



Mander Portman Woodward

GCSE Course Outlines

2017/2018

www.mpw.ac.uk



Dear Student

Choosing the right GCSE subject is the first step along your academic journey. It is important to select subjects that you enjoy and that interest you. The choices you make now will not only determine success in your GCSEs, but also in your A levels, your degree and ultimately your career.



Mander Portman Woodward

All students studying GCSEs at MPW Cambridge follow one-year courses. We offer courses which are suitable for students joining us at the end of Year 9, Year 10 and also Year 11.

When students transfer to us at the end of Year 9, they spend two academic years studying at GCSE level; they follow one-year courses in four or five subjects in Year 10 and then do similarly in Year 11. This route gives them an exam focus throughout their studies here and relieves them of the burden of having to study eight or more subjects at any one time.

One-year GCSE courses are ideal for students who are looking to transfer schools at the end of Year 10. In addition to this they also suit those students who need to repeat Year 11, either by retaking a whole range of subjects or a few key subjects in which they encountered difficulties at school.

Students whose first language is not English with an overall IELTS band 5.0 or higher study up to five subjects from a limited range in their first GCSE year while improving their proficiency in English; they then study up to five more subjects, usually demanding greater literacy skills, in their second GCSE year.

This booklet gives information on the subjects that we offer as one-year GCSE courses. We occasionally offer other subjects that are not listed in this booklet, so please make further enquiries if you cannot find what you are looking for. Each subject is taught according to a specification belonging to one of three Examining Boards: AQA, Edexcel or OCR. A specification divides a GCSE subject up into papers, which might be tested by written examinations, orals, practical exams or coursework. The final mark is obtained by adding together the contributions from all the papers. Our experienced tutors have chosen specifications for our one-year GCSE courses that maximise the chance of exam success.

Students taking GCSEs in 2017/2018 will take a mixture of the new **reformed** GCSEs and the GCSEs that are already in existence (which we are referring to as **legacy** GCSEs). The main features of the new reformed GCSEs are that a new grading scale of 9 to 1 will be used, with 9 being the top grade. Assessment will be mainly by examination, with other types of assessment used only where they are needed to test essential skills. Students will take all their exams in one period at the end of their course. These new reformed GCSEs are being phased in gradually over a three-year period at MPW Cambridge.

In addition to subject lessons, we provide GCSE students with a series of study skills seminars that focus on how to learn and cover such issues as memory technique, time management, motivation, speed-reading and note taking. Key Skills, which universities and employers like students to possess, are developed via the teaching and learning process; they are not taught separately. Students of statutory school age (aged 16 or under in the academic year 2017/2018) or those studying five or more subjects are required to attend compulsory classes in Sport and Life Skills. Our Life Skills programme covers the curricula for Personal, Social and Health Education (PHSE) and Citizenship in a fun, dynamic and interactive way.

One-year GCSE courses at MPW Cambridge provide a good grounding for students planning to carry on to A level or vocational studies. They are well structured, exam focused and allow students to discover and pursue areas of interest and develop valuable skills. Please feel free to contact the college if you would like more information than is contained in this booklet or wish to meet our GCSE subject tutors.

Whether you are planning to study GCSEs for the first time or to retake them, we wish you the very best of luck!

Lisa Foster
Director of Studies



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ANCIENT HISTORY

The course

Ancient History differs from a GCSE in History due to the nature of the sources you will use. While archaeological and other evidence is considered, much of our knowledge of comes from 'historians' of the time who actually saw themselves as writers of literature or moral philosophy. Through these sources, you will learn about and judge the actions of Alexander of Macedon, who expanded the Greek-speaking world over much of Asia; you will see how Hannibal brought Rome to her knees, before she recovered to lay the foundations of her later empire; and how a female ruler, Cleopatra - the last of the Egyptian Pharaohs and last Hellenistic ruler - had such a deep impact on the last days of the Roman Republic. This course consequently offers a wide range of reading and invites the student to apply both their knowledge and interpretation of this work in the exams and controlled assessment in essay form.

“

I came, I saw, I conquered.

”

—Gaius Julius Caesar

What skills do I need?

Students who choose Ancient History combine the intellectual interest in past events to be found in studying History with the reading and analysis found in English Literature, yet without being solely focussed on one activity or the other. Your own reading underpins this course, but we will seek to bring the words written over 2000 years ago to life in the classroom.

How is the course assessed?

The course is divided into three examined components and a controlled assessment:

Unit 1: *The Greeks at War* focuses on the rise of the Kingdom of Macedon and the career of Alexander the Great, 356-323 BC.

Unit 2: *The Rise of Rome* deals with the Punic Wars between Rome and Carthage, 218-146 BC, particularly Hannibal's invasion and defeat.

Unit 3: *Women in Ancient Politics* focuses on Cleopatra of Egypt and her impact on Roman politics, 69-30 BC.

Unit 4: This is the controlled assessment which looks at the Hellenistic kingdoms that rose after Alexander's death in 323 BC but would be eclipsed by Rome by 133 BC.

Each of the three exam units involves a 1 hour 15 minute paper, comprising a source-based short answer and an extended essay section. Each exam paper is worth 25% of the total marks of the course, as is the 2000-word controlled assessment.

Reading

The Campaigns of Alexander

By Arrian, translated by A. De Selincourt

Published by Penguin, ISBN 978-0140442533

The Rise of the Roman Empire

By Polybius, translated by I. Scott-Kilvert

Published by Penguin, ISBN 978-0140443622

The Fall of the Roman Republic

By Plutarch, translated by R. Warner

Published by Penguin, ISBN 978-0140449341

The Hellenistic Age

By P. Green

Published by Modern Library, ISBN 978-0812967401

Exam Board and Specification Codes

OCR Ancient History J151 (legacy)



ART AND DESIGN

The course

Art and Design is a form of communication and a means of expressing ideas and feelings. GCSE Art and Design is a creative and practical course. Students are taught how to improve their technical drawing and painting skills as well as how to explore various techniques to develop ideas. They are also encouraged to research a variety of artists in order to inform their work.

GCSE Art and Design is essential for students wishing to pursue Art as an A-level course. It is also vital for any students intending to study Architecture or for any number of careers in the creative industries, such as Illustration, Graphic Design or Fashion.

“

*Every child is an artist.
The problem is how to remain
an artist once we grow up.*

”

—Pablo Picasso, artist

What skills do I need?

Good technical drawing and painting skills are desirable. A high level of self-motivation and commitment are needed as students will have to spend a considerable amount of time working unsupervised in the Art Studio. Students should also be open-minded and willing to explore a variety of techniques and processes in order to improve their practical artwork.

How is the course assessed?

AQA offer a number of different options for GCSE Art and Design. At MPW Cambridge students follow the Fine Art option, producing practical and contextual work in the following areas of Fine Art: drawing, painting, printmaking and mixed media.

There are two components. Component 1 is coursework with no time limit. It is marked out of 96 and carries 60% weighting. The portfolio of work is selected from work undertaken during the course and must include more than one project. Photography methods are used to support a personal response to an idea, theme or issue. A response to all assessment objectives is required in the portfolio as a whole.

Component 2 is an external assessment set by AQA and concludes with a supervised time of 10 hours. It is marked out of 96 and carries 40% weighting. Students respond to their chosen starting point to produce a personal response. Question papers can be issued to students from 1 January in the year of the exam. Students have unlimited preparation time and a 10 hour period of supervised time. A response to all assessment objectives is required. Work presented is marked by the centre and moderated by AQA.

Reading

AQA GCSE Art and Design Student Book

By M. Piercy et al

Published by Nelson Thornes, ISBN 9781408503201

Exam Board and Specification Codes

AQA Art and Design (Fine Art) 8202 (reformed)



BIOLOGY

The course

The AQA Biology course enables students to: develop scientific knowledge and conceptual understanding of Biology; develop and learn to apply observational, practical, modelling, enquiry and problem-solving skills, both in the laboratory and in other learning environments; develop their ability to evaluate claims based on Biology through critical analysis of the methodology, evidence and conclusions, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

GCSE Biology is well suited to students who wish to study Biology at A level and beyond. A qualification in Biology is ideal for students considering careers in Biomedical Sciences, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine and any type of fundamental scientific research.

“

Reason, observation and experience – the holy trinity of science.

