



Colchester  
High School

**GCSE Courses Handbook  
2022-2024**

Your Gateway to an Exciting Future



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## **MESSAGE FROM ASSISTANT HEAD TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I am sure over ensuing weeks you will find this booklet, together with the presentation that will be sent home an invaluable resource to help guide you through the process of choosing GCSE Options.

The most important aspect of this process is that pupils are able to make informed choices which will benefit their future pathways. Therefore, we will be holding an Options Day on the 25 January for all Year 9 pupils. This will involve, talks, workshops, and career talks with our career partners at SPW Careers.

In addition to this, there will be a presentation sent home to parents which highlight some of the key information about the options process and will provide knowledge on each of the GCSE courses so that pupils can make informed decisions.

Following this, Parents' Evening will then be held on Wednesday 23 February so that you may discuss your child's progress this academic year and the and their possible option choices. More information regarding this evening will follow shortly.

Yours faithfully,

Harriet Croydon  
Assistant Head, Teaching and Learning

# INTRODUCTION TO GCSE COURSES & CURRICULUM IN YEARS 10 & 11

## INTRODUCTION

In September 2022, your child will be entering Year 10 for the fourth year of secondary education and will be commencing courses which build on the previous three years' work. The courses offered at Colchester High School lead to the examinations for the Key Stage 4 General Certificate of Secondary Education, the final sessions of which, for your child, take place in the Summer of 2024.

As is the practice in the majority of secondary schools, a number of subject options must be made by the end of Year 9 in order to produce a curriculum of examination subjects. Pupils at Colchester High School will study the core subjects of English, Mathematics, Science, PE & Games and PSHCE.

Colchester High School requires Year 10 and 11 pupils to follow a range of subjects which is as broadly based and as balanced as possible, mixing the Humanities, the Sciences and the Arts. The options on offer (as appearing in this booklet) have been chosen to reflect this broad-based curriculum. At Colchester High School, we believe it is vital your son/daughter receives the impartial advice and guidance that will ensure the right choices are made.

However, it is important to note that most Universities and employers continue to expect pupils to engage in a wide range of subjects which reflect their own personal abilities and interests. Furthermore, all of these subjects are of the same academic standard and rigour. It is our aim to ensure course choices suit pupil needs, are enjoyable, and provide for success.

## THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM and GCSE

The General Certificate of Secondary Education remains the main means of assessment at the end of Key Stage 4. In almost all secondary schools, the GCSE is the principal 'passport' for the majority of 16 year olds to further education and employment. The specifications of most subjects have undergone changes in recent years. Educational reform has resulted in a new system whereby candidates are now rated using a 9-1 grading system, the purpose of which has been to differentiate between higher ability candidates. Where tiered entry remains, the choice of entry tier is decided on the basis of the teacher's professional opinion and in conjunction with internal assessment evidence.

The grading system and tiered entry system can be confusing, and as such, you are recommended to discuss it with staff during the Options Evening.

## FURTHER EDUCATION

Whatever pathway pupils from Colchester High School choose post Year 11, it is important that both medium and long term goals are considered, in order to ensure every opportunity for a smooth transition from school, to eventual employment.

## HOMEWORK AND TRIAL GCSE EXAMINATIONS

Homework continues throughout Years 10 and 11 as a vital adjunct to all subjects, although the form that it takes and the timescale provided for it is often very different from the Key Stage 3 approach. For some subjects there will be long term projects, for which much research and collation of information will be necessary.

Constant 'topping-up' of knowledge and/or skills is necessary to minimise the last minute pressure before the final examinations, and it is hoped that parents/guardians will be able to continue to monitor their child's homework on a daily basis.

Pupils take Trial GCSE examinations in November/December of Year 11; the conditions for which reflect, as much as possible, those which will be experienced in the final external examinations. Estimated grades obtained from the trial examinations are sent to places of further education as part of the application and selection process. Additionally, some pupils may be taking subjects which require them to sit Non Examinations Assessments (NEA) throughout Years 10 and/or 11 – any such requirements should be discussed with subject teachers prior to starting the course.

## **TEXTBOOK AND EXAMINATION FEES**

Textbooks and portfolios (for Art, Craft and Design) for the individual courses must be purchased by the pupil at an additional cost. Information regarding the cost of the books, and/or portfolios will be sent home in the Summer Term. These can be purchased over the summer holidays in readiness for the new academic year. If pupils change a course, then pupils will have to purchase their new books at an additional cost.

Entrance fees for public examinations and an administration fee are invoiced separately in the Summer Term, prior to the start of the examination period in May/June. This is an established practice of schools in the Independent Sector, and has been the case at Colchester High School for a number of years.

## **CORE CURRICULUM**

The following subjects will be taught to all pupils:

- English (and English Literature)**
- Mathematics**
- Science**
- Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship & Economic Education (Non Exam)**
- Physical Education (Non Exam)**

The Colchester High School Leadership Team continue to explore new courses and qualifications (core and option choices) to ensure the best possible provision and pupil outcomes. Consequently, occasionally some course details may change. This would, however, be communicated to parents and guardians.

