

A LEVEL PHYSICS FAQs

Q: What's Physics about?

Physics is about trying to make sense of all the things that happen... objects fall, hot things cool down, stars shine, electrons move in weird ways. Obviously it's a big old crazy Universe we're in so there's a lot to study, but as you'll see it usually comes down to some simple rules about energy or forces. The heart of physics is learning about these and how we apply them to explain so much.

Q: What are the lessons like?

For two out of three lessons each week we'll introduce some new ideas, spend time discussing and clarifying them, get you to work out things about them (often using calculators), see how they help explain stuff or can be used in technology. For the third lesson we'll focus on some practical work to go with the ideas we've learned and build up investigative skills.

Q: How big are the classes?

Usually between 18 and 22 students in each class.... Most of you will not know each other at the start but we spend plenty of time getting to know each other and working together in different ways, hopefully many will become friends not just classmates.

Q: Do I need to do Maths A-level as well?

No, but most of our physics students do study maths A-level as well and there is a lot of the use of maths in the course. What we always suggest is that you only pick physics if it is a good combination with other subjects... so for example, physics and music or physics and computing are good combinations with or without maths. A-level electronics can go well with physics or you could try it as a less mathematical alternative with a large design-and-build element, which would still be a good scientific A-level qualification.

Q: What do people do at university if they have studied Physics?

A huge range of subjects. Obviously physics or astrophysics degrees, but also a large proportion are aiming for engineering (of many types). Other popular ones recently have been computing courses, maths courses, finance/management, geophysics, environmental sciences and medicine. The main thing to emphasise is that the skills you learn in A-level physics – applying numbers to real situations, considering what the answers

mean – are very valuable in most courses (and careers)... having A-level physics makes your application stand out.

Q: Where can I find out more?

Try the “Springboard” information available on our website, which gives a range of links and further ideas including films to watch, books to read. Also we hope you would try physics during our induction days at Bilborough. Sitting under apple trees may be dangerous, but may also cause you to think like Isaac Newton... this is optional.

Q: Are there any extra costs associated with the A-level Physics course?

No, there are no extra materials or equipment that you are expected to buy for this course.