

How to choose your options in Year 8 or 9

When choosing your options you need to think about:

- the subjects offered by your school
- your future career ideas - are any specific subjects needed? Have you considered all possible careers - are there jobs you don't know about? Are your career ideas right for you?
- your skills and qualities.
- skills shortages and jobs of the future.

Think about YOU when making your decisions - your likes and dislikes both inside and outside school, your future career ideas, the subjects you are good at and the ones you enjoy.

Choose subjects and careers where you can use your skills and qualities and not jobs you think of as being for you because you are male or female. Because some people think of certain jobs as being for men or women this means they are not doing jobs that would suit them best.

Make your own decisions and don't follow what your friends are doing. If you let other people choose for you, you could end up studying subjects or courses that do not suit you. Answering the questions in this section will help you think about what is right for you.

Subjects

Up until now you have probably had to study all the subjects offered by your school but now you can have some say about what you'll study next.



Find out the subjects that are being offered by your school.

Write down the subjects that you like and why you like them.



You are not allowed to say you like them because your friends like them or because you like the teacher!

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Find out if the subjects that you are studying now will be the same in Years 10 and 11. For example, PE in Years 7 and 8 may be very practical but in Years 10 and 11 may involve a lot more writing.

Write down the subjects that you DON'T like and why you DON'T like them.

You are not allowed to say you don't like them because you don't like the people in the class or because you don't like the teacher!



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Find out about any subjects that you have not studied before that are being offered by your school and what they involve. Think about if you would like them and why.



New subject

Example

Health and social care

Why it might be right for me

*It's a mainly practical course - there is a small exam.
I am interested in learning about people.
I am thinking about being a social worker in the future.*

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Career choices

Thinking about what career path you may take when you get older can seem quite a daunting task. No one expects you to have all your career ideas planned out in Year 8 or 9 or even Year 11.

To make sure you keep as many options open to you, try and get good grades in your GCSEs - this means grade 4 and above.

If you work hard and try your best and don't get these grades don't worry, there are still lots of courses at college and jobs you can do. Many of them will want you to continue to work towards getting grade 4 in maths and English.

Take a look at some jobs and what qualifications, skills and qualities are needed for them. Here are some examples of jobs, check out others at <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk>

"As a police officer I need to have skills in verbal communication, team work, IT and record keeping, decision making and sensitivity. I needed good GCSEs in maths and English and three other subjects. I also needed a level 3 qualification, I went to college to do this."



"As a vet, I need to have skills such as verbal communication, patience, customer service, sensitivity and the ability to pay close attention to detail. I needed excellent GCSE results with most being above a grade B (6). I also needed three A levels in science subjects at grade A. This allowed me to go to university to study for my 5-year veterinary medicine degree."



"I am a computer games designer. To get this job I needed five GCSE grades A*-C (9-4) including English and maths. I then went to college to study IT and then eventually onto university to get my degree in computer games development. My employer also asked that I had skills in analytical thinking, problem solving, communication, reasoning and I had to show I could use my initiative."



"I am a bricklayer. I worked hard at school and got good GCSEs in maths and my other subjects, but I got a grade D (3) in English. I went to college for a year to study bricklaying and I resat my English GCSE, which I passed. I then got an apprenticeship with a local building company and was offered a permanent position when I completed my qualification."



"I am a travel representative in Lanzarote. I left school with five GCSEs including, English, maths and Spanish. This really helped me when I was applying for jobs. I went to college and did a level 3 qualification in travel and tourism. I also needed skills in customer service, team work, flexibility and I need to be able to sell and work under pressure."



Your career ideas

If you know what job(s) you might want to do in the future you can find out more about them on the following website - <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk>. Use this website to check if you need any specific GCSEs to do the job(s) you are interested in and then fill in the table below.



Your career ideas	GCSEs needed
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If you are not sure about your career ideas, try doing a career matching program. These programs match careers to ability, skills and qualities and may give you ideas about some jobs you had not thought of before. Your school may subscribe to a program such as Fast Tomato, Jed or Kudos - there are other ones - ask your school.

If you have no career ideas, there are some free quizzes on the internet to help. Look at <https://ckcareersonline.org.uk/career-match-tools>

Work experience and employer visits

Your school may offer work experience in Year 10 or Year 11. This is a good way of seeing how companies work, gaining new skills and seeing if you enjoy the area of work you are placed in or have chosen.

Your school may also arrange for employers to come in to talk to you. If they do, make sure you ask as many questions as you can, so you can find out more about what they do, if they enjoy the job and what route they took to get into their current career.

