

GCSE top tips

Choosing your GCSE options might sometimes feel a bit stressful and confusing. But try not to worry. Making decisions about next steps is a normal part of life and it's a good skill to learn. Lots of people you know had to make choices about their GCSEs (or other qualifications) when they were at school so you're not on your own.

Compulsory subjects

Some GCSE subjects are compulsory (this means that you have to study these) and others are optional. The compulsory GCSE subjects are:

- English Language (English Literature may also be compulsory at your school)
- Maths
- Science

For Science, you may have the option to do a combined Science course which is worth 2 GCSEs or you might be able to choose separate sciences, where you'll study Biology, Chemistry and Physics separately and will achieve 3 GCSEs.

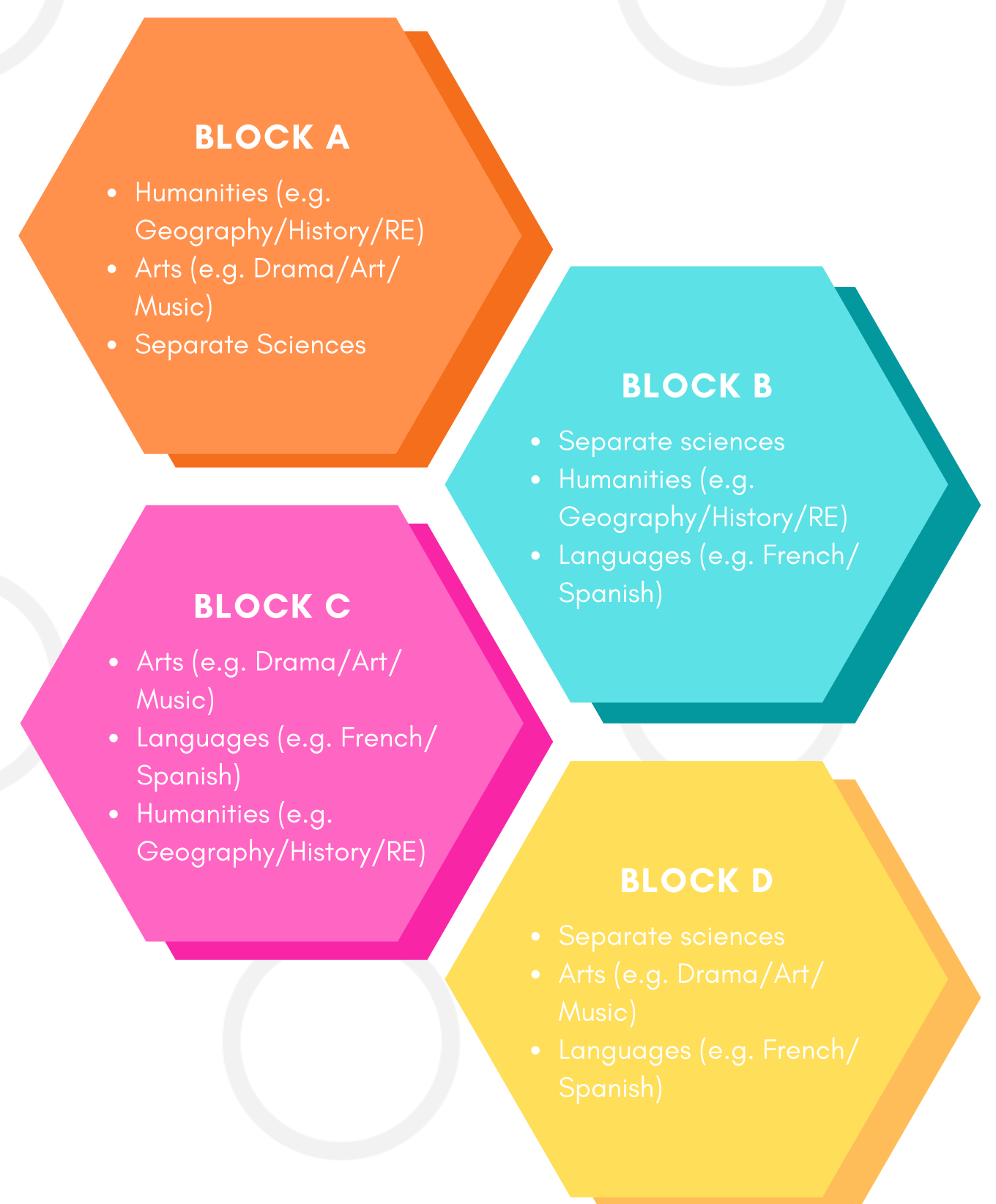
For the rest of your GCSEs, you'll probably be given a choice of a range of optional subjects to take. Make sure to check with your school about any other compulsory subjects though and check out our [#Top Tips](#) below so you can make the best choices for you!

