

Coffee Morning Year 8 Options Explained



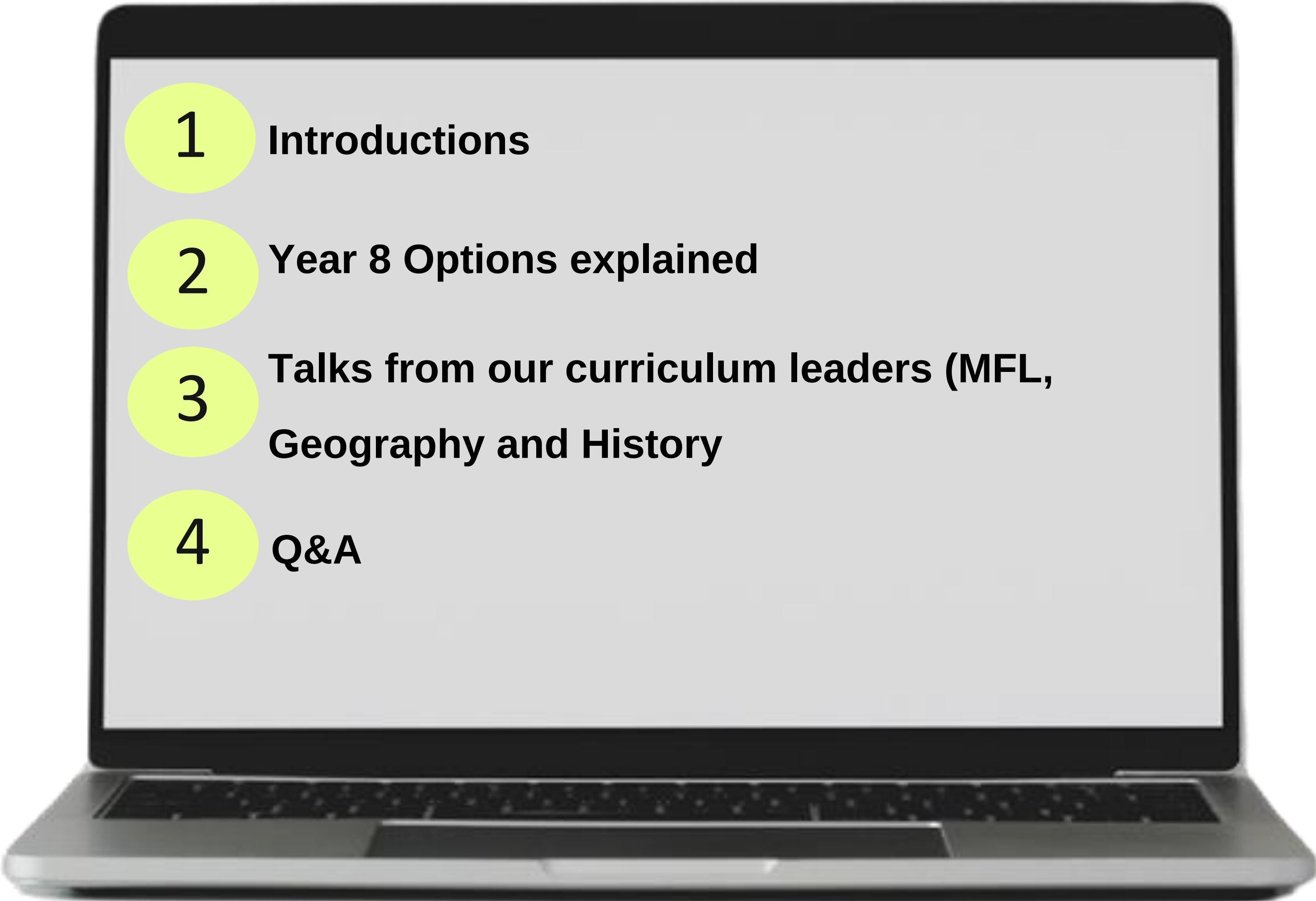
Come along to hear from:
The Deputy Headteacher of Curriculum, Assistant Headteacher and
Careers Lead, Curriculum Leaders of MFL, Geography, and History. There
will be an opportunity for you to ask questions and speak with all the
above key members of staff as well as our school careers adviser.

Tuesday, 13th January 2026

9:00 – 10:15



Welcome!

- 
- 1 Introductions
 - 2 Year 8 Options explained
 - 3 Talks from our curriculum leaders (MFL, Geography and History)
 - 4 Q&A



Careers at Swakeleys School

Careers education at Swakeleys School is committed to helping each student develop the skills and knowledge to make successful careers choices, manage their transitions in learning and feel prepared and confident in the next phase of their life. Whether this be in further education, entering the world of work or training through apprenticeships.





