



Reading School

Sixth Form Information for Entry
to Year 12 in September 2023



900

**To register for the Sixth Form both internal and external students
should visit the Reading School website:**

<https://www.reading-school-admissions.co.uk/>

Headmaster

Mr AM Robson

Head of Sixth Form

Mr A Lloyd

Sixth Form Pastoral Lead

Miss A Stratford

Sixth Form Intervention Lead

Mrs H Majorossy-Young

Sixth Form Transition Lead

Mr D Whitehorn

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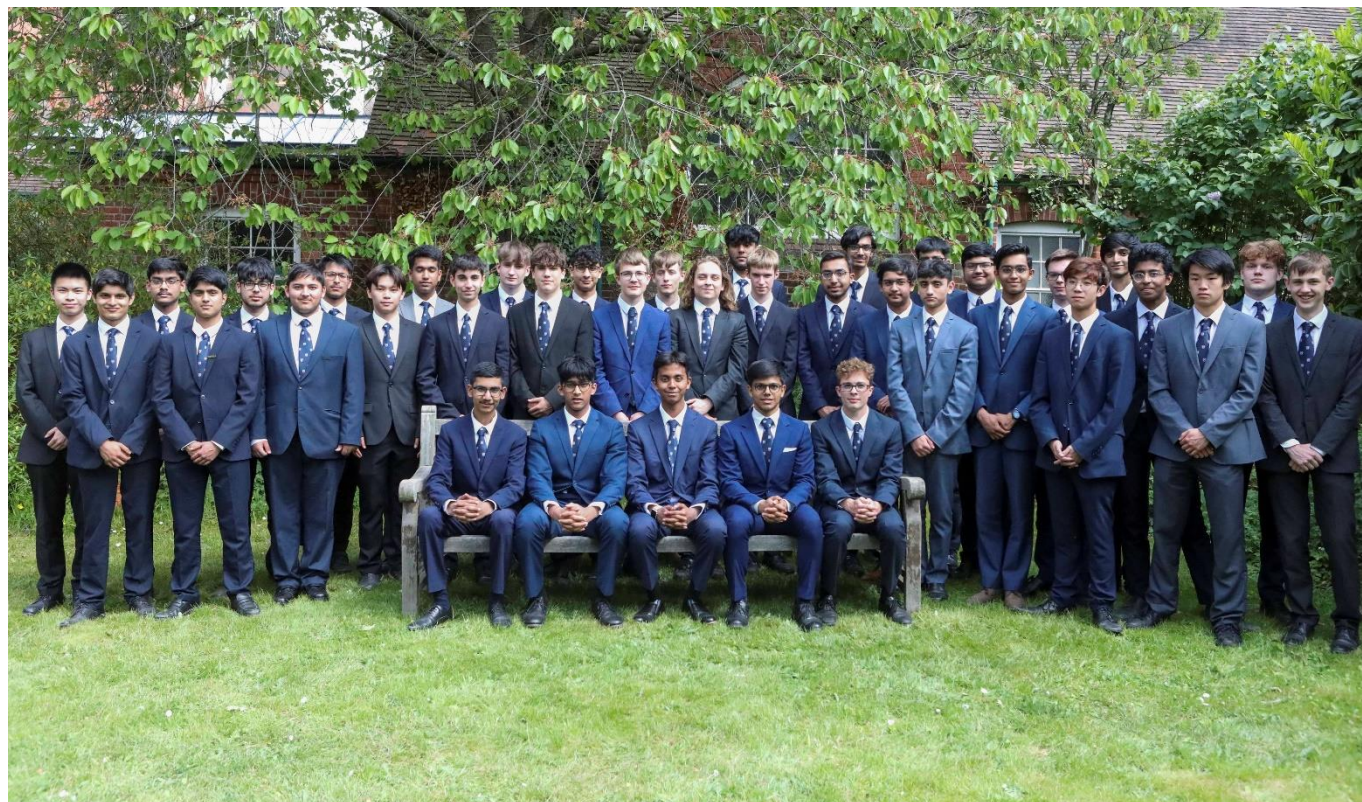
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Introduction



We are delighted that you are considering joining the Sixth Form at Reading School.

Our aim is to provide you with a vibrant learning environment that will enable you to make the most of your undoubted talents, whether they be in academic, sporting, cultural or artistic arenas. It is our hope that your time in the Sixth Form will provide you with a springboard to an outstanding university education, a fulfilling career and a life of learning.

Since its founding in 1125, Reading School has maintained a commitment to learning and a drive to stretch the understanding and aspirations of all those within our community. Academic standards and expectations are very high at Reading School and we believe that it is this culture of aspiration and ambition which enables every student to achieve their very best.

We expect teaching and learning in Reading School to go far beyond the level of the public examinations and to expose our students to questions more commonly experienced at university. This is an ambition demonstrated through our success in international academic competitions as well as outstanding numbers of students who move on to study highly competitive courses in Russell Group Universities or Oxbridge.

Our ethos encourages students to stretch the boundaries of their understanding through independent study, discussion, team work, research and inspirational lectures. At the same time, our students enjoy the support of highly qualified and exceptionally gifted teachers alongside the pastoral support and guidance provided by the Sixth Form team.

Whilst academic excellence may be what first attracts students and their families to Reading School, we would argue that our emphasis on community, integrity and leadership are at least as important. There will be ample opportunities for Sixth Form students to play an active part in the life of the School. There are any number of formal and informal leadership opportunities, from taking part in our flagship Future

Stories outreach scheme to helping to organise charitable fund-raising events or mentoring younger students as part of our House system. This is all alongside a wealth of opportunities to participate in music, drama and sport.

The student body is led by the School Captain and aided by his deputies and an extensive team of prefects who are selected from within the Year 12 group in the summer term. Our desire to encourage integrity and character is further embedded in our programme of weekly chapel services, PSHE, careers consultations, community service and work-placed learning. We challenge all Sixth Form students to actively engage with these extra-curricular activities and to act as role models for the younger students at the school.

The purpose of this information booklet is to help all applicants to the Sixth Form, whether from Year 11 at Reading School or from other schools, to make decisions about their future. However, such a brief overview cannot give a complete picture and we would encourage prospective Sixth Formers to explore the range of videos available on the School website for our Online Sixth Form Open Evening to get a better feel for Sixth Form life at Reading School.

We are eager to welcome new students to the School and have capacity for around 180 students in Year 12 next year. We always value the vibrancy and perspective that is added by external candidates when they join us in the Sixth Form.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alun Lloyd', with a stylized, cursive script.

Mr Alun Lloyd
Assistant Head
Head of Sixth Form

CURRICULUM

This information booklet illustrates the subjects on offer for study in the Sixth Form and the pathways available to students. All of the subjects we offer are two-year linear A-level courses. While our policy is to make every effort to accommodate all combinations of A-level subjects, places on some subject courses may be limited due to staffing constraints. In exceptional cases it may not be possible to run a subject if there are insufficient students applying for it.

However, the curriculum at Reading School is not simply about academic pathways, but about the education of the whole person. A huge amount of our curriculum in the lower school is built around choice and embedding an understanding of the value of leadership, community and service in our students. In the Sixth Form this takes a slightly different form, with our character education programme built into the expectations of all students who join the Sixth Form.

CHARACTER EDUCATION

There are four strands of choice to the Sixth Form Character Education programme. Sixth Formers can choose to do more than one, but they have to do at least one. These strands do not cover the wide-range of other leadership opportunities available in the Sixth Form (such as, the prefect system, house system or clubs), but serve as an addition to them.

These strands have been aligned to the four pillars of Reading School:

Leadership Strand: a series of lectures, seminars and wider learning about character, leadership and personal development led by Mr Miller. Follow this programme of learning and development to build your understanding of leadership.

Integrity Strand: take on an independent learning opportunity to better understand yourself and your own personal development. Explore the Voyage App which allows you to choose what you want to learn more about and gives you the language and tools to do this yourself. It covers reflective habits, communication, careers, interpersonal skills, health finance and lots more beside.

Excellence Strand: be a part of the School's internal mentoring programme. Drive academic excellence with a student or small group of students in the lower years and share your wisdom and knowledge to enhance their learning journey.

Community Strand: look beyond the School's walls and support the School's Future Stories programme, helping local primary schools in our community as an academic and personal mentor to young students. Future Stories will always be the primary opportunity in this strand, but other initiatives can be added to increase our community outreach in the future.

All Year 12 students sign up to one or more of these options early in Year 12 and it is an expectation that all students commit to their chosen option for its full duration. It is not part of the application process to select this element of their Sixth Form education, as more information is provided to students in September 2023.

