



Wadham Project Year 11: A-Level Choices & Next Steps

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STRUCTURE

- **A university view**
- **An undergraduate view**
- **A school view**
- **Next steps**

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A University View

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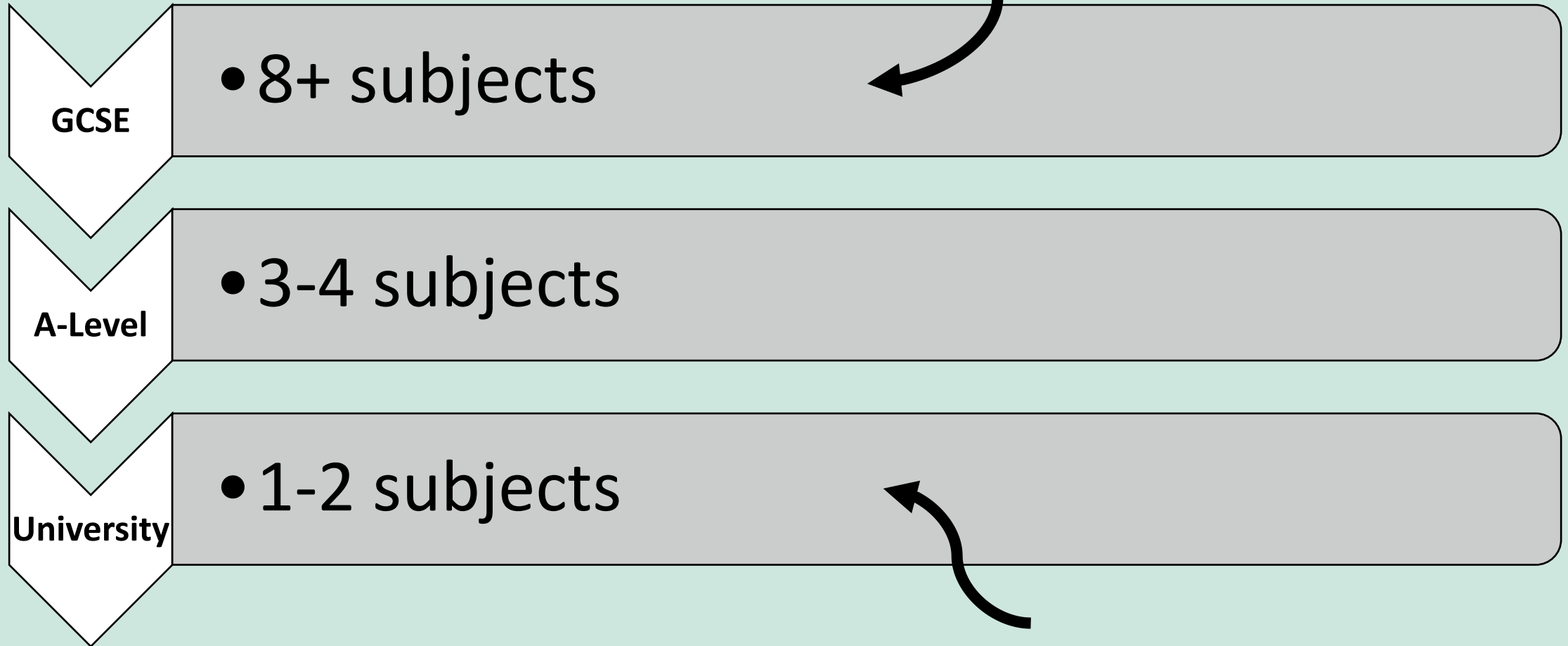
...what job or career you'd
like in the future

...what A-levels I need to
study my chosen course at
university

...what A-levels you should
pick to keep your options
open

The journey...

You are here!



So how do you get here?

