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## **GCSEs**

All pupils in the First, Second and Third forms have received a general education and have followed broadly similar courses.

From the Fourth Form onwards you are able to specialise, enabling you to study individual subjects in greater depth. These studies will lead to qualifications called General Certificates of Secondary Education or GCSEs.

Later, in the Sixth Form, you will specialise further and study subjects at Advanced level. University entrance is determined mainly by your results at Advanced level but many universities look carefully at the GCSE record of potential students before making any offer of a place.

The standard GCSE curriculum for pupils at St Albans School consists of

7 COMPULSORY GCSEs

3 OPTIONAL GCSEs

This booklet is designed to help you make a choice of subjects. It indicates which courses are likely to be available and gives an outline of the content and nature of each subject.

Parents and pupils should appreciate that the final decisions regarding admission to particular courses offered each year are at the discretion of the Headmaster

## MAKING YOUR CHOICE

The GCSEs which pupils choose will open the gate to a Sixth Form career, and ultimately to higher education. To have a realistic chance of success at A level, a pupil needs to have demonstrated some aptitude for academic study at GCSE.

To enter the Sixth Form at St Albans School, we expect pupils to obtain at least six passes including Maths and English at grade C or above in their GCSEs, four of which must be at A grade or better. These grade As will, normally, be in the subjects to be studied at A level. For those A level courses where the number of applicants exceeds the number of places available, preference is given to pupils with the best performance at GCSE. It is therefore very important that the correct decisions are made at this stage.

To facilitate this choice the school provides every opportunity for advice and guidance.

The programme for consultation is as follows:

Issue of Booklet(s)

Consultation evening

Choices evening

Completion of forms

### ***Achievement:***

It is important when choosing GCSEs to consider your ***achievement*** in a given subject. Good grades at GCSE can influence universities and may even make the difference between getting an interview and not getting one. With so many good candidates chasing a few places, the universities have to distinguish between apparently equally able applicants and so they look back at GCSE results. You should therefore consider both your ***proven*** achievement (exam marks, report grades) in a subject as well as your ***potential*** achievement, but do not expect your teachers to be able to predict how you will do at GCSE. Much can change over the next two years! If you are getting A grades in a subject in the Third Form, it does not automatically follow that you will get an A at GCSE. Amongst other things this will depend upon...

### ***Aptitude and Motivation:***

It is one thing to get good grades in a subject, but quite another to do this easily; how long do you spend on homeworks? Do the relevant skills and techniques come easily to you, or do you have to work long hours to achieve your high grades? Do you have the relevant skills for a practically based subject? If you find subjects easy, then you probably have an ***aptitude*** for them.

Equally important, however, is ***interest***. Do you find the subject interesting for its own sake? Do you read about the subject or visit websites that carry associated material? Do you watch television programmes that are related to the subject? Enthusiasm can count for as much as ability, particularly where extended coursework tasks are a part of the subject assessment. Give some thought to the teacher who is taking you; if you get on well with them (or the opposite!), does this affect how you view a subject? How would you feel if another teacher were to teach the GCSE course?

### ***Careers:***

It is quite usual for Third Form pupils to have no clear idea of a future career, but we do anticipate that almost all students who enter the Sixth Form at St Albans School will go on to University.

Where a pupil is already anticipating a given career, it should be borne in mind that in the majority of cases this is likely to change; in the light of this it is important that a perceived career path should not be allowed to narrow unduly the range of subjects selected, and that up-to-date careers advice is sought where necessary. Mr Talbot (Senior Tutor) is available for consultation relating to issues concerning university entrance and careers.

## **THE COMPULSORY SUBJECTS**

The compulsory subjects account for seven GCSEs.

***ENGLISH LANGUAGE***

***ENGLISH LITERATURE***

***FRENCH OR GERMAN***

***MATHEMATICS***

***PHYSICS***

***CHEMISTRY***

***BIOLOGY***

The details for ***FRENCH*** and ***GERMAN*** are given under ***MODERN LANGUAGES*** in the section on ***OPTIONAL SUBJECTS***.

