
MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES: FRENCH

The benefit of studying French to A Level is that students finally have the opportunity to branch out and communicate authentically in the target language. In addition to being able to speak and understand 'real' French, students also have the opportunity to discuss a variety of contemporary issues and to broaden their knowledge of the countries in which French is spoken.

Examining Board
AQA

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS TO THE A LEVEL COURSE

Please see the Sixth Form Admissions Policy for the entry requirements to this course.

YEAR 1

The course builds on and extends GCSE knowledge through the following topics:

- The changing nature of the family
- The 'Cyber-society'
- The place of voluntary work
- Culture – contemporary francophone music and the cinema
- Study of one film

YEAR 2

Year 2 of the course is based on the following topics:

- Positive features of a diverse society
- Life for the marginalised
- How criminals are treated
- Politics and immigration
- Study of one book and one film
- Individual research topic

These topic areas form the basis for A Level assessment:

Paper 1: Listening, reading and translation of both English and French texts (50%)

Paper 2: Written exam covering both books or one book and one film (20%)

Speaking: Discussion of a sub-theme based on a stimulus card plus presentation and discussion of individual research topic (30%)

STUDENT VIEWPOINT

As in many subjects there is a significant step up from GCSE to A Level French. Students are given far more opportunities to write and speak spontaneously and to be creative with the language. Clearly this cannot be achieved without sound understanding of grammar and structures; hence this is the focus early on in the course. Students are expected to take more responsibility for their own progress and to ensure that they spend time outside scheduled lessons to master vocabulary and grammar work. Students are scheduled for at least one-half hour per week to work with the Foreign Language Assistant. This practice and individual attention proves invaluable when preparing for the speaking tests. A Level French is a demanding, but also rewarding, subject as students learn both a practical skill and at the same time have the opportunity to discuss, and deepen their knowledge of, current affairs and world issues.

COMPLEMENTARY SUBJECTS

French combines well with any subject in the Arts and Humanities, but many students view a language as a useful and worthwhile addition to the study of scientific and mathematical courses, leaving them with an extra career alternative later in life.

CAREER AND UNIVERSITY OPPORTUNITIES

Each year a number of students apply to read French at university, but Languages also feature on the short list of seven “traditional academic subjects” on advisory material for Oxbridge admission and in their words: “The study of A Level French is, therefore, to be recommended as a useful, and potentially lucrative, skill for later in life, but also as advantageous for those who wish to apply for some of the traditional academic courses at our top universities.”