

SHAPING  
**YOUR  
FUTURE**  
STARTS HERE

NAME:

FORM:



**GO HIGHER**  
WEST YORKSHIRE

# CONTENTS

<b>SECTION 1</b>	<b>General information</b>	<b>03</b>
<b>SECTION 2</b>	<b>Self-exploration</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>SECTION 3</b>	<b>Further Education</b>	<b>21</b>
	UCAS	23
	Choosing a further education provider	29
	Choosing a further education course	32
	Applying to further education	45
<b>SECTION 4</b>	<b>Introduction to higher education (HE)</b>	<b>53</b>
	Jargon buster	55
	Alternative routes to HE	61
	Choosing a university and course	63
	UCAS	73
	Student finance	80
	Accommodation	82
	Student life	87
	Design your own university!	95
<b>SECTION 5</b>	<b>Careers and employability</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>SECTION 6</b>	<b>Study skills</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>SECTION 7</b>	<b>Self-care</b>	<b>123</b>
	Stress and anxiety	137
	Physical wellness	143
	Self-esteem, confidence and resilience	154
<b>SECTION 8</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>168</b>

# 1 GENERAL INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

KEYWORDS

# INTRODUCTION

**Go Higher West Yorkshire brings together the thirteen higher education providers (colleges, universities and a conservatoire) across West Yorkshire.**

We work as a team to help young people just like you achieve the future they want. We do all kinds of work, including events, activities and lots of 'behind the scenes' stuff, to make sure that every young person in West Yorkshire can make decisions about going to university or college. If you'd like to find out more about what we do, head over to our website at [www.gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk](http://www.gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk) where you'll find lots of information and resources. There's also a ton of useful stuff for parents and carers.

We created this workbook to help you navigate the many twists and turns of deciding what to do with your future. We know that there are loads of things to think about, questions to answer and decisions to make. Hopefully, through completing this workbook you can feel a bit clearer and more confident about your next steps. There are plenty of blank note pages throughout the workbook, so feel free to use these to keep track of any important information or thoughts, or just to doodle and take some time out! We've also included hints, tips and experiences from real life students studying at universities and colleges across West Yorkshire, so keep an eye out for some useful insights.

You might be asked to complete the workbook at school or college, as part of classes or support sessions. You could also complete it by yourself in your own time. However you do it, this workbook is *yours*. Doodle on it, add post-it notes, pour your heart out into it! The more you put into it, the more you'll get out of it.

As well as tackling all the education stuff, we wanted to include some sections about self-care and wellbeing. It's important to take care of yourself and look after your physical and mental health, so you'll find information about self-care, stress and anxiety, physical wellness and more. We've also included regular opportunities throughout the workbook for you to check in on your mood and wellbeing.

**Wellbeing professionals have checked this information and we hope it is useful to you. If you do feel that you would like some extra help, please speak to someone you trust at school or college or your loved ones, who may be able to direct you to a health professional or another source of support.**

# KEYWORDS

**You will find many of these words throughout the workbook. If you come across a word you don't understand, flip back to these pages to find out what it means.**

**A Levels** – Subject-based qualifications that can lead to university, further study, training or work. Usually studied at college or sixth form.

**Academic** – Work done in schools, colleges and universities, especially work that involves studying and reasoning rather than practical or technical skills.

**Advanced apprenticeship** – Also called Level 3 apprenticeships. A work-based qualification that is generally the same level as two passes at A Level.

**Application** – A formal request to be considered for a job or course.

**Apprenticeship** – A real job where you will receive training and be paid a wage.

**Audition** – An interview where you demonstrate a practical skill through performance.

**Bachelor's degree** – A degree that is awarded by colleges and universities upon completing a course of study lasting 3–7 years. This is usually the first degree you do in higher education.

**BTEC** – A career-focused qualification that includes a mixture of practical and written work. Designed to prepare you for the world of work.

**Bursary** – Money given to students to help them pay for things relating to their education. Bursaries do not need to be paid back.

**Campus** – The grounds and buildings of a university or college.

**Campus university** – A university where all the buildings are based on a single site.

**Careers adviser** – Somebody who provides advice and guidance to help people make choices about their education and career.

**Careers fair** – An event where colleges, universities and employers get together to share information with potential students and employees.

**College** – An institution that provides education at a variety of levels.

**Combined/Joint Honours** – A degree course that includes more than one subject.

**Conditional offer** – An offer that depends on the grades achieved at A Level.

**Conservatoire** – A college where students study classical music or other arts-based courses.

**Degree** – A qualification that students get when they finish a course of study in higher education, usually at a college or university.

**Degree apprenticeship** – A work-based qualification that allows students to get a degree as part of their apprenticeship.

**Disabled Students' Allowance** – Money that is available to help students pay for any extra costs they might face due to a disability, mental health condition or learning difference.

**Employer** – A person or organisation that provides jobs.

**Entry requirements** – The grades, points or experience needed to access a course.

**Extracurricular activities** – An activity or subject that isn't part of the usual school or college course. This might include hobbies, volunteering or other interests.

**Foundation degree** – Two-year courses that are equivalent to the first two years of an undergraduate degree. Often provide a combination of academic and workplace skills and knowledge.

**Foundation year** – A course that is normally one year long and gives students the knowledge and skills they need to move onto a full degree.

**Functional skills** – Courses that help students to learn basic reading, writing, maths and computer skills.

**Further education (FE)** – Education that is below degree level for people above school age.

**Go Higher West Yorkshire** – A group of the higher education providers across West Yorkshire that provides information about higher education.

**Graduate** – Someone who has completed an academic degree.

**Graduation** – The ceremony that takes place at the end of an academic course. This is where students receive their formal degree qualifications.

**Grant** – Money that may be available to students to support them with particular parts of their education. Grants usually do not have to be paid back.

**Group interview** – Where you're interviewed alongside other people applying for the same opportunity. This might involve you taking part in an activity with other applicants to showcase your skills.

**Higher apprenticeship** –

Apprenticeships that allow a student to gain qualifications at Level 4 or above.

**Higher education (HE)** – Education that happens at a university or college, where students can achieve a degree-level qualification.

**Higher National Certificate (HNC)** –

A one-year work-related course that is equivalent to the first year of a university degree programme.

**Higher National Diploma (HND)** –

A two-year course that is equivalent to the first two years of a bachelor's degree.

**Independent study** – Work that a student does with little to no supervision.

**Intermediate apprenticeship** –

Apprenticeships that allow students to gain qualifications equivalent to Level 2.

**Lecture** – When a tutor delivers a presentation to students on a particular topic and the students listen and take notes.

**Lecture theatre** – A large space, usually tiered (on different levels), where lectures take place.

**Maintenance loan** – A loan that is paid directly to you, the student, once per term to help cover living costs.

**Master's degree** – A degree that you can study after your first degree to explore a subject in greater detail.

**Mindfulness** – Bringing your awareness to the present moment. Used as a therapeutic technique.

**Module** – A section of a course. Different modules focus on different parts of a subject and combine to create the full course.

**Non-campus university** – A university where the buildings are spread out across a town or city.

**Non-graduate** – Someone who has not completed a degree.

**One-to-one interview** – Where it's just you and the interviewer in the room.

**Online/distance learning** – When you study your course away from the university or college and use online resources to support you.

**Open event** – When universities and colleges open their doors to the general public and offer subject talks, tours of campus facilities and the chance to meet academics.

**Panel interview** – Where you're interviewed by more than one person.

**Personal statement** – A statement that is written by a student when applying for a course. It is a chance to tell your chosen universities or colleges why they should accept you onto their course.

**Plagiarism** – Taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as your own.

**Portfolio** – A document, either physical or digital, that showcases your best creative work.

**Post-16 education** – Education that happens after the age of 16.

**Postgraduate** – Education that happens after students have achieved their first degree.

**Pre-16 education** – Education that happens before the age of 16.

**Prospectus** – A printed booklet advertising schools, colleges or universities to potential students.

**Qualification** – An official record to show that a student has completed a course of study. Qualifications also show the level or grade achieved.

**Repayment threshold** – The amount at which a student or graduate starts or stops repaying their student loan.

**Repayments** – Payments made by a student or graduate to repay their student loan.

**Russell Group** – A group of universities that have a shared focus on research and a reputation for academic achievement.

**Sandwich/placement year** – A sandwich year is an additional option on some undergraduate degrees. It is essentially a full year (usually your third year) where you will be on a work placement that is related to your course.

**Scholarship** – A grant or payment made to support a student's education. Usually awarded as a result of a specific achievement such as achieving certain grades.

**Sector** – An area of similar jobs. For example, the 'music sector' is the name given to jobs that are based around music.

**Self-care** – Taking action to look after your own physical health or mental wellbeing.

**Seminar** – Usually smaller group gatherings that take place at university or college, where students have the opportunity to discuss the information they have found.

**SEND** – This stands for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

**Sixth form** – An educational setting where students, usually aged 16–19, study for qualifications such as A Levels and BTECs.

**Society** – Where groups of like-minded students get together to enjoy a common interest.

**Specialist institution** – Where an entire institution is dedicated to the study of one subject or a group of similar subjects.

**Student accommodation** – Where students live while they are studying at university or college.

**Student ambassador** – Students whose job it is to represent and promote their university or college and provide information about higher education to others.

**Timetable** – A schedule showing when different events or lessons take place.

**T-Levels** – Level 3 qualifications that aim to give students the knowledge and practical experience to get jobs that require specific skills.

**Training provider** – An organisation that supplies the training element of an apprenticeship.

**Tuition fee loan** – A loan that is paid to the university or college to cover the cost of the course.

**UCAS** – This stands for Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. It is a service that provides information about universities and colleges and processes applications to higher education.

**UCAS Fair** – Events held by UCAS where universities from across the UK attend to give students advice and information about their institution and courses.

**Unconditional offer** – An offer that means you have a place based on the qualifications you already have.

**Undergraduate** – A university or college (HE) student who is in the process of studying for a degree.

**University** – An educational setting where students study for degrees and academic research is done.

**University centre** – An educational setting that is typically smaller than a university, where students can study for degrees. They are usually part of a further education college.

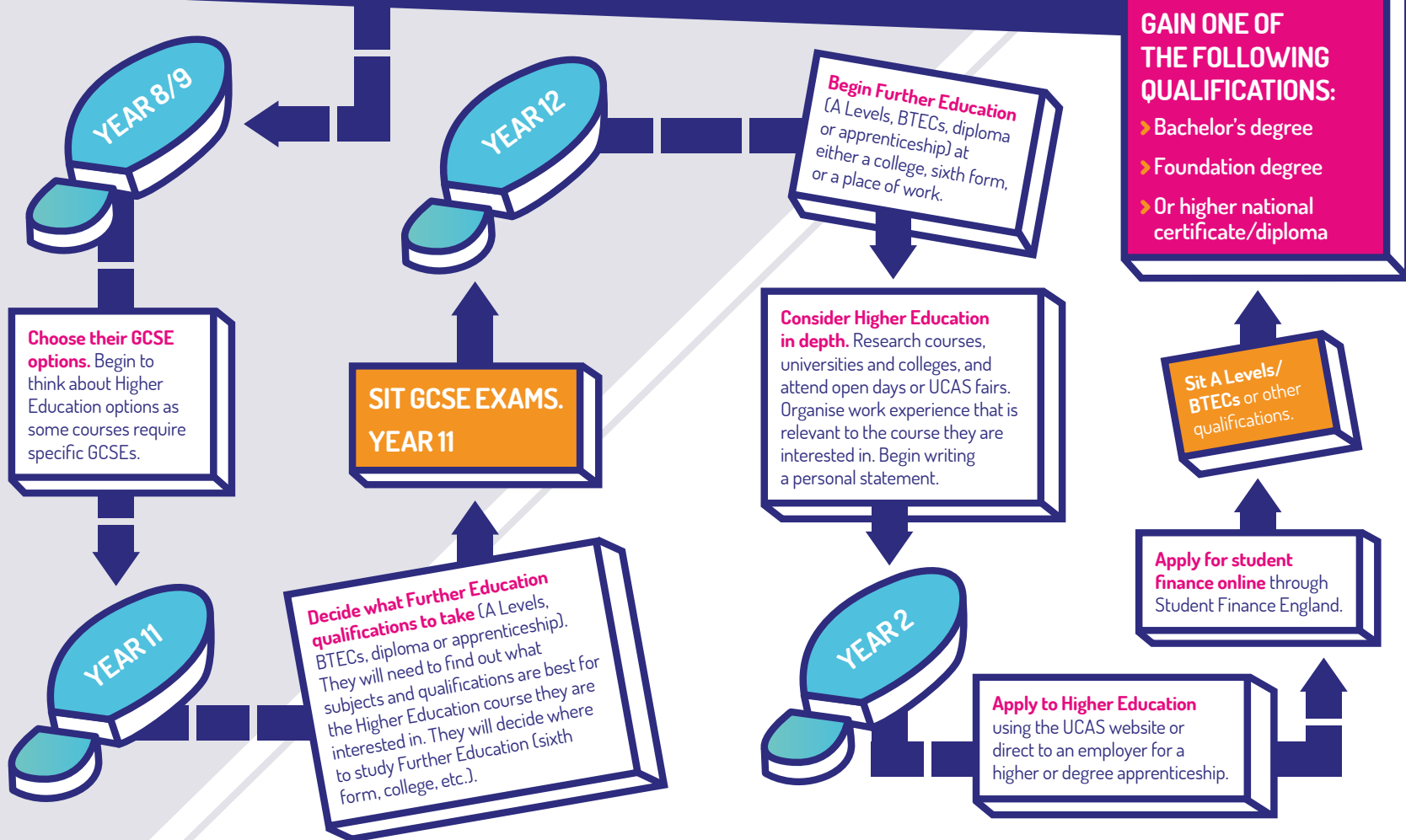
**Vocational course** – A course that relates directly to a job or employment.

**Wage** – A fixed regular payment that is given to someone who is doing a job.

**Work placement** – A period of time where a student can join an employer to get experience of having a job.



# THE HIGHER EDUCATION JOURNEY



# 2 SELF- EXPLORATION

**SELF-EXPLORATION**

**WHAT MAKES YOU, YOU?**

**TAKING A MOMENT TO LOOK BACK**

**A BIT OF FORWARD THINKING**

# SELF- EXPLORATION

**Making decisions can be really tough stuff. There are lots of factors to consider, everyone you ask seems to have a different opinion and it can be hard to drill down on what you really want!**

Before we move onto tackling some of the sections in this book, we wanted to give you a solid starting point and get you thinking about things on a personal level before you start considering any big decisions. Self-exploration can be helpful during any decision-making process, and this can involve thinking about what's important to you, what you like or don't like, and what you want out of life – just some of the things that make up who you are.

In this section, you'll find a range of activities to help you to start thinking about all things you. Some might tackle topics you've already put a lot of thought into, and some might prompt you to think about something for the very first time. Hopefully, completing them will help you to build up a better picture of what you want and like, and will help you with some of the further decision-making work that you'll find throughout the rest of this book.

# WHAT MAKES YOU, YOU?

Have a go at completing the sections below. Don't worry if you can't fill all of the spaces, or if you have lots more to add then go for it!

## My favourite hobbies

(i.e. football, photography)

## Things I'd love to know more about

(e.g. How does the brain work? Why do people commit crimes? The Amazon rainforest)

## Cities or countries I would like to visit

**Things I'm good at** (e.g. helping friends with their problems, fixing computers, drawing)

## Skills I would like to learn

(i.e. how to code, how to look after animals)

## Changes I want for the world

(e.g. a greener planet, better human rights, equality)

## My favourite subjects at school/college

**Events I'd like to time travel to**  
(past or future)

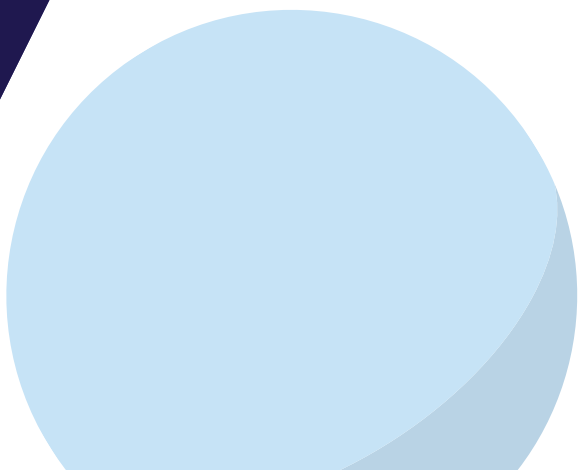


**Things I'd do or buy if I had loads of money**

**Things that are really important to me**  
(e.g. family, mates, travelling)

**Things that make me happy**  
(e.g. skateboarding, performing)

**Things I really want to achieve** (e.g. certain grades at GCSE/BTEC/A Level, try some work experience at a certain place)



# TAKING A MOMENT TO LOOK BACK

Although it doesn't always feel like it, you've already done loads of stuff that can help you now and in the future. Use the prompts below to start thinking about some of these things ...

A few of my favourite memories

Some of my biggest achievements  
at school/college

Things I've done that I'm really  
proud of

Use the table below to write down the experiences you've mentioned above and see if you can think of some specific skills you learned from each one.

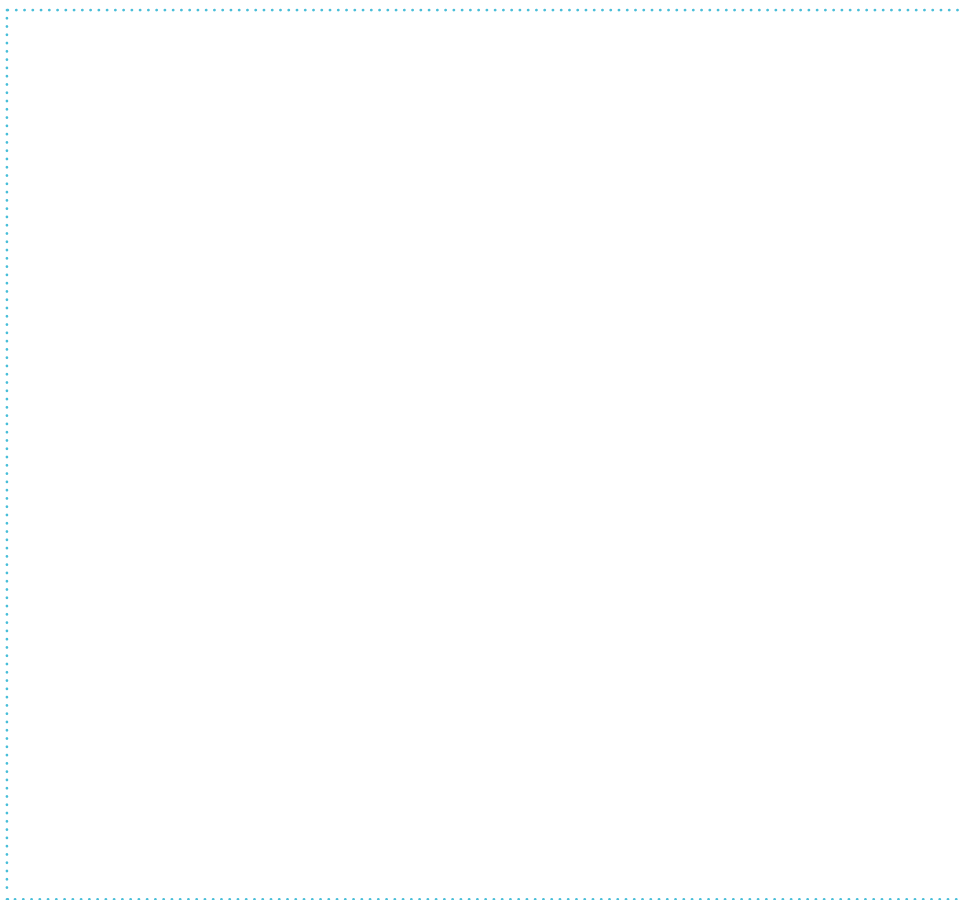
Experience	Skills

# A BIT OF FORWARD THINKING

When it comes to making decisions, it really helps to know what you're working towards. Use the next couple of pages to help you think about some of the things you'd like to achieve in the future. You can then start planning how to take steps towards them.

You might have lots of exciting goals for your life (e.g. owning a big house with a swimming pool, or climbing Mount Kilimanjaro), but for this activity, try thinking about goals that link to your education and/or career.

**Use the space below to mind-map or make rough notes about some of the things you'd like to achieve** (e.g. I want to get good results in my exams, I want to have a career as an Engineer)



Using these notes, think of the three goals that are most important to you. Can you think of a reason why the goal stands out?

Goal A:

Why it's important to me:

Goal B:

Why it's important to me:

Goal C:

Why it's important to me:

**Now see if you can think of one practical step you could take towards achieving each goal.** (e.g. Goal A: I want to get good results in my exams. Practical step: Sign up for revision sessions at school)

A practical step towards goal A:

I will do this by

A practical step towards goal B:

I will do this by

A practical step towards goal C:

I will do this by



**How do you set a good goal that makes sense? Use the STAR Method. STAR stands for Specific, Time-bound, Attainable and Relevant. Try it out for one of your goals below:**

**Goal** – (e.g. 'I want to get good results in my exams');

**Relevant** – what is the point of your goal? (e.g. 'I need a Grade 6 to study English Literature at college');

**Why it's important to me**

**Specific – make it simple and focused**

(e.g. instead of 'I want to get good results in my exams', say 'I want to get a 6 in GCSE English');

**Using the STAR method helps you to work out what you really want, how you could achieve it and how it fits into your journey. Have a go at using the method again for another goal below.**

**Time-bound** – when will you do it by? (e.g. 'by Summer 2022');

**Attainable – is it realistic?** (e.g. 'I have been getting Grade 5s in my mocks, I know I can reach my goal if I fit a bit more revision in');

**Well done on completing your first section!  
We'll build on these activities later in the book.**

# NOTES



How do  
you feel today?

Is anything  
bothering you?

# A QUICK **WELLBEING** CHECK-IN

**Take a few minutes to  
check in with how you're  
feeling right now.**

What are your  
goals for tomorrow?

What is one good thing  
that happened today?

# SELF-CARE CHECK-IN

Tick the things you've done (or plan to do) today. There's space at the end for you to add any that aren't on the list.

Eaten three main meals

Taken a break from social media

Listened to your favourite music

Had a chat with a friend

Done some exercise

Spent some time outside

Taken some time to enjoy a hobby

Said something kind to someone

**Reminder: take five  
long mindful breaths**

# **3 FURTHER EDUCATION**

## **INTRODUCTION TO FURTHER EDUCATION (FE)**

**UCAS**

**WHAT DO YOU WANT TO STUDY?**

**LEVELS – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW!**

**WHERE DO YOU WANT TO STUDY?**

**WHAT ELSE CAN HELP YOU DECIDE?**

## **CHOOSING A FURTHER EDUCATION PROVIDER**

**ONLINE RESEARCH**

**OPEN EVENTS**

**STUDENT LIFE IN FE**

## **CHOOSING A FURTHER EDUCATION COURSE**

**A LEVELS**

**VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

**BTECS**

**APPRENTICESHIPS**

**T-LEVELS**

**SOME FINAL THINGS TO CONSIDER**

**FURTHER RESEARCH**

## **APPLYING TO FURTHER EDUCATION**

**COLLEGE INTERVIEWS**

**PERSONAL STATEMENTS**

# INTRODUCTION TO FURTHER EDUCATION (FE)

**During your education, you've probably studied subjects that have been chosen for you based on the national curriculum. The good news is that when you apply for further education (FE), the choice is yours! You can make the choices about the qualifications you study and where, which can then influence your future education, training and career.**

Deciding what to study after your GCSEs is very exciting, but it can also be confusing because there are so many further education providers and qualifications to choose from. In this section, we'll help you understand the options available and provide activities to help you make a decision about your post-16 options.

After your GCSEs, you could stay at your current school if it has a sixth form, attend a different sixth form or college, or move on to a work-based training provider to study an apprenticeship. As well as being able to choose from different providers, you will also have different types of qualifications to choose from.

FE qualifications can be defined as either 'academic' (based on theory and essay-writing) or 'vocational' (more practical and related to jobs). The most common form of academic qualification is A Levels. Vocational qualifications you might have heard of include BTECs and apprenticeships.