NB: GCSE PE is offered as an intensive one year course in the Fifth Form for those not wishing to continue with Maths after Maths GCSE. It is an excellent grounding for those wishing to pursue PE at AS and A2 and examines both the physical and social aspects of sport. 60% of the final grade awarded is based on practical assessment and coursework, 40% on a theory exam. Students opting for the course should be able to deliver at least two sports to A team standard and demonstrate the ability to achieve a similar standard in two others at the end of two terms. In the past boys have received external coaching to ensure they meet this standard. The list of permissible sports is extensive and areas where boys could pick up sports in which they have not previously competed, and achieve the required standard within the given time frame, are available in school. However, this should be discussed with the PE Department before opting for the subject. The decision whether to take up GCSE PE does not need to be made until the end of the Fourth Form.

## ENGLISH

### Examining Board: AQA 3702 English Specification A and CIE 0486 IGSE English Literature

- English in the Fourth and Fifth Forms constitutes a combined course, taught over two years, certificating pupils for two qualifications: English and English Literature.
- For examination from summer 2008, we will be following AQA Specification A, the most popular English specification.
- For English Literature, we will enter students for IGCSE, which has the advantages of a more interesting range of texts engaging with both national and international traditions, an unseen paper instead of coursework, and a more traditional and secure form of assessment. It is an internationally-recognised qualification taught in more than 4,000 schools worldwide and a growing number of independent schools in this country.
- We will also set by ability, informed by results in the internal and external exams.
- The department follows an agreed programme of study, but teachers of each set choose texts and assessment tasks appropriate to the set's level of ability and in response to their own literary enthusiasms.

#### ***Aims of the course***

##### *In English:*

- to read, analyse and evaluate a range of fiction and non-fiction or media texts, including texts from the English literary heritage and from other cultures and traditions;
- to write in a wide variety of forms for different audiences and purposes, using a wide-ranging vocabulary and an effective style;
- to develop ability in speaking and listening to formulate, clarify and express original ideas in different circumstances, and to listen, understand and respond appropriately to others.

##### *In English Literature:*

- to enjoy the experience of reading literature;
- to understand and respond to literary texts in different forms and from different periods and cultures;
- to communicate an informed personal response appropriately and effectively;
- to appreciate the different ways in which writers achieve their effect;
- to experience literature's contribution to aesthetic, imaginative and intellectual growth;
- to explore the contribution of literature to an understanding of areas of human concern.

## **Course content**

The course is “literature-led”, using a range of literature texts written both before and after 1914 (poetry, prose and drama) to stimulate development and attainment of skills in Reading, Writing and Speaking & Listening (the National Curriculum Attainment Objectives for this subject). However, the current English specification also places a strong emphasis on non-fiction and media texts. Students will also learn to evaluate these, building on their work in the Third Form, and will write in a range of different styles:

- to explore, imagine and entertain;
- to inform, explain and describe;
- to analyse, review and comment;
- to argue, persuade and advise.

Both English and English Literature are linear qualifications, with two exams each at the end of the course. Coursework is only required in English, and will be completed by the end of November of the Fifth Form.

## **English Coursework**

### *Speaking and Listening Coursework (20% of GCSE English)*

Pupils must take part in **three** activities: a group activity, a drama-focussed activity and an individual presentation. This work takes place in the Spring and Summer terms of the Fourth Form.

### *Reading and Writing Coursework (20% of GCSE English)*

#### **Two** Writing Responses

- Original Writing – to imagine, explore, entertain (5%)
- Media – to analyse, review and comment (5%)

These responses will be completed during the first half of the Fourth Form.

#### **Two** Reading Responses

- Shakespeare –this could be a response to the Literature set play
- Prose Study – a response to a prose text in the English Literary Heritage

The first of these responses will be completed in the Fourth Form, and the second at the beginning of the Fifth Form.

## English Exams

There are two papers. All students will sit Higher Tier.

*Paper One* 1 hr 45 mins (30%)

**Reading** response to unseen non-fiction/media texts  
**Writing** to argue, persuade or advise.

*Paper Two* 1 hr 30 mins (30%)

**Reading** response to poetry from different cultures and traditions in the AQA Anthology  
**Writing** to inform, explain, describe.

There will be a full mock in the November of the Fifth Form and exams take place immediately after the summer Half Term.

## English Literature Exams

There are two papers. Exams take place shortly before the summer Half term.

