

A-Level Economics

Entry Requirements: 6 in GCSE English Language and 6 in GCSE Maths, and a 6 in Economics if studied.

Exam Board: AQA

Subject Leader: Mr C Mehat cmehat@taptonschoolo.co.uk

Main Syllabus Area

Economics is the study of how society allocates its scarce resources between competing uses. For instance, how is our access to fresh water managed? It is a vital resource which certainly creates benefits for all consumers; however, it seems our demand exceeds supply available at times and is often rationed. Another issue of concern could be the management of transport. Free Access to roads in this country is an integral part of our society, but it generates considerable problems, pollution, congestion, health issues etc. Economics may suggest the free market is the answer to both problems, charge people for what they use and they would be more careful! But what would the effect be for those on low incomes for instance. A-level Economics develops an understanding in students, which allows them to explore how markets work, and how they fail, both on a local level and at a national and international level, and how Governments can or could take a role.

- How to develop an understanding of economic concepts and theories through a critical consideration of current economic issues, problems and institutions that affect everyday life.
- How to apply economic concepts and theories in a range of contexts and to appreciate their value and limitations in explaining real world phenomena.
- How to analyse, explain and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the market economy and the role of government within.
- How to participate effectively in society as a citizen, producer and consumer.

The main topics include:

- The operation of markets and market failure
 - Economic methodology and the economic problem
 - Price determination in a competitive market
 - Production, costs and revenue
 - Competitive and concentrated markets
 - The market mechanism, market failure and government intervention in markets
- The national economy in a global context
 - The measurement of macroeconomic performance
 - How the macro economy works: the circular flow of income, AD/AS analysis, and related concepts
 - Economic performance
 - Macroeconomic policy
- Individuals, firms, markets and market failure
 - The economic problem and methodology
 - Individual economic decision making
 - Price determination in a competitive market
 - Production, costs and revenue
 - Perfect Competition, imperfectly competitive markets and monopoly
 - The Labour market
 - The distribution of income and wealth: poverty and inequality
 - The market mechanism, market failure and government intervention in markets

- The national and international economy
 - The measurement of economic performance
 - How the macro-economy works: circular flow of income, aggregate demand/ aggregate supply analysis
 - Economic performance
 - Financial markets and monetary policy
 - Fiscal policy and supply side policies
 - The international economy

Method of Assessment

For the A-level course students will sit 3 exams, both last for 2 hours. Each paper makes up 33.3% of the total A-level.

- Paper 1: Component of market and Market Failure. This paper includes 1 data response question from a choice of 2 and 1 essay from a choice of 3.
- Paper 2: National and international economy. This paper includes 1 data response question from a choice of 2 and 1 essay from a choice of 3.
- Paper 3: Economic principles and issues: This paper includes multiple choice questions and 1 case study with questions.

Qualities Required

- An interest in/awareness of current affairs
- A logical, coherent approach to problem solving
- A desire to engage in regular background reading
- An inquisitive mind
- A willingness and ability to work independently, showing initiative, organisation and perseverance
- An ability to communicate effectively
- Some mathematical ability in using and interpreting data

Links with other subjects

Frequently studied alongside Mathematics, Geography and English, but increasingly with a wide spread of other subjects. Economics is becoming an essential element of study in a variety of HE courses from Law to Engineering, including of course Business/Management.

Career Prospects

Economics is a useful background subject for further study in a variety of areas, e.g. journalism, law, but is also a key element of subjects such as marketing, finance, accounting and insurance as well as courses including retail or sports management, and urban

planning. Of course, the subject remains a key area of knowledge and understanding for all future citizens, consumers and producers.

Extension and enrichment opportunities

Economics is a lively subject; study usually involves opportunities to participate in visits to conferences, visits to the City of London, competitions, individual and group presentations and access to the local business community.

