**Choosing GCSE Options – Questions to Ask Yourself**

Need help with choosing GCSE options? Never fear, here are the golden questions to ask yourself.

**1. Should I Base GCSE Options on What I’m Good At?**

It’s worth including this as a factor when choosing your GCSEs. You’re likely to enjoy the subjects you’re good at. Being good at a particular area might help you manage your GCSE workload, too, because you’ll be able to complete work more quickly and get good results. What’s more, learning more about a subject you have natural ability in might be useful when making career choices later down the line.

If you’re not sure how good you are at a subject, you can talk to your teacher and ask for advice.

**2. Should I Base GCSE Options on What I Enjoy?**

It’s fine to consider choosing subjects you like at GCSE level. You’ll be studying that subject for several periods a week for the next two years, so it’ll definitely help if there are aspects of the subject you enjoy! Even if you hate school, there’s bound to be a subject you connect with. This could work to your advantage, because if you enjoy a subject you are more likely to work harder and get a higher grade in it. It’s okay to do a subject just because you like it.

**When choosing subjects you enjoy, ask yourself two things:**

* What’s the **content**of this subject? (Are you interested in the things you’ll be learning about?)
* What **skills**does it require? (Do you think you can build the skills this subject requires?)

If you’re worried about your final list of choices, look at the list and ask yourself: Is my final list of options a balanced one? Is it all just ‘easy’ subjects, which I like but might not be useful to me when it’s time to do further education and/or get a job? Or is it a fair mix of useful stuff and fun stuff? (Not forgetting that useful stuff can be fun too!)

**3. Should I Choose A GCSE Subject Because I Like the Teacher?**

It’s a tricky one, because a great teacher can inspire you to do your best in a subject. However, how much you like your teacher should not be one of the key factors when choosing your GCSE options. That inspirational teacher might leave school, after all. There’s no point doing a subject just to impress your favourite teacher, either. They won’t be in your life forever. The person you most need to impress is yourself, because you’re the one making choices to make your future a better one!

**4. Should I Choose A GCSE Subject Because My Friends Are Doing It?**

It’s better not to just choose a GCSE option because your friends are taking it. Doing different GCSEs shouldn’t have any effect on your friendships – it will just mean you have lots to talk about when you’re together at other times. Plus, there’s a chance you’ll make additional new friends in the subject you choose, too.

**5. Whose Advice Should I Listen to When Choosing GCSE Options?**

**Teachers** at your school are really well-placed to offer you advice and support; do talk to your teachers if you have any questions about your GCSEs and how it all works.

**Careers advisors** are extremely well-trained and prepared to help you with your careers and GCSE-related questions – whatever your questions are, they will be able to offer support, resources and information to help you with your choices.

Your **parents** can also help – they may not understand clever new point systems and things that weren’t around in their day, but they should have your best interests at heart.

Your **friends** will be going through the same stress as you, so you can bounce ideas off them if you like… but it’s important to remember it’s your final decision.

**6. Should I Think About How Courses Are Marked When Choosing My GCSE Options?**

Individual GCSEs will be marked in a variety of ways – through reading and writing coursework completed either in lessons or as homework, exams and perhaps spoken exams (as in the case of languages). You can think about how you perform well, and if there are any marking formats you find particularly challenging.

Your teachers are there to help you choose the most appropriate subjects for you. You can ask them if there’s an oral test or if there’s laboratory or fieldwork involved, and you can also ask them what percentage of marks is given for coursework.

**7. Does My Final GCSE Options List Look Balanced?**

This is a helpful question to ask yourself once you’ve come up with a list of GCSE options you like the look of. Does it look like it’s got a good general spread of subjects (so not pure science and maths, and not pure art or sport)? Does it feature ‘traditional’ subjects (like history or geography) so that you’ve got plenty of future options and a chance to impress universities and employers? Does it feature subjects you’ll enjoy doing and want to learn? If the answer to all these questions is ‘yes’, the chances are you have a balanced final list of GCSE options that will make your next two years rewarding ones and set you up for later life.