

# Option for Success

## Y8 Options for Key Stage 4 at Hazelwick School

2026



NAME: .....

FORM: .....

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# OPTIONS CHOICES

## Why am I choosing?

This booklet is designed to help you make sensible choices which will lead to a well-motivated and rewarding three years of study as well as examination success. We want you to choose options which suit your strengths and future ambitions.

We will discuss your choices with you at each stage of the process to make sure that you are maintaining sufficient breadth and that you are not closing doors on opportunities you may wish to pursue in the future.

### Hazelwick offers a wide variety of courses

COMPULSORY (CORE) EXAM SUBJECTS	COMPULSORY (CORE) NON-EXAM COURSES
English Language English Literature Mathematics Science: Combined (Double) or Separate (Triple)	PSHE/Careers Citizenship and Values/Beliefs/Ethics (VBE) Sport & Recreation (Core non-exam PE)
OPTIONAL SUBJECTS	
<b>Creative Arts</b> Art: Art & Design Art: Photography Drama Music Music Technology	<b>Technology</b> Design & Technology Food Preparation & Nutrition
<b>Computer Science, IT, Business &amp; Travel</b> Business Computer Science IT Travel & Tourism	<b>Humanities &amp; Social Sciences</b> Child Development Geography History Media Studies Sociology
<b>Languages</b> French Spanish	<b>Sport</b> PE: Physical Education PE: Sport Studies

### Some important rules

1. Your options **must** include **at least ONE** of Geography, History, French, Spanish
2. You **cannot** take **both** Art & Design **and** Photography
3. You **cannot** take **both** IT **and** Computer Science
4. You **cannot** take **both** Music **and** Music Technology
5. You **cannot** take **both** Physical Education **and** Sport Studies
6. You **cannot** take a Language that you are not already studying in Year 8
7. To study PE GCSE, you need to have displayed a particular strength at sport **and** you should ideally have played for a school team (or to an equivalent standard in a non-school sport/activity)

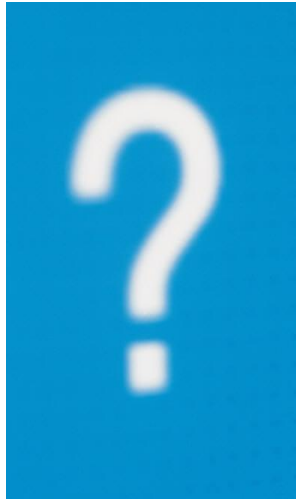
Before making your choices, you will need to consider these questions very carefully:

- How can I find out more about these **subjects**?
- Which subjects do I have to take?
- How do I decide which subjects to take?
- How will my selection affect my future career and/or studies?

Which of the **courses** are open and **appropriate for me**?

**What am I good at?** What are my particular **strengths** and **weaknesses**?

What type of **examinations** will there be? How many **non-exam assessments** are there on each course? How much **coursework** is there?



What sort of **career** or **further/higher education** courses am I thinking of? Are any particular subjects needed or important for this?

What **subjects** and **types of work** do I like doing? Why do I like these?

Is my overall choice a **“balanced”** one, which covers a broad range of subjects and develops different skills? Will the subjects I am thinking of choosing keep lots of career choices and further education courses open to me if I change my mind or if I don't really know yet what job I want or what courses I would want to follow in the future?

Is my academic ability strong enough to achieve at least Grade 5 in all six of the **“EBacc”** subjects? If so, does my overall choice enable me to achieve the **“EBacc”**?

**Find out about these issues...**

...each of these questions is dealt with in the next few pages

# The Subjects

## Key Stage 4 Curriculum

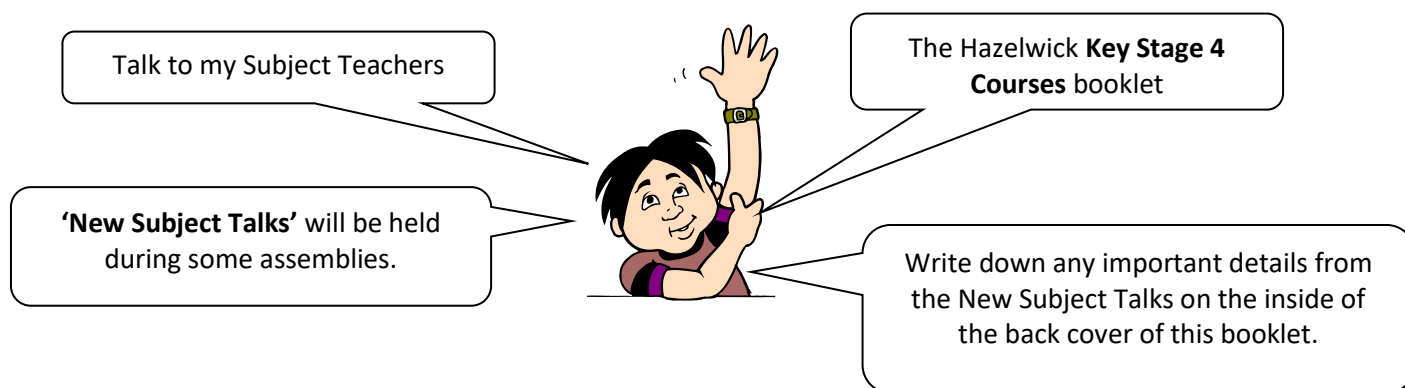
Compulsory Exam Subjects	Information
English	English Language + English Literature
Mathematics	Maths
Science	Combined Science Trilogy (Double GCSE) <b>or</b> Separate Sciences (Triple GCSE)
Compulsory Non-Exam Subjects	Information
Sport & Recreation	Core PE programme (non-exam)
PSHE/Careers	Non-exam courses
Citizenship and Values/Beliefs/Ethics (VBE)	
Optional Subjects	Information
Option 1	<p>Students select <b>four</b> subjects listed from those available (page 3) in order of preference, as well as two reserve choices.</p> <p>We will do what we can to ensure that all students get as many of their first four choices as possible.</p> <p>A reserve will only be substituted after discussion and consultation.</p> <p>Remember to follow the important rules on page 3.</p>
Option 2	
Option 3	
Option 4	

