

# British Education for International Students



## A Level Programme

at Geneva English School



**“With the support and dedication of their A Level teachers at GES, every student is able to fulfill their academic potential and progress with confidence to ambitious global university destinations”**

*Daniel Crabtree*

Head of Senior School



# Welcome

Welcome to Geneva English School, where we offer a British education for international students. Founded more than 60 years ago, we are an academically successful, outward-looking school, and a welcoming community. In the words of a recent graduate, "At GES, every aspect of the environment and culture supports our achievement".

Our A Level students benefit from exceptional teaching, small classes, and individual guidance for their next educational steps and career.

As a pre-university course, the A Level programme is the perfect opportunity to develop independent working skills. Students are in charge of their subject choices so they can focus on the subjects they are most passionate about.

A Levels are highly regarded by universities. At GES, our A Level results place us in the top 5% of schools worldwide, and our graduates have gone on to study the subjects of their choice at top universities in the UK, Switzerland, across Europe and in North America.

I am proud of our graduates' achievements and look forward to seeing new students fulfill their potential under the expert guidance of our teaching staff.

**Christina Matillon**  
Director General



A Levels are the pinnacle of the British education system, academic qualifications which act as the gateway to university education, a currency of learning and achievement retained across continents and throughout careers.

The attraction of the A Level qualification to students, universities and employers alike is to be able to tailor study programmes so that students can gain a greater depth of knowledge in their chosen subjects making them ready to excel at university and in competitive professions.

A Levels have a long history of being globally recognised, the preferred qualification for entry to UK universities while highly regarded by Swiss, European and US institutions alike.

Our experience at GES of working with internationally minded students and their families means we invest heavily in ensuring our A Level programme provides much more than just qualifications. Running through our 2-year programme is 1:1 mentoring to advise and prepare students to progress to ambitious futures, including internships, university visits, application workshops and mock interview clinics.

The A Level programme at GES provides each of our students with the teaching, qualifications, support, encouragement and enriching diversity of experience to act as the springboard to fulfilling their ambitions at university and adult life beyond!

**Daniel Crabtree**  
Head of Senior School



# Introduction

At GES, our expert teaching staff who have, themselves, graduated from the best universities, will guide and inspire you across the subjects that you choose to study. To succeed in A Levels, you need to work hard, read around the topics you are taught and have a love for the subject matter you are studying. In our experience, if you choose subjects you love, you will be successful. As we are deliberately a small school, our class sizes are smaller than you may be used to and so allow you to really be supported, challenged and developed while you study the subjects you enjoy.

We encourage our staff to teach beyond the syllabus, to take you on trips and ensure that you get to understand subjects in depth. In Geography, this could be by visiting a glacier or doing field work in a river. In English, this could be by taking you to the Globe in London to see and feel the atmosphere that Shakespeare intended. In Science, a trip to CERN is easy to take and allows you to understand the science of physics in a real world context.

On top of your academic studies, you will have the opportunity to gain a language qualification in either French or German, which can be achieved by choosing the language as an A Level course or by studying the relevant B2/C1 qualification. Completing such a qualification means that you will be able to apply for university courses in Switzerland as well as neighbouring countries if you get the correct grades for entry to your chosen subject.

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The final two components that form our A Level programme are the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) and the Duke of Edinburgh International Award (DofE). For the EPQ, you choose an area you are interested in, then research this and present your findings through a range of presentation media, from an essay to a video to a composition or portfolio. The EPQ is highly thought of by the top universities and, thus, a very desirable qualification.

The DofE award pulls together a range of different skills and experiences into a globally recognised award. Should you undertake this challenge, you will complete an expedition, do voluntary work, learn a skill and keep a portfolio of evidence over the two years of the course. The DofE award allows you to explore the wonderful Swiss countryside and also give something back to our local community.

We aim to educate the whole person as a responsible, compassionate citizen and recognise that a balanced education neither begins nor ends in the classroom. We believe that choosing three or four subjects you enjoy, plus learning or perfecting a language, as well as the EPQ and DofE, mean that you will be a strong candidate for any university.

Above all, we also want to instill in you a love for learning and start you on a trajectory of academic exploration that will allow you to be successful personally and professionally. We offer an academically rigorous programme, first class teachers and the freedom that allows you to study and socialise whilst being coached and encouraged to be the best you can be.



# The A Level

In designing the best possible curriculum for post-16 education, GES has combined the flexibility and depth of study offered by A Levels with a modern, international approach. Interdisciplinary studies, independent research, sport and extra-curricular activities will complement your core subject work. Our A Level Programme provides a passport to leading universities in Europe, the UK and around the world, and equips students with the confidence and skills they will need in a rapidly changing workplace and interconnected global environment.

## What are A Levels?

Short for 'Advanced Level Qualifications', A Levels are subject-based qualifications that lead to university study, further training or employment. They are usually taken by students aged 16 – 19 and are offered by schools and colleges both in the UK and internationally.

## Where can A Levels take you?

A Levels are recognised and respected by universities around the globe. Students with A Levels gain places at leading universities worldwide, including in the UK, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

## How many A Levels do students usually take?

Students normally study three, or sometimes four, A Level subjects over the course of two years. The A Levels are assessed via a series of examinations and are graded A\* – E. University offers are usually based on three A Levels. Alongside their A Levels, students may study other subjects and take other courses (e.g. languages or the EPQ), some of which may be examined.

## What is the GES A Level Programme?

Our A Level Programme is made up of the following elements:

- ① 3 or 4 A level subjects
- ② The extended project qualification
- ③ An assessed language qualification
- ④ Completion of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award



## A Level Studies

① Most students choose three or four A Level subjects and study these for two years. At GES, we offer a wide range of courses and are happy to advise on subject combinations during the admission process.

## The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

② This is an assessed and moderated project chosen by a student in an area they enjoy. Top universities across the world value this project highly and all GES students will have the opportunity to complete this qualification. Those who do so will be mentored and guided by a member of staff.

## Language Qualification

③ All students at GES will have the opportunity to achieve a B2 language qualification in French. Helping students meet this entrance requirement for local universities is an important part of our international school.

## Duke of Edinburgh Award

④ All A Level students are encouraged to complete the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award. This award includes outward bound expeditions, physical recreation and voluntary service. Achievement of this qualification demonstrates mastery of skills and breadth of experience, and it is well respected across the world.





