



## **A Level Business**

### **Welcome to a brief introduction to A Level Business at Hurtwood**

The purpose of this document is to give you a taster of what is to come in A Level Business and to recommend some reading that can be done in the coming weeks before you embark on the course at Hurtwood.

#### **Part 1 – The Course**

The course is split into four different themes which we look at over the two years:

**Theme 1: Marketing and people**

**Theme 2: Marketing business activities**

**Theme 3: Business decisions and strategy**

**Theme 4: Global business**

In the first year we cover themes 1 & 2 then we move onto themes 3 & 4 in the second year. Your final A Level result is determined by three external papers which are sat at the end of the second year:

**Paper 1: Themes 1 & 4 (35% of final grade)**

**Paper 2: Themes 2 & 3 (35% of final grade)**

**Paper 3: Pre-released research theme Themes 1-4 (30% of final grade)**

All of the examinations are case-study based and are on actual real life business examples. Therefore looking at what is happening in the business world is highly important. This explains why my pre-course recommendations involve reading around the subject and keeping up with current news and events.

We follow the Edexcel/Pearson exam board in Business:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/business-2015.html>

## **Part 2 – Keeping up with current affairs and the Business news**

All Business students should make an effort to follow what is happening in our world today as the way we do business is changing all the time. We are always looking at current examples in class so you should start to follow the business news straight away.

There are many good publications to choose from but as a simple starting point I would recommend looking at the BBC's Business news page on a regular basis.

Link: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business>

Get into the habit of clicking on this page every day and having a look at some of the articles that appear. You don't need to look at every article but choose the ones that interest you or feature an area of business that you are interested in. For example, if you are into your music and there is an article about Spotify then you should be looking into this in a bit more detail.

Remember, your final exam is based on actual business examples, so what you read about now you might even find you are eventually tested on these stories and we are certainly likely to be discussing current events in class. For example, at the moment there is a huge amount of material on the impact that the coronavirus crisis is having on businesses and this will certainly be something we will be discussing in class from September.

## **Part 3 – Recommended reading**

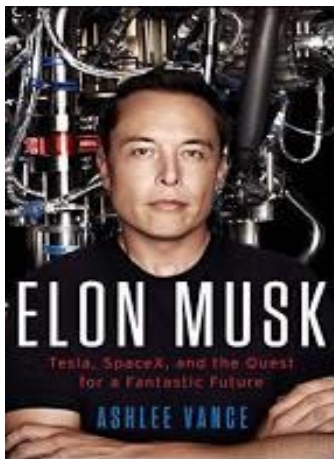
I would never recommend a book to you unless I think it is an interesting and enjoyable read so please give these books a chance. They are all related to big businesses that you will have heard about and the stories of their growth and development link in perfectly with the A Level syllabus. They are all interesting stories about the history and growth of huge multinational businesses which you will enjoy.

I would also suggest you look yourself at different business books in your local bookstore or online. You should try and find business books related to areas that interest you. For example, if film and media is your main interest you should be looking at books related to this industry. Basically, look for a business book that interests you in an area that you may wish to end up working in. Knowledge is the key to success.

## My Recommendations:



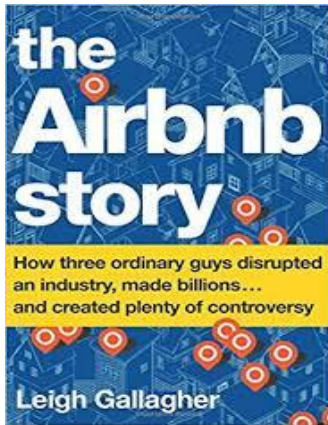
This is my most recent read which looks at the story of Phil Knight, the founder of Nike, and how he built his company formerly know as Blue Ribbon. It is focused on the beginnings of the company and it really helps to understand how the culture of an organisation is built by the owner. You will learn a great deal about Nike's humble start including some great tales about their history. For example Phil Knight wanted the company to be called Dimension Six but no one else liked it and also the story of how the famous swoosh was designed by an Art student for the grand sum of \$35! This book is really well written and is a very enjoyable and accessible read.



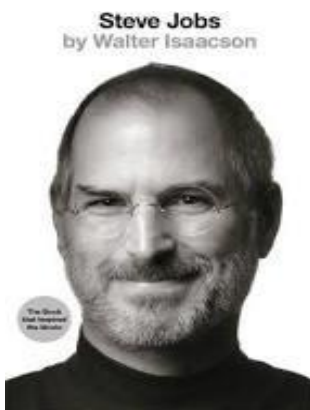
This is the book I got my current A Level students to read in the summer last year. It is a fascinating story of how Elon Musk built his business empire. Did you know that he was the man behind what would later become PayPal? Probably one of my favourite business books as it really highlights the changing business world and it gives an incredible insight into how the methods of computer companies has now changed the manufacturing industry. Just think how Tesla has now impacted on the entire car industry. Great stories about his upbringing as well. I especially liked the fact that as a youngster he read every book in his school library!



This is another excellent read documenting the amazing story of Amazons growth over the past couple of decades. Amazingly, this company was making losses for almost the entire first decade and very nearly went bust during the dotcom crash. This book highlights how the focus on long term growth and development eventually paid off for Jeff Bezos and contains some great insights into the business. Did you know that Netflix runs of Amazon Web Services and that this side of their business is there most profitable area? A fascinating read.



Another excellent book which tells the story of how a few individuals created an industry changing business. It nicely explores the challenges that the founders faced in trying to disrupt an industry and how they had to make changes to their business model to succeed. Did you know that they are called Airbnb because their initial idea was for people to rent inflatable beds on people's floors?



I expect most of you now have an Apple product but do you know the story behind the company and its late founder Steve Jobs? Forget the dreadful film that they brought out this book is far more detailed and gives a great insight into Steve Jobs mind and what inspired him. Read all about how his extraordinary life may have impacted on his product design. Did you know that he once spent a week just living off apples? This is a big book but it is one of the best biography's I have read and is a must for any Apple fans.

So, essentially, my message to anyone starting A Level Business in September is to use this time to extend your reading. Do not worry about learning Business theories and looking at an A Level textbook but start following the business news and get reading some of the books I have recommended. Don't forget, if you really don't enjoy reading all of these books they will also be available on audiobook so you can always listen to someone else read them for you!

**GOOD LUCK & GET READING!**

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