

*Our Reference: HMY/SB**

29th May 2020

Dear Year 13,

I hope you are well and managing despite ongoing circumstances.

Whilst there is considerable uncertainty for everyone right now, I would strongly encourage you all to continue engaging with the online resources available to keep yourself mentally sharp and prepared for the future.

Today, we aim to support you further with the release of our new booklet – ‘Preparing for University.’ Whether you plan on attending University or not, utilising this resource by working through the activities, following the timeline as set out in the tracker and making the most of the advice provided, will place you in the best possible position to make decisions about your future.

For University students – it is not necessary to wait until the June deadline to reply to your offers – do your online research now and then make your firm and insurance choices as soon as you are ready in Track. Several of the activities within this booklet are designed to help you make a smooth move to your University campus.

For those students not going to University: use the activities from this booklet that are relevant alongside the resources already provided to you by Mrs Brake. You should continue to stay in regular contact with her via email at: bbrake@raynespark.merton.sch.uk

I sincerely hope that you are able to take advantage of the opportunity the next few months offers. If I can be of any help what-so-ever please email me on: pfitcher@raynespark.merton.sch.uk

I hope to see you all again on August 13th for results day. Whilst this might take a different shape, it is so important to celebrate your success and planning is underway for this. We will keep you up to date and let you know our plans in due course.

Stay safe and keep well,

P. Fitcher

Mr P Fitcher
Head of Sixth Form



Year 13

Preparation for University

Student Name:

University 'Firm':

Entry Requirements:

University 'Insurance':

Entry Requirements:

This booklet is designed to help you prepare for University.

Amongst all the uncertainty that we are currently in, we do know that this crisis will eventually end and that better days lie ahead; seize this opportunity to get ahead and start preparing for those better days.

Complete as many of the activities in the booklet as you can.



Checklist

	Task	Tick if completed
1	Finalise 'firm' and 'insurance' choices	
2	Open a student bank account (required before you can apply for student finance)	
3	Apply for student finance (advice provided on page 4)	
4	Research 'firm' & 'insurance' accommodation (advice provided on page 5)	
5	Research maintenance loans and scholarship and bursary opportunities (advice provided on page 4)	
6	Complete university accommodation application	
7	Research student budgeting (advice provided on page 4)	
8	Begin pre-reading (advice provided on page 16 - 19)	
9	Collect results and finalise choices	

University of your choice - Basic details:

Do you know exactly where your university is? Have you thought about how you are going to get there? Spend some time noting down the basic details:

	University - Firm	University - Insurance
Name:		
Location:		
Cost of train from London:		
Duration of journey:		
Cost of coach from London:		
Duration of journey:		
Type of Campus: (Campus/City)		
Nearby Cities/Towns		
Societies/clubs on offer that you are interested in checking out:		

Additional notes as you spend time researching about your university:

In addition, it is a good idea to have some details about your 3rd and 4th choice options. If you don't get the results you need on results day you may have to apply through 'clearing'. Having some details to hand (course provider, course name, phone number of admissions tutor for that course, reasons you like that provider) can make a stressful and upsetting experience much more manageable.

Finances at University - SFE

Before you go to University you must apply to Student Finance England (SFE) for your tuition fees (paid directly to your university) and maintenance costs (paid directly to your bank account). You do not have to have a confirmed offer of a place to start the process. Before you begin, have the following things to hand:

1. A working email address
2. A bank account in your own name
3. School, uni and course details
4. An in-date UK passport
5. Information about the income of your parents/carers
6. Information about any other support you are receiving

Then log onto www.gov.uk/studentfinance

To have this money in your account before your September start date you must apply by May 31st but there is always a delay as that date draws closer and more people access the website, so start early!

