

### Departmental Frequently Asked Questions

Department	Question	Answer
<b>Art &amp; Design</b>	Are there written requirements?	Students will be expected to annotate their books explaining their thought processes and where necessary analysing the work of artists and designers.
<b>Art &amp; Design</b>	What specialisms are covered, is it just 2D?	All students are encouraged to explore and experiment with different media and processes including mixed media, painting, photography, 3D design and print making.
<b>Art &amp; Design</b>	Does my child need to be naturally gifted?	A good work ethic, ability to respond to feedback and a genuine passion for the subject is as important as talent.
<b>Computer Science</b>	Do you have to be able to program already?	Definitely not, there is enough time over the three years for us to teach you all of the programming skills you need to know.
<b>Computer Science</b>	Is it just programming?	At GCSE you have to move away from block programming languages like Scratch and Kodu to text based languages. The languages you learn are very similar to what you would use if you worked for Google or Facebook. At the moment we are using Visual Basic for the coursework (this may change to Python which more companies use), HTML (very basic) for the online exam and Java (through Greenfoot) for the online exam.
<b>Design and Technology : Built Environment ( constructuon)</b>	Built environment. 'What skills will we develop during the course?'	Tiling and Carpentry predominantly but you will learn about and experience in a number of trades.
<b>Design and Technology : Engineering</b>	Will there be lots of practical work?	In Year 9 we will be looking to develop your practical skills a lot, in readiness for the assessment in Unit 2. This will include lots of skills-based workshop projects that are designed to instill all the skills you will need to be successful in Year 11. However, in Year 9 we will also teach you how to communicate as engineers using industry standard drawing skills such as Isometric and 3rd Angle Orthographic (technical drawing).
<b>Design and Technology : Engineering</b>	Is there progression into the 6th Form?	Currently, there is no Level 3 (A Level) Engineering course that is offered by the WJEC (there is one in development). However, many of our current engineers go on the highly successful AS/A Level Product Design course where they produce coursework and projects based in the Engineering subject area. Many engineering students are currently doing exactly that, using their skills and knowledge to choose Engineering Design based projects and are very successful, attaining excellent grades and using the Product Design course to go into college and university engineering courses.
<b>Design and Technology : fashion and textiles</b>	What topics do you cover in Fashion and Textiles?	In-depth knowledge and understanding of natural , synthetic, blended and mixed fibres, and woven, non-woven and knitted textiles. New and emerging technologies such as market pull and technology push. Sustainability in the fashion industry. Past and present designers. Pattern cutting, lay plans, equipment and techniques. Smart materials. Construction techniques and finishes. Properties of materials. Surface pattern skills such as laser cutting, making your own patterns on materials, dyeing, beadwork and components.

<b>Design and Technology : fashion and Textiles</b>	What do you make and what skills do you learn?	<p>In year 9 you start mini projects on sustainable fashion which will lead to making a bag made out of recycled denim, you will learn skills such as using the sewing machine, the embroidery machine and the laser cutter for this task. You will practice design on a mannequin to make newspaper dresses. Then you make a corset, learning about fabric manipulation, structure and fastenings and techniques such as applique, tie dye and batik.</p> <p>In the second year you will make a hoodie and complete a mini NEA with a chosen brief in preparation for the final year.</p> <p>During all these projects you will learn skills such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Threading and using a sewing machine.</li> <li>Fabric manipulation.</li> <li>New and emerging technology and smart materials such as e-textiles and photochromic.</li> <li>Fashion design and sketching</li> <li>Sampling and making</li> <li>Surface pattern and texture.</li> </ul>
<b>Design and Technology : Food and Nutrition</b>	What is Food and Nutrition?	<p>The GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition course is an exciting and creative course which focuses on a range of practical skills to ensure students develop a thorough understanding of nutrition, food provenance and the working characteristics of food materials.</p> <p>There are five core topics: Food, Nutrition and Health, Food Science, Food Safety, Food Choice and Food Provenance.</p>
<b>Design and Technology : Food and Nutrition</b>	What skills will I learn?	<p>Food GCSE provides the perfect mix of academic study, countered by the reward of putting research and development into practice through cooking: almost 50% of lessons on the course are practical, making products such as Bread, Fresh Pasta, Pastries, Sauces, Desserts and so much more.....</p>
<b>Design and Technology : Health and Social Care and Child Care</b>	What skills do learners develop?	<p>Learners will develop and apply knowledge, understanding and skills to issues in a range of health and social care, and childcare contexts.</p> <p>While actively engaging in the study of health and social care, and childcare to develop as effective and independent, and as critical and reflective thinkers.</p> <p>Learners will also discover the impacts of health and social care, and childcare services on wider society consider how health and social care, and childcare practice should be ethical and support a sustainable health and care system develop and apply skills relevant to health and social care, and childcare including using and interpreting data develop an awareness of career pathways available within the health and social care, and childcare sector.</p>
<b>Design and Technology : Health and Social Care and Child Care</b>	What is the examination and coursework weighting?	<p>Single award</p> <p>Unit 1: Human growth, development and well-being Written examination: 1 hour 30 min 40%</p> <p>Unit 2: Promoting and maintaining health and well-being Non-exam assessment: approximately 25 hours 60% of Single Award qualification</p>
<b>Design and Technology : Product Design</b>	I'd like to take product design but I dont think I'm very good at drawing.'	<p>All skills for design and presentation aspects are taught in Year 9 and 10. Along with the practical skills you will need for your assessed design and make task in Year 11.</p>

