

PEARSON EDEXCEL
INTERNATIONAL GCSE
OPTIONS BOOKLET

ACADEMIC YEAR 2026-2027



A guide for students and families choosing subjects for Grades 9 and 10

EXPLORE
your interests

CHOOSE
with purpose

PREPARE
for Sixth Form

Contents

A quick guide to the information in this booklet

Use this booklet alongside advice from subject teachers and the school leadership team. Final subject combinations will be confirmed after option preferences have been reviewed.

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Please note

This booklet provides guidance for subject selection. Subject availability, option blocks, course routes and assessment arrangements remain subject to final school confirmation and the relevant Pearson Edexcel specifications.

Welcome to the IGCSE Programme

Beginning a focused two-year journey in Grades 9 and 10

Grade 9 marks the beginning of a two-year programme leading to Pearson Edexcel International GCSE qualifications. This important stage develops the knowledge, skills and study habits students need for Sixth Form and future learning.

Students are expected to become increasingly independent, organised and reflective. They will continue to study core subjects while selecting option subjects that match their interests, strengths and longer-term goals.



What this booklet is designed to do

For students

- Understand what each subject involves.
- Think honestly about interests, strengths and preferred ways of learning.
- Choose a balanced programme rather than following friends.

For families

- Discuss aspirations and workload realistically.
- Use subject information to ask focused questions.
- Seek guidance before choices are submitted.

About Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

Pearson Edexcel International GCSEs are globally recognised qualifications designed for international learners. Each subject follows an official specification that sets out the content, skills and assessment requirements. The programme provides a strong academic foundation and supports progression to a range of post-16 pathways.

Our commitment

The Principal, academic leaders and subject teachers are available to guide students and families. Please contact the school to arrange a discussion when additional advice is needed.

Choosing Subjects

Building a balanced programme around core and option subjects

Students study a combination of core subjects and option subjects. Core subjects provide essential breadth, while option subjects allow students to explore areas of particular interest and prepare for future study.

Core subjects

- English Language or English as a Second Language
- Arabic as a First Language or Arabic as a Second Language
- Mathematics (Foundation or Higher route, where appropriate)
- Science (Single Award, Double Award or Triple Science pathway)
- Islamic Education for Muslim students
- Social Studies for Arabic-speaking students

Option subjects

- Business Studies
- Computer Science
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
- Spanish

Option requirement

Students normally choose at least two option subjects. Final option blocks are created after preferences are collected; therefore, not every subject combination can be guaranteed.

A sensible choice should take account of

- genuine interest and willingness to work consistently in the subject
- current attainment, teacher feedback and readiness for the course
- possible Sixth Form subjects, university pathways or career interests
- the balance between written, practical, numerical and language-based learning
- the overall workload across all subjects.

Choices to avoid

- choosing a subject only because a friend has selected it
- assuming a subject is easy without reading the course outline
- selecting a course only because of a particular teacher
- ignoring advice about language level, tier or science pathway.

Assessment, Grading and Progression

Understanding how achievement is monitored and where the programme can lead

During Grades 9 and 10

- Classwork, homework and regular topic assessments
- Practical activities, projects or speaking tasks where relevant
- Mock examinations and timed practice
- Targeted feedback, support and intervention

Final assessment

- Assessment requirements vary by subject.
- Components may include written, practical, listening and speaking examinations.
- Official examination entries are confirmed by the school.
- Students must follow Pearson Edexcel examination regulations.

Grading

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE qualifications use the 9-1 grading scale, with grade 9 representing the highest level of achievement. A result may be recorded as ungraded when the minimum standard for grade 1 has not been met. Grade boundaries are set by the awarding body for each examination series.

Course routes and placement

- Mathematics may be entered at Foundation or Higher tier. Placement is based on attainment, progress and teacher recommendation.
- Science pathway decisions consider academic readiness, consistency and the capacity to manage the required breadth of content.
- English and Arabic First Language or Second Language routes are selected according to prior learning and language proficiency.

