



# NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME SCHOOL

## Year 9 GCSE Options 2022 - 2024



# GCSE CURRICULUM 2022-24

## Introduction

GCSEs have gone through a significant period of reform within the last five years, with subject specifications being re-written to be more rigorous, coursework (non-examined assessment) in many subjects being reduced or removed altogether, and the new grading scale of 9-1 in all subjects. This latter change was made to allow for greater differentiation between pupils at the higher grades, as well as raising the bar as to what a good pass is; under the old system a good pass was a C, but the Department for Education has made a clear distinction between a standard (4) and strong (5) pass under this new grading scale.

Old grades	New grades
A*	9
A	8
B	7
C	6
	5 STRONG PASS
	4 STANDARD PASS
D	3
E	2
F	1
G	1
U	U

## GCSE Subject Choices

At NULS, pupils will take English, English Literature, Mathematics and a **further 6 subjects** to GCSE. Included within these six choices will be a balanced course in Science. Pupils will need to decide whether to take **GCSE Combined Science: Trilogy**, or the three separate sciences: **GCSE Biology**, **GCSE Chemistry** and **GCSE Physics**.

Pupils choosing **Combined Science** will select **four options** from the remaining option subjects, and pupils choosing **GCSE Biology**, **GCSE Chemistry** and **GCSE Physics** will only select **three options**.

The School strongly advises pupils to choose a Humanity subject and a Modern Foreign Language as part of their option choices. This will provide pupils with a balanced, academic profile of GCSE subjects, in preparation for both Sixth Form and Higher Education study. However, we recognise that all children have their own diverse academic strengths, and potential exceptions can be discussed further if it is considered to be in the best interests of the individual pupil.

### Option Subjects Currently Offered

Humanities	Modern Foreign Languages	Others
Geography	French	Art or Ceramics
History	German	Classical Civilisation
Latin	Spanish	Computer Science
Religious Studies		Drama
		DT (Electronic Systems or Timber Products)
		Food and Nutrition
		Music
		Physical Education
		Textiles

### Choosing the Right Subjects

It is important that pupils make the right choices at GCSE, for the right reasons.

Good reasons for choosing a subject	Bad reasons for choosing a subject
You like it and find it interesting.	Your friends are doing it.
You are good at it and think you will do well in it.	You think you should do it; even if you do not want to.
You need it for your future career aspirations.	Your parents like it, but you do not.
You can develop new skills by doing it.	It is thought of as a 'cool' subject by people.
It will give you satisfaction.	You cannot think of anything else to choose.
Your teachers think it is a suitable choice for you.	You think it will be easy.
It will combine well with other subjects you have chosen.	It sounds good even though you have not found out about it.
You like the method of teaching and assessment.	You really like the teacher you have got now.

### The GCSE Options Process

Date	Event
13 January	Year 9 Options Evening
20 January	Year 9 Parents' Evening
31 January	GCSE 'option choices' sheet to be handed in
1-10 February	Selected Year 9 discussions with SMT to finalise option choices

I will explain this process in more detail during the Year 9 Options Evening on 13 January. I am always available to speak to parents who have any further questions, and can be contacted at the school to speak over the phone or arrange a meeting.

I would encourage your children to speak to their subject teachers and tutors over the coming weeks to help them in making these important decisions. As parents, you will also have the opportunity to speak to subject teachers during the Year 9 Parents' Evening on 20 January.

Students will need to submit their GCSE choices on Monday 31 January. A member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) will arrange discussions with any Year 9 students who are unsure and require further guidance to finalise their option choices before the February half term holiday.

Ian Dicksee  
Deputy Head (Academic)  
idicksee@nuls.org.uk

**Please note:**

Following the return of completed options forms, students' choices will be blocked together for timetable purposes. This will be done in such a way as to accommodate as many requested subject combinations as possible. Please note, however, that the School cannot guarantee that all combinations of subjects will be available. Courses are also offered, subject to demand. The School reserves the right to withdraw the availability of any subject where numbers opting are insufficient.

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The Biology GCSE course in Years 10 and 11 follows on from the work covered in Year 9; it is a 3 year course. Pupils interested in the study of living organisms will benefit by undertaking over 45 minutes extra Biology practice each week, compared to those opting for Combined Science. In addition, the Biology course covers fascinating and rapidly developing areas of research including: monoclonal antibodies, the brain, kidney dialysis and transplantation, protein synthesis, gene expression and mutation, and adult cell cloning.

## Course Content

**Year 9 topics already covered:** Cell structure and transport, cell division, organisation and the digestive system, and organising animals and plants.

**Year 10 topics:** Communicable diseases, preventing and treating disease, non-communicable diseases, photosynthesis, respiration, the human nervous system, hormonal co-ordination, and homeostasis in action.

**Year 11 topics:** Reproduction, variation and evolution, adaptations, interdependence and competition, organising an ecosystem, and biodiversity and ecosystems.

## Assessment

Two written papers, each 1 hour 45 minutes.

Papers taken are either Foundation or Higher Tier.

Each paper = 100 marks and is 50% of the GCSE.

Question types: multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.

## How is the course delivered?

The broad aim of the course is to cover the biological content in ways that will increase pupils' understanding of living organisms and life processes and will encourage scientific thinking. A wide range of practical investigations will be undertaken in addition to the ten required practicals, discussion work will be prominent and pupils will have opportunities to work both in a team and independently on projects and research. Mathematical skills will be incorporated throughout as these constitute 10% of the examination paper. Kerboodle resources and assessments will be employed as further learning tools.

## Additional Information

Year 10 participate in the Biology Challenge Competition organised by the Royal Society of Biology.

Mr N Simms  
Head of Biology  
nsimms@nuls.org.uk

# Ceramics - Three Dimensional Design (AQA)

The syllabus studied at GCSE level encourages a broad approach, allowing pupils to enhance their skills to develop a sound understanding of the nature of the subject, whilst engendering a mature and personal response in some depth.

