

Is A level Economics FOR YOU?

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On paper, taking Economics for your A levels is a foolproof idea. The benefits of the subject seem to go far beyond just the report card. For people still unsure of what they want to be when they grow up, it opens up many avenues, meaning more time to decide. From understanding the implications of monetary policy, and making wiser personal finance decisions, using your knowledge of markets and consumer behaviour, to launching your own startup one day, the possibilities seem endless.

The general impression we get is that Economics gives us skills transferable to other aspects of our lives. While this may be true, there are other less taxing ways to acquire said skills.

Most students take A level Economics because of how interesting its O level counterpart felt, having taught us the basics of concepts such as supply, demand, decision-making, government policy, etc. The problem, as usual, is the leap in difficulty level. While O level papers consist of relatively short, straightforward questions that mostly test a candidate's recollection of general economic theory, A levels questions follow a very different structure.

The papers comprise broad, open-ended questions, each consisting of lots of marks. These essay questions are not only much more challenging to respond to but also require you to have in-depth knowledge of the large Economics syllabus. Candidates are expected to approach each question while considering many different perspectives and structure their answers well.

They also consist of case-based questions, a large step away from just recall, leaning more towards critical analysis and application of theory in a practical context and weighing of the impacts of different financial decisions made by the government or other entities. Not only is the format vastly different, but it also needs

greater English proficiency to organise your answers clearly and concisely.

Compared to the sciences, there's less objectivity in what is required to do well in this exam. The mark schemes are vague about the exact points you need to include in order to score marks. Similar to Literature, they do not offer detailed guidelines about how answers should be. Some teachers may also appear confused, and you may need to search a little bit more to find a good teacher fitted to your specific needs. Due to the comparatively small pool of candidates every year, there are also slightly fewer online resources available for self-studying compared to the sciences.

Difficulty levels are, however, subjective. If you are passionate about the discipline and enjoy dissecting the multi-dimensional implications of economic policy, the open-endedness is but an excellent opportunity to be rewarded for your creativity and analytical prowess. A fact-based questionnaire wouldn't allow you to stand out from your fellow examinees who are less invested and simply learned to recall the theory.

To write top-band answers, you need to keep up with the actual economy. Your knowledge needs to

extend far beyond just your textbook. Regularly reading academic journals, economic reports, and even news coverage of significant economic shifts helps gain a deeper understanding of various markets, policy impacts, and financial stakeholders.

If you are someone who likes extensive reading, rigorous analysis, and would've done all that independent research either way out of a genuine curiosity to learn more about monetary and fiscal policies, expansions and recessions, supply and demand, and all that good stuff, A level Economics is the perfect match.

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Is Further Math for you?

The syllabus is extensive ...



It gets much easier after the first year, once the foundational parts have been covered

Comparatively fewer helpful resources, such as solved past papers, are available online



Friends, teachers, and seniors may exaggerate the difficulty level which can make you more anxious about your performance

It is a rewarding and intellectually stimulating challenge



You'll go into Math, Physics, and Engineering courses with a rock-solid foundation

Is Psychology for you?

The interdisciplinary subject complements well with studies in the sciences, business, or humanities

Offers an extensive introduction to the core areas of human psychology, including social, cognitive, developmental and biological psychology

A helpful addition to your application to study psychology abroad

The syllabus content is memorisation-heavy

Essay questions can make grading subjective

Helps develop strong analytical, critical thinking, written communication, and research skills



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