”

—Robert G. Ingersoll, American political leader

What skills do I need?

You will need a curiosity to learn about the natural world, a desire to gain insight into how science works and of its relevance to everyday lives. Investigative, mathematical and English language skills will all be necessary to achieve highly in this subject.

How is the course assessed?

There are two written examinations, each accounting for 50% of your marks and each of 1 hour 45 minutes duration. Both papers consist of multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response type questions.

Paper 1 will assess Cell Biology; Organisation; Infection and Response; and Bioenergetics.

Paper 2 will assess Homeostasis and Response; Inheritance, Variation and Evolution; and Ecology.

Reading

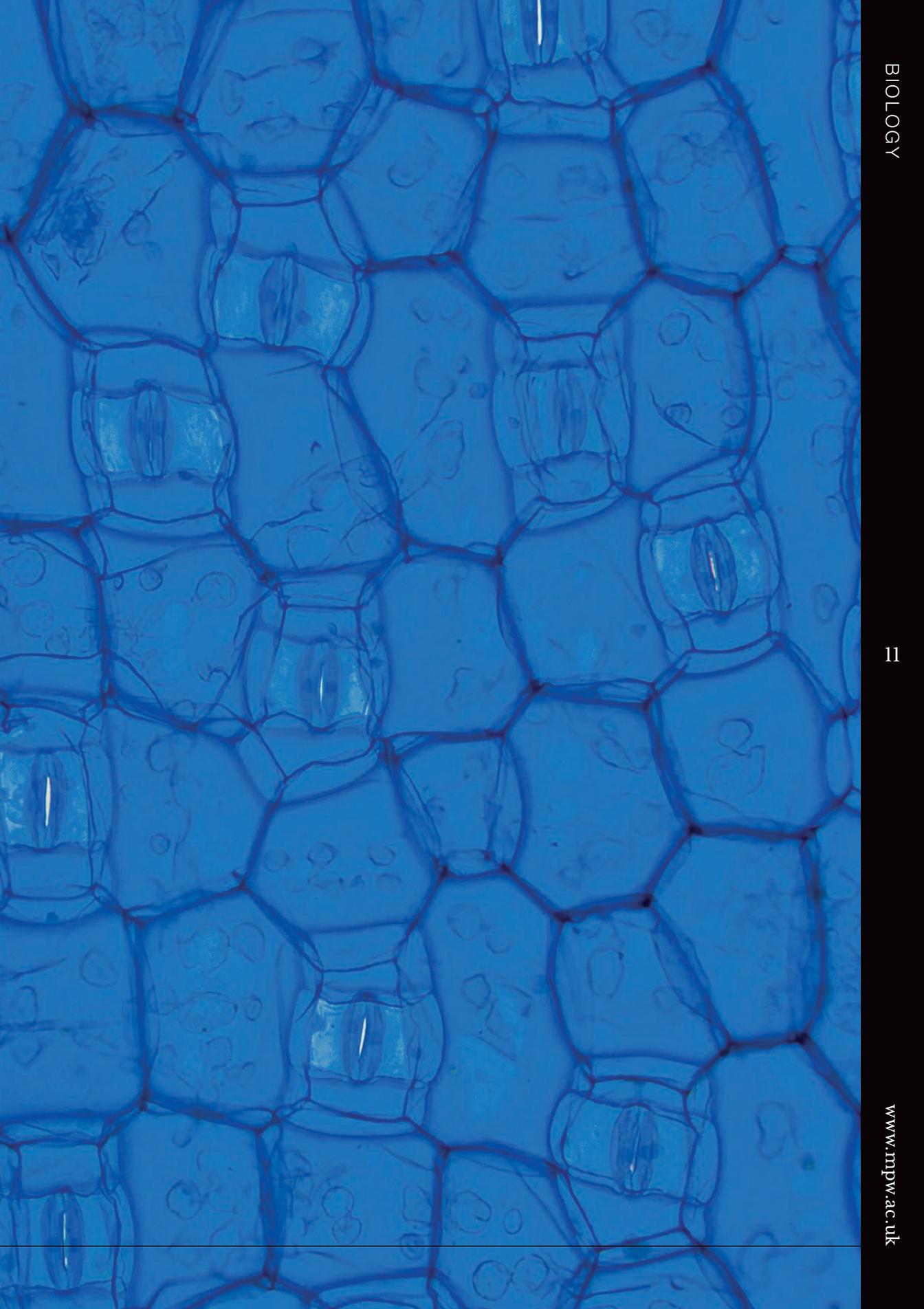
AQA GCSE Biology 3rd Edition

By A. Fullick, A. Coates

Published by OUP, ISBN 9780198359371

Exam Board and Specification Codes

AQA Biology 8461 (reformed)



BUSINESS STUDIES

The course

This is the study of the way businesses run, from large to small, how they are successful, and why they fail if they are not. It analyses businesses through financial statements and explores the way in which people, the business environment and society interact to make businesses successful.

It will help you to learn how to analyse information about real economic activity and make judgements, decisions or suggestions using this. Students will need to be able to do basic Maths, including percentages in percentage change, but no more.

Business Studies is understood by looking at what is required to set one up, the fundamentals of business operation, supply and demand, and then everything that impinges upon that basic model such as legislation, trends, marketing, infrastructure, labour, capital and production. The next unit extends this by looking at how a business grows and the things that affect it. Finally, the knowledge and skills required are used to investigate a particular business. This investigation then forms the basis of a controlled assessment.

“

It's fine to celebrate success but it is more important to heed the lessons of failure.

”

—Bill Gates, entrepreneur

The material of the course is analysed through five lenses: business organisation, marketing, finance, people and operations management. The subject encourages clear thinking and expression. Students will need to be able to write confidently in English and to commit a wide range of technical vocabulary to memory.

GCSE Business Studies is an excellent preparation for the study of the subject at A level (or the related subjects of Economics, Accounts and ICT) and introduces many of the syllabus areas and techniques involved.

How is the course assessed?

This is a modular specification with three elements:

Unit 1 · Starting a Business

1 hour exam, 40% weighting

This unit introduces candidates to issues concerning the setting up and operation of a business. It explores the activities of business and the reasons for success or failure. It encourages candidates to appreciate that the business must operate within society and that this involves businesses engaging with a wide range of stakeholders with different priorities.

Unit 2 · Growing as a Business

1 hour exam, 35% weighting

This unit builds upon the content of Unit 1, allowing candidates to study businesses as they grow and the issues that expansion raises.

Unit 3 · Investigating a Business

Controlled Assessment, 25% weighting

AQA will provide centres with pre-released material which will require candidates to undertake a business investigation. This investigation will then be assessed under controlled conditions to test individual responses.

Reading

AQA Business Studies GCSE

By Stimpson et al

Published by Nelson Thornes

Exam Board and Specification Codes

AQA Business Studies 4133 (legacy)



CHEMISTRY

The course

The AQA Chemistry course enables students to: develop scientific knowledge and conceptual understanding of Chemistry; develop and learn to apply observational, practical, modelling, enquiry and problem-solving skills, both in the laboratory and in other learning environments; develop their ability to evaluate claims based on Chemistry through critical analysis of the methodology, evidence and conclusions, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

GCSE Chemistry is well suited to students who wish to study Chemistry at A level and beyond. A qualification in Chemistry is ideal for students considering careers in Biomedical Sciences, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine and any type of fundamental scientific research.

“

By convention sweet and by convention bitter, by convention hot, by convention cold, by convention colour; but in reality atoms and void.

”

—Democritus, philosopher

What skills do I need?

You will need a curiosity to learn about the natural world, a desire to gain insight into how science works and of its relevance to everyday lives. Investigative, mathematical and English language skills will all be necessary to achieve highly in this subject.

How is the course assessed?

There are two written examinations, each accounting for 50% of your marks and each of 1 hour 45 minutes duration. Both papers consist of multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response type questions.

Paper 1 will assess: Atomic Structure and the Periodic Table, Bonding, Structure, and the Properties of Matter, Quantitative Chemistry, Chemical Changes and Energy Changes.

Paper 2 will assess: The Rate and Extent of Chemical Change, Organic Chemistry, Chemical Analysis, Chemistry of the Atmosphere and Using Resources.