ACADEMIC PATHWAYS

The linear A-levels are very different from the modular AS system. It is imperative with linear A-levels that students start courses of study that they are committed to completing, and, as a consequence we encourage every student to think very carefully about their options and find out as much as possible about the subjects you might want to study.

The priority for every student in considering which pathway they adopt is to reflect on which route is most likely to achieve top grades. For example, attaining 3 A*s is likely to yield better university offers than 4 A grades.

We offer three academic pathways:

Three A-levels

Many students have a clear sense of what their intended pathway into Higher Education is and can clearly identify three A-levels that suit their intended future studies. We believe that students from Reading School should expect to offer more than three A-levels to prospective employers or universities and therefore expect all students to undertake learning above and beyond the curriculum to bolster their applications. For some, this may mean studying an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). For all this will mean utilising the resources the School provides to undertake Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) which supplement their learning and to undertake supra-curricular reading. In 2020, 52% of students at Reading School completed three A-levels.

Four A-levels

For some students four A-levels is a more appropriate option than three or five, because a fourth A-level with a predicted top grade will be a distinguishing feature on their university application. Students who wish to apply for early entry courses at university (e.g. Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Dentistry or Oxbridge applications) might consider four A-levels, although achieving three A-Levels with grades A* is better than achieving four A grades, so students should weigh up this choice carefully. In 2020, 46% of students at Reading School completed four A-levels. To complete four A-levels at Reading School, students will need to achieve at least 60 points from their best 8 GCSEs.

Five A-levels

Students with the very highest raw marks in Additional Mathematics or in GCSE Further Maths may study Maths and Further Maths in one option block, allowing them to study three further A-levels. This is only a sensible option if each of the five A-levels studied is on track for an A* grade. There is very limited value studying five A-levels, if at least three of them are not awarded top grades. Over the last five years on average just 2% of students have completed five A-levels.

Individual students will be advised on which academic pathway to follow based on their performance in their GCSEs, if they have taken on too many or too few A-levels. Over the last few years, each of the students who have completed five A-levels have achieved 72 points from their best 8 GCSEs.

DECISION MAKING

When making decisions about Sixth Form studies we encourage students to consider their own strengths, and interests, the combination of subjects they pursue, requirements for Higher Education courses and the breadth of skills they demonstrate.

What do you enjoy?

If you enjoy a subject now, then that is usually a good guide as to whether you will enjoy it at A-level, even though GCSE and A-level may be rather different. It is vital that you choose subjects you will enjoy. A word of warning: ignore the teacher factor – is it the subject you enjoy, or is it just that you get on well with your current teacher? Also, make sure it's something you enjoy, not something your parents think you should do.

What are your strengths?

The standards at A-level are a significant jump up from GCSE, and so it is important to identify the subjects you are good at. What are your current strengths? Are you better at more practical subjects, or those that involve more theory? Are you good at subjects that are more essay based? Think about your strengths, and look carefully at the subject details.

Do I need particular subjects?

Some students already have clear career goals, although at this age many do not. Many careers and university courses do not need particular subject choices at this stage, but some do. For example, it is not a requirement to have studied Economics at A-level in order to study it at university, but you will need Maths for most Engineering courses and Physics is nearly always required too. If you are in doubt about whether you need to choose a particular subject, do ask for advice, or visit the UCAS website, which provides detailed information about subject requirements for particularly university courses. Read the “Looking Beyond A-levels” section of this booklet for more information on this.

Do I need a range of subjects?

For students studying more than three A-levels it is often beneficial to study a course that shows breadth. This will never be a pre-requisite for a university course, but most university courses are based on offers for grades across three subjects, and a fourth can often therefore be chosen for personal interest and maintaining a skill which could be useful to a future employer (eg. a language or performing art). This is only the case for students who are already achieving top grades in the courses that are most relevant for their degree.

What are facilitating subjects?

The Russell Group guide (www.informedchoices.ac.uk) to making decisions about post-16 education suggests that some subjects are sometimes referred to as ‘facilitating’ subjects. It is suggested that by choosing ‘facilitating’ subjects at advanced level, you will have a much wider range of options available to you at university. Subjects that can be viewed as ‘facilitating’ subjects are:

- Mathematics and Further Mathematics
- English Literature
- Physics
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Geography
- History
- Classical or Modern Languages

Enrichment Subject

Study of the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) provides an opportunity for an in-depth investigation on a topic of their choice. This is particularly useful for students who have a clear idea of a university course and wish to demonstrate advanced detailed knowledge and research skills.

Essay Writing

Many competitive courses will see a qualification in a subject such as English Literature or History A-level as a distinct advantage. Essay writing subjects are held in high regard for the skills they nurture and the academic rigour they demonstrate.

The next step

It is an often-overlooked consideration that some university courses have particular subject requirements and students should consider what subjects they may need in order to move forward to their next goal.

MINIMUM SUBJECT ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Art

We recommend that if students wish to progress onto competitive Art-related university/training courses post-18, students need grade 7 in either the GCSE Fine Art or GCSE Art, Craft, and Design endorsements. If students do not meet these requirements, entry is still possible with a portfolio of visual work and/or discussion with the Head of Art required to assess suitability. The course requires significant independent work in addition to what is covered during lessons, so the number of subjects to be studied and subject combinations should be chosen with care.

Biology

GCSE grade 7 in Biology or grade 7 in both Science and Additional Science.

Chemistry

GCSE grade 7 in Chemistry or grade 7 in both Science and Additional Science. GCSE grade 7 in Maths is also required. If Chemistry is to be studied as one of four subjects, a minimum of 60 points from best 8 GCSEs and a grade 8 in Chemistry and Maths are required.

Classical Civilisation

GCSE grade 6 in English Language and grade 7 in at least one of English Literature, History or Ancient History.

Computer Science

GCSE grade 7 in Mathematics. Computer Science GCSE is not a requirement, but if it has been studied, then a grade 6 is required.

Economics

GCSE grade 7 in Mathematics. Economics GCSE is not a requirement.

English Literature

GCSE grade 7 in both English Language and English Literature.

English Language and Literature

GCSE grade 7 in both English Language and English Literature.

EPQ

GCSE grade 6 in English Language and grade 7 in at least one of English Literature, History or Ancient History.

French

GCSE grade 7 in French.

Geography

GCSE grade 6 in English Language. Geography GCSE is not a requirement, but if it has been studied then a grade 6 is required.

German

GCSE grade 7 in German.

History

GCSE grade 7 in English Language. History GCSE is not a requirement, but if it has been studied then a minimum of a grade 7 is required.

History of Art

GCSE grade 7 in English Literature or History.

Latin

GCSE grade 7 in Latin.

Mathematics

GCSE grade 7 in Mathematics.

Further Mathematics

Further Maths is a popular option at Reading School with around half of A-level Maths students opting to study this course. Students may choose to study Maths and Further Maths in either one or two option blocks. A GCSE grade 9 is required for either option. For students that have studied a further qualification, such as FSMQ (Additional Maths – OCR 6993/01) or Level 2 Further Mathematics (AQA 8365), a grade A or equivalent is highly desirable for studying Maths and Further Maths in one block, although it is not required. Beyond GCSE requirements, students will also need to ensure suitable benchmarks are met on common assessments in order to continue with the subject. Students who wish to be considered for this course should record Further Maths as one of their preferences on the admissions form. No student will be obliged to study Further Maths.

Music

GCSE grade 7 in Music and success at Grade VI level on your primary instrument (the study of a secondary instrument to at least Grade IV level is highly recommended). For candidates who have not studied GCSE, Music Grade VII on an instrument and Grade VI theory is acceptable. A-level Music also requires that students make prominent and consistent contributions to the school's extra-curricular music activities.

Philosophy

GCSE grade 7 in English Language.

Photography

We recommend that if students wish to progress onto competitive Art-related university/training courses post-18, students need grade 7 in either the GCSE Fine Art, GCSE Art, Craft, and Design, or Photography endorsements. If students do not meet these requirements, entry is still possible with a portfolio of visual work and/or discussion with the Head of Art required to assess suitability.

The course requires significant independent work in addition to what is covered during lessons, so the number of subjects to be studied and subject combinations should be chosen with care.

Physical Education

For any students who have studied PE at GCSE, a minimum of a grade 8 is required and be able to evidence either regional representation in a sport or a recognised governing body coaching qualification.

If a student has not done GCSE PE, they must have at least a grade 7 in Biology and be able to evidence either regional representation in a sport or a recognised governing body coaching qualification.

Physics

GCSE grade 7 in Physics or 7 in both Science and Additional Science. GCSE grade 7 in Maths is also required.

If Physics is to be studied as one of four subjects a minimum of 60 points from best 8 GCSEs and a grade 8 in Physics and Maths are required.

Spanish

GCSE grade 7 in Spanish.

