper 2 - Modern Play, Power & Conflict Poetry, and Unseen Poetry</p>
Exam board	AQA
Is the course tiered?	No

Mathematics

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Why should I choose this subject?	<p>Maths is so much more than just a compulsory subject. By studying mathematics, you become better at solving problems and making sense of the world.</p> <p>Maths gives you skills that you can use in other subjects and apply in many different job roles. It helps tackle real-world problems and find solutions. From everyday tasks like counting and shopping to more complex problems like interpreting data, we use maths everywhere.</p> <p>Maths helps us put a price on things, create graphics, build websites, construct skyscrapers, and understand how things work or predict how they might change over time and under different conditions.</p> <p>Understanding a new mathematical concept or solving a problem using maths is enormously satisfying. By studying mathematics, your career possibilities are endless.</p>
What will I learn about?	<p>You will build on your knowledge from key stage 3 and cover the six main topic areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number 2. Algebra 3. Ratio, proportion and rates of change 4. Geometry and measures 5. Probability 6. Statistics <p>Not only will you learn how to solve complex mathematical equations, but the skills you develop whilst working on mathematical processes will develop your problem-solving abilities in other ways, including pattern spotting, working backwards, visualising, working systematically and using logical reasoning.</p>
How will this be examined?	<p>Students will sit three final written examination papers at the same tier.</p> <p>Paper 1 – Non calculator (1hr 30mins)</p> <p>Paper 2 – Calculator (1hr 30mins)</p> <p>Paper 3 – Calculator (1hr 30mins)</p>
Exam board	Pearson Edexcel
Is the course tiered?	<p>Foundation tier (grades 1 – 5)</p> <p>Higher tier (grades 3 – 9)</p>


Science – Combined Science or Triple Science

<p>Why should I choose this subject?</p>	<p>Studying science will feed your curiosity and help you understand yourself and the world around you better. Throughout all the topics you study in science, you'll learn how to work scientifically, solve problems, and analyse data. You'll design and carry out investigations linked to what you learn and develop scientific skills to work safely in a laboratory.</p> <p>Studying GCSE Combined Science deepens your knowledge in biology, chemistry, and physics. It can also provide access to AS/A2 Science courses at college, including A Level Biology, Chemistry, Physics, applied science, and psychology.</p> <p>Studying science in higher education can lead to a wide variety of careers, from healthcare jobs in the NHS, data analysts, conservationists, and forensics to even becoming an astronaut. Highly qualified scientists are in high demand, and their skills are needed in many job fields.</p> <p>Science is central to the discovery and development of many areas of our lives, including the production of medicines, development of everyday technologies, and inventions that have transformed how we live.</p>
<p>What will I learn about?</p>	<p>There are two pathways available in GCSE science:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Combined Science - Triple Science (selected from the Creative Arts option) <p>Both courses cover biology, chemistry and physics concepts and build on your knowledge from KS3. Studying Triple Science means you will complete three GCSEs worth of content whilst Combined Science content covers two GCSEs. Studying Triple Science will mean that there will be more science lessons on your timetable in Year 10 and Year 11 so that you have the required time to complete the course.</p>
<p>How will this be examined?</p>	<p>Students will sit six written exam papers at the end of the course, at the same tier, for both combined science or triple science.</p> <p>Combined Science:</p> <p>Biology paper 1 (1hr 10mins) Chemistry paper 1 (1hr 10mins) Physics paper 1 (1hr 10mins)</p> <p>Biology paper 2 (1hr 10mins) Chemistry paper 2 (1hr 10mins) Physics paper 2 (1hr 10mins)</p> <p>Triple Science:</p> <p>Biology paper 1 (1hr 45mins) Chemistry paper 1 (1hr 45mins) Physics paper 1 (1hr 45mins)</p> <p>Biology paper 2 (1hr 45mins)</p>

	Chemistry paper 2 (1hr 45mins) Physics paper 2 (1hr 45mins)
Exam board	Pearson Edexcel
Is the course tiered?	Foundation tier (grades 1 – 5) Higher tier (grades 4 – 9)


Humanities

Geography

Why should I choose this subject?	<p>Geography helps you to make sense of the world around you. It is a hands-on, relevant, and fun subject, that will prepare you to be successful in a wide range of careers.</p> <p>Geography is a very highly thought of subject by colleges, universities and employers due to the wide range of transferable skills you will master.</p> <p>Whatever your passion for the world, whether that be a love of natural landscapes, an interest in the impacts and responses to disasters, or an intrigue about the factors that contribute to countries being so unique in their culture, wealth and infrastructure – geography is the subject for you.</p> <p>During this course, you will go on trips to Salford Quays in Manchester and Criccieth beach in Wales to carry out geography fieldwork.</p>  <p>Student Quotes:</p> <p><i>"I love geography, it broadens and widens my thinking in so many different ways, and gets me to look at situations from many different angles."</i></p> <p><i>"Geography is fun, especially when you are able to get outside. It makes you feel nature and it enables you to have a deeper understanding of what the world is all about."</i></p>

History



Why should I choose this subject?	It is a common misconception that history belongs in the past. It does not. It is very much a living discipline and our perception of it is always changing! History is highly regarded in lots of professional careers- law, journalism and business, although there are lots more. This is because it allows you to hone your analytical and evaluative skills in a number of different ways.