## **PUPIL CHOICE**

Pupils need to talk to Subject teachers and parents in order to ensure informed decisions are made. To make suitable informed choices, all available information should be considered alongside strengths, current grades, personal interests and aspirations. When choosing courses to study, the following is a brief list of what is considered best practice, and what is not.

DO:

- choose courses you think you will enjoy
- choose courses in which you have an interest
- choose a range of different courses, so that you have a broad base from which to make post-16 choices
- draw up a short list of option subjects, and have a reserve list
- read the subject information on the next few pages and then ask the advice of your Subject teachers, Phase Leader and members of the Senior Leadership Team.
- discuss it with your parents/guardians
- give as much thought to the subjects you choose since it is very difficult to change course once you have started.

DEFINITELY DON'T:

- choose a course because your friends have chosen it
- allow either like or dislike of particular teachers to influence your choice
- choose a course because you think it might be easy
- choose a course because your parents want you to study it, after all, it is you who has to complete the work
- make a decision in a hurry and without due thought
- fail to pursue any subject you may want to study after Year 11
- fail to pursue any subject you may require for entry to a particular occupation or course of further study.

# NOTES

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERATURE

## How will I benefit from this course?

English is invaluable for your future, no matter what you are aiming for. A good command of the spoken and written word will help you every day of your life. Whatever you end up doing, English is essential for college, university, work, and life!

## Desirable skills to succeed

You should demonstrate a confident control of Standard English and you should be able to write grammatically correct sentences, deploy figurative language, writing appropriately for audience and purpose.

## Teaching and Learning

The English Language and Literature course will enable you with the ability to read, critically evaluate a wide range of fiction and nonfiction fluently, so that you are able to discuss and appreciate a wide range of texts showing a good understanding. In the process you will acquire a wide vocabulary, including grammatical terminology, and other literary and linguistic terms.

## GCSE English Language

You will read and be assessed on high-quality, challenging texts from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. The texts, across a range of genres and types, will support you in developing your own writing by providing effective models. The texts will include literature and extended literary nonfiction, and other writing such as essays, reviews and journalism.

## English Language Examination Summary:

<b>Fiction and Imaginative Writing Paper 1 – 1hour 45 minutes (40%)</b>	<b>Non-fiction and Transactional Writing Paper 2 – 2 hours 5 mins (60%)</b>
<p><b>Section A:</b> Unseen 19th Century Fiction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Extract will be approximately 650 words in length</li><li>◆ Shorter response questions will focus on close analysis of the text; longer response questions will ask you to show their understanding of the whole text</li></ul> <p><b>Section B:</b> Creative Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Choice of two tasks linked to the theme of the 19th century fiction</li><li>◆ One task will include images to help you address the task</li></ul>	<p><b>Section A:</b> Comparison of two unseen texts from 20th and 21st century</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ One non-fiction; one literary non-fiction</li><li>◆ Extracts will be approximately 1000 words in total</li><li>◆ Shorter response questions will focus on close reading of the texts; longer response questions will ask you to compare the texts</li></ul> <p><b>Section B:</b> Transactional writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Choice of two tasks linked to the theme of the texts</li><li>◆ Newspaper articles, letters, leaflets etc.</li><li>◆ Audience and purpose along with SPaG will be assessed</li></ul>

## Spoken language

You are required to: listen to and understand spoken language, and use spoken Standard English effectively. This is through the presentation of ideas and information, expressing opinions, and listening and responding to questions and feedback. Spoken language will be reported on as part of the qualification, but it will not form part of the final mark and grade.

# NOTES



## GCSE English Literature

You will study a range of high quality, intellectually challenging, and substantial whole texts in detail, including a play by Shakespeare, a 19th century novel, a selection of poetry since 1789, and fiction or drama from the British Isles from 1914 onwards.

### English Literature Examination Summary

<p><b>Shakespeare and Post 1914 Literature</b> <b>Paper 1 – 1 hour 45 minutes (50%)</b></p> <p><b>Section A:</b> Shakespeare play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Two questions</li><li>◆ One based on a 30-line extract and one on the whole play</li></ul> <p><b>Section B:</b> Post-1914 British Drama</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Choice of essay questions</li><li>◆ SPaG assessed</li></ul>	<p><b>19<sup>th</sup> century Novel and Poetry since 1789</b> <b>Paper 2 – 2 hours 15 minutes (50%)</b></p> <p><b>Section A:</b> 19th Century Fiction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Two questions</li><li>◆ One based on a 400-word extract and one on the whole novel</li></ul> <p><b>Section B:</b> Poetry – Chosen cluster and unseen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ One question comparing one named poem from the anthology with another of the pupil's choice from the collection (from memory). You need to comment on context.</li><li>◆ One question comparing two unseen contemporary poems</li></ul>
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### What post-16 choices would benefit from this subject?