Finances at University - budgeting

It is important that you spend some time considering how you will apportion your money. The best website for figuring out your monthly budget whilst at University is from UCAS.

www.ucas.com/budget-calculator

Some great sites for you to also check out to support you with finance and ways you can cut costs are:

- 16-25 Railcard: just £30 a year to get a third off your rail fares - very useful if you'll be travelling home on the train for holidays and weekends.
- 18+ Student Oyster Photocard: pay a £20 admin fee for 30% off London travelcard costs. You must live at a London address in term-time to be able to apply.
- National Express Young Persons Coachcard: £10 a year (plus £2.50 p&p) for a third off coach fares.
- <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/>

The following places are also useful when searching for additional bursaries or money support:

- <https://www.grantfairy.com/> There are literally hundreds of places you can access additional bursary money- if you are vegetarian, Free school meals, BAME, First in your family to go to University, interested in travelling, like playing sports, LGBTQ+. Download the app and apply for additional bursary help
- <https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/university-tuition-fees/other-financial-support/other-bursaries-and-scholarships>

Accommodation

Many Universities reserve places in their halls of residence for their first year students. Once you register the university will send you a link to the halls that they are associated with, you will probably also get a link to their Facebook pages. It's important to do your research and think about what's important to you. Here are some key things you'll need to consider:

- **Check the links you have been sent carefully** – they always have pictures of what their halls of residence look like, and you may be able to reserve a room online. They'll also list the facilities available and any costs associated with them.
- **Think about private student accommodation** – these are often similar to your Universities Halls, but you won't always be living with people who go to your University. Private halls are often owned by companies who build near Universities. A quick internet search will provide you with reviews.
- **Read the small print** – most accommodation providers (including halls of residence) have strict guidelines and rules on what you can and can't bring/have with you. .
- **Check what bills you'll need to pay** – the cost of living in halls of residence usually includes electricity and water bills, but you'll still need to pay for things like insurance and a TV licence.
- **Consider the essentials** – you'll need things for your bedroom and kitchen. If you move into halls of residence, check what's there already so you don't buy things unnecessarily.
- **Look after your deposit** – money.co.uk share everything you need to know about how to protect your deposit in their guest blog.
- **You can also search social networking sites** - Many students create accounts which you can join. These are as good place to share tips and meet like-minded people before you go.

Here is some advice from someone who is at Bristol...

Definitely join hall's groups on Facebook because there will be events you can go to, this helps you find out what you like. The one thing with halls is to not necessarily fret about distance. If halls are further away the uni usually provides a bus service. It's more important to choose halls you like the look of and generally big ones or the ones nearer all the other halls so you get more of a sense of community and have more people to hang out with.

JW – University of Bristol

Making Notes at university:

It is important to make notes on the things you read as it will improve your understanding by forcing you to convert difficult ideas into your own words. This way, you are more likely to remember what you have read.

If you just read passively while you study you risk 'glazing over' and don't process what you have read.

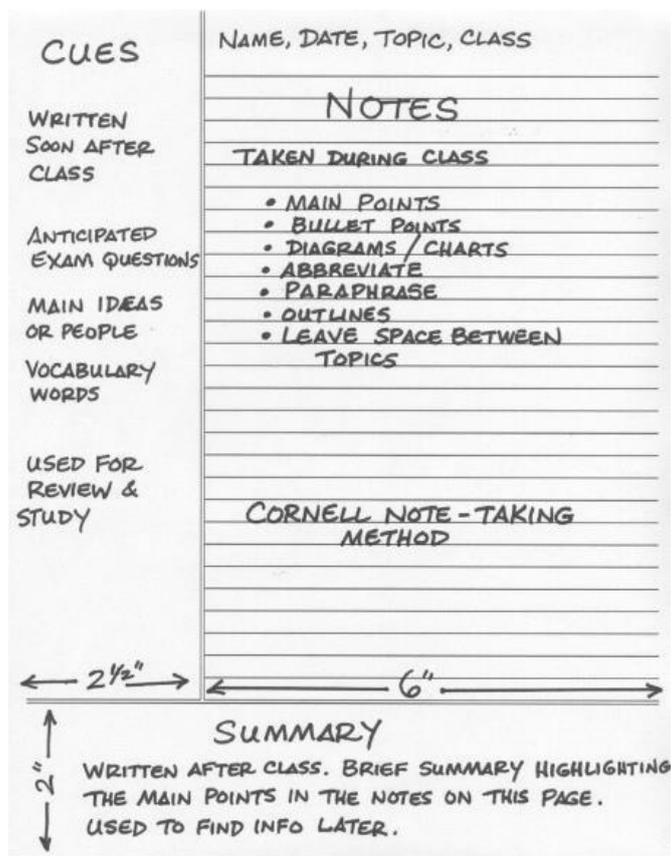
There is no right or wrong way of taking notes. However, try to keep your notes brief and succinct. There is no benefit gained from trying to write everything down - your notes should reflect the main themes and the areas you have identified as important.

