

St Michael's Church of England High School
A Church of England Academy



EBacc explained



Growing in Body, Mind and Spirit

What is the EBacc?

The 'English Baccalaureate' or 'EBacc' is a combination of subjects the Government believes provide a 'broad and balanced' education.

To achieve the EBacc students must gain at least a Grade 5 in the following:

- Mathematics
- English Language / English Literature and both must be studied
- 2 Sciences (Combined, Separate or Computer Science)
- A Humanities subject (History or Geography)
- A Foreign Language

The EBacc has been awarded since 2010 when it was introduced as a school performance measure, but since 2015 there has been significant emphasis placed on students achieving the EBacc combination at GCSE, with the Government saying their ultimate intention is for 90% of pupils nationally taking this combination with only a small minority being able to 'opt out.' St Michael's is in the top 100 schools nationally, meaning it would be 100% of our pupils who should be being 'stretched and challenged' by taking this combination.

Pupils at St Michael's will all take GCSE Maths, English Language, English Literature and Sciences, whether separate Sciences or combined.

During Year 9 they have also continued to study the EBacc combination, choosing four option subjects which include a Humanities subject and a Foreign Language:

CHOICE 1:

History
OR
Geography

CHOICE 2:

German
OR
French

CHOICES 3 and 4: (two from:)

Art and Design / Art Textiles
Design Technology
Food preparation and nutrition
Music
Geography
Drama
Dance
PE
History
GCSE Business
French
Computer Science
Vocational ICT

In Year 10 pupils continue to study Maths, English Language and Literature and Sciences.

They must also study THREE of their four options, therefore if pupils want to continue studying the EBacc they would have to take:

their Humanities choice, either: their Language: ONE choice from their other two option subjects:

History
OR
Geography

German
OR
French

Art and Design / Art Textiles
Design Technology
Food preparation and nutrition
Music
Geography
Drama
Dance
PE
History
GCSE Business
French
Computer Science
Vocational ICT

Do I have to pick the EBacc?

No, but we do recommend you read this information carefully and think about what is best for you. Teaching staff at St Michael's have your best interests at heart and want you to be fully informed as your decisions affect your future. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you have a particular career in mind?
- Do you want to go to college or continue in higher education or training?
- Do you want to go to university?

Remember that all students of your age in the UK are presently being given the same information and you are competing for college and university places with these pupils. The choices you make need to open doors for you and not disadvantage you in the future.

We cannot predict the future, but we can inform you that this discussion is presently ongoing in all schools nationally with many schools already having made the decision for their pupils to take the EBacc combination compulsorily.

Separate (Triple) Science

Pupils can opt to take Triple Science and the Curriculum Leader for Science will speak to them about this. Triple Science is an 'extension' opportunity as it will enable pupils to take 10 GCSEs rather than 9. We would expect pupils who opt to take Triple Science to have also selected the EBacc subjects, as this enables pupils to keep their options broad and balanced, and is the preferred choice to demonstrate 'stretch and challenge.'

Universities and A Levels

There are presently no universities that specify their entry requirements would give preference to pupils who have achieved the EBacc combination of subjects at GCSE.

Most university websites do, however, state that the EBacc subjects taken as A levels happen to be the ones most regularly asked for by college and university courses.

From the website 'Apply to Uni' it states:

'The *English Baccalaureate* is not a qualification. However, by taking the subjects outlined in the English Baccalaureate, **you will be giving yourself the best options and opportunities for further education**, by ensuring you have the broad base of core academic **subjects that universities and colleges prefer.**'

It continues: 'The English Baccalaureate is a measure by which government, local education authorities, parents and pupils can measure a school's performance in key academic areas. It is also a benchmark for universities to check that applicants have a solid academic foundation on which to build.'

'Few of us really know what we want to do in life at 13 or 14, when we make our GCSE choices, so it is well worth keeping your options open. Not many university courses ask for specific GCSEs other than English and Maths, which are compulsory anyway. However, you will usually need the equivalent GCSE to study a subject at A Level.

'You should therefore keep your options open for A Levels by studying as wide a range of GCSEs as possible. The English Baccalaureate should help you do this in two ways; firstly by ensuring your school offers a wide range of core subjects, and secondly by leaving your options open beyond the five core elements of the English Baccalaureate.'

It also states that the English Baccalaureate gives 'a broad foundation in core subjects, which will stand you in good stead for life at university... the English Baccalaureate will show your chosen university that you are a good all round academic, able to cope with both the precision of maths and the sciences, as well as the cognitive skills of learning a language. Indeed, many studies have shown that studying a language actually increases your cognitive abilities by using different areas of your brain. The English Baccalaureate encourages science minded pupils to take a language and benefit from this process, when they may not have otherwise selected a language option.

'It is unlikely that the English Baccalaureate will affect the most academically minded pupils, since they would probably have chosen the subjects that are included anyway. However, it will affect those just below the top stream, by encouraging them to pursue a course of studies that gives them the most sought after academic qualifications, both for universities and colleges and for employers.'

Not thinking of higher education / university?

Some pupils will not wish to continue education to college or university level and may look to take up an apprenticeship. They may feel this approach is less applicable to them. It is St Michael's policy to offer equal opportunities for all and we would also encourage them to think carefully about studying the EBacc.

Further reading / information:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/761031/DfE_EBacc_Leaflet.pdf

<http://www.applytouni.com/courses/languages/english-baccalaureate/>

<https://university.which.co.uk/advice/gcse-choices-university/whats-the-english-baccalaureate>