Reading

AQA GCSE Chemistry 3rd Edition

By L. Ryan, R. Peacock

Published by OUP, ISBN 9780198359388

Exam Board and Specification Codes

AQA Chemistry 8462 (reformed)

The image shows a close-up of a green periodic table grid. The elements Chromium (Cr) and Manganese (Mn) are the primary focus. Chromium is located at atomic number 24, and Manganese is at atomic number 25. The grid lines are white, and the text is in a clean, sans-serif font.

24	25
Cr	Mn
$[Ar]4s^13d^5$	$[Ar]4s^23d^5$
chromium	manganese
52.00	54.94
42	43

COMPUTER SCIENCE

The course

In the space of little over fifty years, computers have become an integral part of the modern world. They have moved from being useful to essential and become fashion accessories in their own right. Yet a computer is nothing without a good program; and a good program requires a good programmer. By studying the Computer Science IGCSE, you will start to learn the basics of coding. You will start at the bottom, learning about logic gates, binary and hexadecimal, and computer architecture. You will then study algorithms and flow-charts as a means of problem solving, and then begin to write whole programs in a high-level language such as Visual Basic or Python. You will also look at important issues surrounding the use of software. You will look at how best to keep systems secure. You will consider ethical issues in computing, for example whether hacking can be justified and how to manage copyright issues in the digital age.

“

What a computer is to me is the most remarkable tool that we have ever come up with. It's the equivalent of a bicycle for our minds.

”

—Steve Jobs,
inventor and entrepreneur

What skills do I need?

You should have an interest in computers and programming. You should have good maths skills and a logical mind.

How is the course assessed?

There are two written papers assessing the two components: Theory of Computer Science; and Problem-solving and Programming. Both papers contain short-answer and structured questions, all of which are compulsory. Each paper lasts 1 hour 45 minutes. The Component 1 exam is worth 60% of the marks and the Component 2 exam is worth 40% of the marks.

Reading

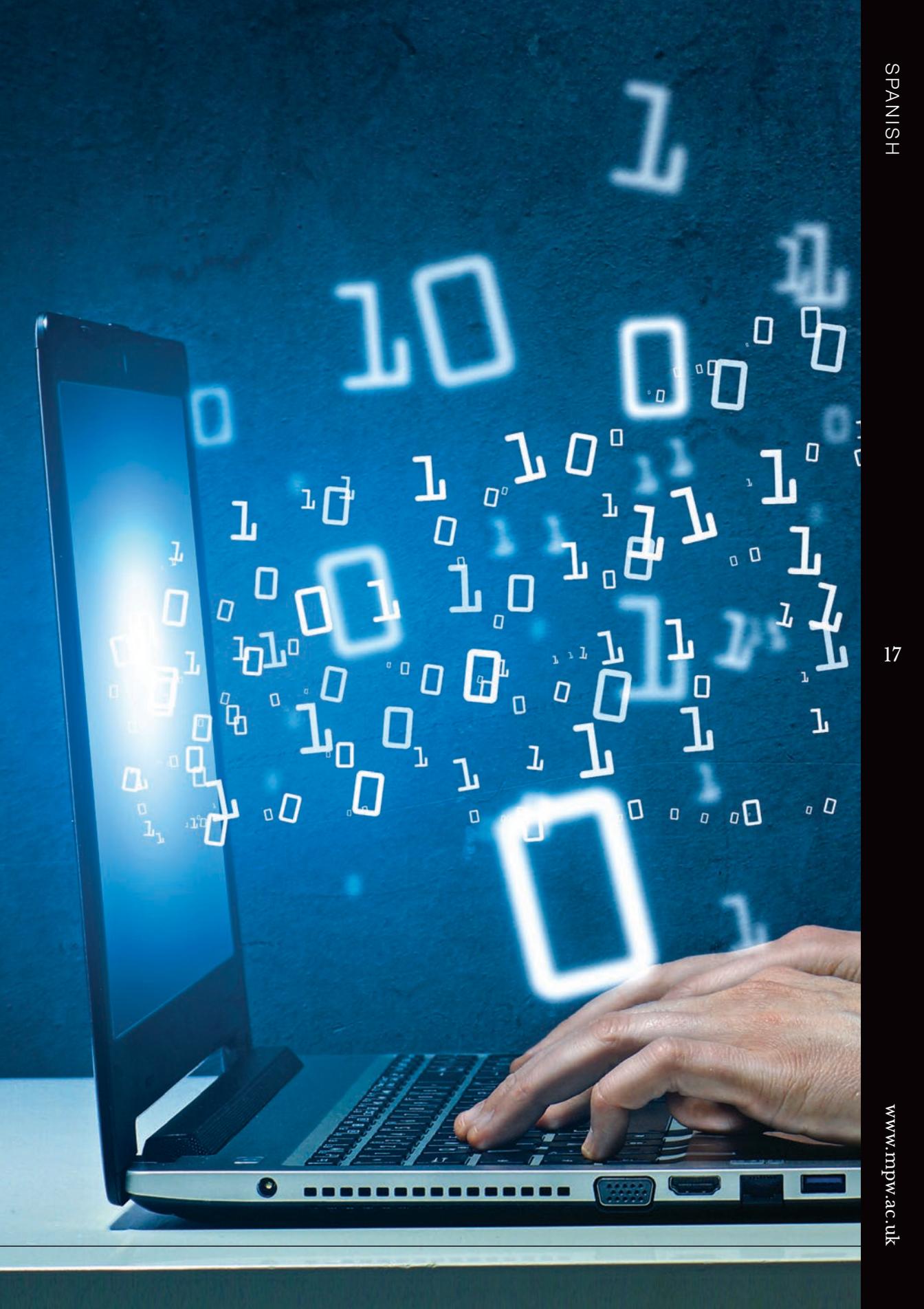
Cambridge IGCSE Computer Science

By P. Hoang, H. Williams

Published by Hodder Education, ISBN 9781471809309

Exam Board and Specification Codes

Cambridge Computer Science 0478 (reformed)



ECONOMICS

The course

Economics is concerned with the allocation of scarce resources to meet needs and wants, and with the behaviour of consumers, producers and governments. It includes the study of how markets work, and what happens when they fail to allocate resources efficiently; the distribution of incomes and wealth; and national economic objectives and the various policies used by governments to try to achieve them. Economics complements subjects such as Mathematics, History, Geography and Business Studies.

Students receive 3 hours of tuition per week. Coverage of the subject material dominates the Autumn and Spring terms; the Summer term focuses on revision and exam technique.

“

The main purpose in studying economics is to avoid being fooled by economists.

”

—Joan Robinson, economist

How is the course assessed?

Unit 1 · Personal Economics

1 hour 15 minute exam, 50% weighting

This unit aims to equip students with the basic tools of the economist to help them understand their place in and contribution to the local, national and global economies as consumers, workers and citizens.

Unit 2 · Investigating Economic Issues

1 hour 15 minute exam, 50% weighting

In this unit, students will further develop their understanding of economic concepts and theories and then apply them to a range of economic issues. Two special topics for investigation are selected each year.

Reading

AQA Economics GCSE

By Horner and Madgett

Published by Nelson Thornes, ISBN 9781408504345

Exam Board and Specification Codes

AQA Economics 4135 (legacy)



ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The course

English is a compulsory subject at GCSE level and there are very good reasons for this. A command of the English Language will not only gain you a GCSE but is now designed to equip you with skills that you need to be successful in life. If you can express yourself confidently, read and understand a wide range of written material and organise and shape your thoughts in writing you can participate fully in society. A good level of written English is necessary for almost every subject you choose to study and will improve your results overall. English Language is not a 'subject' but a vital life skill in an age where our ability to communicate has never been more important.

“

*Reading maketh a full man;
conference a ready man; and
writing an exact man.*

”

—Francis Bacon, *Of Studies* (1597)

What skills do I need?

You need the capacity to engage with reading a wide variety of texts from the c19th-c21st, including literature, non-fiction, reviews and journalism. You will develop the necessary skills to write effectively and coherently using standard English with correct grammar, spelling and punctuation.

How is the course assessed?

There are two written examinations, each accounting for 50% of your marks and each of 1 hour 45 minutes duration. Unit 1 consists of reading a variety of texts and answering shorter questions, followed by an extended question in which you will produce your own descriptive or narrative writing.