Theatre Studies

GCSE grade 7 in either GCSE English Language or English Literature. Drama GCSE is not a requirement, but if it has been studied then a grade 7 is required. A genuine interest in theatre is essential.

SUBJECT OVERSUBSCRIPTION

At the point of offers being made in March 2023, if a subject is oversubscribed and all sets are at full capacity, students with the lowest predicted grades may be asked to choose an alternative subject or take up their reserve choice. After offers have been made any requests to change subject into a department that is oversubscribed will be put on hold until GCSE results are published. At this point a combination of the best 8 GCSE point scores and the mark achieved in the relevant subject will be used to determine ranking.

If GCSE examinations are cancelled or reduced in the summer in favour of Centre Assessed Grades or similar mechanisms, subject oversubscription and suitability may be assessed through a test in September. At the moment there are no plans for this in 2023. In the event that such an assessment become necessary, all applicants will be informed and given reading materials and bridging work to help them prepare for such assessments.

ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

Applications for day and boarding places must be made directly to Reading School for both internal and external applicants. The window opens on 1st December 2022 with a closing date of 27th January 2023. The online application form can be accessed on the school website from 1st December 2022.

External students who receive a conditional offer will be invited to a consultation meeting in February/March 2023 to discuss their subject options, career pathways and extra-curricular interests. The purpose of these appointments is to make transition into the Sixth Form as easy as possible, as well as to finalise A-level subject choices.

All successful internal applicants will be expected to register through an online process in August 2023 once they have received their GCSE results to confirm subject choices and to sign a Sixth Form Agreement. The date for this will be communicated closer to the time.

External applicants in receipt of a conditional offer are expected to send a scanned/photo copy of their results to the admissions office by email no later than 11am on GCSE results day. They are then expected to register through an online process to confirm subject choices and to sign a Sixth Form Agreement. Further details will be sent out in the conditional offer.

All applicants in receipt of a conditional offer will be kept on a waiting list, pending publication of their GCSE results, at which point we will happily accommodate students who have met the entry requirements and for whom there is room.

[Sixth Form Admissions Policy for Year 12 entry in September 2023](#)

OPTIONS CHANGES

Students frequently change their mind about their preferred choice of subjects. All offers are conditional and are linked to subject choices. There is no guarantee that requests to change options can be accommodated and requests that are received after the final A-level subject selections are made can only be finally processed after GCSE results day.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS INTO THE SIXTH FORM

For entry into the Sixth Form students must have achieved the equivalent of a total of at least 56 points from 8 GCSE subjects and at least a grade 5 at GCSE in Mathematics and English Language or a DfE recognised equivalency. Individual subject requirements must also be attained as published in this Sixth Form Information Booklet. If a student is pupil premium/service premium or Looked After Child/Previously Looked After Child then the equivalent of a total of at least 54 points from 8 GCSE subjects and at least a grade 5 at GCSE in Mathematics and English Language or a recognised equivalency is required.

For students wishing to study four A-levels, at least 60 points from their best 8 grades are required.

For students studying overseas, we ask you to contact NARIC direct at: <https://www.naric.org.uk/naric/>. NARIC will convert grades for alternative qualifications into a GCSE equivalent. All NARIC statements will need to be emailed to the admissions department at Reading School. If NARIC are unable to get GCSE equivalency, we will be unable to proceed with the application. Overseas students must also have at least a grade 5 at GCSE in Mathematics and English Language or a DfE recognised equivalency.

INCLUSION

To any student with special educational needs or a disability, who is applying for a place at the School, evidence should be included of the need or disability so the SENDCO can assess the applicant appropriately and so they can put in place plans for providing support should the student join the School.

SPECIFICATIONS

The following guidance notes give details regarding the specifications and examination boards offered in each subject in our Sixth Form. It is a worthwhile exercise to check these specifications and ensure that the content of the courses you subscribe to match your expectations and interest. If there are not enough students to make a subject viable, very occasionally it has been impossible to run a course. We continue to strive for a rich and broad curriculum and are pleased to have such a varied range of subjects including some which benefit greatly from a small student to teacher ratio. Please note that French, German and Spanish all appear under the Modern Foreign Languages sub-heading.

Fine Art

(A651QS WJEC Eduqas A-level Art and Design: Fine Art)

The focus of Art at A-level is to extend and develop skills learnt at GCSE, whilst aiming to encourage students to take more creative risks and really grow as artists. The course will provide you with opportunities to explore ideas in a wide range of media and forms. There are many elements you will master as the course progresses, such as being confident in taking creative risks, learning from and resolving mistakes, creating personal responses to project starting points, and developing and refining your practical skills. Additionally, working independently, and being able to contextualise your own practice through studying and understanding the work of other practitioners is of vital importance.

To be successful this course will require you to be independent and commit to extended learning outside of the classroom; it is hard work from the start, however, the more you put in, the more you will enjoy yourself, and the more rewarding the course will be.

Component 1: Personal Investigation

- September Year 12 – February Year 13
- Portfolio of practical work showing a range of media and approaches to making
- Coherent and logically structured extended written response of a minimum of 1000 words.
- 60% of A-level

Component 2: Externally Set Assignment

- February Year 13 – May Year 13
- Response to an externally set assignment
- Preparatory period + 15 hours supervised time
- 40% of A-level

Biology

(OCR H420)

A-level Biology will give you an exciting insight into the contemporary world of biology. It covers the key concepts in biology and practical skills are integrated throughout the course. This combination of academic challenge and practical focus makes the prospect of studying A-level Biology highly appealing. It is both an exciting and important time to be a biologist. Biologists are working to solve the biggest challenges currently faced by people and the planet – fighting global pandemics, disease, protecting the

environment and feeding our growing population. Some of the most innovative and exciting work in science occurs at the boundaries where biological knowledge is combined with techniques from Chemistry, Physics, Engineering, Maths and Computer Science, such as:

- Biochemistry - investigating the chemical processes of life, combining Biology with Chemistry to study organisms at the molecular and cellular level.
- Biomaths and Computational Biology - using mathematical techniques to solve biological problems. Biotechnology - combining Biology with Chemistry and Engineering to create new biology-based technologies.
- Biophysics - using the laws of physics to better understand movement and structure and answer biological questions.
- Bioengineering - combining biological knowledge with Engineering and design to produce new and innovative products.
- Agri-science, regenerative medicine and synthetic biology - three of the UKs 'eight great technologies' with Biology at their core.

Biology is the study of life. It is a subject of continual advance and change. Students are encouraged to keep up to date with these many new issues and to gain an appreciation of the dynamic nature of science. Biology not only encompasses aspects of the physical sciences and mathematics related to the living world, but also provides an opportunity to consider the ethical issues arising from the rapid advances in the life sciences.

Biology teachers place great importance on learning through practical work and Reading School biologists will experience a wide variety of innovative techniques such as genetic engineering, gel electrophoresis and microscale investigations. Students are encouraged to consider extension work. All Year 12 biologists are entered for the Biology Intermediate Olympiad and the British Biology Olympiad Competition in Year 13 run by the Royal Society of Biology. We have had some students selected for the UK team and compete in the International Biology Olympiad competition.

The specification followed at A-level is OCR Biology A (H420)

- Module 1 – Development of practical skills
- Module 2 – Foundations in biology
- Module 3 – Exchange and transport
- Module 4 – Biodiversity, evolution and disease
- Module 5 – Communications, homeostasis and energy
- Module 6 – Genetics, evolution and ecosystems

Students will sit three examination papers in biological processes (37%), biological diversity (37%) and unified biology (26%). The practical endorsement is reported separately.

Studying Biology will provide you with valuable knowledge, skills and experience. You will gain skills that you can use no matter which career path you choose, both in and out of science will be highly valued by employers and will look great on your CV. These skills can open the door to working in business and enterprise, marketing, law, hospitality, politics and policy, journalism, art, economics and much more.

Many Reading School students go on to study biology-related courses at undergraduate level including Medicine, Biochemistry, Biological Science, Biomechanical engineering, Neuroscience, Biomedical Science, Zoology and Veterinary Science. In the last two years we have had over 35 successful applicants to Medicine. Many medical schools request Biology as an essential component of their entry requirements (for more details see www.medschools.ac.uk). However, it should be noted that many A-level Biology students study many other degrees and combine it with non-scientific subjects there is also no requirement to study other sciences or Mathematics with it.

Chemistry

(OCR H432)

As well as being a fascinating subject in its own right, Chemistry is the cornerstone of Medicine, Veterinary Studies, Textile and Polymer Science, Molecular Biology, Food Science, Geology and a host of other subjects. The A-level course contains a good balance of practical work supporting the Practical Endorsement supported by a carefully structured theoretical framework. The course is designed to cover the needs of many students. In addition to the obvious chemical careers, potential physicists or engineers will find much that is stimulating and challenging. There are several topics of direct relevance to the would-be medics, indeed a top A-level grade in Chemistry is essential for acceptance into a Medical School. In fact, anyone who finds Chemistry interesting, no matter what their future plans, should at least investigate the subject and examine the text books and course material.

