

English Martyrs'  
Catholic School



English Martyrs' Sixth Form

A Level & BTEC

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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# BTEC Level 3 Extended Certificate in Applied Science

- **What are the entry requirements?**  
You need to get a Grade 4's in Science and a Grade 4 in Mathematics.
- **Can I study Applied Science if I am entered for Foundation in Maths or Science?**  
Yes, you need to get a grade 4 in Maths and Science to be able to study Applied Science. You are able to get a grade 4 on the Foundation or Higher paper.
- **Do you learn a bit of every Science?**  
Yes, there is a balance of the 3 different Sciences. In Unit 1, you learn content for Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

Examples of content in each:

Biology – cells, nerves and muscles

Chemistry - calculations, bonding and the periodic table

Physics – waves and communication

- **How many exams are there?**  
In Year 12 you sit 3, 40 minute examinations – one for each Science.  
In Year 13, you carry out a practical exam and then a written paper follows this which is 1 hour 30 minutes.
- **I don't like exams, is Applied Science a good option for me?**  
If you are interested in continuing Science and enjoy completing coursework, Applied Science might be a good option for you as there is a balance of coursework and examination. Overall, there is more examination.
- **What exam board do we use?**  
Pearson Edexcel
- **How much do the textbooks cost?**  
The exact cost will vary depending on where you purchase the textbook from. We recommend the revision guide, which costs approximately £11.50. There is also a workbook, which can be useful too.
- **Do you get to do many practicals?**  
Yes, there are two units which include a large practical component and you will become very skilled in completing practicals independently and in groups.  
In Year 12, Unit 2 (the assignment work) is based on four practicals that you complete and write up. These include: chromatography, calorimetry and titrations.  
In Year 13, Unit 3 is based on investigating science. You will learn theory behind different practicals, such as enzymes and diffusion, carry out these practicals and analyse the results and plan and evaluate investigations.
- **Are we assessed on practicals?**  
Yes. Unit 2 is internally assessed through written assignments and Unit 3 is assessed with a practical and written examination.

- What careers can you do with Applied Science?**  
 There are a number of progression routes which you can do with Applied Science. Students have gone onto study courses such as Pharmacy, Midwifery, Nursing, Biomedical Science and Chemistry. This may include a foundation year at University depending on the requirements, but there are many options.
- How many assignments are there?**  
 In Unit 2 there are 4 assignments, which link to the practicals you carry out.  
 In Unit 12 (the optional unit on Disease and Infection), there are 4 assignments. This is a research based unit.
- How are you assessed?**  
 Unit 1 – 3, 40 minute examinations. One in each Science. This unit is 90 credits.  
 Unit 2 – 4 assignments. This unit is 90 credits.  
 Unit 3 – practical examination and 1.5 hour written examination. This unit is 120 credits.  
 Unit 12 – 4 assignments. This unit is 60 credits.
- How is Applied Science different to A Level Science?**  
 Applied Science is different in the way it is assessed, as there is a mix of coursework and examination. The content is also different, although there is some cross over of some topics with the A Level Science courses.
- Who teaches Applied Science?**  
 This varies from year to year depending on timetabling and cannot be guaranteed. At the moment, the teachers who teach Applied Science are: Mrs Cajkler, Mr Sadler and Mrs Suraweera.

# A Level

## Art

- **Do I have to write a lot?**

There is a requirement to write coherently, using subject specific vocabulary in analysing the work of artists. You will also analyse your own work, reflecting on this as you progress. Support and guidance is provided and your confidence will grow during the course. By the time you have to write your Personal Investigation essay in year 13, you will have developed your skills and confidence.

- **Do I need a good grade at GCSE Fine Art/Art and Design to study A Level?**

We would suggest that students opting for A Level would be in the best position, if they have gained a grade 6 or above at GCSE, although the course is available to you with a lower grade (4 and above), the demands of the course are such that students may find it difficult. A proven record of a positive attitude and commitment to the subject at GCSE are necessary.

- **Do I get the freedom to develop my own ideas?**

Yes, once you have completed a series of workshops on the theme of Flesh and Bones in year 12, you will explore an area of interest and strength within that theme to develop individually. You will select an exam question for a mock AS exam later in y12, which may be different to that of your peers. As you move into year 13, one of the themes from y12 will be developed in an even more personal way for your Personal Investigation.

- **Are the grades achieved in the past within the department high?**

Yes, our students have achieved very high grades over a number of years;  
From 2012-2020 our A level results have never dropped below 17% A\*- A  
In 2020 they were 66% A\*-A (2A\*'s and 2 A's)  
In 2018 they were 75% A\*-A (2 A\*'s and 1 A)  
In 2016 they were 100% A  
In 2014 they were 75% A\*-A  
In 2012 they were 60% A\*-A  
In 2013 the students achieved 90% A\*-C, including 4 A's  
In 2014 the students achieved 100% A\*-B, including 1A\* and 2 A's  
In 2020, 2018, 2016 and 2012 the students achieved 100% A\*-C

- **Does the course take up a lot of time?**

Yes, the course requires a lot of commitment and you will be expected to spend your time in the department during free periods and after school in order to develop your work. This is part of the fun, though and you will find that you build brilliant relationships with your peers and hopefully enjoy the sanctuary of a space where you can be creative and expressive.

- **What kinds of materials will I be using?**

You will have access to a wide range of art media and will be able to enjoy exploring these as you move through the course. Acrylics, oil paint, oil pastels, charcoal, graphite, gloss, varnish, ink, latex, photography, the list goes on . . .

- **Is it a good idea to choose Photography too?**

Lots of A Level Art students study Photography too. The subjects complement each other well and are a good combination, although you will also gain experience of Photography within the Fine Art course, as this is an essential aspect of your work.

- **What kind of career paths would be available to me after studying Fine Art A Level?**

There are many possibilities, here are some; architecture, graphic design, interior design, footwear design, fashion design, contour design, illustration, photography, game design, animation, television, education, set design, floristry

- **What would I do after A Level if I wanted a career in Art, Craft and Design?**

After A Level, students who want to pursue a career in Art, Craft and Design usually take a Foundation Course at a local college or University. This course is an intensive one year course, designed to immerse students in a number of disciplines within the wide range available in the subject. This is a diagnostic course, where the highly experienced tutors will be able to help students identify which degree course they are most suited to. N.B. Architecture students usually go straight onto their chosen course at university, missing out the Foundation course altogether.

# A Level

## Biology

- **What are the entry requirements?**  
You need to get a Grade 6 in Biology and a Grade 6 in Mathematics.
- **Can I study Biology if I am entered for Foundation in Maths or Science?**  
As you require a Grade 6 to study Biology in both Maths and Biology, you would be unable to study A Level, as you can get a maximum of a Grade 5 on the Foundation paper.
- **Why do I need to get a Grade 6 in Mathematics?**  
There is a mathematical component to all of the Science A Levels, which require a sound understanding of Maths. Some of the commonly used mathematical ideas in Biology include, drawing and interpreting graphs, statistical tests, using different formulae.
- **How many exams are there?**  
For AS Biology - there are 2 exams. These are both 1 hour 30 minutes each. They are called: Breadth in Biology and Depth in Biology. There is a mix of multiple choice questions, short answer questions and extend response questions.  
For A2 Biology – there are 3 exams. Two of these are 2 hours and 15 minutes and one is 1 hour and 30 minutes. These are called: Biological Processes; Biological Diversity and Unified Biology.
- **What exam board do we use?**  
OCR A
- **Is Biology harder than GCSE?**  
The short answer is yes, like all A Level subjects. There is a lot of content at A Level that you have to learn and the concepts go into more depth than you have studied at GCSE. You will learn a whole new vocabulary in addition to being able to explain a number of processes.  
It is important that if you decide to pick A Level Biology that you are committed to the course and you really want to study it.
- **What do people find hard about A Level Biology?**  
There is a jump from GCSE to A Level in terms of amount of content and students find it a challenge to remember all the information required for the examination. Students also find it challenging to apply knowledge to unfamiliar contexts, as the examination questions do not ask for answers in a straight forward way.
- **What will I learn about at A Level Biology?**  
There are a huge range of interesting concepts that you learn about during A Level Biology. You begin AS Biology looking at key foundations such as biological molecules, cells and cell division. You then move onto transport in animals and plants. You look at the gaseous exchange system in different animals and how the heart works. There is then a section on diseases and immunity, followed by evolution, biodiversity and classification. During Year 13, you study about respiration, photosynthesis, the kidneys and liver, the nervous system and the brain, genetics and biotechnology and much much more ...

