



Dunottar School



GCSE Options 2025-27

Information and Guidance

INTRODUCTION

Dear Pupil

You are at an exciting, new stage in your academic adventure with some important decisions to make about the subjects you wish to study at GCSE level. The information in this booklet explains GCSEs and is your starting point for reaching decisions about your GCSE choices. It shows which subjects are offered, the content of these courses and how different subjects might work together.

How many GCSEs will you study?

Most pupils at Dunottar study either nine or ten GCSEs. We believe that this gives you a good breadth of subjects without overloading your timetable, thereby ensuring that you still have a healthy balance to school life and the time to enjoy your co-curricular activities. If you wish to take fewer subjects, please discuss this with Mrs Hislop, Deputy Head, Academic.

Making your decision

Some pupils already have a good idea which subjects they want to choose while others are less sure. Whichever situation you find yourself in now, we will provide you with the guidance, advice and support that you need to feel confident about the choices you make. The Year 9 Options Evening will enable you and your parents to learn more about the GCSEs you are considering as you make your final decisions.

Key Dates 2025

Year 9 Options Evening: **Thursday 9th January 2025**

Year 9 Parents' Evening: **Wednesday 29th January 2025**

Year 9 Final Options Choices: **Friday 31st January 2025**

GCSE results at Dunottar

Dunottar pupils achieve very good academic results, with a strong focus on 'value added'. We set high standards, we have high expectations, and we give you the support and guidance that you need to achieve the very best results that you can. In turn, you need to work hard and demonstrate the Warrior Learner characteristics that will help you to succeed.

We hope you enjoy the GCSE courses on offer here at Dunottar.



Mr Mark Tottman
Headmaster

Core and Optional Subjects

Pupils at Dunottar study the core subjects of English Language, English Literature, Science (Physics, Chemistry and Biology) and Mathematics, and four optional subjects.

In choosing your four optional subjects, we advise you to keep your selection broad by choosing at least one foreign language, at least one humanities subject and at least one creative subject. Good subject choices at GCSE means that you can keep your options open for the future.

The following 13 optional subjects are offered at Dunottar:

- Art, Craft and Design
- Business
- Computer Science
- Drama
- Food Preparation and Nutrition
- French
- Geography
- History
- Music
- Physical Education
- Religious Studies
- Spanish
- Three-Dimensional Design

Please note that we try to accommodate all requests, but we cannot guarantee that all combinations will be available. If you change your mind about your options after the deadline, you will need to inform Mrs Stringer, Deputy Head Operations in writing. We will endeavour to accommodate your desired changes after the deadline, but this may not be possible if they do not fit with the option blocks or the planned class sizes.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE & ENGLISH LITERATURE (AQA)

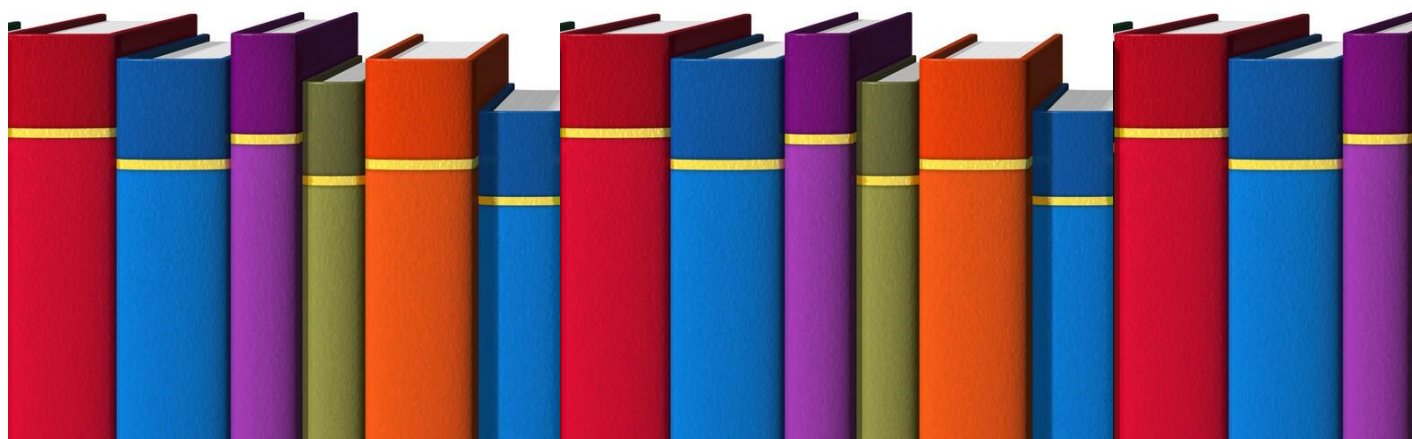
All pupils at Dunottar sit two separate GCSEs for English: one in English Language and a second in English Literature, following the AQA examination board specifications. Details of these can be found at www.aqa.org.uk.