### The 'Options'

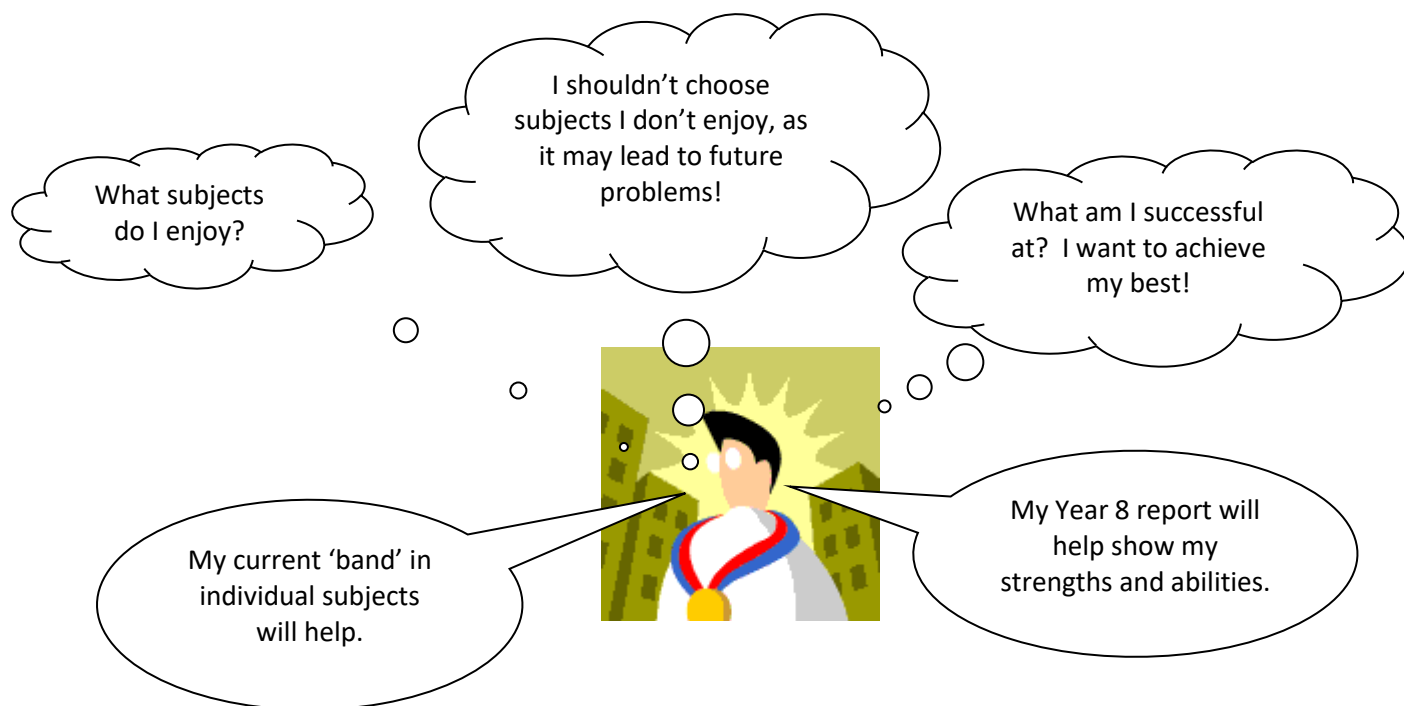
- In addition to the above 'compulsory' examination subjects, you will choose to study 4 **optional examination subjects**.
- The decisions over your choices must be very carefully considered. You will need to seek and take the advice of both your parents/carers and your teachers.
- The end result must be an overall course of study which is **suitable** and **appropriate** for you and which will enable you to be successful during KS4 and beyond.

At the end of this booklet you will find a summary of the courses in the '**Key Stage 4 Courses**' booklet, where full details of all the courses on offer can be found.

