



AYLESBURY
GRAMMAR SCHOOL
Founded 1598

GCSE Options 2021





GCSE OPTIONS 2021



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GENERAL INFORMATION

This is a key period in your school career. In September this year, you will be starting a two-year course leading to GCSE examinations. This booklet will help you to decide your choice of subjects for GCSE.

In Years 10 & 11 (Key Stage 4), you will study a package of compulsory core subjects plus four options. One of these four options will be a Modern Foreign Language which you currently study (French, Spanish or German).

At Aylesbury Grammar School you are offered as much choice as possible, so that you can continue to study subjects you enjoy and may wish to consider taking in the Sixth Form.

1. Compulsory subjects

All students will study the following **compulsory** subjects:

GCSE:	Subject:	Periods per fortnight:
	English (Language and Literature)	7
	Mathematics (including Statistics)	6
	Biology	4
	Chemistry	4
	Physics	4
Non Exam:	PE and Games	4
	Personal, Social, and Health Education	1

Notes:

1. All students are required to choose one modern language from those studied at Key Stage 3. Please read carefully the relevant sections of this booklet for further details. Keen linguists may select an additional language as an optional subject.
2. GCSE Physical Education may be chosen as an optional subject in addition to non-exam PE and Games.
3. PSHE is delivered in tutor groups.

2. Optional subjects

These are the subjects where **you** choose what you want to study. Each is studied on 5 periods per fortnight:

Ancient History	Geology
Art	German
Business	History
Computing	Latin
Engineering	Music
Drama	Physical Education
Economics	Religious Studies
French	Spanish
Geography	



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3. Keeping options open

One of the things to consider in making choices for GCSE is whether you are keeping options open for the Sixth Form and university.

To study for 'A' level in the following subjects you **must** have taken GCSE:

Art, Computing, Design & Technology (Engineering), French, Geography, German,
History, Latin, Music, Spanish

Some 'A' level subjects do **not** require you to have studied them at GCSE:

Ancient History, Business, Economics
Physical Education, Religious Studies / Philosophy, Theatre Studies (Drama)

4. What happens next?

Before making your choices we urge you to talk things through with your parents and read the options booklet very carefully. We have included a section on Frequently Asked Questions which you may find helpful!

These choices are important so do not hesitate to talk to your tutor and your subject teachers. If you need further advice, you may also wish to speak to:

Mr R O'Driscoll (Head of Year 9) rodriscoll@ags.bucks.sch.uk

Mr G Dallas (Assistant Headteacher, Head of Middle School) gdallas@ags.bucks.sch.uk

Dr K J Smith (Assistant Headteacher, Head of Upper School) ksmith@ags.bucks.sch.uk

The Careers Adviser will attend the Year 9 Consultation Evening and be available to provide advice on options and careers.

You will need to make your choices and complete the **option choices form, details of which are on the last page of this booklet**, to the main school office by the end of **Friday 12th February**. If you do not do this then you will be less likely to get your first choice of subjects as the teaching sets may be over-subscribed.

5. Timetable for the GCSE Options Process

January 2021	Options Booklet issued.
Thursday 21 January 2021	Year 9 Consultation Evening – opportunity for parents/students to discuss options with teaching staff.
Friday 12 February 2021	Deadline for return of options choices form.
March 2021	Individual interviews to discuss options and make changes if necessary.
By the end of the Spring Term	Confirmation of option choices allocated.



PART ONE - COMPULSORY CORE SUBJECTS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE & ENGLISH LITERATURE

Exam Board: Edexcel

Specification: 1EN0 (Language); 1ET0 (Literature)

Head of Department: Mr A Skinner

English Language: there are no controlled assessments – both exams will be in the summer of Year 11

Unit 1: fiction and imaginative writing (1 hour 45 minutes) 40%

Unit 2: non-fiction and transactional writing (2 hours and 5 minutes) 60%

Spoken Language ('speaking and listening') is still compulsory, but students are given a separate level. It does **NOT** form part of the GCSE.

English Literature there are no controlled assessments – both exams will be in the summer of Year 11

Unit 1: Shakespeare and post-1914 literature (1 hour 45 minutes) 50%

Unit 2: 19th-century novel and poetry since 1789 (2hours 15 minutes) 50%



MATHEMATICS

Exam Board: Edexcel / OCR / AQA Specification: see below
Head of Department: Mr C P Smith

Exam Board: EDEXCEL 1MA1 GCSE Mathematics (taken by all students in Year 11)
EDEXCEL ST01 GCSE Statistics (taken by all students in Year 10)
OCR 6693 Additional Mathematics FSMQ (Most of Sets 1 only – Year 11)

Controlled Assessment: None for any of the above courses.