#1 Find out what subjects are on offer

Make sure you know what GCSE subjects you can choose from at your school. This information will usually be shared with you by your teachers or you might be able to find it on your school website.

You may be asked to choose subjects in different 'blocks'. These blocks help your teachers to make sure that all of the subjects can be taught across a school week but it might mean that you're not able to do certain combinations.

All schools have different ways of organising GCSE subjects so these blocks are just examples. In this case, you would be asked to pick the block that included the combination of subjects you'd like to choose. Once you decided on the block, you'd need to pick the specific subjects. So, for example, you might decide that Block A looks best for you. Within this block, the specific subjects you decide you'd like to study are Geography, Drama and Separate Sciences.





#2 Attend an options event at school

Your school may be running an 'options evening' or similar event for you and your parents. This is a really helpful event to attend so, if you can, make sure you go along. If you or your parents have any questions about your GCSE options, then this is a really good place to ask your teachers for more information.

If your school isn't running an options event – or you're not able to attend it – then make sure to ask your teachers about where you can get some more information to help you with your decisions.

#3 Talk to your family and teachers

Your parents/carers and teachers are really helpful people to speak to about your choices. Even if you're sure that you know exactly what you'd like to choose, it's still useful to talk your options through.

If you have older siblings or other family members that you think you'd like to talk to as well then go ahead. The more people you speak to, the more informed your decision will be.



#4 Think about what you enjoy

Remember, you're going to have to put a lot of effort into these GCSE subjects and you're going to want to do your best. You'll be studying these subjects for 2 or 3 years so it's really, really important that you're interested in the subjects and enjoy learning about them.

So, while doing your research and speaking to people, have a look at what you'll be learning about in the subjects you're thinking of choosing and check that they definitely look interesting to you.

You can also follow this QR code to see a really helpful video from BBC Bitesize about GCSE subjects.