There'll be lots more information about these qualifications, as well as some others, in the next few pages.

A Levels	BTECs	Apprenticeships
These are subject-based qualifications and you would normally study three A Levels. You may be able to study a mixture of A Levels and BTECs. A Levels are usually assessed using exams.	BTECs are specialist work-related qualifications. They combine practical learning with academic content. They are available at lots of different levels, but the most common levels that you'll find at college are Levels 1, 2 and 3.	An apprenticeship is a mixture of a job and studying. Apprentices spend 80% of their course working and 20% studying. Apprentices also earn a salary.

Now, let's look at what choices you might want to make about your post-16 study. We'll start by encouraging you to have a think about possible subjects that you might want to study. The following activities will link to the rest of this workbook, so do look back at these pages regularly.

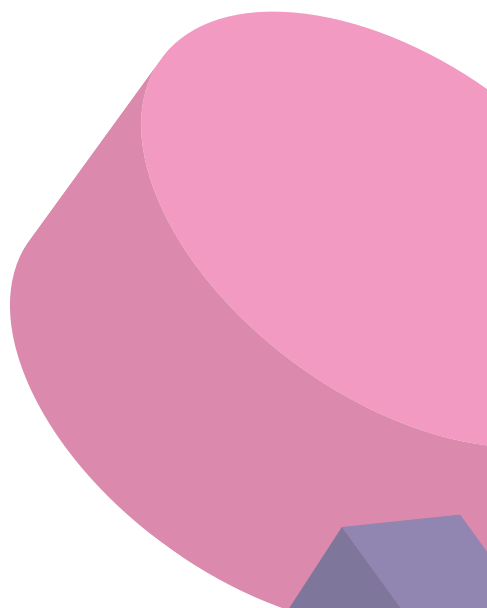


**One of the most useful resources for finding out about further and higher education is UCAS. This is a website that provides loads of information, as well as managing applications to courses.**

We'll find out more about UCAS in later sections of the workbook, but for now you just need to know that it's a great place to go if you have any questions about further or higher education.

You can visit the website at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com).

There are other websites such as Start [apply.startprofile.com](http://apply.startprofile.com) or Future Goals [futuregoals.co.uk](http://futuregoals.co.uk) that also provide lots of information and advice.



# WHAT DO YOU WANT TO STUDY?

**You may already know what you want to study and if so, that's great. However, you might have no idea and that's fine too!**

However, you might have no idea and that's fine too! **Don't worry if you're not sure what you want to study yet. You'll have plenty of time to think about it over the next couple of years.**

There are three main things to think about when deciding what course/s you would like to study. Answer the following three questions to help you get started. The notes you made in the previous section might be useful here.

- 1. What subjects or activities do you enjoy?**
- 2. Do you want to study a subject you are familiar with or something completely new?**
- 3. Do you have a career in mind (e.g. medicine or performing arts)? Do you need to study anything in particular to work in this area?**

Hopefully, these answers can help you choose the right course for you, not just at sixth form or college but also at higher education, like university or an apprenticeship.



# LEVELS – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW!

**One of the first things you'll notice when researching further education is the wide range of courses on offer. We'll explore this in more detail later in the workbook but for now, here's an overview of the different levels:**

- 1. LEVEL 1** qualifications provide an introduction to a subject area and are equivalent to GCSE grades 3, 2 and 1. You will complete these in Y10/11.
- 2. LEVEL 2** qualifications give a deeper understanding of a subject and are roughly equivalent to GCSE grades 9–4. You will complete these in Y10/11. Many employers ask for a Level 2 qualification as a minimum entry requirement.
- 3. LEVEL 3** qualifications include A Levels, BTEC Extended Diplomas and T-Levels. This level is almost always required for university. Many employers look for people who have Level 3 qualifications for more technical jobs or jobs where you'll be supervising other staff.
- 4. LEVEL 4–8** qualifications are classed as higher education – we'll explore these levels a bit more later in the workbook.

# WHERE DO YOU WANT TO STUDY?

**As we've already mentioned, there are lots of different places where you can study further education. Let's have a look at some of the options.**

## **SCHOOL SIXTH FORM**

- If you're already at a school with a sixth form, you could stay here for your further education. This is a good opportunity to stay in a familiar environment. School sixth forms usually have specific spaces for their sixth form students to give them a bit of independence from the rest of the school.
- School sixth forms can be more formal than separate sixth form or FE colleges. For example, at school you might still wear a uniform.
- Only students aged 16–19 can study here.
- School sixth forms come in different sizes and might offer different subjects and qualifications.
- They might also offer different extra-curricular activities.
- Check whether they offer the qualifications and subjects you want.

## **SIXTH FORM COLLEGE**

- Sixth form colleges are usually bigger than school sixth forms, but smaller than FE colleges.
- They usually offer more study options than a school sixth form, with a wider variety of subjects at A Level.
- Most offer vocational qualifications too.
- It's a great opportunity to meet new people and make new friends!
- Sixth form colleges are usually more informal than school sixth forms.
- They also offer a range of extra-curricular activities.

## FE COLLEGE

- FE colleges tend to have a slightly more independent feel, where you take more responsibility for yourself and your learning. Don't worry, there's still plenty of support available, but it's also a chance for you to prepare for higher education and working life.
- There's usually a range of extra-curricular activities available.
- Most colleges offer A Levels, but also offer a range of qualifications in different subjects and levels, such as apprenticeships and T-Levels.
- You may find a much wider range of options than at a school sixth form or sixth form college and have the option to re-sit GCSE Maths and English if you haven't achieved a grade 4 or above.
- FE colleges tend to be more informal than school sixth forms and students usually address their teachers on a first name basis.
- FE colleges have adult courses too, so students will be different ages.
- FE colleges sometimes have University Centres and offer higher education qualifications.

## TRAINING PROVIDERS

- There are lots of training providers offering work-related training and qualifications, including apprenticeships.
- Some focus on a particular sector and job role, e.g. childcare, business administration, construction, or hair and beauty.
- Training providers work closely with employers who offer work-based learning as part of a work placement or employment.
- Many training providers will advertise apprenticeship vacancies on their websites. They will then support students to find an apprenticeship and guide them through the process.
- Apprentices are employed from day one and receive a wage and support from the employer and training provider.

**The questions you answered earlier in this section might help you to decide what option is right for you. Use the space below to write down any thoughts you have after reading this section.**

Once you've thought of possible careers and courses, go to [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) to learn more about them. You can read all about courses and what career paths they could lead to. You can also see what grades are needed to get onto the courses. The Prospects website is also a great tool for this. Using your search engine, search 'Prospects job profiles' or go to [www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles).

You will find that for some university courses you'll need to have studied particular subjects at post-16.

It's important to check out any specific subject requirements before you make your post-16 choices. You can usually find this information on the provider's website. It might seem a bit early to be thinking about this. However, some students reach the end of their FE course and realise they haven't studied the subjects they need for the university course or job that they want. It's best to check well in advance so you can plan properly!

If you're not sure what future career you'd like, consider choosing subjects that will let you keep your options open. On the other hand, if you have a specific career that you're really passionate about, explore whether an apprenticeship could be the right option for you.

***If you're not sure what future career you'd like, consider choosing subjects that will let you keep your options open.***

# WHAT ELSE CAN HELP YOU DECIDE?

1. Talk to your teachers and your careers adviser. You can also go to <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk> where you will be able to explore lots of different jobs and speak to professional advisers.
2. Look at the different types of qualifications and think about what type of learning you prefer. Are you a hands-on person or are you happier doing exams? ([www.ucas.com/further-education](http://www.ucas.com/further-education) is a great place to start when answering these questions.)
3. Take the [www.ucas.com/careers/buzz-quiz](http://www.ucas.com/careers/buzz-quiz) to find out what sort of personality you have and what jobs may suit you.
4. Discuss your thoughts and ideas with people you trust. It can be helpful to hear other people's views when making choices.
5. Attend careers and skills fairs. They're a great opportunity to meet colleges, training providers, apprenticeship providers, employers and careers advisers.

## CHOOSING A FURTHER EDUCATION PROVIDER

Once you've thought about what course/s you want to study, you need to think about where you want to study. As you start to research further education providers you will notice that each is a little different. Some differences you might spot are:

- The courses on offer
- The modules included in each course
- The entry requirements
- Their timetable
- Extra-curricular activities they offer
- Location.

## ONLINE RESEARCH

Your first step when choosing an FE provider should be to do some online research. Explore the websites of FE providers in your area to find out whether they do the course/s you want to study. If you're not sure which FE providers are in your local area, ask your teachers and advisers.

On each website, you are likely to find an online prospectus (a booklet that advertises the provider and gives information about what they offer) or you can ask for one to be sent to you in the post. A prospectus can help you find out:

- The course/s they offer and the entry requirements.
- What modules the course/s includes (you'll notice the same course will cover different topics at different providers).
- What activities you are expected to do as part of the course (some may be exam-based and others coursework-based).
- What extracurricular activities the college provides.
- What other support they offer, such as bursaries, transport and SEND support.
- When they have open events. Make a list of the open events for your top choices and put them in your diary!

## OPEN EVENTS

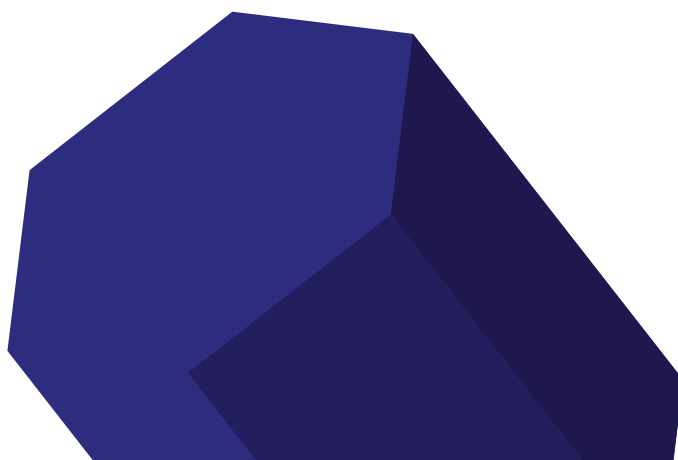
Most FE providers run open events — these might be whole days, open evenings or virtual events that are held online. Some also run taster days and summer schools where you can spend longer with tutors and current students. These can really help you to decide if the course is right for you. You should make the most of these opportunities and aim to visit a few different providers.

You can go to an open day alone, with a parent or family member or with a friend – just make sure that you're ready to ask questions and make the most of the event.

At an open event you can:

- Have your questions answered by academic tutors and current students.
- Ask student ambassadors about student life, including dress codes and timetables.
- Learn about the support you can receive.
- View student work and demonstrations.
- Take part in workshops and activities.
- Tour the facilities.

For more information on how to get the most out of an open event, visit [www.ucas.com/further-education/post-16-qualifications/open-events](http://www.ucas.com/further-education/post-16-qualifications/open-events)



## STUDENT LIFE IN FE

Student life in FE is quite different from school. You'll have a lot more control over your own time, but you're also expected to study more independently than you are at school!

One of the first differences you'll notice will be your timetable. Your day might be much longer than you're used to at school. You might have a few hours 'off timetable' during the day where you don't have any lessons planned and you might not have to attend every day.

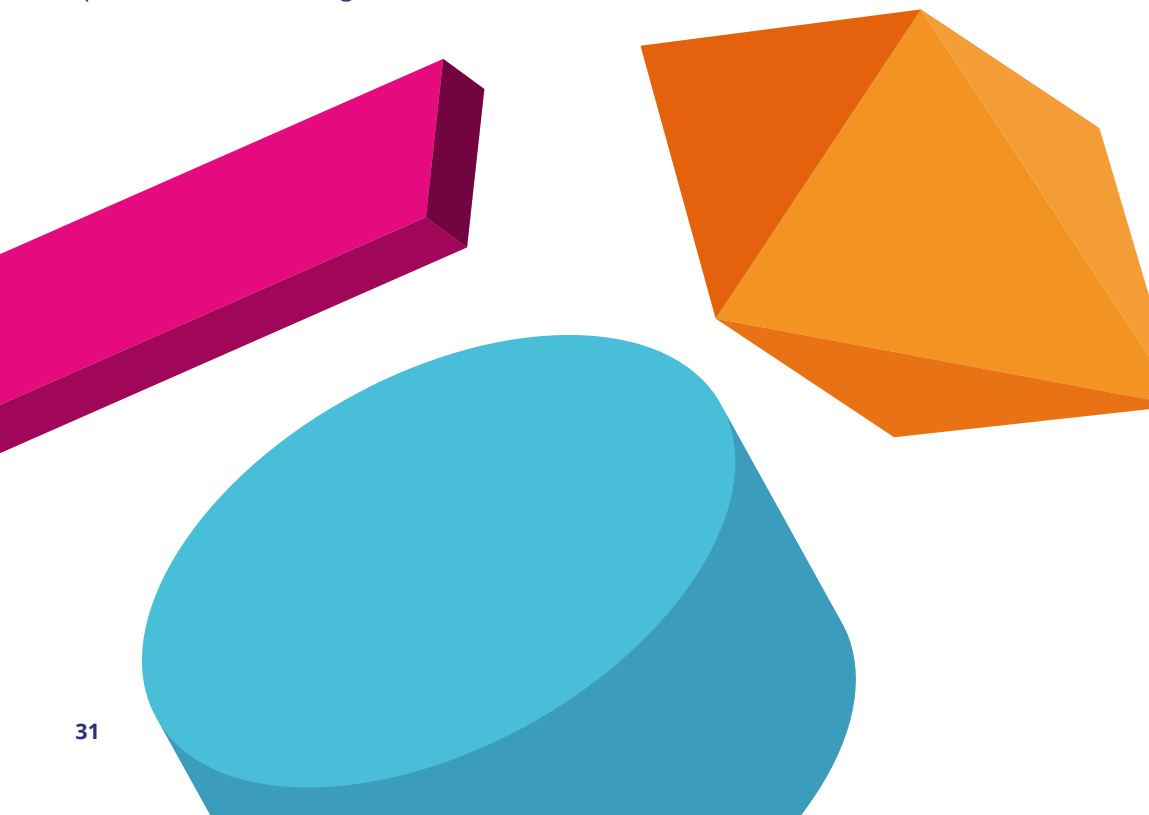
It's useful to ask at an open event what your timetable will look like so that you can start thinking about how to plan your time. You might also want to see if you can fit in a part-time job.

If you choose to study at an FE college, there will probably be students from a diverse range of backgrounds and with lots of different interests. At school, your classmates were all the same age but at college they could be anything from 16 to 80 years old! This makes for quite a different learning environment.

Teachers are different in FE too. They tend to be a bit more informal than teachers at school and you might be able to call them by their first name. You'll probably be assigned a personal tutor alongside your teachers who will support you more generally throughout your time at college. FE colleges also encourage an active social life and you'll have the opportunity to get involved in loads of different events and activities!

Some common college events and activities include:

- Bake sales
- Fancy dress days
- Charity events
- Sports tournaments
- Raffles and fundraisers
- Live music
- Performances.



# CHOOSING A FURTHER EDUCATION COURSE

**We've looked at how to research your options for post-16 study — let's look at the courses on offer.**

We all learn in different ways and knowing which style works best for you can be really helpful. Knowing your learning style can make study and revision easier, as well as help you choose a course.

Have you ever come across the letters 'VARK' at school? This acronym is a handy way to remember the different learning styles.

The four main learning styles are:

- Visual (learning by seeing)
- Auditory (learning by hearing)
- Reading and writing
- Kinaesthetic (learning by doing).

Visual	Auditory	Reading and writing	Kinaesthetic
Demonstrations, diagrams and films, etc.  Work well from lists and written directions	Natural listeners Prefer spoken instructions	Note making Prefer written instructions	Use all senses to help them learn  Learn well from hands-on experience

We all use a combination of styles and nobody is 100% one or the other! However, you will probably have a favourite. Arden University have created a short online quiz that can help you work out your learning style.

Type 'Arden University Learning Styles' into your search engine to find the quiz, which is called 'What type of learner are you?' (<https://arden.ac.uk/what-type-learner-are-you>).



After completing the quiz, make some notes in the boxes below:

Visual	Auditory	Reading and writing	Kinaesthetic

Now head over to the UCAS website ([www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)). In the search box, type 'What qualifications are there for 16–18 year olds?'. Scroll down to the 'Information' section and click on the relevant heading, which will open a quiz. Tick the boxes that apply to you (you can choose more than one) to find out what type of course might suit you ([www.ucas.com/further-education/post-16-qualifications/what-qualifications-are-there-16-18-year-olds](http://www.ucas.com/further-education/post-16-qualifications/what-qualifications-are-there-16-18-year-olds)).

WHAT WAS YOUR RESULT? DID YOU LEARN ANYTHING NEW?

# A LEVELS

**A Levels are academic subject-based qualifications that can lead to university, further study, an apprenticeship or work. Students normally study three or four A Levels over two years and are assessed using exams. You'll find A Levels in traditional subjects such as English, Art or Biology, but also courses you may not have studied at GCSE, like Psychology or Law.**

## WHAT GRADES DO YOU NEED TO TAKE A LEVELS?

To be able to study A Levels, you normally need five GCSEs at Grades 9 to 4, including English and Maths. Some subjects will require GCSE grades in specific subjects and these might be different at different providers. It's therefore worth checking the entry requirements of the school, sixth form or colleges that you're interested in.

If you're thinking about going to university, some higher education courses also ask for specific A Levels or combinations of A Levels. Studying A Levels in a variety of different subjects can be a good way to keep your options open if you're not sure what job or career you would like in the future.

## CHOOSING A LEVEL SUBJECTS

- What subjects are you likely to be good at and enjoy? You will know which subjects you enjoy or do well in at school and these are the subjects you're more likely to do well in at a higher level.
- Research the course content, especially for new subjects that you may not have studied at GCSE.
- If you have a particular job, career or higher education course in mind, you might need to choose specific A Levels to meet the entry requirements – check this out so you can plan ahead.
- You might want to keep your options open so that you have as many opportunities as possible for your future study or career choices.

## WHAT'S IT LIKE TO STUDY A LEVELS?

- You'll study fewer subjects at A Level than you do at GCSE, but you'll develop a much deeper understanding and knowledge of these subjects.
- Because you're picking fewer subjects, A Levels are a good opportunity to start focusing on the things you really enjoy and are good at.
- You're expected to do more unsupervised studying at A Level and will have less input from your teacher. However, you can still expect plenty of support and guidance.
- Whilst A Levels are a great route to higher education, there are some subjects that certain universities won't accept and some they will prefer. Make sure you do your research!

## WHAT GRADES DO YOU NEED TO STUDY VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS?

### WHAT ARE VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS?

Vocational courses are designed to help you learn in a practical way about a specific job area. They can help you get the skills you need to kickstart your career, start a job or progress into higher education.

Types of vocational qualifications:

- BTECs
- Apprenticeships
- T-Levels.

### CAN VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS LEAD ONTO HIGHER EDUCATION?

There are many myths around vocational qualifications and not being able to progress onto higher education. In fact, BTECs and other Level 3 vocational qualifications prepare you and allow you to progress onto a range of courses in higher education.

However, some courses and higher education institutions do request A Levels and, in some circumstances, specific A Levels. Check in advance whether a vocational qualification will allow you to progress onto the higher education courses that you might be interested in studying later on. Your 20% study time will be spent in either:

# BTECS

**BTECs are the most popular and commonly studied vocational qualifications. There are lots of different BTECs available at various levels, from Health and Social Care to Motor Vehicle Technology.**

BTECs offer practical skills, as well as relevant work experience in some circumstances. There are usually less exams and a wider variety of assessment methods than you might find with A Levels. If you study BTECs, you may be assessed using practical tasks, observations and work-based assessments. You may also have to write some essays during a BTEC course.

Some schools, sixth forms and colleges let students study BTECs alongside A Levels. If you like the idea of studying a combination, do your research to find out whether this could be an option for you.

If you're thinking of 'mixing' your qualifications, visit the BBC Bitesize page to find out more:  
[www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zdfdt39](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zdfdt39)

# APPRENTICESHIPS

## APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprentices work regular hours alongside experienced members of staff to gain practical skills, all while earning money. Apprentices are also linked with a training provider, like a college or university, and work towards completing a qualification such as a GCSE, diploma or even a degree. While most of an apprentice's time is spent in the workplace, studying will make up at least 20% of their hours. Completing studies alongside work means that being able to manage your time well is a must!

Your 20% study time will be spent in either:

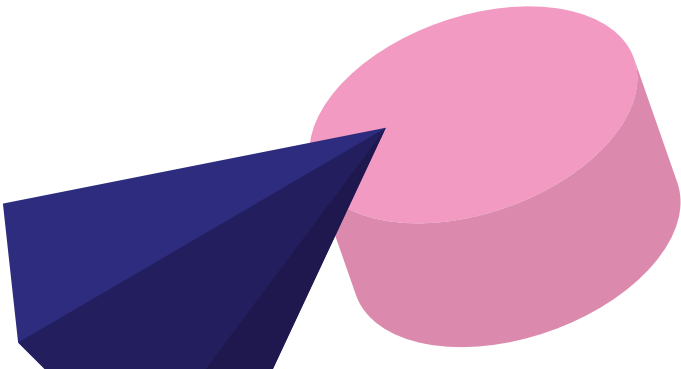
- In an intense 'block' of study (e.g. three solid weeks of studying with your training provider and not working)
- 'Day release' where you have one day a week away from work to study.

While at college or university, apprentices are treated the same as any other part-time student. They have full access to amenities such as student support, the library and social activities to help give them a full and rounded experience.

Apprenticeships take a minimum of one year to complete. However, depending on the level of the apprenticeship, they can take up to seven years.

### Apprenticeship levels

Name	Level	Equivalent education level
Intermediate	2	5 GCSE passes at grade A*–C or 9–4
Advanced	3	2 A level passes/Level 3 Diploma/ International Baccalaureate
Higher	4, 5, 6 and 7	Foundation degree and above
Degree	6 and 7	Bachelor's or master's degree



## WHAT CAN YOU STUDY?

There's a huge variety of apprenticeships available in the UK, covering a range of levels and industries. It's likely you'll be able to find an apprenticeship that is right for you no matter what you want to study! Some subjects that you can find apprenticeships in are:

- Architecture
- Business Management
- Construction
- Nursing
- Zoology.

Depending on the area you choose, you can sometimes work your way up the apprenticeship levels with the same employer. You might start at a Level 3 advanced apprenticeship and then move towards a Level 6 degree apprenticeship to earn a bachelor's degree.

## WHAT ARE THE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS?

- It's important to check the entry requirements of an apprenticeship very carefully as they are often different depending on the sector and the level.
- Every type of apprenticeship is graded at a certain level and this affects the entry requirements.
- For some apprenticeships, everyone has to start at Level 2 no matter what level of qualifications they already have. For example, when studying hairdressing, everyone must learn how to wash and dry hair before moving on to cutting.
- For some Level 3 apprenticeships you may have to work unsupervised. If you haven't had much experience of work so far, you may start on a Level 2 before moving on to Level 3.

- The majority will require GCSE English language and Mathematics at Grade 4 or above (or an equivalent, such as functional skills).
- Level 4 and above apprenticeships will require Level 3 study, such as A levels, BTECs or an advanced apprenticeship.

## EARN WHILE YOU LEARN

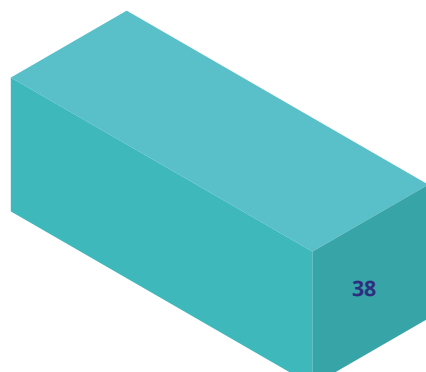
Apprenticeships are often appealing because they allow you to earn money while your employer covers your learning costs!

## ARE THEY COMPETITIVE?

Yes! Apprenticeships are often much more competitive than university and college courses.