At this stage...

it's absolutely fine not to know:

- The exact subject/course you'd like to study at university
- The job or career you'd like to have in the future

it is important for you to know:

- If you know what course you'd like to study, which A-levels are required
- If you don't know what course you'd like to study, which A-levels you can take to keep your options open

A-level choices: why they matter

- A-level choices have a significant impact on **university course options available to you**
- Inappropriate choices **might restrict your options later**, and reduce your chances of getting a place on the right course for you
- Admissions Tutors often prefer applicants to have taken particular subjects, or combinations of subjects, as these provide the **best preparation for their courses**

A-level selection

- Select subjects you enjoy
- Select subjects you think you'll be good at
- Some degrees require particular A-levels...
- ...and some don't require an A-level in the subject to do it for a degree

Medicine at Oxford

Required Subjects:
Chemistry
AND either
Maths/ Biology/ Physics



A wooden gavel with a dark brown, polished head and a lighter, weathered handle, resting on a rustic wooden surface. The gavel is positioned horizontally across the middle of the frame. The background is a close-up of the wood grain, showing vertical lines and natural textures.

Law at Oxford

Required Subjects:

Any subject
combinations

Computer Science at Oxford

Required Subjects:

Maths and Further Maths
(A* in Maths, Further Maths
or Computing)

History of Art at Oxford



Required Subjects:
A subject involving
essay writing.

A-level selection

- Select subjects you enjoy
- Select subjects you think you'll be good at
- Some degrees require particular A-levels...
- ...and some don't require an A-level in the subject to do it for a degree
- Some subjects help to keep your options open
- Universities prefer certain A-levels over others

Facilitating Subjects

Some subjects are more frequently required for entry to degree courses than others. If you don't know what you want to study at university then think about taking two facilitating subjects. This will keep a wide range of degree courses open.

Some facilitating subjects are:

- Biology
- Chemistry
- English literature
- Geography
- History
- Physics
- Modern and classical languages
- Maths and further maths



Interested in arts/humanities/social science

English

History

Languages

Maths

Interested in science

Biology

Chemistry

Maths

Physics

Some examples

Simon wants to do something with numbers, like Business or Economics at University.

He is planning to take Business Studies, Accounting and Economics A-level



Some examples

Issues

- Overlapping subjects – some Universities don't like it if your A-levels are too close together e.g. there is a lot of overlap between Business, Accounting and Economics
- Many Economics courses require or prefer students to have Maths A-level.

Advice

- Drop one of the subjects and take up Maths
- Business Studies and Accounting are more vocational qualifications so they might not be as useful preparation for an academic degree.



Some examples

Carli enjoys writing essays, and thinking about 'big questions'. Her favourite subject currently is Geography. She gets her best marks in Chemistry and Maths, but knows she definitely doesn't want to do a Science-based degree. She likes the sound of Philosophy, but hasn't been able to do it in school so far. In the future, Carli aspires to be a police officer.



THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Focus on your GCSE's and think about what you enjoy.
2. Start exploring your options for A-level.
3. Explore different subjects and find out what you are interested in beyond school.

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An Undergraduate View

Student Ambassador Q & A

Think of some questions for our student ambassadors. Think about:

- What A-levels did they do?
- How did they pick?
- Do the A-levels they did help with what they do now?
- Any advice?



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A School View

Prof Lee Hubbard
Head of Academia
Samuel Whitbread Academy, Best Trust

What is post-16 like?

- There is a bigger expectation on you as a student.
- You have to take more responsibility for your learning. Yes you are supported but there is a change from GCSE turn up and be fed information.
- You have to manage your time and deadlines yourself.

With this freedom comes more responsibility

What is the jump like?



- The Gap between Post 16 and GCSE is big
- The way you have to think is very different.
- The pressure on you is far more than GCSE

What are my course choices?

- Its not simply a choice of A levels, other courses are now available to you depending upon where you are located and what schools your are in.



Post 16 Choices

OCR
Oxford Cambridge and RSA

 **Pearson**
Edexcel

 **BTEC**



Why choices: why they matter

- There is a choice of Post 16 qualifications available to you, depending upon your GCSE grades and host schools or colleges.
- Match your study style to the expectations of the course and how comfortable you feel studying.
- Pick courses that compliment each other, else there is too much of a jump between subjects.

A level Courses

- These are the majority of course students choose.

You will normally attempt 3 course possibly 4.

- They are a 2 year linear course with final Exams in the summer of the second year.