It is the department's policy to enrich its students' experience and expose them to some of the applications of Chemistry in industry. Students are encouraged to attend lectures and industrial visits or work experience can be facilitated if the opportunities arise. We are also keen for students to participate in competitions, such as the Cambridge Chemistry Challenge or the highly challenging RSC Olympiad. Boys have achieved very highly in these competitions in the past and will always be encouraged to participate in activities that further their understanding of the subject.

The syllabus followed is OCR Chemistry A and is divided into six modules over two years. These include aspects of physical, inorganic and organic Chemistry.

- Module 1 – Development of practical skills in chemistry
- Module 2 – Foundations in chemistry
- Module 3 – Periodic table and energy
- Module 4 – Core organic chemistry
- Module 5 – Physical chemistry and transition elements
- Module 6 – Organic chemistry and analysis

Students sit three examination papers at the end of Year 13 on the periodic table, elements and physical chemistry (37%), synthesis and analytical techniques (37%) and unified chemistry (26%).

Classical Civilisation

(OCR H443)

No prior knowledge of the Classical World is required in order to study this course.

The study of Classical Civilisation equally allows students to explore a new subject area or to extend their interest within this field. It is a very accessible course, as students explore the history and cultures of the Romans and Greeks, using English translations of the original source material. Students have succeeded in this subject regardless of previous experience and a good proportion continue with the subject beyond A-level.

The OCR course provides the opportunity to study:

- Classical thought (Democracy of the Athenians)
- Classical visual and material culture (Imperial Image – focusing on the first Roman emperor Augustus)

- Classical literature (including Virgil's Aeneid and Homer's Odyssey, both epic tales of love, battles and blood)

On this course you will gain an in depth understanding of a wide range of themes and topics in the study of the classical world. You'll read and analyse a range of classical texts and gain an appreciation of a number of archaeological objects, ancient images and monuments.

You will be introduced to themes, methods and theories in the study of the literature and history of the ancient world as well as exploring works of art from ancient Greece and Rome, looking not only at the objects themselves, but also on the contexts within which they were produced and used. Myths and mythology are studied throughout the course, exploring the uses of mythological stories, characters and motifs since antiquity right up to the present day.

This course balances the academic study of Classics and Ancient History today with excellent preparation for the 21st-century workplace. You will leave knowing how to identify, select, organise and interpret information, write analytically and develop independent thinking.

Therefore, it complements the Arts subjects, particularly History and English Literature; whilst providing excellent breadth as a subject in its own right.

Computer Science

(AQA 7517)

Computer Science is a fascinating and constantly evolving, futuristic subject that is incorporated into a multitude of industries. Extending a student's ability to design complex computational algorithms by abstracting from real life situations is a key learning objective on this course.

The Computer Science course provides the opportunity to meld both technical and creative skills, whilst cultivating a depth of knowledge of the standards and historical reasons as to how society arrived at the current level of computational ability. The syllabus provides the opportunity to develop a deep appreciation of the fundamentals of programming and data structures, moving on to understand the importance of adopting a systematic approach to problem solving. A review of the structure of computer systems, systems architecture and the features of communication and networking are the precursors to appreciating the consequences of the uses of computing. As well as considering a systematic approach to problem solving, big data and aspects of functional programming, students embark on a voyage of discovery, where they complete a programming coursework project to provide a computerised system to implement a solution to a real-world challenge.

The AQA Computer Science course is assessed via:

- Paper 1 - On screen programming exam, with the questions based on a preliminary program studied prior to the exam. (40% of the A-level)
- Paper 2 – Written theory topics. (40% of the A-level)
- NEA – Investigation of a practical problem, leading to the development of a solution. Both knowledge and skills acquired during the course will be required. (20% of the A-level)

Success on this course will require the student to be independent and committed to extending their learning outside of the classroom. It is essential that the student has a home computer in order to fully engage with the material and concepts covered.

Prior programming or algorithmic experience is desirable, but not a prerequisite, as a practical approach is taken from the onset of the course. The desire to code is essential for a successful student outcome.

Economics

(OCR H46o)

Economics is a lively and evolving social science that studies the choices individuals, businesses, governments and entire societies make. Economics helps you to look more deeply into the world around you, allowing you to develop a broader appreciation of how and why it functions as it does. It can also give you new perspectives on some of the most pressing and challenging problems facing the world today; the causes and consequences of the 2008 financial crash; the operation of the financial markets; growing income inequality; unemployment and underemployment; the economic implications of Brexit; action to reduce carbon emissions; interest rates; the issues surrounding government borrowing and debt; migration and the impact of an ageing population – to name but a few.

The two main components of the subject are:

- Microeconomics, which involves a study of the behaviour of consumers and businesses, analysing how markets work and may often fail. Closer examination of housing, energy, labour, financial, health and education markets help students explore the real-world application of microeconomic theories and concepts. We also look at the theory behind the operations of firms and business enterprises, and the rationale for government intervention.
- Macroeconomics, which is the study of the whole economy – topics such as inflation, unemployment, economic growth, the balance of payments, government policy and international trade are all key issues. Is the government meeting its major economic objectives? Could UK government policy be more effective?

The A-level Economics course is a two-year 'linear' course and is structured to develop both microeconomic and macroeconomic concepts and theories in a variety of contemporary contexts. The course is externally assessed by three examinations at the end of Year 13, and quantitative skills are embedded within the assessment. Students studying Economics combine it with subjects across the curriculum and it complements Mathematics, Sciences, Humanities and Languages.

Many Reading School students go on to study Economics related courses at undergraduate level; in the last two years over 50 students have entered top UK universities (including Oxford and Cambridge) to study Economics, Economics and Management, PPE, and Economics and Finance. Students who are considering taking Economics beyond A-level are strongly encouraged to consider studying A-level Mathematics, in addition to A-level Economics.

English Literature

(OCR H472)

English Literature is a 'gold-standard' A-level, regarded as a 'facilitating subject' by universities. This means that it is a discipline which opens up a wide range of courses to you for study at undergraduate level. Regardless of which academic path you choose to follow, A-level English Literature will be seen as a worthwhile stepping-stone. In recent years we have helped future medics, engineers and accountants (as well as journalists, publishers and teachers) challenge themselves to achieve top grade results in our subject at the same time as they expanded their understanding of their other academic specialisms.

Whether you are a committed literature lover, a budding writer, or even a science purist, English Literature is a course which will engage your intellect and help you to improve how you express

yourself. Carrying on studying English Literature to A-level makes you a much better and more interesting university and employment candidate. It will sharpen your skills of analysis, make you a more skilled constructor of critical arguments, and ensure you can sprinkle your influential ideas with magic fairy dust.

If you enjoyed your study of Gothic fiction, detective texts, Shakespeare, poetry and novels during Years 7 to 11, then English Literature A-level is for you. In the Sixth Form, though, there's much more group discussion, sharing of personal responses, and debating alternative interpretations in class; our A-level students really value the collaborative, conversational focus of the lessons.

A-level English Literature is a two-year linear qualification. It comprises three components, two of which will be examined at the end of Year 13: two 150 minute examinations (worth 40% of the overall qualification each) and a 3,000 word non-exam assessment folder (worth 20% of the overall qualification). Texts which are being studied by the current cohorts include 'Hamlet', 'The Great Gatsby' and 'Paradise Lost'.

English Language And Literature

(OCR H474)

What makes this A-level different from the more traditional English Literature course we also offer? Students get a chance to explore non-fiction texts, spoken texts, experiment with their own creative writing, and focus on linguistics.

English Language And Literature is a unique and distinctive qualification which has been developed in partnership with the English & Media Centre (EMC).

English Language And Literature students will enjoy cultivating their own critical responses and engaging with the richness of language and literature, and the flexible content of this qualification supports independence, wide reading and creativity. Students will study a diverse and stimulating range of fiction, non-fiction and spoken texts. The course also enables students to develop their creativity and expertise by producing their own original writing both in the exam and the non-exam assessment.

There are three examined components and one non-exam assessment component. The first component focuses on non-fiction spoken and written texts from an OCR/EMC anthology (examined in a one-hour paper worth 16% of the overall award). The second component explores poetry and drama (examined in a two-hour exam worth 32% of the final grade). The third involves the study of narrative fiction, from a choice of six prose texts (another two-hour exam worth 32%). In this exam, students also produce their own piece of creative writing and a commentary. The non-exam assessment (worth 20%) comprises two tasks: an analytical comparative essay and a non-fiction original writing piece.

Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

(AQA 7993)

If there's an area of study you really love – whether it's Engineering, Medicine, Economics or anything else – an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) gives you the chance to develop your skills and knowledge by engaging in undergraduate style research.

You'll be required to complete a project based on a research topic of your choice. This can be related to your A-levels or a subject outside of your current areas of study (e.g. Law, Medicine, Psychology,

Philosophy, Sociology – the possibilities are limitless). Your project can be in the form of a 5,000 word essay or report; an artefact, musical composition or dramatic project, with a 2,000 word research report.

You'll have a research skills lesson every week and regular meetings with your appointed supervisor; other than that it is up to you to manage your time. It is anticipated that you will complete your project by the end of Year 12 and it will be submitted in November of Year 13. Successful students on the EPQ are self-motivated, well-organised, and up for an academic challenge.

The EPQ is worth a maximum of 70 UCAS points, which is slightly more than an AS-level (60 points). At some universities, applicants will be made an alternative offer which will be one grade lower than standard, provided they achieve an A grade or above in their EPQ. For all universities, the EPQ offers an opportunity to become an expert in a particular area, an invaluable source of discussion in both your UCAS personal statement and potential university interviews.

Geography

(AQA 7037)

Geography is a popular A-level choice nationally, as well as in Reading School. Teaching is characterised by a lively approach, aimed at developing the geographer's natural curiosity and concern about major contemporary issues. It is Geography's ability to integrate the study of Earth's places, peoples, environments and societies that makes it so relevant to the understanding of the increasingly interconnected world in which we all live and work.

The Geography department at Reading School is staffed with experienced, enthusiastic teachers who are passionate about the world and the role people can play within it. The AQA A-level course comprises of a Physical Geography paper (40%), a Human Geography paper (40%) and the NEA, Non-Examined Assessment (20%). The Human and Physical Geography sections are taught simultaneously by different teachers across the two years. The topics covered in each section are as follows: Physical Geography – coastal systems and landscapes, hazards and carbon and water cycles. Human Geography – changing places, global systems and governance and resources security. At the beginning of Year 13, we also run a five-day curriculum trip to the coast to collect data for the NEA.

History

(AQA 7042)

History is an exciting, interesting and constantly stimulating subject. History is a highly regarded subject for courses at degree level, including Medicine, as well as for a wide variety of professions. It is the most popular degree amongst MPs, popular with lawyers and, at A-level, it is a fantastic complement to scientific courses as it trains students to take in information from a range of sources. Within our experienced and innovative department there is also a determination to make the course as relevant and enjoyable as possible.

Students will study two taught modules for A-level History. Firstly, they will study the Cold War, 1945-1991. Many students will have touched upon the relevant global themes of the 20th century in their GCSEs and we build upon this by investigating the Cold War in fascinating depth. The students have to fully immerse themselves in the political drama, the apocalyptic tension and ideological suspicion as this depth study gets to the heart of one of the most interesting human dramas the world has seen, one which continues to affect us today. Secondly, they will study the Tudors, 1485 – 1603. England's most

famous family have continued to ignite imaginations across the world for a reason: they carried out one of history's most exciting soap operas and they continue to matter to this day. Henry VII's successful invasion, Henry VIII's break with Rome and subsequent creation of the Church of England, Mary's burning of heretics and Elizabeth's defeat of the Armada are just the headlines, behind which lie dark plots, dastardly rebellions and delicious intrigues. Both these modules are taught by teachers who love the content and know the exam board's demands, and are studied by students who become deeply passionate about the subject.

As part of the course, students will also complete an independent investigation into an historical issue. The three they can choose from are: the Crusades, the American Civil War or the French Revolution. This extended piece of writing will involve bringing together a vast array of evidence that students have located themselves and reaching substantiated conclusions.

History of Art

Edexcel Level 3 Advanced GCE in History of Art (9HT0)

History of Art aims to arrive at a historical understanding of the origins, meaning and purpose of art and artefacts from a wide range of world cultures, asking about the circumstances of their making, their makers, the media used, the functions of the images and objects, their critical reception and – not least – their subsequent history.

The study of art in its historical and contemporary forms can help provide you with crucial knowledge of world civilisations, and a way to interpret and understand broader human experience. It can give you visual and analytical skills that can be applied in many aspects of life, and the tools to understand how images and objects work to shape our social and political identities.

You will learn how to analyse and interpret architecture, painting, and sculpture within its historical and artistic context, with first-hand research and investigation encouraged. The subject links particularly well with Art, History, Classical Civilisation, and English Literature.

Visits

Wherever possible, the opportunity should be taken to regularly view artworks first-hand, so a willingness to visit galleries, studios, museums, or other relevant collections in your own time is vital. Reading is ideally located between London and Oxford, with a rich cultural scene of its own.

Post-18 Options

Students who go on to study History of Art at university typically go into careers working in museums, art galleries, auction houses, or private collections. However, studying History of Art is a stepping stone to a wide range of degree-level subjects, and can lead to careers in a wide range of professional settings.

Subject Content and Examination

The subject content is divided into three areas:

- A: Visual analysis
- B: Themes
- C: Periods.

The Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced GCE in History of Art (9HT0) consists of two externally-examined papers. Candidates must complete all assessment in May/June in any single year.

Paper 1: Visual Analysis and Themes

Written examination: 3 hours 50% of the qualification

Content overview:

- Visual analysis
- Themes

Assessment overview:

Section A: Visual analysis

For each of the following types of art and architecture, students answer a single compulsory question that requires them to comment on an unseen photograph of:

- a painting;
- a sculpture; and
- a building.

Section B: Themes

- B2 Identities in art and architecture
- B3 War in art and architecture.

For each theme, students answer a single compulsory question in two parts.

Paper 2: Periods

Written examination: 3 hours 50% of the qualification

Content overview:

- Periods

Assessment overview:

Two Periods:

- C1 Invention and illusion: the Renaissance in Italy (1420–1520)
- C5 Pop life: British and American contemporary art and architecture (1960–2015).

For each Period, students answer a single compulsory question in four parts.

Latin

(OCR H443)

The study of Latin helps to develop logical thinking, as well as enhancing analytical and evaluative abilities. As such, many students that opt for Latin do so to complement the Maths/Further Maths and Physics subjects that require many of the same skills.

At the same time the study of literature augments other subjects, most particularly English Literature and History; the study of this language obviously provides the basis for other Romantic Languages. During the course students will have the privilege to study some of the greatest Classical works, as well as exploring the nuances of translating them. Latin is an extremely well-regarded A-level subject, however the most important reason for taking Latin is that the students really enjoy the course. On account of its

versatility the study of Latin can lead directly to a whole plethora of careers, including the civil service, law, computer programming, journalism or accountancy; and indirectly to becoming a mathematician, scientist, medic or engineer.

The OCR course roughly equates to 50% language and 50% literature. Students will study both poetry and prose.

Mathematics and Further Mathematics

A-level Mathematics (H240)

A-level Further Mathematics (H245)

Examination Board – OCR

Mathematics is an extremely popular choice providing an intellectually stimulating and analytically rigorous course that develops a systematic, yet intuitive, method of tackling problems that is highly regarded by both Higher Education and employers.

Often described as 'The Queen of the Sciences', Mathematics provides the backbone to numerous disciplines. The majority of students who opt for Mathematics choose it as a 'service' subject to enable them to pursue a course in a science-related subject or the social sciences such as Economics, Actuarial Science and Accountancy. However, a significant number do go on to read Mathematics at university.

The designation of the Further Maths options will be based on a candidate's raw score at GCSE. Some sets will be sitting Maths and Further Maths in one block and others in two. Any student who is taking Mathematics only will be assigned to an appropriate set based on their GCSE raw score.

The courses followed in the Sixth Form lead to the OCR qualifications. They are all examined by linear examinations at the end of the two years.

There are additional opportunities offered to Sixth Form mathematicians. The Senior Maths Challenge gives pupils the chance to progress to the Mathematical Olympiads and demonstrate their prowess. A team challenge and various other master classes may also be on offer during the two-year course. Pupils wishing to study Mathematics at Cambridge and other prestigious universities, will be required to sit STEP, MAT or other such admissions tests either at the end or during the Upper Sixth. Help and guidance is available within the department for these tests.

A-level Mathematics only:

To embark on an A-level Mathematics course it is essential to have a complete grasp of GCSE work, in particular an ability to manipulate algebra. Experience shows that pupils who achieve less than a Grade 7 at GCSE struggle to succeed at A-level. For this reason, a Grade 7 at GCSE is a requirement.