The department offers a dynamic and vibrant course which will allow each pupil the freedom to develop their work in a choice of format, media, and scale.

## Course Content

### Component 1: Portfolio

Each pupil must select and present a portfolio representative of their course of study. The portfolio must include both:

1. A sustained project developed in response to a subject, theme, task or brief evidencing the journey from initial engagement with an idea to realisation of intentions.
2. A selection of further work resulting from activities such as trails and experiments, responses to gallery and museum visits, work placements, and other mini projects.

### Component 2: Externally set assignment

AQA will provide a separate externally set assignment for each title, each with seven different starting points. Students must select and respond to one starting point for their chosen title.

## How is the course delivered?

The course allows pupils to work in a truly independent and unique way, by creating a personal progression of ideas through a range of mark making processes within the discipline they have chosen.

## Additional Information

Achieving excellent examination results, the department offers supervised support sessions on a daily basis to allow pupils to use the facilities outside lesson times and to help ensure that they meet all four assessment objectives at a high level.

For further information about the syllabus visit:

[aqa.org.uk/8201](http://aqa.org.uk/8201)

Mrs M Peck  
Head of Art  
mpeck@nuls.org.uk

Chemistry at Newcastle-under-Lyme School is a very popular subject. As a core subject, universities and employers are aware of the intellectual rigour and breadth of skills developed during GCSE Chemistry and the broader skills it develops in pupils. The course is linear with both exams taken at the end of Year 11.

## Course Content

**Paper 1** (Topics 1–5): Atomic structure and the periodic table; bonding, structure, and the properties of matter; quantitative Chemistry; chemical changes and energy changes.

**How it is assessed -100 marks (50% of GCSE)**

- Written examination: 1 hour 45 minutes
- Foundation and Higher Tier papers
- Questions - multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.

**Paper 2:** Topics 6–10: The rate and extent of chemical change; Organic Chemistry; Chemical analysis; Chemistry of the atmosphere; and Using resources.

**How it is assessed -100 marks (50% of GCSE)**

- Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes
- Foundation and Higher Tier papers
- Questions - multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.

## How is the course delivered?

Pupils receive four periods of each science, taught by subject specialists, per week. Students taking Chemistry will be taught by the same teacher for both years. Many double periods include practicals and there may also be longer pieces of mini-project work. During the course there are required practicals, which are examined within the written examination papers. There is no longer a coursework element of the GCSE course. Group work and presentations will be used for theory heavy topics. Modelling will also be used by pupils to envisage and understand abstract concepts.

## Additional Information

Pupils in the GCSE years will have the chance to take part in the RSC Top of the Bench competition, and those competitors will be chosen by departmental staff. Enrichment and challenge material is available in all laboratories and on the department's Firefly pages. After the GCSE course, a Chemistry qualification at A Level provides the necessary skills to follow any science-related degree course or profession. In most cases, Chemistry is an essential subject for medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, pharmacy, chemical engineering and some biological sciences. It is a qualification that is also accepted for non-science careers such as accountancy and law.

Dr P Thomson  
Head of Chemistry  
pthomson@nuls.org.uk

# Classical Civilisation (OCR)

GCSE Classical Civilisation has been designed to provide learners with a broad, coherent and rewarding study of the culture of the classical world. It offers learners the opportunity to study elements of the literature and visual/material culture of the classical world, and acquire an understanding of their social, historical and cultural contexts. It also encourages learners to explore the nature of human existence and to appreciate the influence the classical world still has on our lives.

## Course Content

Students will study two components, one Thematic Study, and one option from the component group Literature and Culture.

Students will study material from both ancient Greece and Rome, and their surrounding worlds, drawn from the time period 3000 BC to 500 AD. This material will encompass aspects of literature and visual/material culture in their respective social, historical and cultural contexts.

The Thematic Study provides the opportunity to study both Greece and Rome, literature and visual/material culture. Students will study the option 'Myth and Religion', covering eight topics ranging across the pantheon of gods; death and burial rites; the universal hero Heracles/Hercules; temples and religious practices; foundation myths and the use of myth as a symbol of power.

In Literature and Culture, students will explore 'The Homeric World', undertaking a thorough study of the archaeological remains of key Mycenaean sites including an exploration of daily life, decorative arts and tombs. This cultural examination will be followed by the study of a related body of literature, 'The Odyssey'.

## Assessment

Two written papers, each 1 hour 30 minutes; each paper is worth 50% of the GCSE:

- 1) **Thematic Study Paper** involves a comparative study of ancient Greece and Rome, and combine literary and visual/ material sources.
- 2) **Literature and Culture Paper** contains two elements; one in-depth cultural study and one study of related literature.

## How will the course be delivered?

The course is delivered over two years, with a weekly timetabling allocation of four lessons a week. The subject lends itself to a range of teaching styles and learning methodologies, including thinking skills, independent learning, source analysis/evaluation, and essay-writing technique.

## Additional Information

Please see the OCR GCSE Classical Civilisation specification:

<https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/315240-specification-accredited-gcse-classical-civilisation-j199.pdf>

Mrs E Scullion  
Teacher of Classical Civilisation  
escullion@nuls.org.uk

# Combined Science Trilogy (AQA)

Pupils selecting this subject will study Biology, Chemistry and Physics and will be taught each of the components by a subject specialist over eight periods per week. At the end of Year 11, pupils will obtain two GCSE grades in Science. This course is available at both Higher and Foundation Tier level.

## Course Content

**Biology topics:** Cell Biology; organisation; infection and response; bioenergetics; homeostasis and response; inheritance, variation and evolution; and ecology.

**Chemistry topics:** Atomic structure and the periodic table; bonding, structure, and the properties of matter; quantitative Chemistry; chemical changes and energy changes; the rate and extent of chemical change; organic Chemistry; chemical analysis; Chemistry of the atmosphere; and using resources.