Course Breakdown (typical)

**27 hours teaching
per cycle**

**25 hours Independent study
per cycle**

**Homework 10 Hours
per cycle**

International Baccalaureate (IB)

- International Course featuring a wider subject choice.

You take 4 course at Higher level and 6 at Standard level.

Course is very suited for international students and students wishing a broader exposure to subject. It is very well received by Universities and has now obtained acceptance as an alternative to A Level.

Course Breakdown (typical)

**25 hours teaching
per cycle**

**30 hours Independent study
per cycle**

**Homework 15 Hours
per cycle**

BTEC Qualifications

- BTEC

Module Based Qualification system with associated Course work.

Course Breakdown (typical)

**25 hours teaching
per cycle**

**20 hours Independent + Coursework
per cycle**

**Homework 10 hours
per cycle**

Summary

- You should be prepared to change the way you work at Post 16 studies
- They will be more challenging than you faced before.
- You will be required to take more responsibility for your studies.
- Even at post 16 think ahead.
- Finally: **Enjoy your A levels / IB / Btec qualifications get into the right working patterns to support your courses and your possible degree courses. This is the time to get things right.**

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Next Steps

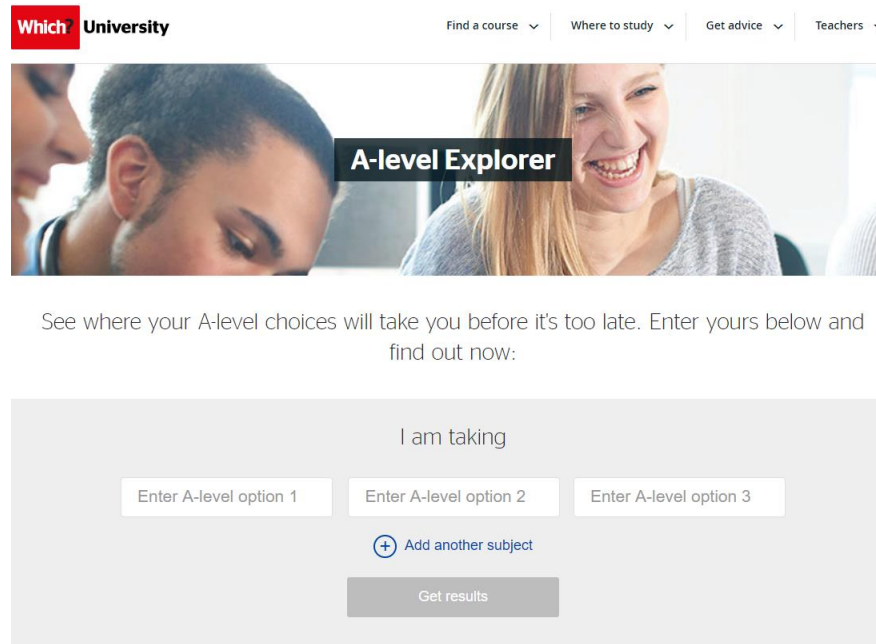
Your next steps



- Focus on your GCSE's and think about what you enjoy.
- Start exploring your options for A Level.
- Explore different subjects and find out what you are interested in beyond school.

- Use the Which? University A-level explorer to look at where different A-levels could take you

(<https://university.which.co.uk/a-level-explorer>)



Which? University

Find a course ▾ Where to study ▾ Get advice ▾ Teachers ▾

A-level Explorer

See where your A-level choices will take you before it's too late. Enter yours below and find out now:

I am taking

Enter A-level option 1

Enter A-level option 2

Enter A-level option 3

+ Add another subject

Get results

Speak to a teacher who teaches a subject you really enjoy at school. Ask them:

- How would you evaluate studying this subject at A-level?
- What is this subject like at university level?
- What would you recommend I do to extend my knowledge of the parts of the subject I really enjoy?

Developing your passions

The people who look at your university applications will often say they want pupils who are passionate about the subject.