	<p>In today's changing world, it enables us to put our present into context and value the journey humanity has been on over time. Historians at MCA will leave our school with the ability to see that everyone can make the world a better place and see that we all have our part to play!</p> <div data-bbox="397 374 1286 667">  </div> <p>Student quotes:</p> <p><i>"History is really useful because it gives you a deeper understanding of why the world is how it is today and it also improves your analytic skills!"</i></p> <p><i>"Studying history allows a new way to view and understand the world and the course it has taken."</i></p>
<p>What will I learn about?</p>	<p>The specification at GCSE builds on knowledge developed across KS3.</p> <p>There are four components studied:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Crime and Punishment in Britain Across Time (1000-present day) with a focus upon the Historic site of Whitechapel in London and the crimes of Jack the Ripper 2. The Elizabethan Age, 1558-1588 3. Superpower Relations and the Cold War, 1941-1991 4. The USA, 1954-1975: conflict and home and abroad (America's involvement in the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights Movement) <p>These fascinating units not only teach specific knowledge, which open the door to understanding our own social and political climate, but each unit also provides opportunities for you to further develop your reasoning and critical thinking abilities.</p>
<p>How will this be examined?</p>	<p>Students will sit three final written examinations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Crime and punishment in Britain, c1000–present and Whitechapel, c1870–c1900: crime, policing and the inner city (30%) 1 hr 20 minutes 2. Early Elizabethan England, 1558–88 and Superpower relations and the Cold War, 1941–91 (40%) 1 hr 50 minutes 3. The USA, 1954–75: conflict at home and abroad (30%) 1 hr 30 minutes

Exam board	Pearson Edexcel
Is the course tiered?	No

Languages


French

<p>Why should I choose this subject?</p>	<p>The ability to communicate effectively is one of the most important skills you will need in life. GCSE French gives students the transferable skills and cultural awareness they will need for any future career, study or travel not just in France but also across the French-speaking world. Being able to speak another language is a highly sought after skill for many employers, opening doors of opportunity in the UK and the rest of the world.</p> <p>The career opportunities for GCSE French are endless. Having a second language is a huge benefit in almost every career. Some of the most popular language career sectors are: law, travel & tourism, education, medicine, sales & marketing, IT, logistics, science & research, business, journalism, international aid, engineering, and publishing.</p> <p>Students may be offered the opportunity to travel to France in Y10 in order to practice their French in a real life context and engage with French culture first-hand.</p> <div data-bbox="435 1364 852 1641">  </div> <div data-bbox="909 1364 1327 1641">  </div> <p>Student Quotes:</p> <p><i>"When you learn another language it opens another world."</i></p> <p><i>"Learning a language helps you to learn about different cultures and understand other ways of life."</i></p>
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What will I learn about?	<p>Students in Y10 & Y11 complete the Edexcel French GCSE qualification, developing their writing, speaking, reading and listening skills in 6 different thematic contexts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My personal world • Lifestyle and wellbeing • My neighbourhood • Media and technology • Studying and my future • Travel and tourism
How will this be examined?	<p>Students will be examined in four areas at the end of Y11. They will complete reading, listening, writing and speaking exams, each worth 25%. The speaking exam will be conducted by their class teacher in the Summer term of Y11.</p> <p><u>Higher</u> Listening – 25% 1 hour Reading – 25% 1 hour Writing – 25% 1 hour 20 minutes Speaking – 25% 10-12 minutes + 15 minutes preparation time</p> <p><u>Foundation</u> Listening – 25% 45 minutes Reading – 25% 45 minutes Writing – 25% 1 hour 15 minutes Speaking – 25% 7-9 minutes + 15 minutes preparation time</p>
Exam board	Edexcel
Is the course tiered?	Yes – Higher or Foundation

