



THE NEW SCHOOL ROME

# A LEVEL

INFORMATION PACK

The A Level (Advanced Level) pathway is a **rigorous, selective and internationally recognised upper secondary education system for students aged 16–18**. Developed in the United Kingdom over 75 years ago, A Level curricula and examinations have continued to adapt to the demands of modern societies and a global economy. They are widely regarded as the **gold standard** of pre-university education, offering academic depth, subject specialisation and strong preparation for higher education worldwide.

At The New School Rome, A Levels represent more than a curriculum: they form a carefully structured educational journey designed to support students in developing intellectual independence, advanced study skills and a clear sense of purpose for their future. Within a supportive and international learning environment, students are encouraged to think critically, work autonomously and take increasing responsibility for their academic choices.

**The New School Rome is the only school in Rome authorised to enter students for the Italian Language and Culture examination (Esame di Lingua e Cultura Italiana).**

When combined with additional A Level qualifications, this examination is **officially recognised by the Italian Ministry of Education** as equivalent to the **Italian Maturità**.

Successful completion of this pathway enables students to apply for Italian public universities as an alternative to the Italian upper secondary school diploma, while maintaining full access to international higher education opportunities.



# What are A Levels?

A Levels are subject-based British academic qualifications, usually taken over the final two years of secondary school (Year 12 and Year 13). Each A Level is a standalone qualification in a single subject and is assessed independently.

Unlike broader, generalist education systems, A Levels allow students to:

- **Focus on a small number of subjects (typically 3 or 4).**
- **Study these subjects in significant depth.**
- **Develop analytical, research and academic writing skills comparable to first-year university level.**

## **Structure of the two-year programme:**

- **Year 12:** Advanced introduction to each subject. In many subjects, students sit AS Level examinations, representing the first half of the full A Level.
- **Year 13:** Further development and consolidation of knowledge and skills, leading to final A Level examinations.

Some subjects (such as Art, Politics and Italian) follow a linear two-year course, with assessment taking place only at the end of Year 13.

Final grades are awarded individually for each subject and range from: A\* (highest distinction); A, B, C, D; E (minimum pass grade).

# Why choose A Levels?

Choosing A Levels means committing to an academically demanding but highly rewarding educational pathway that prepares students exceptionally well for university study and beyond.

## **Key advantages of the A Level system:**

- **Informed specialisation:** students focus on subjects they enjoy and excel in, leading to greater motivation, engagement and academic success.
- **Depth of learning:** subjects are explored in depth, encouraging critical thinking, evaluation and application of knowledge rather than surface learning.
- **University-style learning:** A Levels develop essential academic skills, including:
  - structured and analytical writing
  - interpretation of texts, data and sources
  - independent research
  - time management and self-organisation
- **International recognition:** A Levels are recognised and valued by leading universities in the UK, Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and many other countries.
- **Competitive advantage:** Universities often view A Level students as particularly well prepared, especially for competitive courses such as Medicine, Engineering, Economics and International Relations.

A Levels are officially recognised by the Italian Ministry of Education.

- A minimum of three passed A Levels is required.
- Grades are converted into the Italian 100-point scale.

## Assessment and grade conversion

A Level grades range from A\* to E. Italian universities convert results into a score out of 100.

Indicative conversions include:

- A\*A\*A\* = 100/100.
- AAA ≈ 92/100.
- EEE = 60/100 (minimum pass).



The A Level programme requires consistent commitment, maturity and strong organisational skills. It is designed for students who are ready to take increasing responsibility for their own learning.

**Weekly workload**, for each A Level subject, students should expect:

- Approximately 5 hours of structured lessons with subject specialists.
- Approximately 5 hours per week of independent study, including: reading and wider research practice and consolidation tasks, and preparation for assessments and examinations.

### **Independent learning**

- Students are encouraged to:
  - Plan and manage their study time effectively.
  - Meet deadlines independently.
  - Prepare for assessments without constant supervision.
- The school supports this approach through:
  - Dedicated study periods.
  - Designated Sixth Form study spaces.
  - Direct access to subject teachers for academic support.

This model closely mirrors university learning and supports a smooth transition into higher education.



University guidance begins in Year 12 and continues throughout the Sixth Form (Year 13). Students receive structured and personalised support, including:

- Individual guidance on course and university selection.
- Use of the Unifrog platform for research and planning.
- Full support with UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) applications.
- Guidance on Personal Statements and interview preparation.

Students may apply to up to five universities in the UK, as well as to universities in Italy, Europe and worldwide.

The New School Rome offers a broad and carefully curated selection of A Level subjects, including:

- English Literature.
- Italian.
- Mathematics.
- Physics.
- Biology.
- Chemistry.
- History.
- Geography.
- Politics.
- Economics.
- French.
- Spanish.
- Art.

Each course is designed to provide both strong subject knowledge and transferable academic skills that support future university study.

