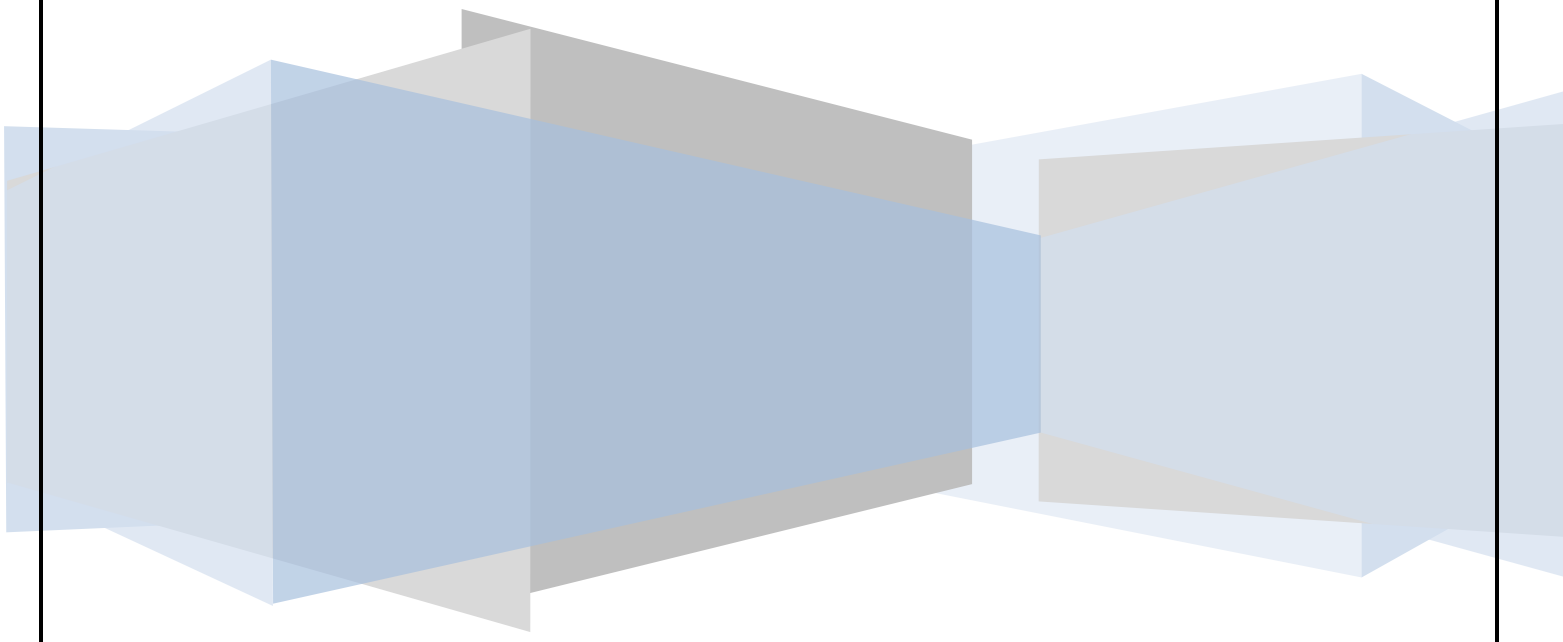
Taverham Sixth Form
One vision. Our passion. Your future.

Economics

Introducing A-Level Economics

Preparation for September



Economics A-Level Course Outline

Examination Board: AQA Economics 7136

Introduction and Structure

Economics looks at the fundamental forces which affect our lives, such as employment, prices, international trade and poverty. Economists are often in healthy debate with each other over these issues. It is this controversy which makes economics lively and interesting. The more you can place economic theory in real world scenarios, the better you will be able to evaluate ideas and give yourself the chance of attaining top grades. You will also personally get more out of the course if you have a good understanding of the economic climate in the UK, across Europe and in a global context.