### How can I find out more about the courses?



## What am I most successful at?



## Skills

Every subject requires and tries to develop a variety of different **skills**. Some of these are very obvious (e.g. "Application of numbers" in Maths, "Remembering things" in Languages, "Communication skills" in English, "Working with your hands" in Art/DT, "Coordination skills" in PE, etc.), but most of the time you probably do the work in each subject without really thinking about the precise skills that are being used and developed.

However, when you leave school, *these skills and abilities* that you have developed are just as important as the facts or knowledge you have learned from studying a subject.

Now is the time then to think a bit more carefully about the skills involved in each subject, **both** the ones you already study **and** the new subjects on offer. This should also help you to identify more accurately your particular **strengths** and **weaknesses**. In a well-balanced choice of options, you should be trying to make the most of those skills which you are best at, while also trying to develop your ability at a number of different skills as well.

The following skills are **general** and are common to most subjects:

- Reading, listening and understanding
- Communicating your ideas in writing
- Discussing different ideas and points of view
- Learning and recalling facts
- Using information to solve problems
- Working with people – teamwork – cooperation
- Working independently

There are other skills that are more **specific** to particular subjects:

- Designing, making and evaluating
- Language skills
- Understanding how society works
- Role play and empathy
- Understanding business and finance

# What subjects do I like doing?

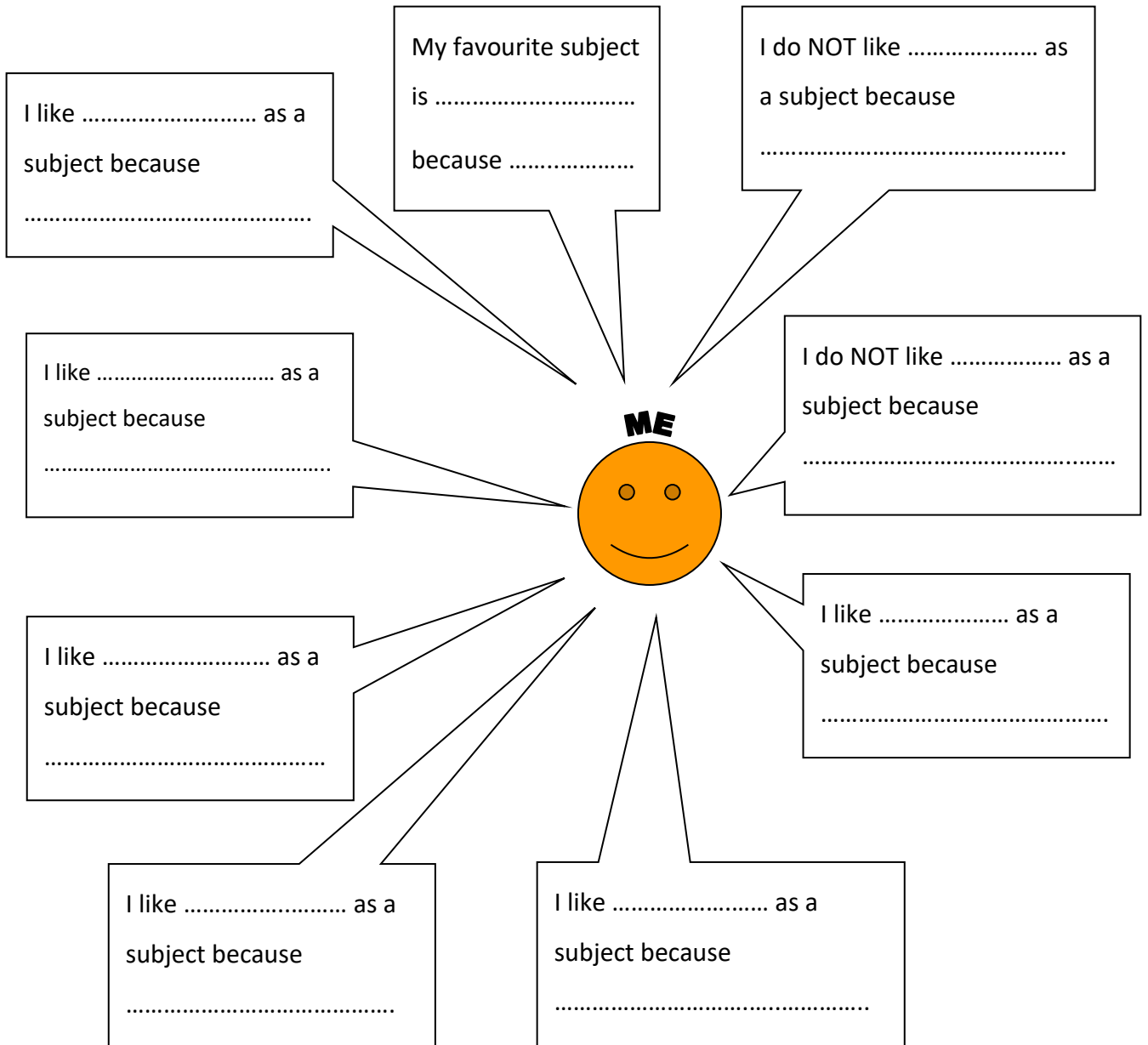
It is important to try to **choose subjects you like and enjoy doing**. Most of us work harder if we like a subject and find it interesting. We find it easier to remember facts about things we enjoy; for example, football, cricket, fashion or music.



