2026-2027

THE PARENTS' GUIDE TO

T Levels and V Levels

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The Parents' Guide to

Join **Parent Club** for ongoing support

The teenage years bring a lot of change - and not always clear answers for parents. From school and friendships to wellbeing, revision and next steps, it can be hard to know how best to support your child.

The Parents' Guide To gives parents practical, easy-to-use support to help them feel more informed, more confident and less alone.

What you'll find in this guide:

✓ **Clear, up-to-date information**
Straightforward explanations to help you understand the topic without jargon.

✓ **Practical advice**
Helpful ideas and tips you can actually use at home.

✓ **Links to trusted sources**
Signposts to reliable organisations and further support when you want to explore something in more detail.

✓ **Helpful next steps**
Simple suggestions to help you feel clearer about what to do next.

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Parent Club

Parent Club is our monthly membership for parents of teens, offering practical, ongoing support across the school year. From revision and future choices to wellbeing and family life, the teen years bring plenty of questions and decisions, and Parent Club is there to give you clear, reliable help when you need it most. What you'll get:

☑ **Practical support** ☑ **Timely resources** ☑ **Live calls** ☑ **Specialist guides**

Learn more

Parent Talks

Join live calls on the topics parents ask about most, with practical advice, expert insight, and time for questions and answers.

Free for Parent Club members.

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Introduction

If your teen wants to stay in full-time education after their GCSEs but doesn't want to focus on A levels, they could take T Levels or V Levels.

T Levels are a two-year course taken in one industry-focused subject with the end qualification equivalent to three A levels. UCAS points are allocated to the overall T Level grade so, if your teen is interested in continuing to university, it's easy for them to choose the right course based on university entry requirements. Students cannot mix T Levels with other qualifications.

V Levels are a new qualification studied over two years and equivalent to one A level. Subjects are focused on workplace knowledge and skills, with a higher proportion of non-exam assessment to benefit practical learners. Students can mix V Levels with other qualifications, so they might take two V Levels and one A level. UCAS points are allocated according to grade, so taking V Levels provides the opportunity to continue studies at university.

Parenting a teen?

Join **Parent Club** for bite-sized, practical support throughout the year – with timely advice, helpful reminders and resources you can use straight away.

Discover more

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Qualification / Educational Routes

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Level 8	**Doctorate (PhD)**		**NVQ 8**
Level 7	**Masters degree (MA)**		**Degree apprenticeship / NVQ 5, 6, 7**
Level 6	**Bachelors degree** BA or BSc		
Level 5	**Foundation degree** FdA or FdSc	**Higher National Diploma (HND)**	
Level 4		**Higher National Certificate (HNC)**	**Higher apprenticeship / NVQ 4**
Level 3	**A levels** Grades A-E; **International Baccalaureate**; **T Levels**; **BTEC Ext Diploma BTEC certificate**; **V Levels (new for 2027)**; **Advanced app. / NVQ 3 / Supported Internships**		
Level 2	**GCSE** Grades 4- 9 (C, B, A or A*)	**BTEC first diploma**	**Intermediate apprenticeship / NVQ 2**
Level 1	**GCSE** Grades 1- 3 (D,E,F or G)	**Foundation diploma / entry level qualifications**	**Traineeship / NVQ 1**
	Academic route	**Technical / Vocational route**	**Applied / work route**

Levels of Education

After GCSEs, there are three main routes your teen can take:

Academic - e.g. A levels, typically leading to university

Technical/vocational - e.g. T Levels or other applied courses, combining classroom learning with practical skills

Work-based - e.g. apprenticeships, where students earn while they learn

From 2027, new 'V Levels' will be introduced as part of the vocational route. These are expected to sit alongside A levels, T Levels and apprenticeships, offering a more flexible option that can be combined with other qualifications.

There are 8 qualification levels. The easiest is 1, the hardest is 8. There is also an entry level qualification for those just starting.

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T Levels

Introduced in 2020, T Levels were developed with employers and businesses to prepare students for working life. T Levels suit teens that like learning through real-life situations.

One T Level is equivalent to three A levels and the course lasts for two years. T Levels involve a mix of classroom learning (about 80% of the course time) and practical experience (about 20% of the course time) including a 45 day on-the-job placement in a genuine business. Grades are assessed based on practical assessments, project work and some examinations. T Levels are usually only available at colleges.

Afterwards, students may go on to university, alternative higher education, another job, an apprenticeship or they may be offered an opportunity with the company where they were placed.