Cornell note-taking:

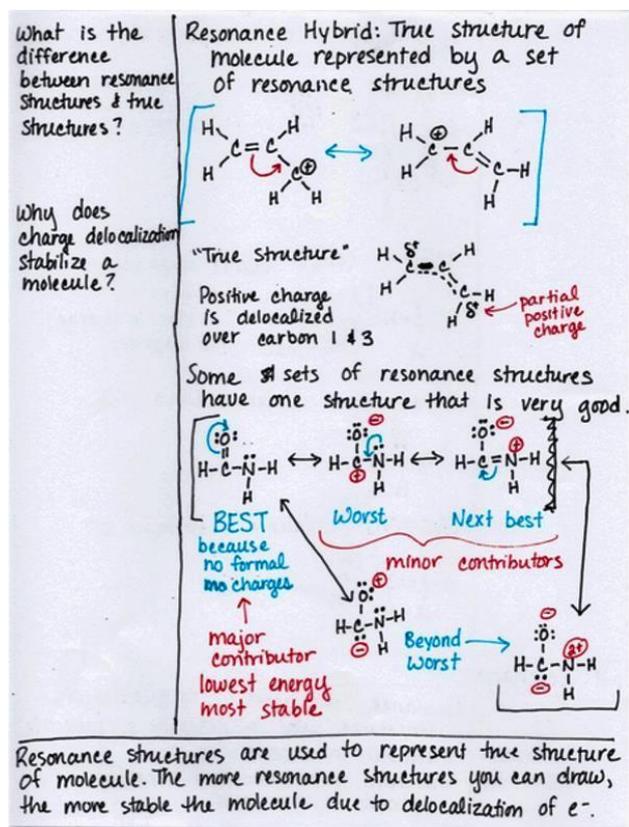
Cornell note-taking is a very popular way of organising notes. It involves dividing your page into three sections:

1. Main section: For notes made during class.
 2. Margin: For noting down key words, people, events, dates and questions, written after class
- Summary: For an overview of the main point, written after class.

How to make Cornell notes:



For example...



Taking notes in lectures:

Taking notes from speech (in a lecture, tutorial or from recorded audio) can be difficult because it may not be possible to ask the speaker to repeat their words. You may find yourself writing as fast as you can and still missing potentially important points.

- If you are given a handout at a tutorial, use this as the framework for taking your own notes
- Try to find out what the subject will be beforehand so you are less likely to be taken by surprise and miss things. Read any relevant study material or notes
- Become accustomed to listening intently. The speaker may signpost significant moments by saying things such as: "I will discuss three main ways in which ...", or "I would like to move on to another topic..."
- Be wary of noting down, as fact, what a speaker might mention as an example of a contentious view
- Become used to thinking actively about what you are listening to. You probably don't need to take notes on everything so get used to identifying what does need to be noted down and what you can let go
- Create a wide margin down one side of the notepaper you use to take notes. Later on, when you look at your notes again, use the margin area to précis or add extra notes to the notes
- Of course you can rewind recorded audio when taking notes from it, but try not to do too much of this as it can take a lot of time
- Try to re-read your notes soon after taking them. This will help to embed the content in your memory. If using the Cornell-method, summarise the main point of the lecture at the bottom of your notes

Have a go:

Watch the TED Talk by Fareed Zakaria, How the world could change after the coronavirus pandemic (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ldKtWp7jIHl>).

As you watch and listen, take note of the key points. Afterwards, pick out key words and terms and summarise the main point. Try and keep your notes to just one page. Remember, you are not to note down everything that is said.