# Extra-Curricular Clubs & Activities

**Students at GES are encouraged not only to make the most of their talents and take intellectual risks, but also to pursue a healthy, well-rounded lifestyle. We believe that education and personal development should never be limited to the confines of a classroom.**

We offer a wide variety of opportunities that sit alongside the academic curriculum and will allow you to broaden your interests, meet people and gain new experiences. While some of these activities are open to students across the whole Secondary school, providing an

excellent way for students of all ages to learn and contribute together, others are specifically for our A Level students. Discover strengths and talents you didn't know you have, possibly even outside your comfort zone!





# Outdoor Education & Expeditions

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award is a core part of our A Level programme at GES.

For a long time, outdoor activities have been recognised as a source of enjoyment, a training ground for useful skills, a means of engaging with nature and the environment, and a way of providing both a physical and mental challenge. More recently, outdoor activities have also been recognised as a way of developing personal awareness and a knowledge of group dynamics and their effective management. Our pupils learn about their strengths and weaknesses, develop robust approaches to problem-solving, and gain resilience in overcoming setbacks, as well as a detailed understanding of the mechanisms operating within a team.

We offer the full gamut of the programme across the school, starting with the Junior Award Scheme for Schools (JASS) right through to the DofE International Award, from Bronze to Gold Award.

The confidence, determination and self-esteem which is built and demonstrated through participation in the DofE Awards is valued greatly by universities and employers. The soft skills and expertise you will gain will stay with you for life.

# Sport

GES has an enviable reputation for the high quality of its sporting teams and the dedication and expertise of the school's PE and coaching staff. There is a strong tradition of sporting excellence at the school, however, all abilities are catered for and every pupil is encouraged to pursue sport, individual or team games, and to develop a healthy attitude to fitness and exercise. The core sports at GES include football, rugby, netball, basketball, racket sports, athletics and cross-country. There are also many opportunities for students to try other sports, such as climbing, crossfit, golf and skiing.

A Sports Leaders programme - unique amongst international schools in the region - is open to students with an interest in disciplines beyond the pure practice of a sport, eg. coaching, umpiring, sports marketing, journalism, etc. The activities featured in the programme build on the background of the highly experienced GES staff combined with the wealth of global sports institutions and associations present in the local area (International Olympic Committee (IOC), UEFA, dozens of global sports federations, etc.).

We are keen for all students to represent GES in sporting fixtures during their school career. Additionally, students who take their sporting expertise to a higher level will have the chance to join one of the usual UK Sports Trips and Tours.





## Art

Art and Design beyond the classroom offers every student the opportunity to explore a broad range of materials and processes, and to develop strong technical skills. The department is housed in a beautiful, bright area.

Our most senior Art students have the opportunity to lead new extra-curricular activities beyond existing art clubs. Student artwork is highly prized and displayed throughout the school.

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## Music

Music is an important part of the fabric that makes up life at GES right through the school. Besides offering an A Level course in Music, we have multiple opportunities for musicians of all types to be involved.

Students in music, instrumental as well as voice, are supported by our Head of Music and A Level subject lead, an expert Music instructions coordinator and Singing teacher, as well as an extended team of visiting instrumental teachers.

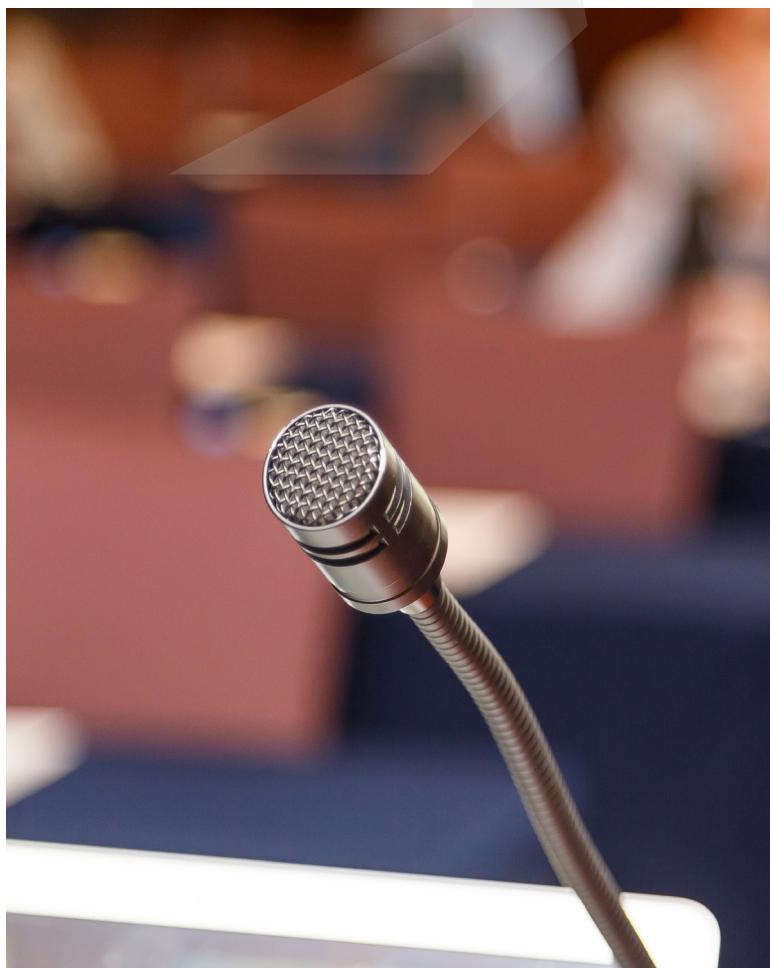


# Drama

Students perform in a variety of plays and musical shows throughout the year, and develop their own pieces and contributions for our end-of-year celebrations at the Secondary school.

Our eldest students are able to assume lead roles in performances, and also in behind-the-scenes and directing activities, which allows them to marry their love for drama and theatre with honing leadership and team management skills.

Theatre trips are a regular feature of the wider activities across the school. In addition, working professionals run workshops and masterclasses at GES.



# Clubs and Societies

Students can get involved in a diverse range of clubs and societies at GES, where they can expand their knowledge and skills through activities led by internal experts and external specialists.

Public speaking is popular at GES, with competitions and activities such as the Model United Nations and debating. Students have the opportunity to visit numerous International Organisations that are located in Geneva and beyond.



# Higher Education and Careers

A Level students are offered a comprehensive programme to guide them through the process of university preparation and applications. Internal experts as well as external university admissions specialists are available depending on the requirements and focus of specific pathways our students want to explore.

The wider school community, including current parents as well as alumni, can be consulted for insights into rewarding careers in international or non-governmental organisations, as well as interesting corporate institutions.

Work experiences are also available with a variety of locally based as well as global organisations and companies.

# A Level Subjects





# Art & Design

## Why study Art & Design?

Art tells a story and is a means of communication in an increasingly visual world.

