

Business A Level Year 12

A student of A Level Business is a curious, commercially aware thinker who doesn't just study businesses they *observe* them. You notice why a brand changes its logo, why a local shop closes, why a company lays off thousands while its share price rises. You read the news differently. You ask "why?" and "so what?" constantly.

You are someone who connects theory to the real world with ease — who can explain Porter's Five Forces using a story about Netflix, or discuss cash flow using a market stall. You write with precision and argue with evidence. You are developing the mindset of an economist, a strategist, and a communicator all at once.

A student of this subject reads broadly, thinks critically, and engages with business as something *alive* — not a textbook exercise.

Summary of course content

The Business A Level syllabus is split into three areas:

Paper 1	Paper 2
What's assessed Unit 3.1 (see section 4.6.2)	What's assessed Unit 3.2 (with links to Unit 3.1. See section 4.6.2)
How it's assessed - Written exam: 2 hours 90 marks 33.3% of A-level	How it's assessed - Written exam: 2 hours 90 marks 33.3% of A-level
Questions Two case studies. Each case study will be followed by five compulsory questions worth 45 marks in total.	Questions Two case studies. Each case study will be followed by five compulsory questions worth 45 marks in total.

Paper 3
What's assessed Unit 3.3 (with links to Unit 3.1 and Unit 3.2. See section 4.6.2)
How it's assessed - Written exam: 2 hours 90 marks 33.3% of A-level
Questions Two case studies. Each case study will be followed by five compulsory questions worth 45 marks in total.

You can find the AQA specification here: <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/business/a-level/business-7138/specification>

Weekly:	- Completion of set work as outlined in the grid below - Read one business news story (BBC Business, FT Student, The Economist). Write 3 bullet points: What happened? Which theory connects? What might happen next?
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Fortnightly:	- Review of recent lessons, learning key terminology, producing revision resources such as cards and mind maps; completion of additional reading from anthologies using pro-forma Independent Study Folder (ISF): this will be checked fortnightly by your tutor and logged. - Listen to one episode of <i>The Diary of a CEO</i>, <i>How I Built This</i>, or <i>Cautionary Tales</i>. Note one idea you'd use in an essay.
Half termly:	Revision: Review knowledge quizzes. Review topics and produce revision resources, e.g., flashcards, mind maps, posters, etc. Complete planning of past exam paper answers - Watch one documentary or long-form video (suggestions calendared below). Write a one-page reflection

Independent Learning Schedule – two hours directed on these areas and what to do

Week beginning	In-Class Focus	Independent Learning Task
7 th September	Induction; What is a business? Needs & wants	Find a business that started in the last 5 years. Research their origin story. Who founded it? What problem did they solve?
14	Entrepreneurs & entrepreneurship; risk & reward	Read one interview with an entrepreneur (Forbes, Guardian). What motivated them? Which motivational theory fits?
21	Business objectives; mission & vision statements	Find 3 real company mission statements. Are they SMART? Are they believable? Write a paragraph evaluating one.
28	Stakeholders; stakeholder conflict	Pick a real business story involving stakeholder conflict (e.g. Amazon workers vs. management). Summarise using stakeholder mapping.
5 th October	External environment — PESTLE	Apply PESTLE to a business of your choice. Find a real news story for each factor.
12	Competition & market structure	Research a market with high competition (e.g. supermarkets, fast food). Who are the main players? How do they compete?
19	Half-term review week	End of unit KO test & 📺 Watch: <i>The Founder</i> (2016, film about McDonald's). Write one page: What made Ray Kroc successful? Was he ethical?
26	Half term	
2 nd November	Management roles; Fayol & Mintzberg	Shadow or interview someone who manages people (family, part-time job). What do they actually <i>do</i> all day?

9	Decision-making models; scientific vs. intuitive	Find a famous business decision that went wrong (e.g. New Coke, Kodak). Was it poor research or poor instinct?
16	SWOT analysis; strategic tools	Complete a SWOT on a local business you know well. Present it in one A4 page.
23	Ansoff's Matrix	Find examples of all four Ansoff strategies used by one major brand (e.g. Apple, Nike). How risky was each?
30	Porter's Five Forces	Apply Five Forces to the streaming industry (Netflix, Disney+, etc.). Which force is strongest right now?
7th December	Ethics in business; corporate social responsibility	Research one company praised for ethics and one criticised. What's the business case for being ethical?
14	Term review & consolidation	Flashcards / revision resources &  Listen to one episode of <i>How I Built This</i> . Note: What theory from this term appears in their story? Write 200 words.
21	Christmas holidays	Holiday Task — Read <i>The Lean Startup</i> (Chapters 1–3) OR watch a YouTube summary. Write 5 bullet points on what Ries means by "validated learning." Also: find one news story per week over the break and annotate it with a business concept.
28	Christmas holidays	
4 th January	Market research — primary & secondary	Design a short primary research questionnaire for a hypothetical new café. Identify 2 biases in your questions.
11	Segmentation, targeting & positioning	Pick a brand and identify their exact target segment. What evidence supports this? Look at their adverts and pricing.
18	The marketing mix — Product & Price	Compare pricing strategies of Aldi vs. Waitrose. How does pricing reflect their brand positioning?
25	Promotion & Place (distribution)	Find an example of a viral marketing campaign. Why did it work? Which part of the mix did it strengthen?
1 st February	Work experience	