The Brilliant Club also has some great resources to help you get ready for university.

<https://thebrilliantclub.org/the-brilliant-club-for-pupils/info-for-pupils/>

This provides some helpful advice on teaching methods, timetable and extra-curricular activities at university.

Current Affairs:

Going to university means that you will be meeting lots of new people. There will be debate, discussion and the dissemination of ideas. It is important that your voice and opinion is heard - you have a lot to contribute.

Sometimes, we need to think about what our opinion or view is in order to be able to articulate ourselves properly. Whatever views you have, make sure you can support them with evidence and can balance them with opposing views. Listen to others. These questions below are topical and could come up in discussion. Think about what your own views are on them and discuss them with your friends.

Politics:

1. Has the government handled the coronavirus correctly?
2. Has Brexit been a triumph or disaster?
3. Is feminism an outdated concept?
4. Should the government be able to take away people's citizenship?

Science and Technology:

1. Is global warming a threat to us?
2. Has technology damaged society?
3. Should we allow parents to choose the genes of their children?
4. Are robots going to steal our jobs?

Foreign Policy:

1. Are Russia and China a threat to the West?
2. Should Britain cut ties with Saudi Arabia?
3. Israel/Palestine-What's the solution?
4. Is Trump building or ruining the USA?

History and Social Policy:

1. Is Great Britain really great?
2. Should the West pay reparations for slavery?
3. Is identity politics tearing society apart?
4. Should free speech be unlimited?

Arts and Culture:

1. Who is the greatest novelist?
2. Is hip-hop a force of good or bad?
3. Should comedians be able to make jokes about all subjects?
4. Is it OK to cause offence?

If you want a head start or to get some background to these topics, check out <https://www.intelligencesquared.com/watch-and-listen/>. Most of the topics above have been debated by high profile figures.

What to expect when you get to University:

When you first arrive at University, it can be overwhelming. If you decide to live away from home you will be getting used to new accommodation and living with new people from completely different and varied backgrounds. The first few weeks as a Fresher can be a little unsettling; they can also be some of the most fun!

Let us hear from some of our former students and find out how they got on when they first got to University...

University is definitely a completely different experience from sixth form. It's like walking into a new world where everyone is in the same boat: all trying to get a degree, making the best memories and trying to be on time to lectures. The amount of freedom and independence you get with your work is such a big jump from the work you do in sixth form, especially with the difference in contact hours you get. But don't worry you're not alone! You can get support from so many different people, not just with work but with financial problems, housing issues or just if you need someone to talk to. The community vibe is great, except in the 9 am lectures where everyone is always half asleep. So always get enough sleep and don't stress too much about the workload!

Best of Luck

EA – University of Surrey

My top tips for starting University

- 1. Go to as many Freshers events as possible*
- 2. Force yourself out of your comfort zone*
- 3. Make a budgeting list when you get your maintenance loan (It may seem like a lot of money but it has to last you for a couple of months)*
- 4. Do all assignments - even formative ones (they don't count towards your actual grade but it is a really good opportunity to practice your writing style for assignments which actually count towards your grade)*
- 5. Remember that nothing is permanent if you don't like your course you can change it, there is usually a "cooling off period" in first year*
- 6. Join societies*

SM – University of Nottingham

I have absolutely loved my first year at Uni. It was a little daunting at the start, but I decided early on that I was going to throw myself in and try to make the most of it. On Freshers week I signed up to a load of different societies (mainly for the free stuff they were handing out when you signed up) and I got to meet so many new people who were friendly and outgoing. I found the academic research and the chance to use state-of-the-art facilities very stimulating, but I probably didn't do enough independent reading for tutorials, don't make that mistake. Enjoy your time, it's great.

