



Sandymount Park ETSS

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Junior Cycle 2026 - 2029

Subject Choice Guide

Junior Cycle Information for Parents and Guardians – Please Click [here](#)



Choosing Subjects for Junior Cycle

When making subject choices, you should consider the following points:

• Choose subjects you are good at
• Choose subjects that you like/enjoy/are interested in
• Choose subjects which tie in with any career aspirations you might have at present, bearing in mind that such aspirations may change over time

In the longer term, beyond the core subjects of English, Irish and Maths, a modern foreign language and a Science subject, there are relatively few demands in terms of essential subjects for jobs and Third Level college courses.

Core Subjects	Optional Subjects	Short Course
English	Geography	Artistic Performance
Gaeilge	Visual Art	Coding
Maths	Music	Japanese
History	Spanish	
Modern Foreign Languages (French/Spanish/German)	Business Studies	
Science	Classics	
SPHE (Social, Personal & Health Education)		
CSPE (Civic, Social and Political Education)		
Ethical Education		
P.E.		

This guide gives details about the **Optional subjects, Modern Foreign Languages** and **Short Courses** and is designed to help you decide which of these optional subjects would be best for you. As a rule, the subjects you choose should be ones that you think you will be good at and that you think you will enjoy.

All subject descriptors are listed in alphabetical order.

[Please read this guide carefully and explore the links within.](#)

For additional information, we recommend consulting the following websites: -

1. Look at the syllabus for the subject at [Curriculum Online](#)
2. www.ncca.ie
3. [Careers Portal](#)



Junior Cycle Subject Information

Business Studies

This subject focuses on improving students' understanding of the business environment and on developing skills for life, work and further study through the three inter-connected strands: Personal finance, Enterprise and Our Economy.

Course Content

Budgeting (household / businesses), consumer rights, banking, cheques, accounts (final accounts, club accounts), running your own business, industrial relations, etc.

Who would this subject suit?

This subject would suit students who are interested in business and who show an interest in setting up their own business eventually and inventiveness. It is a basic requirement for anyone who wishes to work in a business environment.

Type of Homework/Projects/Assignments

Essays, multiple choice, projects, etc.

Other Points

Students must remember that to achieve high grades at Junior Cycle, they will have to work hard.

Career Note

It is particularly useful though not essential for courses in accounting, advertising, banking, business, commerce, finance, management (incl. hotel management), marketing, and taxation. It would be a very useful subject for students who intend to set up their own business.

Progression after the Junior Cycle

To do Economics, Business or Accounting at Leaving Certificate Level, it would be essential for the student to choose Business at Junior Cycle as it provides a basis for the three Leaving Cert subjects.

Further Information on Business Studies

[Business Studies](#)



Classics

Students will study the classical civilisations of Ancient Greece and Rome, which continue to inspire and stimulate today's generation as they have every generation since classical times. Students will learn how they continue to help to shape the Ireland they live in today.

Course Content

Some of the things you will learn include:

- Ancient Greek and Roman mythology
- daily life in Ancient Greece and Rome
- the ancient Olympics
- classical architecture and art
- Pompeii
- famous characters such as Socrates and Julius Caesar.

Who would this subject suit?

This subject will appeal to students interested in History and those who enjoy reading and writing about the ancient world.

Type of Homework / Projects / Assignments

Examining sources to gain an understanding of the classical world, writing their own myths using Ancient Greek motifs, creating projects based on architecture in the ancient world. Writing essays critically analysing Greek myths and poetry.

Other points

Classical studies will be useful to students in helping them solve problems and thinking for themselves when working with others, giving them a broader understanding of Europe and Ireland and expanding their vocabulary and general knowledge. They create posters for homework as well and other visual representations of myths.

Career Note

Classics builds skills and knowledge that are particularly useful for careers in History, Culture and Languages, Government, Media and Publishing and Education.

Progression after the Junior Cycle

After Junior Cycle you may be able to choose Classical Studies as a subject for your Leaving Certificate. After the broad approach at Junior Cycle, you will study topics in greater detail at Leaving Certificate.

Further Information on Classics

[Classics](#)



Geography

This subject teaches students about places, people and what shapes the environment. Geography brings an appreciation of the environment and the impact of daily living on the world around us.