Spanish

Why should I choose this subject?	<p>Being able to communicate effectively is super important in life. GCSE Spanish helps you develop skills and cultural awareness that are useful for any future career, study, or travel- not just in Spain, but all over the Spanish-speaking world. Speaking another language is a skill that many employers look for, opening up lots of opportunities in the UK and around the world.</p> <p>Having a second language is a huge advantage in almost every career. Some of the most popular fields for language skills include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law • Travel & Tourism • Education • Medicine • Sales & Marketing • IT • Logistics • Science & Research
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Business ● Journalism ● International Aid ● Engineering ● Publishing <p>You might even get the chance to travel to Spain in Year 10. This trip would let you practise your Spanish in real-life situations and be immersed in Spanish culture.</p>  <p>Student Quotes:</p> <p><i>"Speaking more than one language means you can widely communicate with other people, expanding your vocabulary."</i></p>
<p>What will I learn about?</p>	<p>Students in Y10 & Y11 complete the Edexcel Spanish GCSE qualification, developing their writing, speaking, reading and listening skills in 5 different topic areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● My personal world ● Lifestyle and wellbeing ● My neighbourhood ● Media and technology ● Studying and my future ● Travel and tourism
<p>How will this be examined?</p>	<p>Students will be examined in four areas at the end of Y11. They will complete reading, listening, writing and speaking exams, each worth 25%. The speaking exam will be conducted by their class teacher in the Summer term of Y11.</p> <p><u>Higher</u> Listening – 25% 1 hour Reading – 25% 1 hour Writing – 25% 1 hour 20 minutes Speaking – 25% 10-12 minutes + 15 minutes preparation time</p> <p><u>Foundation</u> Listening – 25% 45 minutes Reading – 25% 45 minutes Writing – 25% 1 hour 15 minutes Speaking – 25% 7-9 minutes + 15 minutes preparation time</p>

Exam board	Edexcel
Is the course tiered?	Yes – Higher or Foundation

Creative Arts

Computing Pathway (Computer Science)

Once you choose the Computing pathway as an option, we will make sure that you study the right qualification for you (Computer Science or Digital Information Technology). The decision about which course you study, will be discussed between you and Mr Jalloh.

<p>Why should I choose this subject?</p>	<p>Computer Science is everywhere and it's the fastest-growing industry in the job market and society. It's one of the most important subjects because computers and technology are used in almost every sector, like medicine, entertainment, banking, security, fashion, education, sport and many more.</p> <p>No matter what you're interested in, Computer Science offers exciting and challenging opportunities. The subject helps you develop skills to solve complex problems that need creativity and an understanding of different issues.</p> <div data-bbox="453 1249 842 1512">  </div> <div data-bbox="925 1249 1318 1512">  </div> <p>Studying Computer Science could support you to gain employment in the high-end digital sector. Some of the careers, within this field, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Software/Web/App Development, • Hardware Maintenance/Development, • Networking Manager/Engineer • Game and Robotic Design/Developer. • Data Analyst • IT Consultant <p>During this course, you'll go on amazing computing trips that include fun and inspiring activities led by some of the top tech companies in the world, like IBM. You'll also visit gaming and media companies to see how computer games are developed.</p>
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	<p>Student Voice</p> <p><i>"Computer Science has allowed me to develop skills to creatively solve problem in other subject area."</i></p> <p><i>"I thought programming was a boys thing and too hard for me – turns out I'm better than most of the boys and I really enjoy coding. It allows me to be creative."</i></p> <p><i>"Computer science isn't just about coding – I want to be a network engineer and computer science has given me the opportunity to follow this career path into college."</i></p>
What will I learn about?	<p>This course gives you a real in-depth understanding of how computer technology works, providing excellent preparation for further study and employment in computer science. It offers an insight into what goes on 'behind the scenes' in computer programming.</p> <p>With this course you will be able to understand and apply the fundamental principles and concepts of computer science, including abstraction, decomposition, logic, algorithms, and how text, images and sound are represented in binary.</p> <p>You will be able to analyse problems in computational terms through practical experience of solving problems, including designing, writing and debugging programs. The course develops critical and creative thinking, analysis and problem solving skills that can then be applied in a number of contexts including app design, robotics and web development.</p> <p>You will be able to understand the components that make up digital systems and how they communicate with one another and other systems. With this course you will also understand the impacts of digital technology on the individual and to the wider society.</p>
How will this be examined?	<p>This course includes written examinations and coursework.</p> <p>50% of total GCSE: Computer Systems (01) - 80 marks 1 hour and 30 minutes Written Exam Paper (No Calculator)</p> <p>50% of total GCSE: Computational Thinking, Algorithm and Programming (02) - 80 marks 1 hour and 30 minutes Written Paper (No Calculator)</p> <p>Programming Project (03) 20 Hours (during lesson times) Programming Techniques Analysis, Design, Develop Test and Evaluate a program</p>
Exam board	OCR



Is the course tiered?	No
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Computing Pathway (Digital Information Technology BTEC)