The following pages provide an overview of the AS and A Level courses available at The New School Rome.

Each subject offers academic depth, intellectual challenge and strong preparation for university study.

# English Literature

Our English Literature course follows the Edexcel International A Level English Literature syllabus and introduces students to a broad range of prose, poetry, and drama from different historical periods and cultural contexts.

Students explore how writers use language, form, and structure to create meaning and reflect social and historical influences.

The course develops skills in close reading, textual analysis, and critical interpretation, encouraging independent thinking and wider reading.

Students also strengthen their written and oral communication skills, learning to construct clear, well-supported arguments.

A Level English Literature provides excellent preparation for university study and careers in areas such as journalism, publishing, law, education, marketing, public relations, arts administration, and the dramatic arts.

The AS and A Level Italian course develops advanced language proficiency and deep cultural understanding through the Italian current affairs, twentieth-century history and a broad range of literary texts.

Students refine their written skills across four forms of short essays: literary analysis, argumentative writing, current affairs and creative writing. Assessment rewards accuracy, analytical depth and effective communication.

Students following this course may choose to sit the Italian Language and Culture examination (Lingua e Cultura Italiana), which consists of a written paper and an oral examination conducted in the presence of an examiner from the Italian Ministry of Education. This qualification is officially recognised by the Italian State.

This is a demanding course requiring strong writing and analytical skills in Italian. It is recommended only for students with a solid command of written Italian and a genuine interest in the subject.

# Mathematics

The Mathematics course develops logical reasoning, problem-solving ability and mathematical fluency, while encouraging confidence, independence and enjoyment of the subject. Students explore how mathematical ideas connect across different areas of study and how mathematics can be applied to real-world situations.

At AS Level, students study algebra and functions, coordinate geometry, sequences and series, trigonometry, exponentials and logarithms, calculus and mechanics.

At A Level, these topics are extended further alongside advanced mechanics, vectors and numerical methods.

A Level Mathematics is highly valued by universities and employers and supports progression to a wide range of degree courses, including Mathematics, Engineering, Physics, Economics, Computer Science, Medicine, Finance and the Social Sciences. Further Mathematics is strongly recommended for students aiming to apply to highly competitive universities, particularly for courses such as Engineering, Economics, Mathematics or Physics.

Physics at A Level offers a stimulating and challenging course that combines theoretical understanding with practical investigation and independent study.

Students develop strong analytical and mathematical skills, applying core physical principles to problem solving and experimental work.

At AS Level, topics include motion and mechanics, materials, waves, electricity, and the nature of light, providing a solid foundation in classical physics.

At A Level, students progress to further mechanics, particle physics, nuclear physics, and cosmology, gaining a deeper understanding of the laws governing the universe.

A Level Physics develops highly transferable skills and opens pathways to a wide range of careers, including engineering, computing, medicine, finance, energy, and research-based fields.

The Biology course aims to inspire curiosity and enthusiasm for the living world, while developing a deep understanding of biological concepts and processes. Students explore how biological knowledge is applied in society and how scientific developments influence ethical decision-making, economic progress and global challenges.

A strong emphasis is placed on understanding “How Science Works”, encouraging students to develop analytical thinking, research skills and scientific literacy alongside essential practical skills.

At AS Level, topics include cell biochemistry, DNA and inheritance, mutations, social and ethical issues in biology, plant structure and function, biodiversity and taxonomy.

At A Level, students extend their knowledge to areas such as photosynthesis, global warming, evolution and natural selection, immunology, respiration, homeostasis, the nervous and hormonal systems, DNA profiling and the Human Genome Project.

Biology is an excellent foundation for further study and career pathways in medicine, life sciences, biomedical research, environmental science and related scientific fields.

The A Level Chemistry course provides a rigorous and in-depth study of chemical principles while developing the practical and analytical skills essential for success in higher education.

At AS Level, students study the core principles of chemistry including atomic structure, bonding and moles, molecular shape, intermolecular forces, organic and green chemistry, alongside practical laboratory skills.

At A Level, the course progresses to advanced topics such as reaction rates, chemical equilibria, transition metals, organic nitrogen chemistry and further practical investigation.

Chemistry A Level is a highly regarded qualification and provides an essential foundation for university courses and careers in Chemical Engineering, Medicine, Pharmacy and a wide range of scientific and technical disciplines.

The History course encourages students to develop a strong interest in the past while acquiring a sophisticated understanding of historical processes, identities and diversity. Students learn to ask meaningful questions, analyse evidence critically and recognise that historical judgements are often provisional and open to interpretation.

Through the study of diverse and challenging topics, students develop highly transferable skills, including research, analysis, evaluation, empathy and effective communication. These skills are highly valued by universities and employers alike.

At AS Level, students sit two examinations: one essay-based paper and one document-based paper. Topics include the emergence of world powers, international relations in the interwar period and East Asian history.