Course Content

- where people live (the human habitat) and why they live there (population and settlement patterns)
- the natural world and what influences and shape it
- the world of human activities and what influences and shapes it
- how to get and use information from different sources such as textbooks, maps, photographs, graphs, diagrams, newspapers, film and the Internet.

Who would this subject suit?

This subject would suit students who are already interested in themes such as global warming, sustainable food production, natural disasters such as earthquakes and tsunamis, the spread of disease, the reasons for migration and the future of energy resources.

Type of Homework/Projects/Assignments

Map-reading, drawing maps, explaining studying photographs, drawing and explaining maps, graphs, diagrams and charts, field-study projects.

Other Points

In your studies of Geography, you will develop your communication skills as you would in English. You will study tables and draw graphs as in Mathematics. Geography, like Science, is concerned with the environment. Geography and CSPE both include themes such as care for the environment and issues concerned with the unequal division of the world's wealth and resources.

Career Note

Geography prepares you for careers in town planning, outdoor pursuits education, weather forecasting, tourism, and transport. Geography is accepted as a Science subject for some colleges and courses.

Progression after the Junior Cycle

In Leaving Certificate Geography, some of the topics will be familiar and will be covered in much greater detail. New topics will also be introduced such as regions of the world. There is also a geographical investigation, involving fieldwork, which is a compulsory part of the examination. Geography is a popular subject at senior cycle.

Further Information on Geography

[Geography](#)



Modern Foreign Languages (French/German/Spanish)

Language learning develops students' general language awareness. It enhances their ability to analyse how language works, to compare languages, and to reflect on how they learn languages. This has a positive effect on their first language skills and on future language learning.

Course Content

Students will learn to read, write, speak and understand the language. Students will also learn about life and culture in France/Germany/Spain and in other French/German/Spanish speaking countries.

Who would this subject suit?

This subject would suit students who have a love of languages and who are willing to work and apply themselves. Students looking to challenge themselves academically are advised to take an additional modern foreign language as language skills are highly valued by future employers.

Type of Homework/Projects/Assignments

Using vocabulary correctly and appropriately with the help of dictionaries. Talking and writing about yourself and your experience of French/German/Spanish. Reading texts. Listening to audio.

Other Points

You will find modern languages useful in your personal life travelling and, in many careers, including tourism, catering, education, business and translation services.

Career Note

Knowledge of a modern foreign language is now highly desirable. Presently, a pass in the Leaving Certificate (Ordinary Level) in a foreign language is necessary for entry to the colleges in the National University of Ireland (NUI) – UCD, UCC, NUI Galway, NUI Maynooth, Pontifical University Maynooth and the Royal College of Surgeons. Though increasingly there are exceptions to this rule, particularly for Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths degrees.

Progression after the Junior Cycle

To do French/German/Spanish at Leaving Certificate Level, the student must do the language at Junior Cycle

Junior Cycle Information in Modern Foreign Languages

[German](#)

[French](#)

[Spanish](#)

Languages.connect.ie



Music

The music course is not entirely about classical music, but covers all types of music, including traditional music, film music, musicals, etc.

Course Content

The course has three main sections:

- Composing Skills – music notes, and scales, time & key, signatures, rhythm and melody writing, backing chords, etc. are studied.
- Performing Skills – Students can play an instrument for this practical exam or they can sing solo or in a group.
- Listening Skills – All styles of music are covered, including orchestral works, film music, musicals, songs, and traditional music.

Students study a selection of set and choice works and songs. Various aspects of these are examined including style, type of work, instruments played, mood, etc.

Who would this subject suit?

It is not necessary for a student to be able to play an instrument to successfully complete the course, but it does require the student to have an aptitude for and interest in music. Being able to sing can be substituted for a musical instrument.

Type of Homework/Projects/Assignments

Harmony exercises and other written exercises can be given.

Career Note

Music at Leaving Certificate Higher Level is essential for some, but not all music degrees. Music would be a useful (but not essential) subject for students thinking of careers in media, multimedia, film, radio and television, dance, and generally in the entertainment, sports and leisure industries.

Progression after the Junior Cycle

To do Music at Leaving Certificate Level, the student is strongly advised to do Music at Junior Cycle.

Further Information on Music

[Music](#)



Visual Art

This subject enables students to learn and explore the creative world of Art, Craft & Design. It involves practical work in a wide range of media leading to a specific outcome, e.g., an artwork, a design, architectural study, an installation or an event. Making art develops the learner's imagination through developing an idea or concept and allows them to exercise personal responsibility for specific tasks.