Why should I choose this subject?	<p>Computing is a very exciting field- it is needed in nearly every career and is a key part of people's lives. Digital Information Technology can help you get a job in the high-end digital sector. Some of the jobs in this field include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● App Designer ● Game Designer ● Data Analyst ● Product Developer <p>Furthermore, this course includes exciting trips and real-world experiences.</p> <p>You'll go on computing trips to see how people use the skills you've learned in areas like game design, data analysis, and product development. You'll also visit gaming and media companies and see first-hand how computer games are designed and developed.</p> <p>Student Voice:</p> <p><i>"We're learning about things that aren't even covered in most universities yet and we're only in high school!"</i></p> <p><i>"The course made me look at jobs for UI/UX and I saw there were loads at Media City. That's where I want to work now – for the BBC at Media City!"</i></p>
What will I learn about?	<p>This course is all about an exciting and growing part of the computing industry. It combines information technology, digital media, and computer science skills into one subject.</p> <p>You'll learn important skills that show your ability in Digital Information Technology. This includes project planning, designing and creating user interfaces, and making dashboards to present and understand data. The focus is on User Interface (UI) and User Experience (UX) design, which are areas with lots of job opportunities and not enough people to fill them.</p> <p>The course teaches you how to use various computing skills to create User Interfaces and tailor User Experiences. This is important for areas like games development, software development, web development, and designing devices and systems. Big companies like Apple, Microsoft and Google rely on UI and UX design.</p> <p>You'll also learn about effective ways of working in digital information technology. This includes project planning, the iterative design process, cyber security, working in virtual teams, and understanding legal and ethical codes of conduct.</p>

How will this be examined?	<p>This course has 60% coursework and 40% written exam covering the following knowledge:</p> <p>30% of total course: Exploring User Interface Design Principles and Project Planning Techniques (01) 36 hour – Coursework Controlled Assessment</p> <p>30% of total course: Collecting, Presenting and Interpreting Data (02) 36 hour - Coursework Controlled Assessment</p> <p>40% of total course: Effective Digital Working Practices (03) 60 marks 1 hour and 30 minutes Written Paper (No Calculator)</p>
Exam board	Pearson Edexcel
Is the course tiered?	No

Drama GCSE

<p>Why should I choose this subject?</p>	<p>GCSE Drama offers students the opportunity to explore drama as a practical art form in which ideas and meaning are communicated to an audience through choices of form, style and convention.</p> <p>Students will create, perform and respond to drama informed by their theoretical knowledge of drama and theatre.</p> <p>Drama engages and encourages students to become confident performers and designers with the skills they need for a bright and successful future.</p> <p>This drama course provides as much opportunity as possible for students to do what they like best – participate in performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All students devise drama. - All students explore texts practically and work on two text-based performances. <p>Students can choose to develop as a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performer • Designer (lighting, sound, set, costume, puppets) • Performer and designer. <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div> <p>Students will learn to collaborate with others, think analytically and evaluate effectively. They gain the confidence to pursue their own ideas, reflect and refine their efforts. Whatever the future holds, students of GCSE Drama emerge with a toolkit of transferable skills, applicable both in further studies and in the workplace.</p>

What will I learn about?	<p><i>The course consists of three components over two years; Understanding Drama, Devising Drama and Texts in Practice. Students will learn:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The social, cultural and historical context in which chosen performance texts are studied and set • The theatrical conventions of the period in which the chosen performance texts studied were created • The process of creating devised drama • Character motivation and interaction • Performance conventions • The use of performance space and spatial relationships on stage • Actor and audience configuration • Relationships between performers and audience • Vocal interpretation of character such as accent, volume, pitch, timing, pace, intonation, emotional range, delivery of lines • Physical interpretation of character such as build, facial features, movement, posture, gesture and facial expressions
How will this be examined?	<p>Component 1 - Written exam: 1 hour and 45 minutes, 80 marks, 40% of GCSE External</p> <p>Component 2- Devising log, Devised performance, 80 marks in total, 40% of GCSE Internal</p> <p>Component 3- Performance of Extract 1 (20 marks) and Extract 2 (20 marks), 40 marks in total, 20% of GCSE External</p>
Exam board	AQA
Is the course tiered?	No

Art, Craft, Design Pathway (Fine Art)

Once you choose the Art, Craft, Design pathway as an option, we will make sure that you study the right qualification for you (Fine Art or Textiles). The decision about which course you study, will be discussed between you and Mr Maddison.

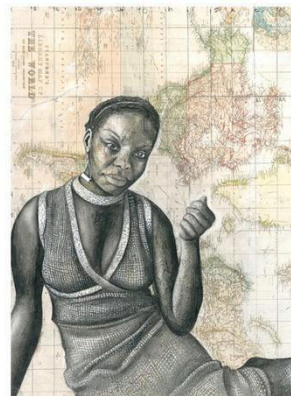
Why should I choose this subject?	Fine Art is a subject full of knowledge with a practical side that lets you be creative using lots of different materials and media. It's very broad and encourages you to
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express yourself through various art forms like painting, drawing, sculpture, and more, depending on where you want to start.



Fine Art allows you to explore themes and create personal projects. You can make your work unique by choosing your own path and developing your ideas.

Having a GCSE in fine art shows colleges, universities and employers that you are a creative person and there are many professions where being able to show creativity is a desirable quality. You will leave MCA with a portfolio of work that you can take to colleges to show a range of skills that you have developed. As part of the course, you would participate in gallery trips where you can be inspired by other practitioners and explore other ways of working that you can then bring into your own practice.



Student Quotes:

"I enjoy the Fine Art course as I have lots of choice in what I do."

"We experiment with different materials and I can use what I feel most confident with."

