



First half term of 2021 done! And for some of you, **we are approaching some really important decisions** in the coming months, whether it is year 8 options, year 11 college or sixth form applications or decisions about which university you are selecting as your 'firm' or 'insurance'... Do you feel ready? Need a few ideas or pointers on how to make well-informed choices? I have decided to revisit some of the items I included last year to help you think it through... I hope you find it useful!



How can you make decisions?

Thinking about decision-making as a process can help you work through stages to come to a conclusion you can be happy with. Have a look at the five steps below and see what you think:



Thinking about your wants and needs

Taking some time to think about your own preferences is important, as well as what you are seeking to achieve - What are your strengths? What do you enjoy?



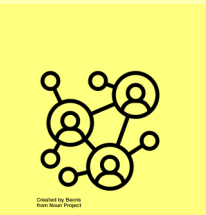
Find out the facts

Researching ideas can help you to reach a decision - What can you find out? Does the course / subject have topics that appeal to you? How is it assessed?



Take it a step further

Carrying your research into the future can help too - If you choose a particular subject, where could it lead? What might come next? Are there any careers you want to look at to see if you have chosen the right pathway?



Use your network

Talking through ideas with others can help you to see things clearly - Who is in your network? Who knows you well? Who has the information you might need? Who can you approach at school?



Weigh things up

After thinking, researching and talking to others, give yourself time to sit and bring it altogether - consider a 'pros' and 'cons' list. Think carefully about both sides and see if it helps you reach a conclusion.

Making use of these steps can help you to look at the decisions you are making in different ways. Giving yourself time to think, research and talk to others is very important if you are to feel confident in the decisions you are making. Go for it!

Females in STEM: Upskill Me Mentoring Scheme comes to HPA!

Last term two students in Y12 were lucky enough to secure a place on a 'Females in STEM' Mentoring Scheme being run by an organisation called 'Upskill Me'. Rebecca and Freya had to apply to join the national scheme which only had 150 places, and so we were thrilled to hear that they had been successful.



So far the girls have attended a virtual launch which took place on 'Ada Lovelace Day'. They have also received a goody bag which contains a reflective journal as well as a DNA shaped necklace.

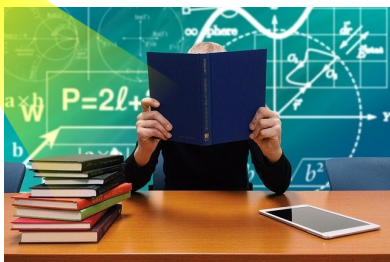
Over the coming months the girls will attend a series of virtual events giving them the chance to hear from a range of professional women working in STEM settings, as well as gaining access to potential work experience as well as a celebration event at Google Headquarters in London.

In speaking to Rebecca about this opportunity she commented that, "STEM is an inspiring group filled with like-minded people and a safe space to discuss our future as females in male dominated industries."

Freya also added that, 'I applied to the programme with quite low expectations of being accepted, and here I am eagerly awaiting the next session in a few weeks time! It's refreshing to be able to connect with so many like minded girls my age who also love STEM subjects'.

We look to hearing more as the sessions continue!

Spotlight on Qualifications - What do the different levels mean?



Qualifications in England are put into different levels. At secondary school, you study for GCSEs which are 'level 2' qualifications. Achieving 5 GCSEs at grade 4 or above will also allow you to unlock 'level 3' studies, which are usually A Level or Level 3 BTEC courses which you can study in the Sixth Form or at college.

But do you know how many more levels there are? Studying at each level, and doing well allows you to access the level above. But how high can you go? Studying at a high level allows you demonstrate a wide range of knowledge and skills, as well as opening the door to high level careers...

Have a look at the table below,

8	Doctorate (PhD)	University
7	Masters degree	University
6	Honours degree	University
	Degree Apprenticeship	Workplace / University
5	Foundation degree	University / College
	Higher National Diploma (HND)	College
4	Higher National Certificate (HNC)	College
	Higher Apprenticeship	Workplace / College / Uni
3	A Levels	Sixth Form / College
	BTEC Level 3 courses	Sixth Form / College
2	GCSE grades 4 to 9	School
	BTEC Level 2 Diploma	School
1	GCSE grades 3, 2 & 1	School
	BTEC Level 1 Award	School

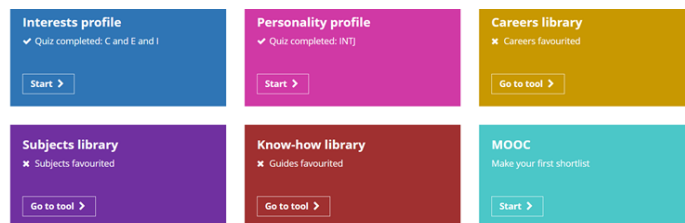
Don't forget Unifrog!

I wanted to remind you that HPA has a really useful tool to help you research and make decisions.



Remember [Unifrog](#)? Use your school email address and password to access it (click forgotten password and a new link will be emailed to you - still can't log in? Email me!)

Here is a reminder of some of the tools. Have a look!



Websites to help you research...

Making Choices

[Hall Park Careers Page](#) - There are some links and tools on this page that can help you compare careers and look at skills. It also links to our Twitter feed which also has regular updates that might help

[BBC Bitesize](#) - It has a careers section which can offer out useful advice. Just remember that options can differ from school to school, so double check with the information you have from Hall Park

[Success at School](#) - Helps you to explore career zones

[UCAS](#) - This site will help you explore university subjects

[Informed Choices](#) - This helps you to see the connection between subject choices (at A Level) and university degree choices

Visualising Ideas

[icould.com](#) - Full of careers advice and video interviews

[Wow Show](#) - The emphasis on this site is to *show you* what the world of work is like. Useful when trying to visualise!

[Uni4me](#) - A site full of activities from universities. Some of these are age restricted, but there are also lots to help you visualise what university would be like. Try searching for campus tours, interviews or video clips

[Nine to Five with Stacey Dooley](#) - A BBC TV series following young people into different areas of work. Could be worth a watch!



“It always seems impossible, until it is done!”

Nelson Mandela



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