**Physics topics:** Energy; electricity; particle model of matter; atomic structure; forces; waves; magnetism and electromagnetism.

## Assessment

There are six papers: two Biology, two Chemistry and two Physics. Each of the papers will assess knowledge and understanding from distinct topic areas.

Each paper will be:

- A written examination - 1 hour 15 minutes
- 70 marks
- 16.7% of GCSE
- including multiple choice, structured, closed short answer, and open response questions

## How is the course delivered?

The teaching of GCSE Combined Science starts in Year 9, the content of which is common to both the Trilogy course and the Separate Sciences courses. This allows pupils to continue with Trilogy in Year 10 or select the individual sciences through their option choices.

## Additional Information

This qualification will give pupils that achieve grades 6 or above the opportunity to progress to A Levels in any of the Sciences.

Mrs A Martin  
Teacher in Charge of Science  
amartin@nuls.org.uk

# Computer Science (OCR)

Computer Science encourages students to think creatively, logically and critically and to develop advanced problem-solving skills. With the growth of computing technology, and a rapid expansion of the jobs market in areas such as Data Analytics and Cyber Security, the knowledge and skills developed during the course are very much in demand.

This qualification encourages students to:

- Understand the impact of digital technology to the individual and to wider society;
- Understand the components (hardware and software) that make up a computer, and how they communicate with one another and with other systems;
- Learn how computers are used to represent numbers (binary and hex), text, sounds and images;
- Understand and apply the concepts of Computational Thinking, including abstraction, decomposition, logic and algorithms;
- Analyse problems through practical experience, including designing solutions, writing and debugging programs.

## Course Content

### Component 01: Computer Systems

Written paper: 1 hour and 30 minutes / 50% of total GCSE 80 marks.

1. Systems architecture 2. Memory and storage 3. Computer networks, connections and protocols 4. Network security 5. System software 6. Ethical, legal, cultural and environmental impacts of digital technology.

### Component 02: Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programming

Written paper: 1 hour and 30 minutes / 50% of total GCSE 80 marks.

1. Algorithms 2. Programming fundamentals 3. Producing robust programs 4. Boolean logic 5. Programming languages and Integrated Development Environments.

## How is the course delivered?

The GCSE course builds on knowledge acquired in Years 7-9, particularly in the main taught programming language, Python, as this lends itself to many practical applications. Students use a wide range of other resources held in the department to develop their programming skills. Students also gain hands on experience of working with computer hardware and network components.

## Additional Information

This GCSE is excellent preparation for students looking to take Computer Science studies at A Level, or for anyone considering any kind of career in Computer Science. In School, students can attend the Computing Club and use the practical computing area of the main computer room to work on personal projects.

Mr S A Luck  
Director of ICT  
sluck@nuls.org.uk

# Design and Technology (EDEXCEL)

## Electronic Systems / Timber Products

The GCSE in Design and Technology enables pupils to understand and apply iterative design processes through which they explore, create and evaluate a range of outcomes. The qualification allows pupils to use creativity and imagination to design and make prototypes (together with evidence of modelling to develop and prove product concept and function) that solve real and relevant problems, considering their own and others' needs, wants and values. It gives pupils opportunities to apply knowledge from other disciplines, including Mathematics, Science, Art, Computer Science and the Humanities.

### Course Content

**Component 1- Examination (50% of the overall grade):** A 1 hour 45 minutes examination consisting of a core element of Design and Technology principles which accounts for 40% of component 1. The additional 60% is achieved through a specialism choice of Electronic Systems or Timber Products. There is also a mathematical element within the core and specialist area which accounts for 15% of the examined mark.

**Component 2 – Non-Examined Assessment (50% of the overall grade):** Pupils will undertake a project as part of their non-examined assessment. The project will test pupils' skills in investigating, designing, making and evaluating a prototype of a product. Pupils are required to analyse a given contextual challenge from a range of three, developing a range of potential ideas to then realise one through practical making activities. The project must allow pupils to apply knowledge and understanding in a product development process to investigate, design, make and evaluate their prototype.

### How is the course delivered?

Design and Technology is a subject which allows pupils to develop their design and practical skills. We endeavour to deliver as much learning as possible through practical experience, but as there will be a written examination, 50% of the lessons will be theory based, ensuring notes and practice material are carried out in preparation.

### Additional Information

The department participates in the National Greenpower Electric Car race series; developing the car and applying the skills of the workshop, allows co-curricular involvement in a different context. The pupils also attend a visit to the Jaguar Land Rover engine manufacturing plant at Wolverhampton.

The department offers Product Design as an A level. The learning process through the GCSE syllabus is an excellent grounding and will allow pupils to have a good base knowledge for the understanding of materials, their manipulation and the design process.

Mr D J Lambert  
Head of Design & Technology  
dlambert@nuls.org.uk

GCSE Drama is an active, engaging and exciting course, which allows you to explore the theatrical process from the point of view of actor, designer and audience member. You will be introduced to a wide range of theatrical styles and texts, mostly through practical exploration, in preparation for two performance components and a written examination.

## Course Content

### **Component 1: Devising Theatre.** *40% (Internally assessed, externally moderated)*

This is a predominantly practical unit, where we will be exploring different performance styles before choosing one to develop into a completely original piece of theatre in response to a stimulus provided by the exam board. Working as either an actor or a designer (lighting; sound; set; costume), you will work in a small group to produce a polished piece of performance work showcasing the talents and creativity of all group members. Your performance will be assessed and a recording of the event / copies of your portfolio will be sent to the examination board.

### **Component 2: Performing from a Text.** *20% (Externally assessed by a visiting examiner)*

You will explore two extracts from the same text and prepare a performance of these as an actor or designer. There is no written element to this aspect of the course, although designers will have to complete the relevant cue sheets / stage plans / costume plots necessary to allow them to carry out their role effectively. In the Spring term of Year 11, an examiner will visit the school to assess your performance.