Assessment

GCSE English Language	
Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing Section A: Reading and response to one literature fiction text, considering how writers use language and structural features to engage the reader. Section B: Narrative or descriptive writing.	Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 50% of GCSE
Paper 2: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives Section A: Reading and response to one non-fiction text and one literary non-fiction text, considering how the authors' points of view are presented to influence the reader. Section B: Writing to present a viewpoint.	Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 50% of GCSE
Non-examination Assessment: Speaking and Listening Skills This assessment is a compulsory requirement despite not forming part of the final GCSE grade. The result of the speaking and listening assessment (a pass, merit or distinction) will be recorded on the front of the GCSE English language certificate. Pupils are assessed on their ability to give a presentation in a formal context; to respond to feedback and questions; and to use Standard English. The presentation is videoed for moderation purposes. Assessment: Assessed by class teacher, internally moderated and then externally moderated.	0% of GCSE

Assessment

GCSE English Literature	
Paper 1: Shakespeare and the 19th-Century Novel Section A, Shakespeare: pupils study a Shakespeare play. They are required to write in detail about an extract from the play and to write about the play as a whole. Section B, the 19th-century novel: pupils study a 19th-century novel. They are required to write in detail about an extract from the novel and to write about the novel as a whole.	Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 40% of GCSE
Paper 2: Modern Texts and Poetry Section A, Modern texts: pupils answer one essay question from a choice of two on their studied modern prose or drama text. Section B, Poetry: pupils answer one comparative question on one named poem printed on the paper and one other poem from their chosen anthology cluster. Section C, Unseen poetry: pupils will answer one question on one unseen poem and one question comparing this poem with a second unseen poem.	Written exam: 2 hours 15 minutes 60% of GCSE

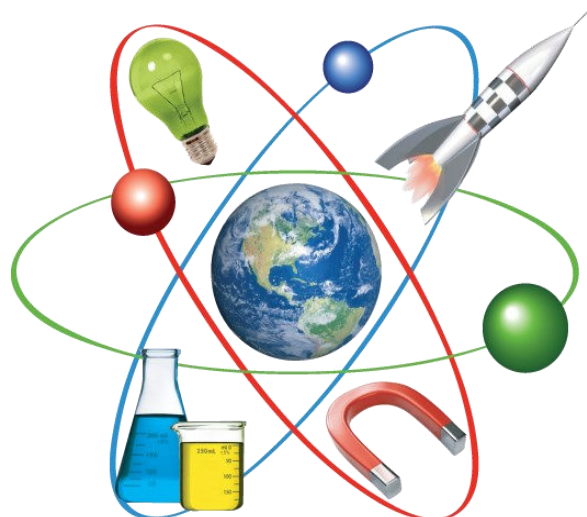


SCIENCES (AQA)

All pupils at Dunottar study the three sciences at GCSE and they start this process at the beginning of Year 9, this ensures ample time to develop the necessary knowledge and skills before the examinations. The School offers three routes by which pupils can access the science GCSEs: combined science (foundation), combined science (higher) and separate sciences (higher).

All pupils in Year 9 study separate sciences for the year. At the end of Year 9, based on the Department's knowledge of each pupil and their examination data, a recommendation for which route each pupil would be most suited to will be sent to parents. Pupils will then be streamed appropriately for the start of Year 10.

It is very important to note that for those considering A level sciences as an option both the combined (higher) and separate sciences (higher) routes are sufficient preparation.



Separate sciences (higher): this route provides the broadest scientific curriculum of all the options. Pupils will sit two exams for each individual science with each paper being 1 hour and 45 minutes. Pupils taking this route will be awarded an individual GCSE grade for each science – three in total. The separate sciences higher route has a grade range of 9 - 4 (although a 3 may be awarded for a pupil who just misses the 4 threshold), where marks below a 4 result in a U grade (unclassified).

Combined science (higher): this route covers much of the same content as the separate science route but some topics are studied in less depth, and some are excluded, to provide a more accessible science option. Pupils will still sit six exam papers in total (two for each science) and the papers are all 1 hour and 15 minutes. Pupils taking this route will be awarded two GCSE grades for their sciences, the grades for which are based on the average of all six papers on a sliding scale. The combined science (higher) route has a grade range of 9-9 to 4-4 (although a 4-3 may be awarded for a pupil who just misses the 4-4 threshold), where marks below a 4-4 result in a U grade (unclassified).

Combined science (foundation): this route is the same as the combined science (higher) except that there is less content to cover and the grade range is 5-5 to 1-1, marks below a 1-1 result in a U grade (unclassified).

Biology Course Content	Chemistry Course Content	Physics Course Content
1. Cell biology 2. Organisation 3. Infection and response 4. Bioenergetics 5. Homeostasis and response 6. Inheritance, variation and evolution 7. Ecology	1. Atomic structure and the periodic table 2. Bonding, structure and the properties of matter 3. Quantitative chemistry 4. Chemical changes 5. Energy changes 6. The rate and extent of chemical change 7. Organic chemistry 8. Chemical analysis 9. Chemistry of the atmosphere 10. Using resources	1. Forces 2. Energy 3. Waves 4. Electricity 5. Magnetism and electromagnetism 6. Particle model of matter 7. Atomic structure 8. Space physics (separate sciences only)



SCIENCES (AQA)

Assessment

Subject	Triple	Breakdown	Combined Science	Breakdown
Biology	Paper 1: Topics 1–4: - Cell biology - Organisation - Infection and response - Bioenergetics	Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 50% of GCSE	Paper 1: Topics 1–4: - Cell biology - Organisation - Infection and response - Bioenergetics	Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes 16.7% of GCSE
	Paper 2: Topics 5–7: - Homeostasis and response - Inheritance, variation and evolution - Ecology	Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 50% of GCSE	Paper 2: Topics 5–7: - Homeostasis and response - Inheritance, variation and evolution - Ecology	Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes 16.7% of GCSE
Chemistry	Paper 1: Topics 1–5: - Atomic structure and the periodic table - Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter - Quantitative chemistry - Chemical changes - Energy changes	Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 50% of GCSE	Paper 1: Topics 1–5: - Atomic structure and the periodic table - Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter - Quantitative chemistry - Chemical changes - Energy changes	Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes 16.7% of GCSE
	Paper 2: Topics 6–10: - The rate and extent of chemical change - Organic chemistry - Chemical analysis - Chemistry of the atmosphere - Using resources	Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 50% of GCSE	Paper 2: Topics 6–10: - The rate and extent of chemical change - Organic chemistry - Chemical analysis - Chemistry of the atmosphere - Using resources	Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes 16.7% of GCSE
Physics	Paper 1: Topics 1–4: - Energy - Electricity - Particle model of matter - Atomic structure	Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 50% of GCSE	Paper 1: Topics 1–4: - Energy - Electricity - Particle model of matter - Atomic structure	Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes 16.7% of GCSE
	Paper 2: Topics 5–8: - Forces - Waves - Magnetism and electromagnetism - Space physics Questions in Paper 2 may draw on an understanding of energy changes and transfers due to heating, mechanical and electrical work and the concept of energy conservation from Energy and Electricity.	Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 50% of GCSE	Paper 2: Topics 5–8: - Forces - Waves - Magnetism and electromagnetism	Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes 16.7% of GCSE

MATHEMATICS (EDEXCEL)

All pupils at Dunottar will take Mathematics International GCSE.