T Levels are a “technical” alternative to “academic” A levels because they focus on industry and include practical study as well as classroom learning. They differ from apprenticeships because the study and working time are reversed, so students taking T Levels are still in full-time education, unlike apprentices, who are being paid to take on a specific job alongside the educational element.

T Levels are great for practical learners who know which industry area they want to learn more about.

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The Industry Placement

A fantastic element of T Levels is the 45 day industry placement – a real job in a genuine business. Sometimes this is offered in one block (45 consecutive days), sometimes as one day each week, or it can be other combinations that suit the company.

This first-hand work experience is hugely beneficial to students, enabling them to get a feel for what it's like in the world of work and whether they like the industry sector they've chosen – it's not too late to make a change post-18 if they don't! The placement can result in some students being offered jobs after they've completed their T Level and for those going on to higher education after sixth-form, their work experience will be impressive on their personal statement or other education application.

Discover more

- Intro to T Levels
- Alternative options

Getting all important transferable skills

Businesses really value transferable skills (sometimes called soft skills) because they are essential to running a business well. Soft skills are developed through practical experience (such as in hobbies and sports) or in the workplace. Examples include communication (being able to express complex ideas simply), leadership (motivating and inspiring others to take action) and teamwork (collaborating with others to achieve joint objectives).

Transferable skills are not industry specific and have equal worth in different job types, which means students that develop a strong set of transferable skills have more opportunities to switch between different sectors to find the roles and industry that suits them best – giving them more options to find a job they are good at and enjoy.

Why do businesses offer industry placements to students with no experience?

Businesses sign up to offer industry placements matched to where their expertise aligns with the T Levels available. This gives businesses an opportunity to:

- discover new talent
- get extra help in their business
- take on apprentices or employees who they know personally through the placement
- avoid costs of recruiting through agencies
- get new ideas from young people

Payment

Businesses aren't legally obliged to pay students during their industry placement, although some may choose to do so.

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T Level Subject Choices

Agriculture, Environmental and Animal Care

- Agriculture, Land Management and Production
- Animal Care and Management

Business, Administration and Construction

- Management and Administration
- Building Services Engineering for Construction
- Design, Surveying and Planning for Construction

Creative and Design

- Craft and Design
- Media, Broadcast and Production

Digital

- Digital Business Services
- Digital Production, Design and Development
- Digital Support Services

Education and Early Years

- Education and Early Years

Engineering and Manufacturing

- Design and Development for Engineering and Manufacturing
- Maintenance, Installation and Repair for Engineering and Manufacturing
- Engineering, Manufacturing, Processing and Control

Health and Science

- Health
- Healthcare Science
- Science

Legal, Finance, Accounting, Sales and Marketing

- Accounting
- Finance
- Legal Services
- Sales, Marketing and Procurement

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Where T Levels Lead

Qualifications needed

Usually 5 GCSEs (graded 9-4) including English and maths, but check individual courses as some differ.

For teens that don't have the qualifications needed to sign up, they can take the "Further Study Pathway" - a one-year course to prepare them to study Level 3 qualifications, including T Levels.

Outcomes

Passing a T Level will demonstrate the following:

- ► an approved technical qualification with nationally recognised grade
- ► first-hand work experience through an industry placement
- ► a minimum standard in English and maths

Students that don't pass all elements of their T Level will receive a "T Level statement of achievement" outlining what has been completed.

Next steps

T Levels offer a broad range of further opportunities after sixth form, including:

- ► university
- ► alternative further education
- ► apprenticeships
- ► jobs from related industries
- ► a job from their placement

University and UCAS[1]

To help T Level students progress into higher education, UCAS tariff points are allocated to the overall T Level grade.

T Level grades offer the following UCAS points (noted with A level equivalents).

UCAS TARIFF POINTS	T LEVEL GRADE	A LEVEL EQUIVALENT
168	Distinction*	AAA*
144	Distinction	AAA
120	Merit	BBB
96	Pass - *grade C or above on the core*	CCC
72	Pass - *grade D or E on the core*	DDD

Discover more

- Intro to T Levels
- Alternative options

1 *Not all universities accept T Levels for entry, so it is important to check the course and university entry requirements if your teen has a specific university they'd like to attend after sixth form.*