Progression after Grade 10

After completing the IGCSE programme, students may progress to Sixth Form at Ghars International School, including General Education Diploma and AS/A Level pathways, subject to the relevant entry requirements. Strong results, effective study habits and appropriate subject choices help to keep future options open.

Possible area of interest	Useful foundations
Science, medicine or engineering	A strong foundation in Mathematics and Science
Computing and digital fields	Mathematics, Computer Science and/or ICT
Business and entrepreneurship	Mathematics, Business Studies and strong communication skills
Languages, communication and humanities	English, Arabic and/or Spanish, supported by a broad subject profile

The examples above are general guidance only and are not formal entry requirements.

English Language

Core subject

English Language

CORE SUBJECT

English Language develops confident readers, precise writers and thoughtful communicators. Students explore how writers shape meaning and learn to produce effective writing for different purposes and audiences.

ENGLISH

IGCSE

What students will learn

- read and understand a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts
- retrieve information, infer meaning and analyse language and structure
- compare viewpoints and evaluate how effectively ideas are communicated
- write transactional texts such as articles, speeches, letters and reports
- write imaginative and descriptive pieces with control and originality
- use Standard English, varied vocabulary, accurate grammar and punctuation.

Skills developed

- critical reading and interpretation
- clear written communication
- creativity and control of style
- planning, editing and proofreading
- discussion and oral confidence.

How to succeed

- Read widely, including quality journalism, short stories and novels.
- Keep a vocabulary bank and use new words accurately.
- Practise timed responses and review model answers.
- Act on feedback by redrafting and correcting recurring errors.
- Use mark schemes to understand what successful responses require.

Course route

The exact Pearson Edexcel English qualification and entry route will be confirmed by the school according to each student's language profile and academic needs.

English as a Second Language

Core English route for eligible learners

English as a Second Language

CORE SUBJECT

This route is designed for students who are developing English as an additional language. It strengthens practical and academic communication across reading, writing, listening and speaking.

ENGLISH

IGCSE

What students will learn

- understand the main ideas and detailed information in spoken and written texts
- identify purpose, attitude and viewpoint
- write clearly for everyday and academic situations
- adapt language and register for different audiences
- communicate ideas with increasing fluency and accuracy
- extend vocabulary and improve grammatical control.

Skills developed

- active listening
- reading for gist and detail
- functional and extended writing
- spoken interaction and presentation
- accuracy, fluency and confidence.

How to succeed

- Use English every day in purposeful conversation.
- Read short articles and graded texts, then summarise the main ideas.
- Listen to English programmes and note key vocabulary.
- Maintain a vocabulary notebook organised by topic.
- Practise speaking and writing under timed conditions.

Important

English as a Second Language is not simply an easier version of English. It is a distinct course designed around the needs of multilingual learners. Placement is based on evidence and teacher recommendation.

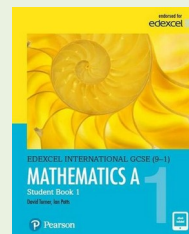
Mathematics

Core subject

Mathematics

CORE SUBJECT

Mathematics develops numerical fluency, logical reasoning and problem-solving. Students learn to select appropriate methods, communicate working clearly and apply mathematics in familiar and unfamiliar contexts.



Main areas of study

Knowledge and techniques

- Number
- Algebra
- Geometry and measures
- Graphs and functions

Application and reasoning

- Statistics and probability
- Problem-solving
- Mathematical reasoning
- Interpreting information and checking results

Course routes

Students may follow Foundation or Higher tier. The most suitable tier is determined through ongoing assessment, mock examination evidence, progress over time and teacher recommendation. The aim is to place each student on the route that offers appropriate challenge and the strongest opportunity for success.

How to succeed

- Practise little and often rather than relying on last-minute revision.
- Show complete working and correct errors carefully.
- Learn key facts, formulae and mathematical vocabulary.
- Attempt unfamiliar problems and explain the reasoning used.
- Use past papers to build accuracy, timing and confidence.

Suggested independent resources: Dr Frost Maths, Corbettmaths, MathsBot, Save My Exams and Physics & Maths Tutor.

