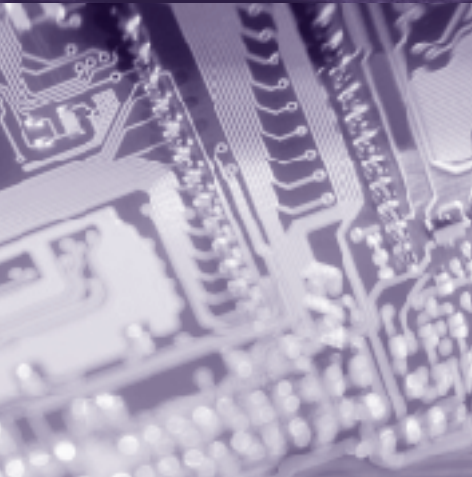


A student's guide to the GCSE in

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)



What is GCSE ICT all about?

- GCSE ICT is an ideal preparation for a technological world in which ICT touches every part of our daily lives. The course will develop your practical ICT skills and extend your knowledge and understanding of ICT systems.
- The course is based on practical work and problem solving and will involve you in developing real life ICT systems.
- All the key pieces of software are included: word processing, databases, spreadsheets, desktop publishing, communications software, modelling/simulations, data logging and computer control.
- You will gain an insight into how computer systems work, computer networking, programming, communications and the Internet.
- You will consider the issues that are facing people as a result of the ever expanding use of ICT systems and the Internet.

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

You should already have a wide range of ICT skills, using a variety of software packages, from your key stage 3 courses. The GCSE course allows you to further develop these skills and provides you with opportunities to explore alternative pieces of software.

Will I enjoy this course?

You will enjoy this course if you want to study a subject that:

- is relevant to the world you live in, and to your future
- will enable you to develop practical skills that will be of immediate value in your other GCSE subjects and further education
- takes a practical approach
- spreads the coursework load over the duration of the course
- develops a full range of skills that will be useful in other subjects you study, and in employment.

What about exams?

After completing your course you will take one two hour exam paper worth 40% of the marks. The exam paper is divided into three sections. Section A contains a collection of multiple choice answer questions. Sections B and C contain sets of structured questions. Section B comprises of a 'case study' - a specific situation involving the use of ICT - that you are told about and prepare for before the exam.

What about the coursework?

Coursework makes up the remaining 60% of the marks. The advantages of this are that you won't be judged just on how well you do on one day in the exam and it reduces the pressure around exam time.

Your coursework will consist of your solutions to four problems that need to be solved using ICT. One of these will be a database problem, another will involve spreadsheets and the remaining two may be chosen by you in agreement with your teacher from a range of alternatives.

You will produce a report for each of the problems you solve which is marked by your teacher. Since there are four pieces of coursework to produce, you can learn from your mistakes and will have the opportunity to achieve a good overall coursework score.

What other skills might I develop?

In addition to developing your practical ICT skills your coursework will help you to develop the skills of organising your own time and reviewing your own work and progress. You will discover how to research information from a range of sources and present it in a variety of ways. You will also learn the importance of working and co-operating with other people. These skills are readily 'transferable' and will be of value in many of your other subjects, in further education and to future employers.

What could I do next with GCSE ICT?

A GCSE in ICT opens the door to a whole range of future opportunities. The skills you develop will support you in your future studies and employment.

A good grade at GCSE ICT will help you move on to any AS, A level or vocational A level course. If you enjoyed your GCSE course, you might want to move on to the specialist AS, or A level courses in ICT or Computing.

Alternatively, you may wish to consider GNVQs at Intermediate level, or more vocationally-related course like a BTEC First or National Award.

Your well developed ICT skills will be highly valued and sought after in all areas of employment.