

GCSEs and where they lead to Post 16 and Post 18

For Students



Overview

Aim: To raise awareness of pathways you could take at 16 and 18 and what might work for you.

Objectives:

1. Understand why GCSEs are important.
2. Understand why achieving grade 4s or above will keep the maximum Post 16 and Post 18 options open and what you can do with grade 3s and under.
3. Be clear about the main Post 16 options.
4. Be clear about the main Post 18 options.
5. Identify what your career pathways could look like.

Discuss..

Why are GCSEs important?

1. GCSEs can determine the college/sixth form you go to.
2. GCSEs can determine the level of apprenticeship you can do or if an apprenticeship is an option directly after school.
3. GCSEs determine the qualifications you take next.
4. GCSEs could be used to assess eligibility for a university course or what university you could attend.
5. GCSEs can affect the career you end up doing.

- **Why is it useful to get as many GCSEs or equivalent at grade 4/pass or above as possible?**

9
8
7
6
5 (strong pass)
4 (standard pass)
3
2
1
U

Cambridge Nationals Grade	GCSE Equivalent Grade
D*2	8.5
D2	7
M2	5.5
P2	4
D1	3
M1	2
P1	1

You get to choose!



What are your choices?

Choices at...



What are the main options open to all Year 11s

We call them your Post 16 Options



College



Apprenticeship



Work

Here are just a few things you need to know about them

Let's get started

Task One – identify the difference between different qualifications and paths post school

How: Each group to work together to explore a different option at college or through an apprenticeship and share what they find with the group. Use the prospectuses and other materials to identify 4 key things that others should know about the option you are exploring.

Why: This activity is about being able to independently explore your options, discuss what they mean and the pros and cons and use the prospectuses to learn about courses and how they work.

To help you use what is available and to understand yourself and how to make informed decisions for your future.

Questions to consider

How many subjects can you study?

How long is the qualification?

What subjects can you study?

What ways would I like to learn to study this?

What does the qualification involve?

What grades do I need?

A Levels

- **A Levels** are often known as ‘**academic, theory-based qualifications.**’
- Assessed by exams at end of 2 years.
- They can prepare you for university, work or apprenticeships.
- You would normally pick 3 subjects to study.
- You will need at least 5 GCSEs at grade 4-9, however some subjects require higher grades.
- Check which subjects need higher grades e.g. Maths and Science/languages may require 6s or above.
- If you have a specific career or degree in mind, check what you might need to study at college.



Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs)

- AAQs are qualifications that offer an academic qualification with applied learning in a range of subjects at Level 3.
- They are designed to help you progress to higher education but can also prepare you for apprenticeships or work. AAQs also attract UCAS points.
- They are designed to be taken alongside A Levels, in subjects not usually covered by A Levels, like engineering, medical and applied science.
- Small AAQs are equivalent to an A Level and have been designed to be studied alongside A levels in a mixed study programme.
- Large AAQs are designed to be studied on their own or alongside one A level.
- They are studied for two years and are part exam and part assessment.
- You will need at least 5 GCSEs at grade 4-9, however some subjects will require higher grades.

Vocational Qualifications

- Vocational qualifications are skills-based qualifications often related to a job role or industry.
- Suitable if you know the industry that interests you or you enjoy more practical ways of learning and coursework.
- Available from Level 1 pathway to Level 3.
- Can be equivalent to 3 A Levels such as a Level 3 Extended Diploma.
- At some colleges you can mix A levels and vocational qualifications.
- You will need at least 5 GCSEs at grade 4/5 or above including English and Maths to study a Level 3 course. Some subjects may require higher grades
- They can give access to university, work or apprenticeships.
- Some of these qualifications will be removed in the next few years but alternatives, including V Levels will be offered.