What will I learn about?	<p>First Unit: Supporting Portfolio</p> <p>In the first unit, you'll create a supporting portfolio where you can learn a variety of fine art techniques and processes. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawing with different media • Painting with watercolours and acrylics • Sculpting with clay • And many other techniques you might choose to explore as part of your project <p>Second Unit: Main Project</p> <p>The second unit is your main project. You'll start with one of three starting points and be encouraged to independently research and develop your work. This unit is all about creating a personal response and showing your creative journey. You'll get to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further explore and develop techniques and media you've already learnt • Learn new techniques and media <p>There's no limit to what you can learn in this subject. There are so many areas within fine art that you can choose to explore and develop.</p>
How will this be examined?	<p>The course is 60% coursework consisting of a main unit and a supporting portfolio.</p> <p>The course is 40% externally set examination, which allows approximately 10 weeks for preparation and 10 hours supervised exam.</p>
Exam board	AQA
Is the course tiered?	No

Art, Craft, Design Pathway (Textiles)

Why should I choose this subject?	<p>Textiles is a subject full of knowledge with a practical side that lets you be creative using lots of different materials and media. It's a form of art that allows you to express yourself in both 2D and 3D art.</p>
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Textiles lets you explore themes and create personal projects where you can truly express yourself.

Having a GCSE in Textile Art shows colleges, universities, and employers that you are a creative person. Many professions value creativity as an important quality.

You'll leave school with a portfolio of work that you can take to colleges to show the range of skills you've developed.

As part of the course, you'll go on gallery trips where you can be inspired by other artists and explore new ways of working that you can bring into your own projects.

Student Quotes:

"I like using the mannequins to create my work onto like a fashion designer would do."

"The best part of textiles is using the sewing machines to add different stitching to my fabric work."

What will I learn about?

First Unit: Supporting Portfolio

In the first unit, you'll create a supporting portfolio where you can learn a variety of textiles techniques and processes. This includes:



- Hand stitching
- Machine stitching
- Appliqué
- Fabric dyeing
- Fabric layering
- And many other techniques you might choose to explore as part of your project

Second Unit: Main Project

The second unit is your main project. You'll start with one of three starting points and be encouraged to independently research and develop your work. This unit is

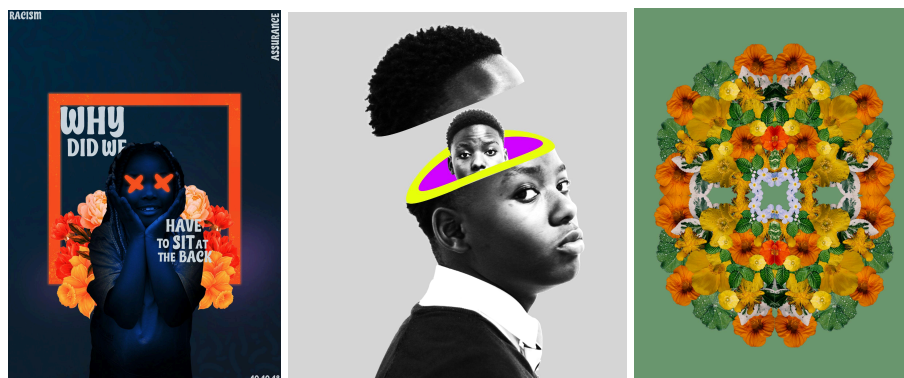
	<p>all about creating a personal response and showing your creative journey. You'll get to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further explore and develop techniques and media you've already learnt • Learn new techniques and media <p>There's no limit to what you can learn in this subject. There are so many areas within textiles that you can choose to explore and develop.</p>
How will this be examined?	<p>The course is 60% coursework consisting of a main unit and a supporting portfolio.</p> <p>The course is 40% externally set examination, which allows approximately 10 weeks for preparation and 10 hours supervised exam.</p>
Exam board	AQA
Is the course tiered?	No

Photography GCSE

Why should I choose this subject?	<p>Photography is an art form that influences almost every industry in the world, whether you are creating promotional material for businesses on social media, documenting sports, showcasing fashion brands, creating movies, promoting musicians or reporting the news. At its best, photography is a powerful language that enables us to document life's most significant, controversial and meaningful moments within a single image.</p> <div>   </div>

Any student that is interested in pursuing a career in the creative industries would benefit from studying photography. It allows you to express yourself, explore a range of themes/issues and create responses that are personal and unique to you.

You will leave MCA with a portfolio of work that showcases skills in camera handling, editing and creative thinking. Having a GCSE in photography shows colleges, universities and employers that you are able to think creatively, develop fresh ideas and solve problems, all of which are increasingly desirable and necessary qualities.



Student Quotes:

"I like taking pictures and learning how to use professional cameras, I enjoy all the things you can do to change them using Photoshop."

"I enjoy photography because I have learnt how to take good photographs and I get to go on trips to see new places and take photos there."