8	Digital marketing & social media	Audit a brand's social media. What platforms? What tone? Who is the audience? Is it working?
15	Half term	
22	Marketing in practice; case study work	
1 st March	Production methods; job, batch, flow	Visit a factory tour (e.g. Cadbury, LEGO on YouTube). Identify the production method.
8	Lean production; just-in-time, Kaizen	Research how Toyota uses lean. Find one UK manufacturer using the same approach.
15	Quality management; TQM vs. quality control	Find a major product recall in the news. What went wrong? How could quality systems have prevented it?
22	Revenue, costs & profit Cash flow; cash flow forecasting	Take a real company's latest annual report (e.g. Greggs plc — it's very readable). Find their revenue, costs and profit. Find a story of a business that failed due to cash flow (not profit) problems. Explain the difference clearly.
29	Easter holiday	 Holiday Task — Read one chapter of <i>Freakonomics</i> (any chapter). Write: What does it tell you about incentives and human behaviour? How might this apply to a business decision? Also complete one timed 20-mark essay question from your revision pack.
5 th April	Easter holidays	
12	Break-even analysis	Practice: Calculate break-even for a hypothetical business you design. Draw the chart. What's the margin of safety?
19	Motivation theory — Taylor, Maslow, Herzberg	Find a real company known for staff motivation (e.g. John Lewis, Google). Which theory best explains their approach?
26	Motivation — Mayo, McClelland; pay systems	Research zero-hours contracts debate. Write a balanced 300-word argument: do they harm or help workers?

3 rd May	Organisational structure; hierarchy & span of control	Draw the organisational structure of a real business from their website. Is it flat or tall? What are the implications?
10	Recruitment, selection & training	Design a job advertisement and person specification for a role at a business you admire.
17	Employer–employee relations; trade unions	Research a recent industrial dispute in the UK. Summarise causes, actions taken, and resolution.
24	Review & consolidation	 Watch: <i>Made in Britain</i> (BBC documentary series) or a business documentary of your choice. One-page reflection.
31	Half term	
7 th June	Paper 1 technique; short-answer & case study	Timed practice: full Paper 1 Section A under timed conditions. Self-mark. Identify two weaknesses.
14	Paper 2 technique; data response	Practice interpreting financial data. Find a company's accounts — write three observations using business language.
21	Essay planning & argument construction	Plan (not write) 5 different 25-mark questions. Identify your thesis, 3 arguments, and a genuine counter-argument for each.
28		
5 th July	Transition to Year 13 — preview of new content	 Listen to an episode of <i>The Economist Checks In</i> or <i>Pivot</i> podcast. Write: What Year 13 topics does this connect to?
12	End of year; Year 13 preparation tasks set	Summer task: Read <i>Bad Blood</i> by John Carreyrou (Theranos scandal) OR <i>Shoe Dog</i> by Phil Knight (Nike). Annotate for business concepts throughout.
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Wider Reading & Resource List

Books

- *The Lean Startup* — Eric Ries
- *Shoe Dog* — Phil Knight (Nike origin story)

- *Bad Blood* — John Carreyrou (Theranos collapse)
- *Freakonomics* — Levitt & Dubner
- *The Tipping Point* — Malcolm Gladwell
- *No Logo* — Naomi Klein (critical perspective on brands)

Podcasts

- *How I Built This* (Guy Raz) — entrepreneur origin stories
- *The Diary of a CEO* (Steven Bartlett) — business mindset
- *Cautionary Tales* (Tim Harford) — business failures & decisions
- *The Economist Checks In* — current affairs & business
- *Pivot* (Scott Galloway & Kara Swisher) — tech & strategy

Websites & Publications

- BBC Business News — daily habit
- FT.com/Students — free student access
- The Economist — one article per week
- Tutor2u Business — revision resources & current affairs
- AQA Business specification — know it, refer to it

Documentaries & Films

- *The Founder* (2016) — McDonald's origin
- *The Social Dilemma* (Netflix) — digital business ethics
- *Jiro Dreams of Sushi* — quality, operations, perfectionism
- *Abstract: The Art of Design* (Netflix) — creativity & branding
- *Inside Bill's Brain* (Netflix) — strategic thinking