To give yourself the best chance of securing an apprenticeship, make sure you:

- Read the entry requirements carefully to check you're suitable for the role.
- Read the course information thoroughly to make sure it's something you're really interested in.
- Read through your application carefully (several times!) and ask someone you trust to check it too.
- Prepare thoroughly for any interviews you are invited to. We've included loads of info in this workbook about how to do this!



## HOW DO YOU APPLY?

You can apply for apprenticeships directly with the employer you wish to work for. They will then set you up with the educational institution for the study side of the course.

Many companies choose to advertise apprenticeships on the government's website. However, some small local companies might only advertise them directly on their website or on local job advertising websites.

To see available apprenticeships on the government's website, search 'Find an apprenticeship Gov.uk' using your search engine or visit [www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship](https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship). You can find out what's on offer in your local area by putting in your location and other factors to narrow down your search.

Most apprenticeships start in the autumn and will be advertised between February and May.

## Which local apprenticeships do you like the look

Which of these is your favourite?

What qualifications are they asking for?

Can you list three things you'd be expected to do on this apprenticeship?

What is the weekly wage?

You should find a list of 'desired skills' on the advert. Which of these skills do you think you already have?

# T-LEVELS

**T-Levels are a new and exciting type of qualification. They aim to give students the knowledge and practical experience to get jobs that require specific skills.**

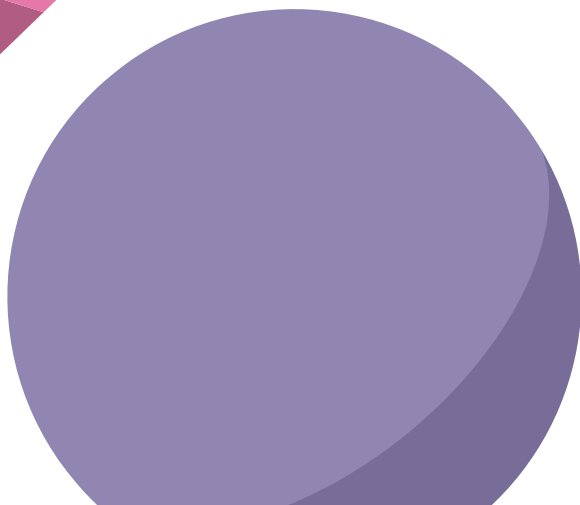
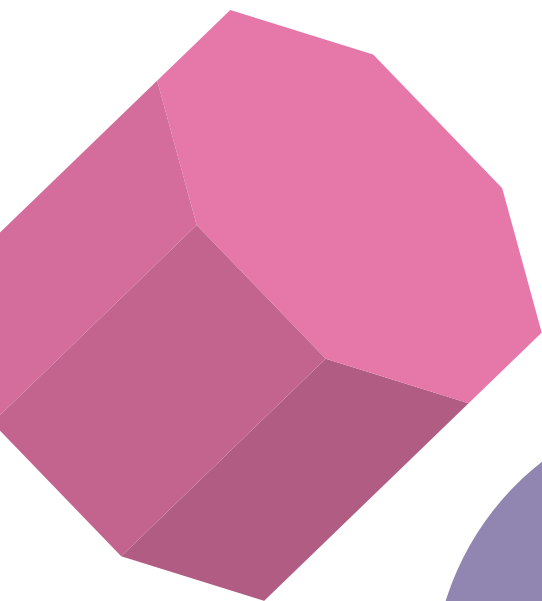
Designed in partnership with businesses, T-Levels also offer students the chance to undertake a work placement. This may be a good option for you if you know what job or industry you want to move into.

**Can you guess what the  
'T' in T-Levels is?  
It stands for technical!**

T-Levels will be recognised by higher education providers, so you might be able to move onto a degree after studying them. However, with T-Levels being so new, you might need to do some research to see if they are available in the subject you're interested in.

T-Level courses currently cover:

- Education and childcare
- Digital production, design and development
- Design, surveying and planning for construction.





# SOME FINAL THINGS TO CONSIDER ...

## **Are you interested in a specific career but don't like the subjects you need to take to get there?**

Take some time to think about whether this is the right path for you. It can be challenging to put 100% effort into something you don't enjoy! Instead, try thinking about the subjects you really enjoy and explore where they could take you.

Another thing to consider is how you like to learn. Will the subjects you're choosing be taught in a classroom environment, with a focus on passing exams and writing essays? Or do they focus on more hands-on practical activities? Does this suit you? This can really influence what courses and careers are right for you.

Finally, try not to be influenced by what your friends are doing. Everyone is different and what is right for them may not be right for you.

Instead, ask yourself:

- What do I enjoy doing?
- What would I like to do?
- What do I want to get out of MY life?

## **FURTHER RESEARCH**

[www.ucas.com/ucas/after-gcses/find-career-ideas/explore-jobs#js=on](http://www.ucas.com/ucas/after-gcses/find-career-ideas/explore-jobs#js=on)

# NOTES



How do  
you feel today?

Is anything  
bothering you?

# A QUICK **WELLBEING** CHECK-IN

**Take a few minutes to  
check in with how you're  
feeling right now.**

What are your  
goals for tomorrow?

What is one good thing  
that happened today?

# SELF-CARE CHECK-IN

Tick the things you've done (or plan to do) today. There's space at the end for you to add any that aren't on the list.

Eaten three main meals

Taken a break from social media

Listened to your favourite music

Had a chat with a friend

Done some exercise

Spent some time outside

Taken some time to enjoy a hobby

Said something kind to someone

**Reminder: take five  
long mindful breaths**

# APPLYING TO FURTHER EDUCATION

Now that you know what's on offer in further education, let's take a look at the application process. Your FE applications will usually be managed by your school and you should receive support throughout the process. However, it's useful for you to understand what happens at each stage so that you know what to expect and what you need to do. Read on to find out more...

**1. Find a sixth form, college or training provider** — Research options in your local area and explore their websites and prospectuses to see what they offer. The Careerpilot website ([www.careerpilot.org.uk/providers/list](http://www.careerpilot.org.uk/providers/list)) has a great tool that can help you find providers nearby.

**2. Research your course options** — Think about courses that might suit your strengths, interests and future plans. Look at the entry requirements to see if you think you'll meet the grades. It's also worth having a back-up plan with lower entry requirements, just in case!

**3. Research your travel options** — How will you get there? How far is the journey? What are the weekly travel costs? If you think you might struggle to cover your travel costs or you live more than three miles away, contact the college to see if there is financial support available. Many local bus or train companies also offer travel passes at discounted prices.

**4. Attend an open event** — These are a great opportunity to get a feel for the place and whether it might be right for you. During an open event, you'll be able to have a look around the buildings and facilities and speak to staff and current students. There will probably be talks about different courses, college life and extra-curricular activities such as sports teams and volunteering opportunities. You'll have the chance to ask any questions you might have to help you make a decision about where you'd like to study.

**5. Additional costs** — If you're under 19, your further education is free. However, some courses may have additional costs such as materials, uniforms or trips. Colleges often offer financial support based on your household income so it's worth checking whether you would be entitled to this.

**6. Complete your application form** — Application forms are often found on college websites or you can request a paper form. Some schools have their own application processes for applying to college, so speak to your careers adviser or teacher about this.

**7. Attend an interview** — Once a college receives your application, you will be invited for an interview. The idea of attending an interview can feel daunting, but we've included loads of guidance later in this section to help you feel prepared and confident!

**8. Wait to hear whether you've been offered a place** — Shortly after your interview (it may be days or weeks, but you can ask when you'll receive a response at the end of your interview), you'll hear whether you've been offered a place or not. Sometimes you might be offered a place on an alternative course. Once you have received an offer of a place, you must let the college know whether or not you want to accept the place. You can accept a place at more than one college or sixth form and then make your final choice on results day.

**Using Careerpilot or Google Maps, find two FE providers in your area and list them below:**

**How far away are the providers you identified above?**

**What methods of transport are available to you?**

**How long would it take you to get to them?**

**Write down three useful questions you could ask at an open event:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Once you've received and accepted an offer of a place on a course, there'll be a couple more events for you to think about before you start:**

- **Taster days** — Taster days are when you can visit providers to see what it would be like to study a particular course. They are also a great opportunity to explore the facilities and meet other potential students. Remember, it's also a chance to ask any questions you have!
- **Results day** — Once you've received your exam results you will need to tell your chosen provider that you want to study with them. Don't worry if you change your mind or don't get the results you were hoping for. Providers will be able to offer support and advice. If you haven't achieved a Grade 4 or higher in Maths and/or English in your GCSEs, you might have to retake these at college.
- **Enrolment** — This is when you officially register as a student with your chosen provider. You'll need to visit the college to give them your exam results. You'll also be given lots of information about what to do next to help get you ready for the start of term.

**Before starting college, don't forget to:**

- Check the date you need to enrol and what you need to take with you.
- Pay any additional costs for your course.
- Check key dates.
- Ask about financial support if necessary.
- Order any books, materials and uniform you will need.
- Look into how you're going to get to college.

# COLLEGE INTERVIEWS

**This is the first of two sections about interviews that you'll find in this workbook. You'll attend interviews for lots of different things throughout your life! Different types of interviews need different skills, so we'll guide you through some hints and tips for college interviews now. We'll then move on to some more advanced interview techniques in a later section.**

We often think of interviews as being for the benefit of the interviewer. They get to ask us questions and decide whether they want to take us on board. But interviews are also a great opportunity for you to talk about yourself and your future ambitions, and to find out more about the course and college life. It's a chance for you to find the information you need to decide whether *they* are a good fit for *you*!

## QUESTIONS TO EXPECT AT AN INTERVIEW

Preparation is key for interviews. The best way to prepare is to answer some practice questions! Below, we look at some of the most common interview questions students get asked when they apply for sixth form or college.

Have a think about a college and course you might be interested in (don't worry, it doesn't have to be set in stone yet!) and use the space below to practice your answers. We've included some guidance for each one to help you get started.

### **Why have you decided to apply to us?**

What is it about this particular college or course that appealed to you? Did it have the right 'feel' at an open event, or does it offer the specific course you wanted?

### **What do you want to gain from the course?**

What are your plans for the future and how do you think this course will help you achieve them? Would this course be useful in any other areas of your life?

### **Where do you see yourself in five years?**

What job do you imagine yourself having? Is there anything else you would like to have achieved by then?



## What do you think your strengths and weaknesses are?

This can be a tricky one as it's often difficult to see these things in ourselves. You can use some of the wellbeing sections in this workbook to help you think about this answer, or maybe ask a friend or loved one what they think your strengths and weaknesses are.

**Top tip!** Identifying a weakness can be tricky as you don't want to sound too negative. Think about whether you have any flaws that can actually be positive. For example, finding it difficult to say 'no' to things might be a weakness because it leaves you overstretched and stressed out. However, it can also be a positive because it shows that you are willing to help other people and get involved.

## Do you have any questions for me?

**Top tip!** Always ask questions at the end of an interview, even if you feel like you already have all the answers you need. This shows you've done your research and are keen, proactive and engaged with the interview and application process. Aim to have two or three questions prepared. These could be about the college, the course or even something that was mentioned at an open event.

## PERSONAL STATEMENTS

You may need to write a personal statement as part of your application. We cover personal statements further on in the book as they are a really important part of higher education applications too. For more information on what a personal statement is, how to write one and what to include, go to [pages 48-49](#).

# NOTES



How do  
you feel today?

Is anything  
bothering you?

# A QUICK **WELLBEING** CHECK-IN

**Take a few minutes to  
check in with how you're  
feeling right now.**

What is one good thing  
that happened today?

What are your  
goals for tomorrow?

# SELF-CARE CHECK-IN

Tick the things you've done (or plan to do) today. There's space at the end for you to add any that aren't on the list.

Eaten three main meals

Taken a break from social media

Listened to your favourite music

Had a chat with a friend

Done some exercise

Spent some time outside

Taken some time to enjoy a hobby

Said something kind to someone

**Reminder: take five  
long mindful breaths**

# **4 INTRODUCTION TO HIGHER EDUCATION - HE**

## **INTRODUCTION TO HIGHER EDUCATION**

**JARGON BUSTER**

**BENEFITS OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SCHOOL  
AND HIGHER EDUCATION?**

**WHAT ARE LECTURES AND SEMINARS?**

## **ALTERNATIVE ROUTES TO HE**

**WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THIS ROUTE?**

**FOUNDATION YEARS**

**FOUNDATION DEGREES**

**HNCS AND HNDS**

**HIGHER LEVEL AND DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS**

## **CHOOSING A UNIVERSITY AND COURSE**

**CHOOSING A COURSE**

**CHOOSING A UNIVERSITY**

**HE SOUNDS GREAT! SO WHAT NOW?**

## **UCAS**

**PERSONAL STATEMENTS**

**WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU'VE SUBMITTED YOUR APPLICATION?**

**INTERVIEWS**

## **STUDENT FINANCE**

**TUITION FEE LOAN**

**MAINTENANCE LOAN**

**REPAYING STUDENT LOANS**

## **ACCOMMODATION**

**WHY LIVE AT HOME?**

**WHY LIVE AWAY FROM HOME?**

**SOME THINGS TO THINK ABOUT IF YOU'D LIKE TO MOVE AWAY**

## **STUDENT LIFE**

**A DAY IN THE LIFE**

**STUDENT LIFE AS AN APPRENTICE**

**CLUBS AND SOCIETIES**

**WHAT IS A STUDENT UNION?**

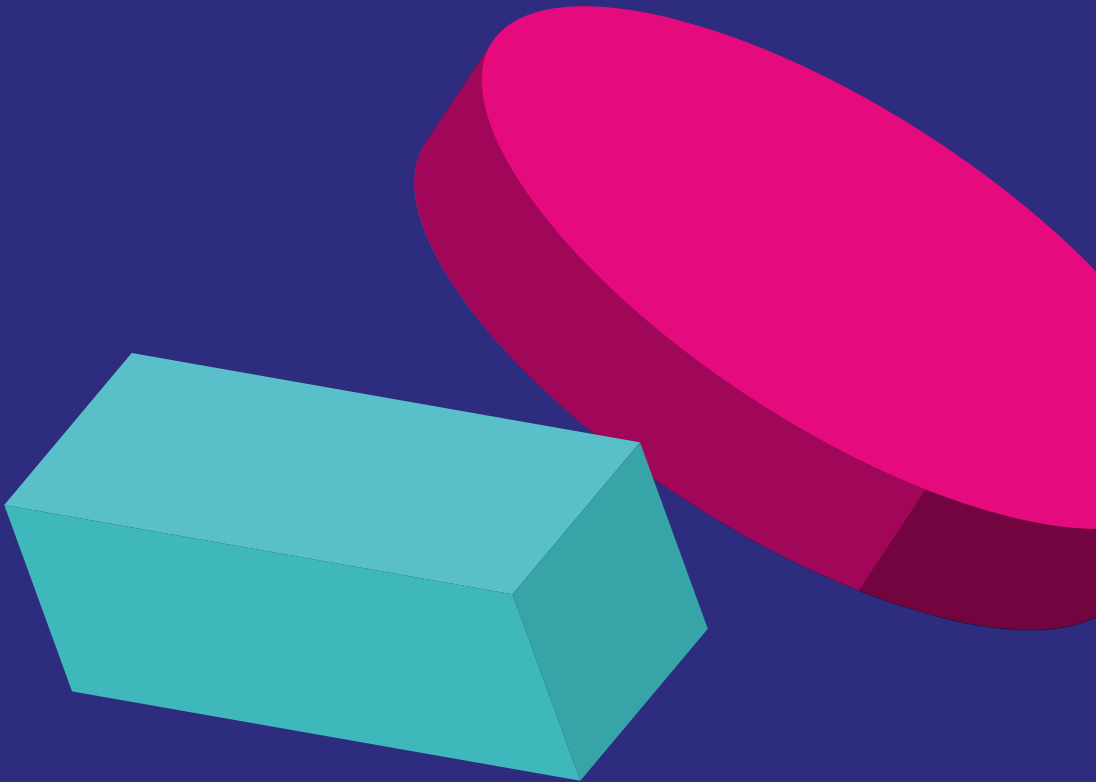
**MANAGING MONEY**

**DESIGN YOUR OWN UNIVERSITY!**

# INTRODUCTION TO HIGHER EDUCATION (HE)

**Higher education (or HE for short) is typically what you study after you finish Year 13/Year 2, if you decide to continue in education. Higher education includes:**

- Getting a degree at a university
- Getting a degree at an FE college
- Higher National Certificates (HNC) and Higher National Diplomas (HND)
- Foundation degrees.



# JARGON BUSTER

Throughout this section, you might come across lots of words you're unfamiliar with. Below, test your current knowledge and see if you can match the word to the definitions. Don't worry, we don't expect you to know them all! The answers are at the back of the book (no cheating!)

Scroll through the numbers and click on the number that links the word to the definition

Students' Union (SU)	1. An informal name for a first-year student
Undergraduate	2. An organisation that is run by students, representing and supporting them
Combined/joint honours	3. A type of teaching where a lecturer presents information and students listen and take notes
Prospectus	4. A student studying for their first degree
Graduate	5. A small teaching group where students and their lecturers can discuss ideas in more depth
Gap year	6. The successful completion of a course at university or college, usually celebrated with a formal ceremony
Sandwich year	7. A type of degree where you study two subjects alongside each other
Fresher	8. A loan given to students to cover fees and living costs
Open day	9. The group of buildings/areas that house a higher education institution
Halls of residence	10. Guides produced by universities/colleges. They contain lots of information about courses, entry and more
Clearing	11. Somebody who has successfully completed a course at university or college
UCAS	12. Buildings where students live
Lecture	13. Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. This is the body that handles most applications
Graduation	14. A system that allows applicants to fill free spaces on university/college courses
Campus	15. A year away from education — some students choose to take this before they go to university/college
Student loan	16. A day where the university/college is open for students to visit, explore and find out information
Seminar	17. A placement year, usually taken in the middle of your course

# BENEFITS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**While it's not compulsory to study at HE level, it can be a fantastic opportunity to boost your career options. A degree can also improve your chances of getting a well-paid job, as graduates are likely to earn more money over their lifetime than non-graduates.**

There are also loads of other great reasons to study at HE:

- You can study your very favourite subject
- Meet loads of new people
- Take part in a huge range of extra-curricular activities
- Volunteering opportunities
- Earn money
- Live away from home if you want to
- ... the list is endless!

However, it's also important to remember that HE isn't for everybody and it's certainly not the only way to be successful. Make sure you do what's right for you!

***“My favourite thing about higher education is definitely the opportunities. They're endless!”***

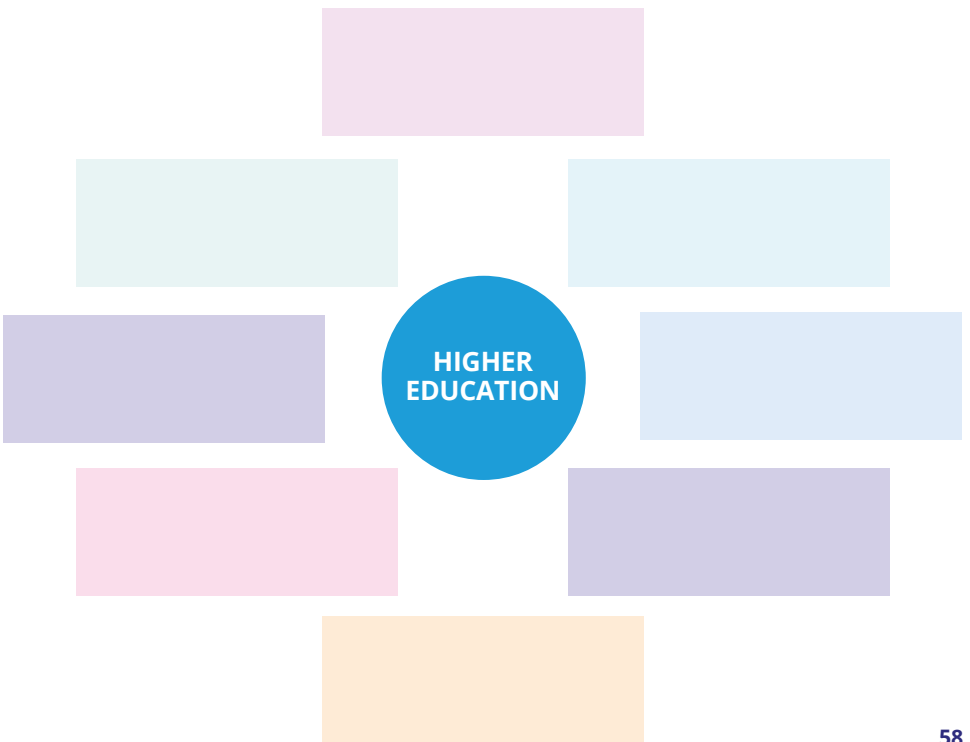
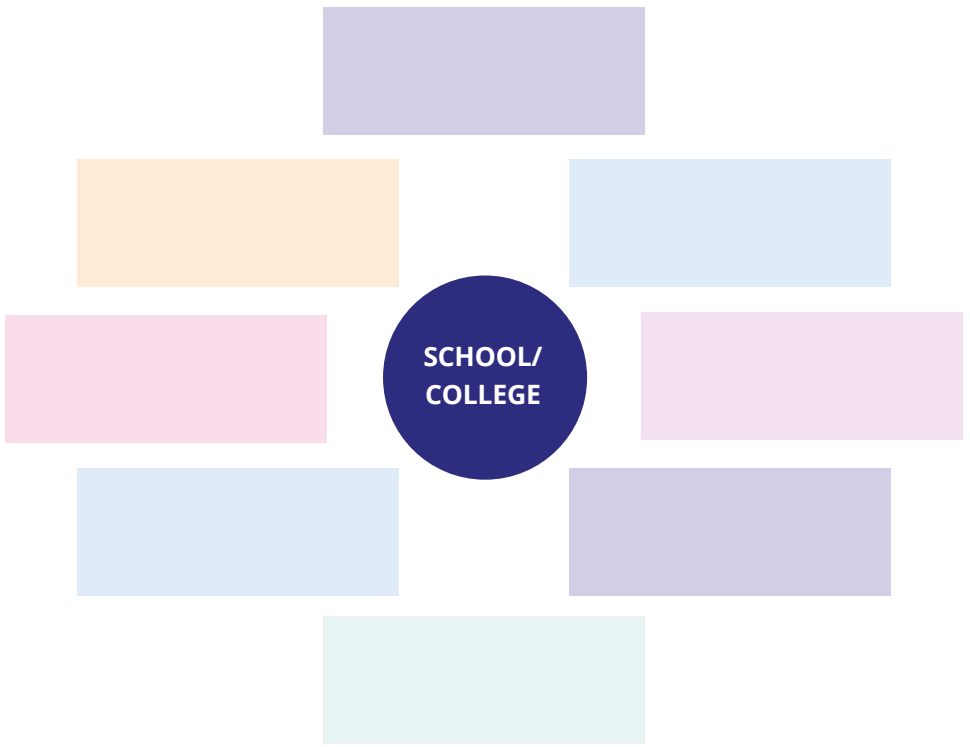


# WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SCHOOL, COLLEGE AND HIGHER EDUCATION?

**Everyone has heard of school and nearly everybody has been to school. Most people have heard of 'higher education' or 'university', but do you actually know what it means or what it's like in real life? What are the differences between the two?**

Take a few minutes to complete the two spider diagrams. Write down the words that come to mind about school and the words that come to mind about higher education. This is only for your reference and to get your brain ticking so don't worry about 'right' or 'wrong' ideas! We'll then have a look at some of the differences between the two over the page.





**Now have a look at the table below that shows some of the key differences between school and higher education. Did any of them make it onto your spider diagrams?**

School	Higher education
Wear uniform	No uniform
Call teachers 'Miss' or 'Sir'	Call lecturers by their first name
Compulsory	Up to you whether you go or not!
Lessons start and end when the bell rings	No bells
Free	Paid for with tuition fees
Everyone goes	Entry requirements decide whether you go
Same time every day	Timetable is different every day
It lasts most of the day	Some days you might not be in at all!

As you can see, most of the differences between school and higher education relate to independence and choice. At school, you'll be used to having a full timetable from about 9am until around 3pm. You're also probably used to being told where to go, what to do and when to do it!