- Do you have to learn about plants?**  
Plants are important living organisms, so yes, they are on the A Level specification. The focus is mostly on the biochemistry of plants and actually you will find learning about the ins and outs of photosynthesis fascinating!
- How much do the textbooks cost?**  
The exact cost will vary depending on where you purchase the textbook from. The AS Biology Year 1 book costs £28.99 and the A Level Biology book (Year 1 and 2 combined) costs £42.99.  
Having a textbook is essential so that you can constantly consolidate the learning in class, add to your notes and learn the content successfully.
- Do you get to do many practicals?**  
Yes, there are 12 Practical Activity Groups (PAGs) that you have to complete, with at least one from each group. We try and make sure you have had more than one for each of the PAGs (as there are 3 possible choices).  
Examples of practicals include: microscopy, investigating enzyme reactions, sampling of habitats, food tests.
- Are we assessed on practicals?**  
You have to collate evidence from your PAGs to get the Practical Endorsement at the end of the qualification.  
You are assessed on the PAGs in your AS and A2 examinations.
- Who teaches A Level Biology?**  
This varies from year to year depending on timetabling and cannot be guaranteed. At the moment, the teachers who teach A Level Biology are: Dr Joshi, Mrs Singh, Mrs Kent and Mrs Cajkler



# A Level

## Business

- **Is Business a popular subject?**

Yes, and it is a growing subject. "A" level business has increased rapidly in popularity over the past three years, we now have more students than ever and 2 classes in each of year 12 and year 13. It is now one of the top 3 most popular A level subjects at the School.

- **Are results good?**

Yes, we have excellent results, both at AS and at A level. Our results are consistently higher than for similar centres and also nationally.

- **What staff do you have?**

We have two full time, specialist, experienced and committed teaching staff. Mr Hunt has many years of management experience at the School in addition to his Business teaching skills. Mrs Westwood Dickens has been teaching for 16 years, plus, extensive management experience in the business world outside of teaching.

Both staff are very aware of students' needs and fully support students. We are available for extra sessions and advice as required by e mail and MS teams. Students of all abilities, provided that they reach the relevant 6th criteria, are very welcome in Business.

- **What resources are available?**

The Business Department offers a real business perspective which underlies all our resources. For example, students are provided with custom-produced Booklets written by Staff to cover the specification topic by topic. These include relevant information accessible by students and support the Course using examples, further reading, activities, and links.

Every topic has a PowerPoint Presentation, available to all students on the Shared Drive, plus, each student is provided with copies. Case studies and other relevant materials are used throughout to develop examination skills, such as numeracy exercises to give students confidence. Resources are constantly developed to reflect changes in the Business world.

- **Is Business a good subject to take at A level?**

Yes, because:

- a) It is an interesting and topical subject in today's world, highly relevant for all students who will enter the world of work at some time in their future.
- b) Recent events (Covid-19) have impacted massively on businesses and the job market. "A" level business helps to make students aware and keep informed, ready to be successful after leaving school.

- **Is it easy to take Business further after post-16 School study?**

Yes; many universities offer business-related degrees. Business ties in well with a wide range of degree level study: can be studied together with various other topics such as management, psychology, sport, marketing, finance, human resources, economics, languages, international studies, law, ICT; these are only examples.

- **How about job opportunities?**

Business acumen and analytical thinking are skills valued by many employers. Studying business gives students a lot of transferable skills. It opens doors to a wide variety of job opportunities: management, accountancy, human resources management, marketing, advertising, finance, operations, consultancy, IT, retail, banking, insurance.

- **How useful is Business A level for all students?**

Irrespective of what students choose to do after School, an A level in Business is useful; students learn good skills: numeracy, literacy, a wider appreciation of the outside world and how it is changing. An understanding of Business impresses employers and may even improve students' chances of finding success world outside of School.

- **What is covered on your A level Business course?**

Our exam board is AQA. The course is arranged as follows:

Year 1 (AS, Year 12)

1. What is Business?
2. Management, Leadership, Decision Making.
3. Decision making to improve performance in business functions:
  - a. Marketing
  - b. Operation
  - c. Finance
  - d. Human Resources

Year 2 (A level, Year 13)

1. Analysing the strategic position of business - internal and external factors
2. Choosing strategic direction
3. Strategic methods: how to pursue business strategies
4. Managing strategic change

- **What examinations are taken?**

Year 12: At AS level there are 2 x 1½ hour examinations:

Paper 1 3 compulsory sections including multiple choice, short answer questions and data response questions (answering questions relating to a business case study).

Paper 2 One compulsory, extensive case study followed by approximately 7 questions.

Year 13: At A Level there are 3, 2 hour examinations:

Paper 1 3 compulsory sections including multiple choice, short answer questions and a choice of two essay questions.

Paper 2 3 data response compulsory questions.

Paper 3 One compulsory case study followed by approximately 6 questions

- **What are the entry requirements?**

Any 5 Grade 4s + at GCSE. If Business is taken at GCSE, a minimum grade 4 is required (you may study A level Business even if you have not taken GCSE). Good skills in English and Mathematics are important in A Level Business, as the Course includes accountancy and other financial topics; and examination questions require extended answers, showing analysis and evaluation. This will be thoroughly covered on the Course and students will be fully supported in gaining these skills.

# A Level

## Chemistry

- **What are the entry requirements?**  
You need to get a Grade 6 in Chemistry and a Grade 6 in Mathematics.
- **Can I study Chemistry if I am entered for Foundation in Maths or Science?**  
As you require a Grade 6 to study Chemistry in both Maths and Chemistry, you would be unable to study A Level, as you can get a maximum of a Grade 5 on the Foundation paper.
- **Why do I need to get a Grade 6 in Mathematics?**  
There is a mathematical component to all of the Science A Levels, which require a sound understanding of Maths. There is a large amount of Maths that you will study in Chemistry and you need to be competent in these skills to be successful at A Level.
- **How much Maths is in Chemistry?**  
A third of the A2 course and half of the AS course links to Maths.
- **How many exams are there?**  
For AS Chemistry - there are 2 exams. These are both 1 hour 30 minutes each. They are called: Breadth in Chemistry and Depth in Chemistry. There is a mix of multiple choice questions, short answer questions and extended response questions.  
For A2 Chemistry – there are 3 exams. Two of these are 2 hours and 15 minutes and one is 1 hour and 30 minutes. These are called: Periodic table, elements and physical chemistry; Synthesis and analytical techniques; and Unified chemistry.
- **What exam board do we use?**  
OCR A
- **Is Chemistry harder than GCSE?**  
The short answer is yes, like all A Level subjects. This is because it is more in depth than GCSE.  
It is important that if you decide to pick A Level Chemistry that you are committed to the course and you really want to study it.
- **What will I learn about at A Level Chemistry?**  
There are a huge range of interesting concepts that you learn about during A Level Chemistry.  
You begin AS Chemistry looking at key foundations such as atomic structure and bonding, calculations and acid-base and redox reactions. You then learn about the periodic table and energy (inorganic chemistry) and organic chemistry.  
During Year 13, you study more about organic chemistry and analysis and look at physical chemistry, such as rates of reactions, entropy and transition metals in more detail.
- **How much do the textbooks cost?**  
The exact cost will vary depending on where you purchase the textbook from. The AS Chemistry Year 1 book costs £28.99 and the A Level Chemistry book (Year 1 and 2 combined) costs £42.99.  
Having a textbook is essential so that you can constantly consolidate the learning in class, add to your notes and learn the content successfully.