### **Component 3: Interpreting Theatre.** *40% (Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes)*

You will undertake a practical study of a set text and undertake live theatre visits to prepare you for the written examination. In the first part of the examination, you will focus on how you would bring a text to life as an actor, director or designer. In the second, you will explore the ways in which other theatrical professionals have brought a text to life in performance.

## How is the course delivered?

Most of the GCSE course will be delivered through practical workshop sessions, supported by notes made about the experience of exploring text, as participant or audience member. Although there will be a requirement for careful study of the text, the philosophy behind the course is that students should understand theatre as a performance art.

## Additional Information

GCSE Drama is not only valuable to those intending to go on to study theatre at a more advanced level, but offers a wide range of transferable skills of great benefit to other courses and occupations. Skills developed include communication, presentation/public speaking, group and leadership skills, problem solving, time management, initiative and the ability to work to a deadline and get it right first time.

Mrs J Betts-Nicholson  
Director of Drama  
jbetts@nuls.org.uk

# English Language (Edexcel)

We deliver the IGCSE Specification A which allows our pupils to access a wide range of engaging and challenging literary non-fiction.

## Course Content

### Paper 1: Non-fiction Texts and Transactional Writing

This examined paper assesses 60% of the total for English Language and covers both Reading and Writing skills. Pupils study a variety of challenging non-fiction texts in preparation to respond to unseen extracts, and to compose their own transactional writing pieces.

### Paper 3: Poetry and Prose Texts and Imaginative Writing

Pupils write two coursework assignments which form 40% of the total for English Language. One piece of writing responds to two poetry or prose texts from an anthology; the second is a piece of imaginative writing.

### Spoken Language Endorsement

Pupils demonstrate their presentation skills in a formal setting, listen and respond to feedback, and use spoken language effectively. They are awarded a separate certificate with a grade of Distinction, Merit or Pass.

## How is the course delivered?

The course is currently delivered alongside English Literature in six lessons per week, usually taught by one teacher. Pupils are encouraged to develop their independent learning skills, particularly through the coursework modules and the preparation for exploring unseen material.

## Additional Information

Both English Language and English Literature are recognised as core subjects which help to develop key skills across the curriculum. The IGCSE specification prepares pupils well for the rigours of A Level study; texts are challenging and we use analytical terminology which can be applied across many subjects. The coursework modules help pupils to make the transition to the coursework demands at A Level.

Ms K R Saunders  
Head of English  
ksaunders@nuls.org.uk

# English Literature (Edexcel)

We deliver the IGCSE Specification which offers a diverse and popular range of set texts across the three genres of poetry, prose and drama.

## Course Content

### Paper 1: Poetry and Modern Prose

This examined paper assesses 60% of the total for English Literature. Pupils study a section of the Edexcel Anthology which covers poems from different cultures and periods of Literature alongside a modern novel which is currently "Of Mice and Men". Pupils also develop their analytical skills when preparing to explore unseen poetry.

### Paper 3: Modern Drama and Literary Heritage Texts

Pupils write two coursework assignments which form 40% of the total for English Literature. One piece of writing responds to a Shakespeare play and the second to a modern play. Pupils study whole texts and learn to explore the ways in which writers use language, form and structure to shape dramatic effects.

## How is the course delivered?

The course is currently delivered alongside English Language in six lessons per week, usually taught by one teacher. Pupils are encouraged to develop their independent learning skills, particularly through the coursework modules and the preparation for exploring unseen material.

## Additional Information

In preparation for A Level, it is important that pupils study the Literary Heritage texts and we particularly value the opportunity to study a whole Shakespeare play. Coursework modules also allow our pupils to develop their independent learning skills, to edit their work, and to organise their arguments effectively. When possible, we arrange trips to the cinema for live screenings or to the theatre.

Ms K R Saunders  
Head of English  
ksaunders@nuls.org.uk

# Food Preparation and Nutrition (AQA)

Food Preparation and Nutrition GCSE will help you to develop a greater understanding of nutrition, food provenance and the working characteristics of food materials. You will also learn about food from around the world, through the study of British and international culinary traditions as well as developing an understanding of where food comes from (food provenance) and the challenges surrounding food security. You will master culinary skills and appreciate the science behind food and cooking. This is an exciting and creative course which will allow you to demonstrate your practical skills and make connections between theory and practice.

## Course Content

1. Food, nutrition and health
2. Food science
3. Food safety
4. Food choice
5. Food provenance

Food preparation skills – these are integrated into the five sections.

There will be one exam for this qualification (50%), which will assess your knowledge of the theory behind food preparation and nutrition. **The exam will be 1 hour 45 minutes long.**

The second part of the assessment will be non-examination assessment and will consist of two tasks (50%), involving practical work:

**Task 1:** Students will carry out an investigation into the scientific principles that underpin the preparation and cooking of food. This task will provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge and practically apply your understanding of the science behind cooking. You'll practically investigate ingredients and explain how they work and why.

**Task 2:** Students will plan, prepare, cook and present a 3 course menu. This task will provide you with an opportunity to cook up a storm and showcase your creativity and cooking skills. You might make a street food menu, create delicious tapas dishes or cook up a menu for a student on a budget.

## How is the course delivered?

This is a GCSE course with a strong practical focus. You'll master a variety of technical skills and become proficient in the kitchen. In addition, you'll develop an in-depth knowledge of food science, food safety, food choice, nutrition and health. You'll also develop transferable skills such as: analysis, evaluation, communication skills, working independently, time management, and the ability to interpret information and data.

Mrs J Machin  
Head of Food and Nutrition  
jmachin@nuls.org.uk

The syllabus studied at GCSE level encourages a broad approach, allowing pupils to enhance their skills to develop a sound understanding of the nature of the subject, whilst engendering a mature and personal response in some depth.

The department offers a dynamic and vibrant course which will allow each pupil the freedom to develop their work in a choice of format, media, and scale.

