

Modern Foreign Languages

Frequently Asked Questions

What is GCSE languages like?

GCSE is very much like you've done at key stage three. It is still divided into listening, speaking, reading and writing, and all 4 skills are worth 25%. All work from key stage three has been leading towards GCSE so all the assessments have been in the style of the GCSE. The topics are different and a bit more grown up (looking at jobs, life beyond school, causes of stress, global issues, relationships, etc) but the style of the content is still similar.

Is there any coursework?

No, it is 100% exam assessed. The speaking exam takes place just before the main Year 11 exam season and is a 15 minute one-to-one interview with your teacher. The other exams are short: 35 minutes to 1 hour 20 minutes and take place with all your other exams.

I do French and German and I don't know which one to choose...

We would always tell you to choose the one you find most straightforward or to choose both, but nobody can make the decision for you.

Can I do both French and German?

Yes, if you are learning both French and German in Year 9, we encourage you to do both if you want to.

Can I do Spanish?

Spanish is offered as a GCSE from scratch. You need to do it in addition to your main language of French and German. You would need to be prepared to work hard because you'll be starting Spanish as a beginner and will need to get to GCSE standard. So it requires hard work, however we expect the Spanish class to be quite small and full of enthusiastic linguists - that will mean you make very rapid progress. Please note that the Spanish will only run if there are enough students who opt for it.

Will I cope with it?

The GCSE is designed for learners of all abilities and offers grades 1-9. If you participate in your lessons and do your "little and often" learning at home, you will be able to make good progress.

Is it Higher and Foundation?

Yes – there are tiers in MFL. The foundation tier covers grades 1-5 and the higher tier covers the top of grade 3 to grade 9. You do not need to worry about the tiering; your teacher and you will make that decision in the Autumn of Year 11 based on your target grade, your mock results and your general performance.



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How many hours of French/German per week will I have?

You will have 5 hours of MFL a fortnight. You will also need to allocate time for MFL homework once a week; revision and consolidation time is very important to achieve proficiency in a language. We suggest to do a little bit of French / German each week. Little and often is much more rewarding and successful than leaving a lot of learning till late.

Are there going to be additional support lessons/sessions in Year 10 and in Year 11?

Yes, you can join weekly revision and intervention sessions. These are one hour long, often carousel style, after-school sessions, with a focus on learning in a fun, collaborative way. We encourage all our GCSE students to partake. So far, students who joined us have been seeing real benefit of well-structured, extra learning in a less formal setting.

How will I practise speaking?

There are four skills in MFL: listening, speaking, reading and writing. You will be practising all four skills each week. In some lessons we will focus on one to two of them only, while in most lessons each week, you will be exposed to all four skills. Speaking is practised in pairs, small groups and one-to-one with your teacher whenever possible. We will be mastering picture description speaking skills, general conversation-style speaking, short role plays and spontaneous speaking too. What's more, speaking is often extensively practised during our weekly intervention sessions which you will be invited to attend. You will also have chance to practise in pairs or small groups with our foreign language volunteers, who come into school just to help you with your languages.

Are there any trips?

French GCSE students have the chance to come on the Year 7 Normandy trip as Language Leaders. There is usually also a KS4 and KS5 French exchange to Brittany, which is funded by legacy EU Erasmus money. German students have the hugely popular trip to Cologne Christmas markets in December which incorporates a visit to our partner school in Aachen. We can also look at you doing your work experience abroad through one of our partner schools.