- **Do you get to do many practicals?**  
Yes, there are 12 Practical Activity Groups (PAGs) that you have to complete, with at least one from each group. We try to make sure you have had more than one for each of the PAGs (as there are 3 possible choices).  
Examples of practicals include: titration, determining enthalpy changes, synthesis of organic liquids and solids.
- **Are we assessed on practicals?**  
You have to collate evidence from your PAGs to get the Practical Endorsement at the end of the qualification.  
You are assessed on the PAGs in your AS and A2 examinations.
- **Who teaches A Level Chemistry?**  
This varies from year to year depending on timetabling and cannot be guaranteed. At the moment, the teachers who teach A Level Chemistry are: Mr Sadler, Miss Turner and Miss Corcoran
- **Do I need to study Chemistry if I want to do Medicine at University?**  
Yes, Chemistry at a grade A or A\* is essential to progress onto a course in medicine, as well as another Science subject.

# A Level

## Drama and Theatre Studies

- **What Exam Board do you use for A level Drama and Theatre Studies?**

Eduqas. You will complete the AS route in year 12 and A level route in year 13. Specifications for the course can be found at:

[https://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/drama-and-theatre-as-a-level/#tab\\_overview](https://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/drama-and-theatre-as-a-level/#tab_overview)

- **What is the entry requirement for A level Drama and Theatre Studies?**

You need to achieve a minimum Grade 4 at GCSE to study A level Drama and Theatre Studies.

- **What do you study at A level Drama and Theatre Studies?**

The course is made up of 2 components in year 1:

30% Performance – two performances; one reinterpreted from an already published play, the other, a faithful interpretation of a published play text as controlled assessment.

20% Written report – that makes connections between theory and practice.

50% Text in Context – Essay based questions analysing a classical text and live theatre.

The course is made of 3 components in year 2:

30% Performance – one performance reinterpreting an already published play.

30% Written report – Making connections between theory and practice.

40% Text in context – Essay based questions analysing classical, contemporary performance texts and live theatre

- **Do I have to perform A Level Drama and Theatre studies?**

No – there are various routes of assessments at A Level Drama and Theatre studies. You can choose to be assessed on Acting, Costume Design, Set/Prop Design, Lighting Design and Sound Design.

- **Do I need to have done GCSE drama to study A Level Drama and Theatre Studies?**

You do not need to have studied GCSE Drama to study A Level Drama and Theatre studies. All content needed to complete the A Level will be taught to all students, experienced or otherwise. It is however, recommended that you have had some experience performing, either curriculum based or in theatre groups outside of school.

- **How many set works will I study?**

You will study 4 play texts for performance; 2 text in year 1 and 2 texts in year 2.

You will study 3 play texts for written exams; 1 text in year 1 and 2 texts in year 2.

- **Will I be involved in extra-curricular activities?**

Yes – it is compulsory for all A Level Drama students to participate in school productions and/or lower school drama clubs. You will also need to commit to time after school for practical rehearsals of exam work.

- **What are the group sizes?**

Group sizes will vary between 2 – 10 students.

- **Will I work on my own or with others?**

You will work both individually and in groups during your time on the course. As an actor, performance work can be performed alone or within a group. As a designer, you will be required to work with at least one other person in order to complete assessment work.

- **Will I have to watch Live Theatre?**

Yes – It is recommended that you watch as much live theatre as possible. You will watch various pre-recorded production within the curriculum and will have at least two opportunities to watch a live theatre production as part of a theatre trip.

- **What careers can A Level Drama and Theatre Studies Lead to?**

A Level Drama and Theatre Studies is a well-respected subject and can lead to a plethora of career routes.

An obvious route of development of A Level Drama would be to complete an undergraduate degree in performance which could lead to various career opportunities in the performing arts industry: actor for the stage, actor for screen, theatre director, film director, and playwright or screenplay writer. If you prefer the design components within the performing arts, there are various University courses that offer a degree in Production Design. Once completed careers could include; costume designer, costume maker, lighting designer, lighting engineer, sound design, sound engineer, stage manager, set designer, set maker. Some theatres within the industry will higher apprentices to learn on the job rather than completing a degree before employment.

A career using drama does not just begin and end in the theatre and film industry. After completing the relevant qualifications you could use you're a Level in drama for teaching, drama therapy, and applied theatre, theatre in education, anthropology, elocution teaching or private tutor. The nature of the course enables students to develop highly desirable skills in areas such as self-management, creativity, data analysis, performance, teamwork, problem-solving, and communication, all of which make A Level Drama students an attractive prospect for potential employers. Other areas for Drama graduates include broadcasting, publishing, law, sociology, psychology, archaeology, civil services and journalism, among many more. This course facilitates a range of prospects for a successful career.

# A Level

## English Literature

- **Why should I take A Level English Literature?**

It's both fun and challenging! It will also enable you to do well on ANY degree course - because ALL universities require you to formulate arguments and produce clearly developed written work. It enables you to become an articulate, well-rounded person – highly valued in the widest range of careers imaginable.

- **Do I need to have a good grade in GCSE Literature?**

Because the skills are similar in GCSE Language and Literature, a good pass in Language is as helpful as one in Literature. Bear in mind, though, that you are more likely to succeed at A Level if your GCSE grades are higher than the minimum requirement.

- **What are the most important qualities a student of A Level Literature should have?**

A love of reading, an ability to consider a range of interpretations of a text and a willingness to debate ideas.

- **What subjects go well with English Literature?**

Any! It's a good subject to combine with the sciences (and boost your chances of being accepted on a science degree!) AND with the humanities. Some of the ideas in History, Psychology, Politics and Sociology overlap with those in Literature.

- **How different from GCSE is A Level Literature?**

Because we do the same board – OCR – there is a natural progression from GCSE to A Level in terms of the skills you need and the questions you answer. For example, you will explore how far you agree with a given statement about a character or text; you will respond to some unseen material; you will compare texts; you will support your ideas with clear evidence. However – you will now analyse more challenging material, and make effective use of other critical views.

- **What are lessons like?**

We try to avoid lectures – except where necessary. Most of the time you will be in small discussion groups, arguing about different possible readings of texts or sharing ideas about the impact of language. We encourage students to lead lessons as they grow in confidence.

- **How many texts will I study?**

In Year 12 you study two plays, one collection of short stories and one collection of poems; In Year 13 you add a third play, another small collection of poetry and two novels.

- **Will I study a Shakespeare play?**

Yes – but this time it is a comedy. You will be able to make links with the Shakespeare play you studied at GCSE.

- **Will I study 'older' texts?**  
 In addition to Shakespeare you need to study some poetry, a novel and a play from the Victorian age. However, the **ideas** in these texts will seem quite modern as each writer challenged the beliefs and conventions of their day.
- **Is there any coursework?**  
 20% of your A Level (studied in Year 13), is based on coursework. You focus on a collection of poetry, a play and a novel all published in the C20th or later.
- **May I choose my own texts to study?**  
 Yes – in coursework for A Level you write about your own choice of novel published after 2000. That writer may still be alive! You are also free to select your own poetry and drama texts – although most students choose the modern play they studied in Year 12.
- **Is there any creative writing?**  
 You may be encouraged to write in the style of one of the texts you are studying. If you wish, one of the pieces for coursework may be a creative reinterpretation of one of your three selected texts.
- **Are the examination papers open or closed book?**  
 As with GCSE, all exam papers are closed book. You already know how to learn quotations!
- **What does it cost?**  
 You are expected to purchase your own copies of the set texts, for £21 in Year 12 and a further £15 in Year 13. You may need to buy your own novel for the coursework.



# A Level

## Film Studies

- **What type of Qualification is Film Studies?**  
Film Studies is an A Level course. You will receive a grade from A to E.
- **Can I decide to drop it after a year and get an AS qualification?**  
You will have the option, if you complete the first year to the required standard to receive an AS award.
- **What will I study?**  
Throughout both years you will study the key elements of film form including cinematography, mise en scene, editing, sound and performance as well as context to when the film was made. The range of different films you will look at is wide and varied from Hollywood to British and American Independent to silent, short and experimental film which many students have found interesting.
- **What is the split between exams and coursework?**  
At AS, there are two exams each worth 35% with the remaining 30% assessed by production work. Each exam lasts 90 minutes and consists of four extended response questions over two sections. There is a similar set up in year 2, only the exams are 150 minutes long and consist of answering 3 extended response questions.
- **What skills will I gain?**  
There are many transferrable skills that will help students in both further education, employment and life in general. They include creative thinking, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, film analysis, textual analysis, communication and research skills.