What will I learn about?

Photography is a practical, hands-on course that helps you develop skills in camera handling, editing, and creative thinking.


You'll engage with various themes and learn about the work of different photographers, graphic artists, and designers. The course starts with an introductory 'Macro' project, teaching you how to handle a digital SLR camera and develop basic editing skills in Adobe Photoshop.

After the introductory project, you'll explore themes like portraiture, urban environment, architecture, movement, or creative landscapes. These projects will introduce more advanced editing techniques and build on the camera skills you learned earlier.

In the later stages of the course, you'll get to choose your own pathways and develop projects around themes or issues that interest and motivate you.

How will this be examined?	Students will develop a portfolio of work, which consists of a main project and smaller, supporting pieces. This counts for 60% of their overall grade. In the final stages of the course, students will undertake an externally set examination that is worth 40% of their overall grade. Students are given approximately 10 weeks of preparation time to respond to a theme on the paper, which culminates with a 10 hour supervised examination over 2 days.
Exam board	AQA.
Is the course tiered?	No.

Graphic Communication GCSE

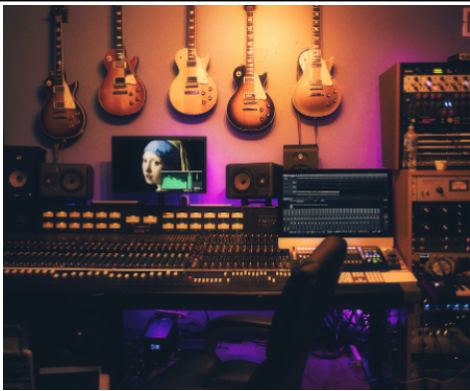
Why should I choose this subject?	<p>Graphics is a subject that is so influential within the modern world. Whether you are creating promotional material for businesses on social media, sports teams or fashion labels; designing games, websites or apps, or creating movies, adverts and animations, effective graphic design will reach new audiences and consumers, develop a strong brand identity and ultimately make companies/businesses successful.</p>  <p>Any student who is interested in pursuing a career in the creative industries will benefit from studying graphics. It allows you to express yourself, explore a range of themes/issues and create responses that are personal and unique to you.</p> <p>You will leave MCA with a portfolio of work that showcases extensive skills/knowledge within Photoshop and a GCSE that shows colleges, universities and employers that you are able to think creatively, develop fresh ideas and solve problems, all of which are increasingly desirable and necessary qualities.</p> <p>Student Quotes:</p>
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	<p><i>"I am good at creating designs digitally and I am developing my skills on Photoshop."</i></p> <p><i>"I want to be a games designer and the work we do in graphic communication will help me to get on my college course."</i></p>
What will I learn about?	<p>Graphics is a practical course that helps you develop skills in editing, problem-solving, and creative thinking.</p> <p>You'll engage with various themes and learn about the work of different graphic artists and designers. The course starts with an introductory 'Design for Product' project, teaching you design fundamentals and important editing skills in Adobe Photoshop.</p> <p>After the introductory project, you'll learn about the importance of colour in design, typography, and brand identity. You'll also develop more advanced editing skills in Photoshop.</p> <p>In the later stages of the course, you'll get to choose your own pathways and develop projects around themes, issues, or design briefs that interest and motivate you.</p> <p>Throughout the course, you'll visit galleries and exhibitions. These trips will inspire you and help you explore new ways of working in your own projects</p>
How will this be examined?	<p>Students will develop a portfolio of work, which consists of a main project and smaller, supporting pieces. This counts for 60% of their overall grade. In the final stages of the course, students will undertake an externally set examination that is worth 40% of their overall grade. Students are given approximately 10 weeks of preparation time to respond to a theme on the paper, which culminates with a 10 hour supervised examination over 2 days.</p>
Exam board	AQA
Is the course tiered?	No

GCSE Music OR Music Technology

Once you choose this pathway we will make sure that you study the right qualification for you (GCSE Music or Music Technology). The decision about which course you study, will be discussed between you and Mr Daniel.

“Music is more than just something to listen to, it is ingrained in our human instinct, connected to core memories and is a window to the soul”

	Option A (GCSE)	Option B (Music Technology)
Why should I choose this subject?	<p>If any of the following statements resonate with you it's possible that Music GCSE is for you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You enjoy music and you get pleasure from being musically creative. • You want to develop and refine your performance skills becoming a creative, reflective and resilient musician. • You would like to develop an understanding and an appreciation of a broad range of music styles and the ability to confidently talk about music using correct key terminology. • You want to develop the ability to compose in a range of styles. <p>Music GCSE is a natural choice for students who play a musical instrument or sing. For this course, you will need to be able to play an instrument for two performances, solo and in a group. There are opportunities to explore composition and create your own music, and you will produce two compositions over the duration of the course. At the end of Year 11, you will do a written exam based on all of the knowledge learned throughout the two years.</p> <p>Student Quotes:</p> <p><i>“I love music because it gives me an opportunity to express my emotions. I have had the chance to experiment with different styles from a range of eras.”</i></p>	 <p>This qualification is right for you if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are interested in how music is produced. • You want to develop the skills to create your own music on a computer. • You want to learn the theory behind musical computer programmes. • You enjoy the technical sides of music. • You want to learn how to engineer music. • You want to learn how to create your own music on a DAW. • You are interested in how sound is recorded. • You want to learn how music technology has changed over the years. • You want to understand how hardware and software come together to help music create. • You want to know how to plan for a recording/ event. • You want to be able to make your own music from scratch <p>This course is for students who love music and technology! Upon successful completion you will be able to plan, set up, create, record, mix and master your own music.</p>