Entry onto A Level English Language or Literature course, including many other A Level courses require a GCSE Level 6 or above, and many college courses require a GCSE Level 4 as a minimum. You will be expected to resit grades below a good pass.

### What might this course lead to in the future?

English graduates have been known to become a: Sports Journalist, Lawyer, Film Director, Public Relations Executive, Fashion Journalist, Author, Newsreader, Politician, Actor, Architect, Creative Director, Scriptwriter, Teacher, Customer Service, Retail and many, many more!

### Personal benefits

GCSE English Language and Literature are invaluable for your future no matter what you are aiming for. The skills you will learn in analysing texts and making inferences about authorial choice will help you every day – and benefit any place of higher learning attended. GCSE English Language or Literature will help you to think logically, work independently and communicate ideas with confidence.

### Who to contact for further advice or information

If you want to know more, then please speak to any member of the English Department who will be happy to help with your query.

Ms. Ritson, Head of English

# NOTES

# MATHEMATICS



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## How will I benefit from this course?

Your numeracy skills will increase as you progress through this subject. Without doubt, accomplished mathematical skills are vital in virtually all walks of life and a good pass in the subject is vital for A Level and tertiary education.

## Desirable skills to succeed

Mathematics is a compulsory subject and a determination to succeed in this subject leads to personal triumphs, and endless opportunities which can be opened up as a result. The problem solving skills gained are of benefit across the whole curriculum, in future studies and in employment.

## Teaching and Learning

The content of the GCSE Mathematics course has already commenced during Year 9. Pupils already have their GCSE textbook and have used Mathswatch and Mathspad which cover the entire syllabus. Pupils will be entered for Higher (with greater content and leading to grades 9-4) or Foundation Tier (leading to grades 5-1). Whatever the level of entry our pupils decide to take, the **aims and objectives** of the course for all our pupils are the same, allowing pupils the opportunity to develop skills and competency in many areas of Mathematics.

## Examination Summary

<b>Paper 1 (33<math>\frac{1}{3}</math>%)</b>	<b>Paper 2 (33<math>\frac{1}{3}</math>%)</b>	<b>Paper 3 (33<math>\frac{1}{3}</math>%)</b>
Non-calculator	Calculator	Calculator
Foundation 1hr 30 mins Higher 1hr 30 mins	Foundation 1hr 30 mins Higher 1hr 30 mins	Foundation 1hr 30 mins Higher 1hr 30 mins

## What post-16 choices would benefit from studying this subject?

An A Level in Mathematics or Further Mathematics would be the natural choice for those who are outstanding, although *everyone* needs a minimum of a grade 4 or 5 in Mathematics to progress into further study or training after GCSEs. We strongly recommend that unless a grade 7, 8 or 9 is achieved at this level, the pupil pursues a subject other than Mathematics at AS or A Level.

## What might this course lead to in the future? Not limited to:

Accountancy, Actuarial Sciences, Aerospace & Defence, Automotive, Biosciences, Business Support Services, Chemicals, Data Science, Economics, Education, Engineering, Environment, Exploration, Geophysics, Finance, Government, Medicine and Healthcare, Insurance, IT & Computing, Manufacturing, Operational Research, Academic/Scientific Research Telecoms, Transport/Travel.

## Personal benefits

Unquestionably, mathematical competency is of benefit in virtually every aspect of life. Mastering mathematical skills will provide excellent foundations for securing a place at a post 16 provider, when applying for continued academic study, apprenticeships and ultimately, employment.

## Who to contact for further advice or information

Mrs Hewes, Head of Mathematics

**Please Note:** the level of entry need not be decided until after the Trial Examinations which are sat in November/December preceding external examination. The decision is a joint decision which is made after consultation between parents, staff and pupils. CHS follows the Edexcel syllabus. Entry may be at the Higher Tier or at the Foundation Tier.

# NOTES

# SCIENCE



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## How will I benefit from this course?

Pupils develop an understanding of the material world. Scientific understanding is changing our lives and is vital to the world's future prosperity. Our aim is to engage pupils to stimulate excitement and help them to develop curiosity about the natural world, thereby giving them an insight into how science works and to appreciate its relevance to their everyday lives.

## Desirable skills to succeed

The majority of pupils will be entered for the Combined Science GCSE. To succeed, candidates must demonstrate good practical, literacy and problem solving skills. At least 15% of the examination will assess GCSE standard mathematical skills, and approximately 15% will be focused on practical skills

## Teaching and Learning

Pupils have access to a comprehensive text book covering all of the topics of study in detail. Practical work is a very important aspect in science and learners will need to complete compulsory practical activities set by the exam board. These will be assessed in the written examination papers.