<b>Design and Technology : Product Design</b>	What is Product Design?	Product design is about teaching the skills required to solve everyday problems. Understanding how products we all use are designed and developed from start to finish, We aim to get you to design in a way that is about improving every day experiences. You will learn about materials and their properties and applications. You will study other designers and companies as well as considering the environmental aspects relating to the design and use of our products.
<b>Digital Technology</b>	What is the difference between Digital Technology and Computer Science?	Digital Technology is about using computer programs, Computer Science is about making them. You can think of it like the difference between learning to drive (Digital Technology) and becoming an engineer to make or fix cars (Computer Science). This does not mean that Digital Technology is less important (far more people use computer programs than make them) but it does mean that people who enjoy Computer Science tend to also enjoy subjects like Maths, Science, etc.
<b>Digital Technology</b>	If I enjoy this course can I study it in more detail in the sixth form?	This specification provides a suitable foundation for the study of the new Digital Technology AS and A level.
<b>French</b>	Is it much harder than the work we have been doing in Year 8?	Of course the work gets harder but we build on your skills gradually and give you time to learn and practise. By the middle of Year 9 you should be able to produce work of GCSE standard, giving us plenty of time to ensure you can reach your potential by the end of Year 11.
<b>French</b>	What makes a good GCSE student in French?	You must be interested in the language and how it works. It also helps if you are curious about how people live in France and other French-speaking countries. In class you should enjoy having a go and enjoy constructing things to say or write. It is really important that you don't mind getting things wrong – that is a crucial part of learning a language! The best linguists try ambitious things, laugh at their own mistakes and learn from them. Remember, all your French teachers have learnt another language!
<b>French</b>	Is it a good idea to do both French and German GCSE?	Of course it is! If you are enjoying both languages this year, it is a good idea to continue with both into Year 9. We have plenty of students every year who thrive on studying 2 languages. The skills needed are the same in both languages.
<b>Geography</b>	Does Geography compliment other subjects?	Geography allows you to learn and develop many transferable skills which can be applied to almost any other subject. You of course develop your literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, but because of the nature of the subject you also get to develop skills like teamwork, creativity, problem solving, debating and communication, organisation and management and research and analysis, as well as many more. These invaluable skills will not only be useful now to support you in your other chosen subjects, but also in the future after your school education, as colleges, universities and employers value the skills developed in Geography.
<b>Geography</b>	Is there fieldwork?	Yes. Part of the course requires you to undertake fieldwork. This is where we go and study different environments, for example Cardiff or Porthcawl. Pupils will build their geographical skills and understanding whilst working in teams and in the outdoors. Please note that at the time of writing, fieldwork has been suspended to adhere to guidelines in relation to COVID-19.
<b>Geography</b>	Why is Geography a good option to pick?	Geography is a subject that is interesting and exciting. We study topics that are relevant to the world today and for your future. The skills and knowledge that are developed will compliment other subject areas. Geography is a subject that is looked at favourably with Universities and employers when you either continue studying or enter the world of employment.

