Park Academy West London
an Aspirations Academy

Physics

A level Physics gives you the opportunity to explore the phenomena of the universe and to look at theories that explain what is observed. This subject combines practical skills with theoretical ideas to develop descriptions of the physical universe. You will learn about everything from kinematics to cosmology and many recent developments in fascinating topics, such as particle physics. If you are interested in the limits of space, the beginning of time and everything in between this is the subject for you. Physics is more than a subject – it trains your brain to think beyond boundaries.

Recommended Reads

1. **Surely You're Joking Mr Feynman: Adventures of a Curious Character**

   Richard Feynman was a Nobel Prize winning Physicist. In my opinion he epitomises what a Physicist is. By reading this books you will get insight into his life's work including the creation of the first atomic bomb and his bongo playing adventures and his work in the field of particle physics.

2. **Moondust: In Search of the Men Who Fell to Earth**

   One of the greatest scientific achievements of all time was putting mankind on the surface of the moon. Only 12 men made the trip to the surface, at the time of writing the book only 9 are still with us. The book does an excellent job of using the personal accounts of the 9 remaining astronauts and many others involved in the space program at looking at the whole space-race era, with hopefully a new era of space flight about to begin as we push on to put mankind on Mars in the next couple of decades.

3. **Quantum Theory Cannot Hurt You: Understanding the Mind-Blowing Building Blocks of the Universe**

   Any Physics book by Marcus Chown is an excellent insight into some of the more exotic areas of Physics that require no prior knowledge. In your first year of A-Level study you will meet the quantum world for the first time. This book will fill you with interesting facts and handy analogies to whip out to impress your peers!

Recommended Movies/Video Clips

1. **Minute Physics –** Variety of Physics questions explained simply (in felt tip) in a couple of minutes. Addictive viewing that will have you watching clip after clip – a particular favourite of mine is "Why is the Sky Dark at Night?" **https://www.youtube.com/user/minutephysics**
2. **Wonders of the Universe / Wonders of the Solar System –** Both available of Netflix as of 17/4/16 – Brian Cox explains the Cosmos using some excellent analogies and wonderful imagery.
3. **Shock and Awe, The Story of Electricity –** A 3 part BBC documentary that is essential viewing if you want to see how our lives have been transformed by the ideas of a few great scientists a little over 100 years ago. The link below takes you to a stream of all three parts joined together but it is best watched in hourly instalments. Don't forget to boo when you see Edison. (alternatively watch any Horizon documentary – loads of choice on Netflix and the I-Player)

   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gtp51eZkwol

4. **NASA TV –** Online coverage of launches, missions, testing and the ISS. Plenty of clips and links to explore to find out more about applications of Physics in Space technology. **http://www.nasa.gov/multimedia/nasatv/**
5. **The Fantastic Mr. Feynman –** I recommended the book earlier, I also cannot recommend this 1 hour documentary highly enough. See the life's work of the "great explainer", a fantastic mind that created mischief in all areas of modern Physics. **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LyqlelxXTpw**

Task

Research two of the following websites and make one page of notes covering a topic of your choice.

a. http://home.cern/about
   CERN encompasses the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) and is the largest collaborative science experiment ever undertaken. Find out about it here and make a page of suitable notes on the accelerator.
b. http://joshworth.com/dev/pixelspace/pixelspace_solarsystem.html
   The solar system is massive and its scale is hard to comprehend. Have a look at this award winning website and make a page of suitable notes.
c. https://phet.colorado.edu/en/simulations/category/html
   PhET create online Physics simulations when you can complete some simple experiments online. Open up the resistance of a wire html5 simulation. Conduct a simple experiment and make a one page summary of the experiment and your findings.
d. http://climate.nasa.gov/
   NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory has lots of information on Climate Change and Engineering Solutions to combat it. Have a look and make notes on an article of your choice.
e. http://www.livescience.com/46558-laws-of-motion.html
   Newton's Laws of Motion are fundamental laws for the motion of all the object we can see around us. Use this website and the suggested further reading links on the webpage to make your own 1 page of notes on the topics.

Task: Research Formulae

This is something you will have done at GCSE and it is crucial you master it for success at A level. For a recap of GCSE watch the following link:

www.khanacademy.org/math/algebra/one-variable-linear-equations/old-school-equations/v/solving-for-a-variable

1. E=m x g x h to find h
2. Q= I x t to find I
3. E = ½ m v^2 to find m
4. E = ½ m v^2 to find v
5. v = u + at to find u
6. v = u + at to find a
7. $v^2 = u^2 + 2as$ to find s
8. $v^2 = u^2 + 2as$ to find u

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Task: Standard Form

At A level quantity will be written in standard form, and it is expected that your answers will be too.

This means answers should be written as ….x 10^y. E.g. for an answer of 1200kg we would write 1.2 x 10^3kg. For more information visit: www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/zc2hsbk/revision .

1. Write 2530 in standard form.
2. Write 280 in standard form.
3. Write 0.77 in standard form.
4. Write 0.0091 in standard form.
5. Write 1 872 000 in standard form.
6. Write 12.2 in standard form.
7. Write 2.4 x 10^2 as a normal number.
8. Write 3.505 x 10^1 as a normal number.
9. Write 8.31 x 10^6 as a normal number.
10. Write 6.002 x 10^2 as a normal number.
11. Write 1.5 x 10^{-4} as a normal number.
12. Write 4.3 x 10^3 as a normal number.

Task: Significant Figures

At A level you will be expected to use an appropriate number of significant figures in your answers. The number of significant figures you should use is the same as the number of significant figures in the data you are given. You can never be more precise than the data you are given so if that is given to 3 significant your answer should be too. E.g. Distance = 8.24m, time = 1.23s therefore speed = 6.75m/s

The website below summarises the rules and how to round correctly.

http://www.purplemath.com/modules/rounding2.htm

Give the following to 3 significant figures:

1. 3.4527
2. 40.691
3. 0.838991
4. 1.0247
5. 59.972

Calculate the following to a suitable number of significant figures:

1. 63.2/78.1
2. 39+78+120
3. (3.4+3.7+3.2)/3
4. 0.0256 x 0.129
5. 592.3/0.1772

Task: Atomic Structure

You will study nuclear decay in more detail at A level covering the topics of radioactivity and particle physics. In order to explain what happens you need to have a good understanding of the model of the atom. You need to know what the atom is made up of, relative charges and masses and how sub atomic particles are arranged.

The following video explains how the current model was discovered
www.youtube.com/watch?v=wzALbzTdnc8

Describe the model used for the structure of an atom including details of the individual particles that make up an atom and the relative charges and masses of these particles. You may wish to include a diagram and explain how this model was discovered by Rutherford