## Examination summary

Combined Science (2 GCSEs)	Separate Science (3 GCSEs)
This is a linear course with all examinations taken during Summer 2022.	This is a linear course with all examinations taken during Summer 2022.
The examination is based on six papers covering the content from all three sciences.	Two examination papers will assess each science, giving a total of six papers.
Each paper will be approximately 1 hour 10 minutes.	Each paper will be approximately 1 hour 45 minutes.

## What post 16 choices would benefit from this subject?

Combined Science helps to demonstrate analytical and logical skills which would be of use in many A Level courses including Biology, Chemistry & Physics. It is also required for Level 3 vocational qualifications in Science, e.g. BTEC Level 3 in Applied Science and apprenticeships in science-based industry.

## What might this course lead to in the future?

Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacology, Engineering, Marine Biology, Radiotherapy, Sports Science, Physiotherapy, Teaching, Forensics, Veterinary Medicine, Astrophysics, Ophthalmology, Environmental Sciences and Genetics.

## Personal benefits

In depth understanding of science, development of transferable skills, and development of the ability to work both independently and in teams.

## Who to contact for further advice and information

Mrs Rose, Head of Science

## Summary

Combined: 6 x 1 hour 10 minute written papers

Separate: 6 x 1 hour 45 minute written papers

# NOTES

# HISTORY



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## How will I benefit from this course?

GCSE History offers an opportunity to study both International and British History. There are opportunities to study history from a variety of perspectives, including political, social, economic and cultural; thereby helping candidates to appreciate the diversity of the societies studied and the experiences of the people in these societies. It also provides the opportunity to enable pupils to study different aspects of the past, so they can engage with key issues such as conflict, understand what drives change and how the past influences the present.

## Desirable Skills

Candidates choosing this subject need outstanding literacy skills as well as the ability to understand sources and have an interest in politics.

## Teaching and Learning

Pupils will be issued with a textbook, handbooks and have access to a variety of resources across the department. There is also the opportunity to travel to Germany in Year 10 so pupils can gain a better understanding of the issues studied.

## Examination Summary

Exam Paper 1: Understanding the Modern World	Exam Paper 2: Shaping the Nation
2 hours: (50%)	2 hours: (50%)
84 marks including 4 marks for SPAG	84 marks
Section A: 1B Germany 1890-1945: Democracy and dictatorship: 6 compulsory questions Section B: Conflict and tension between East and West, 1945-1972: 4 compulsory questions	Section A: 2A Britain: Health and the People: 4 compulsory questions Section B: Norman England: 4 compulsory questions

## What post 16 choices would benefit from this subject?

History is an adaptable subject and is useful for most post 16 courses. If you plan on studying History, Archaeology, Law or Politics, you would benefit from taking History at GCSE.

## What might this course lead to in the future?

History graduates have been known to go into Journalism, Politics, Law, Teaching, Museum Curation, Archivism, the Tourist Industry, Archaeology, TV and Media or become a Historian.

## Personal benefits

In depth understanding of the key issues and concepts studied allow the development of a variety of transferable skills.

## Who to contact for further advice and information

Mrs Brindley, Head of Humanities

# NOTES



# GEOGRAPHY



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## How will I benefit from this course?

Understanding of: tectonic, geomorphological, biological and meteorological processes; the need for management strategies governed by sustainability; direct and indirect effects of human interaction with the Earth and atmosphere. Additionally, an understanding of factors that produce a diverse variety of human environments; the nature of these environments that change over time and place; the need for sustainable management.

## Desirable skills to succeed

Geographical skills including: cartographic, graphical, numerical, statistical skills. Ordnance Survey (OS) maps or other map extracts may be used in any of the three exams.

## Teaching and Learning

All pupils are issued with a comprehensive text book, and have access to a variety of resources. Field studies are very important aspects of this subject and pupils should be prepared to get fully involved.

## Examination summary

<b>Paper 1: Living with the physical environment</b>	<b>Paper 2: Challenges in the human environment</b>	<b>Paper 3: Geographical applications</b>
<b>How it's assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes (35%)</li><li>• 88 marks (including 3 marks for SPaG)</li></ul>	<b>How it's assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes (35%)</li><li>• 88 marks (including 3 marks for SPaG)</li></ul>	<b>How it's assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes (30%)</li><li>• 76 marks (including 6 marks for SPaG)</li><li>• Pre-release resources booklet made available 12 weeks before Paper 3 exam</li></ul>
<b>Questions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Section A: (33 marks)</li><li>• Section B: (25 marks)</li><li>• Section C: (30 marks)</li></ul> Question types: multiple-choice, short answer, levels of response, extended prose.	<b>Questions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Section A: (33 marks)</li><li>• Section B: (30 marks)</li><li>• Section C: (25 marks)</li></ul> Question types: multiple-choice, short answer, levels of response, extended prose.	<b>Questions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Section A: (37 marks)</li><li>• Section B: (39 marks)</li></ul> Question types: multiple-choice, short answer, levels of response, extended prose.