The Options process

Mrs Devereux
Deputy Headteacher



Key stage 4: Years 9 to 11

Core curriculum: Examined subjects

English

2 exams

**English
Lit**

2 exams

Maths

3 exams

**Trilogy
Science**

Two
GCSEs

6 exams

RE

2 exams

15
exams



Core curriculum: Non-examined

PE

PSHCE

**Work
shadowing**



Options

Three more GCSEs

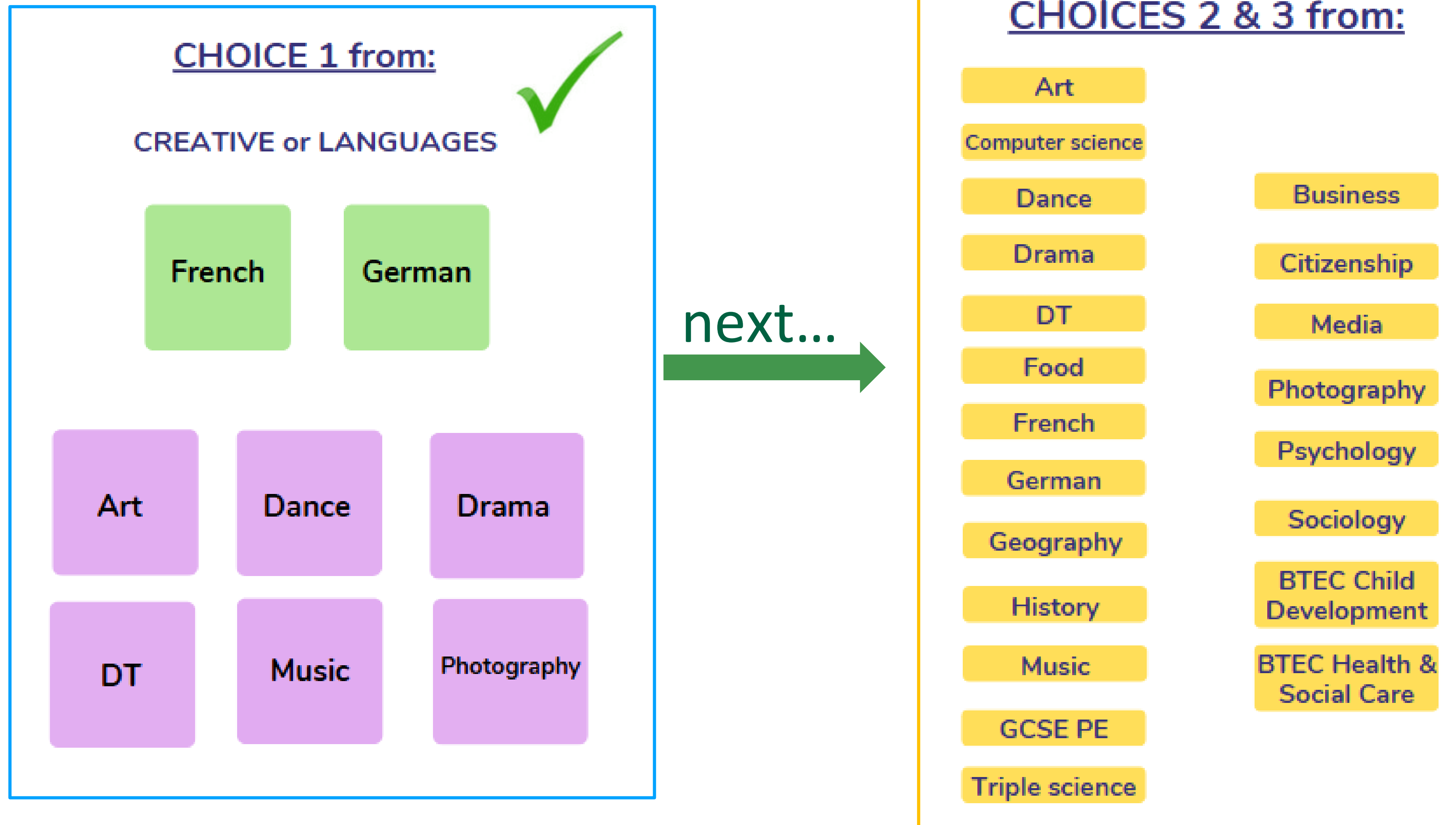


Changes to options

- **No pathways** – these have been removed
- Students all have **three option choices**
- Students must choose a **CREATIVE** or **LANGUAGE** as one of their choices
- Students then have **two more option choices** from all subjects on offer



Options: Three choices



These will all be spread between three option blocks



Year 8 Options: Three option blocks

Example: **Blocks will still be built after dry to get best subject combinations**

Option X	Option Y	Option Z
Business	Drama	Art
Citizenship	History	Business
Dance	Music	BTEC Child Development
Design Technology	PE	Computer Studies
BTEC Health & Social Care	Psychology	Food
Media	Sociology	Geography
French	French	German
Photography	German	Psychology
Triple Science	Triple Science	History
Geography		Sociology

	Option X choice	Option Y choice	Option Z choice
Example 1	Business	Music (CREATIVE)	Sociology
Example 2	French (LANGUAGE)	History	Art (CREATIVE)
Example 3	DT (CREATIVE)	PE	Psychology
Example 4	Dance (CREATIVE)	Drama (CREATIVE)	Art (CREATIVE)
Example 5	Geography	Triple science	German (LANGUAGE)

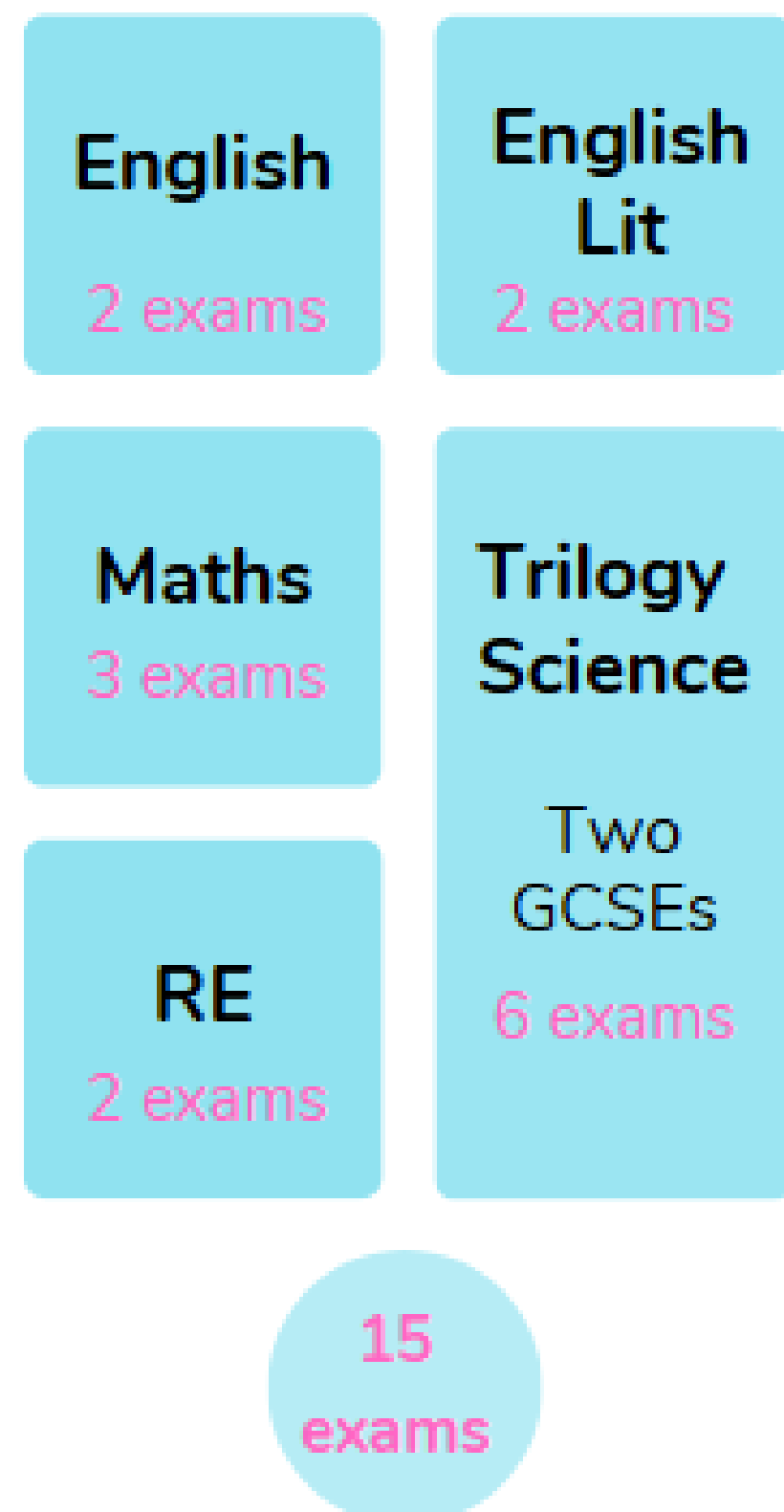
All examples: students have a minimum of **one Creative** or **one Language** but can select any combination from the blocks



