

# Choosing Your Key Stage 4 Options

9

Recommended  
Year 9Length  
70 Minutes

## About This Lesson

Students will consider the Key Stage 4 options available to them. They will develop an understanding of how some subjects are necessary for future study or career choices. To help them in their decision making, students will evaluate reasons for choosing subjects.

## Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will:

- Be able to say which subjects are compulsory
- Understand the variety of course and subject choices available to them at Key Stage 4
- Identify good ways to make decisions about their options
- Connect careers to subject choices

## Driving Question

How do I pick my Key Stage 4 options?

## Future-Ready Skills

Research

Evaluating

Making connections

Reflecting

## Lesson Breakdown

20  
minutes

### Activity 1 - Options, Options

In this activity, students will explore the subject / course options available to them at Key Stage 4. They will understand which subjects are compulsory and why. They will also learn the options they can choose from in addition to compulsory subjects.

15  
minutes

### Activity 2 - Digging Deeper - Skills and Interests

In this activity, students delve a little deeper into the Key Stage 4 options available to them, identifying where their skills lie and how subjects match their interests.

15  
minutes

### Activity 3 - Decisions, Decisions

In this activity, to help improve their decision making skills, students will identify and evaluate different reasons for choosing a particular subject.

20  
minutes

### Activity 4 - Careers and Helpful School Subjects

In the activity, students explore careers that interest them and learn about school subjects that can be helpful.



### Xello Entry Point

Students will need to save at least 3 careers before starting this lesson. It's also recommended that students complete the **School Subjects at Work** lesson and supporting activities.

## Vocabulary

- Vocational courses
- Compulsory subjects
- Foundation subjects
- Optional subjects
- Required subjects
- Key Stage 4 options

## Benchmarks & Curriculum

**Gatsby Benchmark 3:** addressing the needs of each pupil

**Gatsby Benchmark 4:** Linking curriculum learning to careers

**PSHE L7:** Learn about the options available to them at the end of key stage 3

## Activity 1 - Options, Options

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Length  
20 Minutes

### Inquiry Prompts

- Which subjects will you have to study?
- How might your subject choices affect your future options?

### Teaching Strategies

In this activity, students will understand the offer available at their school and explore their initial thoughts on their subject choices.

- 1 Prior to the lesson, collect option booklets or provide students with access to an online resource outlining their Key Stage 4 options.
- 2 Provide students with sticky notes or access to a shared online document where they can note the subject or course choices that appeal to them.
- 3 Have students read the options booklet and make a note of the subjects that they might be interested in.
- 4 Gather the initial thoughts of students in a shared document or using sticky notes or whiteboard / smartboard.

### Materials Required

- Booklet or handout of Key Stage 4 options available
- Whiteboard / Smartboard or some other means of collecting students' initial thoughts on subject choices.

### Outcomes

Students will gain an understanding of the options available to them. This might include vocational courses and alternative options in addition to GCSE subjects. They will identify subjects or courses that appeal to them and they will understand which subjects are compulsory as well as the optional subjects available to them.

## Activity 2 - Digging Deeper - Skills and Interests

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Length  
15 Minutes

### Inquiry Prompts

- What subjects are you or do you think you will be good at?
- Which subjects or types of learning do you enjoy?

### Teaching Strategies

In this activity, students will assess their skills and interests in relation to different subjects. This is intended to help them identify options that they are likely to enjoy studying and succeed in.

- 1 Prior to the lesson, download a copy of the [Digging Deeper worksheet](#) and add to this the subject options available to students. Alternatively, provide students with the blank worksheet and direct them to add the subject choices to this.
- 2 Instruct the students to complete the worksheet, noting which subjects they think they are skilled in and whether they enjoy or do not enjoy the subject.

### Materials Required

- [Digging Deeper Worksheet](#)

### Outcomes

Students will complete the worksheet identifying how their skills and interests map to subjects.

## Activity 3: Decisions, Decisions

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Length  
15 Minutes

### Inquiry Prompts

- What are the best ways to choose your options?
- Where can you get help with choosing your options?

### Teaching Strategies

In this activity, students identify different reasons for choosing subjects and discuss why some are better than others.

- 1 Give the students a few minutes to work in pairs or groups of 3 to list as many reasons for choosing a subject as they can (regardless of whether they think this is a good reason). This can be a written list or they can use sticky notes.
- 2 Collect all the reasons given by students using a whiteboard / smartboard / flipchart and remove any duplicates.
- 3 Engage the students in a discussion of each reason given, critically evaluating the reason.
- 4 Finally, work with the students to achieve a list of ‘good’ reasons for choosing a subject.

### Materials Required

- Whiteboard and pens / smartboard / flipchart and pens

### Outcomes

Students will engage in a classroom discussion about good and not so good ways of picking Key Stage 4 options.

## Activity 4: Careers and Helpful School Subjects

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Year 9



Length  
20 Minutes

### Inquiry Prompts

- What school subjects are helpful to future careers?
- Do you need certain school subjects to access future careers or training you're interested in?

### Teaching Strategies

In this activity, students will explore the education and training section of Xello career profiles. They will use this information to further their understanding of how their Key Stage 4 options relate to future careers and study.

- 1 Provide the [instructions](#) on the next page to your students.
- 2 As an activity wrap up, once students have completed the activity engage them in a class discussion around what they learned. Were they surprised by any of the helpful subjects noted in the career profiles? Did they change their mind about the options they might choose in Key Stage 4 based on any of the activities they have completed?

### Materials Required

- Computer or tablet with internet access
- [Student instructions](#)

### Outcomes

Students will explore 3 careers they have saved in Xello and identify school subjects that could help them achieve their career goals.

## Careers and Helpful School Subjects

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### Student Instructions

The subjects you choose to study at Key Stage 4 can help you progress to further study or in future careers. You may need to study some subjects to access specific courses in the future. Other subjects can be helpful to you in future careers.

- 1 From your Xello dashboard, access your saved career options.
- 2 For at least 3 of your saved careers, read the education and training section of the career profile.
- 3 Make a note of the education and training needed for your saved careers. Sometimes the education needed will be a higher education course, such as a bachelor's degree. If this is the case, consider the school subjects that you might need, or that will help you access that course.
- 4 Think about the following questions and add some thoughts on the Key Stage 4 options you want to investigate further to the **My Notes** card of your saved careers.

Think about:

- Do the subjects listed as helpful to the careers match the subjects you identified in activity 1?
- Do any of the helpful subjects surprise you?
- Do any of your saved careers require no formal education?
- How do you feel about studying the subjects needed or helpful to the careers you have saved?