*Paper One Set Texts: Open Books* 2 hrs 15 mins

There will be a choice of three different questions on each set text. Students must answer at least one passage-based question, and must answer on a Drama Text (eg *Macbeth* or *As You Like It*), a Poetry text (either from *Songs of Ourselves* - the CIE Anthology – or the Poetry of Keats) and a Prose Text (eg *Pride and Prejudice*, *Far From the Madding Crowd*, *Things Fall Apart*, *To Kill A Mockingbird*). Texts must not contain annotation of any kind.

*Paper Three Unseen* 1 hr 20 mins

Students choose to write a critical commentary and appreciation of either an unseen prose passage or poetry. They are recommended to spend 20 minutes reading and planning.

## **MATHEMATICS**

### **Examining Board: AQA**

Pupils are prepared throughout the Third and Fourth Forms to take the GCSE Mathematics examinations at the end of the Fourth Form.

We are currently participating in a pilot scheme for the next planned changes to GCSE Mathematics. Pupils are prepared for two qualifications, GCSE Mathematics and GCSE Mathematics (Additional).

For GCSE Mathematics they will take one paper covering Number and Statistics and two papers covering Geometry and Measures and Algebra. Each paper is 1 hour long.

Additional Mathematics consists of more challenging and unstructured questions on the same syllabus, and is examined in one 2 hour paper. Compared with GCSE Mathematics, it requires more thinking and less application of routine methods.

There is no coursework.

Considerable emphasis is placed on revision via past examination questions and specimen papers, to perfect understanding and improve examination technique.

### ***Setting***

Mathematics is taught in sets throughout the school, allowing teaching at a pace and to a level of sophistication appropriate to each pupil. Setting is flexible at all stages. All students cover the same syllabus and are prepared for the same examination, so that the final grade achievable is not restricted by being in a particular set.

### ***Fifth Form Mathematics***

Most pupils who achieve at least grade A in GCSE Mathematics study one module of the AS Mathematics course, enabling them to discover whether they have the interest and aptitude to continue with the subject in the sixth form. Entry to the Sixth Form for AS Mathematics is dependent on a good performance in the examination on the Fifth Form course.

## SCIENCE

The pupils will study and sit three GCSEs in Physics, Chemistry and Biology.

Each GCSE has the same structure and consists of four modules – three written modules and one coursework.

The pupils have already started their GCSE course in the Third Form and, as a consequence, will complete the first module in each subject by the end of the Autumn Term in the Fourth Form. They will sit the first written module examination in **January of the Fourth Form** and the remaining two at the end of the Fifth Form.

The coursework module is completed by the end of the Fifth Form.

## PHYSICS

### Examining Board : AQA (4451)

The first module (P1) explores the energy crisis looking at the viability of renewable energy sources and assessing the benefits and dangers of nuclear power. Communication is studied; we analyse the difference between analogue and digital signals, and how we can use electromagnetic waves to send mobile phone calls and e-mails and to connect to internet sites. Finally we delve into the realm of astrophysics and start to address some big questions about the origin and evolution of the universe.

The second module (P2) takes us onto the study of forces and motion: why are roller coasters so exciting; how can we use physics to improve sporting performance? Electrical circuits are then studied in detail and we look at how to use these ideas in a variety of applications.

Finally the third module (P3) delves into the world of electromagnetism and studies how motors and generators work. We also explore stars and space and finally study light and sound and look at some interesting applications of both.

## CHEMISTRY

### Examining Board : AQA (4421)

The first module (C1) investigates materials, looking carefully at rocks as building materials, metals and their uses and crude oil as a fuel and plastic. The evolution of the earth is studied looking at how the atmosphere has developed as life has evolved on the planet.

The second module (C2) looks at chemical bonding and how this affects structures and properties. Rates of reaction are studied, together with the energy produced from chemical changes. Finally we look at electrolysis and acids, alkalis and salts.

The final module (C3) studies the periodic table and explores acids and alkalis. The course concludes with the energetics of chemical reactions or an introduction to chemical analysis.

## **BIOLOGY**

### **Examining Board : AQA (4411)**

The first module (B1) looks at the human body; we think about diet, drugs and infections. We then move on to thinking how organisms have evolved and adapted to their environments, looking closely at variation of species.

In the second module (B2) we study cells and look at how they are used in plants to create food. Enzymes and homeostasis are then explored in detail.

The third module (B3) explores transport and respiration and the course concludes with a study of microbiology.