Unit 2 will consist of reading, and writing about, one non-fiction text and one literary non-fiction text, followed by your own writing to 'present a viewpoint'.

Each paper will require you to read and evaluate texts critically, make comparisons about the ways in which language is used, summarise information, and then use the knowledge you have gained to inform and improve your own writing.

Reading

**GCSE English Language for AQA
Progress Plus Student Book**

By L. McNab, I. Pilgrim, M. Slee

Published by CUP, ISBN 9781107452978

Exam Board and Specification Codes

AQA English Language 8700 (reformed)



ENGLISH LITERATURE

The course

GCSE English Literature is often studied in addition to GCSE English Language. The literature course is designed to provide exposure to all genres of literature of high quality, from Shakespeare to the 21st century. In reading and writing about literature, students develop highly transferable analytical and technical skills. Far from simply being a 'subject', the study of English Literature draws together and develops broad cultural, historical and linguistic awareness. The course provides an excellent foundation for the study of English Literature at A level.

What skills do I need?

You need willingness to engage with and take delight in the close reading and analysis of literary texts.

“

A classic is a book that has never finished saying what it has to say.

”

—Italo Calvino, writer

How is the course assessed?

There are two exams. Exam 1 assesses Shakespeare plays and the 19th-century novel. You will answer one question on each, firstly writing in detail on an extract from the text and then moving on to write about the text as a whole. You will study one Shakespeare play and one 19th century novel. Exam 1 is 1 hour 45 minutes and accounts for 40% of your Literature GCSE.

Exam 2 assesses your understanding of poetry and of a modern play or novel. You will answer three questions, one essay question on your studied play or novel, one comparative question on poems from the AQA anthology and one question on an unseen poem, going on to compare it with another unseen poem. Exam 2 is 2 hours 15 minutes and accounts for 60% of your Literature GCSE.

Reading

Frankenstein

By *M. Shelley*

Published by Penguin Classics, ISBN 9780141439471

An Inspector Calls

By *J.B. Priestley*

Published by Penguin Classics, ISBN 9780141185354

Macbeth

By *W. Shakespeare*

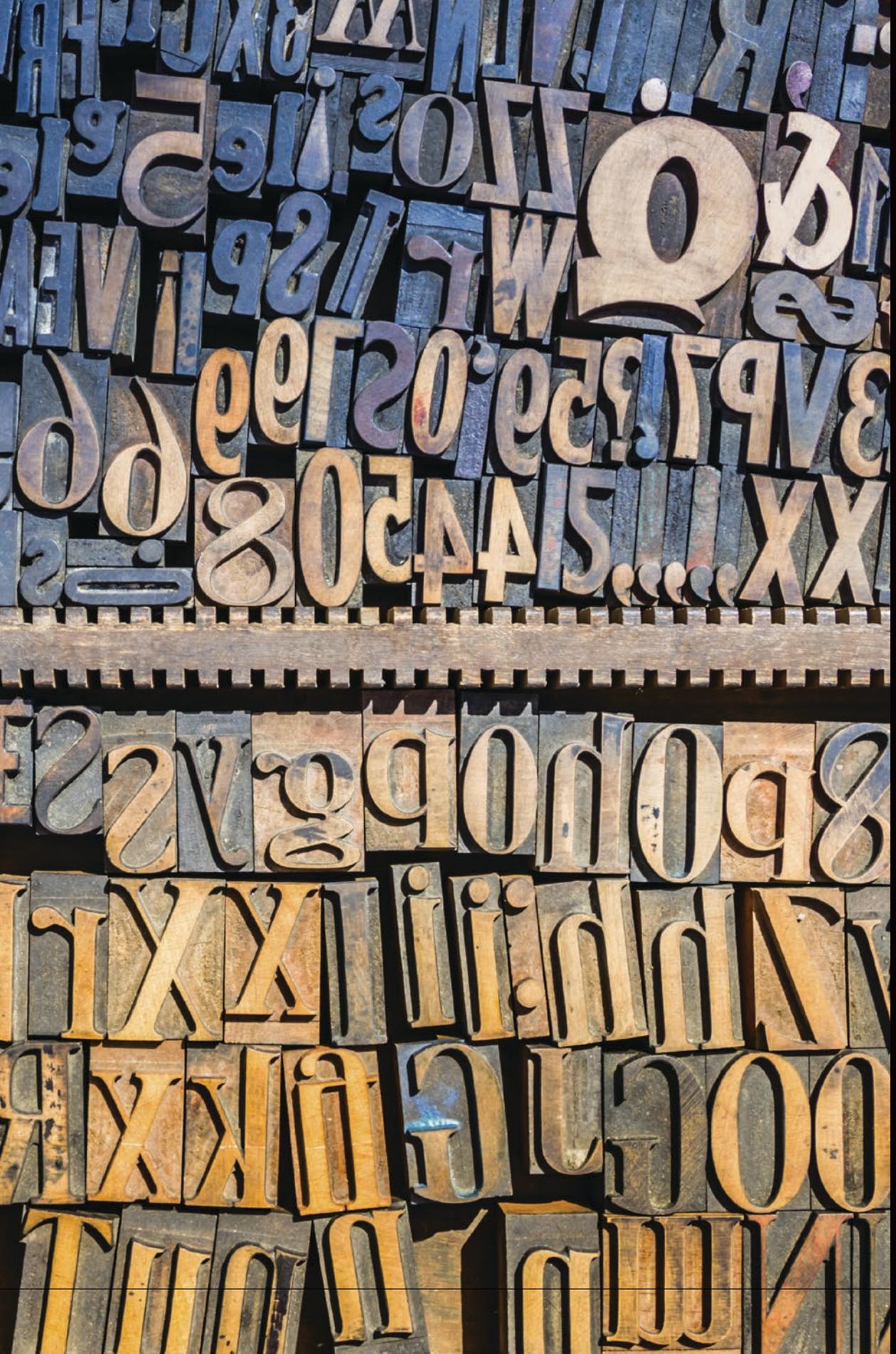
Published by CUP, ISBN 9780521606868

AQA Anthology of Poetry: Poems Past and Present

Available via Exam Board

Exam Board and Specification Codes

AQA English Literature 8702 (reformed)



FRENCH

The course

French is an interesting and challenging subject that equips students with the skills to communicate confidently in French in a range of everyday situations. The five main themes of the course are the following: identity and culture, local area with holiday and travel, school, future aspirations with study and work, and finally international and global dimension. Students will develop an awareness and understanding of the culture and identity of the countries and communities where French is spoken. The course provides an excellent foundation for the study of French at 'A' level.

What skills do I need?

You need willingness to work hard at your grammar on a regular basis. You will also have to learn and relearn the vocabulary for each topic. The aim is to acquire the sufficient tools to be able to produce spoken or written responses in different contexts.

“

The most intimate temper of a people, its deepest soul, is above all in its language.

”

—Jules Michelet, historian

How is the course assessed?

There are four papers which are worth 25% each of the total examination. The use of dictionaries is not permitted and this includes Paper 2, the oral examination, during the preparation time.

Paper 1 is listening and understanding in French. Foundation tier: 35 minutes including 5 minutes' reading time. Higher tier: 45 minutes including 5 minutes' reading time. Students will respond to multiple-response and short-answer open response questions.

Paper 2 is the speaking in French examination. It will be internally conducted and externally assessed. Foundation tier: 7-9 minutes plus 12 minutes' preparation time. Higher tier: 10-12 minutes plus 12 minutes' preparation time. There are three tasks: a role play, questions based on a picture stimulus and a conversation based on two themes of the course.

Paper 3 is reading and understanding in French. Foundation tier: 45 minutes, higher tier: 1 hour. There will be a range of different types of text including advertisements, emails, articles and literary texts. Students are required to respond to multiple-response and short-answer questions.

Paper 4 is writing in French. Foundation tier: 1 hour 10 minutes, higher tier: 1 hour 20 minutes. Students are assessed on their ability to communicate effectively through writing in French for different purposes and audiences. Word counts are specified for each question and students must answer all questions. There will also be a translation into French.

Reading

French/English Dictionary

Published by Collins/Robert or Oxford/Hachette

Please note that dictionaries are not allowed in any of the exams.