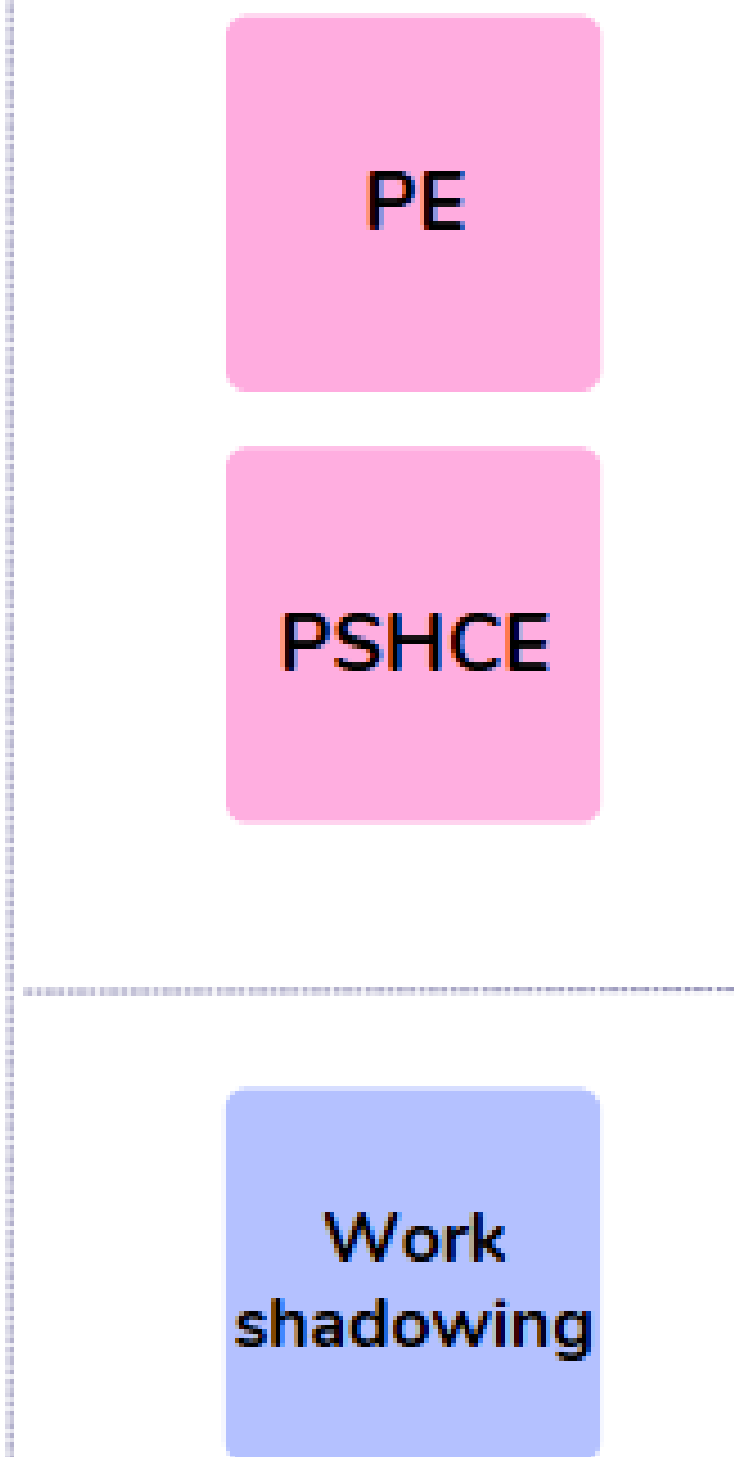
Swakeleys School for Girls: Options Process

Options: Three GCSE choices

Core curriculum: Examined subjects

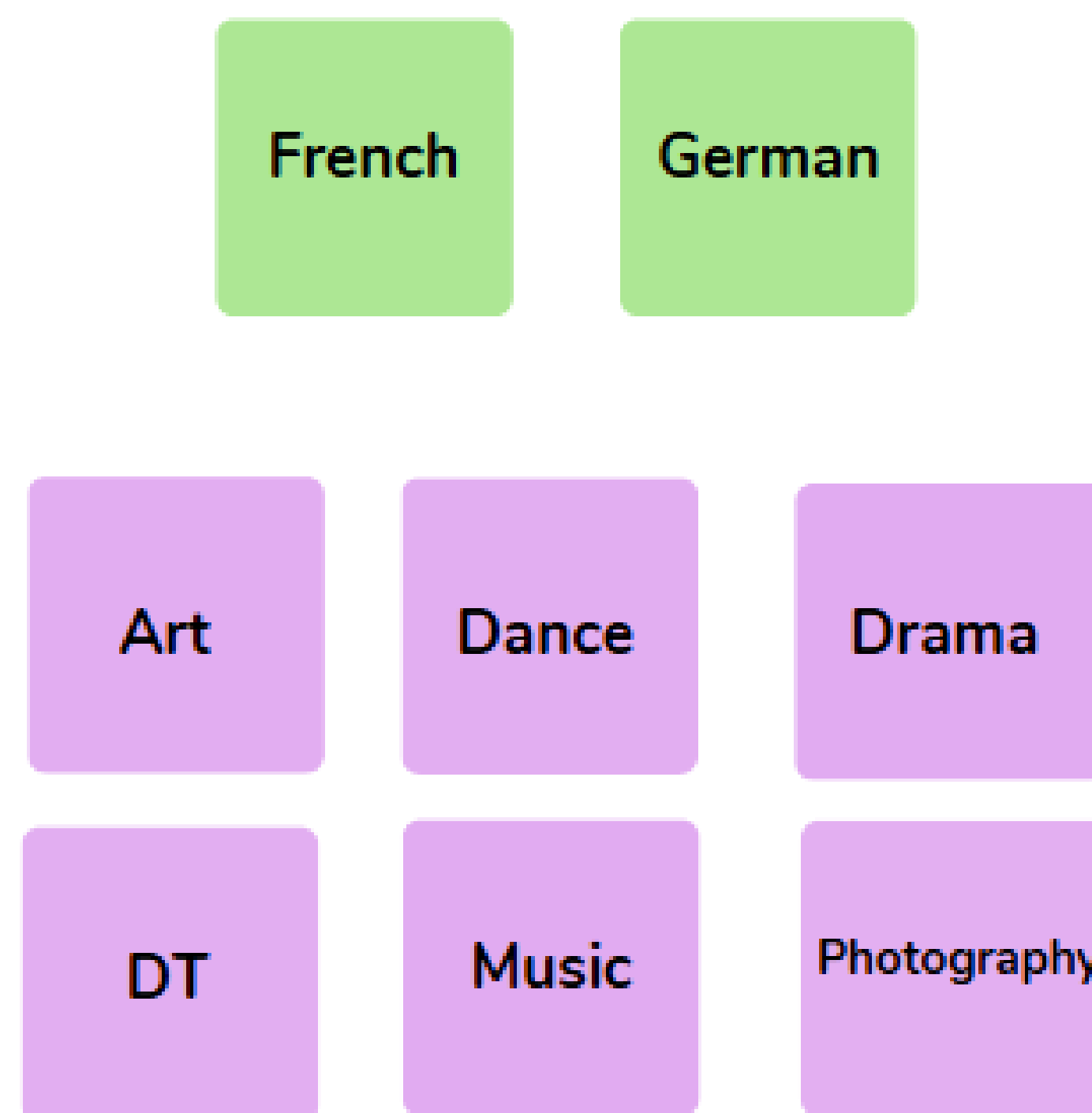


Core curriculum: Non-examined



CHOICE 1 from:

CREATIVE or LANGUAGES



CHOICES 2 & 3 from:



These will all be spread between three option blocks

Date/timing	Actions
Week comm. 3 rd November	Introductory letter home to all families
Tuesday 18 th Nov	Introductory assembly to Y8 in <u>main hall</u> with Mrs Devereux Follow-up letter will be emailed home today Issue option course overview sheet to students – Full options book on website – email & text home about this
Monday 1 st December	Students can sign up for taster sessions in new option subjects
Monday 5 th – Friday 16 th January	Two week focus: taster lessons & careers lessons in KS3 options subjects, careers lesson in PSHCE, drop down taster lessons for new subjects in the canteen
Monday 12 th January	‘Dry run’ of option choices on a Google Form. This is to help me create two option blocks which fit the most common choices – these are not final choices,
Friday 23 rd January	Issue option forms to all Y8 – <u>includes subject option blocks</u>
Wednesday 4 th February	Deadline for handing in options forms



Option X	Option Y	Option Z
Business	Drama	Art
Citizenship	History	Business
Dance	Music	BTEC Child Development
Design Technology	PE	Computer Studies
BTEC Health & Social Care	Psychology	Food
Media	Sociology	Geography
French	French	German
Photography	German	Psychology
Triple Science	Triple Science	History
Geography		Sociology

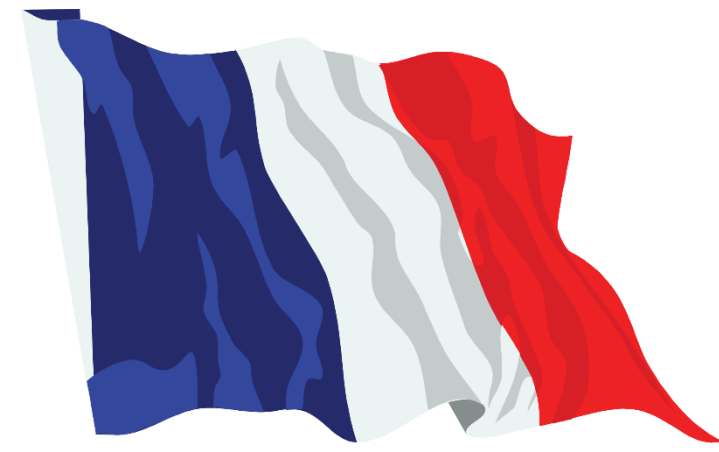
Students also make a further two option choices from all subjects in the option blocks. Students must have a main choice from each option block along with a back-up choice.

OPTION CHOICES:

Complete the table below:

List your choices below, one from each block . You must include a Creative or Language choice		If subjects are full or not running, back up choices may have to be used	
Option X choice:		Option X back up:	
Option Y choice:		Option Y back up:	
Option Z choice:		Option Z back up:	





German / French GCSE

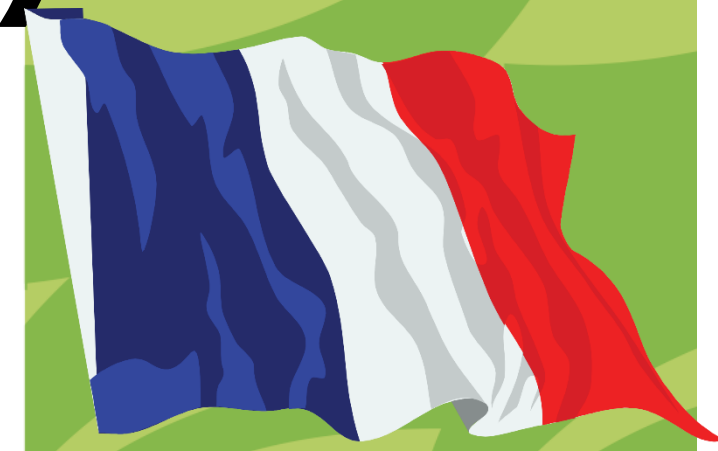
Why are modern foreign languages so important and why should your daughter choose a language as an option?

Mrs Nanuck

Tuesday 13th January



Why should your daughter choose a Modern Foreign Language like French or German(MFL)?



- The ability to speak and/or understand modern foreign languages is more valuable than ever.
- It opens doors for careers in global fields.
- Employers know that Language students learn quickly, and have good listening and communication skills.



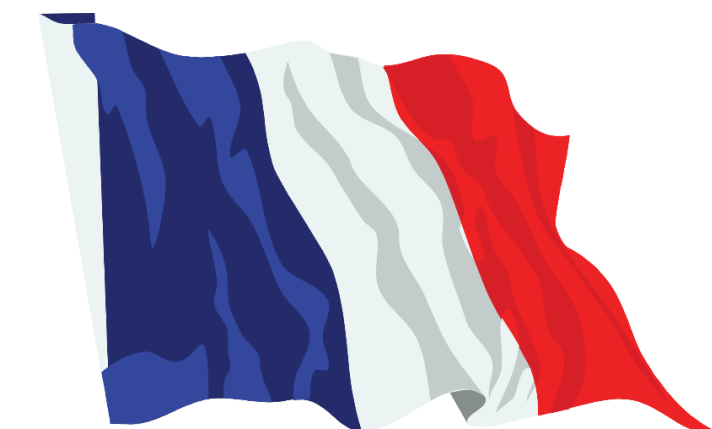
The Top Languages in Demand

The research by CITYLIT reveals that [European languages](https://www.citylit.ac.uk/blog/top-in-demand-languages) are in high demand across multiple industries.

<https://www.citylit.ac.uk/blog/top-in-demand-languages> published on 24/08/2024

The most in demand languages for professionals in the UK.

Rank	Language
1	German
2	French
3	Spanish
4	Turkish
5	Mandarin



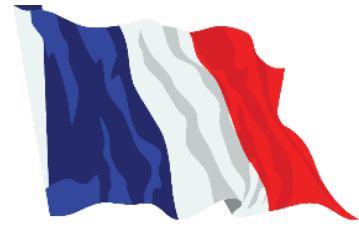


Why learn German?

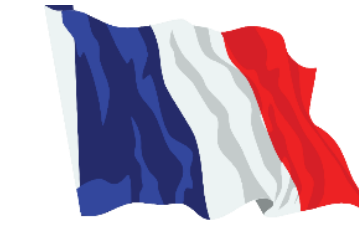


- German is the most sought-after language, with many job ads seeking German-speaking applicants.
- Germany is home to Europe's largest economy.
- Leader in industries such as automotive, engineering, finance, scientific research and health.
- German is also widely spoken across many parts of Europe (Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Northern Italy, and Liechtenstein).
- Speaking the language is critical for British business operations and other sectors in dealings with Germany.