All sets follow a Higher Tier GCSE Maths course, with three exams at the end of Year 11. The course provides a broad basis of 'everyday' mathematics, while also preparing the way for further study at A level. Students will cover all the national curriculum topics in number, algebra, geometry, statistics and probability. The new-style GCSE, graded 9 to 1 (top grade is 9), has much emphasis on problem solving skills, and is more demanding for students than the previous GCSE.

Setting is arranged so that many boys can benefit from smaller class sizes, increasing access to support from their teacher, to maximise GCSE performance in this key subject.

Whilst maximising the GCSE grade in Maths is the priority for all sets, and expectations are very high, all students will have the additional challenge of simultaneously preparing for a GCSE in Statistics, taken at the end of Year 10, but with no additional teaching time. This will give students an extra qualification in this very useful area, which also subsumes and reinforces all the data handling content of the GCSE Maths course. It is also a useful foundation in Applied Maths for the many who will opt to continue with Maths in the Sixth Form.

Additional Maths FSMQ is an extra qualification targeted by Sets 1 only. This Free Standing Maths Qualification aims to really stretch the most able and give an early taste of 'A level' type work.

A variety of evidence is used by the Department to allocate students to appropriate sets for Year 10. The aim behind our setting strategy and the different routes taken in KS4, is to ensure that all students remain suitably challenged and maximise their progress and performance. This has proved a very effective approach for students of all abilities and parental support, whichever set students find themselves in, is appreciated.

Having covered the Higher Tier GCSE course the option of future Sixth Form study in Mathematics remains open to students in ALL sets.



BIOLOGY

Exam Board: OCR Specification: Gateway Biology A (9-1) J247
Head of Department: Mr M T Pilkington

For a copy of the specification please visit:

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse-gateway-science-suite-biology-a-j247-from-2016/>

Students sit two written examinations, all at the end of Year 11. These are:

Paper 3: Testing topics B1 – B3 (1 hour & 45 minutes)

Paper 6: Testing topics B4 – B6 & assumed knowledge of B1 – B3 (1 hour & 45 minutes)

Both examination papers consist of multiple choice questions, short answer styles (practical, mathematical, synoptic and structured questions) and one extended 6 mark level of response question.

There is neither formally assessed coursework nor any Controlled Assessment Tasks.

Practical work is carried out throughout Years 9, 10 and 11. There are eight practical assessment groups (PAGs.) Knowledge of PAGs (practical methods, techniques and skills in the analysis and evaluation of results) are tested in both papers.

CHEMISTRY

Exam Board: OCR Specification: Gateway Chemistry A (9-1) J248
Head of Department: Dr C J Gardner

For a copy of the specification please visit:

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse-gateway-science-suite-chemistry-a-j248-from-2016/>

Students sit two written examinations, both at the end of Year 11 and each 1 hour and 45 minutes.

There is no formally assessed coursework, nor any Controlled Assessment Tasks.

Practical work is carried out throughout Years 10 and 11. Knowledge of practical methods and techniques and skills in the analysis of results are tested in the written papers.

The course starts whilst students are in Year 9.

PHYSICS

Exam Board: OCR Specification: Gateway Physics A (9-1) J249
Head of Department: Mr J P KEMP

For a copy of the specification please visit:

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse-gateway-science-suite-physics-a-j249-from-2016/>

Students sit two written examinations, both at the end of Year 11 and each 1 hour and 45 minutes.

There is no formally assessed coursework, nor any Controlled Assessment Tasks.

Practical work is carried out throughout Years 9, 10 and 11. Knowledge of practical methods and techniques and skills in the analysis of results are tested in the written papers.

The course starts at the beginning of Year 9.



PART TWO - OPTION CHOICE SUBJECTS

These are the optional subjects where **you** choose what you want to study.

ANCIENT HISTORY

Exam Board: OCR

Specification: J198

Head of Department: Miss S E Holliday

This course will appeal to anyone interested in History and enjoyed the Classical Studies course in Year 7. **NO KNOWLEDGE OF LATIN OR GREEK** is required, however the course provides an excellent complement to both Latin and History GCSE. The course covers international politics, war and the strategy of wars, and how civilisations were created and destroyed, and an in-depth study of one particular ancient society. Students will be taught how to analyse and evaluate original source material.

There are two exams.

J198/01 - Greece and Persia

The Persian Empire, 559–465 BC: This is a compulsory period study focusing on the Persian Empire under Cyrus the Great, Cambyses II, Darius I and Xerxes (27.5%) and a depth study on Alexander the Great, 356–323 BC (22.5%). The Persian Empire and its place as the first global superpower has fascinated the world for millenia, students will have the opportunity to learn about how the empire came into being and how it 'fell' both through the failed stand by the Spartans at Thermopylae, and finally through the conquests of a young Alexander the Great.