Course Content

- Drawing - i.e., drawing people, objects, analytical drawing projects
- Painting and Mixed Media Still Life – drawing inanimate (not living) objects
- Graphic Design – posters, advertising, stamps, book covers
- Craftwork – batik, block printing, calligraphy, embroidery, fabric printing, weaving, puppetry, pottery
- 3D work – sculpture, wood carving, construction, modelling

Who would this subject suit?

This subject suits all levels and abilities, especially those with a creative outlook and imagination. Assessment is project based in sketchbooks so time management and organisation skills are important – students must do a lot of artist research and annotation and so motivation to complete projects outside of school time is essential.

Type of Homework / Projects / Assignments

Drawing, painting, design, and craft and research.

Other points

Students must be enthusiastic, interested and be able to apply themselves to projects when necessary. Natural ability alone is not enough. At Junior Cycle, students develop their skills, explore their creative side and maximise their possibilities.

Career Note

Not all colleges require art as an essential subject for entry to art courses; **however**, any student considering a career in art & design, graphics, industrial design, craftwork, etc., would be strongly advised to consider it for Junior Cycle and for Leaving Cert. It is also very useful for primary school teaching and apprenticeships. Please note that it is a strong advantage to have Leaving Cert. Art when trying to get into architecture. (More so than Technical Graphics.)

Progression after the Junior Cycle

To do Art, Craft & Design at Leaving Certificate Level, it is advisable that the student has studied Art at Junior Cycle.

Further Information on Visual Art

Click [Visual Art](#)



Short Courses

Artistic Performance	Coding	Japanese
<p>This short course aims to engage students in artistic practices with others, by offering a structure that can be used to facilitate collaborative and individual imaginative and creative initiatives, leading to a group performance.</p> <p>The 3 Strands in this short course are:</p> <p>Strand 1: Experiencing the Arts - designed to give the students actual experiences of the arts, so that they can begin to talk about and evaluate artistic performances.</p> <p>Strand 2: Planning and preparing - students plan and prepare for the performance that they are going to be involved in.</p> <p>Strand 3: Participation and performance - Within any artistic discipline, there are specific arts literacies (verbal and non-verbal), conventions and skills to be developed: this framework is designed so that students can engage with and participate in arts activities that are of a high quality and lead to the development and improvement of their own artistic skills and then communicate these newly-acquired skills to an audience. While fostering the development of these art-specific skills, a range of transferable skills are also developed that may apply to other collective endeavours.</p>	<p>This short course aims to develop the student’s ability to formulate problems logically; to design, write and test code through the development of programs, apps, games, animations or websites; and, through their chosen learning activities, to learn about ethical issues, computational thinking and computer science.</p> <p>The 3 Strands in this short course are:</p> <p>Strand 1: Introducing computer science - students explore the range of uses computers have in today’s world and learn to understand the hardware and basic software which operates them.</p> <p>Strand 2: This strand deepens the student’s understanding of the computer as a communications tool through the storage and manipulation of data. Students have the opportunity to identify, research, present and receive feedback on a topic or challenge in computer science that inspires them. Students also get to consider the ethical and legal and technical issues around the topic or challenge they have identified.</p> <p>Strand 3: Students are introduced to more complex levels of coding where they can demonstrate their understanding through documentation and discussion of their work, and any potential ethical implications, and through engaging with feedback. Students may also decide to use a programming language of their choice during learning in this strand.</p>	<p>The aim of this course is for students to develop language proficiency in Japanese at level A1.</p> <p>The course also aims to develop language awareness and intercultural awareness in combination with digital literacy skills.</p> <p>The 3 Strands in this short course are:</p> <p>Strand 1: Communicating in Japanese: Students learn to communicate in a simple manner on topics that are familiar to them.</p> <p>Strand 2: Reflecting on Japanese culture and how they relate to it: Students learn to appreciate and respect cultural difference both within the target cultures and their own culture (intercultural awareness).</p> <p>Strand 3: Reflecting on how Japanese works and how they learn: Students learn to reflect on the languages they know, on how Japanese works and what strategies help them in their language learning.</p>
<p>Click Here for further information</p>	<p>Click Here for further information</p>	<p>Click Here for further information</p>