Developing your creativity is to open doors to other ways of thinking. Establishing your critical awareness through observation and interpretation encourages you to form opinions and fosters innovation.

If you already know that you want to pursue Art & Design at university, then A Level is essential for creating a mature, extensive portfolio which showcases your skills and presents a self-portrait through your self-expression.

However, even if you are not intending a career in the creative industries, A Level Art can be a rewarding complement to your studies. Art gives us pleasure, relieves stress and can provide a sense of accomplishment. We make connections with other cultures and centuries as we explore our past and present through the work of artists. We find comfort in making and looking at the visual record of our world.

## Course Content

Over two years, students will develop a portfolio of work which expresses a personal response to a range of ideas, issues, concepts or themes developed with their tutor. This process will culminate in a self-directed personal investigation selected by the student, supported by written material of approximately 1500 words, which is worth 60% of the exam grade. An externally set assignment that responds to stimulus provided by the exam board will be completed at the end of the two years, including preparatory work and a final piece produced in a 15-hour exam, is worth 40% of the grade.

## Inspirational starting point

Do It (home) Curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist, René Magritte's 1952 work 'Les valeurs personnelles'

## Preparation for the course

Scan Instagram and follow the work of any artist / craftsperson / designer that interests you for 30 days. Undertake a 10-day drawing challenge.

Visit a gallery, select one artwork and write an opinion piece.

Choose one activity from 'Do it (home)' – this is free to download.

Listen to any of the following Podcasts: Art for Your Ear, Adventures in Art, Arts & Ideas, Art Curious.

## Future Pathways

There is a wide range of specialisms such as:

- fine art and illustration, both print and digital
- fashion, product or building design
- trend analyst or creative director in a corporate environment
- art therapist in health care
- teacher in education

Exciting careers await in film, television, photography, museums and galleries, and advertising.

## Indicative entrance criteria:

GCSE Art & Design or Design Technology Grade 5 or accredited portfolio from previous school

## Exam board:

AQA  
Syllabus:  
7201



## Coursework:

60%

## Examination:

40%



# Biology

## Why study Biology?

Do you aspire to be a botanist, a zoologist or a microbiologist? Are you looking to integrate ecology or genetics into another subject for which you have a particular passion?

Choosing Biology at A Level is a statement that you care about life on Earth. It means that you are willing to make a difference. You want to be part of a future society that both understands and cares for the delicate ecosystem that surrounds us. What better knowledge can there be than to understand how living organisms function and how they are adapted to thrive in their habitats.

If being the next Darwin is not your thing, how about the next Jane Goodall or David Attenborough? Biology can take you into careers that inspire, intrigue and reward outside of many of the traditional science-based professions.

## Course content

The A Level course is divided into eight topics which consider the fundamental principles of all the Life Sciences. Practical investigations and skills are a key part of the course and allow links to be made with the wider world of science. The topics areas are:

- Biological molecules
- Cells
- Organisms exchange substances with their environment
- Genetic information, variation and relationships between organisms
- Energy transfers in and between organisms
- Organisms respond to changes in their internal and external environments
- Genetics, populations, evolution and ecosystems
- Control of gene expression

## Inspirational starting Point

Hacking Darwin - Jamie Metzl

## Preparation for the course

We recommend you read and complete the activities in GCSE to A Level Progression Guide:

<https://bit.ly/2U16Ac8>

## Future pathways

Studying Biology at A Level or at degree level opens up all sorts of career opportunities, such as:

- doctor
- clinical molecular geneticist
- nature conservation officer
- pharmacologist
- research scientist
- vet
- Secondary school teacher
- marine biologist
- dentist

### Indicative entrance criteria:

Science GCSE Grade 6  
or equivalent

### Exam board:

AQA  
Syllabus:  
7402



### Coursework:

0%  
(but 12 required practicals)

### Examination:

100%



# Chemistry

## Why study Chemistry?

Chemistry underpins a wide range of professions from medicine and forensics, to engineering and psychology. Chemistry develops your analytical skills, your problem-solving skills and your understanding of the function and behaviour of organisms.

Whether getting in tune with your own body, your behaviour or your emotions, it is Chemistry that has all the answers.

The nature of chemical research nurtures teamwork, teaches you to reason and communicate, and develops interpersonal and management skills that are transferable to any subject or career.

## Course content

In Year 12, you will study Physical Chemistry, including bonding, energetics and redox reactions; Inorganic Chemistry, including periodicity and the halogens; Organic Chemistry, including hydrocarbon series and organic analysis.

In Year 13, you will study Physical Chemistry, including thermodynamics and electrochemical cells; Inorganic Chemistry, including transition metals and the reactions of ions; Organic Chemistry, including optical isomerism, aromatic chemistry and polymers.

## Preparation for the course

We recommend you read and complete the activities in GCSE to A Level Progression Chemistry: transition guide:

<https://bit.ly/3k2zfrG>

## Inspirational starting point

The Disappearing Spoon: And Other True Tales of Madness, Love, and the History of the World from the Periodic Table of the Elements – Sam Kean

## Future pathways

Studying Chemistry at A Level or degree opens up career opportunities for a such as:

- analytical chemist
- chemical engineer
- clinical biochemist
- pharmacologist
- doctor
- research scientist (physical sciences)
- toxicologist
- environmental consultant
- higher education lecturer or Secondary school teacher
- patent attorney
- science writer

**Indicative entrance criteria:**  
Science GCSE Grade 6  
or equivalent

**Exam board:**  
AQA  
**Syllabus:**  
7405



**Coursework:**  
**0%**  
(but 12 required practicals)

**Examination:**  
**100%**



# Computer Science

## Why study Computer Science?

At the heart of today's information processing revolution sits Computer Science. There are two halves to the subject - theory and programming. Programming the architecture of a computer must be of interest to you if you choose to do this A Level.

Programming is all about problem-solving. Problems must be modelled and analysed, a solution designed and then finally implemented. The theory revolves around exactly how data can be represented, and the procedures that can transform this data into other forms of information. A key element of the course is object-oriented programming, the most common approach to programming in business and commercial situations.

## Course content

In Year 12, you will study:

- Programming in Python
- Abstraction and automation
- Coding text and graphics
- Hardware and software
- Logic gates and Boolean algebra
- Network and the internet
- Aspects of software development

In Year 13, you will study:

- Data structures
- Algorithms
- Programming paradigms/next steps
- Classification of algorithms
- Databases
- Functional programming paradigms
- Dedicated programming project

## Inspirational starting point

What most schools don't teach - video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nKlu9yen5nc>

## Preparation for the course

We suggest you work through the transition to A Level Computer Science Workbook

<https://bit.ly/3nWqDWG>

## Future pathways

A Level Computer Science can naturally lead to studying Computer Science at degree level. Universities usually require A Level Mathematics for admission to a Computer Science course.

