



Choosing Your Subjects: Making the Right Decision for You

Choosing your subjects is an important moment in your school life. The decisions you make now will shape your day-to-day experience over the next few years and may also influence the opportunities available to you later on. It is worth taking some time, thinking carefully and making choices that truly suit you.



Respect



Responsibility



Resilience

Choose Subjects You Will Enjoy

One of the best starting points is to consider your enjoyment. You are much more likely to do well in subjects that genuinely interest you. Take time to find out what each course really involves, rather than relying on what you *think* it might be like. Look at the topics you will study and the kind of work you will be expected to complete: how much will this be? How often?

Talking to teachers, family members and others who know you well can also help. They may recognise your key strengths and interests you have that you have not have considered. If a subject makes you curious and you can see yourself wanting to find out more, that is a very good sign.

Think About Your Strengths

Enjoyment is important, but so is ability. Choosing subjects you feel confident in often makes learning more rewarding. Think about the subjects you have done well in before and try to understand why.

It also helps to consider what each subject demands. For example, if you are thinking about drama, ask yourself whether you have enjoyed performing in the past, whether you like working closely with other people and whether you are willing to give up additional time after school or at weekends for rehearsals. Every subject requires commitment, so be honest with yourself about the effort you are prepared to put in.

Consider Your Future Plans

Your choices now could affect what you are able to do later in life. If you already have an idea about a career or university course, check the entry requirements. Some courses ask for specific subjects, and knowing this in advance can help you keep the right doors open.

Even if you are not sure about your future yet, it is still sensible to think ahead. Picking subjects carefully now can give you more flexibility when you make decisions later on.

Keep a Good Balance

If you do not yet know what you want to do in the future, aim for a broad and balanced range of subjects. A mixture of different types of learning, such as creative, practical and academic courses, allows you to develop a variety of skills and discover new interests.

A balanced set of subjects can also make your timetable more interesting and prevent you from feeling overwhelmed by too much of the same kind of work.

Make Your Own Choices

Your subject choices should be based on what is **right for you**. Try not to be influenced too much by what your friends are choosing or which teachers you prefer. You may not end up in the same classes, and teaching staff can change.

This is **your** education and **your** future. It is important that you feel confident you have made decisions that suit your interests, strengths and ambitions.

How NOT to choose your subjects

It is just as important to avoid making choices for the wrong reasons.

Do not choose a subject simply because you have heard it is easy. Every subject has its challenges, and what feels straightforward for one person can be difficult for another.

Avoid choosing a subject solely because your family want you to take it. Their advice can be really helpful, but you are the one who will be studying it, so your interests and goals matter the most.

Try not to pick a subject just because you like the teacher. You may not be taught by them, and teachers can change. The same applies to choosing a subject because your friend is taking it. You might not be in the same class, and your learning should not depend on someone else's decisions.

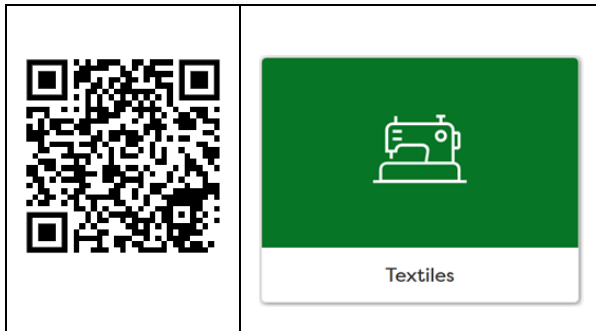
Choosing your subjects is about finding the right mix of interest, ability and future opportunity. Take your time, ask questions and think things through carefully. The best choices are personal, well informed and made with confidence.

Choose a subject you love, scan the QR code
and see where it might lead

	 Art		 Biology
	 Business Studies		 Chemistry
	 Child Development		 Computing
	 Construction		 Dance
	 Drama		 Economics

	 English		 Food (GCSE only)
	 Geography		 Graphics
	 Health & Social Care		 History
	 Languages		 Law
	 Maths		 Media Studies

	 Music		 PE
	 Philosophy & Ethics		 Photography
	 Physics		 Politics
	 Product Design		 Psychology
	 Science		 Sociology



No idea what you want to do after your GCSEs?

Don't worry, choose a mix of GCSE subjects to give yourself as many different options as possible.

If you like one of your GCSE subjects and are looking for ideas of what careers or courses it could lead onto, use the QR code to do the [Skills Profile](#) and find out what skills you have. (You can sign up for free)



Got an idea of a job or job sector you think might suit you?

then check out the [job profiles in the job sectors](#).



Some careers such as architecture, vets, working with languages etc. may require specific degree courses. The [job profiles in the job sectors](#) have details of all the entry requirements for these jobs.

In this case work backwards - to get into these degree courses you may need specific A levels/Level 3 qualifications, and to do these you may need certain GCSE subjects and grades.

Check out what GCSE/A level subjects and grades you need for particular degree courses on [informed choices](#) and [UCAS](#).



