

# England National Curriculum

*A reference guide for home educators*

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The National Curriculum for England applies to schools — not to home-educated children. Under the Education Act 1996, parents need only provide an education that is efficient and suitable. The law leaves both terms deliberately undefined. This document summarises what schools are required to teach, condensed into broad learning strands. You are under no legal obligation to follow it. Use it as a map, not a rulebook.

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KEY STAGES 1–3 · AGES 5–14 · YEARS 1–9

## What schools teach before GCSE

Several hundred individual objectives condensed into their essential themes. Schools cover these in sequence; home educators can approach them in any order.

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### ENGLISH

- Phonics, decoding, and reading fluency
- Reading comprehension — fiction, non-fiction, and poetry
- Vocabulary development and inference
- Handwriting and transcription
- Spelling, grammar, and punctuation
- Composition — narrative and creative writing
- Composition — non-fiction (argument, explanation, report)
- Speaking, listening, and discussion
- Drama and performance

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### MATHS

- Number sense and place value
- The four operations (whole numbers, decimals, fractions)
- Fractions, decimals, and percentages
- Ratio and proportion
- Algebra — patterns, equations, and formulae
- Geometry — properties of shape
- Geometry — position, direction, and transformation
- Measurement (length, area, volume, time, money)
- Statistics — data handling and interpretation

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### SCIENCE

- Working scientifically — enquiry, method, and evidence
- Biology — plants, animals, humans, and ecosystems
- Biology — cells, reproduction, and genetics (KS3)
- Chemistry — materials, states of matter, and properties
- Chemistry — reactions and the periodic table (KS3)
- Physics — forces and motion
- Physics — energy, waves, light, and sound
- Physics — electricity and magnetism
- Earth and space

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### HISTORY

- Chronology and historical frameworks
- Ancient civilisations — Egypt, Greece, Rome
- British history — medieval through early modern
- British history — empire, industry, and the 20th century
- World history beyond Europe
- Historical concepts — causation, change, and significance
- Evidence, sources, and interpretation

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### GEOGRAPHY

- Locational knowledge — UK, Europe, and the world
- Physical geography — landforms, climate, and biomes
- Human geography — settlement, economy, and population
- Map skills, GIS, and spatial reasoning
- Environmental geography and sustainability
- Geographical enquiry and fieldwork

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### MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

- Phonics and pronunciation in the target language
- Listening and spoken comprehension
- Speaking and conversation
- Reading and writing — grammar, vocabulary, composition
- Cultural knowledge of target-language countries

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#### COMPUTING

- Computational thinking and algorithms
- Programming and coding
- Data representation and databases
- Networks, the internet, and how computers work
- Digital literacy, online safety, and ethics

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#### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- Core beliefs and practices of major world religions
- Religious narrative, symbolism, and text
- Ethics, philosophy, and worldview comparison
- Religion in society and history

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GCSE · AGES 14–16 · YEARS 10–11

## What schools teach at examination level

Students typically take 8–10 GCSE subjects. Home-educated young people are not required to sit formal examinations, and many demonstrate learning in other ways.

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#### ENGLISH LANGUAGE

- Reading — analysis of language, structure, and effect
- Reading — comparing texts and evaluating viewpoint
- Writing — descriptive and narrative
- Writing — argument, persuasion, and rhetoric
- Technical accuracy at sentence and text level
- Spoken language assessment

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#### ENGLISH LITERATURE

- Shakespeare — language, theme, and dramatic effect
- 19th-century prose — context and close reading
- Modern texts (drama or prose) — theme and character
- Poetry — named collections and unseen comparison
- Literary analysis — form, structure, and language

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#### MATHS

- Number — calculation, estimation, and standard form
- Algebra — expressions, equations, sequences, and graphs
- Ratio, proportion, and rates of change
- Geometry — properties, proof, construction, and vectors
- Probability
- Statistics — data analysis and representation
- Higher tier: advanced trigonometry, complex algebra, calculus

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#### SCIENCE (COMBINED / TRIPLE)

- Biology — cell biology, genetics, and evolution
- Biology — body systems, health, and ecosystems
- Chemistry — atomic structure, bonding, and reactions
- Chemistry — quantitative and organic chemistry
- Physics — forces, energy, and waves
- Physics — electricity, magnetism, and space
- Working scientifically across all three disciplines

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#### HISTORY

- Thematic study across a long historical period
- British depth study
- Period study — typically 20th-century international history
- Historic environment and source analysis
- Extended historical writing and argument

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#### GEOGRAPHY

- Physical environments — coasts, rivers, tectonics, weather
- Human environments — urban and economic development
- Global challenges — climate and resource management
- UK geographical context
- Fieldwork and geographical skills

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#### MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

- Listening and reading comprehension
- Speaking — transactional and discursive
- Writing — structured and extended response
- Grammar — accurate use across tenses and forms
- Cultural and thematic content — identity, travel, society

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#### COMPUTER SCIENCE

- Systems architecture and hardware
- Memory, storage, and data representation
- Networks and cybersecurity
- Programming — design, coding, and debugging
- Algorithms and computational thinking
- Ethical, legal, and cultural impacts of technology