# A Level

## French

- **What grade do I need to achieve in order to be able to choose French?**  
Grade 4+
- **Is literature part of the AS syllabus?**  
At AS Level we study a film (“Au revoir les enfants”) and in Year 13 we study a French novel.
- **Is there a speaking exam?**  
Yes, Paper 3 is the speaking exam and it is conducted with your teacher in May. You are given a great deal of resources to enable you to prepare for this exam.
- **Are the topics similar to GCSE French?**  
Yes, there is some overlap and extension, for example “The changing nature of Family” and Modules on music and cinema. The Modules we study in Year 12 aim to build on content learnt lower down the school.
- **Are there any significant changes to the exam this year?**  
No, the exam rubric has remained the same at present.
- **I find listening really challenging. Are we examined in this?**  
Yes, in paper 1 there is a listening element, however you have control of the text and you can listen to it as many times as you want within the time given.
- **Is the development of grammar important?**  
Yes, very. At the start of Year 12 we have an intensive revision programme designed to bridge the gap between GCSE and AS Level, and make the transition easier.
- **Will I have the same teacher as I had for GCSE?**  
Not necessarily. Mrs Renault will be teaching Year 12 alongside Mrs Foley or Ms Lee. The AS and A Level classes always have two teachers sharing out the 5 hours per week.
- **Can I still practise my vocabulary on Quizlet and Memrise?**  
Yes, both of these apps are designed to teach AS and A Level. On Memrise, the coursebook we use has been uploaded so that all of the vocabulary is available to practise.
- **Is there anything I can do to prepare myself if I’m interested in taking French next year?**  
Yes definitely. First, have a conversation with your French teacher and they will recommend an extra reading list. Practise the AS level vocabulary on Memrise and use your complex grammar structures at every opportunity. Listen to French radio or read articles on topics that interest you on the internet.

# A Level

## Geography

- **Why choose Geography?**

Choose Geography if you enjoy:

- Getting to know the world through fieldwork
- Getting to know places and understanding other cultures
- Developing your understanding of the impact of globalisation on our lives and how we can manage this sustainably
- To develop a wide range of skills using computers and other technology; which employers and universities really value.

A Level Geography is classed as a science subject by all leading [Russell Group] universities, which provides a human dimension, if you are planning on a range of science studies.

- **How does Geography combine with other A level subjects?**

- If taken with science, it can provide you with the broadest careers options
- If taken with other arts subjects (e.g. History, English, Sociology, Business Studies), it can provide you with a science element, broadening your horizons and keeping your career options open.

- **What is involved in the course at AS Level?**

There are two papers at AS Level, both 1 hour and 30 minutes, which is the same as at GCSE. Equally, it will cover some familiar topics such as Hazards to help make the step up to A Level; as well as new topics such as Changing Places.

You will also need to experience at least two days of fieldwork during the first year of the course.

Component 1: Physical geography and people and the environment	
<b>What's assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section A: <b>either</b> Water and carbon cycles <b>or</b> Coastal systems and landscapes <b>or</b> Hot desert environments and their margins (40 marks)</li> <li>• Section B: <b>either</b> Hazards <b>or</b> Contemporary urban environments (40 marks)</li> </ul>	<b>How it's assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes</li> <li>• 80 marks</li> <li>• 50% of AS</li> </ul>
+	
Component 2: Human geography and geography fieldwork investigation	
<b>What's assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section A: <b>either</b> Global systems and global governance <b>or</b> Changing places (40 marks)</li> <li>• Section B: Geography fieldwork investigation and geographical skills (40 marks)</li> </ul>	<b>How it's assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes</li> <li>• 80 marks</li> <li>• 50% of AS</li> </ul>

- **What is involved in the course at A2 Level?**  
At A2 Level, there are two examined papers, both 2 hours and 30 minutes each, which are divided between Physical Geography [Paper 1] and Human Geography [Paper 2].

It is also expected that you complete at least two further days of fieldwork, which can combine with your Non-Examined Assessment [coursework] that can be based on any aspect of the course you find most interesting. The NEA is also an essential foundation for developing the skills required at university for your dissertation.

- **How successful are our A Level students?**  
A2 Level: 100% Grades A\*-C  
ALPs Rated as 'EXCELLENT'

- **More variety than in most other subjects ...?**

A CBI survey stated that most employers would take on geographers more than any other subject because of the breadth of skills learnt and used in the subject.

During the AS / A2 course, you will be able to:

- Share your work in group presentations
- Develop your research skills through enquiries
- Become involved in discussion based and problem solving activities
- Develop your ICT skills

- **Where do all the geographers go?**

It is a subject which is welcomed by universities (degree courses, BTEC and other vocational courses) and is seen as a 'facilitating subject' by the UK's best (Russell Group) universities because it provides all the skills which are essential for success on degree courses. It can offer you the widest range of job opportunities than any other subject - from accountancy, architecture, civil engineering, the police force, IT, Law, to personnel and management.

- **Broaden your horizons – what about fieldwork?**

A level Geography requires you to complete at least four days of fieldwork that will also include an independent non-examined assessment [or coursework]. This provides an excellent opportunity to conduct a fieldwork study on a topic that really interests you and equally provides an excellent insight into the process of writing a dissertation at university.

- **How can Geography help develop my skills for university?**

Geography is fundamentally about debating how best we can shape our future; therefore building arguments requires a high level of English skills at this level. In addition, Maths skills are also developed to an advanced standard with a clear focus on statistical testing. Use of Geographic Information Systems develops confidence in ICT and you will be strongly encouraged to use mobile apps such as GeogIT to experience how technology can really enhance your data collection and presentations. In addition, researching, referencing, critical thinking, map-reading and scientific reasoning skills will all be enhanced along with the ability to work both independently and collaboratively.

#### A-level

Component 1: Physical geography	
<b>What's assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section A: Water and carbon cycles</li> <li>• Section B: <b>either</b> Coastal systems and landscapes <b>or</b> Hot desert environments and their margins</li> <li>• Section C: <b>either</b> Hazards <b>or</b> Ecosystems under stress <b>or</b> Cold environments</li> </ul>	<b>How it's assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes</li> <li>• 96 marks</li> <li>• 40% of A-level</li> </ul>
+	
Component 2: Human geography	
<b>What's assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section A: Global systems and global governance</li> <li>• Section B: Changing places</li> <li>• Section C: <b>either</b> Population and environment <b>or</b> Contemporary urban environments <b>or</b> Resource security</li> </ul>	<b>How it's assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes</li> <li>• 96 marks</li> <li>• 40% of A-level</li> </ul>
+	
Component 3: Geographical investigation	
<b>What's assessed</b> <p>Students complete an individual investigation which must include data collected in the field. The individual investigation must be based on a question or issue defined and developed by the student relating to any part of the specification content.</p>	<b>How it's assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3,000 – 4,000 words</li> <li>• 35 marks</li> <li>• 20% of A-level</li> <li>• Marked by teachers moderated by AQA</li> </ul>

- **If I want to continue studying Geography at university, what might this look like?**  
Geography at university is very different to A level in the sense that there is no set curriculum, so what you study will depend on the university you attend. This allows you as a student to study elements of the subject that interest you, specialising in what you enjoy most.

If you opt for a BA degree you are more likely to focus on elements of human geography and with a BSc degree you can study more physical geography. However, this is not a rigid system and you have choices and flexibility to select what you learn, tailoring your university education to your own interests.

Unlike the national approach to assessment at GCSE and A Level, methods of examining students at university varies considerably between modules, departments and universities as a whole. Many geography departments have assessed pieces of coursework, essays and computer based skills that contribute to final results in addition to written exams. On completion of your degree, you will have a wide range of skills that are highly desirable to employers and will have prepared you for working in an extensive range of employment sectors.

# A Level

## History

- **Why choose to study History at A Level?**

**Fact ...**

Did you know that at Universities around the world it is the History departments that remain the largest? A Level History is very highly regarded by universities and employers. Historians are prized for their ability to gather and analyse information, express themselves clearly and, most of all, for their independence of mind. The History Department at English Martyrs Sixth Form has an excellent track record as being a popular and high achieving subject with students.