PASSION LED US HERE

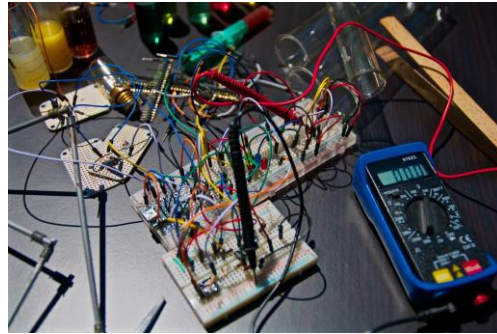


- How do you show academic passion? (without just saying, “I’m passionate about...”)

Step 3: Ways to develop your passions



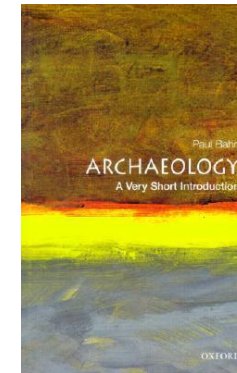
Museums



Programming Courses



Podcasts



Other book examples



Summer Schools



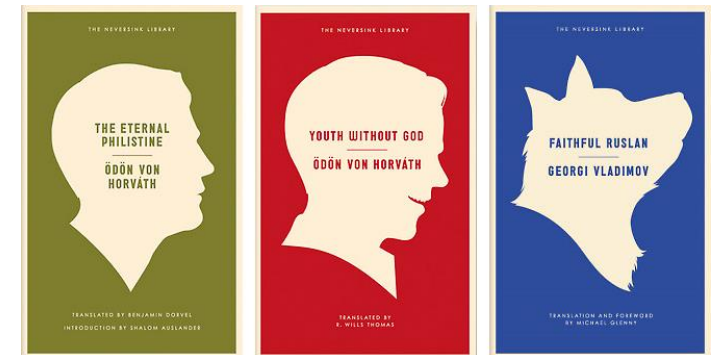
University lectures



EPQ

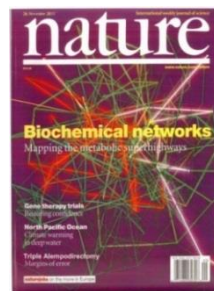
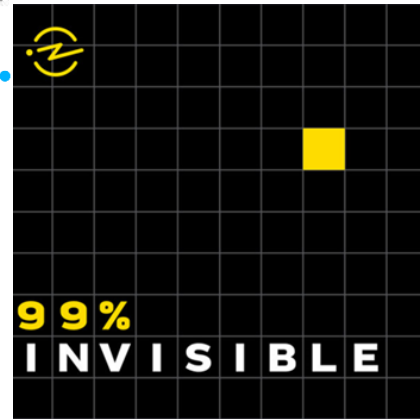
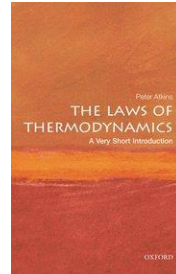
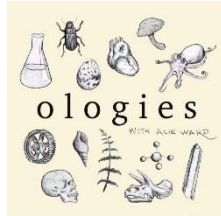
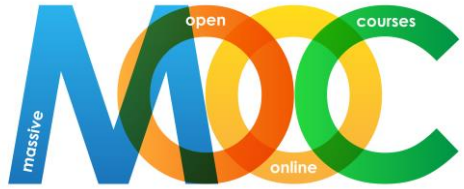


Relevant Work Experience



Other Books by author

Super-curricular activities



Your next step?

Think of one action you are going to take to help plan your next steps

Pledge Example:

- I pledge to use the A-level explorer to look at what degrees my A-levels could lead to

Pledge Action:

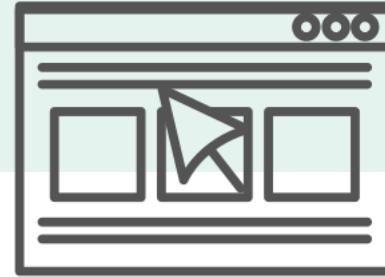
- Use the tool to identify matches based on A-level choices
- Look at the best matches, close matches and unexpected matches
- Find out more about one of these using a university prospectus

Get in touch



Email

access@wadham.ox.ac.uk



Website

<https://www.wadham.ox.ac.uk/schools-and-outreach/the-wadham-project/wadham-project-year-11-resources>