Exam Board and Specification Codes

Edexcel French 1FR0 (reformed)

Prochainement



TOURNÉE
DU
CHAT
NOIR

AVEC
RODOLPHE SALIS



MONTMARTRE



Divan Japonais



LES LEFÈVRE-UTILE



FLEURS

GEOGRAPHY

The course

Geography at GCSE aims to give you an understanding of the interactions between people and their environments, investigating case studies from the UK and the wider world in social, political and cultural contexts. You will gain an appreciation of your role in society by considering different viewpoints, values and attitudes in order to be able to assess the need for a sustainable approach to managing geographical issues. In addition, you will develop a range of skills including those used in fieldwork, maps, and geographical enquiry. Topics of study include tectonics, climate change, poverty, deprivation, global shifts in economic power and the challenge of sustainable resource use.

“

*Geography is an earthly subject,
but a heavenly science.*

”

—Edmund Burke, statesman
and philosopher

What skills do I need?

You will be required to develop and demonstrate a range of geographical skills, including cartographic, graphical, numerical, statistical, and literacy skills. You must have the ability to be able to draw together knowledge, understanding and skills from the full course of study in order to be able to answer a range of differing style exam questions: multiple-choice, short answer, levels of response, extended prose.

How is the course assessed?

This course consists of three written exam papers:

Paper 1: Living with the physical environment consists of the topics: The challenge of natural hazards; The living world; Physical landscapes in the UK. This course is assessed by a written paper which lasts for 1 hour 30 minutes in duration. This paper is worth 35% of the total marks for this course.

Paper 2: Challenges in the human environment comprises the topics: Urban issues and challenges; The changing economic world; The challenge of resource management. This course is assessed by a written paper which lasts for 1 hour 30 minutes in duration. This paper is worth 35% of the total marks for this course.

Paper 3: Geographical applications; Issue evaluation; Fieldwork; Geographical skills. Part of the assessment will be based around a pre-release resources booklet, which is made available 12 weeks before the examination. This course is assessed by a written paper which lasts for 1 hour 15 minutes in duration. This paper is worth 30% of the total marks for this course.

Reading

GCSE Geography for AQA Student Book

By D. Payne, A. Rae, J. Rutter, H. Young, R. Kitchen,
E. Rawlings-Smith

Published by CUP, ISBN 9781316604632

Exam Board and Specification Codes

AQA Geography 8035 (reformed)



GERMAN

The course

Besides being fun and having multiple real life implications, the knowledge of a foreign language is ever more valuable in an increasingly connected world. Many employers look for knowledge of at least one other language across a wide range of jobs. Understanding the German language is a first step to understanding the people and culture of the countries where German is spoken.

The five main themes of the course are the following:

- Identity and Culture
- Local Area and Holiday and Travel
- School
- Future Aspirations (study and work)
- International and Global Dimension

What skills do I need?

The aim is to acquire the sufficient tools to be able to produce spoken or written responses in different contexts. In order to achieve this goal, you will need an interest in other cultures and a willingness to learn and revise vocabulary regularly for each topic.

A logical mind will also help to cope with the grammar.

“

*Aus Steinen,
die einem in den Weg
gelegt werden,
kann man Schönes bauen.*

”

—J.W. von Goethe

How is the course assessed?

There are four papers which are worth 25% each of the total examination. The use of dictionaries is not permitted. This also concerns the preparation time during Paper 2, the oral examination.

Paper 1 will test your listening skills in German.

Foundation tier: 35 minutes including 5 minutes' reading time. Higher tier: 45 minutes including 5 minutes' reading time. Students will respond to multiple-response and short-answer open response questions.

Paper 2 is the speaking in German examination. This exam will be internally conducted and externally assessed. Foundation tier: 7-9 minutes plus 12 minutes' preparation time. Higher tier: 10-12 minutes plus 12 minutes' preparation time. There are three tasks: a role play, questions based on a picture stimulus and a conversation based on two themes of the course.

Paper 3 is reading and understanding in German.

Foundation tier: 45 minutes, higher tier: 1 hour. There will be a range of different types of text including advertisements, emails, articles and literary texts. Students are required to respond to multiple-response and short-answer questions.

Paper 4 will test your writing skills in German.

Foundation tier: 1 hour 10 minutes, higher tier: 1 hour 20 minutes. Students are assessed on their ability to communicate effectively through writing in German for different purposes and audiences. Word counts are specified for each question and students must answer all questions. There will also be a translation from English into German.

Reading

A German dictionary is vital.

Please note that dictionaries are not allowed in any of the exams.

Exam Board and Specification Codes

Edexcel German 1GN0 (reformed)



HISTORY

The course

GCSE History is a course divided into two parts. Paper one deals with aspects of the making of the modern world. Paper two looks at topics that have helped to shape the nation of Great Britain. Students will cover topics such as the rise and power of Nazi Germany, the origins and development of the Cold War, British migration and empire through the ages and Elizabethan England. The course will require students to provide in depth written answers and the ability to analyse historical sources correctly. GCSE History students will learn to provide balanced and reasoned arguments that are supported with factual evidence. They will look at different historical perspectives and make judgements about them based on their content and provenance. Students will also be encouraged to contribute to class discussions, so that a range of perspectives can be established in the classroom.

“

Revisionism is a healthy historiographical process, and no one, not even revisionists, should be exempt from it.

”

—John Lewis Gaddis, historian

What skills do I need?

Students who choose this course will have an intellectual curiosity in History and the ability to write in depth and detail. It is important that History students are also able to appreciate differing perspectives from their own.

How is the course assessed?

The course is divided into two parts:

Paper 1: Understanding the Modern World - looks at:

- Germany, 1890–1945: Democracy and dictatorship
- Conflict and tension between East and West, 1945–1972

Paper 2: Shaping the Nation - looks at:

- Britain: Migration, empires and the people: c790 to the present day
- Elizabethan England, c1568–1603

The course is examined by two written exam papers. Each paper lasts 1 hour and 45 minutes. Both papers are worth 50% of the total marks for this course.

Reading

AQA GCSE History: Germany 1890-1945: Democracy and Dictatorship

By A. Wilkes

Published by OUP, ISBN 9780198370109

AQA GCSE History: Conflict and Tension between East and West, 1945-1972

By T. Williams

Published by OUP, ISBN 9780198412663

AQA GCSE History: Elizabethan England c1568-1603

By W. Royle

Published by Hodder Education, ISBN 9781471864292

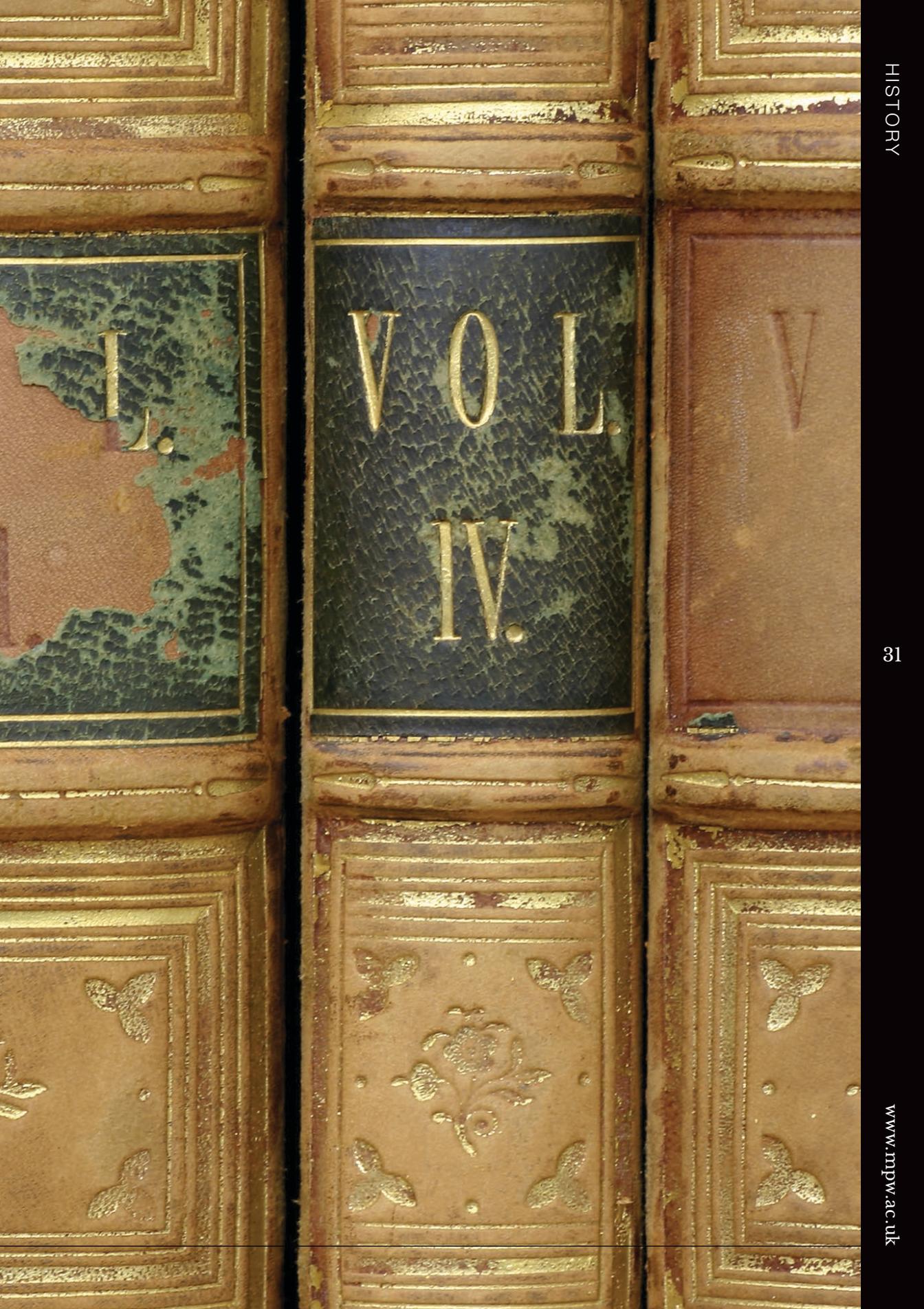
AQA GCSE History: Migration, Empires and the People