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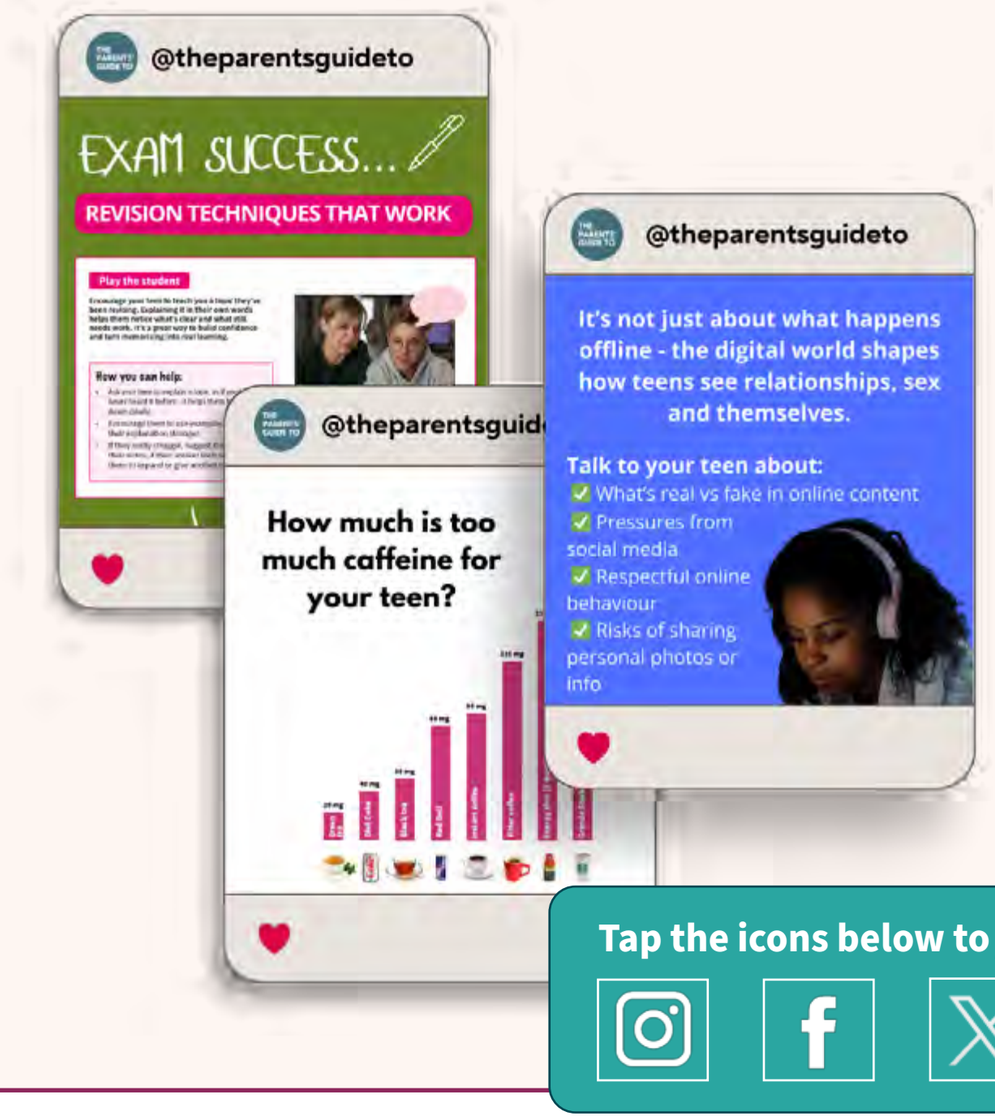
Practical advice you can actually use at home



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V Levels

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New in 2027, V Levels have been developed to give students a chance to get a taster for different industry sectors before specialising. Qualifications are graded through a mix of coursework and exams, with a focus on practical skills. V Levels suit teens that like learning about real life situations and don't want their results to be exclusively dependent on end of course exams.

One V Level is equivalent to one A level and each course lasts for two years. This means students can choose to combine both V Levels and A levels at sixth form. Both schools and colleges will offer V Levels. Afterwards, students may go on to university, alternative higher education, another job, or an apprenticeship.

V Levels are a "vocational" alternative to "academic" A levels because they focus on practical workplace situations and grades are not exclusively dependent on end of course exams. They differ from T Levels because they do not offer as much in-depth technical knowledge and there is no real-life work experience - study involves simulated scenarios.

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V Level Subject Choices

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2027

Digital Systems and Data

Education & Early Years

Finance and Accounting

From 2028

Business & Administration

Care Services

From 2028 (cont)

Construction

Engineering & Manufacturing

Health and Science

Legal

Sales, Marketing & Procurement

Sports, Fitness & Exercise Science

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Where V Levels Lead

Qualifications needed

Usually 5 GCSEs (graded 9-4) including English and maths, but check individual courses as some may differ.