<p>What will I learn about?</p>	<p>You will develop your knowledge and expand on the skill set you developed in KS3 in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening and Appraising in a wide range of musical styles and applying key terminology to describe and analyse music. • Exploring a Wide Range of Music Products and Styles, researching and building an understanding of the stylistic features of each genre. • Performance and Instrumental Aptitude, developing the ability to use your instrumental skill and knowledge to perform as a solo musician or as an ensemble. • Composition of music in a broad range of styles using notation and digital software as a tool. • Responding to a Brief by creating a music product in a specific genre, applying the knowledge and skills into a final project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music Technology and Business: the different roles within the music industry and how they work together. • The Digital Audio Workstation: how to use a DAW to produce and edit music. • Musical Elements, styles and technology: discover the building blocks of music • Sound Creation: how to create sound for a specific reason such as a song, film or background noise. • Multitrack Recording: how recording processes have developed over the decades and how to create your own multi track recording.
<p>How will this be examined?</p>	<p>The GCSE is assessed based on two coursework components and one examination component, which is a listening exam at the end of Year 11.</p> <p>Component 1: Performing A minimum of two pieces, one of which must be an ensemble performance of at least one minute duration. The other piece(s) may be either solo and/or ensemble. One of the pieces performed must link to an area of study of the learner's choice.</p> <p>Component 2: Composing Two compositions, one of which must be in response to a brief set by WJEC. Learners will choose one brief from a choice of four, each one linked to a different area of study. The briefs will be released during the first week of September in the academic year in which the assessment is to be taken. The second composition is a free</p>	<p>The NCFE is split into two sections. One coursework component and one exam at the end of Year 11.</p> <p>Non-exam Assessment (NEA) 60% Create a piece of music designed to meet a brief set by the exam board. This will be created and produced on a DAW (Digital Audio Workstation). Finally, analyse and evaluate this piece and your technical skills.</p> <p>Examined Assessment 40% An assessment like any other in the hall at the end of Year 11. Composed of 80 marks with a mixture of multiple choice, short and long answer questions. This exam will take 1hr 30 and will cover all content areas.</p>

	<p>composition for which learners set their own brief.</p> <p>Component 3: Appraising This component is assessed via a listening examination. Eight questions in total, two on each of the four areas of study. Area of study 1: Musical Forms and Devices Area of study 2: Music for Ensemble Area of study 3: Film Music Area of study 4: Popular Music</p> <p>Two of the eight questions are based on extracts set by the exam board.</p>	
Exam board	EDUQAS/WJEC	NCFE
Is the course tiered?	No	No

Singing Performance

Why should I choose this subject?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You enjoy singing! You enjoy working in small groups You are a well-organised, effective independent learner You want to develop your vocal technique You want to increase your repertoire You want to develop self-assurance and confidence in a safe and supportive environment You are able and willing to perform alongside Mr Daniel for a visiting examiner. You are NOT required to perform in front of an audience, although you will be offered the opportunity should you wish to take it <p><u>This is the only Level 3 qualification available at MCA and approximately 90% of entries obtain a grade 8.5 (the highest possible grade). However, you must check with Mr Daniel before picking this subject to ensure that this course is accessible to you. Additionally, this qualification can be studied during ESA time.</u></p>	
What will I learn about?	<p>You will develop your knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phrasing Diction Breath control Transition Placement 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility • Musicality • Dynamics • Accuracy of pitch and rhythm • Intonation • Resonance • Expression • Posture • Aural awareness • Ear training • Extended range • Musical analysis • Song structures
How will this be examined?	A 20-minute recital made up of FIVE songs, performed from <u>memory</u> with live accompaniment from Mr Daniel.
Exam board	London College of Music
Is the course tiered?	No

Health and Well-being

Religious Education GCSE

Why should I choose this subject?	<p>Religious Education gives you the chance to explore big questions about life, beliefs about God, and other important issues. It's a great way to learn about current events and develop your social, cultural, and moral awareness. RE encourages you to think deeply and make decisions, helping you discuss and analyse topics you see in society and the media.</p> <p>Studying religion and ethics helps you understand your own values and beliefs, giving you a better sense of who you are. RE teaches you to think critically, listen carefully, speak thoughtfully, and write clearly. You'll also learn how to debate,</p>