The Pearson Edexcel International GCSE in Mathematics (Specification A) is assessed at the end of the two years. It consists of two examinations available at Foundation and Higher Tier. Both examinations must be taken in the same series at the end of the course of study. Most pupils will sit the Higher level papers, however, it is likely that some pupils will be better suited to the style of the Foundation level papers. This decision does not need to be finalised until January of Year 11. All pupils study the content necessary to access both the Foundation and Higher level qualifications.

This GCSE requires pupils to be able to use and apply their skills with the curriculum broadly containing these strands:

Number: fractions, decimals, percentages, indices and surds

Algebra: simplifying and solving expressions and equations, graphs and sequences

Ratio, proportion & rates of change: scale factors, direct and inverse proportion

Geometry & measure: angles, polygons, area, volume, Pythagoras and trigonometry

Probability: theoretical and experimental probability, tree and Venn diagrams

Statistics: averages and cumulative frequency

Assessment

Pupils sit two equally weighted examination papers at the end of Year 11. There are questions designed to be accessible to pupils of all abilities in that tier and papers that are balanced for topics and difficulty.

There is no coursework or controlled assessment in Mathematics.

2 equally weighted written exams:
2 hours each



ART, CRAFT & DESIGN (AQA)

Why study GCSE Art, Craft & Design?

Pupils will gain knowledge and understanding of the formal elements, processes, techniques and materials as well as learn a range of specialist skills, initially taught through workshop based lessons then through individual tutorials. Pupils will be introduced to a wide range of contemporary artists and designers who will help contextualise your work and support independent thinking. The course encourages personal development and an experimental approach as well as refinement of technique and drawing skills.

Course content

- Select and use a range of relevant primary and secondary sources to develop an awareness of the basic formal elements of Art & Design such as shape, colour, line, tone, form, pattern, texture and composition.
- Respond critically in written and visual form to work from other times and cultures, considering how ideas and meanings can be conveyed and interpreted in images and artefacts.
- Analysis and evaluation of sources, using knowledge and understanding of the work of others to develop and extend thinking and inform their own work.
- Develop ideas by exploring media, develop technical skills in the areas of painting, drawing, mixed-media, sculpture, land art, printmaking, textiles, digital photography and image manipulation.
- Record observations, experiences and ideas, in visual and written form; undertake research and gather appropriate information for use in practical work.
- Review and refine work through experimentation, group and 1:1 tutorials.
- Produce personal responses to a theme by realising ideas and making connections between personal work and that of the artists, designers, craftspeople and cultures studied.

POSSIBLE THEMES: Structures, Disguise, Close Up, Food & Drink, Surroundings

Assessment

By doing these activities pupils will fulfil the assessment objectives:

DEVELOP ideas through sustained and focused investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources.

REFINE work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes.

RECORD ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions through drawing, annotation and any other appropriate means.

PRESENT a personal, informed and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language.

Unit 1: Personal Portfolio – 60% of GCSE	Unit 2: Externally Set Task – 40% of GCSE
This portfolio contains all artwork produced during Years 10 and 11. Pupils will be expected to research their work and show evidence of how they have explored ideas and developed skills. The sketchbook and supporting studies are as important as the finished pieces. Pupils will be expected to research themes, develop personal ideas and make observations related to artists studied. Independent research is a key element of this and it is essential that work is presented to a high standard at all times.	The task consists of a broad based thematic starting point set by the exam board. The topic will be given in early January of Year 11 and pupils will have ten weeks of preparation time before a final ten-hour timed test. Preparatory material and sketchbooks showing research and development of ideas are as important as the final piece of work and will be marked in conjunction with the work produced during the timed test.

Personal attributes required:

- A high level of commitment, both in school and on visits to external facilities and in completion of work out of school hours.
- To visit art galleries, libraries, museums and other places relevant to the course (either independently or through school trips). This course relies heavily on self-discipline in a practical area so pupils should consider their enthusiasm and ability to work in this way.

Future pathways and careers

Studying GCSE Art, Craft & Design can lead to careers in the following areas: Illustration, film, television and theatrical design, product design, graphics, architecture, fine art, media, fashion, textiles, glassmaking, restoration, photography, museum or art curator, advertising and marketing, ceramics, furniture, jewellery, packaging and product design, model making, interior design, sculpture, journalism, digital arts, teacher, animation, web design, make-up and special effects for film or stage, games designer and more.



BUSINESS (AQA)

Why Study GCSE Business?

Now established at GCSE, our successful Business and Economics Department delivers a highly popular course at Key Stage 4. This relevant and interesting subject will give you the opportunity to explore real world businesses and to understand more about how businesses work whilst fitting neatly alongside a range of other subject option choices. It is a chance to familiarise yourself with the core concepts of business and to develop the wider world skills you will need for a successful career and future.