## Course Content

### Component 1: Portfolio

Each pupil must select and present a portfolio representative of their course of study. The portfolio must include both:

1. A sustained project developed in response to a subject, theme, task or brief evidencing the journey from initial engagement with an idea to realisation of intentions.
2. A selection of further work resulting from activities such as trails and experiments, responses to gallery and museum visits, work placements, and other mini projects.

### Component 2: Externally set assignment

AQA will provide a separate externally set assignment for each title, each with seven different starting points. Students must select and respond to one starting point for their chosen title.

## How is the course delivered?

The course allows pupils to work in a truly independent and unique way, by creating a personal progression of ideas through a wide range of mark making processes and techniques within the discipline they have chosen.

## Additional Information

Achieving excellent examination results, the department offers supervised support sessions on a daily basis to allow pupils to use the facilities outside lesson times and to help ensure that they meet all four assessment objectives at a high level.

For further information about the syllabus visit:

[aqa.org.uk/8201](http://aqa.org.uk/8201)

Mrs M Peck  
Head of Art  
mpeck@nuls.org.uk

250 million people in 53 countries on every continent in the world speak French, and, after the USA, France is the second most visited tourist destination in the world. More than 1,200 French companies have subsidiaries in the UK. 50% of English vocabulary originates from French, so what's not to love? All languages are highly regarded by universities and can be combined well with other subjects. There are very good career prospects afterwards, especially for graduates offering more than one modern foreign language (if you opted for French as your second MFL in Year 9, you have the option of continuing with two modern languages to GCSE).

## Course Content

Pupils are examined in the skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, each worth 25% of the overall marks, in the following areas:

1. **Identity & Culture**
  - Me, My Family & Friends
  - Technology in Everyday Life
  - Free-Time Activities
  - Customs & Festivals
2. **Local, National, International & Global Areas of Interest**
  - Home, Town, Neighbourhood & Region
  - Social Issues
  - Global Issues
  - Travel & Tourism
3. **Current and Future Study & Employment**
  - My Studies
  - Life at School/College
  - Education Post-16
  - Jobs, Career Choices & Ambitions

## How is the course delivered?

The emphasis in language lessons is always on effective communication in French with a strong grammatical base. Up-to-date resources are used as well as regular use of the interactive language lab and other ICT-based activities. Our French speaking Foreign Language Assistant also works with our GCSE pupils, practising the language in small groups and individually, to particularly build oral confidence and comprehension skills.

## Additional Information

We organise regular trips abroad and have recently visited the Normandy area of France, giving pupils an opportunity to increase their cultural and historical understanding of the French way of life. Further day trips, for example with Business Language Champions, are also regularly organised.

Mrs E Kozlowski  
Teacher in Charge of French  
ekozlowski@nuls.org.uk

# Geography GCSE (AQA)

AQA GCSE Geography is a qualification that is engaging and relevant to today's geographers; a qualification that enables pupils to explore the world, the challenges it faces and their own place in it, and to help prepare them to succeed in their chosen pathway as Geography develops a multitude of desirable, transferable skills. This GCSE course will deepen understanding of geographical processes, illuminate the impact of change and of complex people-environment interactions, highlight the dynamic links and inter-relationships between places and environments at different scales, and develop pupils' competence in using a wide range of geographical investigative skills and approaches. Geography enables young people to become globally and environmentally informed and thoughtful, enquiring citizens.

## Course Content

### Paper 1: Living with the physical environment

*Written examination: 1 hour and 30 minutes (35% of the qualification).*

An externally-assessed written exam with three sections:

Section A: The challenge of natural hazards

Section B: The living world

Section C: Physical landscapes in the UK (options chosen: rivers and coasts)

### Paper 2: Challenges in the human environment

*Written examination: 1 hour and 30 minutes (35% of the qualification)*

An externally-assessed written exam with three sections:

Section A: Urban issues and challenges

Section B: The changing economic world

Section C: The challenge of resource management (option chosen: water)

### Paper 3: Geographical applications

*Written examination: 1 hour and 15 minutes (30% of the qualification).*

An externally-assessed written exam with three sections:

Section A: Issue Evaluation

Section B: Fieldwork

## How is the course delivered?

Content is taught in line with the structure of the examination papers to aid the development of pupils' geographical understanding whilst integrating geographical skills and fieldwork at the appropriate points of the content delivery from Paper 1 and Paper 2. Two fieldwork studies must be undertaken which helps develop and apply their theory to the real world. Fieldwork is examined in Paper 3 alongside an Issue Evaluation.

## Additional Information

Where will Geography take me? Apart from the proposed Iceland visit and fieldwork adventures, Geography could lead you to exciting career prospects, with careers ranging from journalism and law to weather forecasting and architecture. According to the Royal Geographical Society, Geography graduates have some of the highest rates of graduate employment.

Mr N Lawton  
Head of Geography  
nlawton@nuls.org.uk

Boasting the highest population in the EU, Germany is widely recognised as the European powerhouse of finance, engineering, science and technology and aeronautics as well as in the political arena, and is the recommended language of the UK STEM Network. All languages are highly regarded by universities and can be combined well with other subjects. There are very good career prospects afterwards, especially for graduates offering more than one modern foreign language (if you opted for German as your second MFL in Year 9, you have the option of continuing with two modern languages to GCSE).

## Course Content

Pupils are examined in the skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, each worth 25% of the overall marks, in the following areas:

1. **Identity & Culture**
  - Me, My Family & Friends
  - Technology in Everyday Life
  - Free-Time Activities
  - Customs & Festivals
2. **Local, National, International & Global Areas of Interest**
  - Home, Town, Neighbourhood & Region
  - Social Issues
  - Global Issues
  - Travel & Tourism
3. **Current and Future Study & Employment**
  - My Studies
  - Life at School/College
  - Education Post-16
  - Jobs, Career Choices & Ambitions

## How is the course delivered?

The emphasis in language lessons is always on effective communication in German with a strong grammatical base. Up-to-date resources are used as well as regular use of the interactive language lab and other ICT-based activities. Our German speaking Foreign Language Assistant also works with our GCSE pupils, practising the language in small groups and individually, to particularly build oral confidence and comprehension skills.