**So...**

By choosing history you can be part of one of the most popular, fascinating and thought provoking subjects on offer with some outstanding teachers to guide you.

- **What about my career?**

The attraction of studying history at any level, but particularly at A Level is that the training and skills developed throughout the course are so highly regarded that the greatest variety of occupations are found by History students. You can choose to do absolutely anything! There is no other subject which prepares you for any career better than history!

- **What is the point of History?**

In one word...

... **EVERYTHING!** Without it we would know nothing, have nothing and be nothing! How can you know who you are unless you have studied the past? We are the product of the past and in the present we make history in our own personal way every day.

- **I've heard that it is meant to be interesting...**

It's about the most interesting thing in the world... real people. We all like to know what real people get up to and that's what history is all about. People are never dull and they get up to the strangest things!

- **So what are the benefits of studying history other than employability?**

There's so much more you can get out of History than just a pathway to a career. It takes you on a journey of self-discovery by giving you a broader 'world view', offering you the opportunity to make sense of people, the world and the problems around us; whether it be the increasing concern of Russia to the world, the continuing impact of religion as a source of conflict, or the changing relationship between Britain and Europe. History allows you the freedom to think and the chance to understand more about the society in which you live. Above all, unlike any other subject, it defines who you are in this world and empowers you with the ability to contribute to, and indeed alter, it!

- **What skills will I develop in History?**

Employers who see that you have a qualification in History will know certain things about you. They will know that you have taken on certain key skills which, learnt through history, can be applied to all sorts of situations:

- You can understand how people think, what motivates them, what they believe and feel.
- You are able to undertake your own extensive independent research.
- You are able to critically assess information and evaluate a range of sources such as biographies, TV programmes, paintings and the internet.
- You can use the past as a means to understand and be critical of current events.
- You can be confident in developing better interpretations rather than relying on 'correct answers'.
- You can communicate clearly and have learned to express yourself verbally and on paper.
- You have developed your own sense of identity as an individual based on the context of the historical studies you have undertaken.

- **What will I study in A Level History?**

At English Martyrs Sixth Form we offer students an exciting, and updated History syllabus which covers British, European and World studies. History is fascinating in its own right, full of intrigue, and stories of heroism, revolution and conflict. Our courses allow you to learn about some of the greatest personalities and most significant events of the past: The Russian Revolution, Lenin, Stalin, the Soviet leaders during the Cold War, the Reformation in England, the reigns of Henry VII, Henry VIII, Edward I, Mary I, Elizabeth I, the division of Germany after WW2, the Communist regime under the Stasi and SED, what caused the American Civil War, the anti-slavery movement, why the North won, President Lincoln and his leadership, the role of Ulysses S Grant, and so much more.

- **How will I be assessed?**

This is an examination based course and is assessed in a variety of ways to reflect the needs of all our students; the two AS units will be assessed through two examinations, each worth 50% of your final AS grade.

The A2 course is also comprised of four units; the first two courses studied at AS, as well as a coursework unit (worth 20% of your final grade) which will allow you to develop and research your own historical enquiry question. The final A2 unit is assessed through an examination paper on rebellion and disorder under the Tudors, and is worth 30% of your final grade.

- **How will I be taught?**

The way we study A Level History at English Martyrs is even more varied and involving than at GCSE! At this higher level we aim to develop your skills as a historian and deepen your understanding of the present through your study of the past through different methods that prove it is not all just about recording the facts!

- Smaller classes with pupils who want to study history at a higher level.
- Discussions and debates.
- Role-play, drama and hot seating.
- The use of media such as documentaries and films to critically assess interpretations of the past.
- The opportunity to read widely around the topics which interest you.
- Encouragement to develop independent thinking rather than just learning the facts.

- **Who can study History?**

In a word, everyone! History is an analytical subject and if you enjoy asking questions, arguing your point and arriving at your own judgments then you will be well suited to it. We place a lot of emphasis on discussion and debate, encouraging you to develop your own skills and to think independently rather than just learning factual material.

- **So what are the entry requirements?**

We will consider every application we receive based individually upon each candidate's merits. You do not need to have studied History at GCSE to study at A-Level however, we expect students to have achieved at least a grade 5 in GCSE English if they have not studied History before. Students who have studied History at GCSE will be accepted if they have achieved a grade 4, however it is preferable to have achieved a grade 5 or higher.



# BTEC Level 3 Extended Certificate in Information Technology

- **What is a BTEC?**

BTECS offer an alternative option to A-Levels. They have both internally assessed units e.g. coursework based and externally set examinations.

A BTEC Level 3 Extended Certificate is the equivalent to 1 x A-Level.

- **How are BTECs Graded?**

BTEC Grading is different to A Levels. The table below shows the BTEC grades with the A-Level equivalent.

BTEC Grade	A-Level Equivalent
<b>Distinction *</b>	8
<b>Distinction</b>	7
<b>Merit</b>	4
<b>Pass</b>	2
<b>Fail</b>	U

- **How long is the course?**

The BTEC Level 3 Extended Certificate in Information Technology is a 2 Year course.

- **What are the topic areas I will study on the course?**

The table below shows all the topic areas and assessment methods.

Unit	School Year	Assessment Method
<b>2-Creating Systems to Manage Information</b>	Lower Sixth	<b>External</b> 2 x Practical Examinations: Part A – 3 hrs Part B – 2 hrs
<b>3-Using Social Media in Business</b>	Lower Sixth	Internal
<b>1-Information Technology Systems</b>	Upper Sixth	<b>External</b> 1 x Written Examination 2 hrs
<b>5-Website Development*</b>	Upper Sixth	Internal

*\*The course offers 2 x optional units, Unit 4-Spreadsheets or Unit 5-Website Development. Only one of these units is required and Web Development is a natural follow on from the BTEC Level 2 offered at English Martyrs Catholic School.*

- **What will I study in the “Creating Systems to Manage Information” Unit?**  
Learners study the design, creation, testing and evaluation of a relational database system to manage information.

The key assessment areas are:

- a) Demonstrate knowledge of database development terminology, standards, concepts and processes
- b) Apply knowledge and understanding of database development terminology, standards, concepts and processes to create a software product to meet a client brief
- c) Analyse information about database problems and data from test results to optimise the performance of a database solution
- d) Evaluate evidence to make informed judgements about the success of a database’s design and performance
- e) Be able to develop a database solution to meet a client brief with appropriate justification

- **What will I study in the “Using Social Media in Business” Unit?**  
Learners explore how businesses use social media to promote their products and services. Learners also implement social media activities in a business to meet requirements.

The key assessment areas are:

- a) Explore the impact of social media on the ways in which businesses promote their products and services
- b) Develop a plan to use social media in a business to meet requirements
- c) Implement the use of social media in a business.

- **What will I study in the “Information Technology Systems” Unit?**  
You will study the role of computer systems and the implications of their use in personal and professional situations.

The key assessment areas are:

- a) Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of information technology terms, standards, concepts and processes
- b) Apply knowledge and understanding of information technology terms, standards, concepts and processes
- c) Select and use information technologies and procedures to explore likely outcomes and find solutions to problems in context
- d) Analyse and evaluate information, technologies and procedures in order to recommend and justify solutions to IT problems
- e) Make connections between the application of technologies, procedures, outcomes and solutions to resolve IT problems

- **What will I study in the “Web Development” Unit?**  
Learners investigate website development principles. They will design and develop a website using scripting languages.

The key assessment areas are:

- a) Understand the principles of website development
- b) Design a website to meet client requirements
- c) Develop a website to meet client requirements

- **What requirement is there for Homework/Independent Study?**

Units 1 and 2 are assessed by an examination and revision activities are issued to ensure the foundations of the key learning areas are embedded to prepare you for them.

Due to the nature of this subject, assessment for units 3 and 5 **MUST** be completed under supervision of the class teacher. No assessment work can be completed at home.

All work is set on a date and due in for submission on time. This is a requirement of all BTEC Courses and your grade can be affected by a late submission. It is your responsibility to manage your time effectively to ensure it is submitted within the timeframe set.

All work is set via **Show My Homework** and **Microsoft Teams**. All work is submitted electronically via Microsoft Teams.