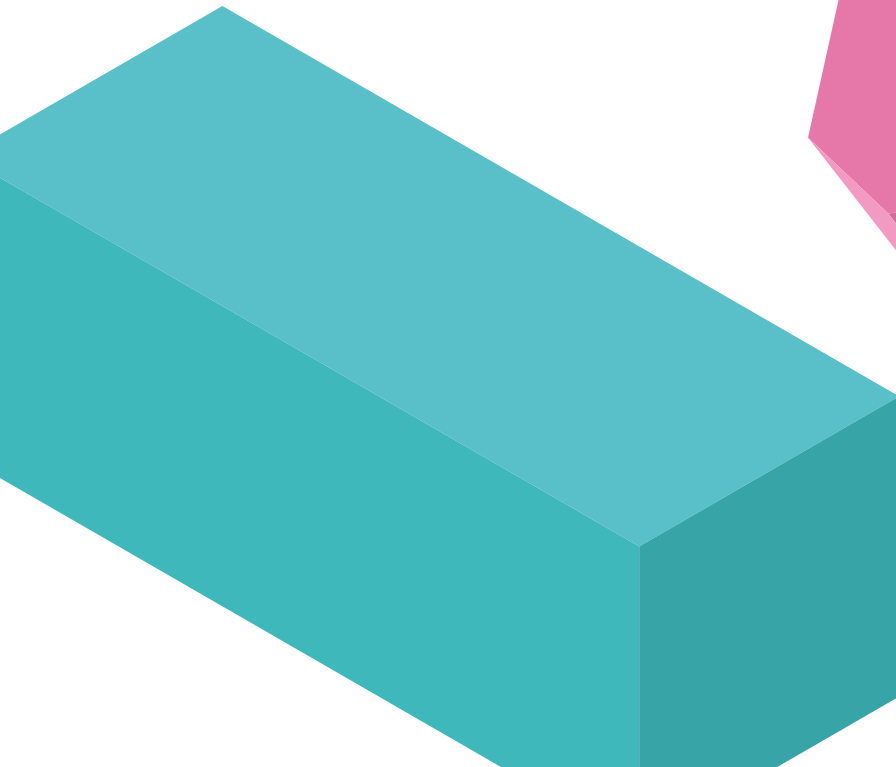
When studying at HE level, particularly at a university, you'll have much more freedom to organise your own time and priorities. At school, your teachers will help you with work as you do it in class. HE is different; you might only have 10 hours of timetabled 'lessons' (lectures, seminars, workshops, etc.) per week and you will complete your work in your own time. In short, you're in charge of your own learning.

# WHAT ARE LECTURES AND SEMINARS?

**Lectures and seminars are the names of the learning sessions you will have during your time at university or college.**

**Lectures** are when a tutor delivers a presentation on a particular topic and the students listen and take notes. These are an opportunity for students to gather all the information they need to complete their projects and assignments. Lectures usually take place in a lecture theatre (a tiered space designed specifically for this style of teaching) but can also take place in a classroom setting.

**Seminars** are usually smaller group gatherings, where students have the opportunity to discuss the information they have found. They can also discuss any ideas they have in more detail with their tutors and fellow students. Seminars are usually much more interactive than lectures and are fairly similar in style to the classes you have at school.



# ALTERNATIVE ROUTES TO HE

**After college, sixth form or school, many students go to university to study higher education. However, more and more students are deciding to go to a college to study for their degree. In fact, according to UCAS, more than 240 colleges in the UK offer a range of HE courses.**

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THIS ROUTE?

- Smaller class sizes and more personal study support
- Local providers
- Lower tuition fees (usually)
- Flexible study options.

**As well as traditional degrees, colleges often offer a wide range of other qualifications. Let's look at some of these below.**

## FOUNDATION YEARS

- Normally one year long
- Usually form part of a full degree
- Can be delivered at both universities and colleges
- Generally studied before moving onto a full degree
- Designed to develop the subject-specific knowledge and skills required to study a full degree in a related subject.

Students might decide to study a foundation year if their grades aren't suitable for their chosen course or if it's a subject that's new to them. Most students who take a foundation year choose to stay at the same university or college to complete their full degree. However, sometimes it is possible to apply for a full-time degree elsewhere if you complete the foundation year successfully.

## FOUNDATION DEGREES

- Usually a two-year course
- Equivalent to the first two years of an undergraduate degree
- A good option for students who would prefer a vocational degree and less exams
- Can also be a good choice for students who aren't yet ready to commit to three years at university.

Foundation degrees often provide a combination of academic and workplace-based skills and knowledge. They may have been designed in partnership with employers, in which case they might focus on a particular job. Foundation degrees can be used as a standalone qualification. However, it's more common for students to move on to a final 'top-up' year, leading to a full bachelor's degree.

## HNCS AND HNDS

- **Higher National Certificate (HNC):**  
A one-year work-related course that is equivalent to the first year of a university degree programme.
- **Higher National Diploma (HND):**  
A two-year course that is equivalent to the first two years of a bachelor's degree.

Like a foundation degree, it is possible to progress from these courses to complete a full bachelor's degree.

## HIGHER LEVEL AND DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS

Higher level apprenticeships provide an opportunity to gain qualifications at Level 4 or above. Degree apprenticeships are a bit different in that you can gain a full degree or even a master's degree!

These apprenticeships are very competitive and are available in a wide range of industries and job roles, including:

- Construction, planning and the built environment
- Agriculture, horticulture and animal care
- Arts, media and publishing
- Business and administration
- Science and mathematics
- Health, public services and care
- Digital
- Creative and design
- Legal, finance and accounting
- ... and lots more!

To do a degree apprenticeship, you first need to find a job with an employer who offers an apprenticeship. Once you have the job, you can then apply for the course.

Like the other apprenticeships we've already talked about, you won't pay for your training or tuition. Your employer will cover the costs and you will receive at least the apprentice National Minimum Wage. However, degree apprentices aren't eligible for student loans so living costs will be covered by the apprentice themselves.

**To find out more about degree apprenticeships, search 'UCAS degree apprenticeships' in your search engine.**

# CHOOSING A UNIVERSITY AND COURSE

**Choosing if you want to study HE and what course you want to study probably seems like a long way away. However, getting a head start by doing some research will help you make your choices for post-16. Working backwards is a great way of figuring out what subjects you should choose and what goals you should set yourself in terms of your grades/marks at GCSE and post-16.**

There are over 160 different HE providers in the UK, offering over 50,000 courses. This is a huge number and can be overwhelming if you are not sure where, or what, you want to study! While it might feel a bit early to be thinking about

higher education, doing some research now can make it easier for you to decide later on. These pages aim to help you research the courses and universities you might want to consider in the future.

***"I already had a career path set out from when I was finishing my GCSEs. I knew then that I wanted to become a psychologist."***

# CHOOSING A COURSE

**One great thing about university is that there's a huge variety of course combinations available. You can also study more than one subject! In some cases, you can combine two subjects and study what is known as a Combined or Joint Honours course.**

You can't combine just any subjects (for example, History and Midwifery don't really go hand in hand!) but there are loads of options to choose from. Some examples of combined or joint honours courses are:

- Drama and Creative Writing
- Business and Finance
- History and Politics
- Philosophy, Politics and Economics.

Another option is to take a course that offers a sandwich/placement year. A sandwich year is an additional option on some undergraduate degrees. It is essentially a full year (usually your third year) where you will be on a work placement that is related to your course. Think of it like an actual sandwich — your first and second years are the bottom slice of bread, the work placement is the filling and the final year/s is the top slice! A sandwich year is a fantastic way to get some practice in the working world and get experience within your chosen sector.

***“I took a ‘sandwich course’ which meant I studied for two years at university, then had a year out on placement and then came back for my fourth and final year. I would definitely recommend a placement year as it gave me such valuable insight into my chosen career, whilst also improving my knowledge on the subject to help with my final year studies.”***



Once you've found a course or combination of courses you like the sound of, you'll need to research how these subjects are taught at different universities and colleges. Using History as an example, some modules you might come across on History degrees are Nazi Germany, The Crusades and Late Medieval Society. However, not all universities and colleges will offer the same modules. It's therefore really important that you do your research and have a look at university course webpages to see what modules they offer and whether they interest you.

**Top tip!** Use the course finder on the UCAS website ([www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)) to explore all the courses and combinations on offer in the areas you're interested in. You can search by subject or location and if you see a course you're interested in, you can click through to see which universities offer that course. This process can be really interesting and you may find out about something you never knew existed!

***“Make sure you LOVE what you study; that way, if things get hard you know you are doing it for a bigger purpose.”***

**Are there any courses that you might be interested in studying at HE?**

Can you combine the subject/s you are interested in with any other subjects? Write down up to three possible combinations (you might find the UCAS website useful here: <https://digital.ucas.com/search>).

**Choose a course that you might want to study and look at the websites of two different universities that offer it. Can you see any differences between the two courses? These might be the modules on offer, placements or opportunities to go abroad.**

Make a list below so you can compare the two courses. Which might suit you best? Remember, picking the right course is up to you, not anyone else!

University one	University two
What are the entry requirements?	What are the entry requirements?
Which modules look interesting?	Which modules look interesting?
Could I do a placement year?	Could I do a placement year?
Could I go abroad?	Could I go abroad?

There are several study options available when you apply to university, including:

- Full-time:** This is the most common form of undergraduate study.
- Part-time:** Many universities and colleges offer part-time courses that will take longer to complete. For example, they might take five or six years instead of three. This option is popular for people who want to work alongside their studies or have other commitments.
- Online/distance learning:** This option means that you study your course away from the university or college, supported by online resources. This lets you learn in your own time, wherever you choose. You will interact with your tutors via email, phone and online platforms and you may be required to come together with your peers for group work from time to time.

***“It’s important to really sit and think about your reasons for going to university. Think whether you are passionate about a subject, and whether you are using a degree as a stepping stone to another pathway.”***

# CHOOSING A UNIVERSITY

**Another important decision to make when applying to university is where you want to study. You can apply for up to five courses and these will likely be at several different universities.**

Would you want to stay close to home or move further away? Many factors will influence this choice, such as:

- What kind of place you would enjoy living in (e.g. a big city or a small town).
- How much it would cost you to live in that area (e.g. living in London will cost more than living in Newcastle).
- Whether it feels like the right kind of place for you.

If you do decide to move away from home, lots of support is on hand! Moving away can be a really great way to throw yourself into student life and meet other likeminded people. We'll talk more about moving away from home, plus student accommodation options, later on in the workbook.

The best thing to help you decide where you want to study is to visit universities on Open Days. Open Days are when universities and colleges open their doors to the general public and offer subject talks, tours of campus facilities and the chance to meet academics. You'll also be able to find information about things like student support, accommodation, health and wellbeing and social activities. You can usually book onto Open Days on the university's website, or you might attend as part of a trip organised by your school or college. Most students start attending Open Days in Year 12, but they're open to all and it's never too early to start doing your research!

Another option when researching where to study is to organise your own trip to the city or town in your free time. This can help you get a feel for the place and see if you could imagine yourself living there.

***"I looked around so many universities and was so stuck between my options. I made a pros and cons list which came down to a combination of accommodation, course content and the 'feeling' of the university as a whole!"***

**Universities and colleges have different features that can influence your decision. For example, some are in countryside locations while others are in city centres. They can also have different types of campuses. Read on to explore some of the different types of universities and factors you might come across during your research.**

## UNIVERSITY CENTRES/COLLEGES

While a lot of people think of universities when they think of studying for a degree, colleges and university centres can also offer higher education courses. We discuss this in loads more detail on [pages 72-79](#).

## RUSSELL GROUP UNIVERSITIES

Twenty-four universities in the UK form part of the Russell Group. These universities are research-intensive, which means lots of staff are involved in cutting-edge research that informs the teaching and learning. These universities also have strong links with the business world. Graduates are often in high demand. Russell Group universities may have higher entry requirements than non-Russell Group universities, and may focus on more traditional academic subjects rather than vocational options.

## SPECIALIST INSTITUTIONS

Some subjects have entire universities or colleges dedicated to them and these are known as specialist institutions. Some of the specialist institutions in the UK are for:

- Performing and visual arts (known as conservatoires)
- Medicine
- Science and technology
- Humanities
- Business
- Veterinary science.

## CITY/COUNTRYSIDE

A big factor in choosing a university is whether you want to be in a big city or a more rural location. There is no right or wrong choice. It's completely up to you and what suits you best!

## CAMPUS/NON-CAMPUS

A campus university is where the teaching and research buildings, accommodation and leisure activities are all close together. This means they often have a safe, friendly community feel to them. A non-campus university is one that is spread out across multiple locations. For example, the student accommodation might be a 30-minute walk from the Students' Union, or different academic buildings might be a short bus ride away from one another.

## FACILITIES

A lot of your time at university will be spent studying, socialising and taking part in extra-curricular activities. It's therefore important to consider things like:

- Libraries
- IT facilities
- Subject-specific facilities such as labs or performance spaces
- Extra-curricular facilities such as sports pitches and cafés.

Compare two universities you like the look of. Write some notes for both, then compare your lists and circle the things that are most important to you.

University one	University two
Is it a university or a college?	Is it a university or a college?
Is it a Russell Group institution?	Is it a Russell Group institution?
Big city or smaller town?	Big city or smaller town?
Campus or spread out?	Campus or spread out?
<div>Students' Union</div> <div>(Take a look at the website and make some notes on things you like below! Do they offer a club or society you like the sound of? What are the support services on offer? What are the social spaces like?)</div>	<div>Students' Union</div> <div>(Take a look at the website and make some notes on things you like below! Do they offer a club or society you like the sound of? What are the support services on offer? What are the social spaces like?)</div>
<div>Facilities</div> <div>(What does this university have relating to your chosen subject? What other buildings are on campus? Is there anything new to the university?)</div>	<div>Facilities</div> <div>(What does this university have relating to your chosen subject? What other buildings are on campus? Is there anything new to the university?)</div>

**Top tip!**

Research, research, research. When choosing a course and a university, there are many steps you can take to ensure you are making the right decision for you. It's okay to have different ideas to your friends and family. Doing thorough research can make it much easier to work out what you really want.

**Useful research includes:**

- Attending Open Days
- Looking at university websites
- Speaking to university staff at careers events such as UCAS fairs or at your school
- Speaking to people who have been to university
- Listening to current students through social media.

***“Do your research, find out if university is definitely for you and make sure that the course is exactly what you are looking for.”***

**A great activity you can do as part of your research is to speak to someone who has been to university. Why not ‘interview’ a family member, friend or teacher about their experiences of choosing a course and university?**

Use the questions below as a guide when carrying out an interview.  
Use the blank spaces to add your own questions too!

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 1. What course did you study?                      | 7.  |
| 2. What made you choose that course?               | 8.  |
| 3. Where did you choose to study?                  | 9.  |
| 4. What was the campus like?                       |     |
| 5. Were you involved with any clubs and societies? | 10. |
| 6. Did you live in student accommodation?          | 11. |

**Now you know a little more about higher education, let's explore the differences between traditional degrees and degree apprenticeships.**

Try the activity below. You can either list the differences or draw a mind map. You may need to do a bit more research using the internet to help.

**What are the similarities between traditional degrees and degree apprenticeships?**

**What are the differences between traditional degrees and degree apprenticeships?**

**What type of person do you think would do well on a degree apprenticeship?**

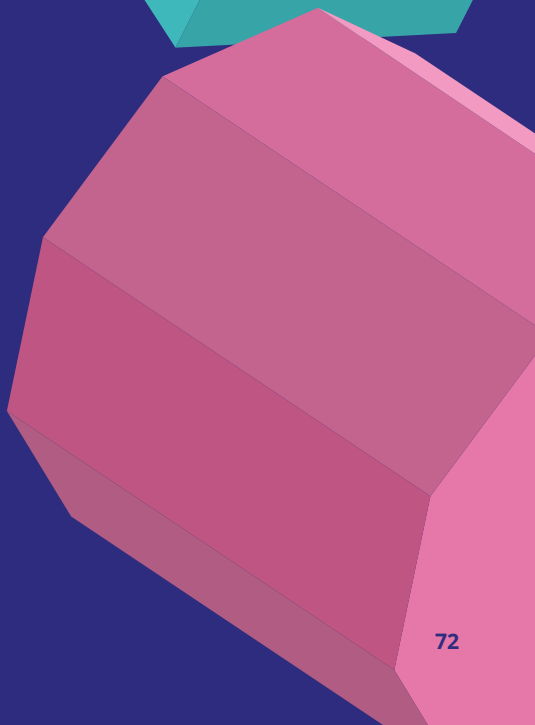
**What type of person do you think would do well on a traditional degree?**

# HE SOUNDS GREAT! SO WHAT NOW?

**If higher education sounds good to you, you'll start thinking about submitting an application during your final year (Year 13 or Year 2 for BTECs) of your further education studies.**

To apply for a degree apprenticeship, there are lots of websites you can use to find opportunities. We've listed some of these in this workbook already ([page 65](#)). As we mentioned before, you apply for a job with an employer that is offering an apprenticeship. You can then apply for a course.

Applications for university degrees are a bit different. They are usually managed through an online service called UCAS. Read on to find out more!



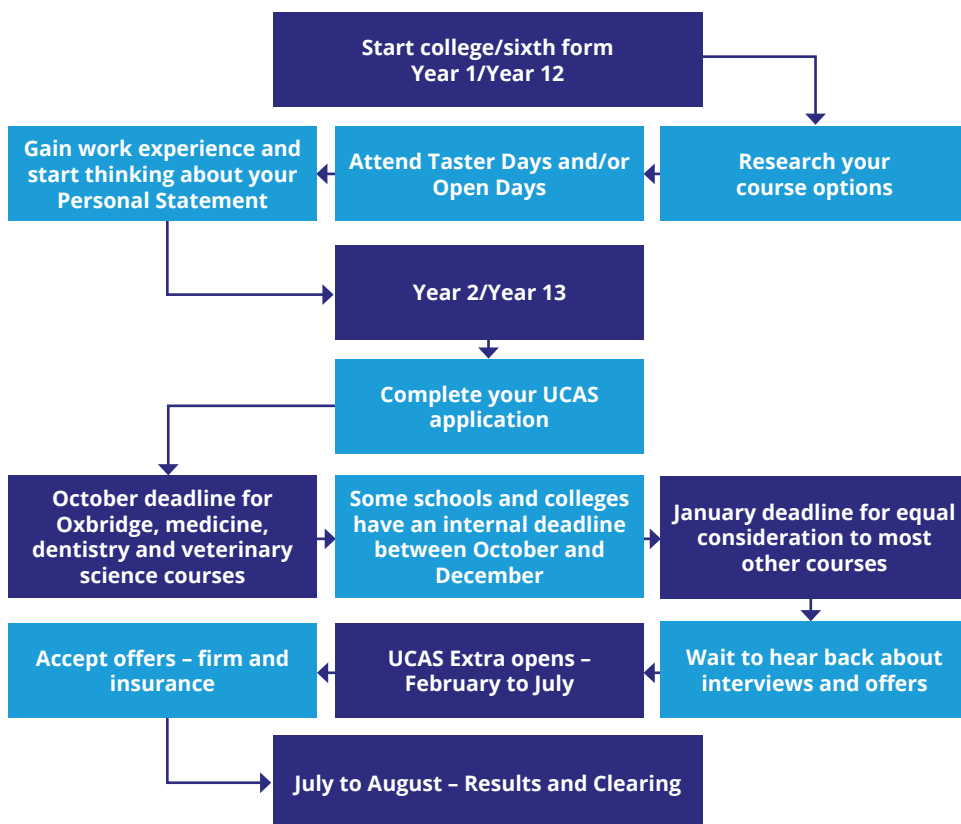




**UCAS stands for Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. This is where you will begin your higher education journey! In a nutshell, UCAS allows you to create one application, which is then sent to up to five universities of your choice.**

The handy chart below gives you an idea of what is included in the UCAS application process and when you can expect different things to happen.

***“The application was really unproblematic for me; I never had any issues and the services at university guided me through any queries.”***



# PERSONAL STATEMENTS

**As part of your UCAS (and college) application, you'll need to write a personal statement. This part of the application is the most important as it is your chance to tell your chosen universities or colleges why they should accept you onto their course.**

You may also have to write personal statements when you apply for jobs throughout your life. It's therefore useful to know how to write a good one!

Read on to find out more about personal statements and how to make yours a success...

A personal statement should include these things:

- Why you've applied for the course, job or opportunity
- What you're good at
- Work experience or employment (if any)
- Career aspirations
- Skills and abilities
- Other interests.

To help you get thinking about what information you might include in a personal statement, have a go at filling in the sections below.

### **Why am I interested in this opportunity?**

**Jobs I've done or work experience I've had (you could also talk about Duke of Edinburgh or NCS here):**

**My skills and abilities (this could be things you're good at in school or other skills you have):**

**My career aspirations (what do you want to do in the future?):**

**Things I've achieved outside of school:**

**My hobbies and interests:**

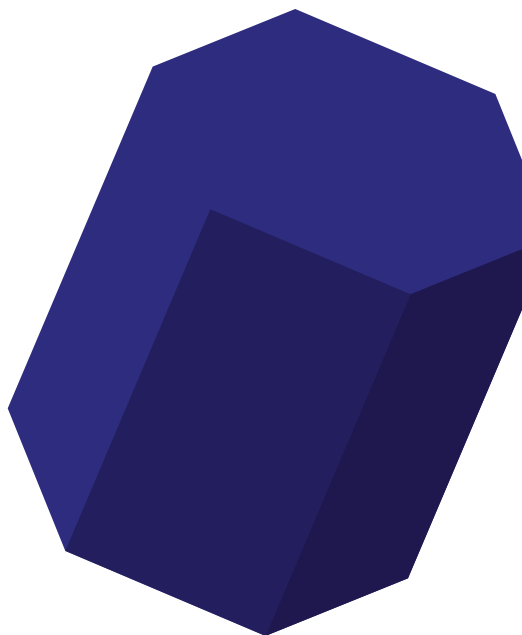
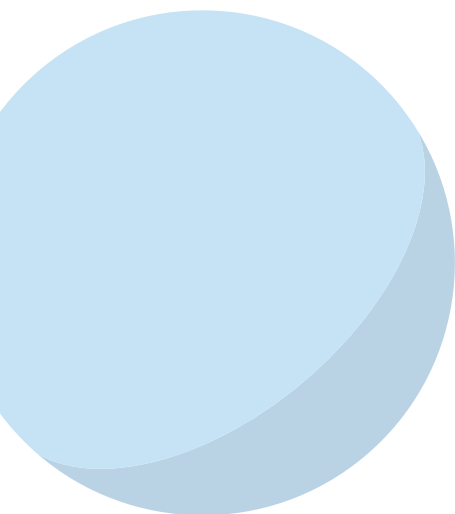
There are a range of activities throughout this workbook that can help you when putting together a personal statement, particularly in the 'Self-exploration' ([page 11](#)) and 'Self-esteem and confidence' ([page 154](#)) sections. It's a good idea to hang onto this workbook so you can use it as a prompt when you need to write a personal statement in future!

# WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU'VE SUBMITTED YOUR APPLICATION?

Once you've submitted your application to UCAS, they will send it off to the universities or colleges you've applied for.

Those universities will then make a decision about whether or not they can accept you onto their course. When you receive your offers, you choose your favourite two options, decline the rest and wait for your exam results!

*When you receive your offers, you choose your favourite two options, decline the rest and wait for your exam results!*



# INTERVIEWS

We've already talked a bit about interviews in the 'Applying to further education' section (see [pages 45-46](#)). Now we'll look at what to expect from an interview when you apply for a higher education course or a job.

You could have an interview for:

- A place at college
- A place at university
- A job
- Other paid or recreational opportunities, e.g. volunteering.

Once you've submitted your UCAS application, some HE courses will ask you to attend an interview or audition before they can offer you a place. Just like with personal statements, improving your interview and audition skills can be useful for your wider life too.

## BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

You're likely to hear about interviews for courses or jobs via email or through the post. You might be asked to prepare a presentation on a relevant topic or a portfolio showcasing your work. It's a good idea to take some time to practice interview questions. There's an activity to help you with this at the end of this section!

