

Link to GCSE

I have not studied GCSE Business Studies; is that a problem?
NO; we will support you all the way.
Many students had not studied GCSE and get great results.

Maths

I have heard the maths in Business A-Level is difficult.
The course is about 15% maths and often comprises of 're-arrangement' of formula; a GCSE Grade 5 skill.
You can come onto the course with GCSE grade 4 maths but then you must take Core Maths as an option so your maths skills develop over the two year course.

Coursework

There is no coursework, just 3 exams at the end of Year 13.

Results

I heard the Business Studies results were good in 2023.
Yes; the results were the third highest in the school and no-one failed.

Subject content

YEAR 12

- 3.1 What is business?
- 3.2 Managers, leadership and decision making
- 3.3 Marketing management
- 3.4 Operational management
- 3.5 Financial management
- 3.6 Human resource management

YEAR 13

- 3.7 Analysing the strategic position of a business
- 3.8 Choosing strategic direction
- 3.9 Strategic methods: how to pursue strategies
- 3.10 Managing strategic change

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Entrance requirements

If you have done GCSE Business Studies then you can join us with a grade 4, but if your maths grade was a grade 4, you must do Core Maths at A-Level.

If you HAVE NOT taken GCSE Business Studies, you can join us with a grade 4 English plus grade 5 maths OR a grade 4 maths but then you must do Core Maths at A-Level. Developing your maths skills is very important.

Writing

I guess there is a lot of writing? Like most A-Levels questions will be challenging and there is extended writing. There is no more or less writing than many other subjects; it is comparable with a Humanities subject.



Realising potential

Business Studies A-Level at Highdown

Progression

Where does this A-Level take me; here are the most popular University courses; Business studies is NUMBER TWO

1. Law
2. Business studies
3. Psychology
4. Computer science
5. Medicine
6. Design studies
7. Sociology
8. Economics

You can take this A-Level qualification in many directions – it is very flexible because it gives you a flavour or many areas of the business world.

Exams

Paper 1: Business 1	Paper 2: Business 2	Paper 3: Business 3
What's assessed All content above	What's assessed All content above	What's assessed All content above
Assessed <ul style="list-style-type: none">written exam: 2 hours100 marks in total33.3% of A-level	Assessed <ul style="list-style-type: none">written exam: 2 hours100 marks in total33.3% of A-level	Assessed <ul style="list-style-type: none">written exam: 2 hours100 marks in total33.3% of A-level
Questions Three compulsory sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Section A has 15 multiple choice questions (MCQs) worth 15 marks.Section B has short answer questions worth 35 marks.Sections C and D have two essay questions (choice of one from two and one from two) worth 25 marks each.	Questions Three data response compulsory questions worth approximately 33 marks each and made up of three or four part questions.	Questions One compulsory case study followed by approximately six questions.

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Your teachers

All of them are AQA examiners!
All are very experienced.
Several worked in industry before education.

Marking and Feedback

You will start answering A-Levels question from the start; practice is needed to develop the answering technique.
There is very regular feedback – verbal; written

How do I prepare for the course?

There are lots of tips over the page. And here <https://www.highdown.reading.sch.uk/pre-course-tasks> - look for the Business section

Final thoughts

Like all A-Levels, Business Studies is a demanding course. We will help you but it is you who must put the effort in, to get the success at the end; we cannot do that for you.

Start developing your research skills

Your exam questions often require you to demonstrate your business knowledge through ACTUAL businesses you know; maybe you work for a business. Maybe you have an interest in a sector; eg Tourism, or Clothes, or Automotive. YOU NEED TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH.

Try these 2023 A-Level questions

Is it inevitable that large, growing businesses will eventually experience rising unit costs? Justify your view. **[25 marks]**

A business decides to make increasing profits its main objective. Is it inevitable that this business will need to improve its quality to achieve this objective? Justify your view. **[25 marks]**

Emerging economies are beneficial to UK businesses, but only as potential markets to help UK businesses to achieve growth.' Do you agree? Justify your view. **[25 marks]**

Research these Business Models

Tannenbaum Schmidt continuum.
Stakeholder mapping
Boston Matrix
SWOT / PESTLE
Elkington's Triple Bottom Line
Carroll's Corporate Social Responsibility pyramid.
Porter's five forces
Porter's generic strategies
Ansoff matrix
Kotter and Schlesinger's - change

Research these simple terms

REVENUE; define and formula	INFLATION
PROFIT; define and formula	INTEREST RATES
CONTRIBUTION PER UNIT; formula	LABOUR TURNOVER; define and formula
BREAK EVEN POINT; define and formula	Return On Capital Employed (ROCE); define and formula – <i>you need it for below!</i>
Unlimited liability	
Opportunity cost	GEARING; define and formula
Extension strategy	WORKING CAPITAL; define and formula
Exchange rate	RECEIVABLE DAYS; formula

Business QUIZ

What did Nokia manufacture when it started trading?
Which company is 'as seen on screen'
What is fast fashion?
What is Kaizen?
Elon Musk wanted to sell Tesla; to who?
Netflix offered itself for sale; to who?