## Additional Information

We organise regular trips abroad and have recently visited the Rhine/Moselle area of Germany, giving pupils the chance to learn about various aspects of German culture and many opportunities to use the language. Further day trips, for example with Business Language Champions, are also regularly organised.

Mrs M T Holmes  
Head of Modern Foreign Languages, Teacher in Charge of German  
mholmes@nuls.org.uk

# History (Edexcel)

The GCSE specification (Edexcel) takes a sweeping approach to various aspects of world history. There is no coursework component or controlled assessment. The GCSE History course is very exciting, accessible and includes a selection of modules covering medieval, early modern and modern periods. This will ensure that our pupils develop into well rounded historians.

## Course Content

### Paper 1: Thematic Study and Historic Environment (1h 15 minutes)

Victorian Whitechapel and the Jack the Ripper murders

Crime and Punishment, 1000 AD to the present

### Paper 2: Period Study and British Depth Study (1h 45 min)

Superpower Relations and the Cold War, 1941-91

Henry VIII and his Ministers, 1509-40

### Paper 3: Modern Depth Study (1h 20min)

Weimar and Nazi Germany 1918-1939

## How is the course delivered?

The course is taught through a combination of engaging activities, traditional note making (in a range of styles and formats) and essay writing, class-based discussion and debate, individual research, and watching documentaries, films and docu-dramas on the various areas of the course.

By the end of the course, you will have learned how to evaluate and analyse information; to form complex judgements, to craft structured answers and to understand people and events.

## Additional Information

The Edexcel GCSE History specification is challenging, and yet accessible, and offers an excellent preparation for pupils considering more advanced study of History, Politics and other related subjects in the Sixth Form.

The skills developed through this qualification are recognised and valued by employers and universities. History provides an excellent basis for careers in Law, Politics, Civil Service, Journalism, Accountancy, Business Management, Advertising, Teaching and Medicine.

Miss L Wilson  
Head of History  
lwilson@nuls.org.uk

Latin leads to a highly regarded GCSE qualification and is particularly valuable when applying for highly competitive degree courses (especially law). A GCSE course in this subject should provide a satisfying experience in itself while forming a sound basis for further study. It fosters a broad range of disciplines and gives students an understanding of some of the elements of classical civilisation, literature and language which have had a profound influence on modern societies, enabling them to gain perspective on many aspects of our own time

The GCSE Latin course will help candidates to:

- Develop an appropriate level of competence in the Latin language and a sensitive and analytical approach to language generally;
- Apply analytical and evaluative skills at an appropriate level;
- Make an educated, personal response to the material studied;
- Actively engage in the process of enquiry so as to grow as effective and independent learners and as critical and reflective thinkers.

## Course Content

**Paper 1 (Latin Language: 50%):** Pupils translate a short passage from Latin into English, answer comprehensions questions in English on a passage in Latin and have to option to translate several short sentences from English into Latin.

**Paper 2 (Latin Verse: 25%) & Paper 3 (Latin Prose: 25%):** Each component tests pupils' understanding and appreciation of a prescribed set text which is between 110 and 120 lines in length and has been studied in class. Pupils will be asked to translate a short extract from each text into English and answer questions on the style and content.

## How is the course delivered?

The GCSE course builds on knowledge acquired in Years 7-9 but with greater emphasis on independent learning. Easily digestible units of grammar are imparted by the teacher, forming the basis of more comprehensive language work. Each pupil's grammar book continues to be an essential reference guide and support during translation activities which range from sentences to longer passages of myth and legend, illuminating the characters and events of the Roman world.

## Additional Information

GCSE Latin will furnish pupils not only with a deep syntactical understanding of language but also the ability to interpret texts critically, skills transferable to a wide range of other disciplines which require analytical thought, logical argument and articulate expression. We regularly send pupils to top universities, including Oxbridge, to read Classics, while other Latinists have gone on to courses such as Law and Medicine.

Ms T A Thomas  
Head of Classics  
tthomas@nuls.org.uk

# Mathematics (Edexcel)

Pupils will study the Edexcel International GCSE in Mathematics (Specification A). The majority of pupils will be entered for the Higher Tier, but it may be beneficial for a small number of pupils to be entered for the Foundation Tier. The level of entry will be discussed with individual pupils and parents before any decision is made.

## Course Content

Externally assessed examination papers:

**Higher Tier:** Two papers - 3H and 4H. Each paper is 50% of the total marks.

**Foundation Tier:** Two papers - 1F and 2F. Each paper is 50% of the total marks.

### Overview of content:

Number, Algebra, Geometry and Statistics

### Overview of assessment:

- Each paper is assessed through a two-hour examination set and marked by Edexcel.
- The total number of marks for each paper is 100.
- Each paper will have approximately equal marks available for each of the targeted grades.
- Each Higher paper will assess the full range of targeted grades at Higher Tier (Questions will also assume knowledge from the Foundation Tier subject content).
- Each Foundation paper will assess the full range of targeted grades at Foundation Tier.
- There will be some common questions targeted at grades 4 and 5, across papers 3H and 1F and papers 4H and 2F, to aid standardisation and comparability of award between tiers.

## How is the course delivered?

In Years 10 and 11 all pupils have five 35 minute lessons a week. These lessons will focus on learning mathematical skills, techniques and concepts and how to use them to solve problems.

## Additional Information

The Edexcel International GCSE in Mathematics (Specification A) qualification enables students to:

- Develop their knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts and techniques;
- Acquire a foundation of mathematical skills for further study in the subject or related areas;
- Enjoy using and applying mathematical techniques and concepts, and become confident to use mathematics to solve problems;
- Appreciate the importance of mathematics in society, employment and study.