Science Pathways

Core subject

Science

CORE SUBJECT

Science combines secure subject knowledge with practical enquiry. Students study Biology, Chemistry and Physics, learn to interpret evidence and develop safe, accurate investigative skills.



Available pathways

Single Award

An integrated course across Biology, Chemistry and Physics leading to one qualification.

Double Award

A broader integrated course across the three sciences leading to two qualifications.

Triple Science

Separate courses in Biology, Chemistry and Physics leading to three qualifications.

The most appropriate pathway is determined by the school using attainment, progress, consistency and readiness for the required breadth of study.

Content and practical skills

Subject content

- Biology: organisms, life processes, inheritance and ecology
- Chemistry: principles, inorganic, physical and organic chemistry
- Physics: forces, electricity, waves, energy, matter, magnetism and particles

Scientific practice

- Plan investigations and select appropriate methods
- Identify variables and work safely
- Make precise observations and measurements
- Present, analyse and evaluate data
- Use scientific terminology accurately

How to succeed

- Use frequent retrieval practice to secure key facts.
- Learn required practical methods and scientific vocabulary.
- Practise calculations, graph work and data interpretation.
- Answer past-paper questions and correct responses using mark schemes.
- Ask for help promptly when a concept is unclear.

Business Studies

Option subject

Business Studies

OPTION SUBJECT

Business Studies introduces students to how organisations operate, make decisions and respond to changing markets. Real and fictional business contexts are used to apply knowledge and develop reasoned judgement.



Main areas of study

- business activity and influences on business
- people in business
- business finance
- marketing
- business operations.

Skills developed

- use business terminology accurately
- apply concepts and calculations to a specific context
- interpret written and numerical information
- analyse causes, effects and possible consequences
- evaluate alternatives and reach justified conclusions.

How to succeed

- Keep organised notes and revise key vocabulary regularly.
- Follow current business news and connect it to course concepts.
- Practise calculations and show working clearly.
- Use case-study evidence in every extended response.
- Develop balanced conclusions rather than giving unsupported opinions.

A good choice for students who

enjoy discussing real-world decisions, interpreting information, explaining cause and effect, and supporting opinions with evidence.

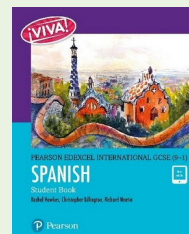
Spanish

Option subject

Spanish

OPTION SUBJECT

Spanish develops practical communication and intercultural understanding. Students build confidence across listening, speaking, reading and writing while learning to use vocabulary and grammar accurately.



Main themes

- home and abroad
- education and employment
- personal life and relationships
- the world around us
- social activities, fitness and health.

Skills developed

- understand spoken and written Spanish
- identify key details, opinions and attitudes
- communicate clearly in speech and writing
- use appropriate register, vocabulary and grammatical structures
- respond spontaneously and sustain longer answers.

How to succeed

- Review vocabulary in short, frequent sessions.
- Practise speaking aloud and record responses for self-evaluation.
- Listen to age-appropriate Spanish media and note familiar phrases.
- Read short texts and infer meaning from context.
- Learn high-frequency verbs and sentence structures thoroughly.

Suggested independent resources: Quizlet, Duolingo, LyricsTraining, Seneca and teacher-approved Spanish media.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Option subject

ICT

OPTION SUBJECT

ICT examines how digital technology affects individuals, organisations and society. The course combines theoretical understanding with practical application and responsible use of digital tools.



Course structure

Theory topics

- Topic 1: Digital Devices
- Topic 2: Connectivity
- Topic 3: Operating Online
- Topic 4: Online Goods and Services

Applied topics

- Topic 5: Applying Information and Communication Technology
- Topic 6: Software Skills
- Safe, secure and responsible practice
- Evaluation of digital solutions

Skills developed

- select appropriate digital tools for a stated purpose
- create, edit and evaluate effective digital products
- manage information accurately and efficiently
- explain benefits, limitations, risks and wider impacts of technology
- work safely, securely and responsibly online.

How to succeed

- Practise practical skills independently and keep clear evidence of work.
- Learn key terminology and use it precisely in written answers.
- Read each task carefully and check that every requirement has been met.
- Evaluate solutions against the needs of the user and context.
- Use past papers to improve both theory and practical examination technique.

