

Year 9 Careers Information & Advice: A guide to choosing GCSE Options

We are entering the time of year when many Year 9 students begin to consider what subjects they wish to take for their GCSE options. It may be that you aren't sure how best to support your child or you may be very informed and confident. Our intention is to offer a gentle guide to support you.

Note: your individual situation may vary slightly, depending on the school your child attends. For example, in some school's option choices are made in year 8 as opposed to year 9 and some GCSE exams are taken a year early in year 10, rather than year 11.

Career Planning

Many students in year 9 make decisions at this time of year with regards what GCSE choices they wish to take in years 10 and 11. These choices will vary significantly from school to school.

Most students will not have an idea of what they wish to do when they are older and if they do, it is very likely these ideas will change over time, and this is perfectly 'normal'. Having said this, some students may have very clear ideas that won't change over the years (from experience these students are likely to be in the minority).

To help students develop their career ideas many schools are developing their careers education offer in line with nationally recognised standards called the Gatsby Benchmarks which include access to independent careers guidance by a fully qualified careers adviser and experiences of the world of work to inspire. Many schools also have a careers library with useful books and resources on their school web pages.

Some of the most useful web tools which, help students explore their ideas include:

- <https://www.startprofile.com/>
- <https://icould.com/>
- <https://www.careersbox.co.uk/>

Unifrog platform is a fantastic resource tool and offers lots of useful information about decision making, Option choices and you can use this to also do research into any Career paths of interest.

- [Unifrog](#)

Your careers adviser Miss Lisa Hill: lisa.hill@castlephoenixtrust.org.uk can help you.

Here are a few other websites that offer quizzes and guides:

- <https://www.mi5.gov.uk/careers/ssq>
- https://www.ste_p_intothenhs.nhs.uk/careers/take-the-test
- <https://www.goconstruct.org/learn-about-construction/find-the-role-for-you/ultimate-quiz/>
- <https://careers.bps.org.uk/>

CAREERS USING YOUR SUBJECTS

The subjects you choose may impact what you go on to study later and what career you go on to afterwards. Have you chosen your favourite subjects? Will your subjects help you towards your goals? How will your subjects be used in the future? There are many things to consider.

Ask yourself questions like these...

- What subjects do you find interesting and enjoyable?
- Where might your subjects lead you?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What do your parents, friends and teachers think you are good at?

Decision Making

There are many ways to make decisions but, your child may wish to choose their subjects based on some of these:

- Being good at them and/or enjoying them

Taking subjects, you are good at and/or enjoy often means you will gain higher grades in these areas, increasing the range of options available to you at post-16. You may also have a more enjoyable time in school during your studies, thereby having a better quality of life and fewer concerns with regards your mental health due to stress or worry.

- Which build skills you wish to develop?

Certain subjects are highly useful in developing transferable skills for the future, often being useful in more than one setting. For example, studying history allows you to learn about historical events but also enables you to develop your analytical, comprehension and essay skills; all of which are desirable in careers requiring these skills such as areas of law and business.

- Which are future proof against automation

Numerous reports talk about the affect automation is having on the possible careers we can pursue, with some jobs being replaced by robots and computers. Leading commentators have discussed the benefits of building skills and abilities in areas which automation will struggle to replace. For example, roles involving creativity, empathy and ingenuity.

Useful careers websites such as <http://explore.skillsroute.com/main> , <https://www.nesta.org.uk/quiz/will-robot-take-my-job/> and the BBC's "Will a robot take your job" (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-34066941>) allow students to explore roles facing a greater chance of automation and identify the skills and subjects they may need to circumnavigate this threat.

A counterpoint is that some reports have highlighted that AI and automation may lead us to sharing the world of work with robots, rather than being replaced by them.

- As a skill for life

An alternative way to choose subjects, is to consider whether these are things you wish to take with you into life as a broader life skill or for fun.

For example, you may take food technology not because you wish to be a chef but because you wish to be able to cook when you move out of home or live away at university. Perhaps you wish to take Spanish because you plan to travel when older, rather than because you wish to work as a translator or within international business.

- For your mental health

Mental health is increasingly important in our lives, in a world which can seem to be going faster and faster. It may be that you choose a subject which helps you to destress and decompress.

A variety of articles online highlight the importance of this aspect within our school. We have developed resources to support individual mental health alongside our emotional wellbeing services:

- <https://www.cxk.org/resources/managing-stress/>
- <https://www.cxk.org/resources/mental-health-spotting-the-signs/>
- <https://www.cxk.org/resources/mindfulness-tips/>
- <https://www.cxk.org/resources/create-your-own-wellbeing-plan/>
- Career Foundation

Lastly, you may choose a subject because it forms the foundation for a career, such as taking art for a career in architecture or design.

I have seen many students take computing or engineering as an option, as they are curious about what is involved and wish to see if it is for them, as an area of work.

Such "trying things out" is useful and key during this period of our children's lives. Where they figure out the sort of adults they wish to become and the areas of work they wish to pursue. Such exploration takes time and for many, will see their ideas change and develop even as they progress into their late teens and early twenties.

Get career ideas by watching icould video stories - search by your **favourite school subject or job type**.

Take the Buzz Quiz to find out what you're like and what you could do.

Can't decide? Tactics for making decisions is a useful list to work through to help you make choices and includes examples around GCSE subjects.

Choosing well: how to pick the right path for you is a more detailed guide to making decisions.