Demand for technology-based careers is very strong and, with many of them being truly global in nature, they will often allow you to work around the world.

You find computer scientists in industries such as entertainment, movies, music, games, animation, fashion, security, working with and helping people, solving problems and making fundamental changes.

**Indicative entrance criteria:**  
Mathematics GCSE Grade 6  
(plus ideally computer science  
GCSE or equivalent)

**Exam board:**  
AQA  
**Syllabus:**  
7517



**Coursework:**

**20%**

**Examination:**

**80%**



# Economics

## Why study Economics?

Economics is one of the most popular A Levels in most schools for good reason. Students often choose it because they want an insight and entry into the world of finance, but it is equally intriguing as a social science - the study of how people behave. Economics will teach you not only to understand the world economy, but, more generally, to analyse novel situations and apply logical principles to them.

The ability to interpret mathematical models for lay-people is becoming increasingly valuable, in a world where all areas of business are starting to use data to help make the most profitable or environmentally sound decisions.

## Course content

You will learn to answer questions about financial systems and how people interact with them. If everyone loves chips, why is caviar so much more expensive than potatoes? Why do governments build roads and schools, but not computers? How do we measure the success of an economy, and how can we improve it? In order to answer such questions, you will need to apply mathematical models, as well as consider human behaviour, in order to construct convincing arguments.

Following on, we will see how some of the ideas we have learned affect business, and understand why some firms grow into giants like Google and Volkswagen, whereas others remain small. Finally, you will apply everything you have learned to a global context. How can we measure, and attempt to manage, international trade, poverty and inequality?

## Inspirational starting point

Wealth Inequality in America - video  
<https://bit.ly/2ls4wHp>

The Debt Limit Explained- video  
<https://bit.ly/3j11nuZ>

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## Preparation for the course

Economics features regularly in the news and current affairs. A great way to prepare for the course would be to start to read the Economist magazine. In particular, you will need to interpret graphs effectively in order to understand economic principles, so looking at the "daily chart" section would be helpful.

## Future pathways

Governments, think-tanks and universities employ pure 'economists', but people who have studied Economics move equally well into the world of business and finance. According to the "Times Higher Education", Economics graduates earn the second highest salaries, second only to Medicine.

**Indicative entrance criteria:**  
Mathematics GCSE Grade 6.  
(Ideally also English language or  
Humanities GCSE Grade 6 or  
equivalent)

**Exam board:**  
Edexcel  
**Syllabus:**  
9ECO



**Coursework:**

0%

**Examination:**

100%



# English Literature

## Why study English Literature?

For voracious readers, word lovers, poets and theatre goers, English Literature is the perfect choice.

Studying literature feeds the imagination. It is a study into the human psyche, human experience and social influences over the years. It allows you to travel back in time, share the experiences of others, take on new perspectives, explore ideas, beliefs and values and challenge or discover your own.

Our A Level course will introduce you to some of the greatest poetry, prose and drama ever written. You will learn how to approach the analysis of texts from a range of different genres, eras and cultures with confidence. You will learn how to express informed and independent opinions and judgements about them based on sound evidence, and how to incorporate critical viewpoints into your essays to support and develop your own arguments.

Analytical skills are central to this subject. Many of these skills are related to independent thinking – the ability to analyse sophisticated ideas and the ways in which they are presented, to synthesise large and complex text, and to know how to build a convincing argument are just a few. The ability to read any content with a deeper appreciation and investigation is an essential skill that will only increase in importance as the platform for sharing views grows.

## Course Content

In Year 12, we will study Love Through the Ages: exploring aspects of this central literary theme as seen over time through different texts (one Shakespeare play, two prose texts and an anthology of Love poetry).

## Inspirational starting point

"The best moments in reading are when you come across something – a thought, a feeling, a way of looking at things – which you had thought special and particular to you. Now here it is, set down by someone else, a person you have never met, someone even who is long dead. And it is as if a hand has come out and taken yours." **Alan Bennett, The History Boys**

In Year 13, we will focus on a unit titled Shared Contexts, with the option Modern Times: literature from 1945 to the present day.

This takes the end of WWII as its historical starting point and explores both modern and contemporary literature's engagement with some of the social, political, personal and literary issues which have helped to shape the latter half of the 20th century and the early decades of the 21st century. Students will study three texts: one prose, one poetry and one drama text, at least one of which must be written post-2000.

## Preparation for the course

Reading: Minimum 3-5 texts (drama, poetry or prose), at least one pre-1900

## Future pathways

English Literature is a highly regarded A Level and one of the Russell Group universities' 'facilitating' subjects – so called because choosing them allows a wide range of options for degree study.

It is widely recognised by universities that the skills developed through the study of English Literature are among the most transferable, with English graduates going on to develop the widest range of careers – among the most popular are publishing, broadcasting, marketing and PR, journalism, law, teaching and politics.

### Indicative entrance criteria:

English Literature GCSE Grade 6 or equivalent

### Exam board:

AQA  
Syllabus:  
7712



### Coursework:

20%

### Examination:

80%  
(40%+40%)



# French

## Why study French?

Choosing to study a language will bring you much more than just linguistic competence. You will develop strong communication skills and an awareness of other diverse cultures, and grow in overall confidence.

French, with a reach of over 300 million people across the five continents, is the international language of cooking, fashion, theatre, the visual arts, dance and architecture. Your A Level in French will give you access to great works of literature, as well as an incredibly rich culture of films and songs. The greats of Francophone culture; Victor Hugo, Molière, Léopold Sedar Senghor, Edith Piaf, Jean-Paul Sartre, Alain Delon and Zinedine Zidane, await you.

## Course content

This A Level course is a fascinating one that enables you to simultaneously develop your linguistic competences and get under the skin of French-speaking society, culture and political life. You will explore issues such as the changing nature of family, diversity, criminality, the online world, immigration, political tensions and contemporary Francophone music.

There will be in-depth studies of either two novels or a film and a novel. You will submit an independent research project of your choosing.

You will also be expected to undertake a stay in the French-speaking world. This could be either an exchange or a cultural/study tour and will give you an invaluable opportunity to experience Francophone culture and everyday life, and to consolidate your linguistic skills.

## Inspirational starting point

Paroles by Jacques Prévert

## Preparation for the course

You should follow news and current affairs in French closely over the summer using a range of media, such as newspapers, the internet, TV and podcasts. You should take every opportunity to consolidate and extend your spoken French, such as through sports activities, clubs and spending time with French-speaking friends.