J198/02 - Rome and its neighbours

The foundations of Rome: from kingship to republic, 753–440 BC: This is a compulsory longer period study focusing on the kings of Rome and the early Roman Republic, with an emphasis on the most exciting and interesting events and characters. (27.5%) and a depth study on Hannibal and the Second Punic War, 218–201 BC (22.5%). Students will look at the mythical foundation of Rome, Romulus and Remus and the wolf, right up to killing of Tarquin the Proud and the end of the kings, following this they will study the North African general Hannibal and how he almost destroyed Rome itself.



ART

Exam Board: OCR

Specification: J171

Head of Department: Mrs L M Tangi

The OCR GCSE Art and Design – Fine Art (J171) has considerable scope for students to focus on their individual strengths and interests but they will be expected to open-minded enough to experiment and try new things. The course is made up of two components. Both components are essentially made up of practical responses and practical study.

Component 01 has a 60 % weighting – this is the portfolio where you will develop, explore and record your ideas. The initial stages of the course consists of a series of tasks that are aimed at developing the skills and ways of thinking that will be needed during the ‘controlled coursework’ phase of component 1. Observations skills, imaginative techniques, composition and the ability to analyse and learn from the work of other artists are essential parts of the course.

Following these initial stages students will begin formal completion of ‘controlled coursework’ during the summer term of Year 10 which runs through until the end of January in Year 11 – up to 45 hours class time in total. During this time, homework tasks will support the coursework but only work carried out in class can be marked and contribute towards the final coursework grade. Ambition, independence and good time management will be essential skills because students have to fully research, develop and make their own piece of work within this period.

Component 02 has a 40% weighting – this is an externally set task provided by the Board. Students will begin work on this component as soon as the ‘controlled coursework’ period is complete. The early release paper provides a choice of starting points either visual or written to develop a response using the skills, knowledge and understanding gained through the course. A preparation period of approximately 8 weeks is provided which is followed by a 10 hour period under exam conditions in which students complete their final piece.

Specification details can be found at:

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse-art-and-design-j170-j176-from-2016/>



BUSINESS

Exam Board: OCR

Specification: J204

Head of Department: Mr G A Davey

If you are opting for this GCSE you are NOT permitted to take a GCSE in Economics as well.

OCR's specification states "This qualification equips pupils with the skills and confidence to explore how different business situations affect business decisions. It is a well-rounded introduction to the subject. The qualification will encourage students to make informed choices about a wide range of further learning opportunities and career pathways as well as develop life skills that enable them to become financially and commercially aware."

This is a GCSE which involves a wide range of activities; it is a "hands on" course that will mean students will find themselves participating in real world business decisions via use of case studies, personal research and practical presentations. As such it is for those students who have a genuine interest in the business world and is not recommended for those unprepared to commit to the workload involved.

The GCSE deals with all of the major functions of business: Marketing, Production, Accounting, Finance and Human Resources. The course looks at how and why business decisions are made in both small and large businesses. The course incorporates a number of key skills: problem solving, numeracy and communication. A lot of time is spent in discussion of how to manage a particular business problem so *students considering taking the GCSE must be prepared to 'speak up' and also not be afraid to use numbers*. Calculations are an important part of business decision making.

There are two examinations in the GCSE; unseen examination papers in the standard question and answer format. There is no coursework (controlled assessment).

Business is a very popular option which has seen many students achieve high grades but is not a GCSE to take if you are unwilling to show initiative and effort. If it is not selected at GCSE level it is still possible to take this subject at Advanced level.



COMPUTER SCIENCE

Exam Board: AQA Specification: 8525
Head of Department: Mr J E Chappell

As a subject Computer Science has aspects in common with Maths, Chemistry, Physics, Biology and Languages. You need to develop your capabilities to solve problems (like Maths), in the contexts of programming a project and answering examination questions. There is a range of theory to understand and apply in the context of written paper exam questions (like any science). And as in learning a language you need to regularly apply yourself to programming tasks in order to develop the fluency you'll need for your programming project, competitive programming, and for the exams at the end of two years.

Exams

We use the AQA specification. There are two end of qualification exams (worth 50% each). The main areas covered in the exams include:

- Programming
- Algorithms (program design)
- Data representation
- Computer systems
- Computer networks
- Computer security
- Ethical, legal and environmental impacts of digital technology

As with the theory so also with the practical. We develop the programming and computational thinking skills for GCSE and beyond. Frequent coding and exam question practice helps students to apply knowledge of computer science principles as you design, program, and evaluate problem solving computer systems.