	<p>evaluate, and analyse, which are useful skills for many careers like Law, Journalism, Social Work, and Politics.</p> <p>Student Quotes:</p> <p><i>"RE has given me the confidence and understanding to discuss current issues."</i></p> <p><i>"RE gives you a better understanding and respect for other religious beliefs, teachings and practices, as well as learning about peace and conflicts around the world."</i></p>
What will I learn about?	<p>The specification builds on the knowledge and skills developed across key stage 3.</p> <p>There are eight units studied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christianity Beliefs & Teachings, • Christianity Practices • Islam Beliefs & Teachings, • Islam Practices • Theme B: Religion and Life • Theme C: The Existence of God and Revelation • Theme D: Religion, Peace and Conflict • Theme E: Religion, Crime and Punishment
How will this be examined?	<p>Students will sit two written papers both lasting 1hr 45mins:</p> <p><u>Paper 1: Religions Paper (50%)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christianity Beliefs & Teachings, • Christianity Practices • Islam Beliefs & Teachings, • Islam Practices <p><u>Paper 2: Thematic Paper (50%)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme B: Religion and Life • Theme C: The Existence of God and Revelation • Theme D: Religion, Peace and Conflict • Theme E: Religion, Crime and Punishment
Exam board	AQA: Specification A
Is the course tiered?	No

Why should I choose this subject?	<p>Sport has the power to change the world. Studying the BTEC Tech Award in Sport gives you the chance to develop specific knowledge and skills through real-life situations. You'll learn about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating sports provisions, including equipment and facilities to improve sports. • Planning and delivering sports drills and sessions. • Fitness for sport, including fitness testing and methods. <p>This course provides a strong foundation for further academic or vocational study at Level 3, including apprenticeships. It covers important aspects of the sports industry, such as fitness testing and training, sports psychology, practical sports performance, and sports leadership. You'll develop and apply your knowledge while also gaining practical, communication, and technical skills.</p> <p>Student Quotes:</p> <p><i>"I enjoyed the practical aspect of this course and applying my skills and talents."</i></p> <p><i>"I can help you in all parts of PE if you want to take a future career in it and is a enjoyable course."</i></p>
What will I learn about?	<p>All students will study three units over the two-year course, which equates to 120 guided learning hours.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Component one – Preparing participants to take part in sport and physical activity fitness for sport and exercise (36 guided learning hours) • Component two – Taking part and improving other participants sporting performance (36 guided learning hours) • Component three – Developing fitness to improve other participants' performance in sport and physical activity (48 guided learning hours)
How will this be examined?	<p>Components 1 and 2 are assessed through coursework.</p> <p>Component 3 is an external 1.5 hour written exam.</p>
Exam board	Pearson Edexcel
Is the course tiered?	No

New subjects for 2026:
Statistics GCSE

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Why should I choose this subject?	Statistics helps you make sense of information in everyday life. It builds strong skills in problem solving, reasoning and analysing data. If you enjoy working with numbers or want a subject that supports science, geography or business, Statistics is a great choice. It also opens doors to many careers that rely on understanding data.
What will I learn about?	You will explore how data is collected, presented and interpreted. This includes learning about sampling methods, probability, graphs, averages and measures of spread. You will work with real data sets and learn how to draw meaningful conclusions from them. The course also develops your ability to question information and judge how reliable it is.
How will this be examined?	You will sit written examinations at the end of the course. These include questions that test your understanding of statistical techniques as well as your ability to apply them to real situations. Some questions will require calculations while others will test your reasoning and interpretation skills. There is no coursework.

Media Studies GCSE

Why should I choose this subject?	Media Studies helps you understand the world of television, film, advertising and online content. It suits students who enjoy being creative and thinking about how messages are presented to different audiences. The subject supports skills in communication, analysis and digital production, all of which are valuable in many future pathways.
What will I learn about?	You will study a range of media forms including magazines, films, music videos, video games and news. You will learn how media products are created and how they influence audiences. You will also explore representation, narrative and industry practices. Practical work allows you to produce your own media piece such as a magazine cover or short video.
How will this be examined?	Assessment is a mixture of written examinations and practical coursework. The exams test your understanding of media language, representation and industry. The coursework, known as a non-examined assessment, requires you to plan and create an original media product based on a set brief.

Business Studies GCSE

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Why should I choose this subject?	Business Studies is ideal if you want to understand how companies operate and how decisions are made in the real world. It encourages problem solving, teamwork and clear communication. The subject is useful for anyone interested in management, finance or starting their own business in the future.
What will I learn about?	You will study topics such as marketing, human resources, finance and operations. You will explore how businesses are set up, how they grow and how they adapt to change. You will learn about customer needs, competition and the economic factors that affect organisations. Real business examples help you apply your knowledge.
How will this be examined?	You will complete written examinations that include structured questions, case studies and extended answers. The exams assess your understanding of business concepts and your ability to apply them to real scenarios.