

AS/A2 Level FRENCH



Course Guide

Level 3 Two-year course

2010/11

This course will suit students who are interested in the French language, linguistics or acquiring a useful communication tool for Higher Education or a career. A must for students who enjoy an analytical study of language and French culture, and who enjoy the challenge of being able to use the language confidently.

Subject introduction

Students can study French at a level, which enhances their present language skills and allows them to decide how far they would like to develop their command of the language. AS and A2 courses are also available in German and Spanish. An AS is a valuable language qualification, in itself. A2 is ideal for those wishing to pursue a language-orientated career, or further language study or languages at university.

AS and A2 candidates follow the AQA Modern Foreign Languages specification. Each level consists of two modules. The recommended course textbook is used with online materials. The course is designed for those who wish to improve their command of French and gain insight into the country, its people and the francophone world. The GCSE language skills – listening, reading, speaking and writing – are further developed along with students' understanding and response to authentic French materials working towards greater accuracy.

Students build up linguistic competence in preparation for examinations and study a wide variety of topics relevant to contemporary France and other French-speaking cultures. Students are encouraged to have an active interest in the French language, its people and cultural context. Reading widely, using the French media and Internet sites to access current affairs information will enhance their skills.

Year 1 study outline

AS students take two exam units. The topic areas, Media, Popular Culture, Healthy Living and Family provide the framework for learning and assessment.

Unit 1 (70%) is a two hour reading, listening and writing paper requiring responses to authentic material. Listening and reading comprehensions and an essay of 200 words are required.

Unit 2 (30%) is an oral 15-minute test based on a response to a written stimulus and questions on the topics studied.

SEE WHAT'S NEXT

Year 2 study outline

Two further exam units will be prepared for the A2 exam, drawing on three additional study topics: Environment, Multicultural Society and Social Issues.

Unit 3 (70%) is a 2½ hour reading and writing paper. This paper includes reading and listening comprehension and translation into English and French.

New language skills at A2 include extended writing in the target language of an essay of 250 words on a cultural topic.

Unit 4 (30%) is an externally examined oral test of up to 12 minutes in which students are required to demonstrate a definite stance on an independently researched issue of their choice.

The Unit allows candidates to present then express and debate their personal views on the current affairs issue for 4-5 minutes after which the examiner initiates more general discussion on at least two further subjects of topical interest.

Methods of study

Students will experience a variety of teaching and learning methods, with a strong emphasis placed on practical use of French in the classroom. A wide variety of magazine and newspaper articles, CD-ROMs and dedicated IT language software, recordings from

radio & TV are used to explore themes that form a basis for oral & written tasks.

Students benefit from weekly sessions in the digital language laboratory and an additional ¾ hour timetabled oral workshop with a native speaker to develop oral skills. Internet, VLE, subscription language resources and course book web links facilitate students' independent topic research and self-study to consolidate and extend classroom learning – classrooms feature digital projectors and interactive whiteboards.

Special features

A well-established work experience programme in France is offered each year. Other trips to French cultural events are also envisaged. Exchanges are arranged each year, if possible. Students are encouraged to apply to the British Council Partnership Scheme, to carry out their research project in the target language country, funded entirely by the British Council. We have had several successful candidates to date.

Subject combinations and careers

A foreign language is a useful tool in any career, for example, in tourism, international banking and commercial companies. As well as pure language degrees there are numerous possible subject combinations with French at

university, such as European Law, or Business Administration & Management.

Success stories

Students have gone on to university in the UK and France to study a wide range of target language degrees, some choosing pure degrees offering interpreting, linguistics and/or literature study. Language degrees offer a year abroad as part of the course and students can spend time in two countries when studying French with another language.

Students often use their practical language skills in a Gap Year: a former French student completed VSO in Vietnam, teaching pilots English.

Methods of assessment

100% examinations at AS and A2 level. Skills weighting at AS is 30% oral and 70% listening, reading, and writing. At A2 understanding and spoken response counts for 30%, understanding, and written response in French for 70%.