7 key transferable skills championed when studying Business:

- When learning about how an organisation runs you will gain an understanding of how they run well, and how you might successfully fit into one in your future
- You learn how to make good decisions based on research, analysis and evaluation
- Studying Business reinforces and gives practice in applying your numeracy skills
- Understanding how businesses can adapt and be flexible in the face of change can support your ability to adapt to different roles and careers throughout your life
- Seeing how business people organise and plan through generating ideas and creating plans to execute them will support you in learning these skills and applying them in the real world
- Problem solving when analysing and evaluating case studies and the current economic and business climate
- Presentation skills through both the content of the course and style of lessons



Course content

We have selected the excellent AQA Business course which has as its focus business in the real world. You will learn to apply your knowledge to a range of business contexts, from small enterprises to large multinational companies and to see how these operate in the local, national and global arenas.

The specification covers the key areas laid out below (Assessment Section) and takes you through the processes of a business from set up onward. You will consider the issues involved in setting up a business through to its expansion, along with the consideration a business needs to pay to its stakeholder groups in order to be successful. We will cover the operations side of customer relations and quality as well as human resource management and how the company might structure its workforce, as well as the marketing mix and basic financial performance measure. Equally as important when operating in recent times, there is a chance to spend time studying both the current utilisation of technology in business and the ethical, social and environmental balance businesses are expected to exhibit.

Assessment

Components	Topics	Breakdown
Paper 1:	Business in the Real World; Influences on Business; Business Operations; Human Resources	Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 50% of GCSE
Paper 2:	Business in the Real World; Influences on Business; Marketing; Finance	Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 50% of GCSE

Future pathways and careers

Whether you intend to set up your own business, or to work in an organisation, the likelihood is that you will be running a team of people and making strategic decisions in your future career. The ability to collate and analyse information, to problem solve and to evaluate different options in order to choose the best way forward are key transferable skills for success.

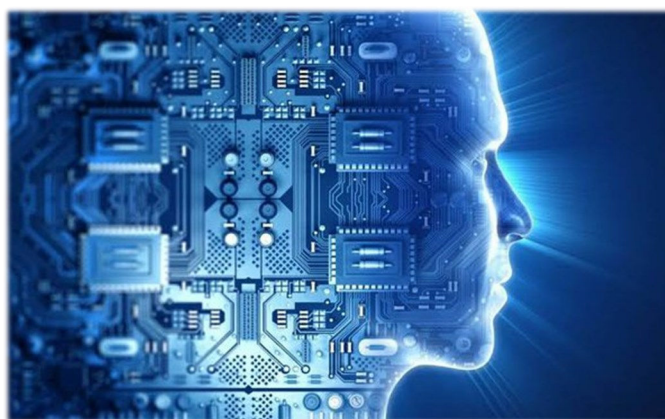
GCSE Business is relevant to so many areas in life, and it is hard to see how this course would not be useful as you go on to further studies and careers.

COMPUTER SCIENCE (OCR)

Why study GCSE Computer Science?

Enjoy logical thinking and problem solving? Interested in learning more about how computers work and discussing ways in which computers impact on our life? If these are areas that interest you, then no doubt you would enjoy studying GCSE Computer Science at Dunottar.

We are a small, friendly and supportive department with a passion and enthusiasm for teaching computing. We believe in the importance of inspiring pupils by the range of job opportunities available in the field of computing. Past trips have included visits to Google, Fidelity Investments Cyber Security and to ASOS to encourage girls into tech careers. Further careers events and trips will be arranged to spark pupils' imagination.



In response to a Royal Society report which recommended a tenfold increase in funding for computer science education, Ronan Harris, UK MD of Google said: *"Whatever school they attend or whatever field they plan to go into, every pupil should have the opportunity to understand the principles and practices of computing. This will broaden their career opportunities and is critical to developing a globally competitive workforce for the 21st century. Google could not have been founded and could not have grown without top quality computer science education."*

Course content

The course covers a range of topics from computer hardware and how computer networks are operated, through to cybersecurity and discussing the ways in which computers impact on society more generally, such as the ways in which technology is used to monitor our behaviour. Pupils are also introduced to algorithms and programming, learning about programming techniques and computational thinking.

Assessment

Computer Science at GCSE is a mix of practical and theoretical study.

Components	Topics	Breakdown
Paper 1: Computer Systems	This written exam covers the Central Processing Unit (CPU), computer memory and storage, wired and wireless networks, systems security and the impact of Computer Science in a global context.	Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes 50% of GCSE
Paper 2: Computational thinking, algorithms and programming	A written exam, testing pupils' ability to think independently, solve problems, interpret algorithms and apply logic.	Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes 50% of GCSE

Future pathways and careers

The rate at which technology is transforming the workplace means that we live in a world where many schoolchildren will work in technology-based roles that do not yet exist, so it is essential that future generations can apply digital skills with confidence. GCSE Computer Science provides excellent preparation for future study in a number of subjects and the demand for professionals who are qualified in this area is increasing.

Pupils can go on to study Computer Science at A level and at University where Computer Science is partnered with a range of other disciplines such as mathematics, business, artificial intelligence, games design, cybersecurity, biological sciences or graphic design.

DRAMA (Eduqas)

Why study GCSE Drama?

"Two things that my school did in helping with my legal career were drama and public speaking, which gave me confidence in thinking on my feet."

Cherie Blair, Barrister

"Studying drama has helped me see the world in many different lights. It has captured my imagination and let it run wild with its endless possibilities. Theatre has helped me become more confident in myself, take and seek opportunities I would have previously hidden from, and set me on the path into the future. It is a cheesy cliché, but since I have found myself in drama, I haven't let it out of my sight." **Drama Pupil**



Course content

Throughout the two years of the GCSE course pupils will gain a knowledge and understanding of key theatrical movements in history, explore a range of theatre styles and genres, and develop their skills as actors, directors, and designers. Pupils will learn about key Theatre Practitioners and what their views on the purpose of theatre are. Pupils will be reflectors, constantly seeking and giving feedback in order to become the best theatre practitioner possible. As well as learning about Drama as an exciting art form, pupils will also learn elements of sociology, media, cultural analysis, literature analysis, teamwork, leadership and communication skills.