- **What is the progression to further learning?**

On completion of this course, you can progress to University on an IT degree or specialist IT degree e.g. Web Development, IT Systems.

It also forms a good level of understanding of ICT to progress on to courses that include IT e.g. Degree in Business IT.

Apprenticeships are also an additional route upon completion.

# A Level

## Mathematics

- **Why study Maths after GCSE?**
  - Stimulating and challenging courses;
  - Increase knowledge and understanding of mathematical techniques and their applications;
  - Support the study of other A levels;
  - Develop key employability skills such as problem-solving, logical reasoning, communication and resilience;
  - Excellent preparation for a wide range of university courses;
  - Leads to versatile qualifications that are well-respected by employers and higher education.
- **What are the career opportunities?**

“...analysis highlights the economic value of good mathematical skills and of higher level qualifications... There is compelling evidence of continued wage returns of up to 11% to A level Mathematics. ”
- **How many exams are there?**

Pure P1, Pure P2, Stats/Mechanics P3  
3 exams: 2h each, 100 marks each, ALL CALCULATOR
- **What is on the course?**

Algebra, geometry, statistics (working with data from a sample to make inferences about a population, probability calculations, modelling real life data using statistical distributions and hypothesis testing) and mechanics (the study of the physical world, modelling the motion of objects and the forces acting on them).
- **What is new compared to GCSE?**

Y12 begins with topics you are familiar with from GCSE: surds, indices, inequalities, simultaneous equations and quadratics etc.  
C1: binomial, C2: Calculus (50%)  
Roughly 60% new content in AS
- **Is it harder compared to GCSE?**

Attitude is more important than ability. A Grade 7 in GCSE Mathematics is highly desirable.

# **BTEC Level 3 Extended Certificate in Creative Digital Media Production**

- **What type of Qualification is Media?**

Media is a BTEC National Level 3 qualification. Given the practical element of Media, the BTEC qualification specifically allows an excellent opportunity to learn both strong elements of the theoretical understanding but also to be able to apply that knowledge in practical film making tasks.

- **Is it the same as A Level?**

BTEC Media is not the same as an A Level, however, it is equivalent to an A Level. It is therefore both accepted by employers and universities when applying for jobs, apprenticeships and degrees.

- **Will I get a grade the same as A Level?**

The grading awarded at BTEC is Pass, Merit, Distinction and Distinction\*

- **Can I decide to drop it after a year and still get the equivalent of an AS qualification?**

Unfortunately, BTEC Media specifically is a two year course and while other BTEC's do offer the ability to achieve a AS equivalent grade after one year, this is not an option for Media.

- **What will I study?**

The primary purpose of this course is to teach students to make good film. In order to achieve this, students will learn a range of many varying and different skills and knowledge. Understanding different film making techniques including the use of light, camera work, sound, background and setting in existing products. Students will look at different genres, the use of tension, narrative structure. This will run parallel to more practical elements of film making, camerawork, editing, recording sound, planning, organising and communicating with others. The course is both demanding but hopefully rewarding in that allows students to explore many different aspects of film making while enabling them to develop certain areas they find most interesting.

- **What is the split between exams and coursework?**

BTEC Media has four units two are coursework and two are exam based. The coursework element of the course will involve taking responsibility for the development and execution of a film project. The exam units are quite different in nature. The first is a practical exam where students will be given two weeks to plan a film project before sitting two, three hour exams where they will have to show the planning and development of the idea. The second is a two hour theory based exam where students will be shown clips of films or pictures and asked to discuss different elements such as the use of light or how the character was represented.

- **How will media help me get a job?**

Media and the Media Industry is an ever expanding and rewarding career option. There are many options and pathways open to students within the industry, indeed a number of our students have subsequently carried on to gain direct employment within the industry as well as continuing on to study Media at university, being able to show their work as real evidence of their media ability to gain access.

Students also gain a number of valuable and transferable skills to show personal development, planning, organising and communicating with others. The range of career pathways students have subsequently gone onto follow is both rich and varied.

# A Level

## Music

- **What Exam Board do you use for A Level Music?**  
Edexcel. There is no AS qualification, so it is a 2 year course.
- **What is the entry requirement for A Level Music?**  
You need to achieve a minimum Grade 6 at GCSE, to study A Level Music.
- **Do I need to have taken any theory exams before studying A Level Music?**  
You don't need to have taken any ABRSM or Trinity theory exams, however you will need Grade 4 theory knowledge to access the course.
- **What do you study in A Level Music?**  
The course is made up of the same 3 components studied at GCSE:  
30% Performance – An 8 minute recital in Year 13.  
20% Composition – A free composition, or a composition based on a brief set by Edexcel.  
10% Technical Study – Harmonising 2 Bach Chorales as controlled assessment.  
40% Listening & Appraising.
- **What grade do you need to be on your instrument/voice?**  
You need to be Grade 5 standard at the beginning of the A Level course (you don't necessarily need to have taken the practical exam). You will be required to perform at Grade 7 standard for your performance exam in Year 13.
- **Do you need to have weekly tuition on your instrument/voice?**  
Yes, this is very important as it prepares you for the performance aspect of the course. At English Martyrs, weekly tuition is provided free of charge. You will have a 30 minute lesson from one of our specialist visiting teachers, who are outstanding performers and trained to prepare students for their A Level performance.
- **How many set works will I study?**  
18, over 2 years.
- **Will I be involved in any extra-curricular activities?**  
Yes – it is compulsory for all A Level students to participate in the relevant choirs and ensembles as advised by the Director of Music.
- **What are the group sizes?**  
Group sizes will vary from between 2-10 students.

- **What careers can A Level Music lead to?**

A Level Music is a highly regarded subject, either alongside other creative courses or in demonstrating a broader range of skills next to Science and Maths. Whilst Music can be a useful subject for Arts and Media courses at university, the obvious degree pathway is going on to a degree in Music, which can lead to a range of exciting career options, including becoming a professional musician, a sound technician, a music therapist, a teacher, or a private tutor. The varied nature of the course enables students to develop highly desirable skills in areas such as self-management, creativity, data analysis, performance, teamwork, problem-solving, and communication, all of which make 'A' level musicians an attractive prospect for potential employers. Other popular destinations for music graduates include broadcasting, publishing, law, politics and the Civil Service. Rather than limiting your career prospects, a music degree opens doors to a wide range of careers.



# A Level

## Photography

- **Why should I study photography?**

Photography is unlike other visual arts in that it begins with a world full of things rather than with a blank slate. Photography is more an art of selection and translation rather than of invention. It is a hybrid form of art informed by science, social science and the humanities. It could also be said it is the most diverse and democratic of the visual arts. This is designed to captivate you both creatively and intellectually.

- **What will I learn on the course?**

You will be introduced to a variety of experiences exploring a range of photographic media, techniques, and processes. You will be made aware of both traditional and new technologies. You will explore relevant images and resources relating to Photography and a wider range of art and design, from the past and to recent times, including European and non-European examples. This is integral to the investigating and making process. Your responses to these examples will be shown through practical and critical activities which demonstrate your understanding of different styles, genres and traditions. You will be aware of the four assessment objectives to be demonstrated in the context of the content and skills presented, and of the importance of process as well as product. You will keep a visual journal (digital sketchbook) to document your work. You will use digital techniques to produce images. The whole course is digital therefore you will learn how to use a digital SLR camera and lenses, understand the basic principles of exposure, shutter speed and aperture. Learn how to use studio lighting equipment and experiment with different digital photographic techniques.

- **What are the aims of the course?**

On this course you will develop:

The ability to explore elements of visual language, line, form, colour, pattern, focus, light and texture in the context of photography.

- Awareness of intended audience or purpose for your chosen area(s) of photography.
- The ability to respond to an issue, theme, concept or idea, or work to a brief or answer a need in photography.
- Appreciation of viewpoint, composition, aperture, depth of field, shutter speed and movement.
- Appropriate use of the camera, lenses, filters and lighting for work in your chosen area(s) of photography.
- Understanding of techniques related to the production of photographic images and presentation and layout.