It's **not** about the lesson you have the best laugh in, the best teacher, the least homework, or if you are with your friends.  
**ALL THAT CAN CHANGE IN THE FUTURE.**

It is the **subject itself** and the **type of work** that we **like**.  
**THESE STAY THE SAME.**

**Don't choose subjects just because they are new** - make sure you understand the work that they will involve and remember you **cannot** change your mind after you have started the course!



## Different Types of KS4 Qualifications

All the qualifications now available at KS4 have been reformed in recent years. They all meet strict standards and have been approved by the government. The courses are organised and assessed by a range of national awarding bodies, such as OCR, AQA and Edexcel. Different courses use different grading systems, but they are all equivalent to each other and can easily be compared:

GCSE	OCR Cambridge Level 1/2 National Certificate	BTEC Level 1/2 Tech Award
9	Level 2 Distinction *	Level 2 Distinction *
8	Level 2 Distinction	Level 2 Distinction
7		
6	Level 2 Merit	Level 2 Merit
5	Level 2 Pass	Level 2 Pass
4		
3	Level 1 Distinction	Level 1 Distinction
2	Level 1 Merit	Level 1 Merit
1	Level 1 Pass	Level 1 Pass
Fail	Fail	Fail

### GCSE courses

- Most GCSE courses follow a traditional academic approach with an emphasis on knowledge and understanding.
- In most GCSE subjects all the final grade comes through performance in two or three written exams at the end of Year 11.
- Some of the more practical GCSE subjects are also assessed through non-exam assessment (coursework or practical work).

### Other GCSE-equivalent courses

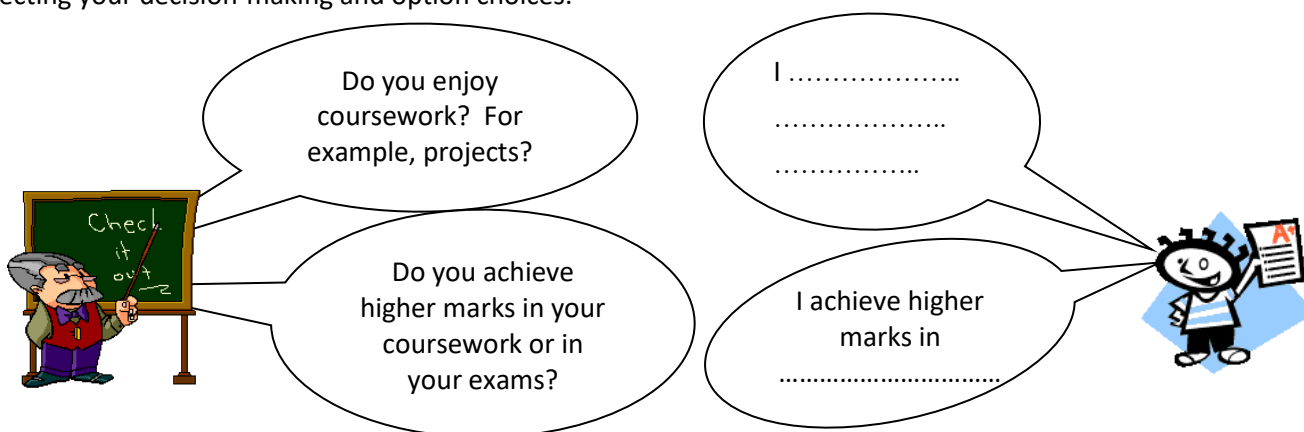
- These courses are assessed mainly through practical work and coursework completed in school.
- All of these courses are more practical, with an emphasis on having the ability to complete a task – evidence of the skills you demonstrate is recorded and entered into your portfolio, and your final grade is based on the portfolio of evidence submitted and/or your practical work, plus one written exam.
- In some subjects, there is an opportunity to re-sit this external exam to improve the original grade.

## What type of work is studied? What about Coursework, Practical Work and Performance?

On the one hand, most of the GCSEs contain **no** coursework at all and are assessed entirely by written exams at the end of Year 11.

On the other hand, a few of the more practical GCSE subjects – and **all** the BTEC/OCR subjects – do contain assessment by means of coursework, practical work, portfolio or performance. This is designed to assess what you can do throughout the course, in addition to a written exam paper at the end. It is very important, since **30% – 60%** of the final mark can come from this type of ongoing assessment, depending on the subject.

Also, in three subject areas (Sport, Music and Computing/IT) we run **two** courses that have similar content and skills but are **assessed** in different ways. The style of assessment and the amount of coursework can be a key factor affecting your decision-making and option choices.



**Find out from pages 22-24** how much the coursework/practical work is worth for the different subjects at Hazelwick. If you want to know more about particular courses, the **Key Stage 4 Courses** booklet is also a good place to start. Also, ask your teachers, Form Teacher or Head of Year.

