

How should I choose my A level subjects?

Careers advice - speak to 6th form staff, especially if you already have an idea of what career you'd like to pursue. This is very important, as some students discover too late they haven't done the correct subjects for what they want to study at university.

Enjoyment - it's important to choose subjects you enjoy doing. Even if you are good at a certain subject, you might not actually enjoy it all that much. There's no point going through sixth form and never looking forward to lessons because you don't like them. This in turn may make you feel you can't cope with the work and make you feel stressed in the long-term. If you look forward to lessons, chances are you will approach them confidently and do well in them.

Research - look carefully at the syllabuses for new subjects your sixth form or college are offering that were not available at GCSE. Some students find that they take these courses without looking into them properly first, and are then disappointed when it's not what they were expecting. Find out what exam board is used for these subjects, and download the syllabus from their website to read more about what it involves. Try to talk to students who are already on the course, and the teacher(s) that runs it.

Strengths - read through the syllabuses for subjects you are considering doing to see whether they play to your strengths. For example, if you excel at creative writing, then an English Language A level would be a better option than English Literature. Talk to your subject teachers about your strengths and weaknesses to assess your potential, allowing you to make more informed decisions about which A levels you choose.

Workload – another good reason to read through the syllabuses of each subject you are considering is to check how they are assessed. How much coursework is there? How many tests/exams are there? Are there any practical assessments? It's probably wise not to take 3 subjects where the main bulk of assessment is coursework, but also not to take 3 subjects where most of the assessment rests on exams at the end of the year. If possible, try to balance your subject combinations so your work will be spread over equal amounts of coursework, exams and practical tests