

2020



COVID-19 update

4<sup>th</sup> report  
GCSE and A-level student  
review



# | Student home learning expectations and experiences

Secondary maintained schools in England  
NERP#644.4: 2020

 [researching.education](https://researching.education)

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Impact  
Fourth report



This market update reviews the expectations and experiences GCSE and A-level students. The responses are divided into first-year and second-year students. In each case there are some common questions, but for each group there are specific considerations to take into account. In the case of second-year students of both GCSE and A-level, most will have mostly finished their syllabus by the time schools were closed. These students will have been preparing for examinations. In contrast, first-year students of GCSE and A-level will be in the midst of learning.

The research was conducted between 5 May and 10 May. Invites were issued to parents with GCSE or A-level children, with the request that the questionnaire be responded to directly by the students, with their consent.

respondents



317

GCSE students (Yr. 10/11)

294

A-level students (Yr. 12/13)



Those students in their first year of either GCSE or A-level are only partially continuing their normal subject teaching and learning from home. A third are doing very little and only a tenth are fully engaged, with few suggesting their key subjects are being taught very effectively.



Currently, half of students in their last year of GCSE or A-level, who would normally be in revision and examination mode are either engaged in general preparedness for their next stage of education, or not doing anything at all.



Few Year 11 and 13 students are happy with the arrangements for determining their predicted grades, with half expecting to do poorly compared to their original expectations after revising and sitting exams. In comparison, a quarter feel they will benefit in receiving their predicted grades.



When it comes to learning from home only a quarter of students are happy about the situation, with most of those in Year 13. It is likely that students feel that they have been given too much schoolwork from teachers, rather than too little.



Most students are looking at an average of three to four hours of schoolwork each day, which as noted above is felt to be too much by a majority of students. Only a very small proportion are working more than 5 hours a day.



When it comes to being able to access a computer and internet access to engage with their learning requirements, a third indicate not being able to fully do so. Most students are engaging by a combination of their school cloud-based learning platform and collaborative tools. Video-conferencing is only being delivered to a quarter of students' key subject teachers.



When asked about their ability to keep up with the learning requirements being set by their key subject teachers only a quarter feel completely able to do so, with the majority of the remaining students partially being able to do so. However, there is concern that more than a quarter are not really able to do so.



When it comes to spending on resources, such as books, subscriptions, apps and online tutoring, there is a broad spread of commitment, with a third of students indicating themselves or their parents have spent nothing on these resources since their school closed.



Average spend is skewed by a small proportion of students accessing online tutors. However, taking into account this group and the third of students indicating no spending, the average spend per student is in the region of £90 to £100 since schools closed.



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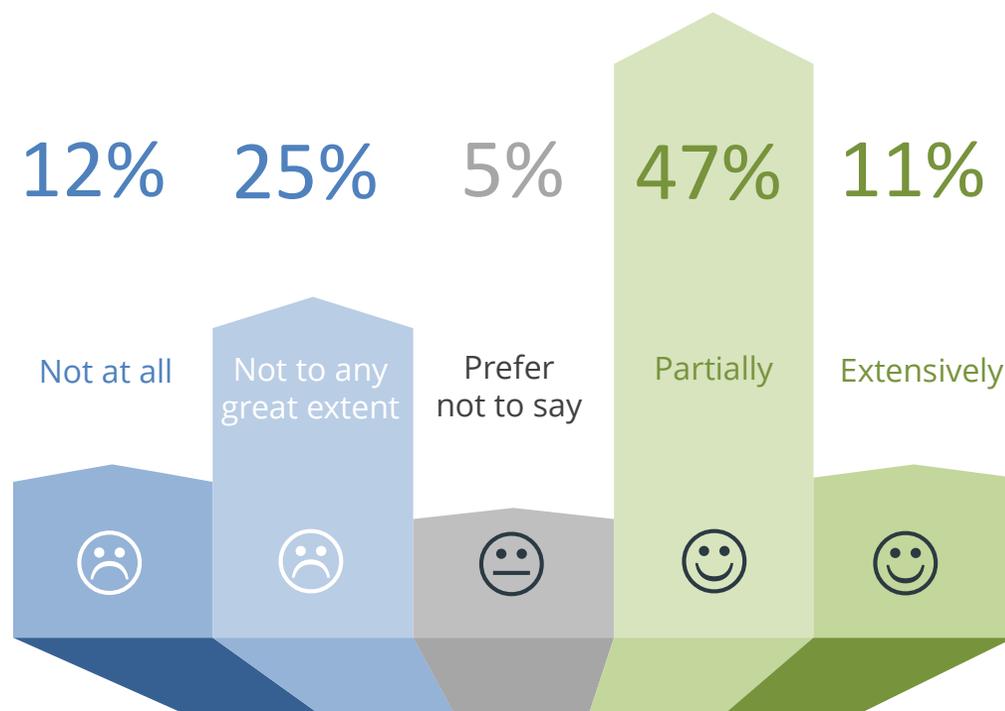