Assessment

Components	Topics	Breakdown
UNIT ONE: Devised Practical Performance, Internally assessed, externally moderated.	Pupils participate in the creation, development and performance of a piece of devised theatre using either the techniques of an influential theatre practitioner or a genre, in response to a stimulus set by WJEC. Pupils must produce: - a realisation of their piece of devised theatre - a portfolio of supporting evidence - an evaluation of the final performance	40%
UNIT TWO: Performance from a Text. External Assessment	Pupils study two extracts from the same performance text chosen by the centre. Pupils participate in one performance using sections of text from both extracts.	20%
UNIT THREE: Written Examination. External Assessment	Section A: Set Text A series of questions on one set text. Section B: Live Theatre Review One question, from a choice of two, requiring analysis and evaluation of a given aspect of a live theatre production seen during the course.	40%

Future pathways and careers

A Level drama, BTEC Level 3 Performing Arts, University.

Career opportunities include Lawyer, Television Presenter, Director, Writer, Dramaturge, Actor, Entrepreneur, Business Owner, Designer, Critic and many more.



FOOD PREPARATION & NUTRITION (Eduqas)

Why study GCSE Food Preparation & Nutrition?

This exciting course from Eduqas (WJEC) offers a GCSE in Food Preparation and Nutrition. It will equip learners with the knowledge, understanding and skills required to cook and also to apply the principles of food science, nutrition and healthy eating. Following this qualification will encourage learners to cook and enable them to make informed decisions about food and nutrition in order to be able to feed themselves and others affordably and nutritiously, now and later in life. It will also allow pupils to understand the huge challenges that we face globally to supply the world with nutritious and safe food.

Course content

- Food commodities e.g. cereals, fruit and vegetables, sugars, dairy, fats, meat/fish and vegetarian alternatives. The course will look at their value in the diet, their working characteristics, experiments to understand changes occurring during cooking and also current recommended guidelines for a healthy diet.
- Principles of nutrition - the role of the main nutrients in the diet, their sources, function and deficiency diseases
- Diet and good health.
- The science of food.
- Where food comes from.
- Cooking and food preparation.

Assessment

Dishes cooked will include a wide range of dishes—main meals, vegetable dishes, pastries, cakes, sauces, dishes for special diets, starters and desserts. It is expected that pupils will cook regularly in order to develop their practical skills and to produce a wide range of high quality dishes.

Component 1	Breakdown
<i>Principles of food preparation and nutrition</i> Written examination comprising short and extended answers.	Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes. 50% of GCSE
Component 2	Breakdown
<i>Food preparation and nutrition in action</i> 1. An investigative assessment worth 15% (8 hours) e.g. find the most suitable ingredients to produce a crisp pastry or investigate the different methods used to thicken sauces. A report of 1500 words will be produced. 2. A food preparation assessment worth 35% (12 hours). Plan, prepare, cook and evaluate three dishes to suit a specific dietary need such as the cuisine of another country or a special diet such as vegetarianism. A report will be produced of 15 sides.	Non-Examined Assessment (NEA) 50% of GCSE

Future pathways and careers

'Food' is one of the world's fastest growing industries. Over 20% of the top 100 British Companies are in food manufacturing. The food and drink industry is booming, with employment reaching the heights of 650,000 people and an annual turnover of £66 billion. The opportunities to work within the food industry really are endless. The food industry contains many multinational companies and opportunities for travel or work abroad exist for those who wish to spread their wings.

Some examples of careers in food are:

Dietician / Nutritionist, Food Sales and Promotion, Product Development, Consumer Technologist (Sensory Analysis and Product Tasting), Chef / Baker / Caterer, Food Journalist / Food Critic, Environmental Health Officer, Health & Safety Inspector, Food Service Management, Delicatessen / Restaurateur, Food Wholesaler, Production & Manufacturing, Quality Assurance / Standardisation, Purchaser (buys and sells food from around the world), Store Manager – Supermarket or Fast Food Chains, Packaging Technologist, Teacher.



FRENCH (AQA)

Why study GCSE French?

- Communication and languages are vital skills in a global world
- Learning another language stretches your mind and gives you a sense of achievement
- You will learn not only a language but also about the fascinating cultures behind it (French and la Francophonie)
- No matter what career path you choose later in life, speaking another language will add a lot of value to your CV and make you a lot more employable
- We offer first class enthusiastic teaching and a vibrant programme of activities and trips abroad
- It's a lot of fun!

Course content

The lessons will incorporate the different skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing) and as such, you can expect a variety of activities in each lesson.

We use many online resources to enhance your experience, give you access to authentic materials and enable you to practise skills, grammar and vocabulary. We use these at school and also expect you to use them at home or in your spare time.

We will work from the beginning of Year 9 on covering the three required themes (see below) and practising the four skills ready for your exams in Year 11.

- [Theme 1](#): People and lifestyle
- [Theme 2](#): Popular culture
- [Theme 3](#): Communication and the world around us

Assessment

Assessment Type		% of Overall Grade
Listening exam (Foundation or Higher tier)	Foundation: 35 minutes Higher: 45 minutes	25%
Speaking exam (Foundation or Higher tier) • Role-play • Read aloud • Photocard	Foundation: 7-9 minutes + 15 minutes preparation time Higher: 10-12 minutes + 15 minutes preparation time	25%
Reading exam (Foundation or Higher tier)	Foundation: 45 minutes Higher: 1 hour	25%
Writing exam (Foundation or Higher tier)	Foundation: 1 hour 10 minutes Higher: 1 hour 15 minutes	25%

Future pathways and careers

Language learning is a great choice for everyone but particularly those pupils who are interested in working or travelling abroad in the future, keen to engage with a multicultural or multinational job, and for pupils wishing to broaden their horizons and learn about the wider world.