T Levels

- T (Technical) Levels are 2-year vocational courses, which are taken after GCSEs and are equivalent to 3 A Levels.
- They prepare you with the skills and knowledge for working in a particular industry.
- 80% of your time will be spent in the classroom and 20% on an extended work placement involving an employer project to support you with being work ready. Exams are a component of the assessment.
- Entry requirements are likely to be 4-5s and above in at least 5 GCSE subjects (including Maths and English).
- Assessed as Pass, Merit, Distinction and Distinction*
- Can be used for higher and degree level apprenticeships, university or work, if you are considering university check that the universities that interest you will accept a T level for entry.



V Levels

V Levels are new qualifications that will offer an academic qualification with applied learning in a range of subjects at Level 3.

- They will be introduced in phases, starting in September 2027. V Levels offer a broad vocational qualification for students who want to explore a sector before deciding where to specialise.
- Initial subjects are likely to include Accounting and Finance, Digital Systems and Data, Catering and Hospitality, and Education and Early Years. Further subjects will be introduced in stages in 2028.
- They are designed to help you progress to higher education but can also prepare you for apprenticeships or work. V Levels also attract UCAS points.
- They are the same size as an A Level and can be combined with A Levels.
- They are studied for two years and may be part exam and part assessment.
- You will need at least 5 GCSEs at grade 4-9, however some subjects will require higher grades.

Apprenticeships

- An apprenticeship means you are employed by a company and earn a wage while you learn.
- You will need to be 16 or over and not in full-time employment.
- There are over 600 apprenticeships starting at foundation, Level 2 or Level 3, from veterinary nurse to game programmer.
- You can apply whilst still at school and vacancies might be available at any time of year.
- **YOU** will need to find your **own** employer or go to colleges and training providers to help you find one. However, colleges cannot guarantee an apprenticeship.
- Assessed to ensure you can achieve the knowledge, skills and behaviours required and you will have to complete assessments.
- After an apprenticeship you might move to a higher-level apprenticeship, work, or further learning.