## Normal learning from home

Year 10 and 12 students

Q1

Around a third of students in either year 10 or 12 are not continuing their normal subject teaching and learning now they are at home. Only a minority consider that they are continuing their normal teaching and learning provision.



To what extent are you continuing your normal subject teaching and learning from home?



## Effectiveness of teaching key subjects

Year 10 and 12 students

Q2

Very few students suggest their key subjects\* are being very effectively taught, although half say they are being somewhat effectively taught. A small minority indicate either very ineffective teaching or not being taught at all.



\* key subjects are those that will be taken in the next stage of education

In general, how effectively are your key subjects being taught remotely by your teachers?

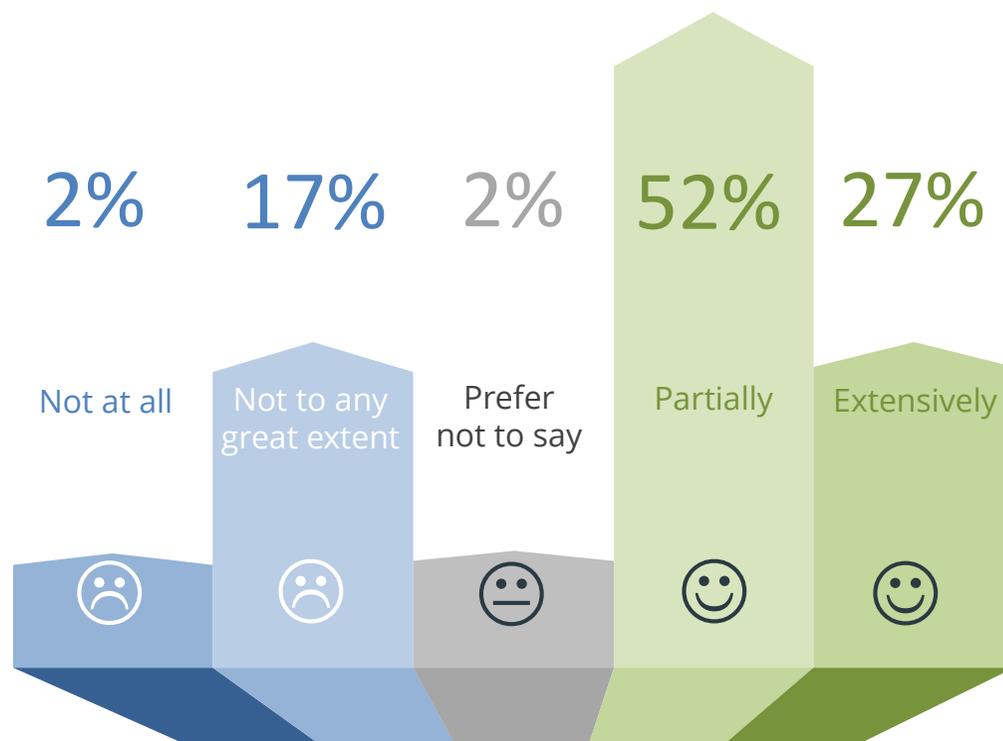


## Undertaking learning requirements

Year 10 and 12 students

Q3

A quarter of students in Year 10 and 12 indicate being fully engaged with learning from home and are undertaking all the requirements made of them. Most of the remaining students say this is partially the case. Of more concern is the near fifth of students not undertaking the requirements in their key subjects.