## What post-16 choices would benefit from choosing this subject?

If you wish to study A Level Geography, studying it at GCSE will equip you with the necessary skills. Many of the skills developed could be applied to the Social Sciences at A Level.

## What might this course lead to in the future?

There has never been a better or more important time to study Geography. With growing interest in issues such as climate change, migration, environmental degradation, and social cohesion, Geography is one of the most relevant subjects you could choose to study. It is also helpful for the Civil Service, Teaching, Meteorology, Tourism, Town Planning, and Military careers among many others.

## Personal benefits

Pupils will develop intellectual skills, such as research skills, using a range of technical methods for the collection and analysis of spatial and environmental data, and undertaking fieldwork. They will also develop transferable skills, such as teamwork and problem solving.

## Who to contact for further advice and information

Mrs Brindley, Head of Humanities

# NOTES

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES



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## How will I benefit from this course?

Pupils will be challenged with questions about belief, values, meaning, purpose and truth enabling them to develop their own attitudes towards religious issues. Pupils will also gain an appreciation of how religion, philosophy and ethics form the basis of our culture. They will develop analytical and critical thinking skills, the ability to work with abstract ideas, leadership and research skills. All these skills will help prepare them for further study.

## Desirable skills to succeed

Success in this subject comes with developing and demonstrating a range of skills: debating, researching, understanding, compassion, empathy, literacy.

## Teaching and Learning

All pupils are issued with comprehensive text books, and through a variety of teaching and learning activities, lessons are engaging and lead to excellent outcomes.

## Examination summary

<p><b>Component 1: The study of religions: beliefs, teachings and practices</b></p> <p>The beliefs, teachings and practices of: Christianity Islam</p> <p><b>How it's assessed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes</li><li>• 50% of GCSE</li></ul>	<p><b>Component 2: Thematic Studies– 4 religious, philosophical and ethical studies themes out of a possible 6</b></p> <p>Theme A: Relationships and families. Theme B: Religion and life. Theme C: The existence of God and revelation. Theme D: Religion, peace and conflict. Theme E: Religion, crime and punishment. Theme F: Religion, human rights and social justice.</p> <p><b>How it's assessed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes</li><li>• 50% of GCSE</li></ul>
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## What post-16 choices would benefit from choosing this subject?

Possibly going on to higher education to study courses including Religious Studies, Theology, Philosophy, Law, Sociology and the Social Sciences.

## What might this course lead to in the future?

Religious Studies develops higher order thinking skills. These skills are in demand in a variety of career paths. This subject will help you to have a good understanding of what people believe and why and to understand motivations and attitudes. This will help you in any career which deals with the public for example, law, social work, medicine, civil service, education and catering to name a few examples.

## Personal benefits

Develop critical and evaluative skills enabling pupils to: identify, investigate and analyse questions and issues; interpret and evaluate religious concepts; communicate, using reasoned arguments substantiated by evidence; make connections between the areas of study linked to human experience.

## Who to contact for further advice and information

Mrs Brindley, Head of Humanities

## Summary:

Exams: 2 written long papers taken in Year 11

Theory: 100%    Controlled assessment: 0%

# NOTES

# FRENCH



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## How will I benefit from this course?

Knowing a foreign language is a valuable skill that is becoming increasingly rare among pupils in the UK and consequently ever more attractive to prospective employers. Studying French will demonstrate you are determined and good at communicating, and that you can think logically as well as creatively and can solve problems. It shows you are open to other cultures and tolerant of diversity. Language GCSEs are highly regarded by UK universities because they demonstrate pupils' commitment to hard work. It is advised that pupils only select one language.

## Desirable skills to succeed

You will need good literacy skills and a willingness to do repetitive learning and memorization, as well as an interest in people and societies.

## Teaching and Learning

GCSE French focuses on the skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing which pupils practise through exposure to authentic spoken and written language on the topics of Family and Relationships, Technology, Education, Leisure and Hobbies, Local Area, Travel and Tourism, Social Issues, Environment, Global Areas of Interest and Work.

## Examination summary

<b>Speaking 25%</b> Approx. 10 mins; recorded. 3 tasks: role-play; picture-stimulus discussion; conversation (two themes: one prepared / one unseen)	<b>Writing 25%</b> Foundation 60 mins Higher 75 mins Two (H) or three (F) open-response questions and translation into French
<b>Listening Comprehension 25%</b> Foundation Tier: 35 minutes Higher Tier: 45 minutes	<b>Reading Comprehension 25%</b> Foundation Tier: 45 minutes Higher Tier: 60 minutes Includes translation into English

## What post-16 choices would benefit from choosing this subject?

French enhances any area of Humanities, with its inherent focus on literacy and with centuries of historical, geographical and religious links between our countries. But research also shows that learning a language develops parts of the brain other subjects do not reach, improving skills in unrelated areas. So French works just as well in combination with mathematics or science-based subjects which demand pattern recognition and thinking outside the box.

