

You may be asked by your post-primary school to choose some of the subjects that you wish to study.

This is likely to happen:

- During first year, when you choose subjects or short courses for the Junior Cycle (first, second and third year)
- In third year, for Transition Year (TY)
- Or, where there is no TY, in third year for the Senior Cycle (fifth and sixth year)
- In TY for the Senior Cycle

This resource sheet gives a brief outline of what to think about before you choose subjects.

It does not provide answers but, rather, suggests the kind of questions to ask yourself and others, like your parents, before choosing your subjects.

You are encouraged to begin thinking about these questions well before you must choose.

The sooner you begin, the more information you will have to make good decisions.

You are also encouraged to speak to parents and other important people in your life, such as your guidance counsellor, while thinking about those questions.

The kind of person you are will have an influence on your choices about your future career.

At first glance, some of the answers to the questions might seem obvious. However, finding the answers to questions about yourself and your preferences can reveal more questions that might need the help of other people to answer.

How you make decisions and how you think about things can also influence your choices. For example, do you make quick decisions or do you like to take your time? Talking about these, especially with parents, can be helpful.

The things you are good at when out of school can have an influence on your subjects. You might be good at music or computers or games, for example. Thinking and talking about these might have a bearing on your choice of subjects.

Other people, like your parents and other family members, probably have some ideas about other things that you are good at, even though you might not think so yourself.

Schools expect students to study **Irish, English and Mathematics** right through post-primary school.

In the Junior Cycle, most schools also expect students to study another **language and science**. Languages Connect highlights the importance of learning a second language.

Having those will allow you to opt for subjects in the Senior Cycle that will prepare you for entry into many University courses. For example, an additional modern language is required for entry to some courses. Science is required, in addition to Mathematics, for many courses in the area of technology, engineering and, of course, science.

Entry to other courses have specific requirements, like having a high grade in mathematics or in Irish, and having one, or two, science subjects is a requirement for entry to others.

For the Junior Cycle, and because your school will have chosen some of the subjects for you, your choice of subjects and courses will be based largely on what you like.

Ask yourself 'What subjects do I like?'

Which of your school subjects has been your favourite (and your least favourite and everything in between)?

Did you like those because of the things you learned or because you liked the teacher? Remember that you might have different teachers for those subjects in future.

Would you like to study those subjects in more detail for the next two years or more?

It can be useful also to ask yourself about why you like or dislike those subjects and, similarly, why you like or dislike other activities in and out of school. Think about the things that you like, such as your hobbies, and the activities like nature study, music, science, history that you enjoyed while in primary school. Did you like helping in various events, like shows or in making things or in helping other people? The answers to these questions might have a bearing on your subject choices.

Then ask yourself about what subjects you are good at.

The subjects you are good at are not necessarily the subjects you like.
The subjects you like are not necessarily the subjects you are good at.
If that is the case, you might need to ask why that is the case.

Can you choose subjects that you haven't studied before?

Your teachers can answer questions about

- your results
- how well you are likely to do in a subject in future
- the things to be learned in the subjects in future
- the possibility of taking up a new subject

You will find more detailed information about the subjects available in the Junior Cycle, the website of the National Centre for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) website at <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Home/Junior-Certificate-Fact-sheets>.

• Art, Craft, Design	• Italian
• Business Studies	• Mathematics
• Classical Studies	• Materials Technology Wood
• Civics Social Political Education	• Music
• English	• Metalwork
• Environmental Social Studies	• Physical Education
• French	• Religious Education
• Geography	• Science
• German	• Spanish
• History	• Social Political Health Education
• Home Economics	• Technical Graphics
• Irish	• Technology

*Latin and Ancient Greek is also a subject on the curriculum, however there is no factsheet available on the subject from NCCA at this time.

When choosing for the Senior Cycle, another important question is

‘What subjects do I need for University courses or careers that I would like to follow?’

Having some ideas about what you would like to do after leaving school will help you to ask more questions about the subjects you will need.

You will need to think seriously about these before you reach the end of the Junior Cycle.

You should note that, although most students will participate in some form of further or higher education or training after leaving school, the entry requirements vary greatly.

Entry to jobs and courses after leaving school will depend largely, though not entirely, on the subjects you study in the Senior Cycle.

Your overall grades in your final examinations will also matter.

Your school will provide information about the subjects it can offer.

Your guidance counsellor will help you to find information about the requirements for entry to jobs and courses.

Resources

Websites, such as Qualifax at <http://www.qualifax.ie/> and CareersPortal at <https://careersportal.ie/> have very useful information that will help to answer your questions and to point to other information to help you with your choices. Similarly, the NCCA website at <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Senior-cycle> contains up-to-date information regarding the subjects available in the Senior Cycle. The Languages Connect website at <https://languagesconnect.ie/why-study-a-language/> highlights the importance of learning a foreign language.