\* key subjects are those that will be taken in the next stage of education

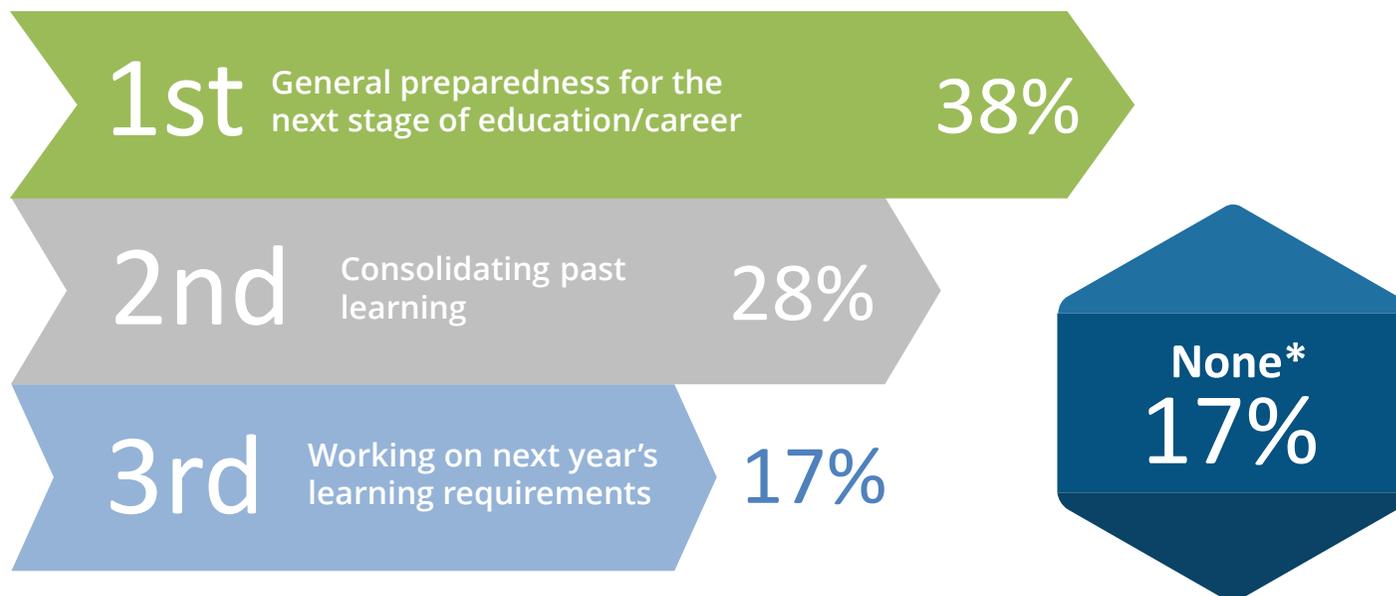
In general, are you undertaking the requirements set by teachers across your key subjects?



## Undertaking learning requirements

Year 11 and 13 students

It is concerning that nearly a fifth of students at the end of their GCSE or A-level are not conducting any activities with their school. There is a bias towards students being involved in general activities, rather than consolidating past learning.



\*Indicating none of the presented options

What learning are you mostly undertaking in your key subjects?

Q4

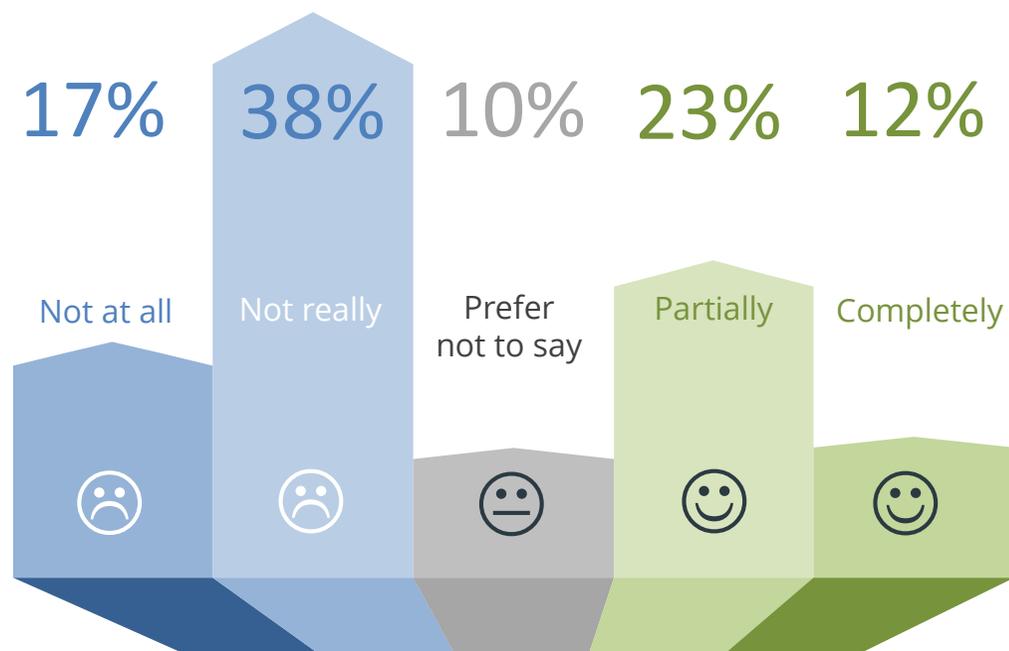


## Sentiment on predicted grade arrangements

Year 11 and 13 students

Q5

Only a minority are completely happy with the arrangements for determining their grades, with over half having a negative sentiment. Negativity is biased to Year 13 A-level students.