Programming

We learn to program with Python, a language that's used in millions of smart-phones, tablets and PCs. You'll learn about design, algorithms, testing and debugging, and use many of the tools you'll need to produce quality code. AGS students will already have experience programming from their Key Stage 3 courses. In addition, students aspiring to study Computer Science beyond GCSE are expected to develop fluency with a second text based programming language, C++, for which we provide the necessary resources and introduction to competitive programming.

Competitive Programming

Students who make exceptional progress with programming challenges may be invited to enter the British Informatics (aka Computer Science) Olympiad in year 11.

Other benefits of Computer Science at AGS

- We are developing links with local high-tech companies and universities.
- We foster and develop interests in robotics and other aspects of Computer Science leading developments worldwide.



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DRAMA

Exam Board: EDUQAS

Specification: 601/8420/6

Head of Department: Mr R J Warner

GCSE drama is a practical course that allows pupils to develop advance performance and technical theatre skills. Drama encourages critical thinking, team skills, problem solving and increases confidence.

The course is assessed by two practical coursework tasks (60%) and a written exam (40%). The GCSE drama course includes the study of a set text (The Tempest) and reviews of live theatre performances.

For further specific information and questions please contact the Director of Drama, Mr Warner, via e-mail rwarn@ags.bucks.sch.uk

ECONOMICS

Exam Board: OCR

Specification: J205

Head of Department: Mr G A Davey

If you are opting for this GCSE you are NOT permitted to take a GCSE in Business Studies as well.

OCR's specification states "Economics is about people and their economic choices. This course enables students to appreciate we are all part of the economy and that economics relates to every aspect of our lives...Economics equips students with the skills and confidence to explore how consumers, producers and governments interact in markets nationally and internationally. By learning how to explain and evaluate economic problems and possible solutions, learners will acquire a way of thinking as economists and develop a logical approach to thinking and reasoning."

Economics is concerned with the behaviour of consumers, producers and the government. We study two broad areas: Macroeconomics, which is concerned with the workings of the economy as a whole. Here we study issues such as: How do firms know what to produce? Why does the government change tax rates? Why is the Bank of England in charge of interest rates and not the Chancellor? Why doesn't the economy grow steadily all the time? These are 'real world' issues and yet many people have only the vaguest notion of the answers and how they affect their everyday life.

At Microeconomic level we look at how markets work and why they fail, for example: Why does the market produce cars but the government provide the roads to drive on? Why does the government try to control monopolies? Why does the NHS exist?

Please do not choose this option if you dislike working with numerical data and graphs. It is a subject that contains a lot of theoretical concepts and, as you will not have studied any of this material before, *you will need to recognise that there is likely to be more homework than in subjects with which you are already familiar.* An interest in everyday business and economic matters is also a requirement; students undertaking this course must be prepared to actively debate economic issues in class.

There are two written papers which are taken at the end of Year 11. There is no coursework (controlled assessment). If it is not selected at GCSE level it is still possible to take this subject at Advanced level.



ENGINEERING

Exam Board: AQA Specification: 8852
Head of Department: Mr C Dimelow

Engineering (AQA 8852)

Engineering is an increasingly innovative and exciting area to work in. It affects every aspect of modern life – from skyscrapers to smart phones, cars and graphic products. This new GCSE introduces you to a host of new technologies, helping you to gain practical skills and understanding to inspire a lifelong interest in engineering. It will particularly appeal to those who enjoy being creative, with an affinity for drawing, design, mathematics and problem solving. The course includes a series of mini practical projects, the development of knowledge and understanding and a coursework-based project. The subject is assessed at the end of Year 11 as follows:

Exam Paper: 2 hours (120 marks), 60% of GCSE

Coursework: Brief set by AQA in June of year of study (80 marks), 40% of GCSE

Further information can be obtained from the department or the examination boards' website:

www.aqa.org.uk

On successful completion of your GCSE you may continue your studies of Design Technology through the A Level Product Design course offered by the Department. Studying Design and Technology at A Level can lead to career opportunities in advertising, architecture, industrial design, illustration, engineering, and designing and manufacturing.



FRENCH

Exam Board: AQA Specification: 8658
Head of Department: Mr T J Crapper

It is essential in today's world that you have a good grasp of **at least** one Modern Foreign Language at GCSE level. The GCSE course in French builds on the skills and grammatical understanding you will have developed in Key Stage 3.

First teaching of the new GCSE course in French began in September 2016. As a linear qualification the first cohort of students sat all examinations in Summer 2018. The papers will be in Listening (25%), Reading (25%), Speaking (25%) and Writing (25%). Students must sit all four at either Higher or Foundation level, not a mixture of the two. Higher tier grades range from 4 to 9, whilst Foundation tier grades range from 1 to 5.