<b>Geology</b>	How can I find out more about Geology?	<u>The answer is here</u> <a href="https://youtu.be/t199NnXFRC8">https://youtu.be/t199NnXFRC8</a>
<b>German</b>	I only started learning German in Year 8. Will that mean I won't get a good grade at GCSE?	Not at all. You'll have double the amount of lessons in Year 9 as in Year 8 so we are able to cover a lot more of the topics and language. There is plenty of time to develop your German in all 4 skills.
<b>German</b>	What makes a good GCSE student in German?	You must be interested in the language and how it works. It also helps if you are curious about how people live in Germany and other German-speaking-countries. In class you should enjoy having a go and enjoy constructing things to say or write. It is really important that you don't mind getting things wrong – that is a crucial part of learning a language! The best linguists try ambitious things, laugh at their own mistakes and learn from them.
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<b>History</b>	Is there a lot of writing in History?	History is a super literacy subject and therefore essay writing skills are required. You will be supported with writing frames as you develop your examination technique.
<b>History</b>	Will I enjoy History GCSE?	If you've enjoyed History in year 8 then you will thoroughly enjoy the GCSE course. We study modern and relevant topics such as USA in the 1920s and the Second World War and the rise of Nazism. Topics such as Civil Rights have links to current society and will provide you with a greater understanding of problems in the world today.
<b>History</b>	How will my learning be supported?	You will be fully supported throughout the course with essay plans, model answers, writing frames and knowledge organisers. Additional revision lesson are timetabled before the exam.
<b>Music</b>	Do I need to pass any grades on an instrument to take GCSE Music?	No - the WJEC GCSE Music course is purposely designed to suit the 'classroom musician', so you do not need to have passed any grades to take GCSE Music. However, it is advised that you should be playing pieces of around a Grade 3 standard when you are in Year 11.
<b>Music</b>	Do you need to learn more than one instrument to be successful at GCSE?	Not at all - you can specialise on one instrument for GCSE Music.
<b>Music</b>	Are there any elements of the exam that would require me to collaborate with others?	In Year 9 Music, there are opportunities to perform and compose in groups. We also encourage independent creativity to prepare you for GCSE Music.
<b>PE</b>	How many sports do I need?	You need to choose three sports from the approved WJEC sports list (found in the programme of study booklet). You need at least one individual sport and one team sport.
<b>PE</b>	My sport is not completed in school but is on the approved list. How will I be assessed? E.g. Horse riding, swimming, etc.	You will be assessed using a short video that you will be responsible for recording. However, your class teacher will help you prepare by discussing the content to include and sharing the marking assessment for your sport with you. All practical sports are assessed using the assessment criteria provided by the WJEC. Marks are submitted to the WJEC prior to moderation. Sport specific assessment criteria can be found on p14 of the link- <a href="https://www.wjec.co.uk/media/0p0o3nqu/wjec-gcse-physical-education-spec-from-2016-e.pdf">https://www.wjec.co.uk/media/0p0o3nqu/wjec-gcse-physical-education-spec-from-2016-e.pdf</a>

<b>PE</b>	I participate/ compete in my sport at school. How will I be assessed?	<p>You will be assessed using the internal moderation process, which will require you to perform in your chosen activity; e.g. warm up, drills and game.</p> <p>The moderation will take place between March and May of the year of examination (Y11). The WJEC will decide on activities and candidates to be seen at moderation. It will be a representative sample of the practical activities offered.</p> <p>All practical sports are assessed using the assessment criteria provided by the WJEC. Marks are submitted to the WJEC prior to moderation. Assessment criteria can be found on p14 <a href="https://www.wjec.co.uk/media/0p0o3nqu/wjec-gcse-physical-education-spec-from-2016-e.pdf">https://www.wjec.co.uk/media/0p0o3nqu/wjec-gcse-physical-education-spec-from-2016-e.pdf</a></p>
<b>Performing Arts</b>	How do grades work with this course?	On a BTEC course you achieve individual criteria at Pass, Merit or Distinction for your assessments. You will receive a Pass, Merit or Distinction grade for completed units and then one of these four grades will be awarded for the whole course.
<b>Performing Arts</b>	My child has a specific interest in the performing arts, can she/he study a specialism such as design/makeup/lighting? Do I have to sing and dance?	The beauty of this course is that we can tailor it to the needs of our pupils! After completing mandatory units, Pearson, our examination board, allows us to choose optional units that meet the needs and interests of our pupils. If a pupil has specific interest in one aspect of the performing arts, it may be possible to study additional units. This course offers the opportunity for students to study and learn in all aspects of Performing Arts. We expect our students to give everything a go but would never force students to perform as a solo performer in a discipline that they do not feel comfortable with.
<b>Performing Arts</b>	I am not a confident person, does this matter?	No, the beauty of Performing Arts is that it develops your confidence along with many social skills. Many students choose our subject to put them out of their comfort zone and become more confident in public speaking and group work interactions.
<b>Science</b>	What is the difference between Double Award and Triple Science courses?	<p>The Triple Award course builds upon the content in the DA and has a few more topics to study for each of the three sciences.</p> <p>There are 9 lesson each fortnight for DA whereas the Triple course has 15 lesson each fortnight. At the end of the DA course, the exams are combined together and pupils are awarded 2 GCSE grades in Science, whereas, in the Triple course the 3 subjects are kept separate and pupils are awarded 3 individual grades for Biology, Chemistry and Physics.</p>
<b>Science</b>	If I take Double Award science can I then go on to study one of the A level sciences?	Yes, the Double Award does allow you to progress to the AS courses in each of the Sciences. However, it is a bigger step up to the AS course from Double Award and pupils tend to find it more of a challenge initially in the sixth form.
<b>Sociology</b>	Is there a lot of writing in Sociology?	There are a mixture of questions on the paper, ranging from short knowledge based responses to essay questions. You will need to construct arguments and there are several extended answers in Sociology, therefore essay writing skills are required.
<b>Sociology</b>	Will there be a lot of debates?	Yes, the subject is highly relevant and involves contemporary debates regarding topics such as inequalities in society and the causes of crime.
<b>Sociology</b>	What skills will I learn?	Sociology provides you with a wide range of skills such as analysis, research, weighing up evidence and being able to evaluate different perspectives.