GEOGRAPHY (AQA)

Why study GCSE Geography?

'Geography is not only up-to-date and relevant, it is one of the most exciting, adventurous and valuable subjects to study today. So many of the world's current problems boil down to geography, and need the geographers of the future to help us understand them.' - **Michael Palin**

Course content

Geography GCSE at Dunottar follows the very popular AQA course. Pupils cover 6 topics, 3 will be Physical Geography based and 3 will be from the Human Geography selection. In addition, a Geographical Applications Paper and Pre-release resource booklet will form the basis of the third examination paper.

Assessment

Components	Topics	Breakdown
Paper 1	Physical Geography: - Natural hazards: Volcanoes and Earthquakes, Tropical Storms, Extreme Weather and Climate Change - Physical Landscapes: Rivers and Coasts - The Living World: Ecosystems, Tropical Rainforest and Hot Deserts	Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes 35% of GCSE
Paper 2	Human Geography: - Urban Issues and Changing Urban Environments (focusing on London, UK and Lagos, Nigeria) - The Changing Economic World (UK and Nigeria) - The Challenge of Resource Management: Food, Water and Energy with an in depth focus on Energy	Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes 35% of GCSE
Paper 3	Geographical Application: - Issue Evaluation - Fieldwork: two days of fieldwork will be conducted in contrasting environments- including a residential trip to FSC Flatford Mill in Suffolk to study the coast around Walton on the Naze and a study into the positive impacts of regeneration at the London Docklands	Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes 30% of GCSE

Geography is the subject which lets you explore your world and find out what makes it work. Enquiry questions fire the imagination as we investigate questions such as:

- Should we be investing in Nuclear power or renewables?
- Can we continue to live 'sustainably' in cities?
- How will climate change affect us?
- How can countries prepare for natural hazards?
- What challenges are there in development of fragile ecosystems?

These constitute just a small number of questions we will pose from the many we cover through the two years. Pupils are encouraged to develop well informed opinions and be able to support their ideas and thinking in an encouraging and supportive environment. Research skills are developed and play a significant role in information gathering, a skill which will be advantageous for further studies or the world of work. A variety of teaching and learning styles are utilised to develop skills in all areas and aim to complement other curriculum subjects resulting in lessons which are engaging. Much thought is given to the types of learners in the classroom and we aim to cater for all, to maximise engagement.

Geography is an excellent bridging subject which draws together skills from both the arts and sciences. It allows the opportunity to develop:

- communication skills
- graphical and cartographical skills
- technological skills, including ICT and GIS
- interpersonal skills through debate and discussion
- literacy and numeracy
- problem solving skills
- entrepreneurial skills and awareness of career possibilities.

Future pathways and careers

Geographers' specialist knowledge and ability to understand issues from a breadth of different perspectives means they are highly sought after in the workplace. Many employers prize the knowledge and skills that studying geography can provide and you will find geographers working in a wide range of jobs, from town planning or working in the environment to travel and tourism, or international charities and retail. In addition, geography's transferrable skills offer excellent preparation for a number of careers including Business, Law and Medicine.



HISTORY (AQA)

Why study GCSE History?

History helps us to develop a deeper understanding of peoples and cultures all around the world. It also helps us to understand and address the problems of modern societies. Understanding the past can act as a guide for the future.

Course content

The GCSE History course builds on the work completed in Year 9 on aspects of twentieth century history through the study of Communist Russia and the Cold War. However, it also provides the opportunity to explore some exciting new topics that will enable pupils to learn about different aspects of the past allowing an understanding to be gained of what drives change and how the past influences the present.

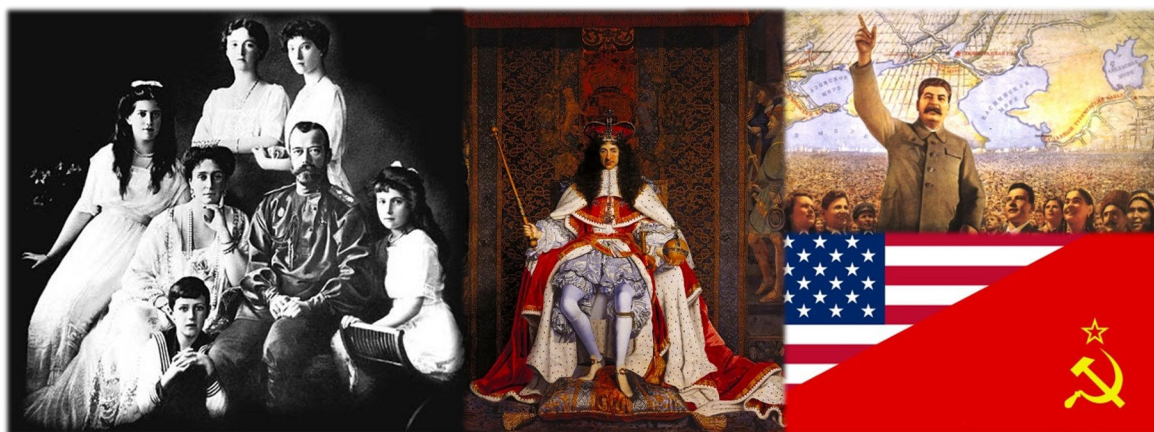
A variety of teaching techniques and the use of different types of source material help to bring the subject alive.