At present, the top set also cover the AQA Level 2 Further Mathematics. Both the International GCSE and the Level 2 Further Mathematics examinations are taken at the end of Year 11.

Miss J Griffiths  
Head of Mathematics  
jgriffiths@nuls.org.uk

A potential GCSE musician will have enjoyed music in Years 7-9, and want to take a subject with a lot of practical work. You will be comfortable with (and even enjoy!) performing in front of others, and want to develop your skills through instrumental/singing lessons. Good GCSE musicians have the patience to stick at long-term composition tasks, and are happy to take constructive criticism and refine their work. You will enjoy listening to a wide variety of music, and be prepared to be open-minded about different styles.

## Course Content

### Paper 1: Performing: 30% of the total GCSE marks

You will prepare and record performances of a solo piece or pieces, and of an ensemble piece. If you are preparing for an instrumental music exam, you can often use the same music. Most Grade 4+ music will allow you to access the full mark range. Recordings can be (re-)recorded as needed anytime in the first 2 terms of Year 11. You need 5 minutes of music to access the full mark range.

### Paper 2: Composing: 30% of the total GCSE marks

You will practise composing in various styles, then in Year 11 compose, notate and record (using Sibelius software) two pieces, one a free composition, and one following a wide choice of briefs from the exam board. Final versions can be completed at any point in Year 11.

### Paper 3: Appraising Music: 40% of the total marks

Your only actual exam (105 minutes). You will study 8 different pieces, from the *Stars Wars* theme to *Defying Gravity* via Cuban Samba, and answer short questions on extracts of the pieces. There will be one “unfamiliar music” question, and one essay.

## How is the course delivered?

In Year 10 you will be taught the toolkit of skills needed to listen effectively to music and write about it using the correct musical terminology. You will then apply these skills to the 8 set pieces. If you are a hard worker, do not worry if you have never taken a written music exam: it is not a theory test, and you will write only one short essay. Confident music reading will help you in all areas of the course; you will be given help and practice, but you should also be prepared to work on this as needed.

## Additional Information

Edexcel GCSE music prepares you very effectively for all exam boards now offering A Level music.

Do not expect to be brilliant in all three strands of the subject; you may feel less confident in one of the areas, and your individual needs can be supported both in and out of class.

Most students start the course as relatively inexperienced composers, but soon pick it up with practice.

Playing in Band or Orchestra or singing in Choir will always help your overall grade and especially your confidence in Paper 1. The particularly wide range of music which our co-curricular activities offer will also help you to become more confident in the “unfamiliar music” question in Paper 3.

# Physical Education (OCR)

Studying GCSE Physical Education will open candidates' eyes to the amazing world of sports performance. Not only will candidates have the chance to perform in three different sports through the non-exam assessment component, they will also develop wide ranging knowledge into the how and why of physical activity and sport.

The combination of the physical performance and academic challenge provides an exciting opportunity for pupils. Candidates can perform, and then through the academic study learn how to improve their performance through application of the theory. Physical Education is learned about through a range of different contexts and the impact it has on people's everyday lives. Candidates will learn the reasons why we do things, and why some people out-perform others, mentally and physically. They will also delve into the ethical considerations behind the use of drugs, and gain an understanding of the consequences of inactivity and poor diet.

Physical Education pupils will be able to apply their theoretical study to support the improvement in their own practical performance and build upon their expertise in extra-curricular sporting activities.

## Course Content

The two year GCSE course encompasses two units of theoretical study (60% of course marks). The practical performance and analysis of three sporting activities (40% of course marks) is internally assessed and externally moderated.

### Theory Paper 1: Physical Factors (30%)

This unit requires pupils to study anatomy and physiology with detail on the skeletal, muscular, cardiovascular and respiratory systems. Exercise Physiology focuses on how this is applied to the principles and methods of training, diet and nutrition.

### Theory Paper 2: Socio-Cultural Issues (30%)

Pupils investigate how skills are learnt and taught, how practice affects performance and information processing relates to skill acquisition. Sports Psychology concentrates upon individual differences in personality and group dynamics. There is a focus on health, fitness and well-being.

### Practical Performance (40%)

Pupils select THREE activities of their choice for practical performance. Analysis of performance requires knowledge of the rules, tactics and training in a sport, and video analysis of a pupil's performance:

- Performance in a team sport;
- Performance in an individual activity;
- Additional performance in either team or individual selected sport;
- Analysis of performance.

Mrs R Lea  
Teacher in Charge of GCSE PE  
rlea@nuls.org.uk

Physics is one of the fundamental sciences that all pupils study as part of their GCSEs. It helps you to understand the world around you; from the motion of galaxies to the structure of atoms. In recent years, major new discoveries such as exoplanets and gravitational waves highlight that Physics is very much alive. Physics is making cutting edge technology possible, such as quantum computing, and is set to be a growth subject in the future.

You will have already made a good start to the GCSE course during Year 9 Physics lessons, covering large parts of topics 6, 3, 4 and 8. Pupils wishing to carry on with Physics into the Sixth Form will follow the AQA Advanced Level.

## Course Content

Topics taught over three years:

1. Energy
2. Electricity
3. Particle model of matter
4. Atomic structure
5. Forces, their interactions, and motion
6. Waves
7. Magnetism and electromagnetism
8. Space physics

There is plenty of mathematics in the Physics course, including rearranging equations and explaining how variables are related to one another, so it suits pupils who are strong in mathematics.

The assessment at the end of Year 11 consists of two 1 hour 45 minute written papers. Paper 1 covers topics 1 to 4 and Paper 2 topics 5 to 8. The papers will include multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response questions.

## How is the course delivered?

Lessons will be a mixture of theory, demonstrations, practical experiments and practice exercises. Although there is no coursework, there is practical work to help develop an understanding of how experiments are carried out and how to handle data. These skills will be examined in the final papers. Over the three years you will cover a number of compulsory experiments that will bring the theory to life.