For teens that don't have the qualifications needed to start V Levels, they can take the "Further Study Pathway" - a one-year course to prepare them to study Level 3 qualifications, including V Levels.

Next steps

V Levels offer a broad range of further opportunities after sixth form, including:

- ► university
- ► apprenticeships
- ► further education or technical training
- ► specialist industry qualifications
- ► employment and career progression within related industries

UCAS and V Levels

The exact allocation according to grade has yet to be announced; however, UCAS points awarded are expected to be comparable to A levels, ranging from 16 to 56 points per qualification.

We'll update **our blog** as more details come out.

Want to stay one step ahead?

Join **Parent Club** for practical tips, useful updates and new opportunities to help you guide your teen.

Discover more

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Which Route Suits Your Teen Best?

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	A levels	T Levels	V Levels	Apprenticeship
Enjoys studying a broad range of subjects	✓✓		✓✓	
Wants learning linked to a specific industry or job sector		✓✓	✓	✓✓
Enjoys academic and theory-based learning	✓✓	✓		
Enjoys practical and hands-on learning		✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Is considering university in the future	✓✓	✓	✓	✓
Prefers regular coursework and ongoing assessment		✓	✓✓	✓
Would like to earn while learning				✓✓
Not sure what they want to do after sixth form	✓✓		✓	
Performs well in examinations	✓✓	✓✓	✓	

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Other Routes To Consider

Don't worry! If T Levels and V Levels don't seem right for your teen, there are lots of other options so they're bound to find something that takes them on the right pathway, suits their study style and that they find interesting.

A levels/AS levels/ International Baccalaureate

An in-depth study of specialist subjects over two years with an examination at the end to test knowledge. Learning mostly takes place in the classroom.

BTEC Nationals

Study takes place over a two year period and is a combination of both practical and theory. Knowledge is tested through course work and a final examination (comprising 40% of the total grade).

Other technical qualifications

Other qualifications available include Cambridge Technicals, City and Guilds, National Vocational Qualifications and Tech Bac (similar to the International Baccalaureate). They are vocational driven courses – i.e. centred around jobs and are well suited to students who know what type of job they want to do when they leave education or who prefer a more practical working style but still want to include classroom learning in their education.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are real jobs in the workplace which include learning elements (that might take place at university, college or an education provider). Apprenticeships were developed to help address the skills shortage in UK businesses. Sixteen year olds can start an apprenticeship at Level 2.

Find out more

If you're interested in finding out more about all the options your teen has after 16, which qualifications might suit them better and why choosing where to study could make a big difference, it's all in ***The Parents' Guide to Post 16 options.***

The Parents' Guide to Post 16 Options

Includes information on:

- What qualifications are on offer
- Which qualifications are better suited to different types of learners;
- Where they can study – the pros and cons
- Considerations in making the right choices
- GCSE results day – what to do if they don't get the results they need.

Buy now

The Parents' Guide to Apprenticeships

Includes information on:

- Types of apprenticeship – the qualifications needed at each entry stage
- The pros and cons
- Degree apprenticeships
- How to research an apprenticeship
- Top ten apprenticeship providers
- The application process

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Career Pathways

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Options after GCSE:

Full time study

A levels
(level 3)

T Levels
(level 3)

V Levels
(level 3)

Other qualifications
(levels 1,2,3)

Exam retakes

Work and study

Apprenticeships
(levels 2,3)

Supported internships

Traineeships

Options after sixth form:

Full time study

University
(levels 4,5,6,7)

Higher technical skill courses
(levels 4,5)

Work and study

Apprenticeships
(levels 3,4,5,6,7)

School leaver programmes / Internships

Work

Employment

Start a business

Other

Gap Year

Exam retakes

Options after Higher education:

Full time study

Postgraduate study e.g. Masters degree or PHD
(levels 7.8)

Work / work and study

Graduate jobs or paid employment

Apprenticeships
(levels 6,7)

Internships / work experience

Non-paid employment / volunteering

Start a business

Other

Gap Year / travel

Exploring the options:

There's more than one route to the same career, so it makes sense for your teen to play to their strengths and take qualifications that suit their interests and learning style so they can land a job they'll love. Take a look at everything that's available to them in The Parents' Guide to Post 16 Options.

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Final words

T Levels and V Levels are two exciting sixth form options that provide a recognised qualification tailored to business needs and skills.

Either one is a great choice for students who want to learn practical skills relevant to the world of work, regardless of whether they want to go on to study for a degree, take alternative further education or go straight into the workplace after sixth form. Project work and ongoing assessment means grades are not entirely dependent on final examinations.