Try to complete the table below for **eight** option subjects that you are considering, and then check your answers with the chart on page 11.

Subject	% Coursework, Practical work, Portfolio or Performance
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	

- Which subjects have the most coursework/non-exam assessment? .....
- Which subjects have the least coursework/non-exam assessment? .....

## A Broad and Balanced Curriculum

### Should I opt for subjects that will give me the EBacc and/or meet the new government proposal?

The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is designed to recognise broad **academic** achievement. You will need to achieve **grades 9-5** in **all** of the following subjects:

- GCSE English Language or GCSE English Literature
- GCSE Maths
- GCSE Sciences (either Combined Science Trilogy or any **two** of Biology, Chemistry and Physics)
- GCSE History or Geography
- A GCSE Foreign Language

The government has just announced a different proposal to encourage students to study a broad and balanced curriculum at key stage 4. The proposal states that students should include subjects from at least two of the following three categories:

- Humanities: Geography or History
- Languages: French or Spanish
- Creative: Art, Design Technology, Drama, Music or Photography

This proposal has not yet been confirmed. However, it is our belief that you should consider carefully the requirements of the EBacc and this new proposal when choosing your options to ensure you study a broad and balanced curriculum.

You must choose either a humanity or a language, however, it will be your choice whether you opt for additional subjects that will meet either the conditions for the EBacc and/or the government's new proposal.

***At Hazelwick, we strongly believe in the importance of an appropriate broad and balanced curriculum. If appropriate to a student's ability and interests, choosing one subject from at least two of the categories Humanities, Languages and Creative, would ensure a broad and balanced curriculum at Key Stage 4.***

**How will I know if I am of the "appropriate academic ability" to make it worth choosing subjects to fit the EBacc?**

A general guide would be if you have a CPI Band of at least Intermediate in the EBacc subjects, by the time of your Year 8 Report (in February).

***For further details about this, and to find out if it's right for you, you should read the relevant sections in the Key Stage 4 Courses booklet and discuss your options with your Form Teacher and subject teachers.***

## Assessment by Subject

Subject	Type of Course	Assessed by Exam	Non-Examination Assessment (NEA)
Art: Art & Design	GCSE	40%	60%
Art: Photography	GCSE	40%	60%
Business	GCSE	100%	0%
Child Development	OCR	40%	60%
Computer Science	GCSE	100%	0%
Drama	GCSE	60%	40%
Design Technology	GCSE	50%	50%
English Language	GCSE	100%	0%
English Literature	GCSE	100%	0%
Food Preparation & Nutrition	GCSE	50%	50%
French	GCSE	100%	0%
Geography	GCSE	100%	0%
History	GCSE	100%	0%
IT	OCR	40%	60%
Mathematics	GCSE	100%	0%
Media Studies	GCSE	70%	30%
Music	GCSE	40%	60%
Music Technology	BTEC	40%*	60%
PE: Physical Education	GCSE	60%	40%
PE: Sport Studies	OCR	40%	60%
Science – Combined Trilogy	GCSE	100%	0%
Science – Separate (Triple)	GCSE	100%	0%
Sociology	GCSE	100%	0%
Spanish	GCSE	100%	0%
Travel & Tourism	BTEC	40%*	60%

*\*For the BTEC courses, the 'exam' component consists of different types of assessment that is set and marked by the exam board.*

*Non-examination assessment (NEA) refers to written work or practical work that is completed in school. This work is assessed internally by teachers and moderated externally by the relevant examination board.*

## Careers at Hazelwick

It is not important to **choose your career now**. Don't worry if you haven't got a clue. Just make sure that you **don't "close any doors"** by dropping a particular subject now. Be aware of the subjects which may be important to a future career choice.

**"Keep your options open."**

Time spent now thinking and finding out about various careers will help you make a good, safe choice of OPTION subjects. The effort will be worthwhile.

You can find more information about careers and the usefulness of various subjects in the following places:

- The **Key Stage 4 Courses** booklet contains a Careers section.
- A variety of books and leaflets on careers is kept in the Careers section of the Library.
- A wide variety of careers information including [job profiles](#) is available on the internet, particularly from the [National Careers Service](#). Here you can get advice from an advisor through a number of channels including telephone, 'webchat' and email (<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>).
- Advice and guidance may also be available from an external careers adviser by booking an appointment through Mrs Wakelin (office on Lower School corridor).
- Information on **Higher Education** (university prospectuses and leaflets) is kept in the school Library and is also summarised in the school's Sixth Form Prospectus, available to you and your parents/carers on the school's website.

Use the spaces on the next page to record the information you find out about various jobs, careers and courses that interest you, and what their entry requirements are.