Biology is a rapidly expanding subject. Students are encouraged to bring in ideas from news articles, which are often related, for example, to medicine or to climate change. There are many opportunities during the course to take part in practical activities and to consider the importance of biology to our lives.

## **COURSEWORK**

The students will need to complete an Investigative Skills Assessment (ISA) for each examination they sit. This will comprise a practical investigation completed in class followed by a test in which they analyse their data and design similar experiments. The ISAs will be spread across the course and the best mark will be put forward.

## **THE OPTIONAL SUBJECTS**

Pupils must choose three of the following subjects:

**ART**

**BUSINESS STUDIES**

**DESIGN and TECHNOLOGY**

**DRAMA**

**GEOGRAPHY**

**GERMAN**

**GREEK (CLASSICAL)**

**HISTORY**

**LATIN**

**MUSIC**

**RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

**SPANISH**

The details for German and Spanish are listed under **MODERN LANGUAGES**. The details for Latin and Greek are listed under **CLASSICAL SUBJECTS**.

*It should be noted that new specifications are coming in for all subjects listed below. All details given are, therefore, provisional. Please ask departments for any updates on the Choices Evening.*

## **ART**

### **Examining Board: OCR**

#### ***Aims of the course:***

- To develop visual perception and understanding including the creative, imaginative and practical skills for working in art, craft and design.
- To develop visual literacy and an appreciation of the richness of our cultural heritage through practical and critical responses to achievement in art, craft and design.
- To develop the individual's special aptitudes and interests and foster and encourage confidence, enthusiasm and a sense of achievement.

#### ***Course Content***

All candidates follow a broad course initially. In addition to painting and drawing, candidates also have the opportunity to develop their skills in printmaking, three dimensional work, collage and design. Some decide, at the end of the Fourth Form, to specialise in drawing and painting, while others can submit a range of work in different media for final assessment.

#### ***Assessment***

**Component I**            Coursework    60% of total mark

Art Portfolio: Candidates produce a portfolio of work from personal/given starting points. Candidates will be given up to a maximum of 15 weeks in which to complete their portfolio. The Portfolio will consist of preparation work and final piece(s).

**Component II**           Examination    40% of total mark

One unit of work, which is the exam piece, and preparation work done in the weeks preceding the examination time of 10 hours (usually spread over two consecutive days).

Candidates choose one theme to interpret from 12 given starting points. Candidates are assessed on their ability to research and develop an idea, their use of materials and ability to make connections with the work of other artists.

The two components are internally assessed, standardised across teaching groups and then externally moderated. Each component is assessed on the following four objectives:

#### ***Assessment Objective 1***

Candidates record responses from direct experience, observation and imagination and develop ideas for their work, investigating visual and other sources of information.

### ***Assessment Objective 2***

Candidates explore and use a range of processes, materials and techniques by selecting visual elements in one or more specialist disciplines working in two and/or three dimensions. Candidates review, modify and refine work as it progresses through process to outcome, realising their intentions.

### ***Assessment Objective 3***

Candidates investigate and research to identify the distinctive characteristics of art, craft and design and relate them to the context in which the work was created. They make connections with their own work and they make informed comment and critical judgements about art, craft and design, using a specialist vocabulary.

### ***Assessment Objective 4***

Candidates present personal responses and realise intentions. They make informal connections with the work of others.

### ***Homework (1 hour 20 mins required each week)***

This comprises a combination of observational drawing and coursework development.

### ***Materials***

Essential materials are provided but additional equipment such as sketchbooks, brushes, pencils and portfolios are recommended. These can normally be purchased through the Art Department.

### ***Excursions***

A number of gallery visits are made during the course. These are usually to the Tate and National Galleries as well as thematic visits, for example, to the Imperial War Museum and National Maritime Museum.

## **BUSINESS STUDIES**

**Examining Board: AQA 4133\***

### ***Aims of the course***

Business Studies is a new and stimulating subject for GCSE students.

The specification is designed to encourage candidates to consider the practical application of business concepts, and to explore business theories and concepts in the context of events in the business world. The AQA specification provides a sound basis for progression to AS and AGCE courses in Economics. The progressive nature of the course encourages the development of a holistic understanding of the main functions of business. The insights and skills developed in this subject will be useful for further education and employment.

GCSE Business Studies is intended to be an academic course, not vocational, and should only be taken by those with a demonstrable interest in the subject. All pupils are expected to keep up with current affairs and follow news and media debate.