## Additional Information

If you are really interested in Physics and good at it too, then opting for GCSE Physics means you will be taught about 30% extra material compared to the Combined Science Trilogy Award. You will go into the topics in more depth, which while being more demanding, will give you a greater insight into the subject.

Mr N Migallo  
Head of Physics  
nmigallo@nuls.org.uk

# Religious Studies (AQA)

GCSE Religious Studies enables pupils to acquire key academic skills in addition to developing their understanding of our world and the diversity of people within it. Pupils will learn how religion, philosophy and ethics form the basis of our culture and they will be required to both understand and critically reflect upon the various ideas and practices that will be explored in the course of study. In so doing, pupils will better understand the national and global context which they are a part of, and will further develop their skills of empathy and evaluation. In gaining a GCSE in this subject, pupils will be challenged with questions about belief, values, meaning, purpose and truth, enabling them to develop their own attitudes towards religious issues.

## Course Content

### Paper 1: The study of religions (50% of GCSE)

Beliefs, teachings and practices of **two** of the world religions listed below:

- Christianity
- Islam
- Buddhism
- Sikhism
- Hinduism
- Judaism

### Paper 2: Thematic studies: philosophy and ethics (50% of GCSE)

Any **four** religious, philosophical and ethical studies themes from the list below:

- Relationships and families
- Religion and life
- The existence of God and revelation
- Religion, peace and conflict
- Religion, crime and punishment
- Religion, human rights and social justice

Each set of questions included in both papers has a common structure of one five-part question of 1, 2, 4, 5 and 12 marks. Each theme is marked out of 24 and there are two themes per religion (beliefs and practices) for Paper 1, and a set of questions for each of the four ethical themes selected in Paper 2.

## How is the course delivered?

A variety of learning techniques are utilised and employed to enable pupils to successfully negotiate the core content of the course. Discussion and debate feature heavily in lessons, in addition to film and documentary about the lives of religious believers.

## Additional Information

There are clear links between GCSE Religious Studies and A-level Philosophy, however many of the key skills gained through the course of study are transferable to other A-level subjects, and indeed beyond.

Mr J Preston  
Head of Religious Studies and Philosophy  
jpreston@nuls.org.uk

Spanish is the most popular Modern Foreign Language learned in the UK and is the second most widely spoken language in the world after Mandarin Chinese. In addition, Latin America is rapidly gaining the world's attention because of its bright economic potential. Spanish culture and tradition is colourful, varied and vibrant with something for everyone! All languages are highly regarded by universities and can be combined well with other subjects. There are very good career prospects afterwards, especially for graduates offering more than one modern foreign language (if you opted for Spanish as your second MFL in Year 9, you have the option of continuing with two modern languages to GCSE).

## Course Content

Pupils are examined in the skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, each worth 25% of the overall marks, in the following areas:

1. **Identity & Culture**
  - Me, My Family & Friends
  - Technology in Everyday Life
  - Free-Time Activities
  - Customs & Festivals
2. **Local, National, International & Global Areas of Interest**
  - Home, Town, Neighbourhood & Region
  - Social Issues
  - Global Issues
  - Travel & Tourism
3. **Current and Future Study & Employment**
  - My Studies
  - Life at School/College
  - Education Post-16
  - Jobs, Career Choices & Ambitions

## How is the course delivered?

The emphasis in language lessons is always on effective communication in Spanish with a strong grammatical base. Up-to-date resources are used as well as regular use of the interactive language lab and other ICT-based activities. Our Spanish speaking Foreign Language Assistant also works with our GCSE pupils, practising the language in small groups and individually, to particularly build oral confidence and comprehension skills.

## Additional Information

We recently visited Bilbao in northern Spain. We maintain contacts with two schools from the area and our pupils have the opportunity to communicate with their students to further their linguistic skills and enjoyment in the subject. Further day trips, for example with Business Language Champions, are also regularly organised. Many students continue their Spanish studies at university and beyond.

Mrs M Isherwood  
Teacher in Charge of Spanish  
misherwood@nuls.org.uk

Studying Textiles at GCSE provides the opportunity to work creatively to a set brief, overcome problems, and develop your design ideas in your own personal investigation as your work progresses. Pupils will become confident in taking risks and learn from experience in the exploration and experimentation of ideas and processes.

The course allows you to embark on a chosen area of textile design, including constructed textiles, digital textiles, dyed and printed fabrics, fashion design and stitched and embellished textiles. Students will explore a wide range of skills from free machine embroidery, applique, weaving and textile embellishment, to pattern design, screen printing and digital textile design, allowing an individual and unique approach to Textiles within the art and design sector.

## Course Content

### Component 01 - Portfolio

Pupils must produce work in response to a set starting point or brief, producing a portfolio of practical work. This component is a non-examined assessment and contributes 60% to the overall weighting of OCR's GCSE (9–1) in Art and Design.

### Component 02 - Externally set task

OCR will provide pupils with five themes, each with written and visual starting points or stimuli. Pupils will select and respond to **one** starting point for their controlled assessment, consisting of 10 hours of supervised time. This contributes 40% to the overall weighting of the course.

## How is the course delivered?

The course allows individuals to work in a truly individual and unique way, by creating a personal progression of ideas through a wide range of skills and techniques within Textile design.

## Additional Information

During your study, you will have the opportunity to enter national competitions, whilst working towards your examinations, along with the opportunity to attend gallery and museum visits to provide a wealth of inspiration. Achieving excellent examination results, the department offers supervised support sessions on a daily basis to allow pupils to use the facilities outside lesson times and to help ensure that they meet all four assessment objectives at a high level.

For further information about the syllabus, visit:

[www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse/art-and-design-j170-j176-from-2016](http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse/art-and-design-j170-j176-from-2016)

Mrs F Jones  
Teacher in charge of Textiles  
fjones@nuls.org.uk



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