

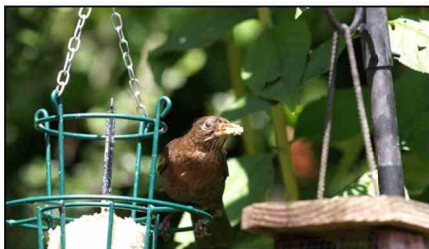
Why is a GCSE in Natural History needed?

Re-engagement with the natural history of Britain has never been more urgent. We need to enable young people to name, observe and record the nature of this country.

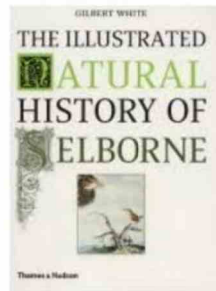


In the past Britain's reputation for recording its natural history was unsurpassed anywhere in the world. Those skills are disappearing as new generations become increasingly disconnected from nature.

A GCSE in Natural History would equip young people to be naturalists and to understand the connection between the environment and health and well-being.



This country is facing increasing challenges due to population, urban development and soaring demands on water and land. It is vital that future generations can identify the animals and plants around them and understand how ecology and human needs inter-link.



Studying natural history is an integral part of Britain's history and culture, by establishing a qualification for young people we will be ensuring this vital traditional wisdom and skill is continued.



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Proposal for a GCSE in Natural History



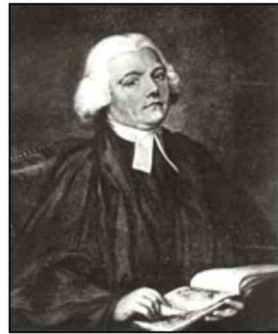
Observe and record nature for the future.

Learn the history of natural history recording in Britain.

Explore the influence of natural history on art, music, literature and culture.

What a GCSE in Natural History would involve

- Observe plants, birds, mammals, insects, and amphibians in various habitats (gardens, parks, woodlands, seashore, moorland etc)
- Record and observe nature coherently and scientifically in words and sketches at different times of day and times of year.
- Name the major animals and plants in any one habitat.
- Understand the basics of ecology in different habitats - i.e. the relationships between individuals and their environment.
- Be able to produce a scientifically useful set of notes that can be used to contribute to national databases.
- Be able to identify native from non-native species and record their distribution in an area.
- Study the history of how nature has been depicted in art, music and literature and study the influence of nature on tv, radio and other media.
- Learn about the history of natural history recording.



Gilbert White



David Attenborough recording *Life Stories* for Radio 4

A GCSE in Natural History would provide a positive, forward-looking approach to wildlife and conservation, enabling young people to understand more fully the importance of biodiversity and learn the skills needed by conservation organisations.

Ray De Young, Associate Professor at the University of Michigan School of Natural Resources and Environment. "If environmental education worked (and, remember, we started back in the 50s) we wouldn't be having the problems we're having."

Tony Juniper: "This is a brilliant idea and I am happy to endorse, support and advocate however I can."

Professor Tim Birkhead FRS: "This is the best idea I have heard about for a long time."



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