Read in French and tackle some of the wonderful works of French literature, both old and new. Why not spend the summer tackling Camus' *L'étranger* or Sagan's *Bonjour Tristesse*?

## Future pathways

In addition to developing spoken competence, you will develop invaluable transferable skills such as critical thinking, risk-taking, resilience and cultural and cognitive flexibility. Language skills are highly sought after by universities and employers and are a great asset for many international organisations as well as a wide variety of fields including the arts, business, law, science, philosophy, history, theatre, engineering and psychology.

**Indicative entrance criteria:**  
GCSE French Grade 6  
or equivalent

**Exam board:**  
AQA  
**Syllabus:**  
7652



**Coursework:**  
0%

**Examination:**  
100%



# German

## Why study German?

German is the second most commonly used scientific language in the world. It is the language with the most native speakers in the European Union and the most-spoken language of Switzerland. Germany is the world's second-largest exporter and its economy ranks number 1 in Europe and number 4 worldwide.

The German-speaking world plays one of the most significant roles in the arts. Indeed, it is the source of many of the most important contributions to literature, music, art, film and philosophy. Knowledge of the language is highly regarded by universities. Its logical structure and many links to English make it relatively easy for English speakers to learn.

In our increasingly globalised society, there has never been a more exciting and important time to be multilingual.

## Course content

You will further develop your linguistic skills, including spoken, and translation skills. Our A Level course allows you to delve deeply into aspects of German-speaking society, such as music, fashion and the digital technology. Amongst other topics, you will debate and explore multiculturalism and learn about artistic culture and political life. Topics include:

- youth politics
- the consequences of reunification
- Germany and the EU
- art and architecture

## Inspirational starting point

Die Verwandlung - Franz Kafka

You will study two novels or one film and one novel in-depth. You will also complete an individual research project of your own choosing which you will debate in detail at the end of the course.

You will be expected to undertake a visit to a German-speaking region during the course. This will enable you to truly experience everyday life and culture and will prove invaluable to consolidating your linguistic progress. This could take the form of an exchange or a cultural/study tour.

## Preparation for the course

Students should already have a sound knowledge of the grammatical and linguistic structures covered at GCSE, or equivalent.

We recommend that you take advantage of the wide range of media available to keep up to date with current affairs in the German-speaking world. Take every opportunity to practise your language skills and explore German literature. Read books, such as Bernhard Schlink's *Der Vorleser*, and watch films, such as *Goodbye Lenin* or *Das Leben der Anderen*.

## Future pathways

Knowledge of German opens up endless opportunities to study and work all over the world, in a wide range of fields, including law, science, the arts and engineering.

**Indicative entrance criteria:**  
GCSE German Grade 6  
or equivalent

**Exam board:**  
AQA  
**Syllabus:**  
7662



**Coursework:**

0%

**Examination:**

100%



# Geography

## Why study Geography?

There has never been a more important time to study A Level Geography. Climate change, migration, environmental degradation, social issues and natural hazards are at a critical point in determining our future.

Being a highly respected academic A Level subject, it is useful not only for Geography-based degrees, such as Environmental Science, but also for further studies like Biology, Business Studies and Economics.

## Course content

In Year 12, we will study Changing Places, Global Governance and Ecosystems under Stress.

In Year 13, we look at the Water and Carbon cycle, Glacial Systems and Landscapes, and Population and the Environment.

## Preparation for the course

Watch some geographical documentaries which will help develop your general geographical knowledge and understanding and help you see what an amazing world we live in.

### Podcasts:

Costing the Earth – podcasts on a wide variety of geographical issues:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006r4wn/episodes/player>

Royal Geographical Society – "Ask the Geographer" podcasts:

<https://www.rgs.org/schools/teaching-resources/ask-the-expert-podcasts/>

### Books:

"Prisoners of Geography", by Tim Marshall

"Factfulness: Ten reasons we're wrong about the world – and why things are better than you think", by Hans Rosling

### Films:

Touching the Void  
Slumdog Millionaire

## Future pathways

According to the Royal Geographical Society, Geography graduates enjoy some of the highest rates of graduate employment.

Geography is an excellent foundation for any career that involves the environment, planning, or collecting and interpreting data.

Popular careers for people with geography qualifications include: weather forecasting, energy and sustainability, town and transport planning, surveying, conservation, waste and water management, environmental planning, and tourism.

The army, police, government, research organisations, law and business world also value the practical research skills that geographers develop.

As geographers learn about human and population development, geography can be useful for jobs in charity and international relations, too.

**Indicative entrance criteria:**  
Geography GCSE Grade 6 or equivalent

**Exam board:**  
Edexcel  
**Syllabus:**  
9GE0



**Coursework:**

20%

**Examination:**

80%



# History

## Why study History?

Historians are best placed to make sense of our rapidly changing world. No other discipline deals so centrally with change as history. Historians also grapple with causation and, for any questions we might ask about the present – what prompted the Brexit vote or the emergence of Trump-like populism? – history gives us a grounding in how to answer them.

The past itself is inherently fascinating – no matter what you find interesting, everything has a history. Not only can historians move about in time and space, but we also have the privilege of being able to study absolutely anything: from the history of food, health and emotions to the history of ideas, sexuality and the environment, as well as more traditional political and socio-economic topics.

Furthermore, there are many skills that historians share with other disciplines. The ability to handle evidence, construct arguments, deal with ambiguity and assess conflicting interpretations are all executed to a high level by historians.

## Course content

Our A Level course is made up of two units which are studied over both Years 12 and 13:

- a depth study on the Transformation of China (1936-1997)
- a breadth study of the late British Empire, 1857-1967, which explores Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

Our course is designed to have a wide international scope. It will provide an understanding of the forces that have shaped the modern world.

In addition, you will complete an extended historical investigation as coursework. This should take the form of a question in the context of approximately 100 years. This is a fantastic opportunity to develop your own interests and will be great preparation for researching and writing essays at university level. You will engage with a wide range of historical interpretations and with the sources that historians have used as evidence to answer their questions about the past.

## Inspirational starting point

Maoism - A Global History, Julia Lovell

## Preparation for the course

Broaden your knowledge of global history by reading, for example, 'Sapiens' by Yuval Noah Harari, or Peter Frankopan's 'The Silk Roads: A New History of the World.'

Deepen your understanding of a topic that interests you. Start by listening to podcasts for ideas (e.g.: You're Dead to Me, History Extra, In Our Time) or watching historical films, then find out more. Ask for reading recommendations, complete a course through FutureLearn or the Open University and immerse yourself in the literature, art and music of the time.