THEMES:

1. IDENTITY AND CULTURE

- Me, my family and friends
- Technology in everyday life
- Free time
- Customs and festivals in French-speaking countries/communities

2. LOCAL, NATIONAL, INTERNATIONAL, AND GLOBAL AREAS OF INTEREST

- Home, town, neighbourhood and region
- Social issues
- Global issues
- Travel and tourism

3. CURRENT AND FUTURE STUDY AND EMPLOYMENT

- My studies
- Life at school
- Post 16 education
- Jobs, career choices and ambitions

How is this knowledge assessed?

Listening - In the Listening Exam students will hear short items such as announcements, short conversations, instructions, news bulletins and telephone messages from suitable adapted authentic sources and answer questions on them.

Reading - The Reading Exam will consist of a variety of longer and shorter written texts from items such as brochures, guides, newspapers, websites, magazines and literary texts. There will also be a short translation task from French into English

Speaking - The Speaking Exam will consist of a short two minute rôle play based on a stimulus card, a discussion of one of the GCSE topics prompted by a photo card (two minutes at Foundation Level and three minutes at Higher Level) and then a general conversation on two further GCSE topics (about four minutes at Foundation Level and about 6 minutes at Higher Level)

Writing - At Foundation Level students will write a message, a short paragraph and a structured essay and short phrases to be translated from English into French.



GEOGRAPHY

Exam Board: AQA Specification: 8035 (Geography A)
Head of Department: Mr M Corby

Controlled Assessment: 0% (There is no coursework)

“Geography is the subject which holds the key to our future” Michael Palin.

Geography is a subject well regarded by employers for the skills developed, namely problem solving, using initiative, decision making and team work. Geography ranks third among the academic disciplines for the employability of graduates. With Geography sitting between economic, historical and scientific subjects, it is perfectly placed to offer the broad and practical approach to find the solutions to the world's problems. It is this broadness that ensures geography fits in with both scientific and humanities based subjects.

Unit 1: Physical Geography

Written Paper – 1 hour 30 mins – 35% of marks

This covers the following topics: river landscapes, glaciated landscapes, ecosystems, hot deserts and natural hazards. Assessment – This unit is assessed through a mixture of short and long answer responses.

Unit 2: Human Geography

Written Paper – 1 hour 30 mins – 35% of marks

This covers the following topics: world economic development, resource management, urban issues and energy problems. This unit is assessed through a mixture of short and long answer responses.

Unit 3. Geographical Skills

Written Paper – 1 hour paper – 30% of marks. (NO COURSEWORK)

Students will receive an information booklet before the exams about a geographic issue which they must answer questions about in the exam. Students will also work in teams completing fieldwork based on the topic of tourism. It is anticipated this will involve completing a residential fieldtrip to the Lake District. They will then be asked questions in the exam about their fieldwork. The exam will also test their Geographical skills such as map reading & graph interpretation.



GEOLOGY

Exam Board: WJEC

Specification: GCSE (9-1)

Head of Department: Mr M J Jones

WJEC Eduqas GCSE (9-1) in GEOLOGY

Geology GCSE is an interesting course aimed at students who want to understand the environment which they see around them and who are prepared to study a new subject and engage in some additional independent work. It offers unique insights into the history of the planet using the principle 'the present is the key to the past' and provides understanding of management of resources now and in the future. It allies comfortably with other sciences and is very well received by all universities. Study in the field is an important element of the course and includes three essential fieldtrips over the two years, to local quarries, to Bradgate Park in Leicestershire and to the Jurassic Coast in Dorset.

Component 1 (50% of the course): Geological Principles On-screen examination: 1 hour 15 minutes 50% of qualification An on-screen assessment consisting of data and stimulus response questions.

Component 2 (50% of the course): Investigative Geology Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes 50% of qualification A written assessment consisting of data and stimulus response questions. This assessment requires short, structured and extended writing answers to investigate the geology of an area shown on a simplified geological map.

You will study four different topic areas including:

Key Idea 1 covers how rock exposures contain evidence of formation and deformation. This includes;

- Minerals
- Igneous rocks and processes
- Sedimentary rocks and their fossil content
- Metamorphic rocks and processes
- Deformational structures.

Key Idea 2 covers the major concepts and techniques that underpin our current understanding of the Earth and its history. This includes;

- The rock cycle
- Plate tectonics
- Geochronological principles
- Global climate and sea level change
- The origin and development of life on Earth.

Key Idea 3 looks in depth at comparisons of the Earth with other planetary bodies within the Solar System provide evidence for the origin and evolution of both

Key Idea 4 covers how Humans interact with the Earth and geological hazards. This includes;

- Earth hazards and their mitigation
- Earth resources and engineering.