PB – Loughborough University

What to take to university:

Important Documents		Electricals	
Item	✓	Item	✓
Passport		Laptop/Desktop computer	
Driver's Licence		Mobile phone and charger	
Passport Photos		Extension leads	
All University correspondence		USB	
University offer letter		Headphones	
All student loan correspondence		Speakers	
Details of accommodation			
Bank account details			
Recent bank correspondence			
National Insurance Card			
Student Discount Cards			
Stationery		Kitchenware (check what is provided in your accommodation)	
Pens and pencils		Cutlery	
A4 lined notepads		Crockery	
A4 binder		Utensils (grater/sharp knife)	
Highlighters		Saucepan/frying pan	
Postits		Baking tray	
Paper clips		Tupperware	
Hole punch		Washing up liquid/sponges/dishcloth	
Stapler/staples		Recipe book	
Calendar/Diary		Snacks!!!	
Bedroom (check what is provided in your accommodation)		Miscellaneous	
Mattress Protector		Fancy dress	
Fitted sheets (x2)		Formal/Evening wear	
Duvet and pillows		Washbag (you might not have ensuite)	
Duvet cover and pillow cases (x2 sets)		Personal medication/prescriptions	
Laundry bin		Multi-vitamins	
Clothes hangers		Basic first aid kit	
Alarm clock		Sturdy bag	
Desk lamp		Photographs of family/friends	
Ear plugs		Board games/playing cards	

Reflection task:

What are you most looking forward to about University?

What do you think your biggest challenge will be living / working with new people? (If you are choosing to stay at home, what do you think the biggest challenge will be in making new friends?)

What could you do to pre-empt or overcome this challenge?

What temptations may you face during Fresher's week?

How can you take care of yourself and make sure you make wise/safe choices?

How to access support at University:

Moving from home, being in a new environment and balancing the stress of University isn't always easy. There may be times you need support for a learning need, a mental health need, a financial need.

All Universities have dedicated places to find support and help. Read the scenarios and research online the places and people you can go to at your University for additional support and help. If you are unsure - reach out to the Student Union who can direct you to the right place.

Issue	Place to find support
<p>1. You have used up all your student loan. You have paid your rent and tuition fees but now you are really struggling for finances in which to live. Where can you go for help?</p>	
<p>2. You have found the semester particularly stressful, you're feeling anxious about work and are struggling to sleep. You think you need to see a counsellor for some additional support. Where can you go for help?</p>	
<p>3. You have moved into your accommodation but it is not at all what you were hoping for, additionally you do not get on with your housemates. Where can you go for help?</p>	
<p>4. You were diagnosed with dyslexia at school and know you will need some further assistance at University. Where can you go for support?</p>	

Meeting New People:

University is a great place to meet new people and make new friends.

Expectations around this can be huge. Many people have heard stories about university being the 'best time of their lives' or 'meeting their wife/husband' at University. It's true that for many, the friends you make at University remain your friends for life but don't arrive at University thinking that you have to make friends straight away. Just relax and don't put pressure on yourself. Be open-minded, welcoming and able to have a conversation with anyone. Small talk is going to be key!

A few other tips for getting on with new people:

Keep the noise down: Halls are pretty compact. No matter how quiet you are, sound travels surprisingly well. Whether you're on the phone, playing music or just shutting a heavy door, there's a chance someone else in your flat will hear you. So be mindful, especially at night and during exam season.

People approach washing up differently: Sharing a kitchen can be great. It's very social and a good way to bond. But you should know that most universities don't give you a dishwasher, so expect to wash your things up by hand.

What if you don't get on with someone?

If you're lucky enough to make friends with everyone you live and study with, that's fantastic! But in all likelihood there will be moments where you clash or disagree. It's understandable given that you're thrown in with a bunch of people with different personalities, but try to compromise and be accommodating when you need to be.

Being civil is the key. Everyone has bad days and life is much easier when you can get on with those you're living with. No matter how different you think you are from those around you, you will have more in common than you think.

Clubs & Societies

There are a huge variety of clubs and societies at universities. During Fresher's Week, lots of clubs and societies will try and get you to join them.

Join those that you are interested in but also take the opportunity to try something new.

You will often find like-minded people in clubs and societies and this is also a great way to build a friendship network.

Clubs and societies are also a great way to make networks for future careers. For example, if you are interested in politics, it is a good idea to join the University newspaper or Students' Union.