Subject content

Over the two years you will learn the following topics:

Individuals, firms, markets and market failure

1. Economic methodology and the economic problem
2. Individual economic decision making
3. Price determination in a competitive market
4. Production, costs and revenue
5. Perfect competition, imperfectly competitive markets and monopoly
6. The labour market
7. The distribution of income and wealth: poverty and inequality
8. The market mechanism, market failure and government intervention in markets

The national and international economy

9. The measurement of macroeconomic performance
10. How the macro economy works: the circular flow of income, AD/AS analysis, and related concepts
11. Economic performance
12. Financial markets and monetary policy
13. Fiscal policy and supply-side policies
14. The international economy

Assessment

Paper 1: Markets and market failure	+	Paper 2: National and international economy	+	Paper 3: Economic principles and issues
What's assessed Content 1 – 8 above		**What's assessed** All content 9 – 14 above		**What's assessed** All content 1 – 14 above
Assessed • written exam: 2 hours • 80 marks • 33.3% of A-level		**Assessed** • written exam: 2 hours • 80 marks • 33.3% of A-level		**Assessed** • written exam: 2 hours • 80 marks in total • 33.3% of A-level
Questions • Section A: data response questions requiring written answers, choice of one from two contexts worth 40 marks • Section B: essay questions requiring written answers, choice of one from three worth 40 marks		**Questions** • Section A: data response questions requiring written answers, choice of one from two contexts worth 40 marks • Section B: essay questions requiring written answers, choice of one from three worth 40 marks		**Questions** • Section A: multiple choice questions worth 30 marks • Section B: case study questions requiring written answers, worth 50 marks

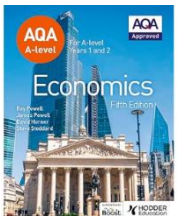
Entry requirements

Six GCSEs at Grade 4 or above including at least Grade 4 for English Language and Grade 5 in Mathematics, English Language or English Literature.

Careers

Having studied economics possible career options include accountancy, stockbroker, banker and online financial and business-related careers. However, most require a higher level of education. A-level economics can lead to degrees in economics, business studies, social sciences and engineering.

Reading List and Useful Resources



AQA recommended textbooks

- AQA A Level Economics Fifth Edition by James Powell, Ray Powell, David Horner and Steve Stoddard

Easy to read books

- Freakonomics – Steven Levitt
  - the economics of drug dealing, sumo wrestling and estate agents, amongst other thing.
- Made in Britain – Evan Davis
  - an up to date analysis of the British economy – a look at the UK's strengths and weaknesses
- The Undercover Economist – Tim Harford
  - introduces some basic economic concepts into real life scenarios

Semi-academic books

- Globalisation and its Discontents – Joseph Stiglitz
  - this book provides a look at some of the downsides of globalisation
- The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone – Richard Wilkinson & Kate Pickett
  - outlines the consequences of inequality in society and what should be done to develop a fairer, more equal society

Films/documentaries

- A Beautiful Mind (2002)
  - starring Russell Crowe: a drama based loosely on the life of John Nash the Nobel prize winning mathematician and economist
- The Corporation (2005)
- The Big Short (2015)
  - starring Brad Pitt, Christian Bale, Ryal Gosling, Steve Carell, it dramaties the financial crash in 2008
- Enron - The Smartest Guys in the Room (2006)
  - great documentaries that expose the darker side of corporate power, greed and fraudulent behaviour

Keeping up with current affairs

- read a ***quality broadsheet newspaper*** on a regular basis
- look out for ***economics related documentaries*** (Evan Davis and Robert Peston often present topical economics documentaries)
- listen to economics related radio programmes (e.g. ***More or Less***, presented by Tim Harford – weekly on BBC Radio 4, podcasts also available)
- read various economics and current affairs magazines (e.g. The Economist, Economic Review, The Week)

Please be aware that if you are eligible for a post 16 bursary then the cost of relevant books and resources may be covered depending on family circumstances – please ask in the sixth form office for further details.