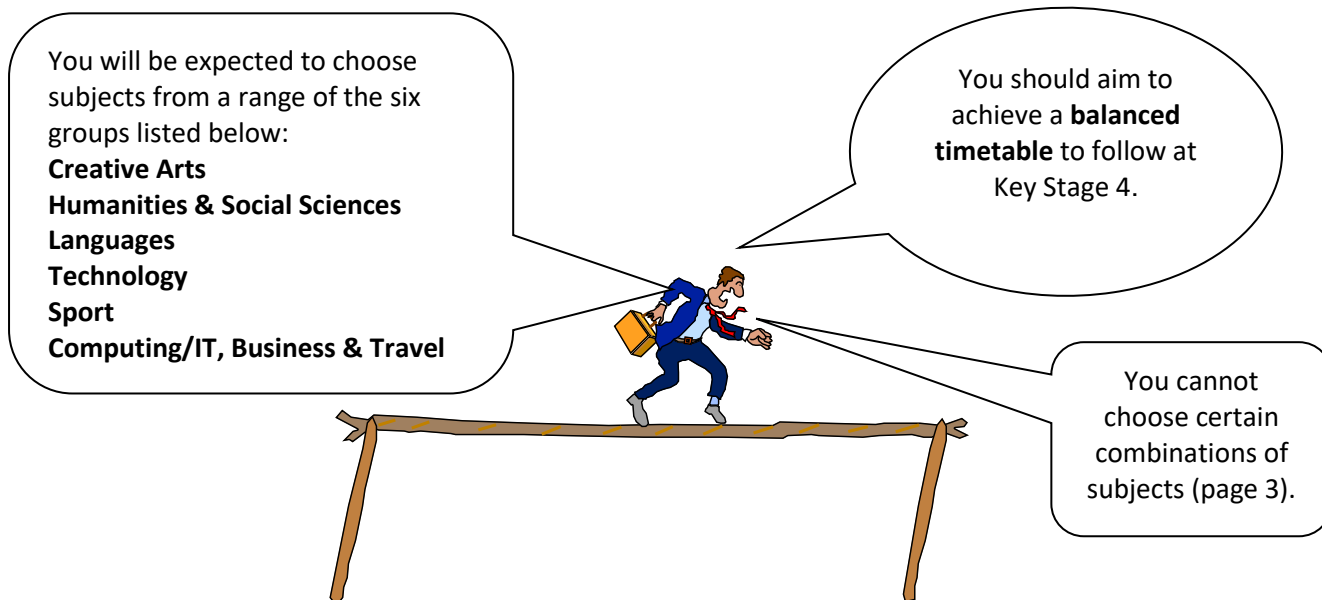
**Please remember – every subject is worth studying for its own sake and not just as a means of getting a job. Each subject helps you to develop a range of skills that will be useful to you in the future.**

## Careers Information Page

Complete this page for three jobs that interest you. You can find the information from the internet, the library, or from the Careers office.

<b>OCCUPATION 1</b>	
JOB DESCRIPTION	
QUALIFICATIONS NEEDED	
FURTHER EDUCATION OR TRAINING DETAILS	
USEFUL ADDRESSES	
<b>OCCUPATION 2</b>	
JOB DESCRIPTION	
QUALIFICATIONS NEEDED	
FURTHER EDUCATION OR TRAINING DETAILS	
USEFUL ADDRESSES	
<b>OCCUPATION 3</b>	
JOB DESCRIPTION	
QUALIFICATIONS NEEDED	
FURTHER EDUCATION OR TRAINING DETAILS	
USEFUL ADDRESSES	

## Balance



You may have a particular strength for instance in Languages, the Arts or the Humanities, in which case you may wish to study two or more subjects from one of those areas.

### What am I trying to balance?

**All the optional subjects can be divided into six broad groups:**

- Creative Arts
- Humanities & Social Sciences
- Languages
- Technology
- Sport
- Computing/IT, Business & Travel

**Can you divide these subjects into their correct group?**

Art & Design, Business, Child Development, Computer Science, Design Technology, Drama, Food Preparation & Nutrition, French, Geography, History, IT, Media Studies, Music, Music Technology, Photography, Physical Education, Sociology, Spanish, Sport Studies, Travel & Tourism