GERMAN

Exam Board: AQA

Specification: 8668

Head of Department: Mr R E Sloan

It is essential in today's world that you have a good grasp of **at least** one Modern Foreign Language at GCSE level. The GCSE course in German builds on the skills and grammatical understanding you will have developed in Key Stage 3.

First teaching of the new GCSE course in German began in September 2016. As a linear qualification the first cohort of students sat all examinations in summer 2018. The papers will be in Listening (25%), Reading (25%), Speaking (25%) and Writing (25%). Students must sit all four at either Higher or Foundation level, not a mixture of the two. Higher tier grades range from 4 to 9, whilst Foundation tier grades range from 1 to 5.

THEMES:

1. IDENTITY AND CULTURE

- Me, my family and friends
- Technology in everyday life
- Free time
- Customs and festivals in German-speaking countries/communities

2. LOCAL, NATIONAL, INTERNATIONAL, AND GLOBAL AREAS OF INTEREST

- Home, town, neighbourhood and region
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- My studies
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How is this knowledge assessed?

Listening - In the Listening Exam students will hear short items such as announcements, short conversations, instructions, news bulletins and telephone messages from suitable adapted authentic sources and answer questions on them.

Reading - The Reading Exam will consist of a variety of longer and shorter written texts from items such as brochures, guides, newspapers, websites, magazines and literary texts. There will also be a short translation task from German into English

Speaking - The Speaking Exam will consist of a short two minute role play based on a stimulus card, a discussion of one of the GCSE topics prompted by a photo card (two minutes at Foundation Level and three minutes at Higher Level) and then a general conversation on two further GCSE topics (about four minutes at Foundation Level and about 6 minutes at Higher Level)

Writing - At Foundation Level students will write a message, a short paragraph and a structured essay and short phrases to be translated from English into German.



HISTORY

Exam Board: Eduqas

Specification: C100QS

Head of Department: Mr J M Barrie

The course is divided into 4 separate units, each of which is examined by a terminal exam. There are no Controlled Assessments in the new syllabus.

We intend to offer the following options at GCSE:

- 1) The Elizabethan Age, 1558-1603
- 2) The USA: A Nation of Contrasts, 1910-1929
- 3) The Development of Germany, 1919-1991
- 4) The Development of Warfare, c500 to the present day

'As part of Unit 4 students are required to study a site of historical interest. In 2021/22 this is intended to be Dover Castle.

Educational visits are an important part of learning about History beyond the classroom. In order to further develop our students' interest and understanding of the development of warfare, in recent years we have organised trips to London to visit the Imperial War Museum, HMS Belfast and the Hendon RAF Museum.

We believe that these exciting range of new courses will enable students to build on their interests in History, develop their historical skills and the courses will also provide a firm foundation for those students who wish to continue the subject to A Level.

If you require any further information about the GCSE History course, you should speak to Mr Barrie or your History teacher.

LATIN

Exam Board: OCR

Specification: J282

Head of Department: Miss S E Holliday

This course will appeal to anyone who enjoys the study of Latin and exploring an ancient culture through its language and literature. It will develop language skills in every area and expand your analytical and problem solving skills. Latin continues to be one of the most valued GCSEs and A Levels by universities for all subjects. It provides an excellent complement to the study of Modern Foreign Languages and English Literature, as well as testing logic skills. You will read stories based on the myths, legends and history of Rome in Years 10 and 11 to develop your grammar and vocabulary further, and you will also read original Latin literature and investigate literary techniques. **All exams are taken at the end of Year 11.**

Unit J282/01: Latin Language (50%)

You will develop your language skills further from those in Years 8 and 9, and translate passages into English. These are based around the topics of Myths and Roman history. You will continue to be expected to be able to make derivations and you will also develop your English into Latin skills.

Unit J282/03: Latin Prose Literature B (25%)

You will study a selection from works by Apuleius and Cicero, on witchcraft and the morality of personal gain.



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Unit J282/05 Latin Verse Literature B (25%)

You will study a section of Virgil's Aeneid Book VI, examining the journey of the hero Aeneas into the underworld, a key part in the most famous Roman epic and the basis for many great works of European literature, such as Dante's Inferno and Milton's Paradise Lost.

MUSIC

Exam Board: OCR

Specification: J536

Head of Department: Mr D C Nathan

Coursework: 60% (Performing and Composing)

The exam is divided into three parts – listening (40%), performing (30%) and composing (30%). The Listening Paper is a series of questions on a dozen or so short extracts of music. For the Performing Paper students must play one solo piece ideally of Grade 4 standard or above, and one duet, trio or ensemble piece (eg a piano duet, a guitar duet or a piece for an instrument with piano accompaniment). For the Composing Paper students must submit two original pieces; which needs to be scored out and recorded onto CD.