A-level Further Maths (in addition to A-level Mathematics):

A-level Mathematics and Further Maths can be studied in a single block, or as a double block option. Very able mathematicians have the opportunity to pursue this course in a single option block. Most likely these pupils are in the top set in Year 11 (if they currently attend Reading School) and they must achieve a grade 9 for GCSE. Current Reading School pupils should also be recommended by their Year 11 teacher for this course. Those joining Reading School for their A-level studies will need to have gained a grade 9 at GCSE in order to be considered to study Further Maths in a single option block. For those that

have studied an additional mathematics qualification, earning a top grade such as grade A in Additional Maths (FSMQ – 6993/01) or grade 9 in Level 2 Further Mathematics (AQA 8365), is highly desirable.

Further Maths is also offered in two option blocks for students who will benefit from a more measured pace. Such pupils will need to have achieved a grade 9 at GCSE. No additional qualification is needed. Once students are enrolled in the subject, they will be expected to demonstrate their suitability to remain on the course by achieving benchmarks on common assessments. For students that do not meet these targets, discussions will take place with the Mathematics department and Sixth Form team as to whether it is appropriate for the student to continue on the course.

Modern Foreign Languages – French, German and Spanish

French (AQA 7652)

German (AQA 7662)

Spanish (AQA 7692)

“One language sets you in a corridor for life. Two languages open every door along the way.”

— Frank Smith

Why Study Languages?

Studying a language at A-level is an exciting and rewarding experience. It is a facilitating subject at university, as the range of skills developed during the course will be a real strength with any degree and will keep your options open. A-level languages apply not only for the linguists who are passionate about languages and cultures, but also to those interested in medicine, law, business, politics, etc. because of its focus on communication skills. Science oriented students will also find an interest for the opportunities to work/research abroad (CERN, ESA, Cyber Valley...). Languages can be studied at degree level both as a subject on their own, as part of a joint degree and as a subsidiary subject, combined with a wide range of other subjects, including Politics, Maths, Science, History, English, Marketing & Engineering.

The A-level specification constitutes an integrated study with a focus on language, culture and society. Having a language to A-level improves your employability: it fosters a range of transferable skills including communication, critical thinking, research skills and creativity, problem-solving, analytical and presentation skills which are valuable to the individual and the job market. Becoming fluent in a language which is widespread and useful for mainly fields in and out of the UK is indeed a skill that enables you to stand out in a competitive environment.

A-level Languages at Reading School

Our A-level teachers in MFL are all experts in and passionate about their subjects, and include a number of native speakers. Students studying French, German or Spanish at A-level will enjoy lessons that are unlike any other subject in Sixth Form. Lessons typically involve reading and listening to authentic materials (music, podcasts, films, newspapers, novel...) and discussing them as well as discussions and debates around important society and cultural issues (politics, human rights, immigration, cinema...). The content goes beyond a simple 1st person perspective to embrace wider issues and broaden students' horizons.

Students have a privileged experience thanks to the smaller classes, which is an ideal environment to develop their oral skills and spontaneity with the target language. We also endeavour to offer our

students a range of opportunities to use their skills outside the classroom through a number of events and trips, including study days and exchange trips with foreign schools.

The course includes a wide range of topics which can appeal to a wide range of tastes. Wish you could take Film Studies, EPQ, PPE, Literature, Geography, History and more, but only have one block left? Choosing a language is for you!

The AQA course focuses on the following topics:

French (AQA 7652)

- Artistic culture in the French-speaking world (a culture proud of its heritage, contemporary francophone music, cinema: the 7th art form)
- Aspects of political life in the French-speaking world (the right to vote and political commitment, demonstrations, strikes – who holds the power?, politics and immigration)
- Aspects of French-speaking society: current trends (the changing nature of family, the 'cyber-society', the place of voluntary work)
- Aspects of French-speaking society: current issues (positive features of a diverse society, life for the marginalised, how criminals are treated)
- Film study of *La Haine* by Mathieu Kassovitz
- Book study of *No et moi* by Delphine de Vigan

German (AQA 7662)

- Artistic culture in the German-speaking world (festivals and traditions, art and architecture, cultural life in Berlin, past and present)
- Aspects of political life in the German-speaking world (Germany and the European Union, politics and youth, German re-unification and its consequences)
- Aspects of German-speaking society: current trends (the changing nature of family, the 'cyber-society', youth culture)
- Multiculturalism in German-speaking society (immigration, integration, racism)
- Film study of *Das Leben der Anderen* by Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck
- Book study of *Der Vorleser* by Bernhard Schlink

Spanish (AQA 7692)

- Artistic culture in the Hispanic world (modern day idols, Spanish regional identity, cultural heritage)
- Aspects of political life in the Hispanic world (today's youth, tomorrow's citizens, monarchies and dictatorships, popular movements)
- Aspects of Hispanic society (modern and traditional values, the 'cyber-society', equal rights)
- Multiculturalism in Hispanic society (immigration, integration, racism)
- Film study of *Ocho apellidos vascos* by Emilio Martínez-Lázaro
- Book study of *Las bicicletas son para el verano* by Fernando Fernán-Gómez

Examination content

- Paper 1: Listening, Reading and Writing – 50%
This includes a range of spoken and written comprehension questions, with an individual mp3 player for each candidate. It also includes summary and translations skills.
- Paper 2: Essay Writing – 20%
This includes a persuasive reflection on the film and the book studied during the course, which will allow the candidate to develop their critical skills.

- Paper 3: Speaking – 30%
This includes a discussion around one of the AQA topics, followed by a presentation and follow-up conversation around a research project chosen by the candidate.

Music

(EDUQAS 601/8146/1)

Since September 2019, Music in the Sixth Form has followed the EDUQAS specification. The course is divided into the disciplines of performance, composition and listening, but there is naturally a considerable increase in the rigour of these areas when compared with GCSE.

Through the range of genres, styles and eras contained in the Areas of Study they will explore musical context, musical language and performance and composition skills. The EDUQAS course has options and pathways designed to appeal to, and cater for, a wide range of interests, instruments and personal creative strengths.

Candidates can choose to major in either performance or composition.

Performance

Major (35%)

- Minimum ten-minute performance externally assessed by a visiting examiner.
- A minimum of three pieces.
- At least one of these pieces must be as a soloist. The other pieces may be either as a soloist or as part of an ensemble or a combination of both.
- One piece must reflect the musical characteristics of one area of study.
- At least one other piece must reflect the musical characteristics of one other, different area of study.
- If taking this option then candidate must minor in composition.

Minor (25%)

- Minimum six-minute performance externally assessed by a visiting examiner.
- A minimum of two pieces either as a soloist or as part of an ensemble or a combination of both.
- One piece must reflect the musical characteristics of one area of study.
- If taking this option then candidate must major in composition.

Composition

Major (35%)

- Compositions with a combined duration of eight to ten minutes.
- One to a brief set by WJEC (linked to Areas of Study A)
- Second must reflect the musical characteristics of a different area of study
- The third composition is a free composition.

Minor (25%)

- Compositions with a combined duration of four to six minutes.
- One to a brief set by WJEC (linked to Areas of Study A)
- Second composition is a free composition.

Written Examination

Assessment of Areas of Study A (40 marks)

- A question on an unprepared extract with a skeleton score provided.
- A detailed analysis question on a choice of either set work.
- An essay-based question which assesses knowledge of the development of the symphony in relation to both set symphonies and to the wider social, cultural and historical context.

Assessment of Areas of Study B, C or D (30 marks)

- One question on an unprepared musical extract
- A comparison question based on two unprepared extracts assessing wider understanding of the area of study.

Assessment of Areas of Study E or F (30 marks)

- An analysis question on one of the two set works
- A question on an unprepared musical extract.
- Learners will not be expected to identify the composer of unprepared extracts.

Areas of Study

We currently study Areas of Study A, D and E.

The Western Classical Tradition: The Development of the Symphony 1750-1900 is currently compulsory with prescribed works

Optional (2 to be studied)

Choose one from Areas of Study B, C or D and a second from Areas of Study E or F.

- Areas of Study B: Rock and Pop
- Areas of Study C: Musical Theatre
- Areas of Study D: Jazz
- Areas of Study E: Into the Twentieth Century
- Areas of Study F: Into the Twenty-first Century

Prescribed Works

Area of Study A

Choose one set work for detailed analysis and the other for general study.

- Symphony No. 104 in D major, 'London': Haydn
- Symphony No. 4 in A major, 'Italian': Mendelssohn

Area of Study E

The following two set works are studied in depth.

- Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano, Movement II: Poulenc
- Three Nocturnes, Number 1, Nuages: Debussy

Philosophy

(AQA 7172)

What does the course aim to do?