Are you happy with the arrangements for determining your predicted grades?

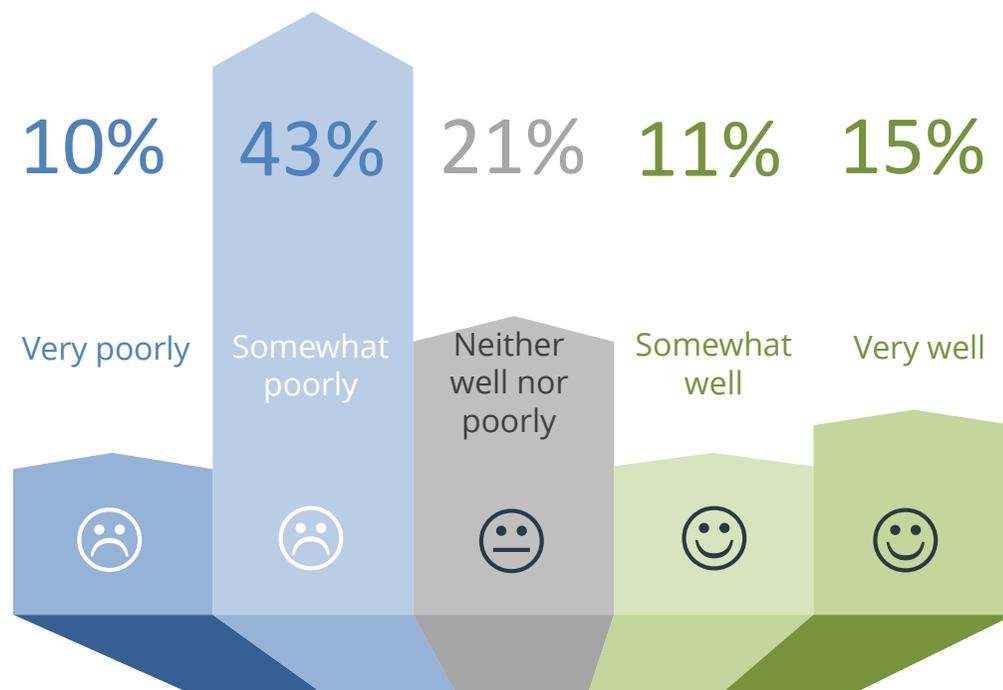


## Predicted grade expectations

Year 11 and 13 students

Q6

Compared to what grades students thought they would obtain after revision and examinations, a majority expect to do less well with the arrangements for predicted grades. Only a minority expect that they will do very well out of the switch to predicted grades.



How well are you expecting to do in your GCSE/A-levels compared to your original expectations after revising and sitting exams?



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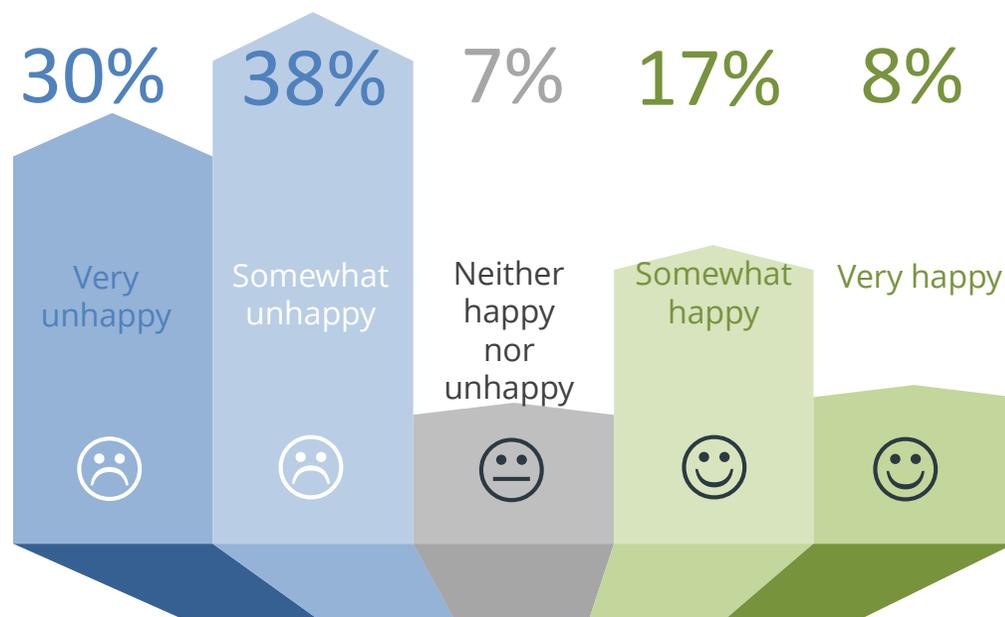