### ***Course Content***

Unit 1: Setting up a business: the business organisation: starting a business enterprise, business aims and objectives, business planning, legal structure, business start ups. Marketing and the marketing mix. Finance, including cash flow and profit and loss. People in business: recruitment, motivation and legislation. Operations management: production methods, customer services

Unit 2: Growing as a business: this involves studying the same topic areas as in Unit 1, but builds upon them, allowing candidates to study businesses as they grow and the issues that expansion raises. Additional topic areas include balance sheets, organisation charts and management hierarchies, business growth and quality management

Unit 3: Investigating Businesses: this involves a controlled assessment: the titles are presented by the exam board, but marked by the school.

### ***Assessment***

Unit 1: One externally assessed written paper, 1 hour, 40% of marks.

Unit 2: One externally assessed written paper, 1 hour, 35% of marks.

Unit 3: Controlled assessment: involving 5-7 hours research time and up to 3 hours writing up findings in controlled conditions, 25% of marks.

\*Please note that the department is currently reviewing all GCSE Business Studies specifications. At the moment the department plans to offer the course as detailed above; however, this may be subject to change. There is very little difference between the three English exam boards in terms of course content and scheme of assessment.

## CLASSICAL SUBJECTS

### LATIN

#### Examining Board: OCR (J281)

The aim of Latin GCSE is primarily to develop an awareness of and sensitivity to the use of language in general. As with their earlier study of Latin, the learning of Latin words will greatly enrich pupils' knowledge of English vocabulary, and the study of Latin grammar will enable them to develop a greater understanding of how English in particular, and languages in general, are structured. The study of Latin literature enables them to develop a more sensitive awareness of the language as they see how skilful authors use language effectively to convey subtle messages and to create certain effects on their audiences. Above all, they are learning about communication.

The syllabus involves translating unseen Latin prose into English, answering comprehension questions on unseen Latin prose and studying Latin prescribed texts, both prose and verse, in the original language. Candidates are assessed on their language competence and their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of prepared works of Latin literature.

<b>Paper 1</b>	Unprepared Comprehension and Translation	1 hour	25%
<b>Paper 2</b>	Unprepared Comprehension and Translation	1 hour	25%
<b>Paper 3</b>	Prose Literature	1 hour	25%
<b>Paper 4</b>	Verse Literature	1 hour	25%

*There is no coursework option.*

### GREEK

#### Examining Board: OCR (J291)

The aims and content of this syllabus are very similar to those for Latin.

<b>Paper 1</b>	Unprepared Comprehension and Translation	1 hour	25%
<b>Paper 2</b>	Unprepared Comprehension and Translation	1 hour	25%
<b>Paper 3</b>	Prose Literature	1 hour	25%
<b>Paper 4</b>	Verse Literature	1 hour	25%

*There is no coursework option.*

## **DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY**

**Examining Boards : Graphics – Edexcel  
Resistant Materials Technology – Edexcel  
Electronics – AQA**

### ***General Details***

Design and Technology is an exciting, dynamic area of the curriculum where students are encouraged to identify problems or needs and design, develop and manufacture realistic, high quality solutions. The subject encourages innovation, imagination and flair and reflects the ever changing world in which we live and interact. It places growing emphasis on the environment and sustainability but also encourages the use of modern materials and manufacturing techniques through the use of computer aided design and manufacture. Students explore ways in which aesthetic, technical, economic, environmental, ethical and social dimensions interact to shape decision making and their designing and making.

At this stage the students will specialise in one of the three Design & Technology specialist areas on offer and will work in this area throughout their GCSE years. They may choose to study:

- Graphics
- Resistant Materials Technology
- Electronics

All courses are similar in structure and assessment but focus on different material areas.

### **Graphics**

This particular specification aims to promote the careful and thoughtful use of graphic materials, namely paper, card and board, foamboard, sheet plastic, rigid foam and joining materials to design and manufacture graphic products. These products may range from two dimensional promotional items and corporate branding through to three dimensional architectural models, advertising display stands and packaging solutions. It also requires the students to investigate commercial and industrial processes related to the production of these products.

