



THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF PARIS

Why would I choose to study A level?

The principal advantage of A Levels is the freedom of choice that they offer. Most pupils study three A Level subjects and there are no specific requirements for which subjects a pupil should study. A Levels allow pupils considerable freedom to specialise in the subjects that really interest them, and which are more closely related to the course that they might aspire to study at university. Certain subject combinations, such as Maths, Further Maths, combined with a science subject, are also more easily achieved through an A Level programme. A Levels also allow for the study of all three sciences. For pupils who aren't quite so sure about their future plans, A Levels still give them the option of maintaining a breadth of subjects, such as studying a humanities subject, combined with Maths, a science subject, or a language.

A Levels are truly rigorous academic qualifications and allow students to develop a depth of subject knowledge that is not found in other 16+ qualifications. A Levels are recognised by universities all over the world, including those in Europe, North America, Africa, Hong Kong, Australia, and New Zealand. However, a frequent misconception is that A Levels are somehow perceived as a 'weaker' qualification by some universities, particularly in America. This is not true. The US-UK Fulbright Commission publishes a table on their website to help potential applicants average their A Level qualifications into a grade point average (GPA). From that table, it can be clearly seen that an A* grade at A Level is the equivalent of a 4.0 GPA scale, which is the highest point on the scale. Last year 55% of our grades at A level were A*-A.

Many people compare A levels with the International Baccalaureate. They are different qualifications that make different demands on students. A typical university requirement to study a competitive subject, such as Medicine, Engineering or Law might be A*, A, A, to a pupil studying A Levels, or a combined total 40 points for a pupil studying the IB. It can be debated as to which pupil, if any, has the advantage. This would require the IB pupil to get at least a 6 in most of their subjects. The pupil who is specialising in three A Level subjects, particularly ones that interest them, will be at an advantage. Despite studying six subjects on the IB, you'll only take three (or occasionally four) at higher level and the other three (or two) at standard level. For university courses that require specific subjects at A level or equivalent, IB students typically need to take these subjects at higher level rather than standard level. So, whether you take the IB or A levels, you'll typically only have three subjects that will help you meet specific entry requirements.

A level study takes less time in the classroom than IB study. As such A level is a far closer to the university experience that you are preparing for. It allows for the pursuit of excellence in other areas for example high level music or sport. As well as time in the classroom you have directed study time and the opportunity to read and research your subject extensively. At the BSP we offer additional opportunities to broaden the



THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF PARIS

Sixth Form experience through service opportunities, co-curricular activity, and leadership roles. The BSP also offers the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) to be taken alongside taught courses. It is also reassuring to know that the A level course is backed up and accredited by a Government Department (Department for Education) so changes to the curriculum are rigorously and openly debated, there is an established and effective appeals process and students from a wide spectrum of academic backgrounds take the exams as opposed to the rather, often highly academic group that take IB. The IB programme has been beset with controversy over grading during the 2020 and 2021 exam seasons. In short A level offers greater academic expertise, reliability through accountability, a thorough preparation for university study and a greater opportunity to gain the very highest grades possible.

A Levels have taken BSP students to top institutions across the world and here in France. They inspire a life-long love of subject, great study habits and remain the most in-depth 16+ qualification in the world today.