Assessment

Paper 1: Understanding the Modern World		Breakdown
Russia, 1894-1945: Tsardom and Communism • The end of Tsardom • Lenin's new society • Stalin's USSR Conflict and tension between East and West, 1945-1972 • The origins of the Cold War • The development of the Cold War • Transformation of the Cold War	Written exam: 2 hours 50% of GCSE	
PAPER 2: Shaping the Nation		
Thematic Studies: Britain: Health and the People: c1000 to the present day • Medicine stands still • The beginnings of change • A revolution in medicine • Modern medicine British depth studies including the historic environment: Restoration England, 1660-1685 • Crown, Parliament, plots and court life • Life in Restoration England • Land, trade and war • The historic environment of Restoration England	Written exam: 2 hours 50% of GCSE	

Future pathways and careers

Studying History at GCSE will develop transferable skills desired by employers including research skills, handling and analysing data, constructing an argument and communication and writing skills. It is a useful subject for many future career choices including teaching, museum work, archive work, librarianship, TV and media work, law, banking, politics and archaeology to name but a few.



MUSIC (EDUQAS (WJEC))

Why study GCSE Music?

- Music is a highly regarded academic subject and is held in high esteem by both universities and employers; they know that if you are a musician then you are dedicated, intelligent, creative and good at working in groups!
- Music helps you to develop a variety of strengths such as tenacity, courage, curiosity, independence and aspiration.
- Music enables you to develop team skills, communication, self-confidence and self-reliance, as well as providing a means of artistic expression and creativity.
- Singing or playing an instrument helps you to think and react quickly.
- People study music because they love it and you will have plenty of practical and performing opportunities to develop your talents.



You will find Music GCSE rewarding if you:

- Enjoy listening to and learning about a variety of musical styles
- Enjoy performing (singing or playing) music
- Enjoy creating and recording your own music
- Enjoy using music technology (such as GarageBand or Sibelius)
- Have instrumental or singing lessons
- Take part in co-curricular music ensembles.



Assessment

Component	Assessment
Performing is worth 30%	You will perform two pieces, one of which will be a solo and the other will be part of an ensemble.
Composing is worth 30%	You will compose two pieces, one must be in response to a brief set by the board and the other can be a piece of free composition.
Listening and Appraising is worth 40%	To prepare for this you will learn about the musical elements and areas of study. You will express and justify opinions on the music heard. You will also learn to complete short musical dictation and notation questions for this paper.

What are the areas of study?

Area of Study 1: Musical Forms & Devices	In this area of study, pupils place music within a broad historical context. The area of study focuses on understanding structural forms and devices across a variety of genres and styles from the Western Classical Tradition 1650-1910. This area of study includes one prepared extract which learners must study in depth: "Badinerie" by J.S. Bach.
Area of Study 2: Music for Ensemble	In this area of study, pupils develop understanding of sonority and textures through listening to and/or performing examples from chamber music, musical theatre, jazz and blues.
Area of Study 3: Film Music	In this area of study, pupils will develop an understanding of film music, including the use of timbre, tone colour and dynamics for effect.
Area of Study 4: Popular Music	In this area of study, pupils will develop an understanding of popular music: pop, rock and pop, bhangra and fusion (of different styles). This area of study includes one prepared extract which learners must study in depth: "Africa" by Toto.

Future pathways and careers

- You can consider A Level Music
- Your listening skills will help the aural perception needed in other subjects (for example, language and drama exams)
- Your performing skills will give you confidence in front of an audience – useful for most careers.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (AQA)

Why study GCSE Physical Education?

Pupils work towards understanding the human body, movement, socio-cultural influences and well-being in physical activity and sport as well as evaluating their own practical performance. Pupils opting for GCSE PE should be confident in the knowledge they have a strong and competitive performance level in three practical sports (with at least one of the sports being individual/team based, in line with the specification).

Assessment

The Physical Education course consists of examination assessment which contributes 60% of the final mark and non-examination assessment which contributes 40% of the final mark.

Examination assessment - Topics	Breakdown
This section covers a range of topics including physiology, health and well-being, sports psychology and the media and technology within sport. They are tested through two separate one and quarter hour papers both taken in Year 11.	2 written exams: 1 hour and 15 minutes each 60% of GCSE
Non-examination assessment - Activities	Breakdown
Each pupil will be assessed in a range of activities, of which their strongest practical performance in three different physical activities will be submitted; one in a team activity, one in an individual activity and a third in either a team or in an individual activity. Pupils will also submit a piece of coursework that analyses and evaluates their performance to bring about improvement in one activity. For any activities undertaken independently by the pupil, for example skiing or horse riding, video evidence must be collected and submitted for assessment.	40% of GCSE

Future pathways and careers

Due to the detailed understanding developed on this course, it complements subjects such as biology, psychology and sociology. Studying Physical Education leads to a wide range of career choices such as physiotherapy, teaching, punditry, sports analysis, sports science research and many more. It also provides excellent balance and variety for those who are unsure of their career choice at this stage.



RELIGIOUS STUDIES (AQA)

Why study Religious Studies?

If you enjoy discussions, debates, sharing ideas, finding out about current affairs and are inquisitive, then this may well be the subject for you. It provides you with the opportunity to take a closer look at some of the deepest issues in our lives and on the global stage.

Course content

Religious Studies is considered an academic subject. It enables pupils to develop essay writing skills and develop their own arguments and opinions. At GCSE pupils will look at moral issues from a Christian and Muslim perspective. These include abortion, euthanasia, marriage, divorce, cloning, sexism, racism, and religion and the media.

Questions that are looked at over the course include:

- Is there a God?
- What do religious people think about the world?
- If God is real, why does He allow suffering?
- How do / should religious people act?
- Should we allow abortion?
- Should the UK reinstate capital punishment?

Pupils will gain important skills linked to knowledge and understanding. However, expression of opinion, debating current affairs, explanation of concepts and analysis and evaluation of others and personal views will be taught.