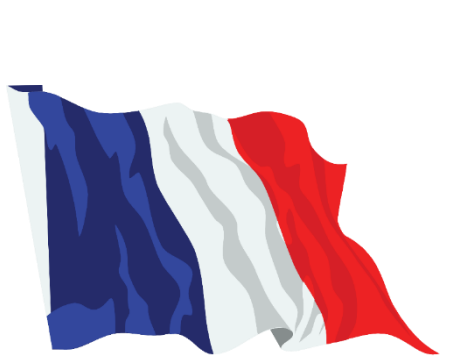


Why learn French?



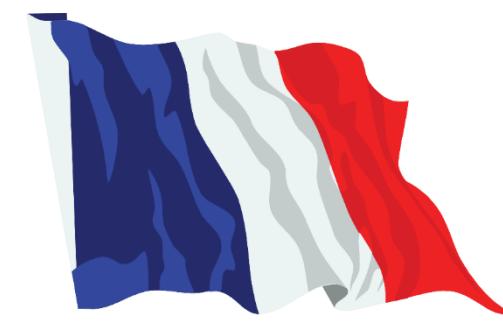
- French is the second highest language in demand , with substantial demand across numerous industries.
- French is not only spoken in France but also in many countries across Europe, Africa, North America, and parts of the Caribbean and Asia.
- Hence making it an asset in global communication, diplomacy, and international business.
- French along with English is the official language used in The United Nations, the International Olympic Committee, the International Red Cross and the European Court of Justice.





Translator
Sales Executive
Interpreter
Nurse
Foreign Civil Servant
Publisher
Actor
Business Executive
Tour Operator
Editor
Journalist
Tour Manager
Diplomatic Service Operator
Event Manager
Prime Minister
Broadcaster
Travel and Tourism
Detective
Hospitality
Fashion designer
Sommelier
Sub-titles and Voice Overs
Marketing Executive
Airline ground services
Airline Cabin Crew
Children's holiday entertainer
Import & Export Specialist
International Aid Worker

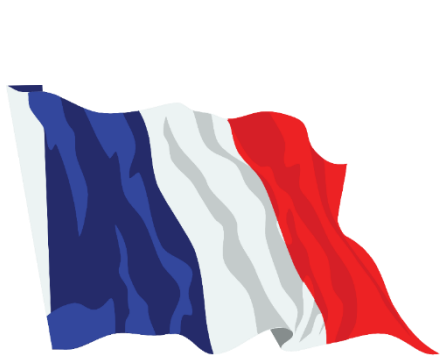




Apart from job prospects.....

- Languages are so important that the UK is **rejoining the Erasmus scheme from 2027**, allowing students to study abroad in an European Union country for a year. Scheme is open not just to university students but also to those on vocational courses as well as apprentices.
- Learning a foreign language enhances **cultural understanding** and enriches our lives.
- Studying a second language boosts **students' cognitive skills like problem-solving and memory retention**. Effective brain workout for young people and older learners.





Apart from job prospects.....

- When applying for university, having a foreign language is a plus as it's called a **facilitating** subject. Universities prefer facilitating subjects as they are particularly useful for developing skills in critical thinking, essay writing or problem solving.
- Languages give people the edge and help to **stand out** from the crowd whether it's at work, in social situations or at university.
- Whether your **child's future is in business, engineering, medicine, fashion, technology, entertainment, journalism, law, teaching or even AI**, speaking/understanding another language will put her in an excellent position in our globalised world.



Quotes from some of the current Year 10 students

You look cool!

It helps to understand new things when you are learning a language: Kabilini

You look like you are a well rounded student: Leeya

It makes me be in a really good mood when I go to my language lesson: Siyana

You have good knowledge of the other country's culture: Eliza

Love interest!

Lessons are fun

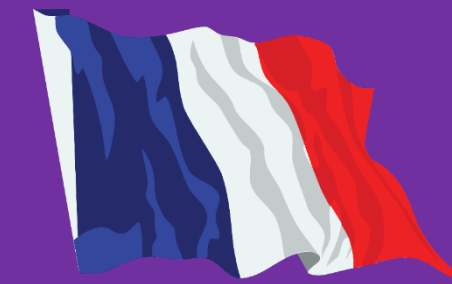
It boosts memory and focus, it sharpens your mind

It opens job opportunities.