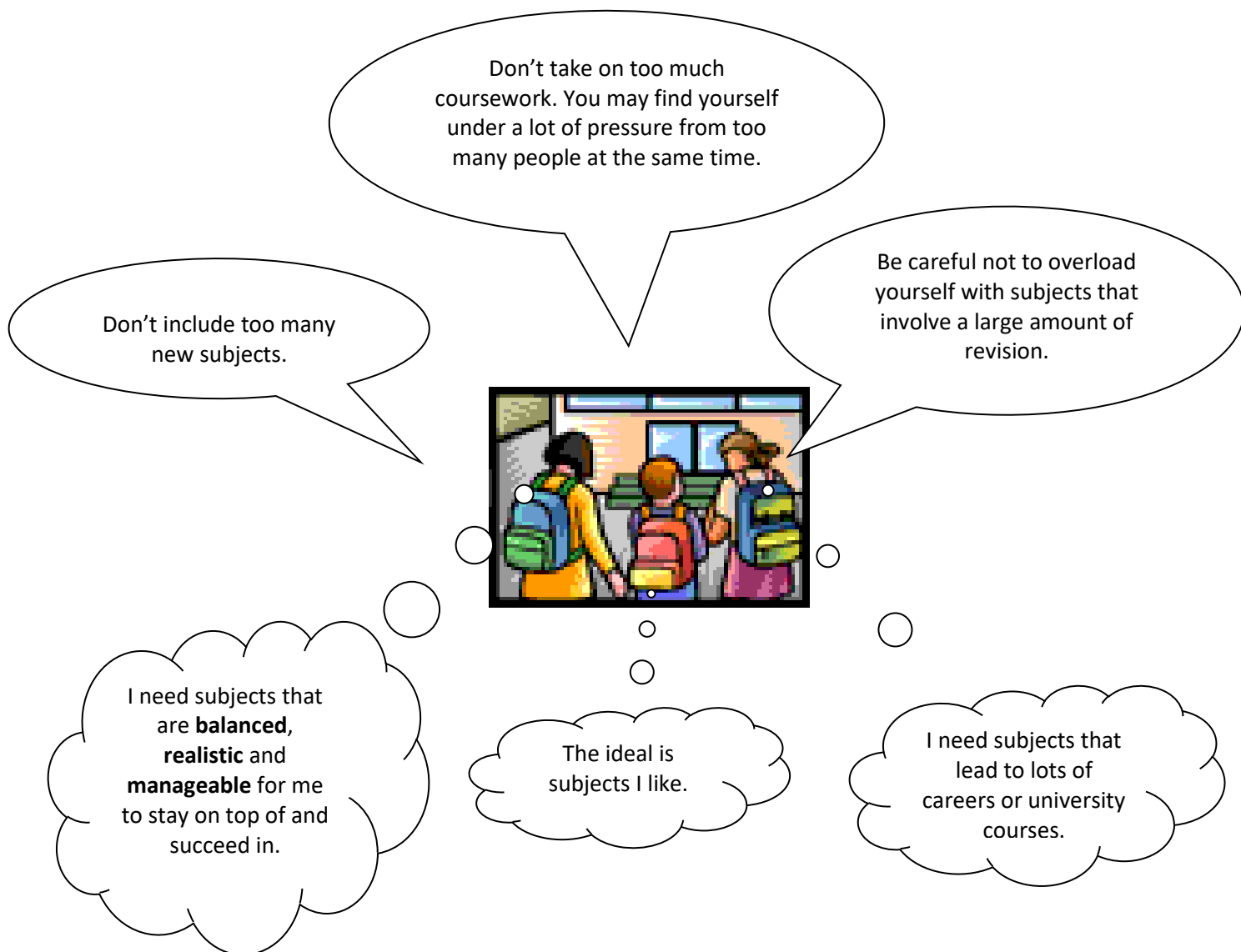
Creative Arts	Humanities & Social Sciences	Languages	Technology	Sport	Computing/IT, Business & Travel

On the table below highlight the subjects that are new to you and then circle the ones that you are interested in finding out more about:

Creative Arts	Humanities & Social Sciences	Languages	Technology	Sport	Computing/IT, Business & Travel
Art: Art & Design Art: Photography Drama Music Music Technology	Child Development Geography History Media Studies Sociology	French Spanish	Food Preparation & Nutrition Design Technology	Physical Education Sport Studies	Computer Science IT Business Travel & Tourism

### Why is balance important?

A broad range of subjects develops a broad range of skills and abilities and gives you a broader range of career and further/higher education options at the end of Year 11.





## KS4 Pathways to Success

You will soon have to start making decisions on which subjects you want to study at KS4.

- **Look at the profiles of Students A and B**
- **What subjects do you think they should opt for?** Discuss your choices with a partner.
- With your partner jot down a few imaginary **'Student profiles'**

### Student profiles

#### Student A

- *Enjoys sport but is not very good at it*
- *Is in the top Maths set and is very good at Science*
- *Has the ability to achieve the 'EBacc'*
- *Is good at practical work but not very 'artistic'*
- *Loves to act*
- *Likes to study the world of finance and business*
- *Has studied French in Years 7 & 8*

What would be a good pathway for Student A? Make sure it is balanced and includes the subjects they like.

	Maths	Science	English	Core PE	PSHE Citizenship VBE	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Student A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				

Now look at this profile:

#### Student B

- *Loves sports and is in all the school teams*
- *Would like to be a fitness instructor in a holiday camp*
- *Would like to have a qualification in IT*
- *Likes to design things*
- *Would like to work in Spain*
- *Generally does better in ongoing assessment rather than exams*
- *Enjoys cooking and gained good marks in Food.*

	Maths	Science	English	Core PE	PSHE Citizenship VBE	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Student B	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				

Are there any other questions you would like to ask Student B? Ask your Form Tutor.

Now make up two of your own Student Profiles. Discuss one with a partner.