## What might this course lead to in the future?

French is the only language other than English that is spoken on five continents; it is the second most used language on the internet; and it has a long history in international affairs as an official language in the UN, NATO, International Red Cross and the International Olympics Committee. Closer to home, the UK does the vast majority of its business with its immediate European neighbours, so linguists are in high demand in the world of commerce.

## Personal benefits

Speaking a foreign language will make you stand out from the crowd. Be prepared to be challenged and frustrated, but also gratified when you master a skill that can be used for life. Languages develop communication skills, memory, adaptability, logical thinking and confidence.

## Don't pick this if

You are not keen on words or are not good at motivating yourself to learn on a regular basis.

## Who to contact for further advice and information

Mrs. Brown, Head of Modern Foreign Languages

# NOTES

# SPANISH



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## How will I benefit from this course?

Knowing a foreign language is a valuable skill that is becoming increasingly rare among pupils in the UK and consequently ever more attractive to prospective employers. Spanish is spoken in 23 countries and by over 300 million people worldwide. By learning the language you show you are persistent and curious about the world, and have developed skills in multi-tasking and performing under pressure. Language GCSEs are highly regarded by UK universities because they demonstrate pupils' commitment to hard work. It is advised that pupils only select one language.

## Desirable skills to succeed

You will need good literacy skills and a willingness to do repetitive learning and memorization, as well as an interest in people and societies.

## Teaching and Learning

GCSE Spanish focuses on the skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing which pupils practise through exposure to authentic spoken and written language on the topics of Education, Travel and Tourism, Holidays, Work, Hobbies, Family and Relationships, Technology, Social Issues, International Events and the Environment.

## Examination summary

<b>Speaking 25%</b> Approx. 10 mins; recorded. 3 tasks: role-play; picture-stimulus discussion; conversation (two themes: one prepared / one unseen)	<b>Writing 25%</b> Foundation 60 mins Higher 75 mins Two (H) or three (F) open-response questions and translation into Spanish
<b>Listening Comprehension 25%</b> Foundation Tier: 35 minutes Higher Tier: 45 minutes	<b>Reading Comprehension 25%</b> Foundation Tier: 45 minutes Higher Tier: 60 minutes Includes translation into English

## What post-16 choices would benefit from choosing this subject?

Research shows that learning a language develops parts of your brain other subjects do not reach, improving skills in unrelated areas. Languages serve as a good foundation for humanities subjects as a result of the focus on literacy, but they also develop the thinking skills and pattern recognition that are useful in scientific and maths-related subjects.

## What might this course lead to in the future?

Spain is a major player in the EU and one of Britain's most important trading partners, so there are opportunities for work using the language close to home, as well as in the US where it is spoken by 9% of the population. As it is one of the official UN languages, work in international organisations may appeal, while you may prefer to choose it to enhance your visits to Spain or Latin America.

## Personal benefits

Speaking a foreign language will make you stand out from the crowd. Be prepared to be challenged and frustrated, but also gratified when you master a skill that can be used and enjoyed throughout life. Languages develop communication skills, memory, adaptability, logical thinking and confidence.

## Don't pick this if

You are not keen on words or are not good at motivating yourself to learn on a regular basis.

## Who to contact for further advice and information

Mrs. Brown, Head of Modern Foreign Languages

# NOTES



# Art, Craft and Design



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## How will I benefit from this course?

If you enjoy being creative, want to increase your practical skills and improve your analytical, communication and research abilities, Art, Craft and Design is a great choice.

## Desirable skills to succeed

You do not have to be brilliant at Art, but you do need to have patience and the desire to experiment with techniques and materials. Perseverance and the ability to manage your free time are traits that will enable you to meet deadlines, remember this course is 60% coursework that starts from your very first lesson.

## Teaching and Learning

Pupils will be taught a range of techniques and design strategies at the start of the course and will gradually be encouraged to become more independent in their creative process until they are confident in taking the initiative to tackle a design problem. Pupils' outcomes will be informed by their own strengths, interests and subject specialisms. **They must work within two of the specialisms listed below during the course:**

- **Fine art:** For example, drawing, painting, printmaking, photography, collage.
- **Graphic communication:** for example, design for print, advertising, digital editing, illustration and typography.
- **Textile design:** for example, art textiles, fashion, printed and dyed textiles, surface pattern, stitched designs.
- **Three-dimensional design:** for example architectural design, sculpture, ceramics, product design, jewellery.
- **Photography:** for example portraiture, experimental imagery, installation, documentary, photo-journalism.