When things go oh-so badly wrong!



Hovis 122 years in 122 seconds; amazing!



Try your maths

Values for Business A

Current assets	£550,000
Current liabilities	£270,000
Non-current liabilities	£4m
Operating profit	£3m
Gearing	22%
Change in share price over the year of this business	-15%
Change in the share price of the top 100 UK companies over the year	+8%

Using the data above calculate the ROCE for the business above. **[4 marks]**

Research these resources

www.bbc.co.uk/news
<https://www.tutor2u.net/business>
<https://www.hoddereducation.com/alevelbusiness/aqa> [this book we can get on an app for you]

Answers: tyres/toilet paper. ASOS. Throw away fashion. Continuous improvement. Apple. Blockbusters

Business Studies A-Level at Highdown – Getting Ready to join the course

How do I prepare for the course?

The school has a section on the web site at <https://www.highdown.reading.sch.uk/pre-course-tasks> - check out the Business Studies section



Business is constantly changing

Over the summer research some businesses you know and start to make some notes;

Download the **BBC NEWS app; SKY news app; 'X' app** and keep an eye on the changing world of business.

Are they successful and if so why? If not- why?
Are they making the headlines in the news and if so why?

Sharpen your maths!

The Business A-Level maths is often about re-arranging the formula that you learn. You need to know the formula but then might need to re-arrange it. Watch this video and practice; the book helps too

<https://youtu.be/itlD0BtmRUI>

<https://www.tutor2u.net/show/resources/calculation-practice-book-for-aqa-a-level-business-for-exams-from-2025>



Building context for your written answers

To develop a great written answer to questions such as;

A business decides to make increasing profits its main objective. Is it inevitable that this business will need to improve its quality to achieve this objective? Justify your view. [25 marks]

You need to develop an answer that uses your business knowledge within a business context. In this case you could use Aldi and BMW.

Aldi IS successful and IS expanding but it IS NOT going to improve its quality – they know who they are and what they stand for. HOWEVER Samsung's flip phones were a disaster upon launch; to get profitability they DO need to improve quality. So.....is it inevitable – not it is not – it depends on the business.

If you do not have context your answer will be a copy from a textbook and you will not get great marks. RESEARCH, RESEARCH, RESEARCH.

A part time job you have, may offer great context to use in your answers

Maybe you work for Costa or M&S or Waitrose or IKEA – that is a great starting point! These businesses offer great context for your Business A-Level answers – What is their customer service like? How about their managers – do they 'tell' or 'consult'? Is the stock always there – if not why not

Business to research could include

• Volkswagen	• British Airways PLC	• John Lewis & Waitrose
• ASOS	• Apple	• Lloyds; or a 'Big 5 bank'
• BP PLC	• Marks & Spencer	• Tesla
• 'X' formally known as Twitter	• Ikea	• Costa Coffee

Books to buy – but SECOND-HAND from Amazon Market place

BOOK TITLE	Author	IBSN
Building strong brands	Aaker, David	978-1849830409
Screw it, Let's Do It; Lessons in Life	Brandson, Richard	978-0753510995
The lean book of lean- a concise guide to Lean Management for Life & Business	Early, John	978-1119096191
The Everything Store; Jeff Bezos and the Age of Amazon	Stone, Brad	978-0552167833

Apps to download – check out businesses!



The skill of writing styles for a great answer!

The style of writing at A-Level is a development from that at GCSE Business; but if you did not take Business GCSE don't worry! The main requirements are as follows;

- 1) Knowledge (know your definitions)
- 2) Application (this is a big one for context of the case studies and extracts)
- 3) Analysis (show logical thinking and arguments. Consider why you raised the point)
- 4) Evaluation (bringing it all together, forming a judgement and answering the question)

Tutor2u: Tutor2u recommend a style of writing called *PeCAN PiE*, you can watch a video on this here:

<https://www.tutor2u.net/business/reference/effective-paragraph-technique-pecan-pie>

Your summer project

1. Complete the key terms list on the previous pages.
2. Choose 3 businesses from the list provided
3. Create a fact file on each of the companies. The fact file should not be longer than two pages of A4 or 10 slides. You can do a mix of both.
 - a. Who they are and what they do
 - b. Key financial Information on them
 - c. Their ownership type
 - d. Recent news articles on the company over the past 12 - 18 months
 - e. Their plans for the future
 - f. Their two major competitors and why are the competitors?
4. Download the three recommended apps. If you don't have a 'X' / twitter account, then get one! On 'X' / twitter you can follow the recommended news companies.
5. Choose at least one of the reading books to buy a second-hand copy or download from Amazon. Write a short summary of the book, maybe 5 things you have learnt about business.
6. Download the AQA specifications. This can be found here:



Look through the AQA specification, it can be a real help in understanding your forthcoming course.

7. Consider getting a part time job.
8. Enjoy and most of all embrace Business Studies as a diverse topic that isn't always about making the most revenue and profit; it is far broader than that. And business change day to day – its dynamic.

Contact for advice & Guidance

If you need any more advice and guidance; just e-mail
mahodges@highdown.reading.sch.uk