## Feelings on learning from home

All GCSE and A-level years

Q7

The majority of students are currently unhappy with having to learn from home, with a bias towards GCSE students in Year 10. A-level students are coping a little better, but few are currently very happy with the arrangement.



How do you currently feel about learning from home?



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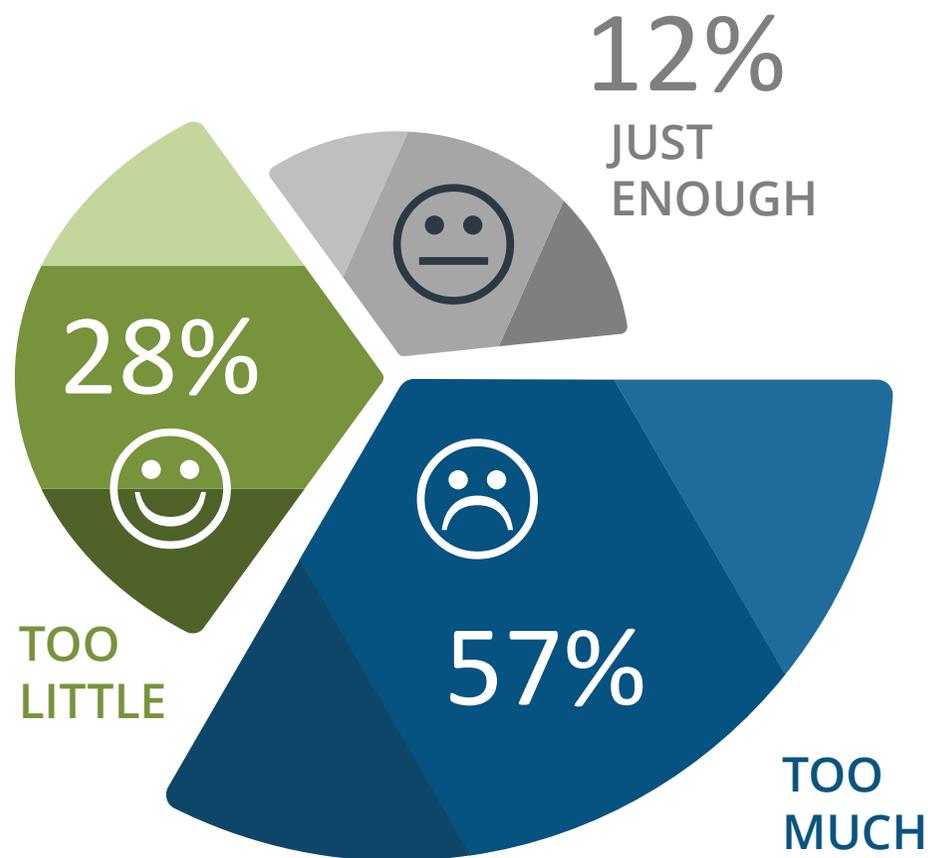


## Schoolwork received

All GCSE and A-level years

Q8

Currently, few students suggest they are receiving too little schoolwork from their teachers, with most of these being GCSE Year 10 students. The majority of GCSE Year 10 and A-level Year 12 students indicate receiving too much schoolwork.



How much schoolwork do you receive from your teachers?