- **What are the areas of study?**

You will be required to work in one or more area(s) of photography, such as those listed below. You may explore overlapping areas and combinations of areas:

- Portraiture
- Landscape photography (working from the urban, rural and/or coastal environment)
- Still life photography (working from objects or from the natural world)
- Documentary photography, photo- journalism
- Fashion photography
- Experimental imagery
- Multimedia
- Photographic installation
- Moving image (video, film, animation)

- **Do I need my own camera?**

Yes, but it does not have to be a DSLR camera, any digital compact camera or a good mobile phone that has a camera with the ability to change settings manually. We only have a limited number of cameras to use in class.

- **How will I be assessed?**

Students are entered for AQA examinations. The course is made up of two components, in year 12 component 1 is portfolio based and makes up 60% of your final grade, whilst component 2 is an externally set exam task worth 40% with a practical 10-hour exam. In year 13 it follows the same structure, but component 1 is a Personal Investigation with a written element of 1500-3000 words. Component 2 is an externally set exam task worth 40% with a practical 15-hour exam

- **Is there an exam?**

For the externally set assignment (Component 2) students will choose from a selection of externally set themes given by the exam board. Through research and practical experimentation students will develop a body of work that explores their chosen theme. The investigations must include evidence of the student's ability to research and develop ideas and relate their work in meaningful ways to relevant critical/contextual materials. The investigation must be informed by an aspect of contemporary or past practice of artists, photographers, designers or craftspeople. Students will be given 10 weeks preparatory time and 10 or 15 hours exam to create final outcomes.

- **What does the course combine well with?**

A wide variety of subjects: Photography combines Art and Science very neatly. Although many students study it alongside art subjects, useful links exist between Photography and Psychology, Media Studies, Film Studies, History, Sociology, Geography and English.

- **What skills are required?**

No skills are required, you do need the enthusiasm and the willingness to learn, be proactive and be ready to work independently and oversee your own learning. This course is after school 2 days a week therefore you need to show exceptional commitment. It is a course with high academic expectations in terms of language and the ability to research and analyse with the added dimension of technical understanding. But it is a most rewarding course as well. This course will definitely prepare you for higher education at university.

- **What can career or Higher Education course can Photography lead too?**

This course will lead you to a career in Photography of course, but also in Art & Design, Visual communication, Advertising, Graphic design or Illustration, TV/Film & Media Production, Multimedia technology, Journalism and even Forensic Science.

# A Level

## Physics

- **What are the entry requirements?**  
You need to get a Grade 6 in Physics and a Grade 6 in Mathematics.
- **Can I study Physics if I am entered for Foundation in Maths or Science?**  
As you require a Grade 6 to study Physics in both Maths and Chemistry, you would be unable to study A Level, as you can get a maximum of a Grade 5 on the Foundation paper.
- **Why do I need to get a Grade 6 in Mathematics?**  
There is a mathematical component to all of the Science A Levels, which require a sound understanding of Maths. There is a large amount of Maths that you will study in Physics and you need to be competent in these skills to be successful at A Level.
- **How much Maths is in Physics?**  
There is a great deal of Maths in Physics, some of this crosses over with the Mathematics A Level, such as the mechanics section. There are lots of equations, graphs and calculations involved and you need a good grasp of mathematics to be able to confidently tackle the physics questions which involve all the above components.
- **Do I need to study A Level Maths?**  
No, it is not a requirement to study Maths at A Level, although it complements Physics very well. Some University courses may require you to have Maths and Physics, so if you know this is something you want to do beyond the Sixth Form, it would be a good idea to research these courses before selecting your options.
- **How many exams are there?**  
For AS Physics - there are 2 exams. These are both 1 hour 30 minutes each. They are called: Breadth in Physics and Depth in Physics. There are a mix of multiple choice questions, short answer questions and extend response questions.  
For A2 Physics – there are 3 exams. Two of these are 2 hours and 15 minutes and one is 1 hour and 30 minutes. These are called: Modelling Physics; Exploring Physics; Unified Physics.
- **What exam board do we use?**  
OCR A
- **Is Physics harder than GCSE?**  
The short answer is yes, like all A Level subjects. There is some complex mathematics involved, as well as more challenging concepts. The A Level requires you to gain a deeper understanding of concepts that you begin to learn at GCSE.  
It is important that if you decide to pick A Level Physics that you are committed to the course and you really want to study it.
- **What do people find hard about A Level Physics?**  
Students find the jump from GCSE to AS Physics challenging, as although it is building on previous knowledge it requires more practice to master the finer details.

- **What will I learn about at A Level Physics?**

There are a huge range of interesting concepts that you learn about during A Level Physics. You begin AS Physics looking at key foundations such as physical quantities and measurements. you then move onto topics in Forces and motion and electrons, waves and photons

During Year 13, you learn about the Newtonian world and astrophysics, Particles and medical physics and much much more.

- **How much do the textbooks cost?**

The exact cost will vary depending on where you purchase the textbook from. The AS Physics Year 1 book costs £28.99 and the A Level Physics book (Year 1 and 2 combined) costs £42.99.

Having a textbook is essential so that you can constantly consolidate the learning in class, add to your notes and learn the content successfully.

- **Do you get to do many practicals?**

Yes, there are 12 Practical Activity Groups (PAGs) that you have to complete, with at least one from each group. We try and make sure you have had more than one for each of the PAGs (as there are 3 possible choices).

Examples of practicals include: determining the gravitational field strength, investigating radiation, electrical circuits and quantum effects.

- **Are we assessed on practicals?**

You have to collate evidence from your PAGs to get the Practical Endorsement at the end of the qualification.

You are assessed on the PAGs in your AS and A2 examinations.

- **Who teaches A Level Physics?**

This varies from year to year depending on timetabling and cannot be guaranteed. At the moment, the teachers who teach A Level Physics are: Dr Brown, Mr Boston and Mrs Suraweera

# A Level

## Politics

- **What will we study?**

Unit 1 – UK Politics  
democracy  
political parties  
electoral systems  
voting behaviour and the media

Unit 2 – UK Government  
the constitution  
parliament  
the Prime Minister  
relationships between the different branches of government

Unit 3 – Government and Politics of the USA  
the US Constitution and federalism  
US Congress  
the President  
US Supreme Court and civil rights  
democracy and participation  
comparative theories between UK and US

Core Political Ideas (all three of the following)  
conservatism  
liberalism  
socialism

Non-Core Political Ideas (one of the following)  
anarchism  
ecologism  
feminism  
multiculturalism  
nationalism

- **How will we be examined?**

Year 12 – Two 1 hour 45-minute exams covering UK Politics and Government  
Year 13 – Three 2-hour exams covering the whole course

- **Which exam board do we use?**

Pearson

- **What are the entry requirements?**

Five grade 4+ passes at GCSE. The course is assessed primarily by essay so good passes in English and History (if taken) are important.  
You also need to have an interest in current affairs and follow the news.

- **Which other A Levels would Politics combine well with?**  
Politics can combine with any other subject but History, Theology, Sociology, English, Business and Psychology are common combinations.

# A Level

## Psychology

### **What is psychology?**

Psychology is the study of mind and behaviour.

### **What does the subject entail?**

A diverse selection of topics are covered in the AQA Psychology Specification:

### **Year 12: Psychology A Level Year 1 and AS**

Social influence, Human memory, Attachment, Approaches, Psychopathology, Research Methods

### **Year 13: Psychology A Level Year 2**

Schizophrenia, Human relationships, Forensic psychology, Approaches, Biopsychology, Research Methods, Issues and debates in Psychology

### **In Year 12 we will be answering questions such as.....**

How does our memory work?

What happens to infants if they do not form attachments with a caregiver?

Why do people obey?

What are the symptoms and causes of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, phobias and depression?

What are the links between human biological structures e.g. the brain and behaviour?

### **In Year 13 we will be answering questions such as.....**

What are the explanations for offending behaviour?

What is offender profiling?

What are the psychological explanations for schizophrenia?

Is there evidence for brain localisation of function?

How do human relationships form?

### **What skills are required?**

Above all you need an interest and a passion for finding out about why people behave the way they do.

It helps if you can look at a behaviour and actively consider different points of view as to why the person is behaving that way e.g. Someone with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder may have it due to past life experiences rather than biological reasons.