It is a requirement that students play an instrument for GCSE Music and that they take an active part in ensemble playing / singing – either inside school or outside of school. Students need to be aware of a wide variety of musical styles and be happy listening to and studying music from the Baroque period through to the Beatles as well as more modern pop music. Good candidates will have achieved Grade II or above in the Theory of Music and Grade III or above on their instrument before starting Year 10.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Exam Board: OCR

Specification: J587

Head of Department: Mr P N Dean

TWO written exam papers.

ONE practical component (controlled assessment). In this component you will be assessed in **THREE** practical performances (i.e. **THREE** sports).

ONE written analysis tasks (AEP).

There will be two written papers, each with a 30% weighting, both taken in Year 11. The practical assessment will consist of practical performance and analysing and evaluating performance (AEP weighting 40%). A good level of practical performance is essential in at least 3 practical areas of physical education (team or individual games, swimming, athletics, gymnastics, etc). The course forms a good basis for continuing to study Physical Education at AS and A2 level.



RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Exam Board: AQA

Specification: 8062 (Spec A)

Head of Department: Mrs K L Crussell

Controlled Assessments: none

Religious Studies is an increasingly popular option at AGS. Students are already familiar with the evaluative questions that form the basis of the examination and will have already studied the Buddhist and Christian traditions in their KS3 lessons. The aims of the GCSE Religious Studies course are to:

- 1) develop our knowledge and understanding of religious and non-religious beliefs, and to develop our ability to construct well-argued, well-informed, balanced and structured written arguments
- 2) reflect on, and develop, our own values, belief, meaning, purpose, attitudes and truth in the light of what we learn from our study of religion
- 3) prepare ourselves for adult life in a pluralistic society and global community

There are two examination papers, each worth 50% and each lasting 1 hour 45 minutes.

Paper 1: The study of Buddhism (a non-theistic philosophy) and Christianity:

Buddhism: We study the Dharma and the various Buddhist traditions. We find out about temples and monasteries, worship and festivals, and different forms of meditation and other activities of the sangha. We visit Amaravati Buddhist Monastery near Hemel Hempstead and the Buddhist Temple and Peace Pagoda at Willen Lake.

Christianity: We consider the nature of God, the after-life, salvation, and the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the local church, different forms of worship and prayer, the significance of sacraments, pilgrimage, and celebrations such as Christmas and Easter. We spend a day visiting Aylesbury churches and meeting members of the Town Chaplaincy.

Paper 2: Philosophical and Ethical Studies:

We study four topics in detail:

1. **The Existence of God** and **Revelation** including philosophical arguments for and against the existence of God. (We looked at this briefly in year 8.)
2. **Peace and Conflict** including violence, weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and war, and the role of Religion and belief in 21st century conflict.
3. **Crime and Punishment** including the causes of crime and the Death Penalty.
4. **Human Rights and Social Justice**, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, prejudice and discrimination, wealth and poverty.

The course has academic rigour and a practical outlook as we consider different religious beliefs and attitudes to issues in contemporary British society. We listen attentively and respectfully to a range of viewpoints reflecting the diversity of viewpoints that people hold. We question opinions intelligently and express our own views clearly, confidently and non-judgmentally. We learn to think clearly and compassionately about issues that are significant for us as individuals and for the world in which we live. These skills and attitudes are highly valued by employers and higher education institutions alike. Religious Studies is a relevant qualification for any career which involves working with other people such as law, politics, and medicine. The UK is a multi-faith society and an understanding of our differences will help us live and work together peacefully.

Assessment: At the end of the course students sit two (equally weighted) examinations, each lasting 1 hour 45 minutes, as described above



SPANISH

Exam Board: AQA

Specification: 8698

Head of Department: Mrs R J Corbould

It is essential in today's world that you have a good grasp of **at least** one Modern Foreign Language at GCSE level. The GCSE course in Spanish builds on the skills and grammatical understanding you will have developed in Key Stage 3.

First teaching of the new GCSE course in Spanish began in September 2016. As a linear qualification the first cohort of students sat all examinations in summer 2018. The papers will be in Listening (25%), Reading (25%), Speaking (25%) and Writing (25%). Students must sit all four at either Higher or Foundation level, not a mixture of the two. Higher tier grades range from 4 to 9, whilst Foundation tier grades range from 1 to 5.

THEMES:

1. IDENTITY AND CULTURE

- Me, my family and friends
- Technology in everyday life
- Free time
- Customs and festivals in Spanish-speaking countries/communities

2. LOCAL, NATIONAL, INTERNATIONAL, AND GLOBAL AREAS OF INTEREST

- Home, town, neighbourhood and region
- Social issues
- Global issues
- Travel and tourism

3. CURRENT AND FUTURE STUDY AND EMPLOYMENT

- My studies
- Life at school
- Post 16 education
- Jobs, career choices and ambitions

How is this knowledge assessed?