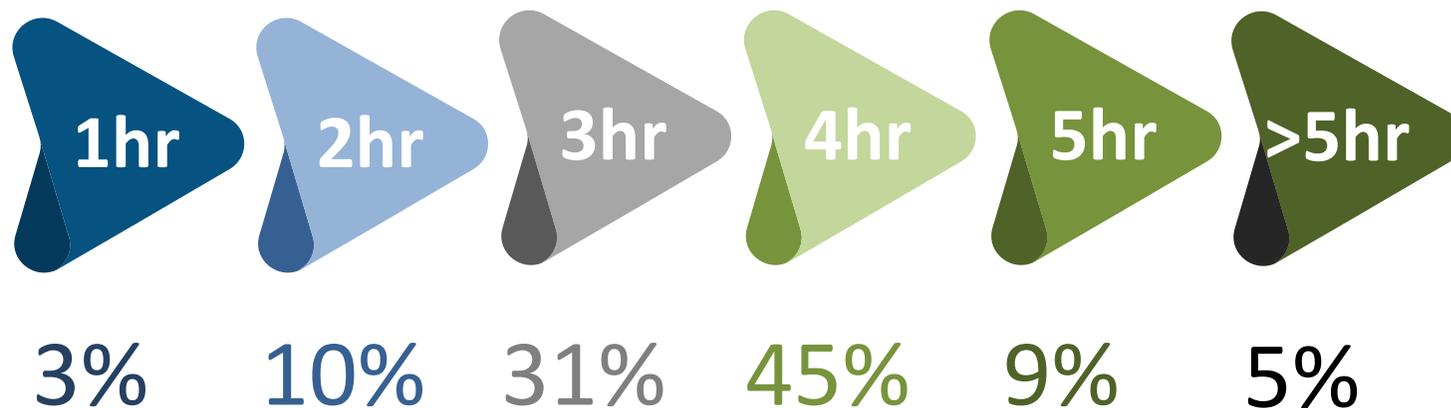
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## Daily hours spent on schoolwork/activities

All GCSE and A-level years

Although the majority of students indicate receiving too much schoolwork from teachers, most students are only receiving 3 to 4 hours of work per day. Very few are required to work for a normal school day (with or without homework included).



On average, how many hours do you spend on schoolwork and activities each day?

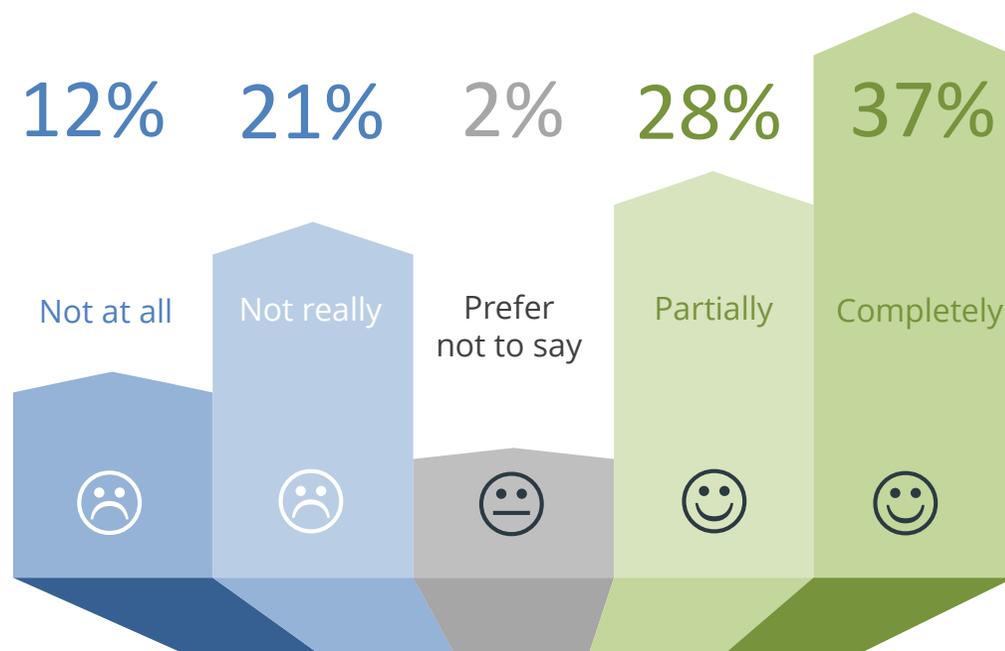


## Adequate computer & internet access

All GCSE and A-level years

Q10

It is of concern that a third of students (more GCSE but fewer A-level) do not have adequate access to IT to engage with their learning from home. Little more than a third of students are in a position where there are no issues.



Do you have adequate access to a computer and internet access to engage with your learning from home?