ICT or Computer Science?

ICT focuses on the use and impact of digital systems and the creation of practical solutions. Computer Science focuses more heavily on algorithms, programming and how computer systems work.

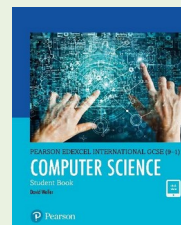
Computer Science

Option subject

Computer Science

OPTION SUBJECT

Computer Science develops computational thinking and a deeper understanding of how digital systems operate. Students learn to analyse problems, design algorithms and create, test and improve programmed solutions.



Course structure

Core computing concepts

- Topic 1: Problem-solving
- Topic 2: Programming
- Topic 3: Data

Systems and context

- Topic 4: Computers
- Topic 5: Communication and the Internet
- Topic 6: The Bigger Picture

Skills developed

- decompose problems and design step-by-step solutions
- read, write, trace and debug code
- represent and process data
- explain hardware, software and networking concepts
- evaluate the social, legal, ethical and environmental effects of computing.

How to succeed

- Program regularly; confidence grows through repeated practice.
- Trace algorithms carefully and explain each step.
- Test solutions using normal, boundary and invalid data.
- Record errors and the strategies used to fix them.
- Practise exam questions as well as practical programming tasks.

Suggested independent resources: Craig'n'Dave, Computer Science GCSE Guru and teacher-provided coding activities.

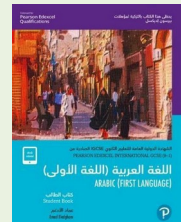
Arabic

Core language subject

Arabic

CORE SUBJECT

Arabic develops accurate, confident communication and a deeper appreciation of the language, its culture and its rich literary traditions. Students follow either a First Language or Second Language route.



Course routes

Arabic as a First Language

- Develops sophisticated reading comprehension
- Strengthens extended and purposeful writing
- Explores language, style and cultural context
- Builds accuracy, organisation and expression

Arabic as a Second Language

- Develops listening, speaking, reading and writing
- Builds practical vocabulary and grammatical control
- Improves fluency in everyday and academic contexts
- Supports confident interaction and communication

Themes may include

- youth and education
- media and culture
- sport and leisure
- travel and tourism
- business, work and employment
- environment and health
- technology.

How to succeed

- Read Arabic regularly, including stories, articles and age-appropriate media.
- Build topic-based vocabulary and review it frequently.
- Practise extended writing and improve work through redrafting.
- Listen to and speak Arabic in a range of contexts.
- Use teacher feedback to improve accuracy, structure and expression.

Placement

The First Language or Second Language route is selected according to the student's previous learning, proficiency and teacher recommendation.

Supporting Success and Next Steps

A shared commitment between students, families and the school

How the school supports students

- Clear curriculum plans and subject guidance
- Regular assessment and constructive feedback
- Mock examinations and targeted intervention
- Printed and digital learning resources
- Meetings with teachers and academic leaders when needed

Student responsibilities

- Attend regularly and arrive prepared
- Meet deadlines and organise materials
- Review learning every week
- Ask for help before small gaps become larger
- Complete all work honestly and independently

How families can help

- Establish a realistic weekly study routine with suitable breaks.
- Encourage regular reading, retrieval practice and independent problem-solving.
- Discuss progress calmly and focus on actions rather than marks alone.
- Monitor deadlines and help students maintain an organised workspace.
- Contact the school early when academic or wellbeing concerns arise.

Next steps

1. Read the subject summaries carefully.
2. Discuss interests, strengths and future possibilities as a family.
3. Ask subject teachers about course demands and suitability.
4. Submit option preferences by the date communicated by the school.
5. Wait for the school to confirm final option blocks and course routes.

Final reminder

The strongest choices are informed, balanced and realistic. They should reflect the student's own interests and readiness while keeping suitable Sixth Form pathways open.

GHARS INTERNATIONAL PRIVATE SCHOOL

Growing knowledge, confidence and future possibilities