Careers Quizzes

Career quizzes can be used to explore what opportunities might be available to you. For some, they are useful tools for discovering new possibilities and insights into themselves and the world of work. Feel free to have a go... who knows what you might discover!

Personality quizzes

These are based on the idea that people with different personalities, prefer different types of work.

National Careers Service: Discover Your Skills		
Sort Your Future		
UCAS Careers Quiz		
Complete Careers Quiz		
16 Personalities TEST		
Red Bull Wingfinder		
The Buzz Quiz		

Sector quizzes

Different industries produce their own quizzes to help you explore what you might like, here are a few examples. Why not take a look?

• Construction	
• Work for MI5	
• Jobs in NHS	
• Creative Careers	
• Civil service careers	

Whichever quiz you use, it is useful to keep in mind, the question “why?”

For example, if the quiz results point you towards some jobs and away from others, ask yourself why the results were the way they were. It maybe that the quiz you used, has identified certain parts of a job or industry sector you like which, has led to certain results. Whether you agree or not with the results, this can be useful to reflect upon and consider what they mean for you.

Supporting Career Conversations at Home

Attached are some Family Action Plan sheets designed to help parents talk with their children about their future, explore different options, and support them in making informed, confident choices.

FAMILY ACTION PLAN



My child has no idea what to do next

Start exploring areas that might interest them but keep your options open and allow them time to reflect on the ideas you discover

What	When	Reflection	Completed
Encourage your child to start exploring careers options based on their skills and interests, for example by encouraging them to use the Career planner tool on the Prospects website	In the next month	Which sections and jobs have you discovered? Had you thought about them before? Is there one in particular your child finds more appealing?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Find out more about three occupations within those sections on the National Careers Service website including skills & qualifications required.	In the next month	What information did you find out about these occupations? What qualifications are required for these occupations and where can you complete them - at school/college/work?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Find out more about the different education and careers options on the Talking Futures website	In the next two months	What information did you find out about these routes? Is there one that seemed particularly appealing?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Explore two different websites of different companies or sector organisations, using the resources list on the Talking Futures website.	In the next two months	What companies or sector organisations did you look at? What jobs occupations are available within those?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Attend a careers event or activity at school/college and take this action plan with you to find out how staff can help you explore the options further	This term/when one is next available	What did you find out? Have you identified who can support you in your child school/college? What questions might you or your child want to ask them?	☐ Yes ☐ No
			☐ Yes ☐ No
			☐ Yes ☐ No

Explore more on Talking Futures Find more information on the [Resources](#) page and explore education and career pathways.

FAMILY ACTION PLAN

TALKING

FUTURES

My child has a few things they like in school/college and has a bit of an idea what to do next

Explore their ideas in a bit more detail and see if they can find a few options they would like to focus on

What	When	Reflection	Completed
Discuss what subjects your child likes in school/college. Spend some time looking into where these subjects might lead to, using the Careerplilot website for instance	In the next month	Which sectors and jobs have you discovered? Is there one in particular your child finds more appealing?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Find out more about three occupations within those sectors on the National Careers Service website including skills & qualifications required	In the next month	What information did you find out about these occupations? What qualifications are required for these occupations and where can you complete them - at school/college/work?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Consider exploring more options based on their skills and interests, for example by encouraging them to use the Career planner tool on the Prospects website	In the next two months	Which sectors and careers have you discovered? Had you thought about them before? If not, repeat action two with the new options you have discovered.	☐ Yes ☐ No
Attend a careers event or activity at school/college and take this action plan with you to find out how staff can help you explore the options further	This term/when one is next available	What did you find out? Have you identified who can support you in your child's school/college?	☐ Yes ☐ No
			☐ Yes ☐ No
			☐ Yes ☐ No

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FAMILY ACTION PLAN

TALKING

FUTURES

My child has a very clear idea about what they want to do next

Find out more about their areas of interest and explore wider options to check if there might be areas they haven't thought about yet

What	When	Reflection	Completed		
Spend time finding out more about the sectors and careers they are interested in, exploring careers on the National Careers Service website	In the next month	What did you find out? What occupations are available within those sectors?	☐ Yes	☐ No	
Find out more about three occupations within those sectors on the National Careers Service website including skills & qualifications required.	In the next month	What information did you find out about these occupations? What qualifications are required for these occupations and where can you complete them - at school/college/work?	☐ Yes	☐ No	
Find out more about two occupations within each of those sectors on the National Careers Service website including skills & qualifications required	In the next month	Did you find out more information about occupations? What qualifications are required for these occupations and where can you complete them - at school/college/work?	☐ Yes	☐ No	
Attend a careers event or activity at school / college and take this action plan with you to find out how staff can help you explore the options further	This term/when one is next available	What did you find out? Have you identified who can support you in your child school / college?	☐ Yes	☐ No	
Explore other careers options based on their skills and interests that they might not have thought about. Encourage them to take a careers quiz, for example using the Career planner tool on the Prospects website	In the next two months	Which sectors or careers have you discovered? Had you thought about them before? If not, repeat action one and two with the new options	☐ Yes	☐ No	
			☐ Yes	☐ No	
			☐ Yes	☐ No	

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