

27th March 2020

RE: Preparing for Post – 16 Letter

Dear Year 11 Parents and Carers,

Once again, we want to inform you that we are incredibly proud of your children and we are in an excellent position as your child has made at least two or more post – 16 applications. This also means post – 16 providers already have your child’s details and are aware of the qualification and subjects they wish to study. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with some guidance on communicating with post – 16 providers and preparing your child for studying post – 16.

Update on GCSE qualification and grading

The school received information from the Department for Education today stating that guidance will be published on how examination grades will be calculated by the end of next week. As soon as we have received this information, we will share it with you so that we can further put your mind and the students’ minds at ease. Thank you for patience and support while the Government responds to this unusual situation.

Communication with post – 16 providers

It is important to keep the lines of communication open to ensure a smooth transition. During this time, we would recommend you send an email as some schools may be closed and staff are working from home. All contact details for post – 16 providers can be found on their website or our website [here](#).

If your child has a **conditional/unconditional offer**, we advise that they make contact with their first-choice provider and enquire about additional reading they would recommend, to bridge the gap between GCSE and the qualification they have chosen to do.

If your child is still **awaiting an offer**, we advise that they contact the post – 16 provider and ask if there is any further information they would like from yourself or AGFS, including when you might hear back about a decision.

If an application went through just before the school closure period, we advise that you contact the post – 16 provider and check whether it was received. Additionally, please inform us by emailing sreddy@arkgreenwich.org and we will follow up on your behalf too.

Preparation for post – 16 qualifications

Now is the time for your child to start preparing for their post – 16 journey. We advise that they contact their first-choice post – 16 provider and ask them what they would recommend to read in preparation for their courses. This will not only show they are proactive but will help bridge the gap between GCSE post – 16 courses.

We are delighted to enclose some guidance from some AGFS alumni. Their valuable guidance aims to help you during this period and give you an idea of how your child can use this time wisely.

If you have any questions regarding post – 16, please do not hesitate to contact Miss Reddy, Assistant Headteacher - sreddy@arkgreenwich.org.

Yours faithfully

Mr Spiers
Headteacher

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'Ambition, Growth, Fellowship, Scholarship'

Jaynelle Osei, 2019 Alumni currently studying at Dartford Grammar School for Girls

What to do now - A guide for Year 11s

We are currently going through a very turbulent and tempestuous time, especially for those of you in Year 11. Nevertheless, Year 11 students will still be going to Sixth Form/College, so whilst we are quarantined, now is the best time to get a head start and begin preparing for your Sixth Form/College journey. Below are subject-specific guides to help you figure out what to do to prepare. These are not extensive, but are small things that will really help you later on.

English Literature

English Literature is possibly one of the easiest subjects to prepare for out of most subjects. Read, read, read! Then read some more! You can begin by looking at the Sixth Form/College that you think you may go to and look at the books, plays, and poems they will be studying in Year 12. Whilst you don't have to annotate these texts in full, simply reading the text and making note of why you like or don't like it will help you very much in the future. This is because reading in Year 12 becomes a lot more hectic than Year 11, not only do you have your school texts, but you also begin to explore wider reading texts. This can get overwhelming, so starting now will not only help you stay focused on that English Literature mindset but also give future you a break. It is also important to mention, please check the school's texts, if you don't particularly enjoy or like the themes of the texts they study, it may make it harder for you in Year 12, so pick your schools wisely!

Here are some places where you can read books:

For a Price: <https://www.audible.co.uk/>

For Free: <https://www.gutenberg.org/>

History/ Politics

Now, I may be biased, but History is possibly one of the most enjoyable subjects to prepare for. Like English Literature, wider reading is also a way to prepare. Based on the content that the school you want to go to is teaching, you can find historical books to help boost your knowledge. For example, I'm currently doing Tsarist and Communist Russia as part of my course, so I've been reading books such as Revolutionary Russia by Orlando Figes. By doing so, you've given yourself the background of the content you will be



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studying in more detail and developing your critical thinking skills for debate. Additionally, watching documentaries can be a fun and chill way of getting knowledge for a specific course. The BBC is a wonderful resource to watch these documentaries from a wide range of topics. Happy watching and reading!

To watch: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/categories/history/featured>

Modern Foreign Languages

The big difference between GCSE and A Level Languages is the link to cultural studies. In addition to some core language work, you will spend the majority of your time learning about the history, politics and society of the countries you are studying, as well as studying a film and a piece of literature. To best prepare for this, you should:

1. Start reading the news in the language you are studying e.g. www.france24.fr or www.elmundo.es.
2. Watch films on Netflix in the language you are studying.
3. Go to Walter Presents on Channel 4 On Demand and watch TV series in the language you are studying.
4. Revise core grammar by using the grammar section of www.thisislanguages.com

Psychology

For Psychology, wider reading and watching is something that students all recommend to increase subject knowledge. Some advice is that you do not need to go too heavy with this but knowing some key figures and theorists can help you in the long run.

Some wider reading for Psychology:

Introducing Psychology: A Graphic Guide to Your Mind and Behaviour by Nigel Benson

Freud for Beginners by Richard Appignanesi and Oscar Zarate

Psychology: A Very Short Introduction by Gillian Butler and Freda McManus

Sociology

Television shows can help you widen your knowledge and have some value to the course. Whilst they may not be as subject-specific as a History documentary, they are useful for making you think and develop your own opinions and arguments.