## Future pathways

The disciplinary skills of a historian can lead anywhere. The ability to analyse critically and communicate clearly are invaluable in a wide range of subjects and career paths. Moreover, studying history encourages us to ask and answer important questions about our increasingly complex world.

**Indicative entrance criteria:**  
GCSE Grade 6 or equivalent qualification

**Exam board:**  
AQA  
**Syllabus:**  
7042



**Coursework:**

20%

**Examination:**

80%



# Mathematics

## Why study Mathematics?

If you love solving problems or enjoy the satisfaction of getting a single right answer, Mathematics may well be the subject for you.

Mathematics can be useful in many areas: from engineering to economics and medicine to computing. The social sciences, geography and its related fields will require Mathematics in order to analyse statistics.

Many students say "Maths is a subject where I know that hard work will get me a better grade". They take it because they are confident that their determination will be rewarded. Maths is hard, and universities and employers know that, so they respect people who have done well in this subject.

## Course content

Mathematics at A Level is split into Pure and Applied. Most of the Mathematics you have learned to date is Pure Mathematics and you will extend your understanding of this in many ways. You will learn how to solve cubic equations in addition to quadratics, study vectors in three dimensions rather than just two and explore the properties of "sin" and "cos" beyond triangles.

The most significant idea developed is that of calculus, which allows you to measure the rate at which a variable changes. Newton first developed this idea in order to prove that the Earth travels around the sun in an elliptical orbit, but it now has a multitude of applications. In Mechanics, you will learn how to simplify the complexity of the real world to make predictions about its behaviour. By applying Newton's principles, you will learn to answer questions: At what angle should you kick a football to attain the greatest range? Why does your stomach lurch when a lift comes to a stop?

Statistics helps us to make decisions when faced with uncertainty. Does a drug work? Is a jury biased? How certain can you be when making such a statement? You will learn to use probability to answer such questions and will also develop the statistics you have learnt at GCSE, or equivalent, discovering new ways of analysing data to compare populations.

## Inspirational starting point

Fermat's Last Theorem - Simon Singh

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## Preparation for the course

Mathematics is a subject which builds upon previous learning, so if you are not totally secure in the concepts of GCSE mathematics, or equivalent, you will find learning new ideas difficult. It would be useful to practise on [drfrostmaths.com](http://drfrostmaths.com). If you are not already at GES, contact us to see our Year 11 scheme of work.

## Future pathways

Learning Mathematics is challenging, but the reward is significant. Mathematicians are key individuals in a wide variety of roles in today's world because of their ability to spot patterns, think abstractly and to generalise concepts. People who have studied Mathematics at a high level occupy top positions at companies from Google and Facebook, UBS and Deloitte to Aston Martin. As high-tech industries grow, these skills will be increasingly in demand.

### Indicative entrance criteria:

Mathematics GCSE  
Grade 7 or equivalent

### Exam board:

Edexcel  
Syllabus:  
9MA0

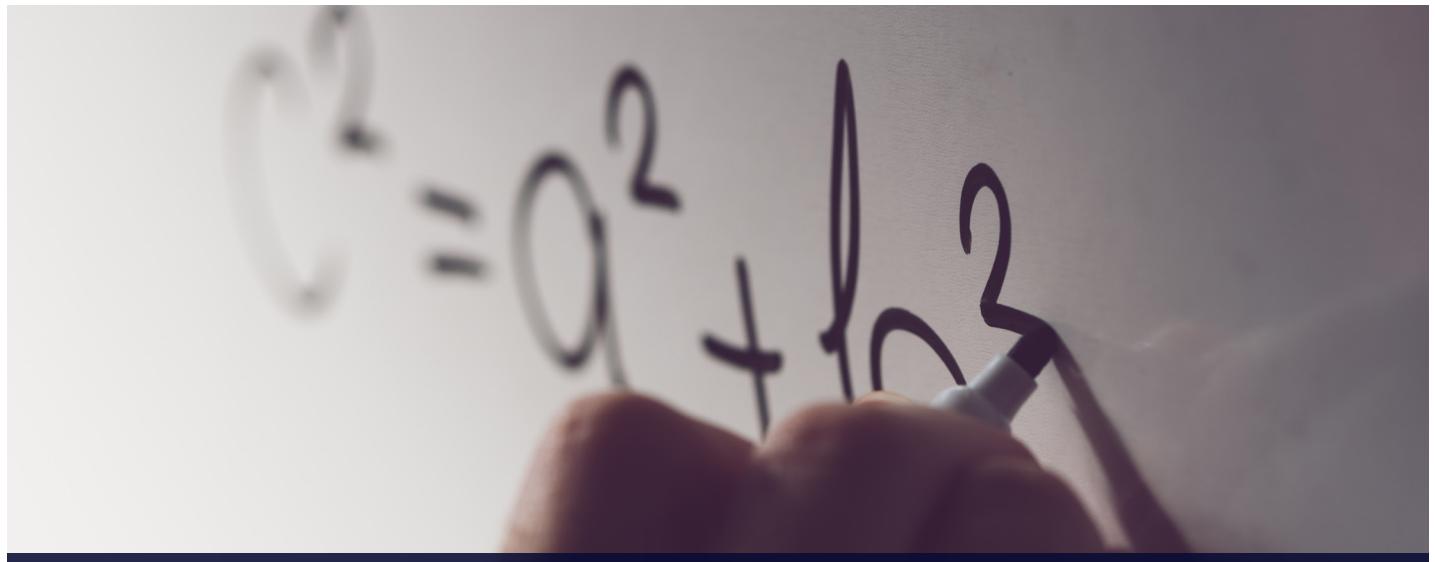


### Coursework:

0%

### Examination:

100%



# Further Mathematics

## Why study Further Mathematics?

Simply, because you love Mathematics, and you're really good at it!

Further Mathematics builds upon the material in Mathematics A Level. You will learn about more abstract concepts and apply them to many more real-life situations. If you aim to study Mathematics, Physics, Computer Science, Engineering or Economics at a top university like Cambridge, Harvard or the Sorbonne, studying Further Mathematics A Level is almost essential.

## Course content

What number has the property that its square is negative? The answer to this question is found in Further Mathematics. This course also poses new and interesting scenarios in which geometrical skills can be applied to shed light on algebraic problems.

You will learn to use matrices both to solve simultaneous equations and to explore transformations of points and shapes on the plane, and much more about using vectors to describe objects in three dimensions.

The calculus you encounter in your A Level Mathematics course is extended and developed so you will be able to solve a much greater breadth of problems, including finding solutions to equations which involve rates of change.

