

## Choosing your A Level Subjects

**The two most important criteria for choosing subjects are:**

- what you are likely to be good at
- what you are likely to enjoy.

Most higher education courses require certain A level grades (or alternative equivalent qualifications), and many specify the A level subjects and GCSE subjects that you should have. Think ahead to what you will be doing after A levels to help you choose the best subjects now. If you are not sure what career you will enter, try to choose a selection of subjects that will keep your options as open as possible.

**Therefore, when making your choices you should consider:**

- the subjects in which you are interested
- your abilities, aptitudes and skills
- how open you want to keep your career choice
- which A level subjects are available at your school or in local sixth forms and colleges.

### **A level Subject Combinations**

Some A levels cover common ground, for example, geography and environmental science, or economics and business. If the overlap is too great, some higher education institutions may not accept the combination. On the other hand, two complementary subjects may help a great deal in your studies. For example, doing physics without mathematics or another science would be difficult and is not generally recommended.

Some degree courses specify the A level subjects that you need.

**The following list shows the most popular degrees that often require specific A levels:**

- **biology** – biology and another science or maths, especially chemistry
- **chemistry** – chemistry and usually another science and/or maths
- **dentistry** – chemistry and one or two other sciences
- **engineering** – maths and physics (or maths and chemistry for chemical engineering)
- **law** – no specific subjects are required although subjects involving essay writing can be helpful
- **maths** – maths (sometimes further maths)
- **medicine** – chemistry, biology and either maths or physics will keep your options open for all medical schools. The majority of medical schools require A level chemistry, while some specify biology at A level. (For those without science subjects at A level or

equivalent, it is possible to undertake an additional pre-medical year at some universities. The pre-medical year is a preliminary course in chemistry, physics and biology.)

- **modern languages** – usually you will need the language at A level standard but requirements vary, especially for more unusual languages.
- **music** – music
- **physics** – physics and maths
- **veterinary science** – chemistry and one or two other sciences.

So you see there is a lot to think about. Do your research and choose wisely.

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