At A Level, students complete two further examinations focusing on European history between the wars and the Holocaust.

History A Level provides excellent preparation for degree courses in Law, Politics, International Relations, Journalism, Media Studies, Psychology, Philosophy, Sociology and related subjects.

Politics is the study of power and decision-making. Students explore how political systems operate in the United Kingdom and the United States, examining the role of institutions, democratic processes and political ideologies.

The course develops skills of analysis, evaluation and effective communication through the study of competing political theories and contemporary issues. Students are encouraged to personalise their learning, particularly through in-depth ideological study.

No prior knowledge of politics is required, though an interest in current affairs and a curiosity about how governments make decisions will support success in the subject.

Politics A Level provides excellent preparation for degrees in Political Science, PPE, Law, International Relations, Economics, Journalism, History and Philosophy.

Economics allows students to develop an interest and understanding of daily economic realities in their surroundings. It provides students with the tools to better understand the ever-changing nature of a globalised world in which decision making and critical thinking become fundamental to thrive.

Economics is the backbone of a series of career options, ranging from studying Economics itself to areas like Business and management, Finance and other similar fields of study.

The subject promotes a series of skills, being the following a selected sample:

- Development of quantitative skills.
- Critical thinking.
- Problem solving.
- Interpretation.
- Decision making.

The areas and exams for the subject are organised in the following manner:

- AS/Y12:
  - Unit 1: Markets in Action.
  - Unit 2: Macroeconomic performance and policy.
- A2/Y13:
  - Unit 3: Business behaviour.
  - Unit 4: Developments in the global economy.

## **French**

The AS and A Level French course develops advanced language skills through engaging, student-focused assessment and culturally rich content. Students deepen their understanding of French-speaking societies while developing confidence and accuracy in written and spoken communication.

The course provides a strong foundation for further study in French, Modern Languages and related disciplines, and supports future careers in European studies, international relations, diplomacy, business and communication.

## **Spanish**

The AS and A Level Spanish course develops advanced language skills through engaging content and culturally rich study. Students gain a deeper understanding of Spanish-speaking societies while building confidence as effective and informed communicators.

The course provides strong preparation for university study in Spanish, Modern Languages and related disciplines, including Latin American Studies, European Studies and International Relations.

Art and Design at A Level encourages students to develop creative thinking, imagination and intellectual independence. The course supports the development of investigative, analytical and practical skills, alongside aesthetic awareness and critical judgement, enabling students to refine personal ideas and produce original outcomes.

Students work with a broad range of media and techniques, gaining insight into the relationships between art, craft and design, as well as the cultural and historical contexts that shape creative practice.

The course follows the Edexcel A Level Art and Design specification and is assessed through two units:

- Unit 1 (60%) consists of coursework completed over the two-year programme, including a 1,000-word written investigation.
- Unit 2 (40%) is an externally set examination, combining preparatory work with a 15-hour practical examination completed over three days.

A Level Art and Design provides a strong foundation for progression to university degree courses or a BTEC Foundation Diploma, leading to pathways in Architecture, Graphic Design, Fashion, Fine Art and related creative disciplines.

# The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) is an optional additional qualification, equivalent to an AS Level, and is highly valued by universities.

## **What is the EPQ?**

The EPQ is an independent research or production project that allows students to explore a topic of personal, academic or creative interest in depth.

Projects may take a variety of forms, including:

- A research essay.
- A practical artefact.
- A creative outcome.
- An interdisciplinary investigation.

## **Why universities value the EPQ**

The EPQ demonstrates:

- Academic independence.
- Advanced research skills.
- Critical evaluation and reflection.
- Long-term project planning and execution.

# The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

Many universities explicitly recognise the EPQ during the admissions process and may reduce entry requirements for strong EPQ candidates.

## **Assessment**

The EPQ includes:

- A written report (1,000–5,000 words).
- An oral presentation.
- Assessment based on planning, research, implementation and critical reflection.

## **How is it assessed?**

- 20% of the marks are awarded for how well you manage the project – so you need to be organised.
- 20% are for your research skills and use of resources – these can be ICT based or / and involve talking to real people.
- 40% is given for how well you realise your plan and overcome the problems encountered.
- 20% is for your ability to review your progress and evaluate your own performance.

# Key Points at a Glance

- A Levels are a rigorous academic pathway that provides solid preparation for university studies starting in Year 12.
- Students usually study four subjects in Year 12 and continue with three A Levels (required by universities) in Year 13.
- Applications to UK universities are made through UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service).
- The Personal Statement supports the application, but academic results remain the main factor.
- Unifrog helps students connect subject choices with university courses and future careers.
- Guidance and support are provided throughout the Sixth Form years.

If you want to know more on how to choose your subjects and university, download our "Student Guidance" on our website.



## See our community in action.

**Contact us** here to register for an **Open Day** or to arrange a **personalized tour**.

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