

A student's guide to the GCSE in

SCIENCE SINGLE AWARD A (1521)
SCIENCE DOUBLE AWARD A (1522)
BIOLOGY A (1520)
CHEMISTRY A (1530)
PHYSICS A (1540)



What is GCSE science all about?

GCSE Science involves the study of

- Living Processes and Living Things
- Materials and their Properties
- Physical Processes

The Double Award science qualification is the most popular choice counting as two GCSE grades. You might, depending on the advice of your teacher, follow a Single Award, equivalent to one GCSE, or you might be able to do Biology, Chemistry and Physics as separate subjects.

The qualification you follow will depend on courses available in your school and your progress during Key Stage 3.

In your science lessons as well as studying theory, you will carry out practical investigations, such as finding out the effect of temperature on germination, what conditions effect how fast chemicals react or the use of solar panels in heating water.

How does it follow on from what I have learnt before?

Your GCSE science lessons carry on from the work you have already done in Key Stage 3. Some new topics will be met during the course, these develop from earlier topics you will have covered in Key Stage 3.

Why do I have to take GCSE science?

Throughout your life you will have contact with the products of science and technology; think how many people own a mobile phone, the advice you receive from your doctor based on science or articles in the newspapers and TV about issues linked to space science. In your science lessons you will develop the skills to help you understand and use your scientific knowledge in the context of your everyday life.

Scientific knowledge has developed over time and new discoveries continue to be made in all parts of the world. In your science lessons you will explore how ideas and evidence in science have developed, for example you may use resources exploring the development of digital signals or examining the discovery of antibiotics.

How will I be tested?

At the end of your course you will take written exam papers in each of the three strands:

- Living Processes and Living Things
- Materials and their Properties
- Physical Processes

Students taking GCSE Biology, Chemistry or Physics will take an additional paper(s) in the separate science(s).

For all qualifications the written papers taken at the end of the course count as 80% towards your total marks.

Is there any coursework?

Yes, coursework is similar to the style of investigations carried out during Key Stage 3. You will need to show that you are able to plan an investigation, carry this out, collect results and observations and from this explain what has happened. An example would be looking at the effect of exercise on your pulse rate. At the end of your course you will have to present a folder containing pieces of coursework which will count towards your final grade. Your teacher will let you know the number of pieces of work required for your qualification.

What about my results?

You will receive your final results towards the end of August. The double award certificate will show two grades from A*A* - GG, it will show the same grade twice. The single award certificate and the separate science certificates will only show one grade from A* - G.

What other skills might I develop?

While you are doing this course you will also have the chance to develop skills in application of number, IT, communication, problem solving, working with others and in improving your own performance. These six skills are called the Key Skills. You may take a qualification in these skills in addition to your GCSEs.

What can I do next with GCSE Science?

When you receive your results you may wish to continue your study of science. The options open to you depend on the results achieved and your own interests, your teacher will be able to help you select the appropriate course.

You may wish to study a GCE AS or A level in Biology, Human Biology, Chemistry or Physics. Alternatively, you may wish to consider studying science in a more vocational context such as a Vocational A level in Science or Health and Social Care. In addition, there are many openings in science-based courses such as BTEC qualifications for animal nursing, dental technology or electronics.

There are many jobs and careers that build on from a GCSE Science qualification, such as all areas of medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, environmental studies, teaching, engineering and computing.