TV Shows which have some sociological value:

“Panorama”

“Cutting Edge”

Art

Since we are on lockdown, it may not be as easy to prepare for Art as it once was. Many people’s advice was to go see galleries and exhibitions, this can still be done. There are many different virtual galleries online which you can use. These may be useful for expanding your knowledge on art and picking up on some new artists you may have never heard of before.

Some Virtual Galleries:

<https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/visiting/virtual-tours>

<https://www.eden-gallery.com/virtual-tour/>

Business

If you are planning to study Business, now is the perfect time to get stuck in! Business is constantly evolving and reading current affairs is imperative for the clear and developed understanding of the Business world and the impact of politics and economics within that. Tips would be to keep up-to-date with news surrounding businesses, this is especially useful because we are in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic. By doing this, you are expanding your own bank of real-life scenarios which you can adapt to theory in Year 12. This is something you are expected to do in Year 12 but will be of real help now. In addition, if you were not studying Business at GCSE, then it may be helpful to do some self-study on the GCSE course online to make sure that you understand key terminology as your classes may have Business GCSE students and some teachers may forget to slow down.

To Read: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business>

To Study: <https://app.senecalearning.com/courses> / <http://www.tutor2u.net/>

Maths

Maths is mostly GCSE content at the beginning of the course, so making sure to practice key things such as basic algebra and quadratics is important. A top tip is to go over all the maths content you found difficult at GCSE and make sure that everything is consolidated. With Maths, the only way is to continue to practice making sure you don't lose those key skills needed. If you would like to get a head start, the website 'Physics and Maths Tutor' is recommended by A Level students and could be a way for you to gauge if Maths is for you.

To Study: <https://www.physicsandmathstutor.com/>

Biology, Chemistry and Physics

For Chemistry, some advice from Year 12 students was to make sure you have all your GCSE Maths knowledge consolidated. Chemistry students have stressed: **make sure you know there is maths**, this is a key point and it's important you keep practising to make sure your key skills are consolidated. There are some Biology, Chemistry and Physics textbooks online which can help you with the transition, but the current A Level students only suggest you do this if you really struggled with the GCSE course and need some extra revision and help. The key thing to do again is to keep going over the GCSE course to make sure you don't lose any content knowledge.

Textbook Links:

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Head-Start-level-Chemistry-Level/dp/1782942807>

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Head-Start-level-Biology-Level/dp/1782942793>

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Head-Start-level-Physics-Level/dp/1782942815>

I hope this guide has been useful and wish you all the best.

-Jaynelle

Giacomo Bognolo, 2018 Alumni currently studying at St Olave's Grammar School

With your GCSEs cancelled, like my A Levels, we have all lost the structure in our lives that we had only last week. Now we have no exams to work towards and some uncertainty surrounding our grades and post – 16 study. It is common in times like these to feel bored and purposeless, with no routines and no end-goal. I hope my suggestions for how to spend your time from now until you start your post-16 study help to counteract this.

The most important thing to do right now is **make a plan**. Plan not only your daily routine, but your next few years. If you want to go to university, now is the time to research your course and figure out if there are books you can start reading now, or courses you can go on once you start Year 12. Perhaps you will want to contact your future school to see if they have any reading or activities they want you to do before starting - although give this a week or so for teachers to settle into their new routines as they are very busy right now! If you are studying a **science subject**, make sure you don't forget GCSE content as this upholds all your post – 16 content. If you did not finish the course, then complete it yourself so you have an understanding of all the content you will rely on in the next two years.

Get into **productive habits**. Make sure you don't get used to taking forever to do an easy task, simply because you know you have the time now - GCSEs taught me to be more efficient with my time management, and you will need to be too. **Read a newspaper** every day (for example when you eat breakfast) so you keep up with **current affairs**. I like The Guardian, which is free (<https://www.theguardian.com/uk>) and The Times, which requires a subscription (<https://www.thetimes.co.uk>). Reading the opinion articles in these papers will help develop your **critical thinking**, especially as they generally have opposing political views.

Use your free time **wisely**. Of course, you should take some time to relax and process what has happened with exams and what is going on in the world. But don't forget that you will (hopefully) never be in this situation again, so don't let all this free time go to waste. You could **learn a language** (for example, I've started studying Latin and Spanish) using the many free online courses available (see below). You could also look at the Open Learn website (part of the Open university) (<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses/full-catalogue>) which has loads of free courses in a range of fields, from psychology to law, that could interest you - these are great to start off with and give you the necessary grounding to get more advanced.

You could also **volunteer**. In a national crisis such as this, we need to work together and support the wider community. Lots of people are struggling right now, and there are plenty of volunteering opportunities you could take part in which would really help those in difficulty. You have been given five months of time - make sure you give something back to others too. Have a look here for what you could do to help: <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering/i-want-to-volunteer/volunteering-coronavirus>.

Language-learning websites:

1. - <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses/full-catalogue>
2. - <https://www.duolingo.com>
3. - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/>

Good luck and stay healthy. If you need any help or wish to contact me, then please do so. My email is giacomobognolo@gmail.com.

-Giacomo Bognolo