Less chance of Alzheimer

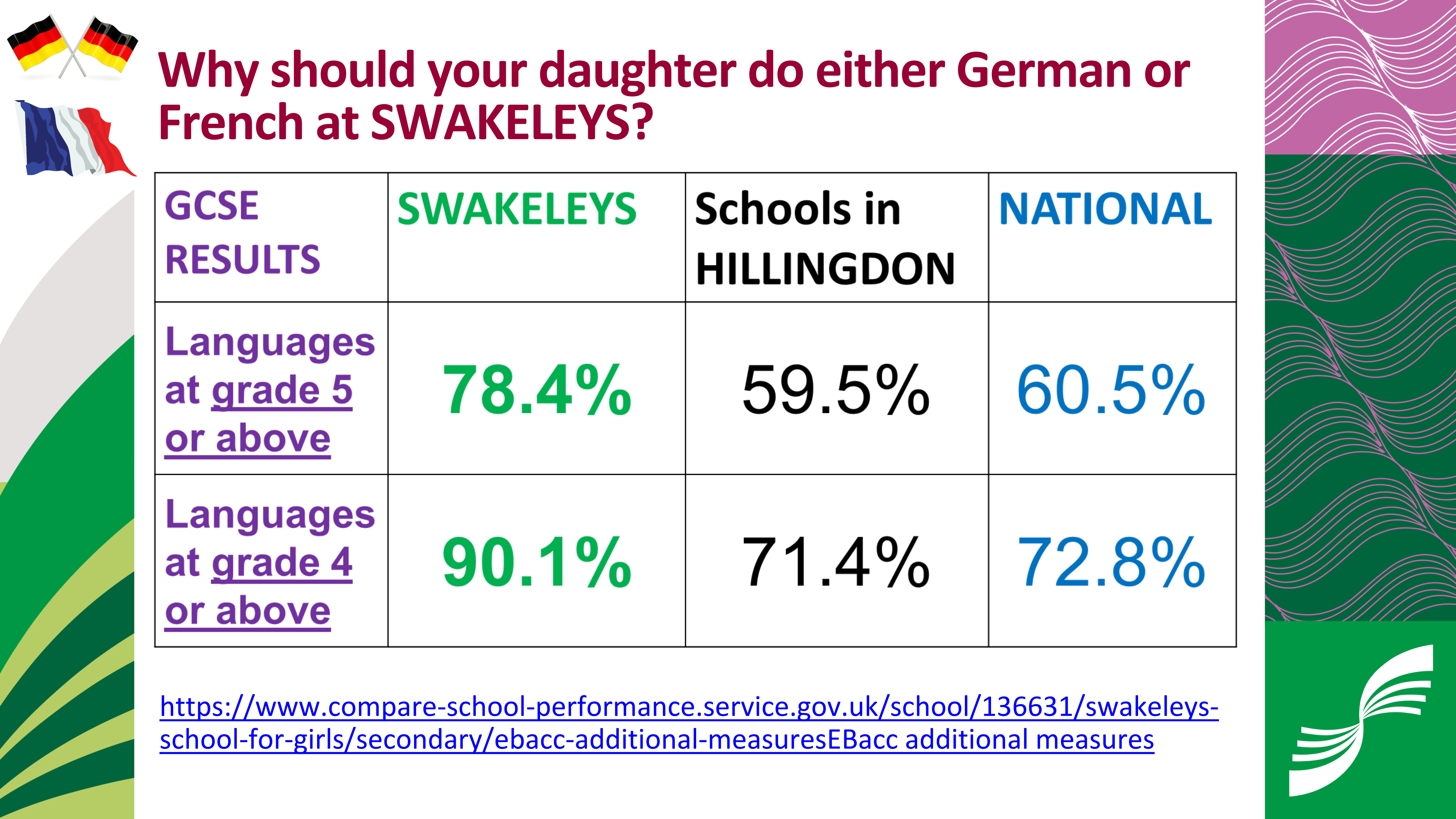


Views of Mishall Gilani 10 DS



“Learning a language has definitely changed the way I learn and the way I see things. It’s made me more confident, because I’ve had to speak out loud and not worry about getting everything perfect. I’ve noticed my memory getting stronger because I’m constantly learning new vocabulary, and it has made problem-solving feel easier in other subjects too. Studying a language hasn’t just taught me words and grammar; it has made me more independent, more curious, and more willing to challenge myself. A language doesn’t just help you say more, it helps you be more.”





Why should your daughter do either German or French at SWAKELEYS?

GCSE RESULTS	SWAKELEYS	Schools in HILLINGDON	NATIONAL
Languages at <u>grade 5 or above</u>	78.4%	59.5%	60.5%
Languages at <u>grade 4 or above</u>	90.1%	71.4%	72.8%

<https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/school/136631/swakeleys-school-for-girls/secondary/ebacc-additional-measures>EBacc additional measures



Geography GCSE

Why is Geography so important and why should your daughter choose it as an option?

Mrs K Bradnum

Tuesday 13th January



A-levels

Opinion

The Guardian view on geography: it's the must-have A-level

How geography GCSE weathered storm of curriculum changes

Far from lacking skills, employers actively seek geography graduates for their wider view of the world

Guardian Careers
The Careers Blog

What makes psychology and geography grads the most employable?

Geography a force for broadening the mind, says Michael Palin

Comedian and broadcaster praises rise in geography entries at GCSE and A-level

Why study geography?

1. It develops key transferable skills

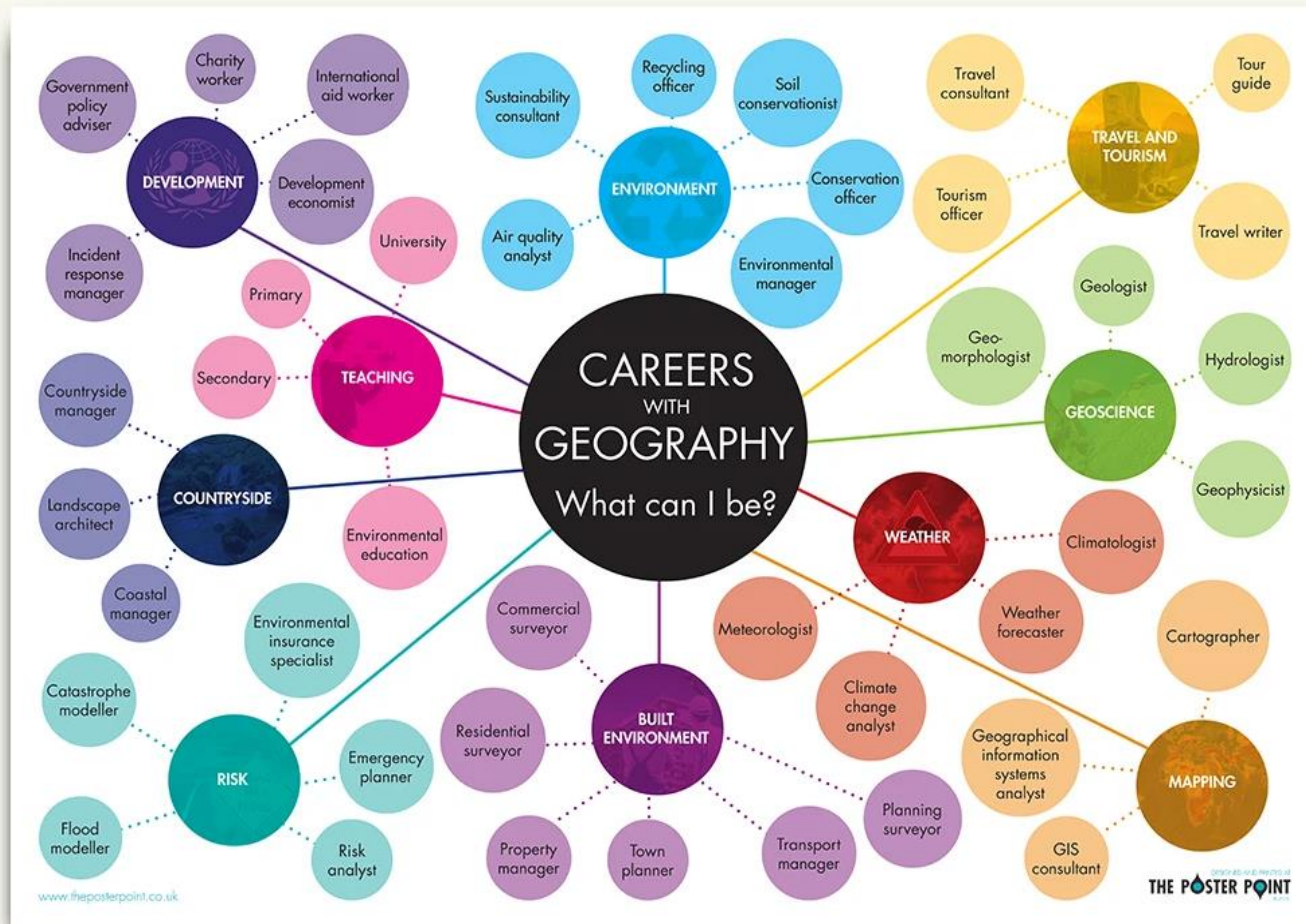
2. It connects to science, arts and current events

3. It's hands on and relevant to life

4. It fosters global awareness and real world understanding

5. It boosts employability and career prospects





Geography at Swakeley's...

Three dedicated and enthusiastic specialists

Fieldtrips related to the curriculum, with more on the horizon....

A popular and well attended enrichment club 'Geog Soc'

Since 2022, a consistent 63% of our cohort have achieved a grade 5-9....





"I think Geography is something everyone should do. You discover something new every lesson. It helps us gain an understanding of the world we live in".