You will learn how to describe space using not only  $(x, y)$  Cartesian coordinates but also polar coordinates and, through doing so, you will discover interesting new graphs. The applied lessons will build on the statistics and mechanics encountered in the Mathematics course. You will learn to use certain statistical models (Poisson, exponential, rectangular) to make predictions

and test hypotheses, and make sensible assertions about how confident you are in your decisions. You will be able to model collisions between particles, use your trigonometric understanding to describe circular motion and employ calculus to Newtonian models to make them more realistic and predictions more accurate.

## Inspirational starting point

The Map of Mathematics – Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OmlJ-4B-mS-Y>

## Preparation for the course

You should use drfrostmaths.com to keep improving your fluency with the topics you have studied so far, especially algebra, rules of indices and graphs.

You might also read some general interest Maths books such as Chaos by James Gleick or Fermat's Last Theorem by Simon Singh.

## Future pathways

Those who want to study Mathematics, Physics or Computer Science at university will benefit greatly from successfully completing the A Level in Further Mathematics. This course challenges students to reason carefully and critically in ways which are beneficial to many other possible study and career paths. As such, this qualification will add weight to applications for all sorts of jobs or university courses.

### Indicative entrance criteria:

Mathematics GCSE  
Grade 7, but ideally 8 or 9 or equivalent (need to be studying Mathematics A Level too)

### Exam board:

Edexcel

### Syllabus:

9FM0



### Coursework:

0%

### Examination:

100%



# Music

## Why study Music?

Music A Level is a creative and empowering course. It gives you the opportunity to engage critically with selected pieces. At the same time, you can experience artistic performance and learn to compose music. The course will allow you to develop as a perceptive, analytical, and passionate musician through the wide-ranging programme of study.

Studying an Arts subject such as Music allows you to use expression, open-mindedness and creativity in a fundamentally human way. If you enjoy performing, composing, and using analytical skills to explore a wide range of music, you should consider choosing this subject at A Level.

## Course content

### Component 1: Appraising music

You will learn to listen, analyse and understand a set piece in context. You will be assessed with a listening and written paper.

### Component 2: Performance

The assessment is based on a solo and/or ensemble performance as an instrumentalist, or vocalist and/or music production (via technology).

### Component 3: Composition

You will be assessed on two pieces: composition to a brief and free composition.

## Inspirational starting point

Classical Music: The Stories - poscast

## Preparation for the course

Listen to a wide range of music, aiming to relate this to the A Level areas of study.

Recap history and theory of music covered in the GCSE course (get in touch with us if you haven't studied GCSEs)

Ensure you are confident reading music in the treble and bass clef, and understanding key signatures, cadences, and chords.

Continue to practise your chosen instrument.

## Future pathways

Possible careers directly related to music include:

- performance musician
- music teacher
- music therapist
- arts/concert administration and management
- film, television and video game composition

An A Level qualification in Music is a valuable pathway to further study at a university or conservatoire, or to work in the music industry. Music is a highly regarded subject for many universities and employers as it complements other subjects well and shows that you possess a broad range of skills.

## Indicative entrance criteria:

GCSE Music: Grade 6 or above.

If no GCSE, students should be able to perform on an instrument (including voice) at ABRSM Grade 6, and have a grasp of music theory to ABRSM Grade 5. Auditions or entry exams may be required.

**Exam board:**  
AQA  
**Syllabus:**  
7272

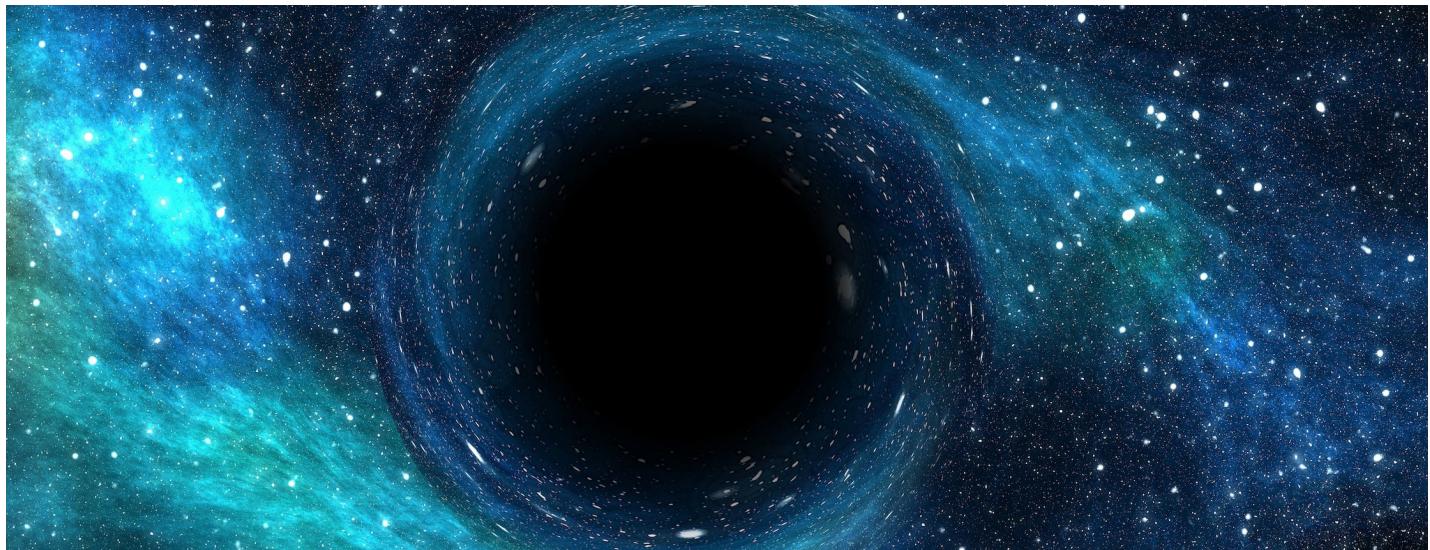


## Coursework:

**60%**  
(30% performing,  
30% composing)

## Examination:

**40%**



# Physics

## Why study Physics?

Physics explains your place in the world around you. It also attempts to show how your world fits into the vast space that is the universe. The laws of Physics transcend borders so, wherever you are, it puts Maths into practice and teaches you to think and develop intellectually. Physics complements most other A Level subject choices.

You do not have to be a genius to study Physics, but you would be pretty smart to choose it.

## Course content

Being the most fundamental of the experimental sciences, Physics seeks to explain the universe itself from the very smallest particles to the vast distances between galaxies.