By R. Whitburn, A. Mohamud

Published by Hodder Education, ISBN 9781471886249

Exam Board and Specification Codes

AQA History 8145 (reformed)



ITALIAN

The course

Italian is an interesting and challenging subject that equips students with the skills to communicate confidently in Italian in a range of everyday situations. It suits all students who are interested in communicating with people of other nationalities. Students learn about the culture of countries where Italian is spoken and benefit when they come into contact with Italian-speaking people, both young and old, both at home and abroad. Italian is studied in relation to some or all of the following themes: media and culture, sport and leisure, travel and tourism or business, work and employment.

Students receive 3 hours of group tuition per week. Regular homework and tests mean students consolidate their intellectual and study skills and receive essential exam practice. Please note that dictionaries are not allowed in any of the exams.

“

*You may have the universe
if I may have Italy.*

”

—Giuseppe Verdi, composer

How is the course assessed?

Unit 1 · Listening and Understanding in Italian

Foundation and Higher Tier: 35 minute exam, 20% weighting

Students listen to a range of formal and informal Italian material spoken by native speakers. What they hear may include instructions, messages, announcements, monologues, dialogues, discussions, factual material, narrative and expressions and justifications of points of view, all of varying length. A range of questions of varying type and difficulty tests their comprehension.

Unit 2 · Speaking in Italian

Foundation and Higher Tier: 8-12 minute exam, 30% weighting

Students must demonstrate the ability to use the Italian language for different purposes and in different settings, and will be assessed on two speaking activities based on the themes above and chosen from the following task types: an open interaction, a picture-based free-flowing discussion or a presentation with discussion following.

Unit 3 · Reading and Understanding in Italian

Foundation Tier: 35 minute exam

Higher Tier: 50 minute exam, 20% weighting

The examination consists of a number of short texts, notices or news reports in Italian on the themes above and testing is through a variety of tasks which require a response, written or non-verbal, to demonstrate understanding.

Unit 4 · Writing in Italian

Foundation and Higher Tier: internal assessment under controlled conditions, 30% weighting

The student must complete two separate writing tasks (each of up to 200 words) undertaken in controlled conditions in a single assessment session of no more than one hour. The work will relate to one or more of the themes above.

Reading

An Italian dictionary is vital.

Exam Board and Specification Codes

Edexcel Italian 2IN01 (legacy)



MATHEMATICS

The course

Mathematics can best be described, at this level, as the formulation and application of both numerical and abstract concepts. The student of mathematics has to be creative and imaginative, have a sense of flair and most importantly be curious about the world around them. Mathematics touches on many areas and requires intellectual flexibility and a methodical approach.

Mathematics has a clear influence on accountancy, architecture, biology, chemistry, economics, engineering, finance, physics, etc. At the same time it is an active field of research in its own right.

“

The pleasure we obtain from music comes from counting, but counting unconsciously. Music is nothing but unconscious arithmetic.

”

—Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz,
philosopher and mathematician

The course is divided into three components or assessment objectives:

- Number and Algebra: integers, fractions, powers and roots, set notation, percentages and ratios, algebraic manipulation, equations, formulae and identities, functions, linear and quadratic equations and graphs, inequalities, proportionality, sequences and calculus.
- Shape, space and measure: geometry, angles, lines and triangles, polygons, symmetry, measures, construction, circles, trigonometry in 2D and 3D, perimeter and area, volume, similarity, vectors and transformation geometry.
- Handling data: statistical measures, graphical representation of data, probability.

What skills do I need?

You need to be able to make deduction from mathematical information, construct chains of reasoning, present arguments and proofs and interpret and communicate information accurately.

How is the course assessed?

Students pursue the International GCSE course at either Higher Tier, which covers the grade range 9-4, or at Foundation Tier, which covers the grade range 5-1. For either tier the course is assessed by means of two written examination papers. Each paper lasts 2 hours and is worth 50% of the total mark. Calculators are allowed on all papers.

Reading

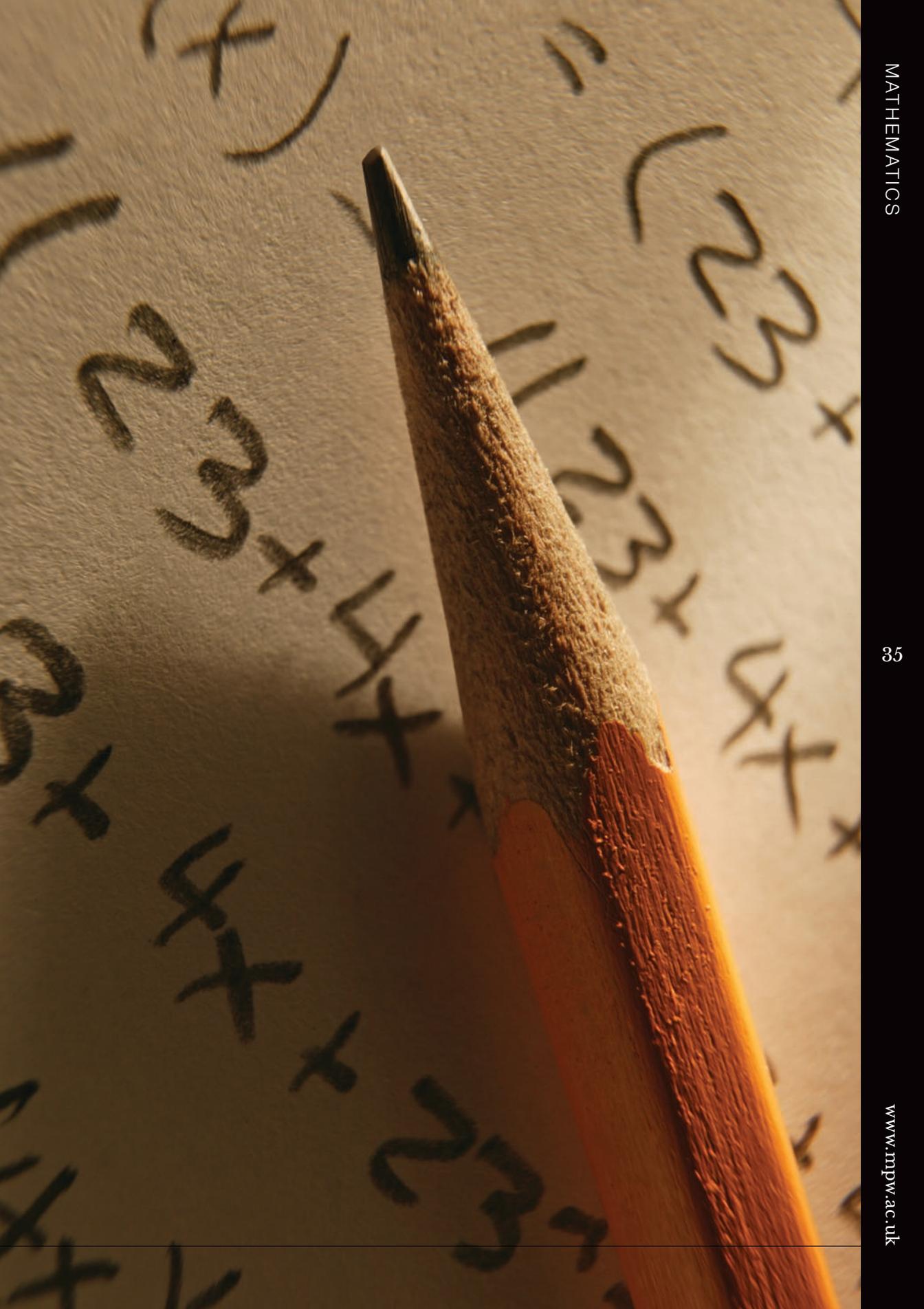
Edexcel International GCSE Maths Student Book