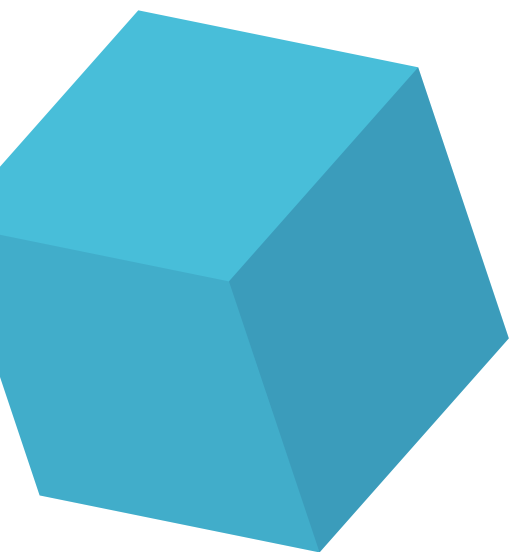
## TYPES OF INTERVIEW

There are a few different types of interview:

- **One-to-one:** Where it's just you and the interviewer in the room.
- **Panel:** Where you're interviewed by more than one person.
- **Group:** Where you're interviewed alongside other people applying for the same opportunity. This might involve you taking part in an activity with other applicants to showcase your skills.

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview questions are designed to help you show the interviewer why you're the right person for that course or job. It's not a test — think of it more as an opportunity to chat with the interviewer/s about what you've got to offer.



Have a go at this activity to practice talking about yourself. These are some of the most common questions asked during interviews!

**Tell me about yourself** (it can be tricky to answer this one on the spot, so be prepared)

**What are your strengths?**

**What are your weaknesses?**

**Can you describe a time when you have had to work under pressure?**

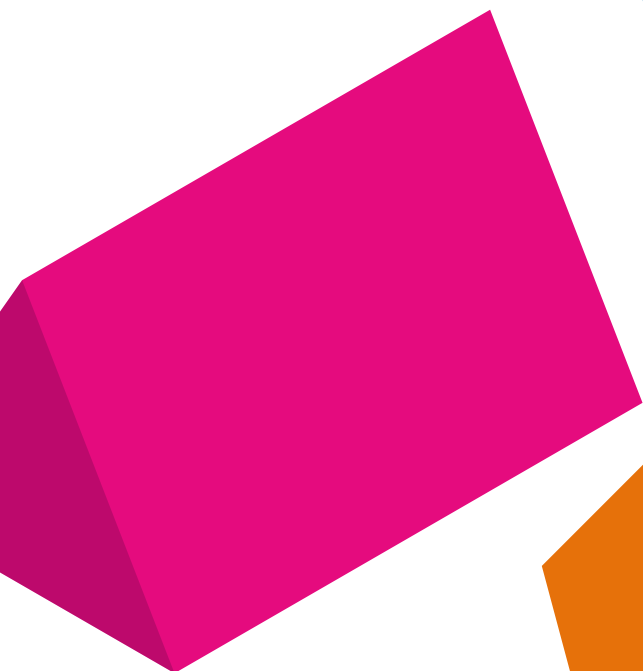
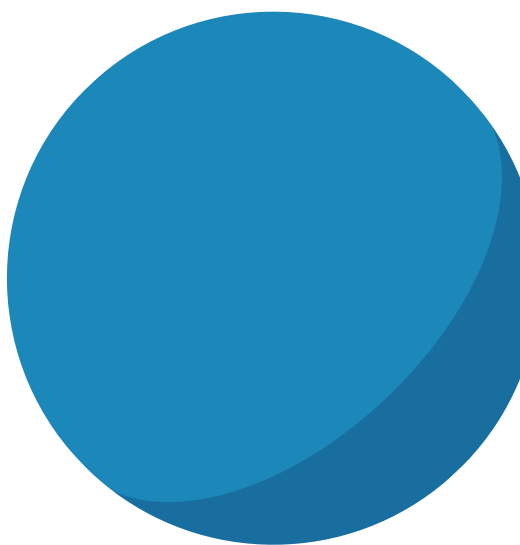
**How do you find working in a team?**

## AUDITIONS AND PORTFOLIOS

If you're applying to a specialist institution (we talked briefly about these earlier in the book), you may find that you're asked to attend an audition or produce a portfolio. These are generally required for performing and visual arts courses.

- Auditions are an exciting opportunity to showcase your talents. You would be asked to prepare a short piece that is relevant to your course (maybe a dance routine or piece of music on your chosen instrument) and perform it for members of staff from the course.
- Portfolios are often required for creative courses. You would take your portfolio along with you when you attend an interview with your chosen universities or colleges. They are a great opportunity to share your best work, style and skills with admissions tutors.

***"My course required an interview with a design portfolio which I just saw as an opportunity to show my passion for design"***



# STUDENT FINANCE

**Student finance is one of the most talked about parts of going to university or college and you may have heard a bit about it on the news or TV already. Student finance is money that students can borrow from the government to help them pay for their course, accommodation and general living costs while studying.**

Student finance means that no matter how much money a student has access to at home, anybody can afford to go to university or college. The government body that oversees and manages student finance in England is called Student Finance England.

There are two key parts of a student loan:

- Tuition fee loan
- Maintenance loan.

## TUITION FEE LOAN

The tuition fee loan is paid to the university or college to cover the cost of the course. As of February 2021, universities can charge up to £9,250 per year for their courses (course costs at colleges are usually lower). The tuition fee loan is paid directly to the university or college by the government.

## MAINTENANCE LOAN

This loan is paid directly to you, the student, once per term to help cover living costs. These costs might include accommodation, bills, food and travel. This loan is what is called 'means-tested', meaning that the amount a student will receive depends on the earnings of their household. Everyone is entitled to *some* maintenance loan, but those with lower household incomes will be entitled to more.

Loan amounts can change. If you're interested in finding out how much you might be entitled to, we'd recommend visiting the Student Finance England website at <https://studentfinance.campaign.gov.uk>.

There are also grants, bursaries and scholarships available across the UK. These might be available to students with additional support needs, those who achieve particularly highly in specific subjects or who are from a low-income background. Students usually apply for these directly with the university and they don't normally need to be repaid.

Students with extra support needs may be eligible for Disabled Students' Allowance. This can help to pay for specialist equipment and other expenses.



## REPAYING STUDENT LOANS

*(figures correct at time of publication)*

We often find that people feel frightened or overwhelmed when they think about having to repay a student loan. But it really doesn't need to be scary! There are lots of things in place to make sure people can afford to repay their loans in a safe and worry-free way. Some key things to remember about student loan repayments are:

- You won't start repaying your student loan until the April **after** you graduate (graduation usually takes place in July or November).
- You will not make **any** repayments until you are earning over £26,575.
- If you are earning this minimum figure, repayments generally cost less than a cup of coffee per week.
- If you ever drop below this amount (what is known as the repayment threshold), you stop making repayments until you are earning that amount again. If you never earn that amount, you will never repay a penny.
- Repayments are taken directly from your wages before they reach your bank account, so you don't need to set up any payment plans or direct debits.
- Any loan that hasn't been paid back after 30 years gets written off. This means that your payments stop and the debt is removed.

There are a few other things that students should be aware of when it comes to student finance, but we just wanted to give you a short and sweet introduction. If you decide to apply to university, when the time comes you'll receive loads more information from school or college to make sure you're fully prepared and in the know.

Parents and carers are often concerned about student finance and the repayment system. It might be useful to share this section with them to help put their mind at ease. More information can be found on the Student Finance England website or there are lots of other handy resources available online.

# ACCOMMODATION

We've talked a lot about choosing the right university and course for you. The next big decision is choosing where to live! Your accommodation is where you'll be going home to at the end of each day. It's where you'll rest, socialise, study, keep your belongings... it'll be home!

One of the first things a student needs to think about is whether they want to live at home or move into student accommodation. This is a personal choice. Everyone will make a different decision based on a number of factors and there's no right or wrong answer.

***"Do your research and choose what suits you best – not just the cheapest or most popular!"***

Do you have any thoughts about where you want to live at university or college? Make some notes below. Don't worry, we won't hold you to it if you change your mind later on!

***"My top tips for moving out would be: make it homely, you're going to be spending a lot of time there; learn how to budget, you can't afford take-away every night; leading on from that last one, learn how to cook!"***

***"When I moved away from home, I loved having the freedom to do the things I wanted whenever I wanted."***

## WHY LIVE AT HOME?

- Home comforts
- Existing support networks (e.g. friends and family)
- Saving money
- You might have existing responsibilities (e.g. a job or caring responsibilities).

***"I lived at home for the first three years because it was convenient for me and helped me to save money."***

## WHY LIVE AWAY FROM HOME?

- Meet new people
- Because you're going to a university or college that is far away from your home
- Gain independence
- The excitement of living somewhere new
- Learn lots of new life skills (e.g. paying bills, cooking, household chores, etc).

***"In my first two years, I stayed in student halls in a flat with three other people. We got on really well and became like family. I took a placement year, which I moved back home for to save as much money as possible, and then booked a private house with my friends for my final year."***

## SOME THINGS TO THINK ABOUT IF YOU'D LIKE TO MOVE AWAY

Different types of student accommodation will have different facilities and options. Some useful points to consider when choosing accommodation are:

- Do you want to live with all male/female or mixed?
- Are there any facilities or amenities that are essential to you (e.g. en-suite, gym, double bed)?
- How far away is the campus from where you'll be living? What are your travel options? How long will it take? How much will it cost?

***"My priorities were cleanliness, safety and affordability. My accommodation is a 10-minute walk to campus and a 20-minute walk to Leeds city centre. There's also a doctors and a supermarket not too far away!"***



# NOTES



How do  
you feel today?

Is anything  
bothering you?

# A QUICK **WELLBEING** CHECK-IN

**Take a few minutes to  
check in with how you're  
feeling right now.**

What is one good thing  
that happened today?

What are your  
goals for tomorrow?

# SELF-CARE CHECK-IN

Tick the things you've done (or plan to do) today. There's space at the end for you to add any that aren't on the list.

Eaten three main meals

Taken a break from social media

Listened to your favourite music

Had a chat with a friend

Done some exercise

Spent some time outside

Taken some time to enjoy a hobby

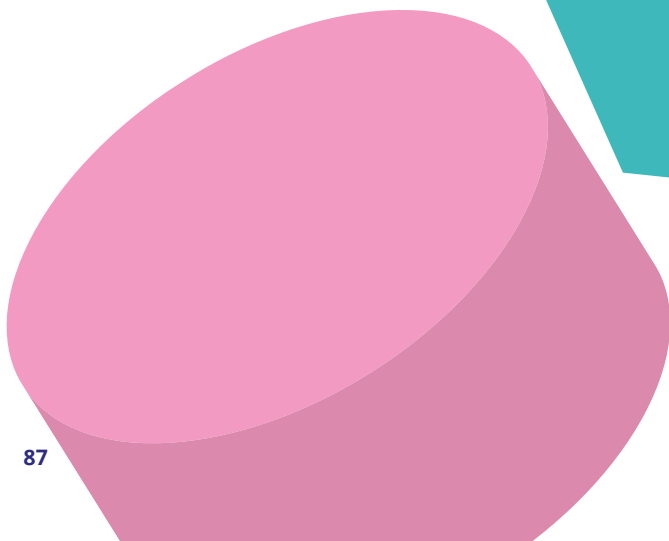
Said something kind to someone

**Reminder: take five  
long mindful breaths**

# STUDENT LIFE

Student life is made up of many things. From social activities to budgeting your money to studying abroad, higher education will give you the chance to do new things, meet new people and explore your own interests and passions.

*"The network of individuals you are introduced to at university is absolutely amazing. You have the opportunity to meet and connect with so many like-minded people and I've had a great experience making friends."*



# A DAY IN THE LIFE...

Below is a timetable of an average week at university. As you can see, it shows some of the differences we've mentioned previously, such as plenty of free time and fewer timetabled lessons.

LOOK AT THE TIMETABLE AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BELOW:

How many lessons do you have at school in a single day?

How many seminars?

How many lectures does this person have per week?

You might spot some activities, such as social activities and work, that we haven't covered yet. Don't worry, we'll come onto those shortly!

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
6am							
7am				Study			
8am							
9am							
10am	Visit family home	Lecture – Digital Victorians Joseph Priestley Building	Lecture Hands on History Lockside Building	University library	Seminar Digital Victorians Joseph Priestley Building	Work Student Ambassador	Work Student Ambassador
11am		Netball practice Sports Centre		Lecture – Britain on the breadline Edith Key Building	Study		
12am			Lecture – Britains Abroad: 1500–2000 Ramsden Building	Seminar – Hands on History Lockside Building	University library		
1am		Study				Seminar – Britains Abroad: 1500–2000 Ramsden Building	Study
2am				Rehearsal – Musical Theatre Society Drama Studio	Seminar Britain on the Breadline Edith Key Building		
3am		University library					Home
4am			Work Student Ambassador				
5am	Study						Meet friends
6am	Home						Local restaurant



**Does this timetable match up to your idea of higher education?  
Did anything surprise you? Are these positive or negative surprises?**

### **THINGS TO BEAR IN MIND:**

- Some courses will have much more time spent in university or college, attending lectures or seminars, e.g. science subjects. If you choose a subject that requires lots of practical experiments, such as chemistry, you might need to be in a laboratory for a lot of your study time.
- If you choose a vocational degree or course, such as nursing or physiotherapy, you will spend a lot of time on placement rather than in lectures, seminars or on campus.
- Different universities and colleges will teach the same subjects, but in different ways. This might change how your timetable looks.

# STUDENT LIFE AS AN APPRENTICE

As we know, higher education isn't all about university and college. It also includes any apprenticeship at Level 4 and above. Apprentices are still students, but you're also an employee and with that comes certain expectations and responsibilities.

You'll get all the benefits of being a student, such as:

- The opportunity to join clubs and societies
- Access to facilities on campus (e.g. the library)
- Student discounts.

However, you'll also essentially be working and studying at the same time, so be prepared to learn some strong time management skills!

To find out more about life as an apprentice, visit:  
[www.whatcareerlive.co.uk/advice/life-as-a-degree-apprentice-everything-you-need-to-know](http://www.whatcareerlive.co.uk/advice/life-as-a-degree-apprentice-everything-you-need-to-know).

*"I have grown so much as a person through volunteering, working for the university and attending so many events. They're a great way to meet people and build a skill set that will stick with you for life."*

# CLUBS AND SOCIETIES

**Clubs and societies are where groups of like-minded students get together to enjoy a common interest. They're all about socialising and doing something you enjoy!**

You probably have after school or lunchtime clubs at school. Clubs and societies at university or college are very similar except they're run by students for students, usually through a place called the Students' Union. Because they are student-led, it means that you can set up new clubs and societies yourself (as long as you have a few other people to do it with you!).

***"In my first year I was part of the kickboxing club, which was so much fun. My brother and I did Ju Jitsu for eleven years, so it was nice to get back into training at uni."***

## **WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF CLUBS AND SOCIETIES?**

There is a club or society out there for everyone. Whether it's an LGBTQ+ group, a sports team or a gaming club, you'll find something to suit you. If you don't, you can set one up yourself! Some weird and wonderful examples of clubs and societies are:

- **Quidditch Society,**  
University of Nottingham
- **Viking Society,**  
University of Plymouth
- **Tiddlywinks Society,**  
University of Cambridge
- **Competitive Eating Society,**  
University of Kent
- **Beekeeping Society,**  
University of East Anglia
- **Extreme Ironing Society,**  
University of Nottingham.

***"I made friends for life by joining a society. I'm more involved with my netball friends than my course friends!"***

**Why not have a go at dreaming up your own society? Use the space provided to draft what your society might be, using the prompts below to help you. You can design a poster or flyer, make notes or draw a visual representation. Whatever suits you best!**

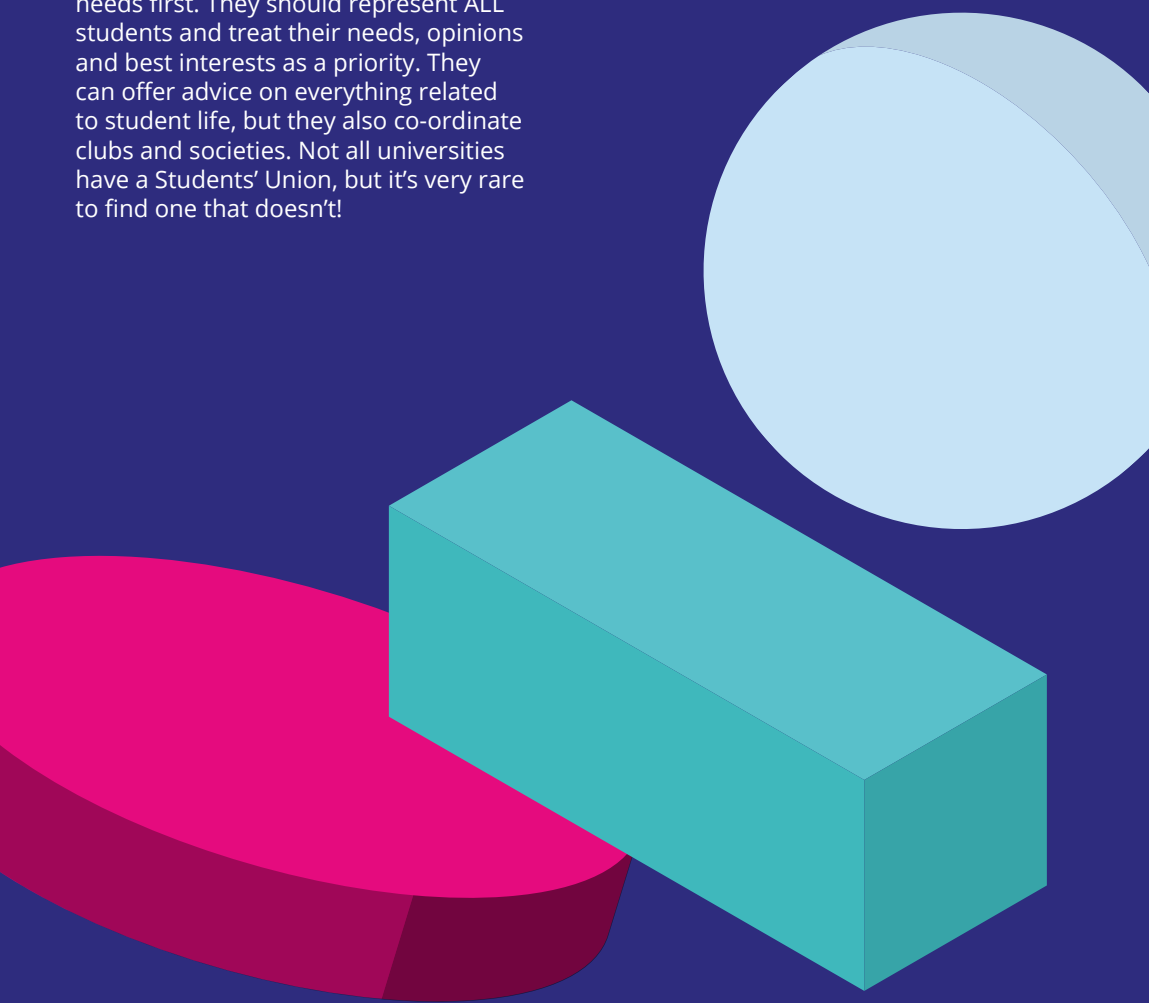
**THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. What is your society?                    | 4. Is there a cost to join?                   |
| 2. How many people do you need to start it? | 5. Will you need any money to run activities? |
| 3. Plan your first activity to promote it.  |   |

# WHAT IS A STUDENTS' UNION?

**A Students' Union is an organisation that is run and staffed by students.**

They are dedicated to putting students' needs first. They should represent ALL students and treat their needs, opinions and best interests as a priority. They can offer advice on everything related to student life, but they also co-ordinate clubs and societies. Not all universities have a Students' Union, but it's very rare to find one that doesn't!



# MANAGING MONEY

**Most people find managing their money to be one of the biggest adjustments to life as a student. You should know a little bit about student finance from the previous sections in the workbook.**

Keeping an eye on how much money is coming in and going out is key as a student. There are lots of apps available that can help with this!

**Income might include:**

- Student loan payments
- Wages from a part-time job
- Help from parents.

**Outgoings might include:**

- Rent payments
- Food
- Course books
- Travel expenses.

## **PART-TIME JOBS**

A part-time job is a great way to get some extra cash! It also boosts your CV and might help you figure out a potential career path. Look out for opportunities on campus like student ambassador work (where you might work on Open Days or with school groups visiting campus) or jobs in the Students' Union.

***Keeping an eye on how much money is coming in and going out is key as a student.***

# DESIGN YOUR OWN UNIVERSITY!

**Now is your opportunity to put everything you've learned about higher education into practice. It's time to design your own university!**

In the space below, let your imagination run wild. If you could attend any university in the world, real or fantasy, on earth or a different planet entirely, what would it look like? There are no rules here so really go for it!

## Some points to consider:

- What kind of university is it? (Some of our favourite themes from the past have been chocolate, social media and Harry Potter).
- What kind of students go there?
- What courses does it teach?
- How much does it cost?
- What clubs and societies are there?
- What does the campus look like?
- Can you describe/draw the accommodation?
- Does it have any cool features that make it totally unique?

# NOTES





How do  
you feel today?

Is anything  
bothering you?

# A QUICK **WELLBEING** CHECK-IN

**Take a few minutes to  
check in with how you're  
feeling right now.**

What are your  
goals for tomorrow?

What is one good thing  
that happened today?

# SELF-CARE CHECK-IN

Tick the things you've done (or plan to do) today. There's space at the end for you to add any that aren't on the list.

Eaten three main meals

Taken a break from social media

Listened to your favourite music

Had a chat with a friend

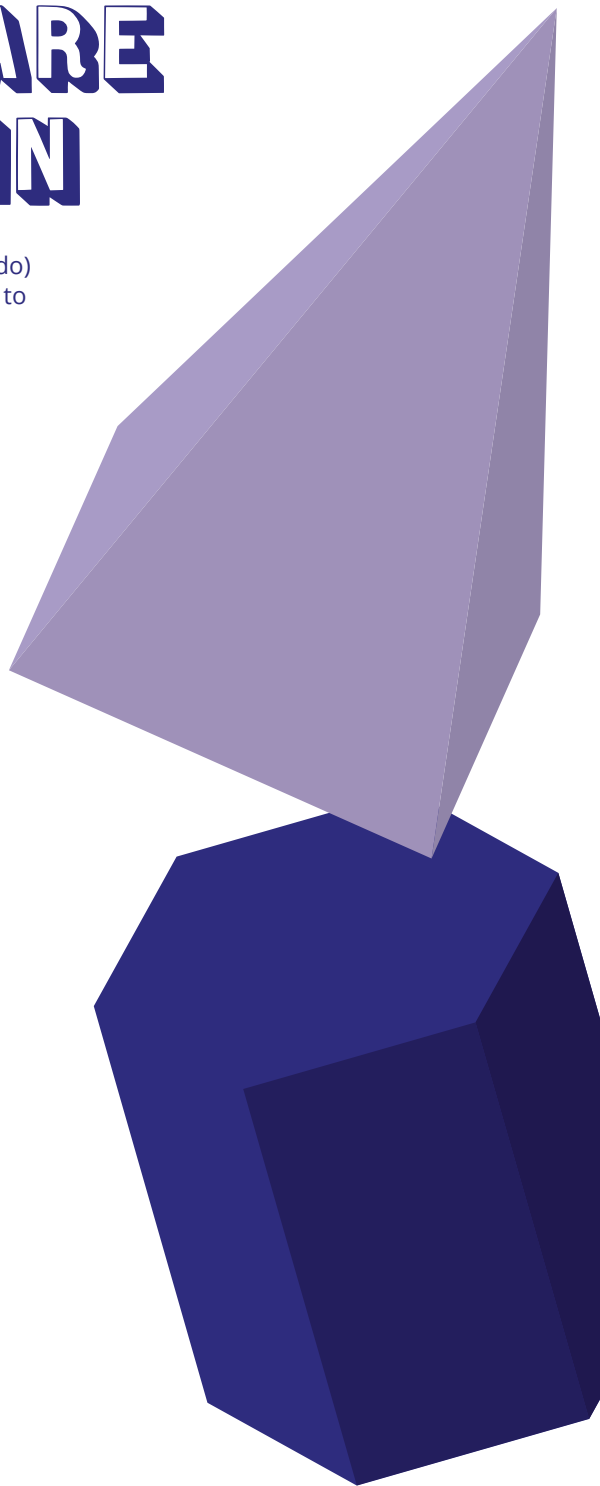
Done some exercise

Spent some time outside

Taken some time to enjoy a hobby

Said something kind to someone

**Reminder: take five  
long mindful breaths**



# 5 CAREERS AND EMPLOYABILITY

CAREERS AND EMPLOYABILITY

MAKING A DECISION

RESEARCHING YOUR OPTIONS

GET CHATTING

# CAREERS AND EMPLOYABILITY

When we talk about 'careers', we often think of just 'getting a job'. However, a career can be so much more than that! It can open up a world of fantastic opportunities and rewards. You will probably have lots of different jobs as you build your career, each giving you different skills and experiences. You may even end up doing something totally different to what you had expected!