T Levels are a good choice for students that what to focus on what businesses need to be successful in specific industry areas. Getting 45 days' first-hand experience in a real job will give them an advantage in whatever they choose to do after sixth-form, whether that's continuing with higher education or entering the world of work.

V Levels are good for practical learners who aren't yet sure of their specific industry interests. They can keep their options open or combine learning about work-place subjects with more traditional A levels.

Find out more about how to help your teen choose their next steps at **TheParentsGuideTo.co.uk.**

Enjoyed this guide?

For more support, practical advice and helpful next steps, choose where you'd like to go next.

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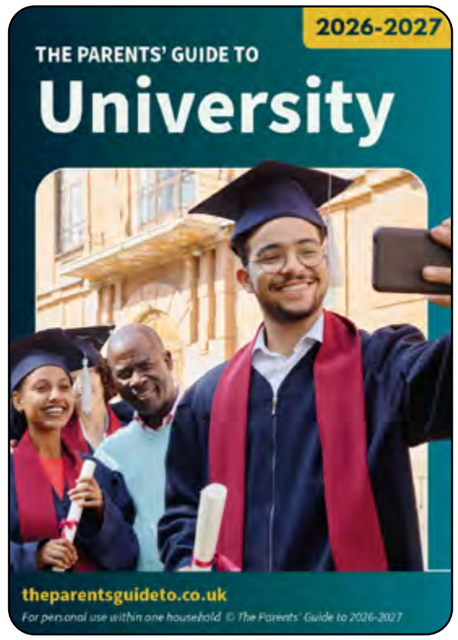

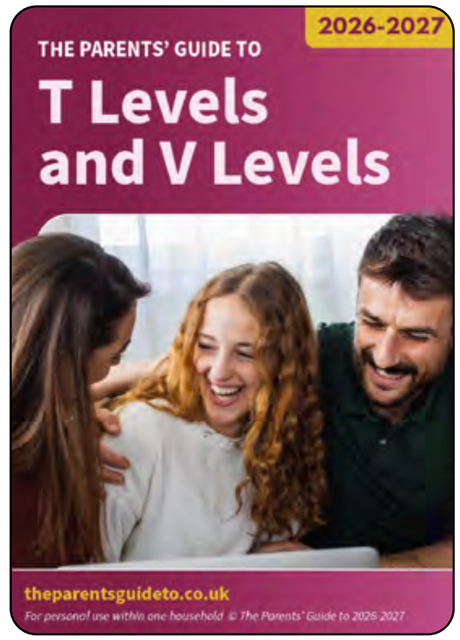

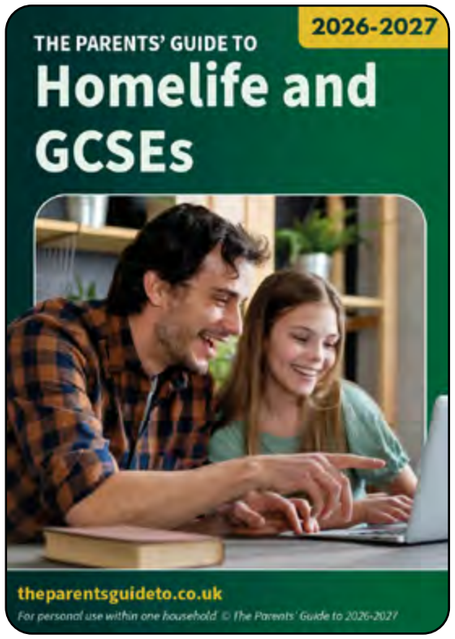

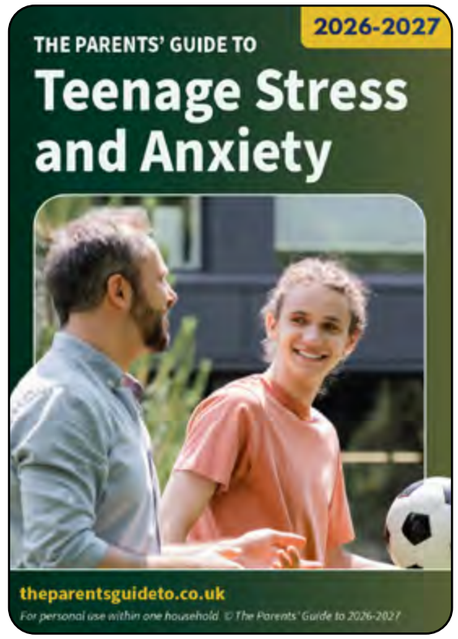

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