"Geography is my future. It is influencing me to think about the impact we have on the planet"

"It is very interesting. We learn about issues and topics from all over the world".

"I love learning about how people impact and change physical and human environments. It is so exciting".

"I love it because you learn a lot about world issues. It is really relevant to the world around us"

"It challenges me. We learn something new everyday. It brings light to a lot of world issues!"





History GCSE

Why is history so important and why should your daughter choose it as an option?

Ms K Morais

Tuesday 13th January



History GCSE

Overview of the course

Two exam papers

Paper 1

- America 1920-1975: Opportunity & Inequality
- Conflict & tension: the First World War 1894-1918

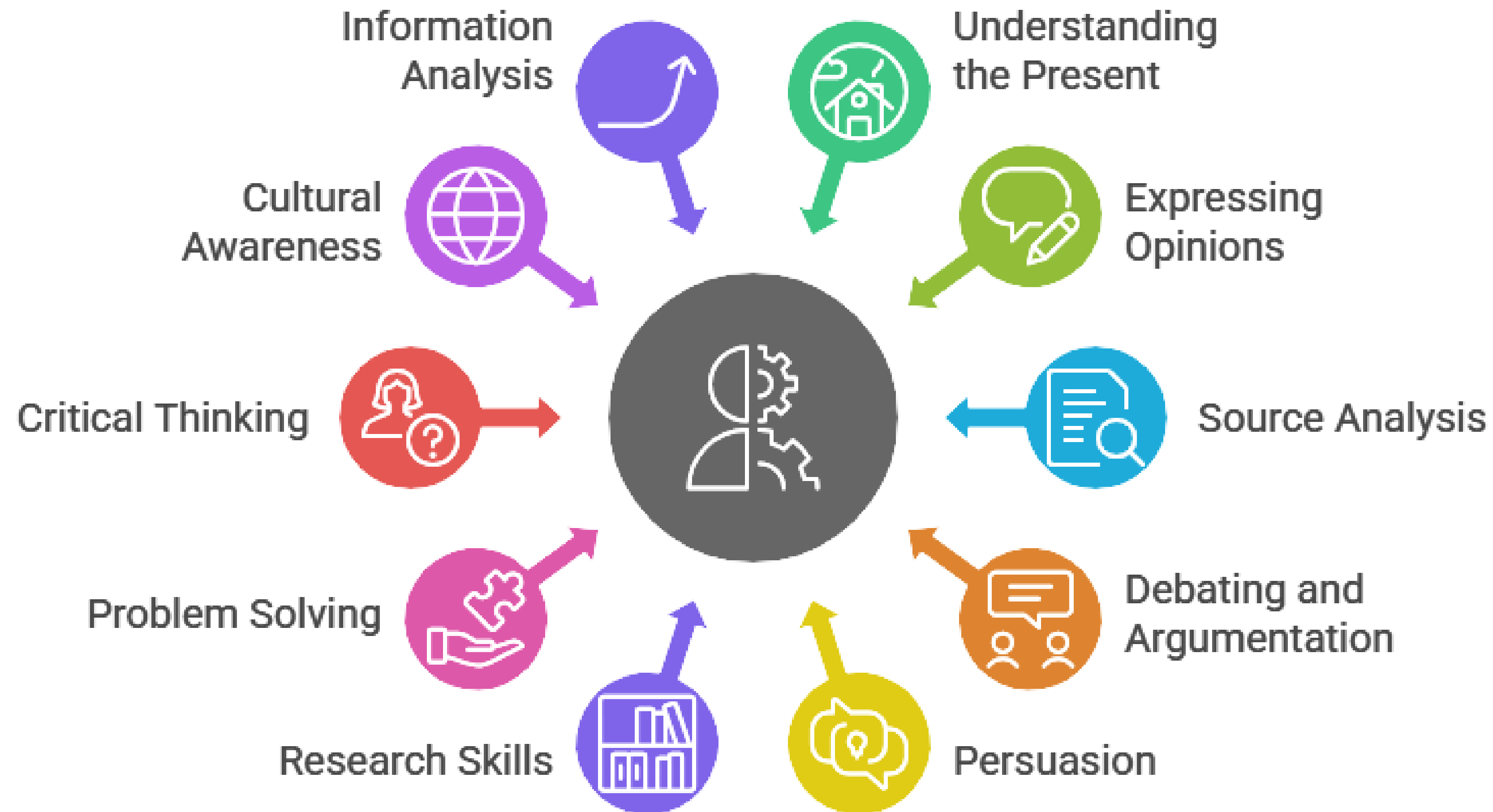
Paper 2

- Britain: Health and the People: c1000 to the present day
- Elizabethan England, c1568-1603



What skills will your daughter learn?