Preparation for September

Please complete all work on lined paper (or word process) making sure your name is marked clearly at the top of each sheet. Please bring with you to your first lesson in September.

Section 1: Percentages

Percentages are very useful to economists, and you **must** know how to use them. We can always describe trends using raw data…

1983 GDP in the UK was £304.5bn
1990 GDP in the UK was £555.1bn
1993 GDP in the UK was £630.0bn

…**but!** …it is more appropriate (i.e. clearer) if we use percentages…

From 1983 to 1990 GDP rose by 82%, but between 1990 and 1993 it rose by only 13%

Essentially we have calculated percentage changes and as a result our description of the trend is much clearer, as will be our subsequent analysis of the situation.

1. You can work out some percentage changes easily, without a calculator. Do the following:
   a. £1 to £2
   b. £10 to £5
   c. £100 to £75
   d. £75 to £100
   e. £50 to £75

   To work out any percentage change, always use the same formula:

$\frac{\text{New Value – Old Value}}{\text{Old Value}}$	X 100	**or**	$\frac{\text{Change in Value}}{\text{Old Value}}$	X 100

2. Work out the following percentage changes in GDP from 1993 to 2003:
   a. 1993 GDP at current prices was £304.5bn, 2003 GDP at current prices was £630.0bn
   b. 1993 real GDP was £440.9bn, 2003 real GDP was £548.6bn
3. Why is there a discrepancy between these two sets of figures?

This activity will be used to see your numeracy skills in an economics context.

Section 2: Economics Book/Film Review

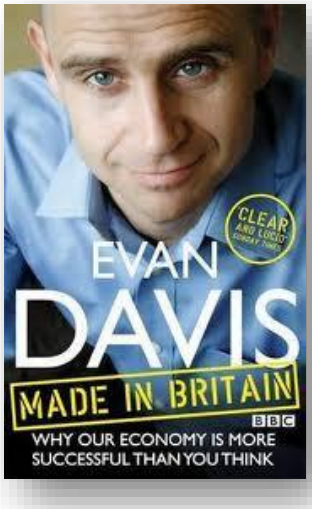
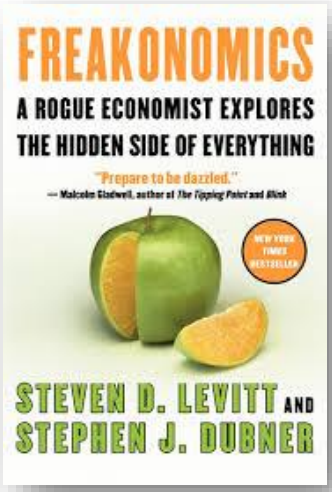
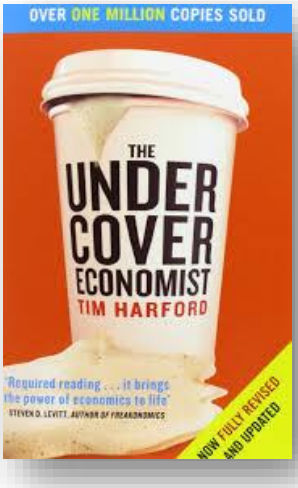
Either read one of the 'Easy to read' Economics books *or* watch one of the recommended films on the reading list on page 4.

Write a book or film review that covers the following:

- an overview of the book / film
- what economic concepts appear (you may want to refer to the specification)
- what does the book teach us about economics?
- how useful is the book when learning about economics?
- would you recommend this book to another economics student and why / why not?

Format guidance

- ✓ Your work should be **no more than one side of A4** (single line spacing, font 12 if typed)
- ✓ Any information directly from the book or film should be sourced
- ✓ Your work will be assessed for literacy as well as content covering the five bullet points above

This activity will be used to see your level of written communication in an economics context.

We look forward to seeing you in September!