### **Resistant Materials Technology**

This particular specification aims to promote the careful, thoughtful and skilful use of Resistant Materials, principally wood, metal and plastics, composite, smart and modern materials and associated pre-manufactured items and components to design and manufacture three dimensional products. These products may range from storage and display solutions, lighting systems or educational toys through to garden products or even body adornment products.

## **Electronics (AQA)**

This specification is designed to encourage students to be able to make quality, functioning electronic products with originality and flair, using a wide range of electronic components with appropriate modern materials used to package electronic circuits. Students will be enthused and challenged by the range of study opportunities offered by the theory content of this course, and will be able to demonstrate their knowledge and pursue their own areas of interest during the final coursework project.

### ***Assessment***

The specifications above follow a similar pattern of assessment with up to 60% of the final examination grade achieved through coursework and the remaining 40% through final examination. The students are carefully guided through the coursework element with work monitored and developed to ensure maximum marks are achieved before the final examination. This will involve the production of a detailed design folder leading to the manufacture and evaluation of a quality, three dimensional product in the chosen material areas.

## DRAMA AND THEATRE ARTS

Examining Board: Edexcel (1699)

### *General Details*

This course is designed for those who have enjoyed drama in the First, Second and Third Forms and would like to pursue their interest further by learning skills required for theatre performance and by working creatively on a variety of projects. The students should gain confidence in social skills, problem solving, communication and working with others. The course is challenging but fun and there is always a high take-up.

### *Course Content*

**Paper 1      Practical Components**                      60% Assessed internally with external moderation.

There are two units of practical coursework.

**Unit 1- Drama Exploration** is about using drama to explore themes and issues in response to at least two different texts chosen from different times and cultures. This is accompanied by supporting documentary evidence.

**Unit 2-Exploring Play Texts** is about exploring a complete and substantial play, chosen by the centre, from the point of view of directors, performers and/or designers, accompanied by a portfolio of appropriate supporting documentary evidence. Pupils will create a written response to a piece of live theatre.

Candidates are assessed both as individuals and as members of a group. It is important therefore that they are able to work co-operatively with others and are reliable. Rehearsals may sometimes take place out of School time.

**Paper 2      Performance**                                      40% Externally set and moderated

This is a practical examination of a performing or technical support role within the context of the performance to an audience of a devised or scripted play.

### *Theatre Visits*

These are organised as part of the course. They normally take place in the evening.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

The world in which we live is likely to change more in the next 50 years than it has ever done before. Our role in that change is more important than ever. Geography explains the changes and helps to prepare people. It is a subject about now and the future.

Geographers have a unique viewpoint combining political and economic aspects with an understanding of the physical processes. Geography develops the ability to combine scientific principles with economic awareness, environmental concern and an appreciation and tolerance of peoples' attitudes and values.

You will explore places, peoples and cultures and learn to understand the interconnections and interactions between them, as well as being involved in the investigation of current issues. For example, should we defend the coast or allow natural processes to take their course? How should we approach the problems of climate change? Is it right that we subsidise every European Union beef cow with the equivalent of an annual round-the-world air fare?

You will look at a wide range of places and scales from the local through national to global.

There will be two written examination papers and it may be possible to take one of these in the summer term of the Fourth Form and another at the end of the Fifth Form.

Geography involves you going out on fieldwork. There will be several opportunities to leave the classroom, including a residential visit to Pen Arthur. There will be a short investigation to analyse, in class time only, using the data collected during the fieldwork. This is called the controlled assessment unit and is the third part of the new GCSE Geography exam.

There will be an opportunity to join an international trip at least once during the GCSE course. This would be optional and is not an exam requirement. In 2008, Fifth Form students went to Iceland.

<p><b><i>GEOGRAPHERS CAN:</i></b> <i>Make a concise report</i> <i>Handle data</i> <i>Ask questions and find the answers</i> <i>Make decisions about an issue</i> <i>Analyse material</i> <i>Manage themselves</i> <i>Solve problems</i> <i>Be independent thinkers</i></p>	<p><b><i>GEOGRAPHERS ARE:</i></b> <i>Good communicators</i> <i>Spatially aware</i> <i>Socially and environmentally aware</i> <i>Problem solvers</i> <i>Good team players</i> <i>Computer literate</i> <i>Well rounded, flexible thinkers</i></p>
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(source: RGS)

## HISTORY

### Examining Board: OCR (1937)

#### *Introduction*

The study of History offers unique opportunities within the GCSE curriculum. The subject provides an awareness of how the world we live in today was created and influences the way in which nations and institutions interact and affect one another. In addition it imparts the skills required to build upon that knowledge and develop further understanding of our society and how various sections of our own and other cultures may differ in their perspectives on the world.