Skills Developed in GCSE History



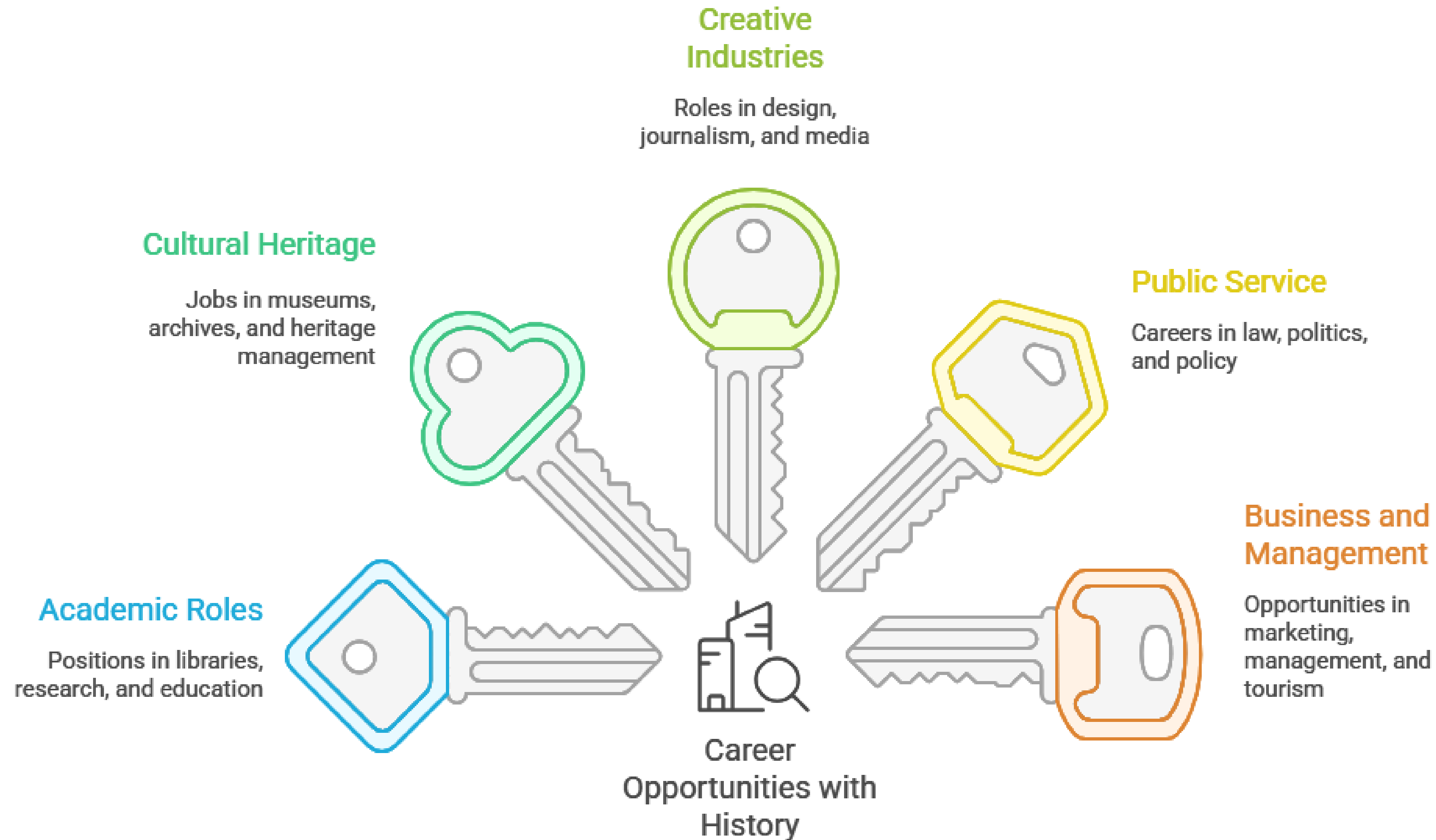
History GCSE

What career opportunities can GCSE history lead to?

- GCSE History is a highly respected academic subject that is valued by universities and employers alike.
- Studying History equips students with a wide range of transferable skills that are essential for future success.
- GCSE History keeps future career options open.
- Employers are always looking for young people who are able to think critically and analytically, both key attributes of the historian, and studying GCSE History can help them to take the first steps on a variety of career paths, including law, journalism, marketing, human resources, and management.



Diverse Career Paths with History



History GCSE

Why study history at Swakeleys?

Three experienced subject specialist teachers in the history department.

The department consistently achieves GCSE grades above the national average. In 2025 78% students achieved grades 9-4 and 30% achieved grades 9-7. The national averages were 64% and 26% respectively.

Students have the opportunity to study a wide range of time periods, topics, and locations.

The history department runs trips to museums, theatres, and historical sights to bring what students have learnt in lessons to life.



What do GCSE history students say?

GCSE history helps me understand how events in the past still affect our lives today. It has helped me improve my writing and confidence in explaining questions. I enjoy learning about historical events and debating whether the decisions made at that time were right or wrong. I'd recommend history because it teaches skills that are useful in lots of other subjects, not just history.

Year 10 student

GCSE history is a very fun and interesting subject. It is very applicable and relevant to modern day events. It can also be very helpful in understanding why things are the way they are.

Year 11 student

History was my favourite lessons in my GCSEs. The subject is so interesting and the history department are so supportive. I wouldn't have achieved my grade 9 without them.

A Level student

GCSE History is an amazing choice if you want to understand why the world is the way it is today and how people's actions have shaped it. It also links really well to other subjects and everyday life.

Year 11 student

History is amazing! You learn so much and it is good to know the past to understand the future. Through learning history you learn how people have come to be who they are today and predictions on the future. **Year 9 student**

It's very interesting and you don't get bored in lessons. **Year 9 student**

History is very interesting/engaging and a subject where you can actually give your own thoughts about something, not just apply some formula or memorize the meaning of a word. **Year 10 student**

Choose GCSE History to become a detective of the past; it turns fascinating stories—from Medieval doctors to 1920s gangsters—into powerful skills for your future. **Year 11 student**



Careers Fortnight

Calendar of Events during Careers Focus Fortnight January 2026				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
5 January	6 January	7 January	8 January	9 January
Launch Step in to the NHS competition (Year 7&8) Year 8 Taster sessions (Media P2 & Sociology P4) <i>Canteen</i> Green Careers Display Alumni Display	Hall assembly on careers (Year 7&8) Year 8 Taster sessions (Health and Social Care P1 & Psychology P3) <i>Canteen</i> Years 8-10 Talk about Careers in Women Sport from the Harlequin Foundation (P2) <i>HALL</i>	1-1 Mock Interview day HALL (Year 11) Year 8 Taster sessions (Citizenship P3 and Childcare P4) <i>Canteen</i>	Hall assembly on careers (Year 11) Year 9-11 Geography talk on Sustainability within Delta Airlines and careers in Aviation P1 HALL Year 10 KCL MFL talk about careers in languages (P5) <i>HALL</i>	Hall assembly on careers (Year 9&10) Year 8 Taster sessions (Business P2) <i>Canteen</i> Science Made Simple (work shop) for all KS3. 3 workshops (P3-P5) HALL
12 January	13 January	14 January	15 January	16 January
Year 8 AMAZON – Think Big Mobile STEM workshop LRC Women in Engineering workshop (Year 9&10) Offsite SCS Railways Acton SEND Careers Lunch	Year 8 Options Careers Coffee Morning (Parents) HALL 6th Form Taster Day (Year 11) Year 9-11 Careers in Hospitality Talk Stephen Travis (P4) Hall	Careers Fair Day P1 – Year 10 P2- Year 11 P3 – Year 8 P4 – Year 9 P5 – Year 7 Insight workshops & Speed networking (Year 10 & 11: P3-P5)	Year 10 & 11 SEND trip to Uxbridge College (P1-P3) Offsite	TALK Geography with Katie Underwood & Hannah Alchihimi-Alumni Year 8: P1 Year 9-11: P2 HALL Year 11 IAG session (P4) <i>ICT Rooms</i> Year 11 Mock results (P5) <i>Hall</i>

*Blue – new events for this year / *Red TBC



Careers Focus Fortnight

(5th January 2026 - 16th January 2026)

LMI Assembly

Step into the NHS competition

Science made simple workshop

Careers Talks (Geography & Sport)

Year 8 Taster Sessions

Year 8 Amazon Think BIG STEM workshop

Career fair 2026 (Wednesday 14th January)

PSHCE lessons linked to careers for the 2 week period



Independent Careers Advisor

Melanie Kindley – Deeks

Has worked in education and careers for nearly 20 years. Her role is to help students figure out their next steps and find the best route to get there.

This could include:

- Careers research
- What your options are in terms of next steps
- Applying for further education
- Finding and applying for apprenticeships
- Writing a CV
- Interview practice



In school every Monday and Tuesday and can be found in room A171.

Hosts lunch-time careers clinic once a month.



How can you help ?

As parents or carers, you will have the opportunity to support your child's decision and their future career choices.

So how can you help them make decisions that are right for them?

- ✓ Talk regularly about careers, aspirations and interests as part of everyday conversation, not just at key decision-making points.
- ✓ Share your experiences, the choices you made and your skills with your child, whether you currently are in work, you are a full-time parent, you are seeking work or you are retraining.
- ✓ Encourage your child to be curious and work with them to research their options even if you don't know the answers yourself.