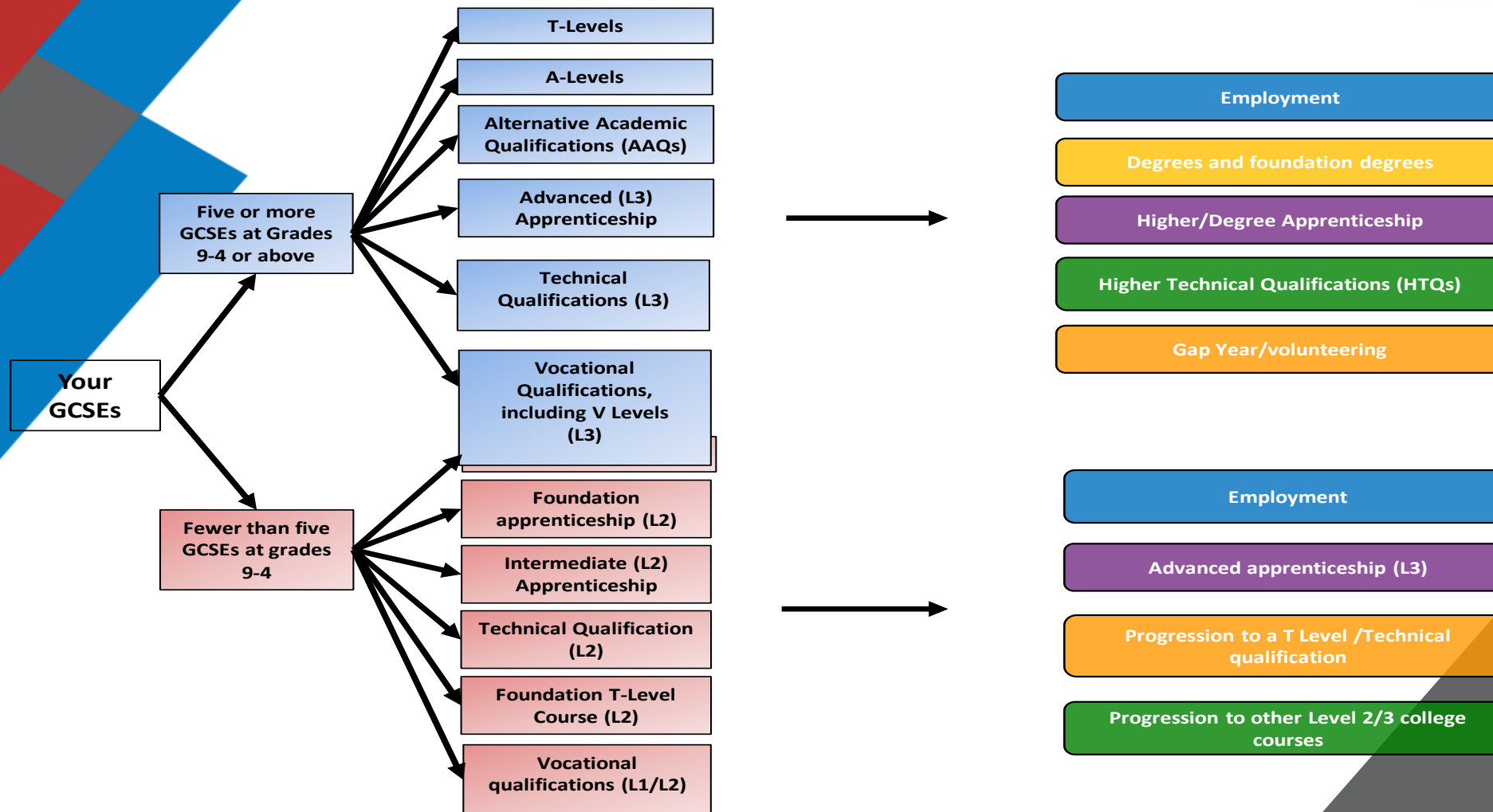


Employed, Self-Employed or Volunteering

- If you are planning to go straight into employment, self-employment or volunteering you need to be aware that it **is not an easy option!**
- You will be required to do accredited education or training alongside this option.



Post 16 Pathways



What is an apprenticeship?



NAME:
NGAIO

SALARY RANGE:
£10K - £12K

TITLE:
**BROADCAST JOURNALIST
ADVANCED APPRENTICE**

EMPLOYER:
**BBC RADIO
BRISTOL**

What are apprenticeships?



Employed



Paid a salary



Contract



80% work
20% off the job



Typically
1-4 years +

600+

600+ standards



Foundation -
Degree level



Real job =
responsibilities



Not the easy option

Who do you know? What did they do?



JOE SUGGS

Strictly dancer and YouTube blogger started out as an apprentice roof thatcher which is why his YouTube channel is called “ThatcherJoe”.



IDRIS ALBA

Former tire fitter who trained as an actor in UK before becoming famous in the UK and Hollywood.

Some useful places to look for information could be...



The careers section on your school website.