Looking After Yourself:

Going to University is a massive change in your life. For many, it will involve moving away from home and away from support networks. University can also be a busy time, which can make it harder for you to take the time to look after your wellbeing. When you're busy, stresses can mount up and really take its toll - so it's important to take the time to prioritise your own mental wellbeing.

Before you go to University, it is a good idea to note down the things that help you to maintain good wellbeing. Think about the things that make you feel energised and positive. It might help to work backwards and think about the things that make you feel drained and exhausted.

Below are some examples of things that help you maintain good wellbeing:

- A good night's sleep and a good sleep routine
- Eating well
- Physical activity
- Doing something you enjoy
- Quiet time
- Spending time with friends

Sleeping well is very important and something that can easily be neglected at University where, should you want to, you could go out and stay out late every night. Likewise, there will be lots of opportunities to eat takeaways and junk food. Be kind to yourself and make sure you don't fall into the partying hard, eating poorly trap - it will leave you burnt out.

Whatever time you have, you can do something to help your own wellbeing. Below are some of the best apps and website available to help you look after yourself.



HEADSPACE

Everyday Mindfulness and Meditation for Stress, Anxiety, Sleep, Focus, Fitness, and More

YOUNGMINDS
fighting for young people's mental health

Free 24/7 support across the UK if you are experiencing a mental health crisis.



Stem4 is a teenage mental health charity that has created the Calm Harm and Clear Fear Apps.

Pre-reading for your course:

Every university course will have a reading list. This reading list will support you in your understanding of your subject and ultimately support you in achieving a top quality degree.

This is a really great opportunity for you to get ahead of the course by completing some pre-reading.

To get a full reading list, contact the course leader (their contact details will be on the online prospectus for your course). The course leader will be able to provide a more extensive list of books/articles that correlate with your course.

This is also a great opportunity to be inspired and heighten your passion around the subject that you have chosen to study at university.

Getting books:

Sometimes books for University can be expensive. Below are some ideas of where you can access articles and books for free/cheaper:

- <https://bookboon.com/en/textbooks>
- <https://openlibrary.org/>
- <http://www.worldlibrary.org/>
- <https://scholar.google.co.uk/>
- <https://www.goodreads.com/>
- <http://www.gutenberg.org/>
- <http://www.readprint.com/>
- <https://academic.oup.com/journals/>

You can also order books that are 'good as new' 'new' or 'used' from Amazon. If you are usually in receipt of the bursary in 6th Form it would be a good idea to use this to fund the key texts for your University course. Get in touch with Mr Fitcher pfitcher@raynespark.merton.sch.uk if you would like to access the bursary fund to buy course texts.

It is also worth going on the Facebook groups and student forums as many former students sell their text books at reduced prices for the new students coming through.

If you are doing a Science/Medicine based course do make sure you have the latest text books that include the latest research – your University reading list should guide you on the best text books to get.

Studying beyond A-Level

You currently have the longest period of your life without formal education. Do not waste this. You will rarely have the opportunity to drive your own learning and become impassioned with something that you didn't think you would. There are also a huge number of free resources that you should take advantage of.

Audible is currently offering free audiobooks for students – this is an amazing opportunity.

Preparing for Career Success at University

Website	https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/career-success
Fee	Free
Course Outline	<p>Choosing the right degree and university may feel daunting enough, without worrying about what you're going to do after graduation. But with the graduate job market becoming increasingly competitive, it's vital to start thinking about your long-term career and employability now.</p> <p>This free online course will show you how to make the most of the time you'll spend in higher education, with the ultimate aim of improving your prospects when you graduate.</p>
Duration	Three weeks

Website	https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/preparing-for-uni
Fee	Free
Course Outline	In this course you will explore some key skills needed for success at university. You will hear what university lecturers have to say about skills their students excel at, or struggle with, from undergraduates about areas they have found difficult and some top tips for coping with the university learning environment.
Duration	6 Weeks (3 hours per week)

Pre-entry Info & Digital Literacy Tutorials

Website	https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/idlt/preentry
Fee	Free
Course Outline	<p>These tutorials, videos and guides will support you in your work at school or college and in your transition to university level study and employment.</p> <p>Modules: Discovering; Questioning; Referencing; Creating and Communicating</p>
Duration	No set duration.