Listening - In the Listening Exam students will hear short items such as announcements, short conversations, instructions, news bulletins and telephone messages from suitable adapted authentic sources and answer questions on them.

Reading - The Reading Exam will consist of a variety of longer and shorter written texts from items such as brochures, guides, newspapers, websites, magazines and literary texts. There will also be a short translation task from Spanish into English

Speaking - The Speaking Exam will consist of a short two minute role play based on a stimulus card, a discussion of one of the GCSE topics prompted by a photo card (two minutes at Foundation Level and three minutes at Higher Level) and then a general conversation on two further GCSE topics (about four minutes at Foundation Level and about 6 minutes at Higher Level)

Writing - At Foundation Level students will write a message, a short paragraph and a structured essay and short phrases to be translated from English into Spanish.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Q. What are good reasons for opting for particular subjects?

You should ask yourself the following questions before choosing a subject:

- Do I have an aptitude for this subject?
- Do I enjoy studying this subject at the moment?
- Will this subject provide enough (or too much) academic and intellectual challenge?
- Do I need this subject for my higher education and career plans?
- Will my choices give me a broad and balanced range of subjects?

2. Q. How likely is it that I will get my choice of options?

As long as you meet the deadline for handing in the option form, it is highly likely that you will get your option choices. Occasionally some subjects are under-subscribed. If too few students opt for a subject it will not run.

If we cannot accommodate your first set of option choices, we will speak to you to discuss any changes to be made.

We endeavour to create a timetable that allows each student to opt for a portfolio of subjects which best meets their individual needs. There are, however, certain constraints that mean, in a relatively few cases, you may not be able to put together your ideal combination of subjects. In the interests of breadth and balance, it will **not** be possible for you to study certain combinations of subjects, such as Business and Economics.

3. Q. What is the maximum number of GCSEs I can take?

The majority of students will take 11 full GCSEs. .

Some students may take more subjects following discussion with the Head of Section. However, **it is not the number of GCSE passes** that matter but the **quality** of the passes. Allowing time to be involved in the many extra-curricular activities offered at school will probably be more helpful in developing your potential in the long term and is certainly of interest to universities and future employers.

4. Q. How will GCSE results affect my long term prospects?

GCSEs are very important. Universities use the quality of GCSE passes as part of their selection process for applicants. The Higher Education Leader at the school has spoken to Year 9 about this process and the importance of top grades.

5. Q. Which Maths sets take the additional Maths FSMQ?

Set 1 has the opportunity to study for the FSMQ Additional Maths, a Free Standing Mathematics Qualification **in addition** to Mathematics.

6. Q. I find languages difficult. Do I have to do a modern language?

Yes, our Key Stage 4 curriculum includes a modern language and this breadth is an asset to our students.



GCSE OPTIONS 2021

7. **Q. I find science challenging. Is it possible for me to drop one of the three GCSE science courses offered at AGS and opt for an additional subject instead?**

No. Our agreed Key Stage 4 curriculum includes three GCSE science courses.

In Year 10, students struggling to cope with the demands of the three sciences will be put into smaller classes and a more supportive learning environment.

9. **Q. I wish to take a subject because I enjoy the teaching style of my current subject teacher. Can you guarantee that I get this teacher in Year 10 and Year 11?**

No. Timetabling constraints and possible staff changes mean there is no guarantee that you will get the same teacher. Choosing a subject on the basis of teacher preference is not the right reason for choosing that subject.

10. **Q. What are the minimum entry requirements for the Sixth Form at Aylesbury Grammar School?**

Our current minimum requirements are 44 points from the best 8 full GCSE results. You must achieve a minimum of grade 5 in Maths and English. You should have **at least a GCSE grade 6** in the subjects you wish to take at A Level, some subjects require a grade 7.

The vast majority of Year 11 students at AGS obtain at least the minimum requirements to continue their study here into the Sixth Form.

YEAR 10 OPTION CHOICES FORM 2021

Please complete this form by **Friday 12 February 2021** at the latest

To complete the form you will need to follow this link: <https://forms.gle/8stWe34mDRPzU6zo9>

Please note that you must be signed in to an AGS school google account in order to complete this form

Before submitting the form, please be sure of your options as you may only submit the form once. You should provide your chosen Modern Foreign Language choice and three other choices in order of priority. You should also provide two reserve options, again in order of priority.



Walton Road, Aylesbury, HP21 7RP
(01296) 484545
office@ags.bucks.sch.uk