#### *Aims of the Course:*

To enable pupils

- to acquire knowledge and understanding of the human past;
- investigate historical events, changes, peoples and issues;
- develop an understanding of how the past has been represented and interpreted;
- use historical sources critically in their historical context;
- draw conclusions and appreciate that these and other historical conclusions are liable to reassessment in the light of new or newly interpreted evidence.

#### *Course Content*

The course examines the twentieth century world. From World War I, the defining chapter of this century, we study the impact of the search for peace in the inter-war period and the failure of that search in the causes of World War II. Particularly close attention is paid to developments in the USA in this period and in Russia both before and after the Revolution. Candidates then examine the Cold War from 1945 to 1991, which in turn dominated global events in the post-war world as well as recent confrontations with terrorism.

#### *Assessment*

**Objective 1** To recall, select, organise and deploy knowledge of the syllabus content.

**Objective 2** To describe, analyse and explain

- the events, changes and issues studied.
- the key features and characteristics of the periods, people, societies or situations studied.

**Objective 3** In relation to the historical context, to comprehend, analyse, interpret and evaluate the events, peoples and issues studied using a wide range of sources of information of different types.

**Component 1** Paper 1 (2 hours) - 45% of total mark

Section A: Source-based questions on international relations between 1919 and 1939 and the Cold War of 1945 - 1991.

Section B: Structured questions on international relations between 1919 and 1939 and the Cold War of 1945 - 1991.

Section C: Structured questions on Russia 1905 - 1941.

**Component 2** Paper 2 (1 hour 30 mins) - 30% of total marks

A detailed, source-based investigation of a particular issue relating to changes in British society either from 1890-1918 or from 1939-75.

Candidates use their contextual knowledge to help them comprehend, interpret, evaluate and use the sources and historical information they are given.

**Component 3** Historical Enquiry - 25% of total marks. This will be a controlled assessment task set by the Board on a theme relating to topics such as The Role of the Individual in History or a thematic study in Twentieth Century History.

Each assignment is internally assessed, standardised across teaching groups and then externally moderated.

***Excursions***

A Battlefields Trip takes place during half term of the Spring Term in the Fourth Form. Although places are limited, candidates are strongly advised to experience an excursion which has an educational and cultural value reaching far beyond the assessment objectives of GCSE History.

## **MODERN LANGUAGES (FRENCH, GERMAN & SPANISH)**

**Examining Board: AQA (3651, 3661, 3691)**

### ***Aims of the courses***

- To foster an interest in the language and culture of the countries concerned.
- To promote an interest in language as an intellectual discipline.
- To increase pupils' confidence in the written and spoken language.
- To enable pupils to enjoy using languages.
- To provide a sound basis for A level for those candidates who wish to continue.

### ***Course Content***

Four skills (reading, listening, speaking and written coursework) are tested by examinations in the Spring and Summer of the Fifth Form. Listening and Reading are each worth 20%, Speaking and Writing 30% of the final grade. The Writing component consists of two pieces of coursework written under Controlled Conditions. We feel the written skill is the key one to develop since it forms a solid base for comprehension and expression in all the others. That said, listening, reading and speaking are constantly practised to achieve an overall balance. For the Speaking component candidates must submit two dialogues (performed with the class teacher), for which they will have been prepared in advance. The Listening and Reading components are assessed by final examination.

The subject content focuses on four principal areas, referred to as Contexts and Purposes. These are: Lifestyle, Leisure, Home and Environment, and Work and Education. Thus candidates will be expected to acquire a good range of relevant vocabulary in all these areas during the course (the text books and additional materials we issue contain all that might be needed, but candidates will be obliged to spend time learning the words independently and regularly during the course).

All pupils are issued with a textbook (***Encore Tricolore Nouvelle Edition, Logo!, Español Mundial 1, Mucha Suerte!***)

### ***Homework (2 forty - minute preps per week)***

Candidates can expect to produce at least one written piece of work in the foreign language each week and this will be marked. The other homework will frequently be a learning exercise of some sort (often vocabulary) and this will often be tested. Sometimes pupils may be required to work on a listening activity at home, or work on a reading comprehension exercise.

