

How to Choose Subjects to Pursue at A-Level

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Your child has just received their O Level results. Do you know how to assist them to move from O Level to A' Level or choose other career options? So far I have noted that some children get straight As in all the subjects they have set for. Others get varying grades on various subjects. The question still remains, how do you proceed with whatever you have?

Let us look at some factual information in relation to the performance of children at O level. The grades that your child gets at O level are a result of true ability in those subjects, their own effort, assistance from teachers and both the learning and home environment. From the grade your child gets at O level you will not be able to tell if the grade is as a result of the true natural ability or it's the impact of the other factors cited above. Most parents pretend to know how to advise their children on what subjects to take at A-Level. The truth is that you will not be able to tell from O level results whether the grades are a result of the child's true ability or not.

You do not need to guess which areas are the areas of strength for your child. There is a science to assist you with that. Your child should capitalize on their areas of strength when choosing subjects for A-Level. I know others say what about what they are interested in doing eventually. It is very important to take note of that. However, interest alone with no natural ability in the areas you want to pursue careerwise will not take you far. Parents have wasted money supporting their children, who choose the wrong subjects at A-Level. The consequence of wrong A level subject choices is that they fail to garner the right number of points to pursue a career of their choice. The majority of students are not informed about what subjects are required to get into certain degree programs. There are degree programs where a specific subject is required at O or A level. You will find that some miss an opportunity to do subjects they will get straight As and get at 15 points because of prestige issues. The consequences when they fail to garner enough points to go into university are dire for both the child and the parents. Parents need to know that the best route available before assisting your child to choose A level subjects is to subject them to Career Guidance Testing or profiling. These are done by registered Psychologists.

Career guidance testing is a process of administering psychological tests to candidates in order to determine their natural aptitude in a variety of areas. Over and above aptitude tests career interests and personality tests are also administered. Insights from these tests will show whether a child has a natural ability for sciences for example and which ones. It will show which career options motivate the child. It will show whether the child's personality is aligned with the career choices they want to make.

Here the tests that are given on the aptitude or cognitive profiling side.

1. **Verbal Reasoning** – This test taps into the logic or what you write and say. There are people who speak very good English but with no logic. Such people fail this test dismally. This test is very important for people whose work involves communicating ideas, understanding and

interpreting written material. People who score at least above 75th percentile in verbal reasoning can choose A level subjects such as English, history, and languages and they will do very well. If they score at 75th percentile in these tests they are likely to do well at A level. The actual career options to pursue are; law, journalism, social studies, arts, media, public relations, advertising, education, and business.

2. **Numerical Reasoning** – the test measures the ability to reason with numbers and to deal with quantitative measures insightfully. People who score above the 75th percentile in this particular test can pursue Maths, Physics, Chemistry, and Accounting. Career options available as they pursue University education are finance, science, banking, architecture, engineering, data scientist and statisticians.
3. **Abstract reasoning** - this test assesses how well one can reason with geometric figures or designs. People who score in the upper quartile in this test should aim to choose physics, chemistry, biology, and art.
4. **Mechanical Reasoning** – tests the ability to understand basic mechanical principles of machinery, tools and motion and laws of everyday physics. People who score high in this test should choose physics, applied maths, and art.
5. **Spatial Reasoning** – it tests the ability to visualize a three-dimensional object from a two-dimensional pattern and to visualize how this object would be like if rotated in space. Those who score high in this test are very likely to have the capacity for art, design, architecture, dentistry and fashion design.
6. **Other supporting tests** – students coming for career guidance testing will also be tested in spelling, language usage, attention to detail, and perceptual speed and accuracy. These supporting tests measure things that are needed in every job but will not stop someone from choosing a particular option should they not do well in these tests.
7. Over and above the tests listed above students will complete an interest inventory plus a personality test. These are meant to match the student's capacity as assessed through cognitive tests to their interests and personality.

It is very unlikely that a student will fail A' Level once their subject combination is chosen through this method. My experience has been that 99% of the students we redirected to the correct subjects through this method perform extremely well at A-Level which allows them to pursue University education or other career options.

I pain me to see the frustration that parents and students go through after the child fails A level. Parents had very high hopes based on O levels results. Without proper guidance, parents will lose money and students will lose time and opportunities. Career guidance testing based on this scientific approach which can then be used to guide the child on subject choices at A level.

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