By C. Pearce

Published by Collins, ISBN 9780008205874

Exam Board and Specification Codes

Pearson-Edexcel 4MA1/3H and 4MA1/4H (Higher Tier) and 4MA1/1F and 4MA1/2F (Foundation Tier)



PHYSICS

The course

The AQA Physics course enables students to: develop scientific knowledge and conceptual understanding of Physics; develop and learn to apply observational, practical, modelling, enquiry and problem-solving skills, both in the laboratory and in other learning environments; develop their ability to evaluate claims based on Physics through critical analysis of the methodology, evidence and conclusions, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

GCSE Physics is well suited to students who wish to study Physics at A level and beyond. A qualification in Physics is ideal for students considering careers in Engineering, Medical Physics and any type of fundamental scientific research.

“

Look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Try to make sense of what you see, and wonder about what makes the universe exist. Be curious.

”

—Stephen Hawking

What skills do I need?

You will need a curiosity to learn about the natural world and a desire to gain insight into how science works and of its relevance to everyday lives. Investigative, mathematical and English language skills will all be necessary to achieve highly in this subject.

How is the course assessed?

There are two written examinations, each accounting for 50% of your marks and each of 1 hour 45 minutes duration. Both papers consist of multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response type questions.

Paper 1 will assess: Energy; Electricity; Particle model of matter; and Atomic structure.

Paper 2 will assess: Forces; Waves; Magnetism and electromagnetism; and 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.

Reading

AQA GCSE Physics 3rd Edition

By J. Breithaupt with L. Ryan

Published by OUP, ISBN 9780198359395

Exam Board and Specification Codes

AQA Physics 8463 (reformed)



PSYCHOLOGY

The course

Psychology is the study of mind, brain and behaviour. This course will appeal to students who enjoy exploring issues with regard to how and why people behave the way they do, and who enjoy planning and carrying out investigations. Prospective students should be aware that Psychology is not an easy option. At GCSE level an introduction to core theories, concepts and research studies is provided, together with an understanding and appreciation of the scientific nature of Psychology, and of the relationship between the subject and its application to contemporary society.

Students receive 3 hours of tuition per week. The subject material is taught across all three terms. The summer term, though, focuses more on revision and examination techniques. Regular timed assignments and homework mean that students consolidate their knowledge and understanding of units B541, B542, and B543 throughout the course.

“

The postmortem room has become the temple of truth.

”

—Donald Calne, neurologist

How is the course assessed?

Unit B541 · [Studies and Applications in Psychology 1](#)

1 hour 15 minute exam, 40% weighting

In this unit students study the following areas:

- Biological Psychology: Sex and gender
- Cognitive Psychology: Memory
- Developmental Psychology: Attachment
- Social Psychology: Obedience
- Individual Differences: Atypical behaviour

Unit B542 · [Studies and Applications in Psychology 2](#)

1 hour 15 minute exam, 40% weighting

In this unit students study the following areas:

- Biological Psychology: Criminal behaviour
- Cognitive Psychology: Perception
- Developmental Psychology: Cognitive development
- Social Psychology: Non-verbal communication
- Individual Differences: The self

Unit B543 · [Research in Psychology](#)

1 hour exam, 20% weighting

In this unit students study the following areas:

- Planning research
- Doing research
- Analysing research
- Planning an investigation

Reading

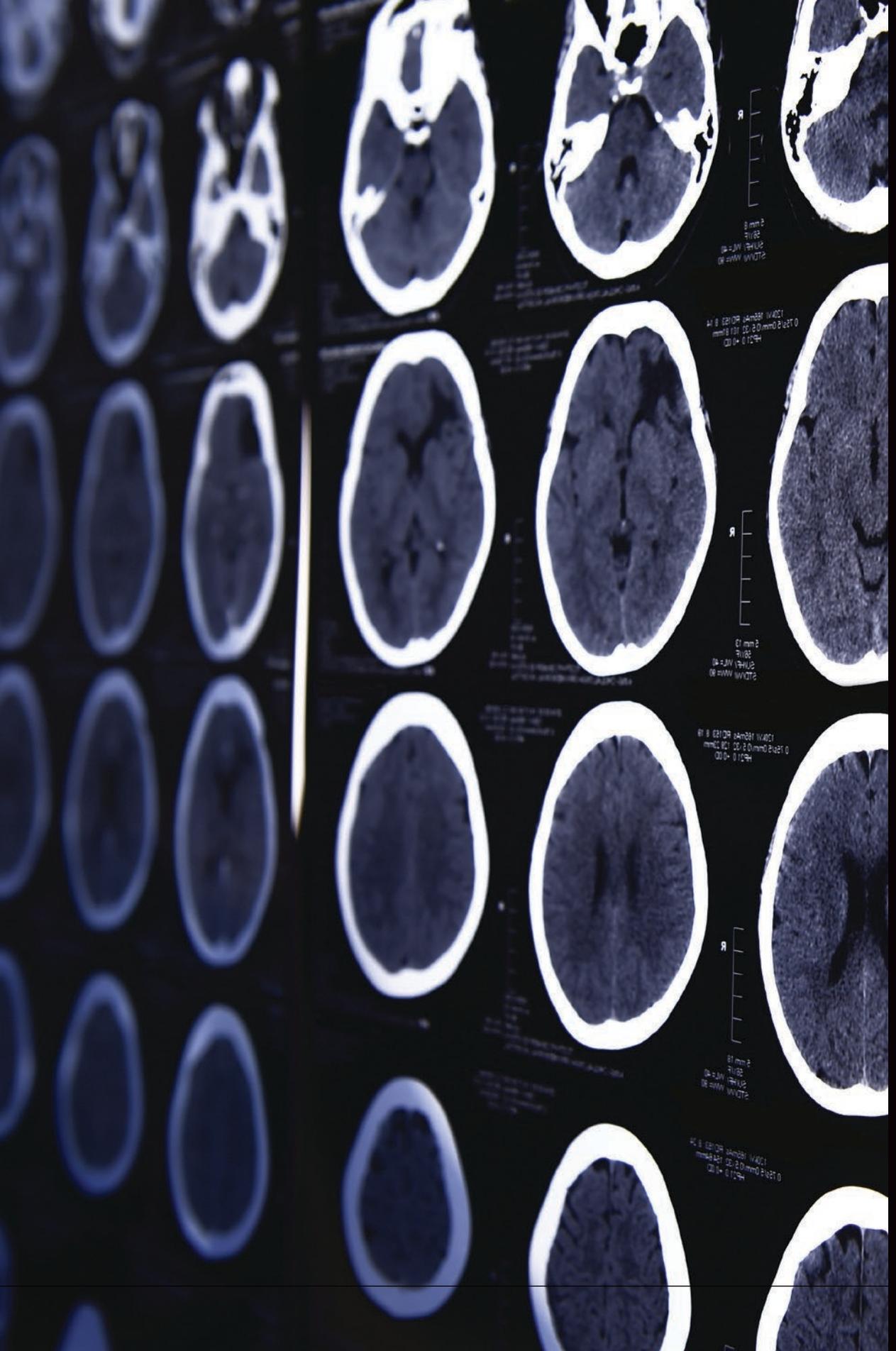
OCR GCSE Psychology

By M. Billingham, D. Groves

Published by Heinemann, ISBN 9780435807702

Exam Board and Specification Codes

OCR Psychology J611 (legacy)



RELIGIOUS STUDIES

The course

Religious Studies deals with issues that are relevant to all aspects of life in the 21st century. Students look at the beliefs, teachings and practices of two religions. The course covers relationships and families, equality, gender issues and prejudice and discrimination. Philosophical perspectives on the existence of God are also discussed. The contribution of religion to war and conflicts is explored and whether peace can ever be achieved. We also study the relationship between religions and non-religious beliefs. You do not need to have a particular faith to explore answers to these questions in GCSE Religious Studies. Equally you do not have to be a non-believer. The student of Religious Studies has to have intellectual curiosity and the ability to empathise with and understand the views of others.