## Examination summary

Portfolio (60%)	Externally set assignment (40%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The coursework unit should include evidence for each of the assessment objectives</li><li>• Two projects will be completed</li><li>• Centre-assessed and moderated by AQA.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Starting points will be set by AQA.</li><li>• Pupils will be required to respond to one starting point in their chosen specialism.</li><li>• Pupils will be expected to develop their own work to resolve their investigations, producing a final piece or pieces based upon preparatory studies and research.</li><li>• A response that meets all assessment objectives is required.</li><li>• There will be a preparatory period lasting from January to Easter followed by 10 hours of supervised time in exam conditions.</li><li>• The assignment will be centre-assessed and moderated by AQA.</li></ul>

**What post-16 choices would benefit from choosing this subject?** Post 16: A Level Art and Design, Graphic Design, Fashion Design, Engineering, Photography.

**What might this course lead to in the future?** Careers as an Architect, Web Designer, Graphic Designer or Photographer. Art-related jobs in Advertising, TV, Film or Theatre

**Personal benefits:** The transferable skills you will gain, creative thinking, research, communication and the ability to develop, refine and present ideas are all highly regarded by employers and universities.

**Don't pick this if:** You struggle with subjects which have a significant practical element or if you struggle to time manage.

## Who to contact for further advice and information:

Mrs Traynor and Mrs Barber.

# NOTES

# COMPUTER SCIENCE



Colchester  
High School

## How will I benefit from this course?

Computer technology is advancing rapidly, and the way technology is used continues to evolve. This course will get you working with real-world practical programming techniques which provides exceptional understanding of how technologies function on the hardware level.

## Desirable skills to succeed

Enthusiasm for ICT and computing, with an ability to: analyse theoretical and technical computational problems; apply numeracy and literacy; act on instructions; think logically and apply computational thinking.

## Teaching and Learning

The course is teacher led with a textbook and digital and online learning resources. This course will develop critical thinking skills, analysis and problem solving skills through the programming aspect of the course. All of this leads you developing these skills to a high level, so that you can succeed in the 21st century.

## Examination summary

### Exam Board: Edexcel

#### PAPER 1

Written examination: 1 hour and 30 minutes. 50% of the qualification. 75 marks.

This paper will assess Topics 1 to 5. • Topic 1: Computational thinking – understanding of what algorithms are, what they are used for and how they work; ability to follow, amend and write algorithms; ability to construct truth tables. • Topic 2: Data – understanding of binary, data representation, data storage and compression. • Topic 3: Computers – understanding of hardware and software components of computer systems and characteristics of programming languages. • Topic 4: Networks – understanding of computer networks and network security. • Topic 5: Issues and impact – awareness of emerging trends in computing technologies, and the impact of computing on individuals, society and the environment, including ethical, legal and ownership issues.

#### PAPER 2

Onscreen examination: 2 hours. 50% of the qualification, 75 marks

This paper will assess Topic 6: Problem solving with programming. The main focus of this paper is: • understanding what algorithms are, what they are used for and how they work in relation to creating programs • understanding how to decompose and analyse problems • ability to read, write, refine and evaluate programs. Assessment overview - This practical paper requires pupils to design, write, test and refine programs in order to solve problems. Pupils will complete this assessment onscreen using their Integrated Development Environment (IDE) of choice. You will be provided with: • coding files • a hard copy of the question paper • the Programming Language Subset (PLS) – as an insert in the question paper and in electronic format. Pupils then answer the questions onscreen using Python 3. This assessment consists of six compulsory questions.

## What post 16 choices would benefit from this subject?

There are many possible post-16 options using the skills developed in this course, in particular, excellent progression to AS and A Level Computer Science, vocational courses and on to degree level courses in the areas of Computing, Engineering and Science.

## What might this course lead to in the future?

If you're interested in the world of Cyber Security, Social Media, E-Commerce, Game Development, Robotics or Software Development, then this course will provide a sound basis for further study, or employment in any of these fields (*including a huge range of S.T.E.M. fields!*)

## Changes for the future

In January of 2019, Ofqual announced future assessment arrangements for GCSE Computer Science. Their decisions mean that for the 2022 exams and onwards the assessment of programming skills will be by exam only.

## Personal benefits

Develop an understanding of current and emerging technologies and how they work, and many transferable skills which will benefit you when seeking employment which requires specialist understanding of computers. **Don't pick this if...** You do not have a deep interest in computer theory, logic, programming & practical problem solving.

## Who to contact for further advice and information

Ms Chloe Haggerty, Computer Science Teacher

# NOTES

# MUSIC



Colchester  
High School

## How will I benefit from this course?

Music is a powerful medium of communication that inspires creativity and expression in ways that no other subject can. Pupils will learn about a wide range of musical genres and styles through the integration of performing, composing and listening practical activities.

## Desirable skills to succeed

Music is the ideal subject for you if you love music and enjoy composing and performing. You must be willing to learn to play an instrument or sing, create music on your instrument or computers and learn about all types of music.