Subject Specific Studies

Website	https://www.gresham.ac.uk/ https://www.gresham.ac.uk/schools https://www.gresham.ac.uk/watch/series/
Fee	Free
Course Outline	Gresham College was founded in 1597 and has been providing free lectures within the City of London for over 400 years. All lectures are streamed live and the website provides access to over 2000 of these. These range from one off shorts to series of lectures – all easily accessible and signposted on the website (most useful links included above).
Duration	Each lecture lasts approximately 45 minutes.

Website	https://www.glyndwr.ac.uk/en/ShortCourses/Confidentlearner/?utm_source=Twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=SocialSignIn
Fee	Free
Course Outline	This course is designed to enable you to increase your confidence as you take the next step in undergraduate education.
Duration	The course will cover 8 weeks of learning; 3 hours per week for 7 weeks with the assessment on the 8th week. This will be delivered online through Moodle.
Assessment	The course is assessed remotely, through coursework and a presentation, and is worth 20 credits.

Website	https://www.mooc.org
Fee	Free
Course Outline	MOOC's are Massive Open Online Courses available for anyone. They provide a flexible way to learn new skills and supplement learning. There are over 2900 on offer
Duration	Typically 3 or 4 hours per week for 4 to 8 weeks
Assessment	Some have assessments at the completion of the course with certificates available to purchase for a small fee.

Open University

Website	https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ https://www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses/full-catalogue
Fee	Free
Course Outline	<p>Open Learn gives you access to over 1000 free courses, interactives and videos. The courses cover a range of subjects; there really is something for everyone (Health, Sports and Psychology; Education and Development; History and The Arts; Languages; Money and Business; Nature and Environment; Science, Maths and Technology; Society, Politics and Law).</p> <p>Not only is this an exciting opportunity to develop your subject knowledge in preparation for University or Employment, you could branch out into a new area of interest.</p>
Duration	The courses range from 4 to 40 hours, depending on the difficulty (Introductory to Advanced).
Assessment	Once you have completed courses, you will be awarded with statements of participation to use as evidence of completion.

Open Yale Courses

Website	https://oyc.yale.edu/ https://oyc.yale.edu/courses
Fee	Free
Course Outline	<p>Open Yale Courses provides free and open access to a selection of introductory courses taught by distinguished teachers and scholars at Yale University. The aim of the project is to expand access to educational materials for all who wish to learn. All lectures were recorded in the Yale College classroom and are available in video, audio, and text transcript formats.</p> <p>There is an exciting and diverse range of course on offer (African American Studies; American Studies; Astronomy; Biomedical Engineering; Chemistry; Classics; Ecology; Economics; English, Environmental Studies; Geology and Geophysics; History; History of Art; Philosophy; Physics; Political Science; Psychology; Religious Studies; Sociology and Spanish).</p>
Duration	The courses are delivered over a number of weeks and require from 2 to 4 hours per week (depending on the course).



Future skills for teenagers worldwide

To keep up with our rapidly changing world and stand out from the crowd, students need to be great communicators, great collaborators, adaptable, resilient and creative. EtonX delivers courses that bridge the gap between academic success and life in the real world.

We have teamed up with Eton College to offer you the opportunity to take one of Eton's online courses, focused on developing the skills you need to be successful in the work: 'Creative Problem Solving'.

From Eton College

EtonX's courses allow students globally to benefit from Eton's acclaimed expertise in developing well-rounded, high-achieving students. An Eton education values real-world skills alongside academic learning. Our courses draw on centuries of expertise from Eton College, preparing students with the skills they need to be leaders and be successful in the world's top universities.



How to sign up to your EtonX course:

1. Visit the EtonX website <https://signup.etonx.com/>
2. Choose **Sign up with Access Code**. Enter your Access Code (Each code expires *31st July 2020* and must be redeemed before this date).
3. Follow the on-screen instructions. Please sign up with your **school email address**.
4. Congratulations! You can now get started on your course.

Access Code: DDRZH7WB