People may be telling you that you need to decide what you're doing with your future, but it can feel overwhelming and difficult to know where to begin. It can be useful to break the process down into smaller steps to make it more manageable. Let's take a look below at a process that can help to give structure to your decision-making.

***"Having a job as a student taught me time management skills, as well as resourcefulness, professionalism, confidence and how to think on my feet."***

# MAKING A DECISION

## 1. SELF-EXPLORATION

Go to [page 12](#) to complete some exercises to help with self-exploration and get an idea of your skills and strengths. Take your time with this if you can — knowing yourself is an important step when considering what jobs might be a good fit for you!

## 2. MATCH INTERESTS TO OPTIONS

As well as thinking about what you'd like to do, it's also important to think about what options are available. For example, if a love of sport shines through during your self-exploration, you might want to start looking at the different careers you could do within sports. This could range from being a PE teacher to a sports therapist, a personal trainer to a sport and exercise psychologist.

Remember to research multiple options and think about what your 'plan B' might be in case you change your mind or the job you want is very competitive. Having multiple options means you are more prepared, no matter what happens in the future.

## 3. USE YOUR SUPPORT NETWORK

Use the support you have around you, including your teachers or careers adviser at school or college, and friends and family. A careers adviser is a great person to speak to when you need a bit of help or advice with your career choices. They can ask questions to help check you've thought through different aspects of your decision and prompt you to think about aspects you hadn't considered.

Sometimes, making a decision can feel scary because it means that things will change and there is an element of the unknown. Talking things through with people you trust can really help you visualise what the change will be like and check that you feel comfortable with the decision you're making.

## 4. PUT YOUR DECISION INTO PRACTICE

Once you've done lots of self-exploration, research and made use of your support network, you may be feeling more confident in your decision. Now is the time to put all that hard work into practice! This will often mean filling out applications and other related paperwork for a course, job or opportunity. Make sure you know when the deadlines are so you don't miss your chance.

## 5. REFLECT AND LEARN LESSONS

While you might now be focusing on your next steps, it is always important to think about your experience to help you develop for next time. Make a note of what went well and anything you would do differently next time.

Use the prompts below to help you think about what you found useful and would do again, and what you would do differently.

**What did you learn from the process?**

**Would you have done anything differently?**

**Who did you speak to that helped you?**

**How long did it take you to find information?**

**What did you find difficult about the process?  
And how did you overcome this?**

**What did you enjoy about the process?**

Thinking about questions like these can help you to be more focused and effective next time you need to make a decision.

# RESEARCHING YOUR OPTIONS

These are some great websites out there to help you explore different careers. There are also lots of quizzes to help you think about what careers might suit you.

Some of our favourites include:

- [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk)
- <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk>
- [www.ucas.com/careers-advice](http://www.ucas.com/careers-advice)
- <https://icould.com/buzz-quiz>

And remember, one of your most valuable resources is your Careers Adviser. Book an appointment with them if you haven't already!

---

Use the quizzes on Prospects and iCould to explore different careers and see what jobs are suggested for you. Make a note of these below.

Pick one of these jobs and read more about it on Prospects. You can do this by typing the job into the search box. Using the information on the jobs page, answer the following questions:

**What course/courses would you have to study to do this job?**

**What type of skills do you need for the job?**

**What do you like about the job?**

**Which bits don't you like or think you wouldn't like to do?**

Now pick one of the courses you would need to do in order to get that job and answer the following questions:

**What are the entry qualifications for the course (these are the qualifications you need to have to be able to apply)?**

**How long will I study for?**

**What qualification will I get?**

**When do I need to apply?**

**How do I apply?**



## **What information do I need to fill out the application form?**

Now, look at a university/college/apprenticeship that offers the course and answer the following questions:

**What is the course content? What will you study?**

**How is the course taught (e.g. classroom, lab, placement).**

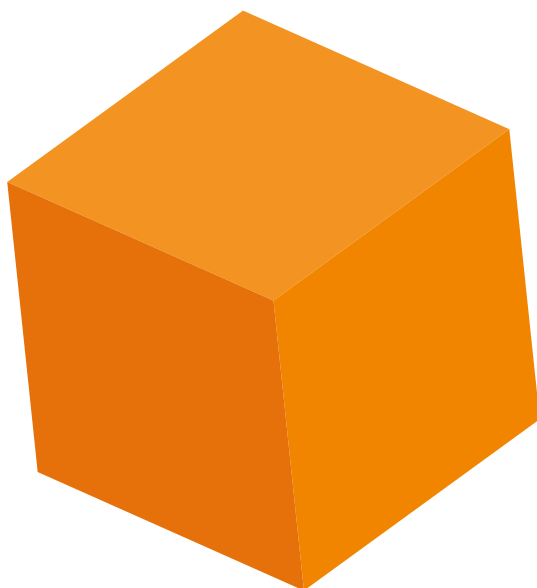
**How will you be assessed?**

# GET CHATTING

**Speaking to people about what they do is a great way to find out about different jobs and get some honest insight into what it's really like to do them.**


If you can, speak to a few people who do jobs that sound interesting or appealing to you. The prompts below can help you when asking someone about their job. Feel free to use these as a starting point and add your own questions in the spaces provided!

1. **Have you always done this job?  
If not, what did you do before?**
2. **How did you get into this  
job/career?**
3. **What do you like about your job?**
4. **What don't you like about  
your job?**
5. **What did you study?**
6. **Did that directly relate to the  
job you're doing now?**
7. **What did you think you wanted  
to do when you left school?**
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

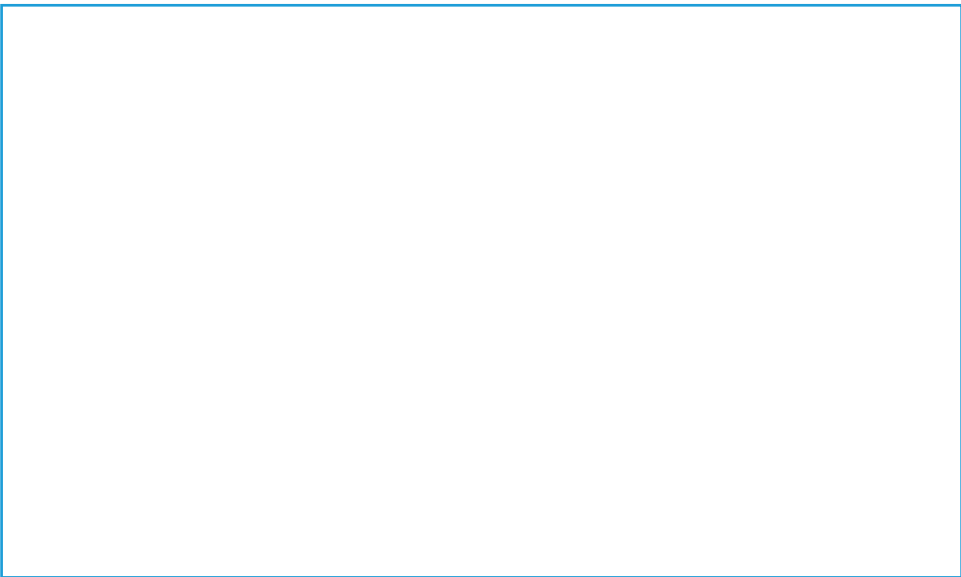


Hopefully, the activities in this section have helped you think about your future plans as well as given you some hints and tips for further research. In the spaces below, outline any findings you have made about your potential future plans. You could write some notes or use some paper to draw it — it's up to you!

**What might you want to do to do as a job or career:**



**What might you want to do to do as your 'plan B' job or career. This doesn't have to be second best — it can be something else you are equally interested in!**



# NOTES



How do  
you feel today?

Is anything  
bothering you?

# A QUICK **WELLBEING** CHECK-IN

**Take a few minutes to  
check in with how you're  
feeling right now.**

What is one good thing  
that happened today?

What are your  
goals for tomorrow?

# SELF-CARE CHECK-IN

Tick the things you've done (or plan to do) today. There's space at the end for you to add any that aren't on the list.

Eaten three main meals

Taken a break from social media

Listened to your favourite music

Had a chat with a friend

Done some exercise

Spent some time outside

Taken some time to enjoy a hobby

Said something kind to someone

**Reminder: take five  
long mindful breaths**

# 6 STUDY SKILLS

STUDY SKILLS

TIME MANAGEMENT

DEALING WITH DISTRACTIONS

PRIORITISING

ORGANISING

NOTE TAKING

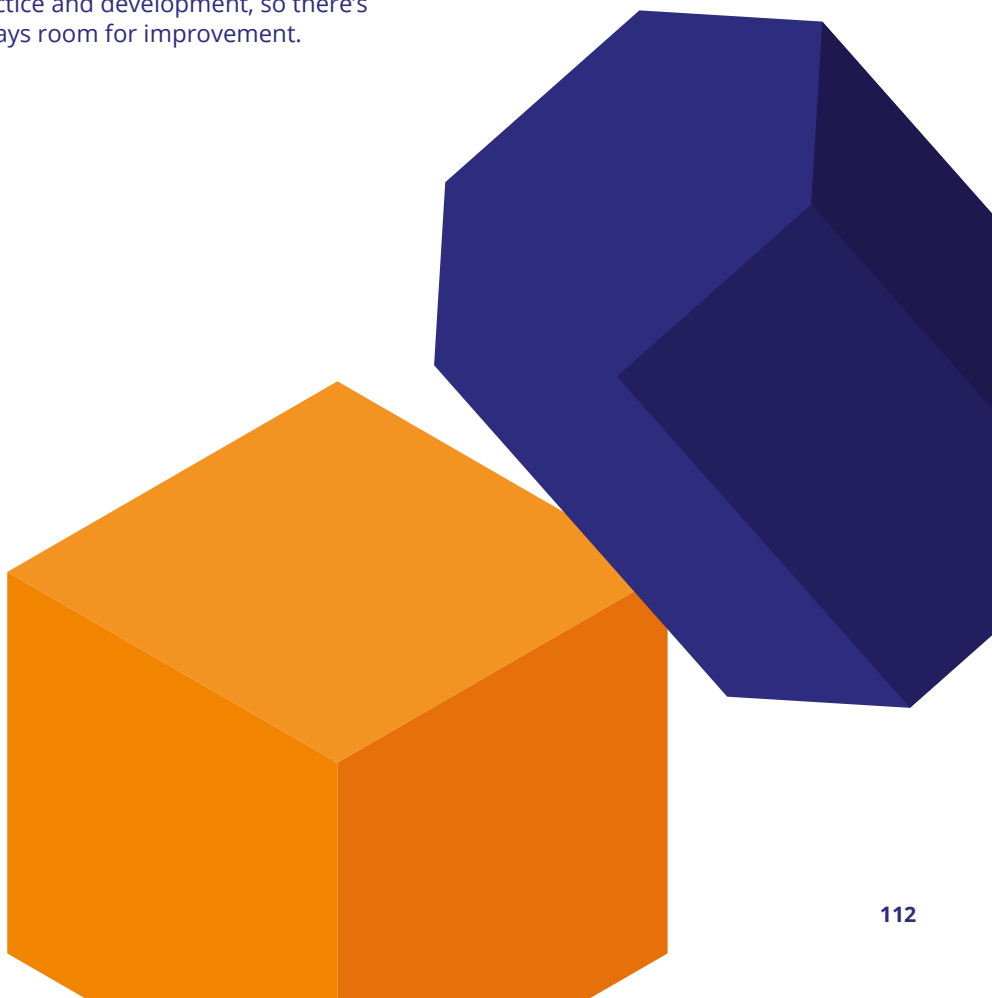
RESEARCHING FOR WRITTEN WORK

# STUDY SKILLS

**Study skills are the skills you need to be able to learn effectively and efficiently. They can be vital to your success as a student as well as in later life, and will come in handy throughout your further study and career.**

Everyone learns and studies differently, so you might find some of the skills we talk about in this section more useful than others. You might also find that you already know a lot of this information! However, a key part of study skills is practice and development, so there's always room for improvement.

**Read on for some hints and tips that can help you take your studying to the next level.**



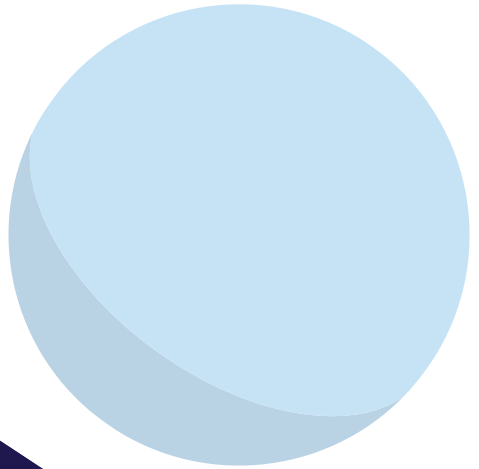


# TIME MANAGEMENT

**Time management means planning your time to make you more productive and efficient.**

Common things that can make it difficult to manage your time are:

- Leaving things until the last minute
- Difficulty prioritising tasks
- Distractions (social media, TV, friends, etc.)
- Being unable to find a good place to work
- Feeling overwhelmed with work
- Not knowing how to get started.



# DEALING WITH DISTRACTIONS

Some common tactics to help you avoid distractions and stay focused are:

- Start your task at a time when you work best and choose a location where you feel comfortable and focused.
- Take regular breaks.
- Turn off your phone/email/social media alerts. Set a time in the day when you deal with these alerts (e.g. lunchtime) and block them out until then! There are plenty of apps that can help you do this by blocking access to your apps for a specified amount of time.
- Keep a research diary. What have you achieved today? Can you do better tomorrow?

Below, write down some of the things that regularly distract you. In the right-hand column, see if you can think of ways to tackle these distractions.

Distraction	Potential solution
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

# PRIORITISING

Sometimes, you might have lots of tasks to complete for a piece of work. If you do, you'll need to prioritise different tasks so that you can be as efficient as possible. This is especially important at busy times when you have a lot of deadlines.

One way of prioritising your tasks is to make a list of the things you need to do, then decide whether they are important, urgent or both. This will help you decide which tasks to do straightaway and which you can leave until later.

- **Important and urgent?**  
Do it now.
- **Not important but urgent?**  
Do it soon.
- **Important but not urgent?**  
Do it later.
- **Not important and not urgent?**  
Don't do it.

Use the table below to help you decide the importance and priority of each task for your work:

	Important	Not important
Urgent		
Not urgent		

# ORGANISING

**When you're working towards a goal or objective, it's important to set yourself clear and manageable targets.**

This will help you manage your time and organise your workload.  
The targets you set should be SMART:

<b>Specific</b>	Make sure your aims aren't too broad or vague
<b>Measurable</b>	How will you know when you have achieved your aims?
<b>Attainable</b>	Make sure your goals aren't overly ambitious and you're capable of achieving them
<b>Realistic</b>	Think about the time and resources you have available
<b>Time-bound</b>	Set a deadline so you know when you want to finish by.

**For each task you set yourself, make sure it follows the SMART principles.**

Below, try to create a SMART objective for a homework or revision task.  
Use the table to break the task down into manageable chunks:

**My SMART objective:**

<b>S:</b> What do I want to achieve?	
<b>M:</b> How will I know when I have achieved it?	
<b>A:</b> Am I capable of achieving this goal?	
<b>R:</b> Can I achieve it with the time and resources I have?	
<b>T:</b> When do I need to have achieved this by?	

***"One of my main tips is to plan, plan, plan. I always know what I want to achieve in a day and the expectations I set myself."***

# NOTE TAKING

***“Note making is not just about writing down everything you hear or read. It is a process of reviewing, connecting and synthesising ideas.”***

*Skills @ Library, University of Leeds*

**Many people think effective note taking is simple, but it actually takes a lot of thought! Think of it as an active and reflective process. How often have you been in a lesson and taken notes but not taken any of the information in?**

## **BENEFITS OF NOTE TAKING**

- Helps you stay active and engaged during your research
- Helps you to understand things more deeply
- Allows you to be selective and pick out key ideas
- Makes it easier to remember things
- Helps you to organise your ideas and make connections between sources
- Useful for planning and structuring written work
- Helps avoid plagiarism (claiming another person's work as your own).

## **WHAT SHOULD GOOD NOTES INCLUDE?**

When you are writing notes, think about the checklist below. Following these steps will help make sure you have well-structured and useful notes.

<b>Date</b>	Make a note of the date. This will help you keep track of your reading.
<b>Source information</b>	Make sure you include the author, title, date, publisher, page numbers, etc.
<b>Headings and subheadings</b>	Which part of your research does it help you with? Make sure this is clear!
<b>Ideas and prompts for further study</b>	Did this source mention another work that fits with your research? If so, write it down!

# RESEARCHING FOR WRITTEN WORK

## Some of the steps included in researching for written work are:

- Find the information
- Work out which bits are going to be most useful
- Apply it to the project or assignment you are working on, effectively identifying links and connections to your topic or subject.

Each of these steps is really important. You can't use the information if you haven't found it and read or looked at it. And you can't use it effectively in your work if you don't understand it!

## CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking is key when you are undertaking research and is a great mindset to be in whenever you're doing research. Critical thinking doesn't just mean thinking a lot about something. It means applying logic and reasoning to your thinking and not accepting everything you read, see and hear as a hard fact.

***Critical thinkers are curious and ask questions about the world.***

## Here are some questions you could ask during your research to make sure you are thinking critically:

1. Is it current?
2. Is it relevant to your work?
3. What's the purpose of the source? Is it an advertisement, a study, a newspaper article?
4. Where did the information come from? Who wrote it? Who funded the report?
5. Is it reliable? Do you trust the source? Is it biased?

- Helps you stay active and engaged during your research
- Helps you to understand things more deeply
- Allows you to be selective and pick out key ideas
- Makes it easier to remember things
- Helps you to organise your ideas and make connections between sources
- Useful for planning and structuring written work
- Helps avoid plagiarism (claiming another person’s work as your own).

## WHERE TO LOOK

In person	Online
Local libraries	Podcasts and audio books
University libraries, special collections and archives	Social media: Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook
Government offices and civic buildings	Google Books and online journals
Museum collections and archives	Wikipedia, online dictionaries and encyclopaedias
Community centres	Documentaries and YouTube

## FOUR STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL RESEARCH

- 1. Manage**

It’s easy to lose information found on the internet! Make sure you plan a way of storing the information so that you don’t forget where you found it.
- 2. Challenge**

We can’t expect the internet to give us answers like a person would. It may not always give us exactly what we want! Ask yourself: where has the information come from? Who has written it and why? Does this affect how useful it is?
- 3. Investigate**

Online research can be a bit of a treasure hunt! Use a range of websites and keywords to find the most relevant information.
- 4. Search**

It can be tempting to just stick with the information that’s easiest to find, but if you look a little deeper you can find some really great stuff!

# NOTES





How do  
you feel today?

Is anything  
bothering you?

# A QUICK **WELLBEING** CHECK-IN

**Take a few minutes to  
check in with how you're  
feeling right now.**

What are your  
goals for tomorrow?

What is one good thing  
that happened today?

# SELF-CARE CHECK-IN

Tick the things you've done (or plan to do) today. There's space at the end for you to add any that aren't on the list.

Eaten three main meals

Taken a break from social media

Listened to your favourite music

Had a chat with a friend

Done some exercise

Spent some time outside

Taken some time to enjoy a hobby

Said something kind to someone

**Reminder: take five  
long mindful breaths**

# 7 SELF-CARE

SELF-CARE

WHAT IS SELF-CARE?

COMMON FORMS OF SELF-CARE

GET PRACTICAL!

MINDFULNESS

TOP TIPS!

A SELF-CARE DECLARATION

# SELF-CARE

***“You get out of university what you put into it, so go with an open mind. Throw yourself into everything, but always put your health first.”***

**We believe it's really important to look at the full picture when making plans for the future.**

This means acknowledging the huge importance of our wellbeing in this process. We've therefore included a full section in this workbook dedicated to your health and happiness, both physically and mentally. We'll also tell you about plenty of useful resources you can use if you want to learn more and take your self-care journey further. All this information and advice has been double-checked by wellbeing experts.

**One really important thing to say is that if you're struggling at the moment and feel like you need some extra support, please speak to somebody and/or visit your GP. There is absolutely no shame in asking for help. Talking to someone about how you're feeling is incredibly important — you do not need to feel alone.**

It's fair to say that there isn't a single part of our lives that isn't affected by our mental health and wellbeing. Whether it's our school or college life, life at home, relationships with friends and loved ones or just how we feel when we're alone, our mental wellbeing is always there with us.

**Life can be stressful. If we don't check-in with ourselves and take breaks, it's easy to become overwhelmed.** The best learning, thinking, decision-making and, well, *living* happens when your mind is in a healthy place, so we think it's pretty important that we all try and take care of our emotional health.

You may already be a self-care whizz or maybe this is all new to you. Either way, we hope to give you a little bit of guidance on how to take care of yourself and feel as great as possible!

# WHAT IS SELF-CARE?

**Self-care is the idea of keeping a check on your wellbeing. This includes taking the time to do nice things for yourself and noticing how you're feeling. It can be used to either actively combat poor mental health or as a way of maintaining your wellbeing to try and build your resilience throughout your whole life.**

You might hear or see people referring to their 'self-care routine' and there's a good reason for this. Routine is one of the foundations of self-care and having a regular routine that focuses on your wellbeing can be extremely beneficial. It can help you manage stress and anxiety, feel happier and tackle life's challenges. You might find some of the sections in this workbook useful for developing your own self-care routine.

Self-care will look a bit different for everybody. After all, we don't all like the same things and something that makes your mate happy might bore you to tears! While lighting a candle and listening to a podcast might be just the ticket for some of us, others probably couldn't think of anything worse. So, it's useful to start by looking inwards and considering: what makes *me* happy?

**List three things (or more!) that lift your mood:**

It's also worth mentioning that some things that feel like self-care can actually be problematic in the long run. For example, lots of people find huge comfort in sleeping and a good night's sleep can be just what we need! However, sleeping too much might actually be a way of avoiding negative feelings or overwhelming experiences.

This means it could be adding to the problem. We don't want you to start worrying too much about these things, but it's always a good idea to keep an eye on your self-care and coping mechanisms. This way, you can make sure they're truly helping, rather than hindering.

# COMMON FORMS OF SELF-CARE

Let's have a look at some of the most common forms of self-care.

## SLEEP

An unavoidable part of life, sleep is something that we all have a relationship with. It has a massive effect on your body and mind, so it's important to try and have a healthy sleep pattern. Allowing yourself the occasional lie-in can be a really nice way to take care of yourself. On the other hand, if you find yourself sleeping excessively on a regular basis, try waking up a little earlier. A bright and early start might just boost your mood.

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

A bit of physical activity can really help to combat stress and lift your mood. It doesn't have to be anything super energetic or strenuous (unless you're into that kind of thing, of course) but just a short walk, swim or cycle (or yoga, or dance, or badminton, or basketball .... you get the idea!) can work wonders.

## A GOOD DIET

Research suggests that the food you eat can directly impact your sense of wellbeing and, of course, your overall physical health. You can find some great resources about eating healthy on the NHS Live Well website ([www.nhs.uk/live-well](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well)). We've also included a section on physical wellness later in this book.