If you have ever wondered where it all started or what life is all about or whether we are all free, then you have already been doing philosophy. Indeed, philosophy is the activity of using rational argument and logical thinking to shine light on life's big questions. By studying philosophy, you will gain a greater understanding of the world we live in and your own self. You will also form a greater appreciation of any of the other subjects you will be studying, be they science subjects such as Physics or Biology or arts subjects such as English or History.

Which topics will you study?

At A-level, you will look at two topics - Metaphysics of God which contemplates the nature and existence of God and Metaphysics of Mind, the intellectual and practical exploration into the true nature of what we call "Mind". This second-year builds on the foundations built in the first year in Epistemology; the study of knowledge and justified belief, and Moral Philosophy; the study of moral principles that govern a person's behaviour or the conducting of an activity.

What skills will you develop when studying philosophy?

Philosophy will help you develop your ability to construct well-argued, well-informed, balanced and structured written arguments as well as providing you with the necessary skills to examine information in a critical way as well as form judgments based on clear evaluation. In addition, as an essay-based subject, there will be plenty of opportunity for students to develop an ability to provide clear expositions of difficult ideas as well as rigorous and sustained commentary.

Who should study this course?

Philosophy appeals if you have skills in the Arts and/or the Sciences. Philosophy is a popular choice if you wish to impress when it comes to university applications. It also enables you to fine tune your reasoning so that your philosophical skills can be applied to a range of careers. Law, politics, the civil service, journalism, advertising, education, medicine are some of the professions where your ability to turn abstract subjects into solid concepts will be highly regarded.

What is the structure of the course?

This course will be taught across 6 lessons per week. Homework will be set on a regular basis. Students will receive both class and revision notes but the reading of textbooks along with classic philosophical texts as an accompaniment is highly recommended. The assessment is purely by examination. There are two papers of three hours each. Within each paper there are two sections, each one covering one of the four areas of the syllabus (Paper 1, Epistemology and Moral Philosophy; Paper 2, The Metaphysics of God and The Metaphysics of Mind). Each section has five questions with no choice (so you need to know the whole syllabus) and is a graded series of essay questions. The first four examine knowledge and understanding, building up from mere definitions (which must however be philosophically precise) to longer explanations of ideas and standard arguments. Finally, there is a major argument and evaluation question, where you must debate and decide a philosophical problem, such as 'Is there anything that we know for certain?'

Photography

WJEC Eduqas A-level Art and Design (Photography) A656QS

Are you creative and imaginative? Do you enjoy exploring ideas and looking at things in different ways? Would you like to study a subject that is very hands-on? If so, A-level Photography could be a good fit for you. You will develop your understanding of the visual world, learn practical skills, and respond to ideas and issues in ways that are personal to you.

We live in a visual culture, where we have never been exposed to so much visual imagery. Photography is about looking, learning, thinking, and communicating ideas. Photography means “drawing with light”, with contemporary photographers using a range of digital and analogue techniques to create images that make a personal statement about things that interest or concern them. The most exciting aspect of photography is that you are capturing the world as you see it.

You will learn the science, craft, and art behind photography, what good photos can be and how to take them, and how to edit digitally to sympathetically enhance your photographs. You will learn how to analyse and critique your own work and the work of others, investigating a range of critical references that will inspire you in your own practice.

The subject links particularly well with other arts endorsements, however many students have not taken an Art and Design qualification at GCSE level, nor are they taking any other arts-subjects for A-level. Students take the subject as they already enjoy it, would like to give themselves a well-rounded education alongside primarily written subjects, or take a subject that offers a practical way of working when compared to many other A-level classes.

Possible areas of study include:

- photographing people
- photographing places
- still-life photography
- documentary photography
- photojournalism
- experimental imagery
- photographic installation
- fashion photography
- digital imaging
- moving image (video, film, animation).

Particular considerations to be aware of:

Most photography lessons are spent editing and critiquing photographs previously taken, so students must be willing and proactive in taking photographs in their own time so that they are able to progress through the course at an appropriate pace. Being organised and hardworking is vital in order to meet deadlines set.

Students should be aware that this course will have costs associated with it, as digital work will need to be professionally printed, and students will need to factor in the cost of transportation if they wish to take photographs outside of their local area or visit exhibitions. A personal DSLR camera and use of a PC/Mac/laptop at home is strongly recommended. As part of the Reading School Promise, eligible enrolled students can apply for help with costs associated with the course.

Visits

Wherever possible, the opportunity should be taken to regularly view inspiring sources first-hand, so a willingness to visit places, galleries, studios, museums, or other relevant collections in your own time is vital. Reading is ideally located between London and Oxford, with a rich cultural scene of its own.

Further Study and Career Opportunities

Possible degree options include:

- Animation
- Commercial photography
- Creative and editorial photography
- Digital media
- Fashion photography
- Film and television
- Film and visual culture
- Forensic photography
- Graphics with photography
- Medical photography
- Visual communication

Subject Content and Examination

There are two components at A-level: Component 1 – Personal Investigation (60% of the qualification) and Component 2 – Externally Set Assignment (40% of the qualification).

Component 1: Portfolio

The Personal Investigation consists of two integrated constituent parts:

1. a major in-depth critical, practical and theoretical investigative project/portfolio and outcome/s based on themes and subject matter that have personal significance;
2. an extended written element of 1000 words minimum, which may contain images and texts and must clearly relate to practical and theoretical work using an appropriate working vocabulary and specialist terminology

Component 2: Externally Set Assignment

This component is based on preparatory study that leads to a 15 hour period of sustained focus in which you will produce a response to a chosen visual or written stimuli.

Physical Education

(AQA 7582D)

Physical Education is an A-level we relaunched last year, as increasing numbers of students have selected this subject at GCSE, the demand for a PE A-level course was clear.

Physical Education is a practical and rigorous course that covers a range of challenging aspects of sporting performance, physiology, psychology and sport's societal impact. This breadth of topics means it ties in well with science subjects as well as humanities.

It is not a subject to be taken on lightly and students without an elite level of sporting performance will struggle to achieve top grades, due to the heavy weighting of the sporting performance element in this qualification.

The AQA course focuses on the following key areas

- Applied anatomy and physiology
- Skill acquisition
- Sport and society
- Exercise physiology
- Biomechanical movement
- Sport psychology
- Sport and society and the role of technology in physical activity and sport

These seven topics are assessed through two, two-hour exams, which make up 70% of the overall grade, with the final 30% coming from a practical performance assessment which requires students to demonstrate high levels of sporting skill as either a coach or performer, plus a verbal analysis of performance.

Physics

(AQA 7408D)

Physics is perhaps the most fundamental of all the sciences, seeking to explain the science of stellar evolution, the nature of the fundamental particles that form the “fabric” of the Universe and everything in between. Physics is a challenging and interesting subject which will help you to understand the world and universe around you. A-level Physics is a vitally important qualification for many careers.

Some students go on to study Physics at university. This may lead to a career in research and development, either in a university or in industry. High temperature semiconductors, a better understanding of sub-atomic particles and more efficient ways of storing energy for cars are just three areas of research being pursued at the moment.

Perhaps the majority of those who study A-level Physics do so in order to apply their physics knowledge in another subject area at university. Examples of this are the many branches of engineering, electronics and meteorology. For these careers, A-level Physics is essential. Other students will use their knowledge, practical and analytical skills as a pathway to follow a career in veterinary science, medicine, dentistry or biochemistry. Physics students are also very well positioned to take up law and accountancy and finance positions because Physics is highly regarded by universities as a test of problem-solving ability and logical thought.

At Reading School, we follow the AQA A-level syllabus (7408). The core content consists of the following topics: Measurements and their errors, particles and radiation, waves, mechanics and materials, electricity, further mechanics and thermal physics, fields and their consequences, and nuclear physics. New from September 2022 is the choice of optional module (please see the AQA specification for more detail). We offer either Turning Points or Astrophysics at Reading School. Students wishing to study Physics at A-level should decide upon their preferred option at application, so that the correct teaching groups can be built and maintained for year 12 moving into year 13.

A-level Physics is a two-year ‘linear’ course which is examined externally at the end of Year 13. A very broad practical approach is built in to the syllabus which allows students to develop their scientific

analytical skills to a very high level. The course has a high level of mathematical content which students will learn how to use in theoretical and practical situations.

Theatre Studies

(AQA Drama and Theatre 7262)

The course consists of a healthy balance between practical and written work. One of the most exciting aspects of the AQA A-level course is that you are given several opportunities to approach work from the perspective of a performer, director or designer, experiencing all aspects of the theatre maker's craft. This work is accompanied by a working notebook and a reflective report, but by and large, they are performance led components which in total are worth 60% of your final grade. In one component you devise your own piece of original theatre and for the other component you work on the presentation of three extracts from different plays, one of which is attached to a theatre practitioner you will study the work of. The choice of material is very wide and governed by you.