In Year 12, we will build on prior knowledge and topics including Mechanics, Waves and Electricity, while introducing new topics, such as Particle Physics and Quantum Phenomena.

In Year 13, we will develop these ideas further through the study of Electrical, Gravitational and Magnetic Fields. Other topics covered will include Thermal Physics and Nuclear Physics.

In addition, you will study one of the following: Astrophysics, Medical Physics, Engineering Physics, Turning points in Physics or Electronics.

## Inspirational starting point

For the Love of Physics : From the End of the Rainbow to the Edge Of Time - A Journey Through the Wonders of Physics – Walter Lewin

## Preparation for the course

We recommend the GCSE to A Level Progression activities and additional reading.

30

Read and complete activities:

<https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/physics/specifications/AQA-7407-7408-SP-2015.PDF>

- GCSE to A Level Progression
- Six Easy Pieces – Richard P Feynman

## Future pathways

Studying Physics at A Level or degree level opens up all sorts of career opportunities.

- geophysicist/field seismologist
- healthcare scientist, medical physics
- radiation protection practitioner
- research scientist (physical sciences)
- scientific laboratory technician
- meteorologist
- structural or acoustic engineer
- product/process development scientist
- systems developer
- technical author

You can also move into engineering, astrophysics, chemical physics, nanotechnology, renewable energy and more.

**Indicative entrance criteria:**  
Science GCSE Grade 6  
or equivalent

**Exam board:**  
AQA  
**Syllabus:**  
7408



**Coursework:**

0%

(but 12 required practicals)

**Examination:**  
100%



# Sociology

## Why study Sociology?

This study of society offers a unique lens through which to examine the complex web of human interactions and the structures that shape our lives and humanity.

This A Level course provides an engaging exploration of sociological concepts, theories, and methods that will empower you to better understand the world and your place within it.

As C. Wright Mills once said, "The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relationship between the two within society. This is its task and its promise".

## Course Content

Introduction to Sociology: Delve into the foundations of sociology, understanding its history and key thinkers.

Social Structures: Examine the structures that underpin society, including family, education, and religion.

Social Change: Explore the dynamics of social change, globalisation, and social movements.

Social Inequalities: Analyse the impact of class, race, gender, and other factors on social inequalities.

Research Methods: Develop your research skills and learn to conduct sociological investigations.

## Inspirational starting point

To begin your sociological journey, reflect on this thought-provoking quote by sociologist Emile Durkheim:

"Man is pre-eminently a social animal!" This quote sets the stage for your exploration of how human beings are deeply interconnected and how society shapes our thoughts, behaviours, and aspirations.

## Preparation for the Course

This A Level course requires dedication, critical thinking, and an open mind. We will provide you with the necessary textbooks, resources, and access to online databases. You will be expected to engage in stimulating class discussions, research projects, and essays. Be prepared to think critically about the world around you and be open to challenging your preconceptions.

Remember that sociology is a dynamic field, so staying up-to-date with current events and research is also important as you progress in your studies.

## Future Pathways

This course will provide you with valuable knowledge, analytical skills and research capabilities crucial for higher education and careers in sociology or a related social science, such as psychology. Sociology graduates are ideally prepared for opportunities in fields such as healthcare, law, journalism, human rights, marketing and more.

**Indicative entrance criteria:**  
GCSE English Language  
or Humanities Grade 6  
or equivalent

**Exam board:**  
AQA  
**Syllabus:**  
7192



**Coursework:**

0%

**Examination:**

100%

# Spanish

(40%+40%)

## Why study Spanish?

Spanish, with more than 500 million speakers, makes the rich cultural offering of over 20 Spanish-speaking countries available to you. Indulge in the original works of Cervantes, Federico García Lorca, Borges, Cortázar, García Márquez, Octavio Paz, Mario Vargas Llosa and more, and enjoy the resurgence of Latin pop that has thrust Latin culture, its origins and influences into the mainstream for you to explore.

Studying a language opens endless doors for you. Language skills allow you to truly immerse yourself in countries and their cultures, experience literature and film in their original form and have access to study and work opportunities abroad.

## Course content

This A Level course is wide-reaching. Linguistic competence is developed and honed, and a wide range of topics related to Hispanic society, such as social and technological change, highlights of artistic culture and multiculturalism, politics and the influence of the past on today's Hispanic world, are explored in depth.

During the course, you will have the exciting opportunity to study Hispanic literature and film: either one novel and one film or two novels. For the spoken element of the course, you will undertake an independent research project of your choosing.

You will be expected to take part in a visit abroad during the course and experience the culture and everyday life in a Spanish-speaking country. These visits are expected to be either an exchange or cultural/study tour.

## Inspiration starting point

Latinoamérica - Calle 13

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rA2FAVRAO2Y>

A journey across Latin America in one song

## Preparation for the course

Students should already have a sound knowledge of the grammatical and linguistic structures covered at GCSE, or equivalent, and should take the opportunity over the summer to further hone their linguistic skills by taking advantage of all opportunities to practise their spoken Spanish. You can keep up to date with current affairs through a range of media and by starting to read and watch some of the masterpieces of Spanish film and literature.

## Future pathways

An A Level in Spanish will open doors to further study, travel and work opportunities. Spanish, with its global reach, is highly valued in the work of numerous international organisations as well as in the fields of accountancy, banking, marketing, sales, tourism and trade.

As well as becoming competent in Spanish, you will acquire transferable skills such as resilience, resourcefulness, creativity, critical thinking, and linguistic, cultural and cognitive flexibility.

**Entrance criteria:**  
GCSE Spanish Grade 6  
or equivalent

**Exam board:**  
AQA  
**Syllabus:**  
7692



**Coursework:**

0%

**Examination:**

100%



# How to Apply

A Levels are challenging, thought-provoking and inspiring. To achieve top marks, you will need to demonstrate a genuine interest in your chosen subjects as well as a commitment to studying.

Whether you are coming to GES with GCSEs or other qualifications, we will want to meet with you to discuss your motivation for following this programme, your longer-term goals and how A Levels will help achieve them.

We will review your reports from your current school and we will ask you to reflect on and explain why you want to study the subjects for which you are applying.

For students applying with GCSEs, we would like to see your mock exam results or your teachers' predictions of your grades. We would normally expect you to achieve a grade of 6 or above in relevant subjects in order to confirm your place.

In all cases, we will consider you as an individual, taking into account your education up to this point and your aims for the future, as we process your application.

**If you are interested in applying to the GES A Level programme, or would simply like to find out more, please contact [admissions@geschool.ch](mailto:admissions@geschool.ch)**

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