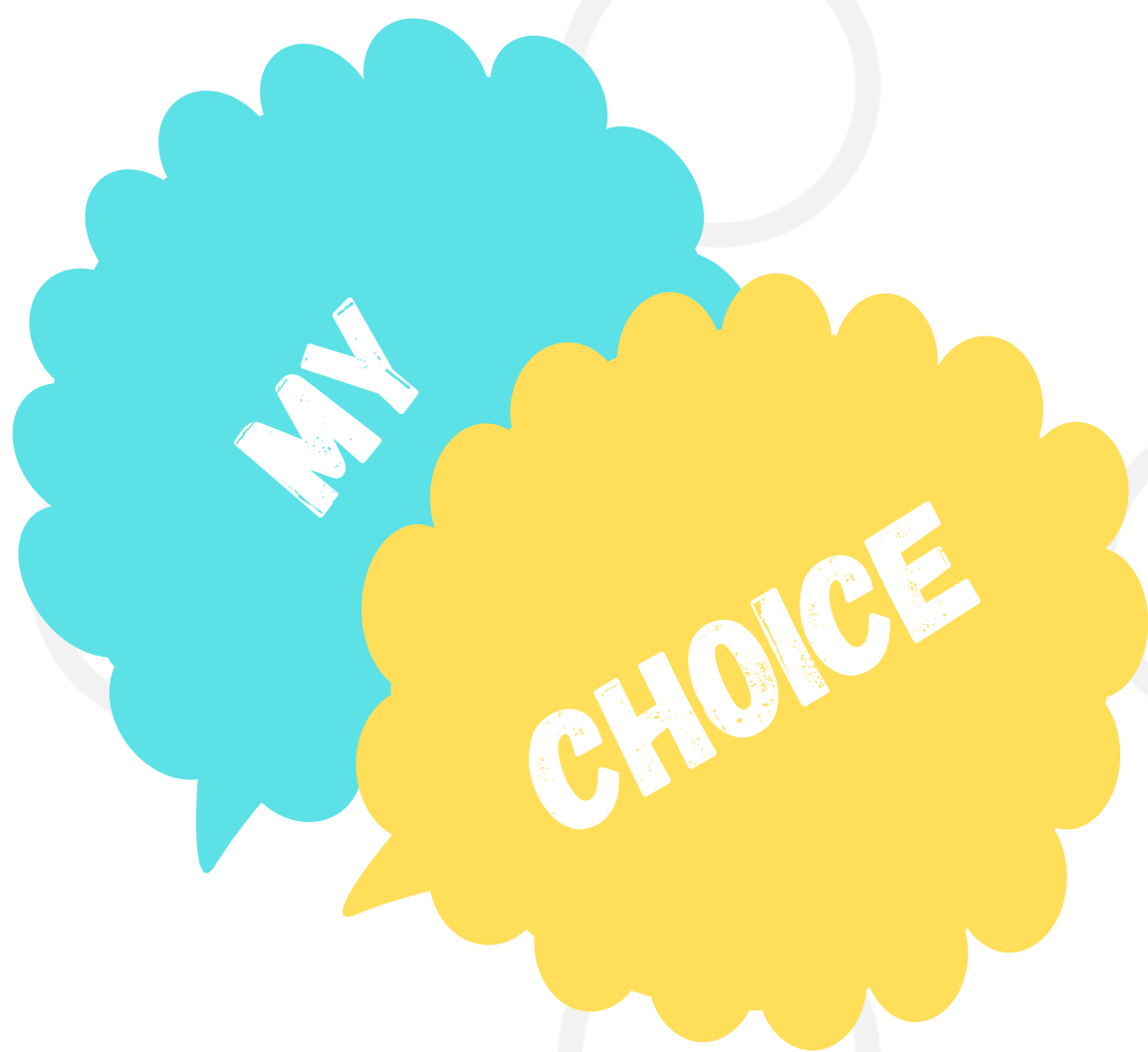
YOUR FUTURE!!!

#5 Think about the future

If you think you know what you'd like to do in the future, then it's a good idea to do a bit of research before you pick your GCSE options.

For example, if you're hoping to go to university and study something like Medicine, then it's a good idea to do triple science GCSE. This is because some sixth forms and colleges prefer for you to have studied triple science if you'd like to do a science subject at A Level. For Medicine, you usually need to have an A Level in Chemistry and an A level in one other Science/Maths subject so triple science GCSE would be a good foundation for this.

If you're not sure about what you'd like to do in the future, then it might be useful to choose a range of subjects to keep your options open. Remember **Tip #4** though! Make sure that these subjects look interesting before you pick them!



#6 Remember, this is your choice

Lots of your friends are likely to be making their GCSE options choices at this time too. It's important to remember that you and your friends will all want to do your best in your GCSEs and that each of you has a choice.

It might be tempting to pick a GCSE subject because a friend has chosen it too, but make sure you think carefully and consider **Tip #4** and **Tip #5**. If you pick something you don't enjoy or that won't help with your future plans, then it might be harder to stay motivated.

And finally... #7 Don't stop asking questions!

If you're still unsure about something to do with your GCSE choices, then make sure you ask for help. Don't stop asking questions until you're happy you have all of the information you need to make a decision.

There are lots of people on hand to help! :)