STUDENT C	STUDENT D

### Some important rules

1. Your options **must** include **at least ONE** of Geography, History, French, Spanish
2. You **cannot** take **both** Art: Art & Design **and** Art: Photography
3. You **cannot** take **both** IT **and** Computer Science
4. You **cannot** take **both** Music **and** Music Technology
5. You **cannot** take **both** Physical Education **and** Sport Studies
6. You **cannot** take a Language that you are not already studying in Year 8
7. To study PE GCSE, you need to have displayed a particular strength at sport **and** you should ideally have played for a school team (or to an equivalent standard in a non-school sport/activity)

**In addition to these 'rules':**

Do not choose lots of new subjects *just* because they are 'new'. Remember, you must find out as much as you can about any course you are considering taking. **Make informed choices.**



## Twelve Good Reasons

Carry out this exercise once you have considered the sections in this booklet on:

**Abilities**

**Likes**

**Careers**

**Balance**

Consider these “**Twelve Good Reasons**” for choosing a subject:

Place a ‘**G**’ against **good** reasons

Place an ‘**X**’ against **bad** reasons

<i>I like the teacher who’s teaching me the subject this year.</i>	
<i>My friend’s doing it, so I want to do it too.</i>	
<i>It’s a subject you need for lots of different careers.</i>	
<i>It’s assessed mainly by ongoing coursework, which suits me as I tend to do better in class than I do in exams.</i>	
<i>I know exactly what I’m going to do, so there’s no need to worry about keeping my options open.</i>	
<i>My Science teacher is guiding me towards this course.</i>	
<i>It’s a subject I do well in and I’m interested in it.</i>	
<i>It’s something my parent/carer wishes they’d done when they were at school.</i>	
<i>I only want to do the subjects I find easy.</i>	
<i>I don’t enjoy the subject.</i>	
<i>It’s a new subject and it sounds interesting.</i>	
<i>Taking this subject will mean that I can get the EBacc.</i>	

**Add one more good reason and one more bad reason of your own.**

**‘G’** \_\_\_\_\_

**‘X’** \_\_\_\_\_



## A summary of the subjects

Course	Exam/Coursework Structure
<b>CORE SUBJECTS</b>	
<b>ENGLISH LANGUAGE GCSE</b>	Two written exams 40% + 60% = 100%
<b>ENGLISH LITERATURE GCSE</b>	Two written exams 50% + 50% = 100%
<b>MATHEMATICS GCSE</b>	Three written exams 100% (One non-calculator, two with calculator)
<b>SCIENCE GCSE</b>	<b><i>Combined Science (Double)</i></b> Six written exams 100% <b><i>Separate Sciences (Triple)</i></b> Six written exams 100%
<b>OPTION SUBJECTS</b>	
<b>ART: ART &amp; DESIGN GCSE</b>	Personal Portfolio 60% One externally set assignment 40%
<b>ART: PHOTOGRAPHY GCSE</b>	Personal Portfolio 60% One externally set assignment 40%
<b>BUSINESS GCSE</b>	Two written exams 50% + 50% = 100%
<b>CHILD DEVELOPMENT <i>OCR Cambridge National</i></b>	Written exam 40% Coursework 60%
<b>COMPUTER SCIENCE GCSE</b>	Two written exams 50% + 50% = 100% Mandatory programming project

<b>DT: DESIGN TECHNOLOGY</b> <b>GCSE</b>	Written exam 50% Coursework 50%
<b>DRAMA</b> <b>GCSE</b>	Written exam 40% Practical exam 40% (= Portfolio 30% + Performance 10%) Practical exam 20%
<b>FOOD PREPARATION &amp; NUTRITION</b> <b>GCSE</b>	Written exam 50% Coursework 50% (= Food Science Investigation 15% + Food Preparation Assessment 35%)
<b>FRENCH</b> <b>GCSE</b>	Written exam (reading) 25% Written exam (writing) 25% Written exam (listening) 25% Speaking exam 25%
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b> <b>GCSE</b>	Three written exams 100% Physical 35% Human 35% Applications 30%
<b>HISTORY</b> <b>GCSE</b>	Three written exams 100% Thematic study 30% Depth studies 40% + 30% = 70%
<b>IT</b> <i>OCR Cambridge National</i>	One written exam 40% Coursework 60%
<b>MEDIA STUDIES</b> <b>GCSE</b>	Two written exams 35% + 35% = 70% Coursework 30%
<b>MUSIC</b> <b>GCSE</b>	Written exam 40% Performing 30% Composing 30%
<b>MUSIC TECHNOLOGY</b> <b>BTEC</b>	Coursework 60% One externally set assignment 40%
<b>PE: PHYSICAL EDUCATION</b> <b>GCSE</b>	Two theory written exams 60% Practical Work 30% Coursework 10%

<p align="center"><b>PE: SPORT STUDIES</b> <i>OCR Cambridge National</i></p>	<p align="center">One written exam 40% Practical Work 40% Coursework 20%</p>
<p align="center"><b>SOCIOLOGY</b> <i>GCSE</i></p>	<p align="center">Two written exams 50% + 50% = 100%</p>
<p align="center"><b>SPANISH</b> <i>GCSE</i></p>	<p align="center">Written exam (reading) 25% Written exam (writing) 25% Written exam (listening) 25% Speaking exam 25%</p>
<p align="center"><b>TRAVEL &amp; TOURISM</b> <i>BTEC</i></p>	<p align="center">Coursework 60% One externally set assignment 40%</p>