“

Theological religion is the source of all imaginable follies and disturbances; it is the parent of fanaticism and civil discord; it is the enemy of mankind.

”

—Voltaire, philosopher

The course is divided into two components. Component one looks at:

- Beliefs and teachings and Practices (01-5)
*Students are required to study **two** religions from: Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism.*

Component two looks at:

- Religion, philosophy and ethics in the modern world from a religious perspective (06-10)
*Students are required to study this component from the perspective of **one** of these religions: Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism.*

Students study four themes:

- Relationships and families
- The existence of God, gods and the ultimate reality
- Religion, peace and conflict
- Dialogue between religious and non-religious beliefs and attitudes

What skills do I need?

You need to be interested in the world around you and keen to discuss thorny issues.

How is the course assessed?

The course is assessed by means of two written exam papers for component one. Each paper lasts 1 hour and is worth 25% of the total marks. Component two consists of one externally assessed paper which lasts for 2 hours in duration.

Reading

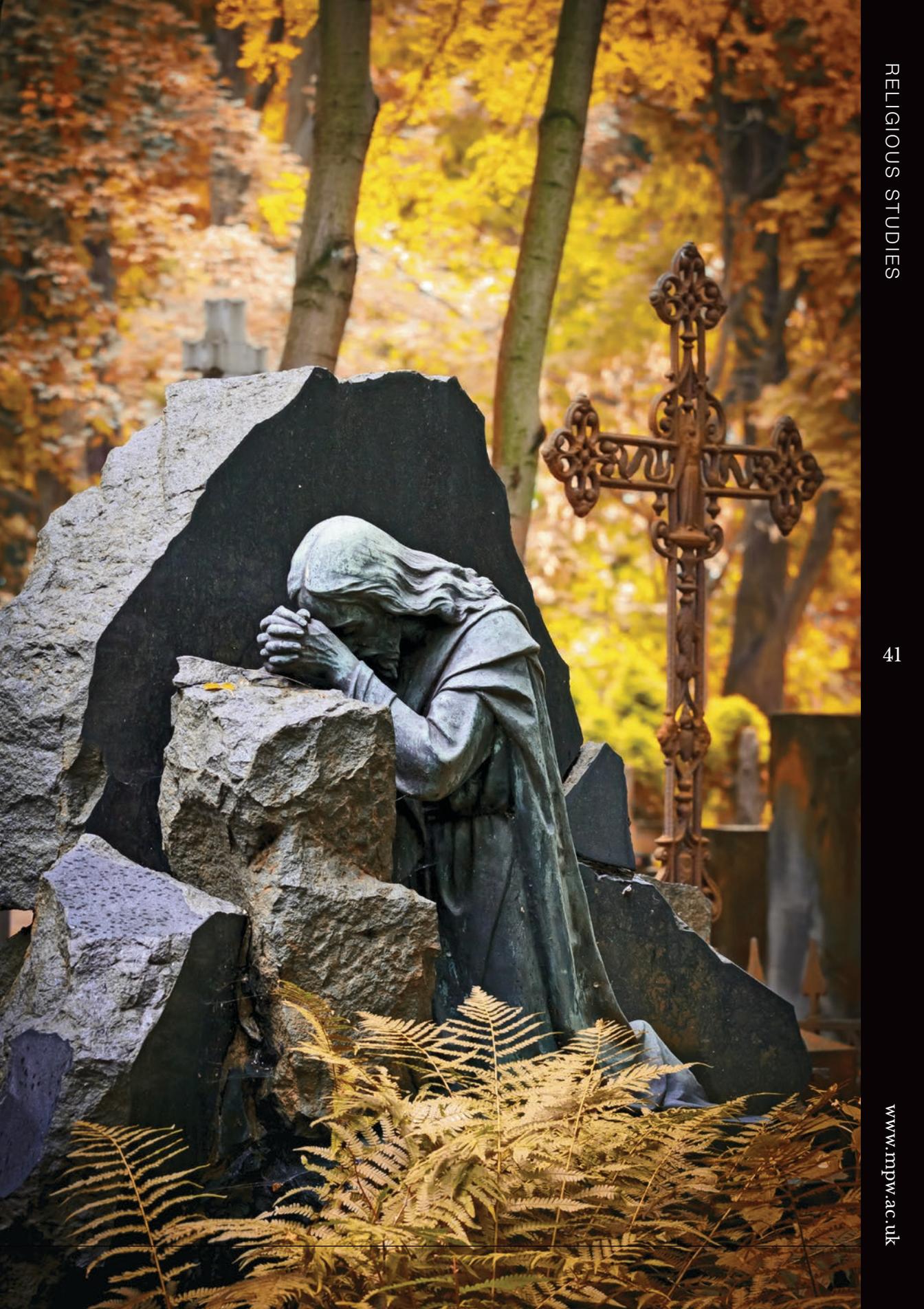
Religious Studies OCR GCSE (9-1) Student's Book

By L. Abbott with S. Clarke

Published by Hodder Education, ISBN 9781471865244

Exam Board and Specification Codes

OCR Religious Studies J625 (reformed)



SPANISH

The course

Spanish is an interesting and challenging subject that equips students with the skills to communicate confidently in Spanish in a range of everyday situations. The five main themes of the course are the following: identity and culture, local area with holiday and travel, school, future aspirations with study and work, and finally international and global dimension. Students will develop an awareness and understanding of the culture and identity of the countries and communities where Spanish is spoken. The course provides an excellent foundation for the study of Spanish at 'A' level.

What skills do I need?

You need willingness to work hard at your grammar on a regular basis. You will also have to learn and relearn the vocabulary for each topic. The aim is to acquire the sufficient tools to be able to produce spoken or written responses in different contexts.

“

He who reads much and walks much sees much and knows much.

”

—Miguel de Cervantes, novelist,
poet and playwright

How is the course assessed?

There are four papers which are worth 25% each of the total examination. The use of dictionaries is not permitted and this includes Paper 2, the oral examination, during the preparation time.

Paper 1 is listening and understanding in Spanish. Foundation tier: 35 minutes including 5 minutes' reading time. Higher tier: 45 minutes including 5 minutes' reading time. Students will respond to multiple-response and short-answer open response questions.

Paper 2 is the speaking in Spanish examination. It will be internally conducted and externally assessed. Foundation tier: 7-9 minutes plus 12 minutes' preparation time. Higher tier: 10-12 minutes plus 12 minutes' preparation time. There are three tasks: a role play, questions based on a picture stimulus and a conversation based on two themes of the course.

Paper 3 is reading and understanding in Spanish. Foundation tier: 45 minutes, higher tier: 1 hour. There will be a range of different types of text including advertisements, emails, articles and literary texts. Students are required to respond to multiple-response and short-answer questions.

Paper 4 is writing in Spanish. Foundation tier: 1 hour 10 minutes, higher tier: 1 hour 20 minutes. Students are assessed on their ability to communicate effectively through writing in Spanish for different purposes and audiences. Word counts are specified for each question and students must answer all questions. There will also be a translation into Spanish.

Reading

A Spanish dictionary is vital.

Please note that dictionaries are not allowed in any of the exams.

Exam Board and Specification Codes

Edexcel Spanish 1SP0 (reformed)





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