## WATCHING TV

Sometimes there's nothing better than kicking back and binge-watching your favourite TV show or film. Set a bit of time aside, stick something on that makes you feel good and enjoy — just be careful not to do too much binge-watching to the exclusion of everything else!

## SPENDING TIME WITH FRIENDS OR LOVED ONES

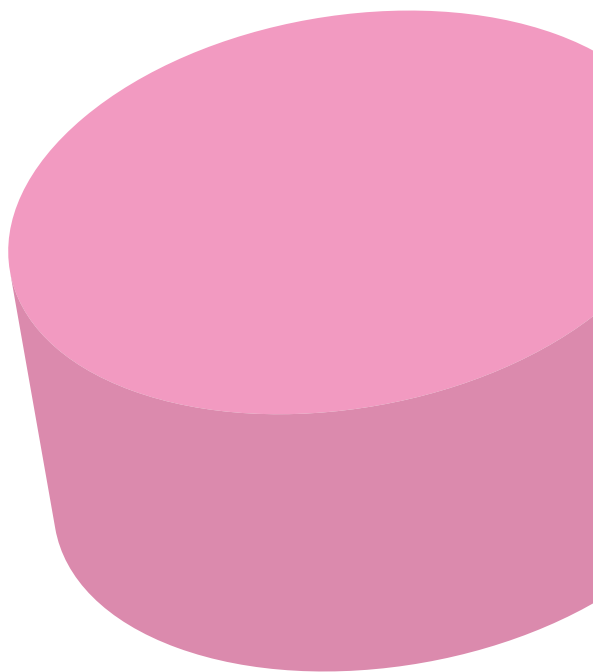
We can probably all agree that spending time with people we love and who make us feel good is a great way to feel happy and content. If you find yourself feeling a bit low, why not pick up the phone to a mate or schedule some time in with a loved one?

## SPENDING TIME OUTSIDE

Nature has been hailed as a great healer for thousands of years. Sure, we all spend time outside running for the bus or just getting from A to B. But if you're feeling stressed, consider carving out some time to intentionally get outside. You might be surprised just how much difference a bit of fresh air can make!

## READING

Sometimes a bit of escapism is just what you need. As well as watching TV and movies, reading a good book can be the perfect way to escape. It doesn't have to be anything long or heavy. A comic or magazine can work just as well!



## ENJOYING A HOBBY

Setting time aside to do the things you enjoy is really important. Find a hobby or activity that makes you feel good and do it regularly. It might be something involving others, such as joining a sports team or singing group, or a more independent activity like crafting or drawing.

## LISTENING TO MUSIC

When you're feeling a bit down or just lacking in motivation, an upbeat playlist can really help get you going. You could even push the boat out and indulge in a bit of hairbrush singing or bedroom dancing.

## HAVING A GOOD CRY

Crying is one of the most natural things in the world. It releases endorphins, the feel good chemicals that can help to ease both physical and emotional pain. This explains why sometimes having a good cry can make you feel a whole lot better. There's absolutely no shame in shedding a tear or two, so if it feels right for you, go for it.

Self-care can also be a little more subtle and might include things such as setting boundaries, taking a break from social media or asking for help. We'll explore some of these ideas in a bit more detail later on in the book.

# GET PRACTICAL!

Sometimes it can be really helpful just to do a brain dump and get all of your thoughts and worries out with no judgements. We all have little (and sometimes big) things rattling around in our heads that can make us feel anxious or unsettled.

Have a go at dumping a few of your thoughts and worries into the space below:

Make a list of songs that uplift and inspire you:



**Are there any quotes that make you feel just a little bit better about life?**

**Make a note of them here:** Some people also find it really helpful to print out quotes and mantras that make them feel better and put them up where they'll see them regularly. You could also write them out by hand. Why not try it?

**List some places in your local area where you can go to get a bit of fresh air and stretch your legs:**

**List your top three TV shows...**

**... and your top three films!**

# MINDFULNESS

**Mindfulness is a tool that comes highly recommended for helping with the symptoms of stress, depression and anxiety. Mindfulness can be described as taking the time to pay full attention to something, whether it's your breath, your surroundings or a piece of music.**

You then take the time to really notice what you're doing, seeing, hearing or feeling. Sometimes we do it automatically, like when we take a bit of time to gather ourselves with some deep breaths when we're feeling anxious.

Mindfulness can be used as a deliberate tactic either when things feel overwhelming in the moment or as a regular way to keep ourselves calm and relaxed. It doesn't have to be super time-consuming or obvious. After a bit of practice, you'll be able to use mindfulness techniques anywhere, at any time.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MINDFULNESS?

- Feel more relaxed and focused
- Stay calm under pressure
- Avoid getting upset too easily
- Feel more patient
- Feel happier.

If you'd like to try mindfulness and feel like some active guidance would be beneficial, the **'Headspace'** app is a great tool.

## A SHORT, GUIDED BREATHING EXERCISE

Breathing exercises are one of the most common forms of mindfulness. Why not have a go at the exercise below and see how it makes you feel?

1. Sit in a comfortable position and relax as much as possible.
2. Close your eyes and bring your attention to your breath. Notice the sensation of the air entering your lungs as you breathe in, and leaving your lungs as you breathe out.
3. Sit with this feeling for a minute or two, focusing on your breathing and noticing how your chest rises and falls with each breath. If you find your mind wandering, that's okay and totally normal! Each time it wanders, notice this and gently bring your awareness back to the breath.

**And there you go. It really can be as simple as that!**

There are lots of different mindful breathing techniques out there, so you might want to do some more research and try different ones.

**Some of our favourites include:**

- **Counting your breaths** — Start by counting one when you inhale, two when you exhale, three when you inhale, and so on.
- **Box breathing** — Inhale for a count of four, hold your breath for a count of four, exhale for a count of four and wait for a count of four before inhaling again. Repeat as necessary until you feel more relaxed.
- **Belly (or 'diaphragmatic', if you want to get fancy) breathing** — Lay down on a flat surface with your knees bent and rest one hand on your upper chest and one on your belly. Breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose and feel the hand on your belly rise. Breathe out and feel your belly flatten. Try to keep the hand on your chest as still as possible.

These breathing exercises (and mindfulness in general) can be a really useful part of self-care. We've included a breathing exercise reminder in our self-care check-ins throughout this book. Why not give them a try next time you're feeling stressed or tense?

**TOP TIPS!**

- Try and get into a bit of a routine with your self-care. Even if it's only ten minutes a day in the morning or the evening, routinely setting time aside to do things for yourself is really important.
- Even if mindfulness doesn't sound like 'your kind of thing', why not give it a go just once or twice? It can be difficult to try things that are out of our comfort zone but if you don't try, you'll never know whether it works for you or not!

# A SELF-CARE DECLARATION

**It can be easy to lose track of time, get busy with life and forget to stop and think about what you need to feel good. So, why not commit to your wellbeing and sign a self-care declaration?**

I, (insert your name here) \_\_\_\_\_, am worthy of feeling happy and relaxed. I commit to setting time aside on a regular basis to take part in self-care activities in order to take care of my mental wellbeing.

I commit to spending (insert minutes/hours here) \_\_\_\_\_ per day doing things that make me feel good.

(Type your name below)

Now, it might feel a bit silly to write a letter to yourself, but trust us. Making a written commitment to do something that's important to you can really help you stick to it! If you want to feel even sillier, why not read it out loud to yourself a few times? Go on, we dare you.

We've included an additional resource in this workbook — a photocopyable mood tracker (see [page 133](#)). Each day, either colour in or tick the boxes next to the moods or emotions that you've experienced. Tracking your mood is a useful way of keeping a check on your happiness levels and giving yourself the opportunity to notice how you've been feeling.








Hopefully, this section has given you a gentle introduction to the ideas of self-care and mindfulness. If you'd like to find out more, we've included links to loads of fantastic websites and apps that have tons of information and support. You can find them at the back of the book!

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

WEEK OF \_\_\_\_\_

Feel free to print this page so you can  
use it as many times as you need

# TODAY I FELT

	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
CALM 							
SURPRISED 							
HAPPY 							
SAD 							
ANGRY 							
FRUSTRATED 							
ANNOYED 							
CONFUSED 							
DISAPPOINTED 							
SCARED 							
EMBARRASSED 							

# NOTES



How do  
you feel today?

Is anything  
bothering you?

# A QUICK **WELLBEING** CHECK-IN

**Take a few minutes to  
check in with how you're  
feeling right now.**

What are your  
goals for tomorrow?

What is one good thing  
that happened today?

# SELF-CARE CHECK-IN

Tick the things you've done (or plan to do) today. There's space at the end for you to add any that aren't on the list.

Eaten three main meals

Taken a break from social media

Listened to your favourite music

Had a chat with a friend

Done some exercise

Spent some time outside

Taken some time to enjoy a hobby

Said something kind to someone

**Reminder: take five  
long mindful breaths**



# STRESS AND ANXIETY

**We all feel nervous or panicky sometimes, usually because of something specific like exams or an argument with a friend. These feelings can actually be really useful and are our body's way of trying to protect us and prepare us for anything that might be dangerous.**

Usually, once the risk or issue has passed, we find ourselves able to calm down and move on. However, sometimes we might find that we're experiencing these difficult feelings without an obvious trigger. We may also experience them over a longer period of time. This is when stress and anxiety can start to become a problem.

Stress and anxiety are undeniably tricky to deal with and can be completely debilitating when they impact your everyday life. Although it's really common (according to the Mental Health Foundation, 20% of adolescents may experience a mental health issue in any given year\*), knowing this doesn't always help if it's something you're going through yourself.



[\\*<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/statistics/mental-health-statistics-children-and-young-people>](https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/statistics/mental-health-statistics-children-and-young-people)

# WHAT DOES ANXIETY FEEL LIKE?

Anxiety doesn't always look or feel the same for everybody and it comes with a long list of possible symptoms. Individuals may identify with one, some or all of them.

## SYMPTOMS CAN ALSO BE SPLIT INTO FOUR CATEGORIES:

1. **Thoughts**
2. **Feelings**
3. **Physical symptoms**
4. **Behaviours.**

It's very common for those suffering with anxiety to experience a combination of these. Some of the more common symptoms of anxiety are:

### Thoughts

- "I can't cope"
- "I don't know what's happening to me".

### Feelings

- Sadness
- Frustration
- Stress
- Embarrassment.

### Physical symptoms

- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Shaking
- Blushing
- Sweating.

### Behaviours

- Avoidance (avoiding those things that might cause anxious thoughts, feelings and behaviour)
- Trying to control things
- Over-planning
- Being irritable
- Oversleeping.

Anxiety also comes under a range of different headings, including but not limited to:

- Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD)
- Social anxiety
- Anxiety and depression
- Panic attacks
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Phobias
- Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

If you head over to [page 154](#), we've talked a bit about self-care and mindfulness. We've also looked at how these techniques can reduce stress levels and help us stay relaxed and happy. There are some activities and guided breathing exercises there too that might be helpful for stress and anxiety.

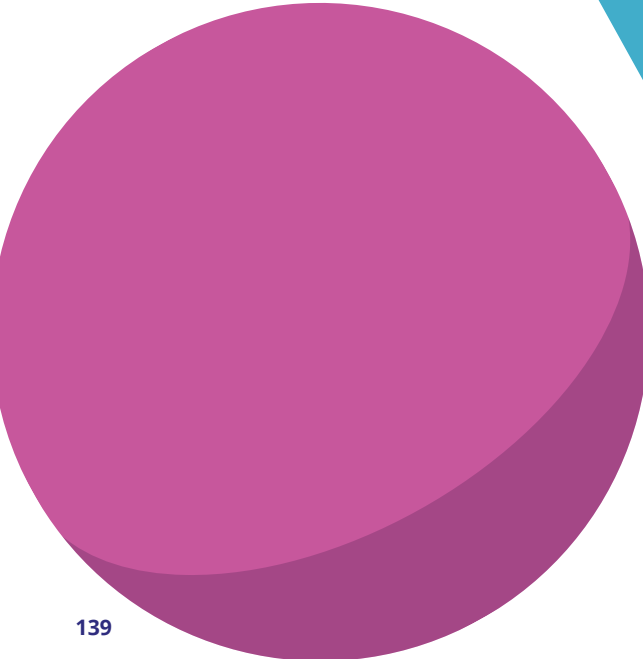

# GETTING HELP



**Experiencing stress and anxiety is extremely challenging and often leaves us feeling stuck and overwhelmed. However, it's really important to understand that anxiety is something that can be successfully managed and treated. There are lots of effective types of support available.**

**It can be difficult to ask for help, but just taking that first step can bring a massive change to how you're feeling.**

Remember that experiencing mental health difficulties is nothing to be embarrassed about. If you feel that you need a little more help, a conversation with your GP or the pastoral support staff at your school can set you on track for finding ways to manage your symptoms.



# EMERGENCY SUPPORT

Should you ever find yourself in a position where you need emergency support, there are some incredible free services available that are specifically for young people experiencing mental health difficulties.

These are usually phonline or chat services that are available 24/7. Some of these include:

**Childline**  
[childline.org.uk](https://childline.org.uk)

**The Mix**  
[themix.org.uk](https://themix.org.uk)

**Young Minds Crisis Messenger**  
[youngminds.org.uk/  
find-help/get-urgent-help/  
youngminds-crisis-messenger](https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/get-urgent-help/youngminds-crisis-messenger)

**No Panic**  
[nopanic.org.uk](https://nopanic.org.uk)

**IAPT services**  
each locality has an IAPT provision which  
can be found through NHS choices

**SHOUT text service**  
[giveusashout.org](https://giveusashout.org)

**This has been a very general introduction to anxiety and stress, and there's a lot more information available that you might find useful.**

If you'd like to do some more research, head to the back of the book to find some links!

.....

How do  
you feel today?

Is anything  
bothering you?

# A QUICK **WELLBEING** CHECK-IN

**Take a few minutes to  
check in with how you're  
feeling right now.**

What is one good thing  
that happened today?

What are your  
goals for tomorrow?

# SELF-CARE CHECK-IN

Tick the things you've done (or plan to do) today. There's space at the end for you to add any that aren't on the list.

Eaten three main meals

Taken a break from social media

Listened to your favourite music

Had a chat with a friend

Done some exercise

Spent some time outside

Taken some time to enjoy a hobby

Said something kind to someone

**Reminder: take five  
long mindful breaths**

# PHYSICAL WELLNESS

Whether it's being with friends or family, taking a walk or spending too much time on social media, the daily choices we make have an impact on our physical wellbeing. Physical health and mental health go hand in hand.

*The key to tip-top wellness is knowing the importance of daily exercise, good nutrition and sufficient sleep. So, let's dive right in!*



# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

**We all know that physical activity can reduce major illnesses such as heart disease, obesity and type II diabetes. However, did you know that when done regularly, it can boost your self-esteem, mood and sleep quality? It can also make you less prone to stress, depression and anxiety.**

Regular physical activity has lots of health benefits, including:

- Improving fitness
- Providing an opportunity to socialise
- Increasing concentration
- Boosting your metabolism
- Building a stronger heart and bones and healthier muscles
- Encouraging healthy growth and development
- Improving posture and balance.

Everybody has different levels and abilities when it comes to physical movement and exercise, so be sure to work at your own level. If you have a disability, mobility issues or a long-term health condition, there is some great advice on the NHS website about how to get active. You can check this out at [www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/get-active-with-a-disability](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/get-active-with-a-disability).

## KEEP IT FUN!

It's important to find activities that you enjoy. This way, it will not feel like a chore and you are more likely to stick with it.

## HOW MUCH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY SHOULD I DO?

As we've already mentioned, when it comes to physical activity, we all work at different levels. However, it's generally recommended that adults aim for an average of at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week. Children are advised to spend 60 minutes per day taking part in physical activity, averaged across the week. However, even a small increase in physical activity can make a huge difference!

## THERE ARE TWO MAIN TYPES OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:

- Aerobic exercise (cardio), e.g. walking, running or cycling
- Strength exercise, e.g. lifting weights or using resistance bands.





It can also be categorised by intensity:

1. **Moderate intensity:** This means working hard enough to raise your heartbeat so you breathe harder and start to sweat but are still able to talk. A really accessible example of this would be going for a brisk walk. It can also include more specific activities such as skateboarding or rollerblading!
2. **Vigorous intensity:** This is when your heart rate raises even higher, you breathe harder and faster and talking becomes difficult. Some examples of vigorous intensity exercise include:
  - Running
  - Swimming
  - Football, basketball, tennis.

Try to take part in a variety of types and intensities of exercise across the week to develop your movement skills, muscles and bones. If possible, aim to do higher intensity and resistance activities three days a week as these will help to strengthen muscles and bones.

Finally, reducing the time amount of time you spend sitting or lying down is important for generally keeping active. Remember to break up long periods of sitting with some kind of movement. Aim for activities that make you breathe a little faster and feel a little warmer!

***Did you know that some everyday activities can be great forms of exercise? For example, vacuuming is a form of cardio exercise, whilst heavy gardening such as digging or shovelling can help to build strength!***

# NUTRITION

**As a teenager, your body is going through many physical changes. These changes need to be supported by a healthy and balanced diet.**

The Eatwell Guide, which outlines the government's advice on how to achieve a good, balanced diet, provides a visual guide to eating a varied and healthy diet. The guide divides food and drink into five main food groups, recommending that we try and choose a variety of different foods from each of the groups. This helps us get all the nutrients our bodies need to stay healthy.

- 1. Fruit and vegetables:** Aim to eat at least five varied portions of fruit and veg each day. Choose fresh, frozen, tinned, dried or juice. This food group is a good source of vitamins, minerals and fibre. However, just be aware that products such as fruit juice can be high in sugar and should therefore be consumed in moderation.
- 2. Starchy foods:** These should make up just over a third of the food we eat. You can introduce high fibre wholegrains, such as wholewheat pasta and brown rice into your diet as well as making small changes such as leaving the skins on potatoes. Starchy foods are a good source of energy and are the main source of a range of nutrients, such as fibre, calcium, iron and B vitamins.
- 3. Dairy:** Milk and dairy products, such as cheese and yoghurt, are a good source of protein and calcium which helps keep our bones healthy. Unsweetened, calcium-fortified dairy alternatives like soya milk also count as part of this food group.
- 4. Protein:** Protein helps your body build and repair muscles and bones. It also helps make hormones and enzymes. Beans, pulses, fish, eggs and meat are all good sources of protein, vitamins and minerals. Pulses such as beans, peas and lentils are good alternatives to meat because they are lower in fat and higher in fibre and protein too. If you do eat meat, choose lean cuts and mince and eat less red and processed meat like bacon, ham and sausages. Aim for at least two portions of fish every week if you can, one of which should be an oily fish, such as salmon or mackerel.
- 5. Fat:** Unsaturated fats are healthier fats and include vegetable, rapeseed, olive and sunflower oils. Remember, all types of fat are high in energy and should be eaten in moderation. Fat helps the body to absorb vitamins A, D and E. These vitamins are fat soluble, which means they can only be absorbed with the help of fats. Too much fat in your diet, especially saturated fats like red meat and butter, can raise cholesterol, which can increase the risk of heart disease.

## DON'T FORGET TO DRINK!

The Eatwell Guide recommends drinking six to eight glasses of fluid a day. Water, lower-fat milk, sugar free drinks, tea and coffee all count! However, caffeinated drinks should be consumed in moderation.

## VITAMINS AND MINERALS

Vitamins and minerals are nutrients that your body needs in small amounts to work properly and stay healthy. Find out more about four important vitamins and minerals below:

- 1. Vitamin C** is a water-soluble vitamin. It is needed for the growth and repair of tissues in all parts of the body. Citrus fruits such as oranges and lemons are famous for their vitamin C, but did you know that vegetables such as red peppers, spinach, broccoli and brussels sprouts are all high in vitamin C too?
- 2. Vitamin D** is a fat-soluble vitamin that helps to regulate the amount of calcium and phosphate (chemicals that are essential for the production of energy, muscle and nerve function) in our bodies. These nutrients help to keep bones, teeth and muscles healthy. Good sources of vitamin D include oily fish like salmon and sardines, egg yolks, red meat and the sun!
- 3. Calcium** is a mineral that builds strong bones and teeth. It also helps regulate our heartbeat. Good food sources of calcium are dairy products, green leafy vegetables such as kale and spinach or bread and fish where you eat the bones, such as sardines and pilchards.
- 4. Iron** is a mineral and is important in making red blood cells, which carry oxygen around the body. Good sources of iron include red meat, beans, nuts, dried fruit such as apricots, and fortified breakfast cereals.



# SLEEP

## Let's talk about those Zzzzzs!

Tired of always feeling sleepy?

Having trouble staying awake in class?

Find it hard to get out of bed in the morning?

If you have answered yes to any of these questions, you are not alone! Many teenagers (and adults, for that matter) feel that they are always tired.

For teenagers, there is a particular reason why sleep is so important. Sleep helps to refuel your brain and body. Teenagers therefore need more of it because their bodies and minds are growing so quickly!

## HOW MUCH SLEEP DO I NEED?

Scientific research shows that many teens do not get enough sleep. To be at your best, you need between eight and ten hours of sleep every day. While you might not always be able to get this much, it's important to try and get enough sleep as often as possible. Try to also stick to a good sleep schedule if you can.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T GET ENOUGH SLEEP?

Although getting enough sleep may not feel like a big deal, teens who don't get enough sleep and are overtired are more likely to:

- Have trouble with memory, concentration and motivation
- Have slow reaction times that could cause accidents
- Feel depressed and anxious.

## HOW TO GET A BETTER NIGHT'S SLEEP

Here are seven easy ways to help catch more Zzzzzzs:

- 1. Have a relaxing bedtime routine:** Have a light snack before bed. Try to go to bed at around the same time every night. Keep your room cool, dark and quiet.
- 2. Always fall asleep in your bed:** Use your bed for sleeping only. Avoid doing homework, using a smartphone or tablet, or playing video games whilst in bed. Try to be in your bed with the lights out for at least eight hours each night.
- 3. Get exercise every day:** But avoid hard exercise in the evening. Regular exercise helps you to sleep more soundly.
- 4. Cut out the caffeine:** Too much caffeine, found in drinks such as tea, coffee, cola and energy drinks, can stop you from falling asleep. They can also reduce the amount of deep sleep you have.
- 5. On weekends:** No matter how late you go to bed, try to get up within two to four hours of your usual wake up time. This is especially important if you have trouble falling asleep on Sunday nights!
- 6. Turn off screens:** Light from any screen interferes with our sleep. Having screens in the bedroom also means you are more likely to stay up late interacting with friends on social media. Try to have at least one hour of screen-free time before sleep. This can be a good opportunity to grab your favourite book and get reading!
- 7. Talk through any problems:** This will help put your problems into perspective, alleviate any worries you might have and allow you to sleep better with a more rested mind.

You can also jot down your worries or make a to-do list before bed to help you keep track of any tasks for the following day. This will reassure you that you won't forget anything important and hopefully make you less likely to lie awake worrying during the night.

**Remember!** If you're having trouble with your sleep and you've tried all these suggestions, please talk to somebody or check out these useful organisations:

- YoungMinds
- The Sleep Council
- Happy Maps
- Childline
- NHS.

## THE GOOD STUFF: WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF SLEEP?

When we sleep, our bodies repair muscles, grow bones and manage our hormones. It also sorts through our daily short-term memories to file them away in our long-term memory. Pretty cool stuff! But what else does a good night's sleep help with?

- Improves brain sharpness, concentration, productivity and memory
- Boosts your mood
- Improves athletic achievement
- Enhances your immune system
- Keeps your blood sugar stable.

**As you can see from this section, having a good night's sleep is just as important for your health and wellbeing as exercise and nutrition ... who knew?!**

## THE FIVE BEST SLEEP APPS

These days, there's an app for pretty much everything. Sleep is no different! There are a variety of apps aimed at promoting effective sleep and each has different functions. These include soothing music, sleep meditations and bedtime stories. If you've never used any of these tools before, why not download a few different apps and see which you like best?