Your in-school Careers Adviser

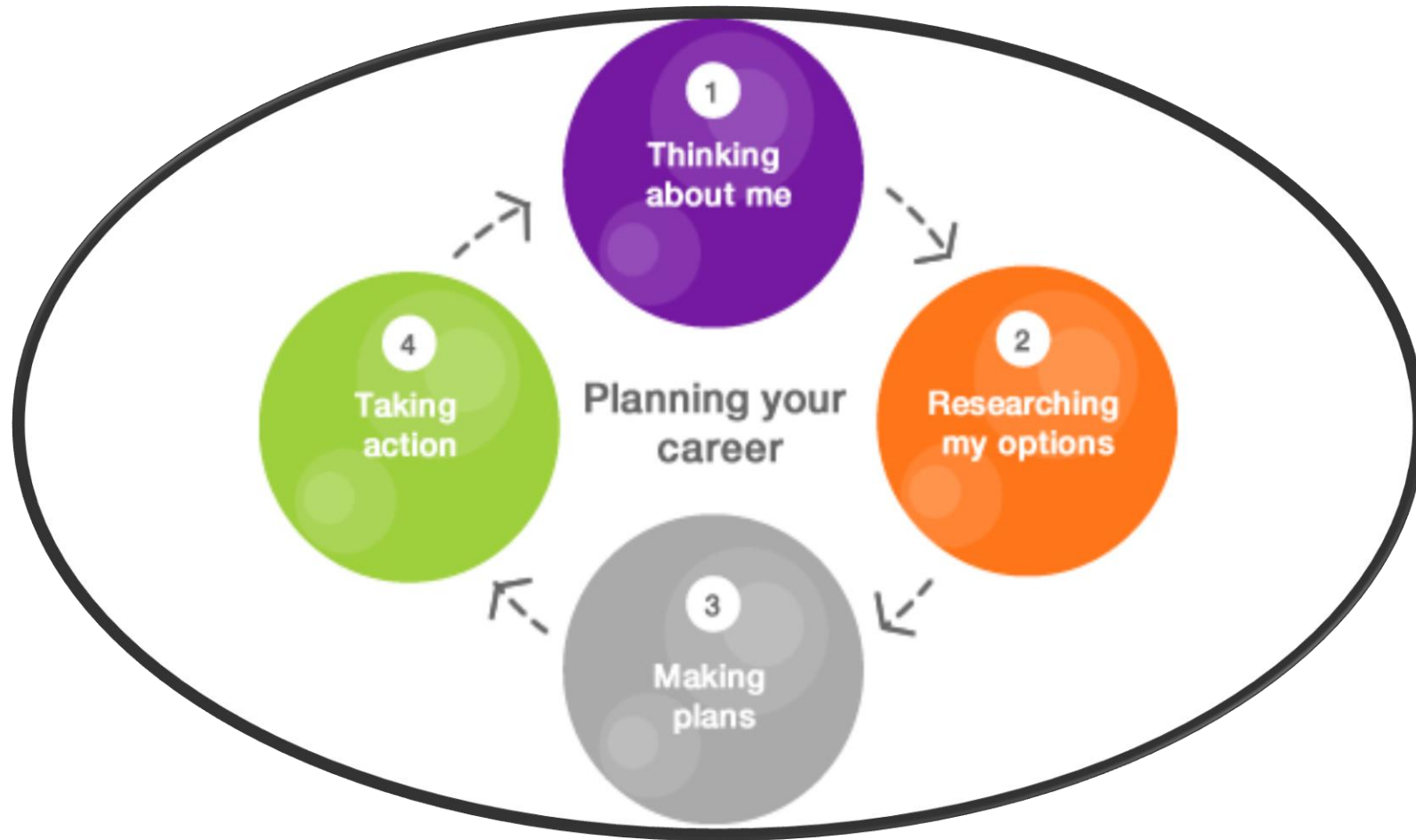


University prospectuses - find them in the library or your careers adviser's office



Local Training Providers'

What do I do next?



Let's get started

Task Two – Learn more about possible career pathways

How: In groups of 4-6 using college prospectuses and apprenticeship information, research what interests you. Then pick one you want to find out more about and one backup, then consider the following:

1. Which of the options looked at feels right for you?
2. What are the entry requirements (e.g. what GCSEs and grades do you need)?
3. Where could I study/apply/find more information about this?

Researching my options

- Look at the college prospectuses, find out what you like the idea of, and what doesn't interest you.
- Find out if the subjects you like can be taken as an apprenticeship?
- Find out if you can study the subjects you like at A level or through a vocational route such as a BTEC or T level course.
- Complete the pathways worksheet with any career that interests you.



LET'S RECAP...

What have you learned today:

- Why GCSEs are important.
- Why achieving as many grade 4s or above as you can will keep your options open.
- There are options for everyone.
- Understand what the main Post 16 options are
- How to start researching what option feels right for you

Any Questions