The written paper, making up 40% of the final grade, includes the study of two vastly contrasting set texts from a performance perspective and analysis and evaluation of live theatre seen. The emphasis at A-level is very much on theatre as a performance art and everything is explored from a practical perspective. The plays – Jerusalem by Jez Butterworth and Tennessee Williams' The Glass Menagerie - are taught not as literary texts but as productions to be brought alive which makes the subject vibrant and dynamic. You will be asked to form opinions and to analyse every aspect of the work, research into the social, cultural and historic background and nature of the plays also plays a key part in our work, allying Theatre Studies very strongly to other research-based subjects. Visits to the theatre are vital and the focus is on seeing professional work. We will experience a wide variety of style and genre throughout our studies. It is important to remember that there is a significant amount of written work and self-directed study, so a real enthusiasm and genuine interest in the subject is essential.

LOOKING BEYOND A-LEVELS

It should be stated that the study of A-levels is, in and of itself, a valuable endeavour. Education is a gift and to only see your A-level studies as a means to the next step in your journey towards a career, is to overlook the importance of education and the power it has to enrich. Your A-level choices should be partly informed by looking at the stage beyond, which for many is university, but this should also be balanced with your interests and passions, which may be slightly tangential or even unrelated to your final destination. The essay-writing or communication skills you accrue on a History or Theatre Studies A-level may prove invaluable to a future medic or engineer, even though other subjects are requirements for studying medicine or engineering at university. Pursuing your future career should not be the only element you consider when selecting A-levels.

However, before embarking on A-level study many students should have a sense of the pathway ahead of them regarding future study or employment. It is much easier to achieve top grades at A-level with a clear sense of how your current studies may benefit you in the future. It must be emphasised though, that rarely do all higher education establishments have the same requirements, and very rarely is there no flexibility at all. On the other hand, you must recognise that if you have an unconventional combination of subjects for a particular course you may put yourself at a disadvantage with respect to others in the university selection process. You may wish to consult Careers staff to check details.

Please email careers@reading-school.co.uk to book an appointment if you are a current Reading School student.

Some degree courses such as those in Science and Medicine may lead to specific occupations while others, more especially in Arts subjects, are less 'vocational'. However, you should be wary of letting this aspect totally determine your A-level subject choice and remember that the quality of both A-level passes and a degree are widely regarded as a measure of mental calibre in the professions, commerce and industry. The majority of graduates rarely employ their degree information but do employ their cumulative skills. In other words, whilst you may wish to keep an eye on the future there is much to be said for choosing subjects in which you are interested and you are likely to be successful.

A further consideration may be your proposed career direction beyond university and you may wish to consult a range of publications, many of which are available in the LRC. If you do join Reading School for the Sixth Form, you will be able to access this resource. The LRC is also open to Sixth Form pupils during their private study periods. Laptops can be used in the LRC and student printing, photocopying and scanning is available. The LRC holds approximately 8000 books including titles to support reading beyond the curriculum, well-being and popular fiction. They also provide access to a range of excellent eResources that can be accessed from home including JSTOR and Britannica and an ebook service called VLeBooks.

Digital Learning at Reading School

In the next academic year (2023-24), we are looking to launch a change to our digital learning strategy. At present around 88% of our students utilise laptops or tablet devices to supplement their studies in the Sixth Form. Moving forward, we are looking to embrace digital learning, so all of our Sixth Form students can benefit from the array of opportunities this presents, alongside the traditional teaching and learning that our school has excelled at over many years.

From next year, we will be expecting all students in the Sixth Form to bring a device to school that will be used to augment their learning. These devices can be new, second hand, or devices already in the home. The School will provide guidance on which devices would be most suitable and we have listened to parent feedback related to cost and will align our recommendations to the cost suggested as most suitable by the majority of parents. If students are currently in receipt of free school meals, or have need of financial support with this purchase, the School will be able to offer assistance with this.

We are doing this because we are already seeing such a large number of students utilising digital learning and technology that by moving this to a whole cohort expectation, we will be in the position that teaching staff can build digital resources and teaching into their lessons knowing that all students will be able to access it. We see this as a really positive step forward in our teaching provision for A-level students.

More specific guidance on this will come out to offer holders in due course. For the moment, we hope this FAQ document is helpful in answering some of the questions you may have about this.

[FAQ on Digital Learning](#)

Sixth Form Agreement

What the School agrees to:

Sixth Form students at Reading School can expect the school to support them through many opportunities to learn and grow. We endeavour:

- To offer a first-class education, which will challenge you to achieve your very best academically, as well as giving you the opportunity to explore existing and newly discovered talents through varied extra-curricular opportunities;
- To let you grow as an individual in a happy and caring environment where you will be supported in all that you do;
- To inform you about your progress in the Sixth Form and about the opportunities available at 18-plus;
- To make the School's expectations clear and consistent for all, with due regard for preparing Sixth Formers for adult life.

What you agree to:

- The School can expect you to enter the Sixth Form as young adults within the School community and understand the importance of acting as role models;
- To enjoy the opportunities and privileges, you are expected to set an example to the rest of the School in your studies and in all other aspects of life in the School community;
- To challenge yourself in all that you do, and aim to leave the School with life changing qualifications and a breadth of different skills and experiences, ready to make a positive difference to the world.
- To bring the correct equipment to lessons
- To spend adequate time on your work as advised by your teachers
- To complete homework and coursework on time
- Attend all external examinations punctually. (If you do not attend an examination without good reason you will pay the examination fee.) All resits must be paid for in advance.
- Respect the academic expertise of subject staff and recognise that predicted grades made in Year 13 are not subject to negotiation.

We expect that you are responsible for your own learning and adopt the following:

Excellence

- Be enthusiastic learners
- Ask questions when you don't understand
- Learn from your mistakes
- Complete all work to the best of your ability and on time
- Take time to review feedback and work out how to improve next time
- Be eager to participate in class discussions and activities
- Be inquisitive and have an open mind
- Present work well and take pride in it
- Be eager to try new ways of learning and go outside of your comfort zone
- Be prepared to tackle difficult problems and activities
- Do independent work outside of your lessons to ensure you are working to your potential

Integrity

- Have good manners
- Show respect and tolerance to other students and staff
- Conform fully to the School's expectations about personal conduct and appearance (Please read the School Dress Code fully)
- Treat the School with respect and accept responsibility for maintaining the Sixth Form Common Room

- Never leave School premises without authorisation from your tutor and/or Head of Year/Head of Sixth Form You may leave the site after 12:50pm if you do not have any lessons after this time. If you are staying in school you are expected to sign-in at the LRC for the afternoon
- Holidays should not be taken in term time
- Driving lessons should not be arranged during school time unless it is during a study period in the afternoon

Leadership

- Be a positive influence on others around you
- Be confident in what you can do
- Bring your own ideas and information to lessons
- Take advantage of extra-curricular activities which take place outside school hours, looking to lead the lower years in these activities where possible, as well as support and represent the school when asked to do so e.g. at Open Days
- Understand the importance of acting as role models to students in the school

Community

- Help and encourage others to learn when they are stuck or confused
- Look after the learning environment
- Listen carefully to the teacher and fellow students when they are talking
- Be present in school from 8.20 a.m. – 3.25 p.m. (unless you have no lessons or School activities after 12:50.) This may change based on the impact Covid-19 has on the school day.
- Attend all morning tutor periods, House Assembly and Chapel
- Inform your form tutor and your subject teachers and make arrangements to complete any work missed, if you know in advance that you will be absent
- Attend games lessons on Wednesday afternoons
- Commit to performing community work on a regular basis throughout Year 12.

Disciplinary Procedure

If you fail to observe the expectations, the following sanctions will apply:

- Your tutor will discuss the problem with you and remind you of our expectations. This meeting will have the status of an oral warning and a record will be kept of it.
- If you do not heed this warning, the matter will be referred to the Sixth Form Intervention Team. They will see you about the matter and after the discussion a letter will be sent to both you and your parents. This will constitute a written warning.
- Should you fail to act upon this warning, the matter will be referred to the Head of Sixth Form and, in consultation with the Headmaster, you may be required to leave the Sixth Form

Progression into Year 13, Subject Drops and Subject Changes

We hope that all students will undertake two years of study at Reading School and will complete their A-levels successfully. Students who are achieving significantly below their own ability at the end of Year 12 will be encouraged to carefully consider their careers pathway and option choices.

We encourage students to commence their Sixth Form studies with an academic programme that suits them. Students may be allowed to drop a subject in the first two weeks of their first term or at the end of the summer term. Drops at other times of the year are discouraged, and students are reminded that beginning a subject which they later drop disadvantages themselves, the School and others.

Apart from in exceptional circumstances, no A-level subject changes will be permitted beyond the first half term of Year 12.



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