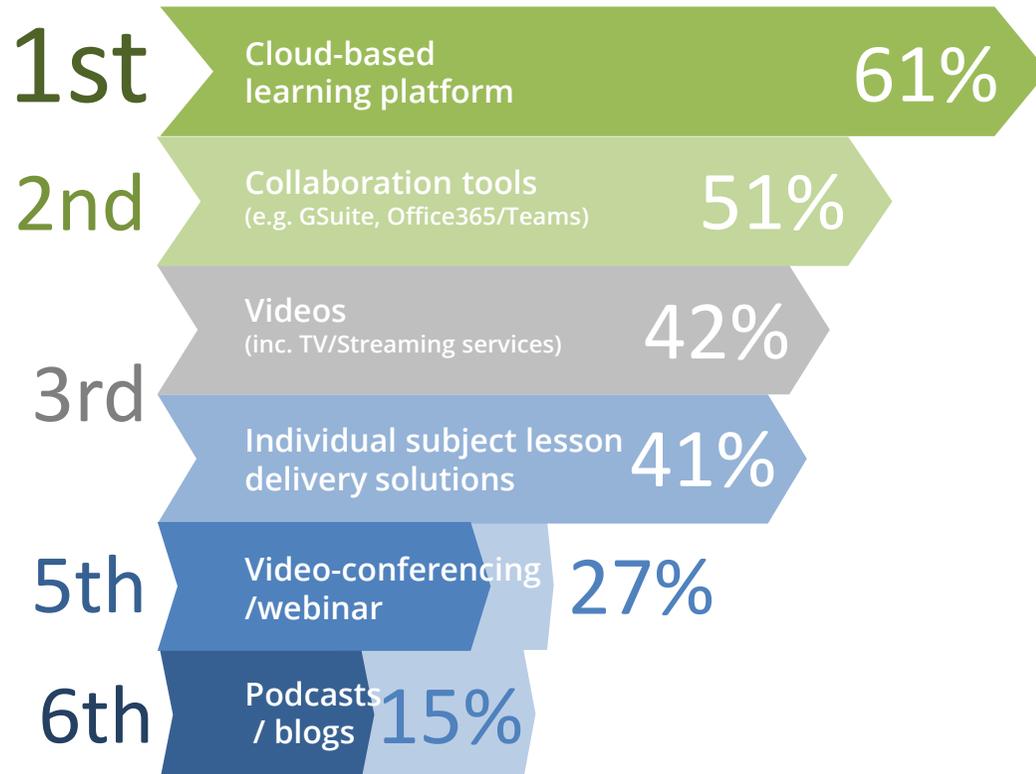


## Methods of teaching

All GCSE and A-level years

Q11

Most students are engaging with teachers in two or more ways, with the school learning platform (e.g. Google Classroom, Firefly) being the most common. Half of students are also interacting via collaboration tools. Although much has been written about video-conferencing software, only a quarter of students indicate engaging with teachers in this way.



Which of the following methods of teaching are currently being used by your key subject teachers?