Some good apps for sleep include:

1. **Headspace:** This is predominantly a meditation app, but it also has some great features for sleep.
2. **Noisli:** This is a simple noise-making app that lets you choose from a wide range of sounds such as wind or white noise to help you fall asleep.
3. **Pzizz:** With Pzizz, you can set a timer for the length of session you want, allowing it to play soothing dreamscapes before waking you up with an alarm in the morning.
4. **Calm:** Has celebrities reading soothing bedtime stories.
5. **Sleep Cycle:** Tracks your sleep pattern to optimise your snooze time.

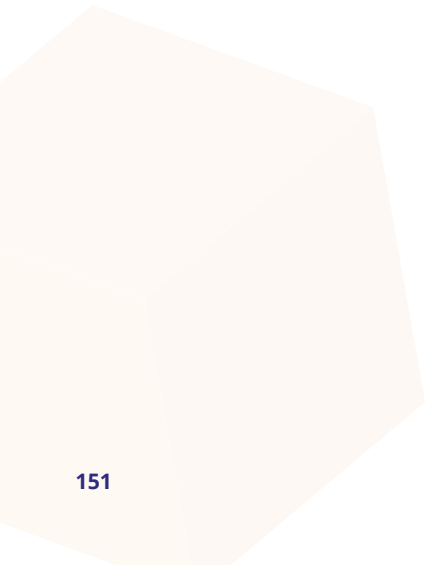
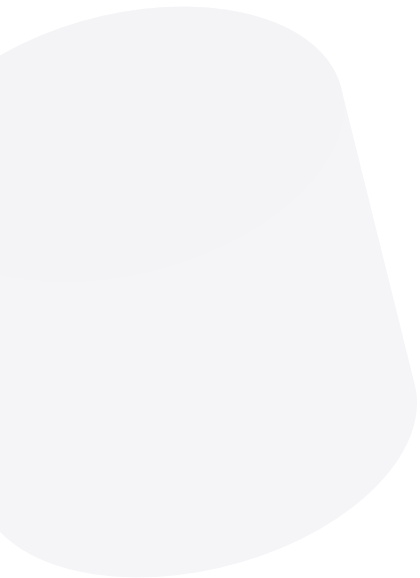
## A FEW FACTS ABOUT SLEEP

- 12% of people dream in black and white.
- Humans spend a third of their life sleeping.
- Sleeping on your front can aid digestion.
- Sleeping on your side can aid your brain with memory storage.
- The longest someone has gone without sleeping is 11 days.
- Elephants sleep less than any other animal.
- On average, we spend about two hours per night dreaming.

After reading all this, the main takeaways are to move our bodies, eat a varied, balanced diet and get plenty of sleep! If you can find ways to combine these tips and tricks for physical wellness with the information you've learned about mental wellbeing, you will hopefully start to feel a greater sense of overall physical and mental wellbeing.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/sleep-tips-for-teenagers/>

# NOTES



How do  
you feel today?

Is anything  
bothering you?

# A QUICK **WELLBEING** CHECK-IN

**Take a few minutes to  
check in with how you're  
feeling right now.**

What is one good thing  
that happened today?

What are your  
goals for tomorrow?



# SELF-CARE CHECK-IN

Tick the things you've done (or plan to do) today. There's space at the end for you to add any that aren't on the list.

Eaten three main meals

Taken a break from social media

Listened to your favourite music

Had a chat with a friend

Done some exercise

Spent some time outside

Taken some time to enjoy a hobby

Said something kind to someone

**Reminder: take five  
long mindful breaths**

# SELF-ESTEEM, CONFIDENCE AND RESILIENCE

We couldn't include information about taking care of yourself without including one of the biggies: self-esteem. It's fair to say that confidence and self-esteem are things we all struggle with at times, no matter how old we are, how successful we are or how many people love us!

Boosting your self-esteem and having a positive relationship with yourself can pave the way to so many wonderful opportunities. Let's look at how we might do that.

## WHAT IS SELF-ESTEEM?

Self-esteem is having confidence in your own worth. It's believing that you deserve wonderful things and having the confidence to set yourself on a path to achieving them.

# HOW IS IT RELEVANT TO MY EDUCATION AND MY FUTURE?

**We've covered a lot of ground in this workbook and taken some really great steps towards making decisions for your future. However, there's a limit to how helpful this can be if you don't believe that you're capable and worthy of achieving the future you want for yourself.**

There's no denying that boosting self-esteem is easier said than done. We're often discouraged from speaking positively about ourselves for fear of sounding arrogant. There's definitely a line here (we'll look at that in more detail a bit later) but we can all benefit from a boost in confidence and remembering that we have a lot to offer the world!

Thankfully, things come about naturally in day-to-day life that give us a little boost and remind us how competent and capable we are. It might be scoring a goal at football practice or a mate thanking you for listening to them and helping them to feel better when they're sad. These things give us a little zap of happiness and can make us feel really proud and positive towards ourselves.

**Can you think of a time recently when you've felt that little 'zap' of pride or positivity towards yourself?**

## **THERE ARE LOTS OF LITTLE WAYS THAT WE CAN ACTIVELY WORK ON FEELING BETTER ABOUT OURSELVES:**

- Trying new things ...
- ... and trying them again if you don't get the result you hoped for!
- Recognise that the effort is worth just as much as the outcome
- Boost the self-esteem of others with genuine compliments
- Acknowledge the things you like and appreciate in others
- Adjust your posture
- Be assertive
- Ask for help.

# TRYING NEW THINGS

We've covered some pretty big themes there, so let's look at some of them in more detail. Most of us have got things that we're good at and things that we'd like to try. Often, we find ourselves so caught up in self-doubt that we don't even give these 'things we'd like to try' a go, choosing to stick with the stuff we're already pretty confident about.

We can find ourselves fearing failure and worrying about looking silly if we get it wrong or aren't perfect at it first time. This can lead to us missing out on things that we might be really great at!

It's also worth remembering that it's very rare to be excellent at something the first time you do it. The best and quickest way to make progress is to get back out there and try again! (Just think if you'd never got back on your bike after falling off for the first time ...)

**It's not easy to put that self-doubt aside and take a risk, but just imagine: there are things out there that you're brilliant at and you'll never know unless you try.**

**Is there anything you'd really love to do or try? Make a list below.**

**How might you go about trying these things? Could you join a club or take an online workshop?**

# RECOGNISE THAT THE EFFORT IS WORTH JUST AS MUCH AS THE OUTCOME

**Unfortunately, you're not going to become the world number one at everything you try your hand at. Realising that something just isn't for you can feel really disheartening at times.**

However, remember that there's a lot to be learned from trying even if you don't get the outcome you hoped for. Plus, you may not be a huge success at everything but if something brings you joy and happiness then it's worth pursuing.

It takes courage and bravery to take a risk and these qualities deserve to be celebrated! And who knows? Maybe that next thing you try will be just right for you...

**Can you think of a time where something you tried didn't work out as planned, but you learned something anyway?**

# BOOST THE SELF-ESTEEM OF OTHERS

Compliments can be powerful things. They can put a spring in our step in the short term and make us feel loads more confident about ourselves in the long term.

Remember how lovely it feels for someone to say something nice to you.  
**Next time you see something you like or appreciate in someone else, tell them!**

**Think of a friend or loved one that you admire and write why you feel this way about them below:**

Why not say it to them next time you get the chance?

**How might you go about trying these things? Could you join a club or take an online workshop?**

**If a friend was giving you a compliment, what do you think they would say?**

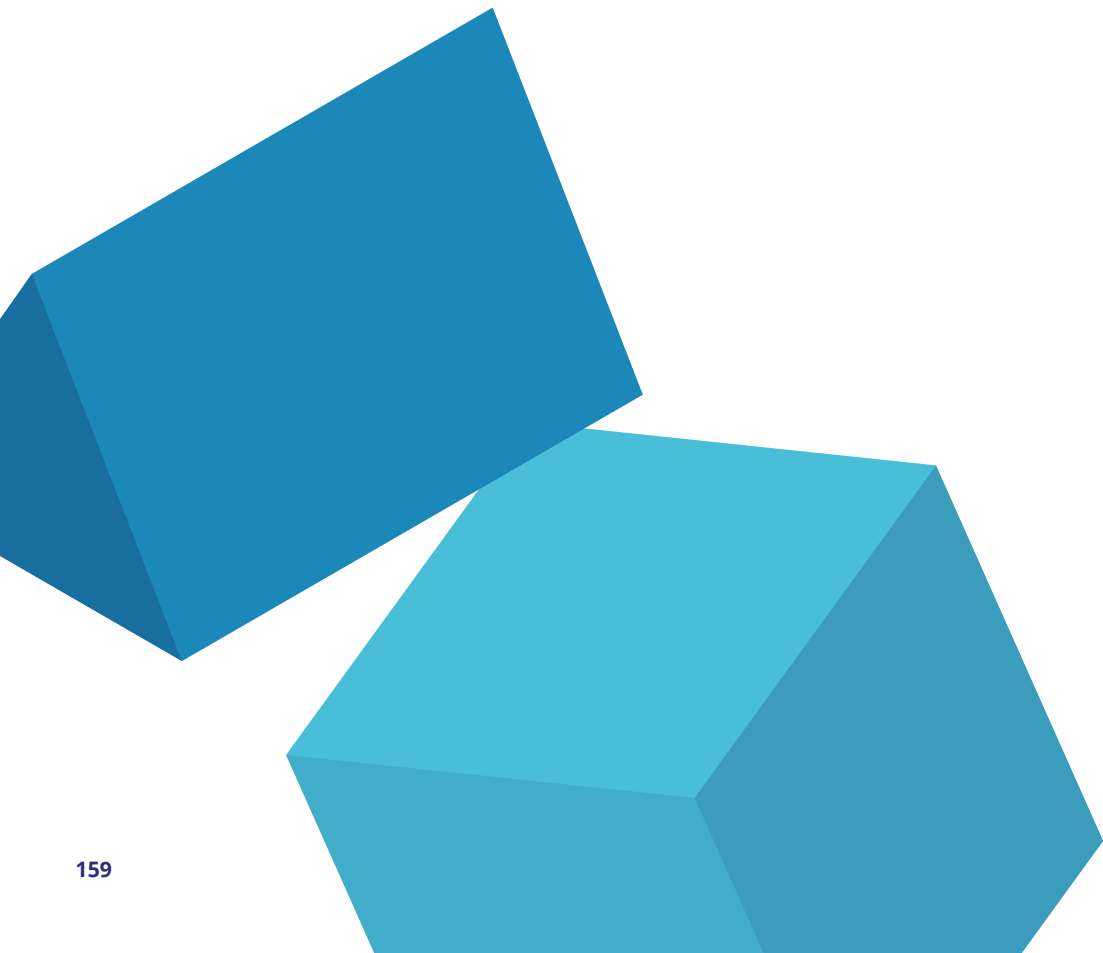
Why not say it to yourself?

# PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR POSTURE

**It might sound a bit silly, but the way you hold yourself physically is believed to have a real impact on your confidence levels.**

Body language is super important when communicating with others. It can tell its own story regardless of what's coming out of your mouth! Slouching can send a message to other people that you're lacking in confidence or are insecure, as well as making you feel that way yourself.

However, by standing tall with your chin raised and shoulders back, you can project a much more confident image that can help people to trust you and engage with you. Eye contact is also key for projecting confidence, so regularly meet the eye of people you're talking to.



# BE ASSERTIVE

**Being assertive means being confident and bold. In practice, assertiveness means standing up for your own or other people's best interests in a positive, calm way. In order to be assertive, you first need to think about how you feel, what you think and how you want to respond to any given situation. It's therefore important to take a moment to consider this before you act.**

Being assertive can also include saying no and setting boundaries when it comes to things like your personal space, time and emotions. Remember though, being aggressive is not the same as being assertive; staying calm, positive and kind is really important.

- **Saying no** — It's easy to find ourselves wanting to say yes to people all the time, usually because we want to please them or find it awkward to say no. It's not always easy to say no to things and it can be helpful to start small (for example, when someone offers us something, we often feel the need to accept even if we don't want it for fear of seeming rude — if you don't want it, practice saying 'no, thank you!'). You could then move onto saying no to things that feel bigger, such as hanging out with friends when you don't really feel like it. Learning to check in with what you actually do and don't want and acting on it can really help to boost self-esteem and confidence.
- **Setting boundaries** — Saying no is definitely a form of boundary setting, but there are lots of other ways to do this too. Personal boundaries are the healthy rules we set around things such as our emotions, time, possessions or personal space. These boundaries make us feel safe and comfortable.



# ASK FOR HELP

**Asking for help can feel really difficult as we often don't want people to know that we can't do everything by ourselves. However, that's actually true — nobody can do everything without a little bit of help and that's nothing to be embarrassed or ashamed of.**

Whether it's needing some support with understanding your school work or a bit of advice around how to tackle a personal problem, seeking help can get issues sorted out sooner.

It can also help you learn new things and develop bonds with people. You might notice that when people ask *you* for help, it makes you feel really good about yourself, right? So spread the love and ask for help next time you need it.

**Is there anything you've been struggling with recently that you think you could benefit from some help with? Who could you ask?**

Earlier on, we asked you to think about a recent time when you felt a little zap of happiness and pride in yourself. We reckon there are loads of these zaps happening all the time, but it can be easy to either forget about them or not even recognise them in the first place.

If you're wanting to boost your self-esteem, acknowledging these moments is a great place to start. You could even start writing them down! Keeping a log can be a lovely way to remind yourself what's great about you if and when self-doubt starts to creep in.

**Why not start a list now in the space below?**

If you look around, you might notice that self-esteem is quite contagious. If you can speak positively about yourself, it can really encourage other people to do the same. Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you're with a group of people and one person says something unkind about themselves?

Before you know it, someone else has chimed in with a critical remark about themselves and then everyone gets on board! We feed off each other's attitudes and if you're being negative about yourself, it can 'give permission' for the people around you to be negative too. So, it makes sense that if you approach yourself positively, that can be passed onto other people as well!

***It's not always easy to take the first step towards this change in perspective. However, by just stopping and thinking about how you speak about yourself before it comes out of your mouth, you can make huge changes to how you and other people feel about yourselves.***

#### **SOMETHING TO REMEMBER...**

One thing we don't want to do is stray into arrogance. There's a fine line between knowing that you're a great person with lots to offer the world and thinking you're the best thing since sliced bread! Some simple ways to make sure you're staying grounded are:

- Always be genuine and sincere
- Make sure you're listening to those around you rather than just talking about yourself or sharing your own thoughts
- Don't be afraid to admit when you're wrong.

# A NOTE ON KINDNESS

**We've talked a lot in this section about how to be kind to yourself, give yourself confidence and remind yourself how brilliant you are. However, we believe that it's equally important to turn these skills outwards. You can use them to help others to feel wonderful about themselves too!**

Sometimes, it can be easy to fall into a trap of being a bit judgemental. Social media can encourage us to criticise other people's bodies, their choices, hobbies, relationships, music choices or clothes. Most of us have been on the receiving end of these judgements at one point or another, whether it's a nasty comment, being excluded from social groups and activities or a prolonged campaign of bullying. I think we can all agree how horrible it feels, so this is just a gentle reminder to always choose kindness. Remember that the way we speak to or treat people can have a huge, lasting impact on them.

We're sure you're all lovely people and know all about being kind. However, a little reminder never hurt anybody, so here are some simple ways to show kindness:

- Smile at people
- Offer to help
- Give a genuine compliment
- Before you pass comment on something, ask yourself — Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it kind?
- Invite someone to join you who might otherwise be left out
- Really listen when someone is speaking to you
- Apologise when necessary
- Think twice before posting negative comments on social media. They are just as harmful as face-to-face comments!

# LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Below is a selection of activities designed to help you remember how awesome you are. If you're not used to speaking kindly to yourself, you might find it takes a little while to answer some of these questions. That's okay! We know you're brilliant and soon enough you'll know it too.

My friends think I'm great because...

Something I'm really proud of is...

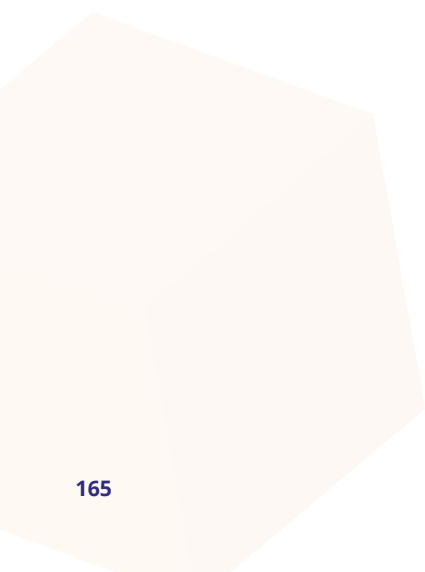
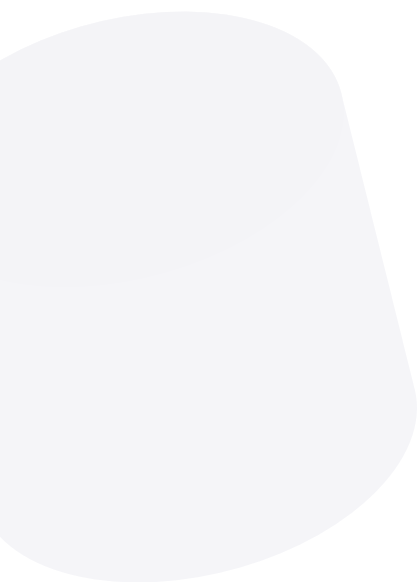
I make my loved ones happy when...

One unique thing about me is...

I really admire myself for...

I often receive praise for...

# NOTES



How do  
you feel today?

Is anything  
bothering you?

# A QUICK **WELLBEING** CHECK-IN

**Take a few minutes to  
check in with how you're  
feeling right now.**

What is one good thing  
that happened today?

What are your  
goals for tomorrow?

# SELF-CARE CHECK-IN

Tick the things you've done (or plan to do) today. There's space at the end for you to add any that aren't on the list.

Eaten three main meals

Taken a break from social media

Listened to your favourite music

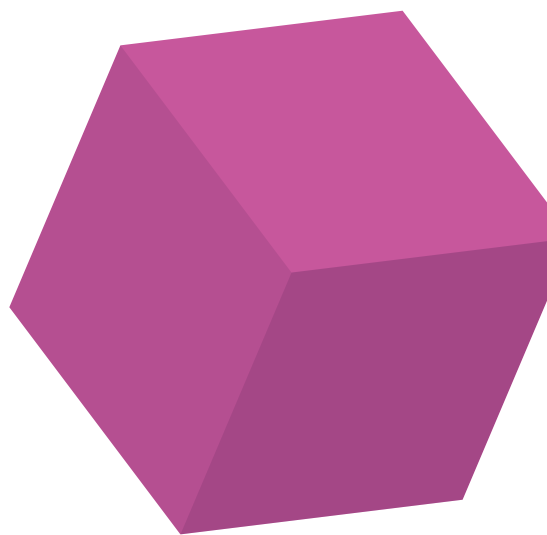
Had a chat with a friend

Done some exercise

Spent some time outside

Taken some time to enjoy a hobby

Said something kind to someone



**Reminder: take five  
long mindful breaths**

# 8 CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

USEFUL RESOURCES

JARGON BUSTER ANSWERS



# CONCLUSION

**We hope this workbook has been helpful and you're feeling a bit more confident about your future options and choices. There's been a huge amount of information to take in, so well done for getting to this point!**

We recommend keeping hold of your workbook if you can as you might find some of the activities, information and answers within it useful when you're considering your options over the next couple of years.

This workbook is just a taster of the information and support that is available to you, so on the next page we have provided a list of links and resources that you might find useful for further research. Our website is also a great place to go for more information, so head over and check it out at [www.gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk!](http://www.gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk!)



# USEFUL RESOURCES

## APPRENTICESHIPS

- [www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship](https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship)
- [www.whatcareerlive.co.uk/advice/life-as-a-degree-apprentice-everything-you-need-to-know](https://www.whatcareerlive.co.uk/advice/life-as-a-degree-apprentice-everything-you-need-to-know)

## CAREERS

- <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk>
- <https://ckcareersonline.org.uk>
- [www.ucas.com/further-education](https://www.ucas.com/further-education)
- [www.ucas.com/careers/buzz-quiz](https://www.ucas.com/careers/buzz-quiz)
- [www.ucas.com/careers-advice](https://www.ucas.com/careers-advice)
- [www.ucas.com/ucas/after-gcses/find-career-ideas/explore-jobs#js=on](https://www.ucas.com/ucas/after-gcses/find-career-ideas/explore-jobs#js=on)
- [www.prospects.ac.uk](https://www.prospects.ac.uk)
- <https://icould.com/buzz-quiz>

## EMERGENCY SUPPORT

- [www.childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk)
- [www.themix.org.uk](https://www.themix.org.uk)
- <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/get-urgent-help/youngminds-crisis-messenger>
- <https://nopenic.org.uk>
- <https://giveusashout.org>

## MENTAL HEALTH

- [www.rethink.org](https://www.rethink.org)
- <https://youngminds.org.uk>
- [www.mind.org.uk](https://www.mind.org.uk)
- [www.time-to-change.org.uk](https://www.time-to-change.org.uk)
- [www.samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org)
- [www.ocduk.org](https://www.ocduk.org)
- [www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk](https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk)
- [www.childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk)
- [www.themix.org.uk](https://www.themix.org.uk)
- <https://nopenic.org.uk>
- [www.actionforhappiness.org](https://www.actionforhappiness.org)
- <https://thehappynewspaper.com>
- [www.feelbetterleeds.org.uk](https://www.feelbetterleeds.org.uk)
- [www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/youth-mental-health](https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/youth-mental-health)
- <https://healthyyoungmindspennine.nhs.uk/resource-centre/apps>
- [www.blurtitout.org](https://www.blurtitout.org)
- [www.headspace.com](https://www.headspace.com)
- [www.kooth.com](https://www.kooth.com)
- <https://giveusashout.org>
- [www.happymaps.co.uk](https://www.happymaps.co.uk)

## OPEN EVENTS

- [www.ucas.com/further-education/post-16-qualifications/open-events](http://www.ucas.com/further-education/post-16-qualifications/open-events)

## PHYSICAL WELLNESS

- [www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/get-active-with-a-disability](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/get-active-with-a-disability)
- [www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/healthy-eating-for-teens](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/healthy-eating-for-teens)
- <https://sleepcouncil.org.uk>
- [www.noisli.com](http://www.noisli.com)
- <https://pzizz.com>
- [www.calm.com](http://www.calm.com)
- [www.sleepcycle.com](http://www.sleepcycle.com)

## QUALIFICATIONS

- [www.ucas.com/further-education/post-16-qualifications/what-qualifications-are-there-16-18-year-olds](http://www.ucas.com/further-education/post-16-qualifications/what-qualifications-are-there-16-18-year-olds)
- [www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zdfdt39](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zdfdt39)

## STUDENT FINANCE

- [www.gov.uk/student-finance](http://www.gov.uk/student-finance)
- [www.ucas.com/sfe](http://www.ucas.com/sfe)

## STUDY SKILLS

- [www.ucas.com/undergraduate/student-life/study-skills-guides](http://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/student-life/study-skills-guides)

# JARGON BUSTER ANSWERS

**Fresher**

An informal name for a first-year student.

**Students' Union (SU)**

An organisation that is run by students, representing and supporting them.

**Lecture**

A method of teaching where a lecturer presents information and students listen and take notes.

**Undergraduate**

A student studying for their first degree.

**Seminar**

A small teaching group where students and their lecturers can discuss ideas in more depth.

**Graduation**

The successful completion of a course at university or college, usually celebrated with a formal ceremony.

**Combined/joint honours**

A type of degree where you study two subjects alongside each other.

**Student loan**

A loan given to students to cover fees and living costs.

**Campus**

The group of buildings/areas that house a higher education institution.

**Prospectus**

Guides produced by universities/colleges. They contain lots of information about courses, entry and more.

**Graduate**

Somebody who has successfully completed a course at university or college.

**Halls of residence**

Buildings where students live.

**UCAS**

Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. This is the body that handles most applications.

**Clearing**

A system that allows applicants to fill free spaces on university/college courses.

**Gap year**

A year away from education — some students choose to take this before they go to university/ college.

**Open day**

A day where the university/college is open for students to visit, explore and find out information.

**Sandwich year**

A placement year, usually taken in the middle of your course.