Half-term grades take account of the performance in homework and in class. Pupils' contribution to oral work, therefore, will always be significant.

### ***Special Features***

The demands placed on candidates opting for modern languages are similar, though it is worth pointing out that Spanish is a two-year course, so candidates who are already experiencing difficulty with French or German will be advised not to opt for an additional language unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Pupils are well served where trips and exchanges are concerned, and teaching staff are keen to promote these. There is no better way of boosting candidates' confidence in the language as well as giving them a useful cultural experience which can broaden their thinking and give a challenging new perspective on assumptions they have made about a particular country.

## MUSIC

### Examining Board: AQA

#### **Component 1      Listening to and Appraising Music**

20%            1 hour written examination

80 marks      Externally assessed.

Candidates explore five Areas of Study (*Rhythm & Metre; Harmony & Tonality; Texture & Melody; Timbre & Dynamics; Structure & Form*) through three strands of learning (*The Western Classical Tradition, Popular Music of the 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries, World Music*).

Assessment is through a terminal examination marked by AQA examiners. Candidates respond to questions based on short musical extracts drawing on music from all five Areas of Study.

*Students take this examination at the end of the Fourth Form and can re-take it in the Fifth.*

#### **Component 2      Composing and Appraising Music**

20%            Up to 20 hours Controlled Assessment for the composition and 2 hours controlled time for the appraisal

40 marks      Externally assessed

A: Candidates compose **ONE** piece of Music which explores TWO or more of the five areas of study and links to **ONE** of the three strands (**Western Classical tradition for 2011**).

B: Candidates appraise the process and outcome.

#### **Component 3      Performing Music**

40%            Controlled assessment

60 marks      Internally assessed and externally moderated

Candidates offer **one individual** and **one group performance**.

*Students take this examination at the end of the Fourth Form and can re-take it in the Fifth.*

#### **Component 4      Composing Music**

20%            25 hours controlled Assessment

30 marks      Candidates compose ONE piece of music which explores TWO or more of the five Areas of Study in any style or genre of the candidate's choosing.

## **RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

**Examining Board: OCR (J621)**

### ***Aims of the course:***

The Twenty-First Century is an exciting and challenging time in which to live. A greater awareness of different cultures, together with advances in science and technology, raises questions of identity (who we are), theology (what we can believe) and ethics (how we should behave). The Religious Studies GCSE affords students the opportunity to explore the important issues and ideas that have shaped our world. Students will not only attain a sound background knowledge in relevant areas of study; the course will also help them develop their critical skills and their ability to put forward their own arguments clearly.

### ***Assessment***

There is **no coursework**. Students sit four papers.

The four papers are:

Unit B601: Philosophy 1 (Ideas about God, Experience and Life after Death)

Unit B602: Philosophy 2 (Ideas about Good and Evil, Revelation and Science)

Unit B603: Ethics 1 (Questions of Relationships, Medical Ethics, Poverty and Wealth)

Unit B604: Ethics 2 (Questions of Peace and Justice, Equality and the Media)

Each paper is one hour long and worth 25% of the total mark.

### ***Course Content***

While students will be able to draw on a whole range of ideas the course is studied from a Christian perspective.

### **The Philosophy of Religion**

These papers focus on what people believe.

Unit B601 explores why some people believe in God, and what characteristics they believe that God to have. It also considers different claims about the plausibility of life after death and looks at modern debates about judgement, heaven and hell.

In Unit B602 students think about why a good God might allow evil to exist; the various responses to this dilemma will include discussions about the origins of evil, free will and conscience. They also examine religious and scientific views about the origins of the world and humanity, and looks at whether there is a conflict between those views.

## **Religious Ethics**

These papers concentrate on how people behave.

Unit B603 explores issues arising out of human relationships including marriage and divorce, and sex and contraception. It also focuses on the dilemmas that modern medicine encounters over issues such as euthanasia, abortion and cloning. Students will also analyse the possible causes of world poverty and attitudes to wealth.

Unit B604 examines the various responses to conflict and whether going to war can ever be justified. Students also explore attitudes to crime and punishment. This paper also explores the role of the media in influencing belief and behaviour, as well as examining the crucial question of equality both with regard to race and gender.