Reading list

23 Things They Don't Tell You About Capitalism (Ha-Joon Chang) - challenges conventional thinking
 Age of Discovery: Navigating the Risks and Rewards of Our New Renaissance: (Ian Goldin & Chris Kutarna)
 Alibaba: The House that Jack Ma Built (Duncan Clark) - The rise of the Chinese corporate giant
 Almighty Dollar (Dharshini David) - follows the journey of a single \$ to show how the global economy works
 Capitalism Without Capital: The Rise of the Intangible Economy (Haskel and Westlake)
 Capitalism: 50 Ideas You Really Need to Know (Jonathan Portes) - compact and excellent reference material

Choice Factory (Richard Shotton) – a story of 25 behavioural biases that influence what we buy
 Doughnut Economics (Kate Raworth) – challenges much of orthodox thinking in the subject
 Drunkard's Walk (Leonard Mlodinow) – a brilliant history of Maths with lots of relevant applications
 Economics for the Common Good (Jean Tirole) – applied micro from a recent Nobel prize winner
 GDP: A Brief but Affectionate History (Professor Diane Coyle) – really good on the GDP / well-being debate
 Grave New World: (Stephen King) – Former head of Econ at HSBC looks at the fracturing global economy
 Great Economists: How Their Ideas Can Help Us Today (Linda Yueh) – perspectives on contemporary issues
 Growth Delusion: The Wealth and Well-Being of Nations (David Pilling) – antidote to gospel of GDP
 Inequality (Anthony Atkinson) – a superb book on one of the defining economic/political issues of the age
 Inner Lives of Markets: How People Shape Them–And They Shape Us (Sharman and Fishman)
 Limits of the Market: The Pendulum Between Government and the Market (Paul De Grauwe)
 Misbehaving: The Making of Behavioural Economics (Richard Thaler) – a truly superb biography
 Plundered Planet: How to Reconcile Prosperity with Nature: (Professor Paul Collier) – development classic
 Poor Economics: Rethinking Ways to Fight Global Poverty (Banerjee & Duflo) – development economics

Positive Linking – Networks and Nudges (Paul Ormerod) – good introduction to network economics
 Rise and Fall of Nations: Ten Rules of Change in the Post-Crisis World (Richir Sharma)

Risk Savvy - How to make good decisions (Gerd Gigerenzer) – the world of heuristics and risk management
 Ten Great Economists (Philip Thornton) – biographical background, well worth a read

The Box - How the Shipping Container Made the World Smaller and the World Economy Bigger, (Levinson)
 The Everything Store: Jeff Bezos and the Age of Amazon (Brad Stone) – a great business page turner
 The Great Divide (Professor Joseph Stiglitz) – one of the classic critiques of globalisation
 The Great Escape (Professor Angus Deaton) – a broad sweep of economic history and poverty reduction
 The Undoing Project: (Michael Lewis) – Tracks the birth of behavioural economics, Kahneman and Tversky
 Thinking Fast and Thinking Slow: (Professor Daniel Kahneman) – the classic Kahneman epic on psychology
 Upstarts: How Uber and Airbnb are changing the world (Brad Stone) Follow up to his work on Amazon
 What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets (Michael Sandel) – Pure PPE bliss
 Who Gets What - And Why: Understand the Choices You Have; Improve the Choices You Make (Al Roth)
 Why Information Grows: The Evolution of Order, from Atoms to Economies (Cesar Hidalgo) – challenging
 World of Three Zeroes (Muhammad Yunus) – new book from founder of the Grameen Bank

Independent Study

Consolidating notes using the knowledge books
 Complete and mark past papers using resources from the exam board websites
 Reading: See updated reading lists
 Microsoft Teams: Comprehensive set of resources which includes past papers, mark schemes, knowledge books and quizzes

Websites

www.tutor2u.com, www.economicsonline.co.uk and www.economicshelp.org are free one stop economics information gateways for students and teachers. In particular, they contain a considerable amount of economic data relating to a large number of countries as well as extensive theory and revision notes.

Other Useful Websites

The following websites are excellent for up-to-date articles and economic data.
 BBC - www.bbc.co.uk
 UK Treasury - www.hm.treasury.gov.uk
 The Bank of England - www.bankofengland.co.uk
 The Office for National Statistics - www.ons.gov.uk/welcome.htm