## Teaching and Learning

All pupils will have access to the department's resources including music, instruments, books, worksheets, use of music software and practice space. They will perform on their chosen instrument/voice or through music technology both individually and in groups. Opportunities will be given to practice in class and perform in school events. Performing and gaining confidence is such an important part of the course that we expect pupils to join Senior Choir and another extra curricular activity related to their own instrument/voice.

## Examination summary

<b>Component 1: Understanding music</b>	<b>Component 2: Performing music</b>	<b>Component 3: Composing music</b>
<b>What's assessed</b> Listening and Contextual understanding <b>40% of GCSE marks</b>	<b>What's assessed</b> Music performance <b>30% of GCSE marks</b>	<b>What's assessed</b> Composition <b>30% of GCSE marks</b>
<b>How it's assessed</b> Exam paper with listening exercises using excerpts of music	<b>How it's assessed</b> 2 Performances on an Instrument/voice or music technology (Solo and ensemble)	<b>How it's assessed</b> 2 Compositions: Composition to a brief and a free composition
<b>Questions: 1h 30 min exam paper</b> Section A: Listening Section B: Contextual understanding	<b>Non-exam assessment - internally marked and externally moderated by AQA.</b>	<b>Non-exam assessment - internally marked by teachers and externally moderated by AQA.</b>

## What post-16 choices would benefit from choosing this subject?

If you enjoy the GCSE Music course then you can consider further musical study such as A Level in Music, Music Technology and Performing Arts, BTEC National Diplomas in Music, Popular Music and Music Tech.

## What might this course lead to in the future?

Studying music at degree level can lead to many jobs directly related to music such as: Musician, Music Therapist, Private Teacher, School Teacher or Sound Technician, Broadcasting/Film/Video or any other career which involves good communication and social skills, confidence and creativity.

## Personal benefits

Developing performing and composing skills through practical work both individually and in groups. There will be plenty of opportunities to perform at school events and develop transferable skills.

## Don't pick this if

You do not enjoy performing in front of others or dislike listening to a wide range of musical styles (including classical music).

## Who to contact for further advice and information

Miss Romero-Fernandez, Head of Music

# NOTES

# PHYSICAL EDUCATION



Colchester  
High School

## How will I benefit from this course?

Pupils will become increasingly physically competent through being actively engaged in a range of physical activities. They will become increasingly effective in their performance in different types of physical activity and roles such as player / performer, leader and official. They can develop their ability to engage independently and successfully in the processes of different types of physical activity and also develop and maintain their involvement in physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle.

## Desirable skills to succeed

Candidates choosing GCSE Physical Education will need to perform 3 sports to a reasonably high level and therefore should only undertake the course if they have shown a potential in sport. Pupils should not underestimate the importance of the theoretical aspects which comprise 60% of the course.

## Teaching and Learning

All pupils are issued with a very comprehensive text book and have access to a wide range of resources and their lesson notes in order to maximize theoretical potential. We also utilize the facilities at a number of local sporting venues and sports clubs in order to complete the practical elements of the course.

## Examination summary

<b>What's assessed—Paper 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Applied anatomy and physiology</li><li>• Movement analysis</li><li>• Physical training</li><li>• Use of data</li></ul> <b>How it's assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes (30%)</li><li>• 78 marks</li></ul>	<b>What's assessed—Paper 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sports psychology</li><li>• Socio-cultural influences</li><li>• Health, fitness and well-being</li><li>• Use of data</li></ul> <b>How it's assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes (30%)</li><li>• 78 marks</li></ul>
<b>What's assessed—Non Examined Assessment (NEA)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practical performance in three different physical activities in the role of player/performer (one in a team activity, one in an individual activity and a third in either a team or in an individual activity).</li><li>• Analysis and evaluation of performance to bring about improvement in one activity.</li></ul> <b>How it's assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assessed by teachers, moderated by AQA</li><li>• 100 marks (40%)</li></ul>	

## What post-16 choices would benefit from choosing this subject?

If you might be studying for an A Level in Biology or furthering your interest in PE/Sport you would benefit from studying GCSE Physical Education.

## What might this course lead to in the future?

GCSE PE can offer the pupil a wide range of career opportunities. By choosing this pathway, pupils can go onto a career in: The Leisure Industry (e.g. Lifeguarding or Leisure Centre Management); Teaching; Coaching; Sports Leadership and Development; Medicine; Physiotherapy; Sciences.

## Personal benefits

In depth understanding of sport and exercise; how the body works and elements enabling a competitor to maximize performance.

## Don't pick this if

You find sport and exercise challenging, have a history of non-participation in PE/games for various reasons or if you are not prepared to combine the theoretical and practical elements.

## Who to contact for further information

Mr. Dowson, Head of PE.



# Colchester High School

Wellesley Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3HD

Telephone: 01206 573389

Email: [info@colchesterhighschool.co.uk](mailto:info@colchesterhighschool.co.uk)

[www.colchesterhighschool.co.uk](http://www.colchesterhighschool.co.uk)

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