Pupils will learn through discussions, debate, role play and a variety of multi-media tools. Although Year 9 Religious Studies will give you a good idea of the style of teaching and learning, the GCSE course does differ in content and format to work in previous years. However, if you currently find R.S. in Year 9 enjoyable and are good at it, this will be a good indicator of whether you should do it or not.

Assessment

Topics	Breakdown
Paper 1: Beliefs and practices	Written exam: 1 hour and 45 minutes 50% of GCSE
Paper 2: Themes (Current Affairs/ Ethical Issues)	Written exam: 1 hour and 45 minutes 50% of GCSE

Future pathways and careers

Religious Studies is a subject that can be combined with any other subjects at GCSE and can lead to a variety of A Level courses and careers. It is very useful for anyone who wishes to work with people especially in the fields of medicine, law and public services such as the police force and teaching. If you are interested in learning about religious beliefs in a diverse society and ethical issues such as abortion, euthanasia and human rights, then you will find studying Religious Studies at GCSE useful and interesting. You don't have to have your own religious belief but you need to be prepared to think about what you and other people believe with an open mind.



SPANISH (AQA)

Why study GCSE Spanish?

- Communication and languages are vital skills in a global world
- Learning another language stretches your mind and gives you a sense of achievement
- You will learn not only a language but also about the fascinating cultures behind it (Spain and the Spanish-speaking world)
- No matter what career path you choose later in life, speaking another language will add a lot of value to your CV and make you a lot more employable
- We offer first class enthusiastic teaching and a vibrant programme of activities and trips abroad
- It's a lot of fun!

Course content

The lessons will incorporate the different skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing) and as such, you can expect a variety of activities in each lesson.

We use many online resources to enhance your experience, give you access to authentic materials and enable you to practise skills, grammar and vocabulary. We use these at school and also expect you to use them at home or in your spare time.

We will work from the beginning of Year 9 on covering the three required themes (see below) and practising the four skills ready for your exams in Year 11.

- [Theme 1](#): People and lifestyle
- [Theme 2](#): Popular culture
- [Theme 3](#): Communication and the world around us

Assessment

Assessment Type	% of Overall Grade	
Listening exam (Foundation or Higher tier)	Foundation: 35 minutes Higher 45 minutes	25%
Speaking exam (Foundation or Higher tier) • Role-play • Read aloud • Photocard	Foundation: 7-9 minutes + 15 minutes preparation time Higher: 10-12 minutes + 15 minutes preparation time	25%
Reading exam (Foundation or Higher tier)	Foundation: 45 minutes Higher: 1 hour	25%
Writing exam (Foundation or Higher tier)	Foundation: 1 hour 10 minutes Higher: 1 hour 15 minutes	25%

Future pathways and careers

Language learning is a great choice for everyone – but particularly those pupils who are interested in working or travelling abroad in the future, keen to engage with a multicultural or multinational job, and for pupils wishing to broaden their horizons and learn about the wider world.



THREE-DIMENSIONAL DESIGN (OCR)

Why study GCSE Three-dimensional Design?

Do you enjoy designing? Do you enjoy making? Then this is the course for you!

The Design & Technology Department has a well-resourced workshop and CAD room, where pupils have the opportunity to learn about and work with a wide range of materials. We make full use of the facilities to enable pupils to work in realistic and accurate ways, developing the potential to produce high quality finished prototypes that meet real needs and that can be tested under real conditions. Skills involve combining creativity with practical processes and knowledge and understanding from other STEM subjects.

Course content

This exciting GCSE award provides freedom, flexibility and opportunities for pupils to work within a wide range of materials including timber, metals and polymers. This course will develop creative and practical skills including freehand drawing and making skills along with CAD/CAM (computer aided design and manufacturing) skills. Pupils can choose to work in one or more areas of the three-dimensional design syllabus, including: product design (e.g. lighting, furniture, etc), architectural design, jewellery and body adornment.

Assessment

The GCSE in three-dimensional design is completely coursework-based with no written examination and will therefore require pupils to be fully committed to the time and effort required to produce high quality design and practical work throughout the GCSE course. There are four assessment objectives (AO) where pupils are expected to demonstrate their ability to:

AO1: DEVELOP ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources.

AO2: REFINE work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes.

AO3: RECORD ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses.

AO4: PRESENT a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language



Unit 1: Personal Portfolio – 60% of GCSE

- The portfolio and supporting test pieces and models are as important as the final products, and must provide evidence that the pupil has met all four assessment objectives. The design portfolio contains all work produced during Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils will be expected to research themes, develop personal ideas and make observations related to the designers and design movements studied, as well as show evidence of how they have explored ideas and developed practical skills.
- Independent research is a key element of this and it is essential that work is presented to a high standard at all times. This can be in the form of a digital portfolio, sketchbook, mounted sheets, maquettes, prototypes or scale models.

Unit 2: Externally Set Task – 40% of GCSE

- Pupils respond to one of five themes, each with a range of written and visual starting points and stimuli.
- Over a ten-week period, pupils research, plan and develop ideas for their response to the option they have chosen, which they must then realise within the ten-hour supervised time period.
- Preparatory material and sketchbooks showing research and development of ideas are as important as the final piece of work and will be marked in conjunction with the work produced during the timed test.

Future pathways and careers

Complementary GCSE and A Level subjects include Art, Craft & Design, Business, Geography, Languages and STEM-based subjects. GCSE Three-Dimensional Design pupils can also go on to study Three-dimensional Design at A Level at Dunottar School. Higher Education and careers opportunities include product design, industrial design, fashion design, set design, graphic design, computer games design, architecture, materials technologist, designers, mechanical, electrical, civil and robotics engineering, to name but a few.

WARRIOR LEARNING



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