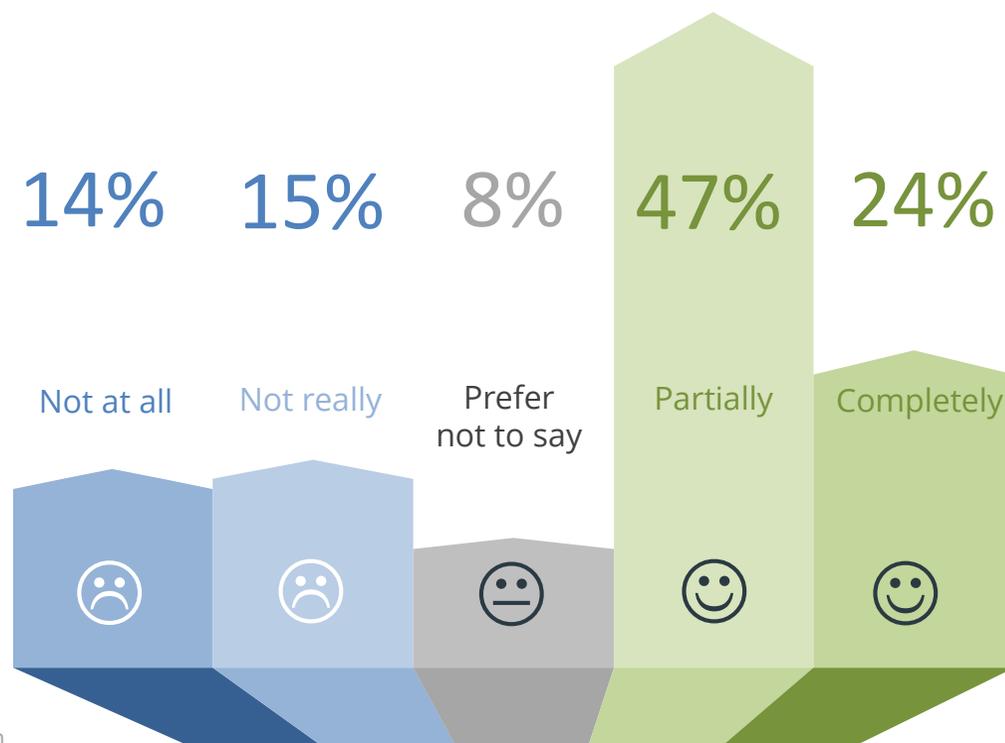


## Keeping up with teacher requirements

All GCSE and A-level years

Q12

A quarter of students are completely keeping up with teacher requirements, while the majority of the remaining students are partially doing so. However, over a quarter of students are not meeting requirements, with the majority of these being Year 10 students.



\* key subjects are those that will be taken in the next stage of education

Do you feel able to keep up with the learning requirements being set by your key subject teachers?



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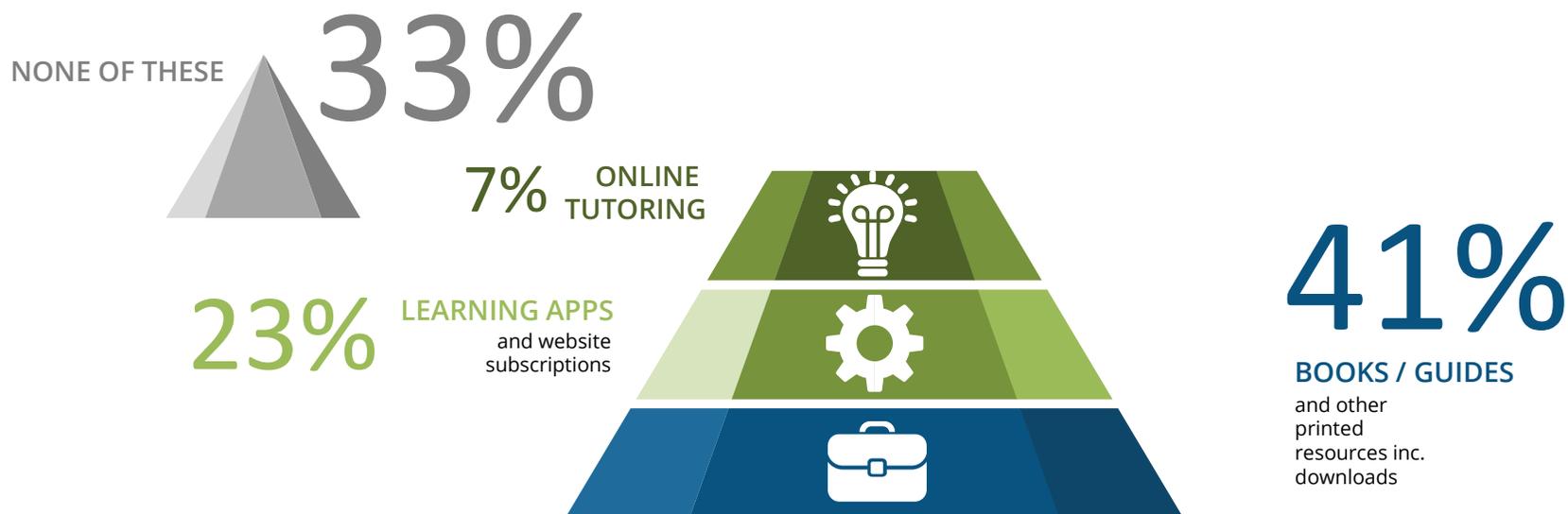


## Spending on home learning resources

All GCSE and A-level years

Students are most likely to indicate the purchase of books and guides, as opposed to the purchase of learning apps and website subscriptions. However, free materials are an alternative. Online tutoring is unlikely to measure highly, but levels of spend are high.

Q13



Have you or your parents spent extra money on the following since you have been home learning?



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## Level of spend on resources

All GCSE and A-level years

Students in Year 11 and 13 are unlikely to have spent on resources, with the focus being on printed resource spend by Year 10 and 12 students. The average is around £90.

Q1C

Av. spend  
**£94**

All students



Roughly, how much has been spent on the items you have selected?

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End