Independent learning skills are valued in all A Levels, but being able to read after lessons and study away from class is valued greatly.

### **What are the entry requirements?**

5 Grade 4's and above to include Grade 4 in GCSE Maths and Grade 4 in at least one GCSE Science subject.

### **How will I be assessed?**

Assessment is through examinations. There is no assessed coursework but you will have an opportunity to conduct at least two mini investigations into human behaviour under supervision which will help with exam skills.

### **Psychology A Level Year 1 and AS**

Paper 1: Introductory Topics in Psychology. Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes (50% of AS level)

Paper 2: Psychology in context. Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes (50% of AS level)

### **Psychology A Level Year 2**

Paper 1: Introductory Topics in Psychology. Written exam: 2 hours (33.3% of A-level)

Paper 2: Psychology in context. Written exam: 2 hours (33.3% of A-level) Paper 3: Issues and Options in Psychology: 2 hours (33.3% of A-level).

### **What other subjects work well with it (typical combinations)?**

Any combination will work as Psychology is found in all areas of life. Currently students are studying Psychology with: Sociology, Politics, Business studies, History, English etc

Students who select science subjects e.g. Biology also choose Psychology. It does offer alternative few points that traditional science subjects may not address e.g. mental illness may be explained through psychological rather than biological principles.

### **What careers can I do with a qualification in Psychology?**

You can specialise as a Chartered Psychologist e.g. in Sports, Clinical, Educational, Forensic psychology etc

An A Level in Psychology is a starting point to these careers which involve studying at university and doing post-graduate training

Essentially any career where you work with people would be a useful application of psychology e.g. teaching, police work, nursing, human resources etc

If you want to know more about careers you could contact the British Psychological Society at [www.bps.org.uk](http://www.bps.org.uk)

### **Will I do well studying Psychology at English Martyrs Sixth Form?**

The Psychology Department has an excellent record of high achievement. A – Level results have been awarded ALPS ratings of between 1-3, indicating 'excellent' performance each year from 2007 to the present. In other words, students typically add value to their expected grades meaning they do well.

### **How is Psychology taught within the classroom?**

The content is delivered using a variety of different techniques from group work to individual tasks. We also subscribe to Kerboodle which gives you an excellent opportunity to engage online as well.

### **How popular is Psychology at university?**

Psychology is one of the UK's fastest-growing subject at degree level and is very popular.



# A Level

## Religious Studies

- **What is covered on the course?**

Religious Studies is broken up into three strands: Philosophy, Ethics and Developments in Christian Thinking. Each section is given equal weighting. Philosophy deals with the search for knowledge and deals with questions about the existence of God. Ethics explores questions of morality and what should be done when faced with a particular set of circumstances. Christian Thinking is concerned with matters of religious doctrine, Church teaching and faith.
- **What skills will I acquire on the course?**

Students will learn to critically assess evidence, debate relevant and current issues, create threads of arguments and articulate their own views clearly and succinctly. The three separate strands prepare students for higher education in a wide variety of ways but fundamentally lead to a greater richness and depth of understanding enabling students to perceive the world around them in a new and exciting way.
- **Do I need to have studied Religious Education at GCSE?**

No. It is certainly an advantage to have received some form of Religious Education, to be of or to have been exposed to some form of religious disposition given that one third of the course is 'Developments in Christian Thinking' and another explores the philosophy of religion.
- **Is Religious Studies an exam-based subject?**

Yes. The course consists of three separate strands each assessed by a 2 hour examination. Students should also be willing to engage in essay practice throughout the year.
- **What can an A-Level in Religious Studies lead to?**

Aside from potentially going on to read Theology or Divinity at university this A-Level is often particularly sought after in the fields of: law, politics, diplomacy, international relations, teaching, academic research, social work, health work, vocational work and charity work. All three strands of the course are incredibly versatile and provide students with a set of skills valuable to a wide range of professions. They also look impressive on any curriculum vitae!
- **Do universities like Religious Studies?**

Yes. In fact many of the best universities in the world are particularly pleased to see it. Not only is it the original thinking subject but it is the subject that many of the best universities are actually founded upon. It is a part of their tradition and their heritage. The need for students to fill places in Divinity and Theology Colleges at universities is currently greater than ever.
- **Will I enjoy Religious Studies?**

It depends on your personal interests. All three strands require a substantial amount of reading. Among other things, students will be expected to take part in discussions and debates. The course deals with some of the most controversial and challenging issues in our world today in addition to looking back over some of the greatest questions and arguments put forwards by the greatest minds of all time.

- **Will I have to do a lot of work in Religious Studies?**

There is a reason why universities like it so much... Yes! We expect students to be reading around each topic and to keep on top of the various articles and reading materials we provide. Students are also asked to complete a 1,500 word essay every two weeks in order to improve their skills in critical thinking and academic writing.

- **Who will teach me Religious Studies?**

The course is delivered in its totality by our RE Department. Philosophy is shared between Mr Hunka and Mr Gonzalo, Mr White teaches Ethics and Miss Jones teaches Theology. All of our teachers are subject specialists but are also able to draw on a far broader range of expertise.

- **Will I need to study General RE each week in addition to Religious Studies?**

No. If you are lucky enough to be one of our Theology students then you are exempt from General RE. You will already be devoting at least 20% of your timetable to RE each week and will obviously be delving into topics in far greater depth than any of your peers.

# A Level

## Sociology

- **How are students assessed in Sociology?**  
All exams no coursework. 2 exams at the end of year 12 and 3 exams at the end of Year 13
- **What subjects work well with Sociology?**  
Psychology/ English/ History
- **What are the topics covered in Sociology?**  
Families and Households/ Research methods/ Education/ Media/ Crime
- **Do you need a GCSE in Sociology to do it at A level?**  
No, for most students this is a new subject, therefore no previous knowledge of the subject is needed.
- **What is the biggest exam question students will need to complete?**  
20 marks in Year 12  
30 marks in Year 13
- **What are the course requirements?**  
Five grade 4s or above, we do encourage those who have an analytical mind and those who feel confident in essay writing.
- **What is the course textbook used in class?**  
Year 12 – AQA A level Sociology, Book one by Rob Webb
- **Do you need to know current affairs?**  
This is not a must, however we encourage you to have awareness of the things that are going on around in society – past and present.

# BTEC Level 3 Extended Certificate in Sport

- **What is the official name of the course offered?**  
Pearson level 3 national extended certificate in sport
- **What areas of sport are taught in level 3 sport?**  
Student who study Level 3 BTEC Sport study the following units of the course:  
  
Year 12  
Anatomy & Physiology / Practical Sports Performance  
  
Year 13  
Fitness Training and Programming for Health, Sport and Well Being / Professional Development in the Sports Industry
- **Is the BTEC as valuable as an A-level?**  
Yes it is. Students who study BTEC Sport level 3 will receive a qualification that is the equivalent to one A-level.
- **Do you need to have studied level 2 btec sport in order to be considered for this course?**  
No. Although studying BTEC Sport at Level 2 will be beneficial to learners, we do consider taking students without such qualifications.
- **Do all universities recognise the qualification and accept it for entry requirements?**  
Yes. BTEC qualifications are fully recognised by all universities and UCAS entry points are awarded based on the assessment level achieved. Over the past 5 years we have had many students that have chosen to further study a sport related degree at different universities across the country.
- **How much of the course involves practical lessons?**  
The majority of Level 3 BTEC Sport lessons are theoretical and therefore delivered in a classroom setting. However, for Practical Sports Performance unit students will be required to participate in practical lessons and are assessed in 2 chosen sports.
- **Would I receive a qualification if I drop the subject at the end of year 12?**  
Yes. If a student successfully completes both units in year 12, they will be awarded the Pearson Level 3 National Certificate in Sport, which is the equivalent to an AS level qualification.
- **Should I still study sport if I do not play competitive sport outside of school?**  
Although playing competitive sport outside of school would be advantageous for practical assessment, students are still encouraged to study Level 3 BTEC Sport if they do not play for a sports team outside of school.
- **Have previous level 3 sport students progressed to study sport-related courses at university?**  
Yes. Over the past 5 years we have had many students that have chosen to further study a sport related degree at different universities across the country.