

# French, German and Spanish

Exam Board: Edexcel

The Modern Languages department are pleased to be able to offer students who have already studied French, German or Spanish to GCSE level the opportunity to continue with their language studies to AS/A2 Level. Whatever language you choose to study the specification and format of each Unit is the same. The course content itself is language specific and prepares students to become well informed and effective communicators in their chosen language. A Level specifications will be changing from September 2016 and teachers will adapt course content in line with these changes once details are finalised by the exam board.

## Summary of course content

**AS level** - is based on the following general topic areas:

- Youth culture and concerns
- Lifestyle: health and fitness
- The world around us: travel, tourism, environmental issues and the target language speaking world
- Education and employment

Unit 1: Spoken expression and response: Rewards students for their ability to converse in the foreign language on a general topic area that they have chosen in advance from the topic areas.

Unit 2: Understanding and written response: Requires students to understand and convey their understanding of foreign language texts and recordings. Students will also need to produce an essay to demonstrate an ability to manipulate the foreign language in continuous writing.

**A2 Level** - is based on the following general topic areas in addition to those above:

- Customs , traditions, beliefs and religions
- National and international events: past, present and future
- Literature and the arts

Unit 3: Understanding and spoken response: Requires students to demonstrate the effectiveness of their foreign language skills through presenting and taking a clear stance on any issue of their choice. Students will need to defend their views and enter into a debate.

Unit 4: Research, understanding and written response: Requires students to demonstrate skills in Advanced level language writing and translation from English into target language. Students are also required to demonstrate evidence of independent, Advanced level language reading and research linked to an area of particular interest and the culture of a target language-speaking country.

## Summary of assessment scheme

**Unit 1:** 8-10 minute assessment in 2 parts:

**Section A:** students respond to 4 Edexcel-set questions on a stimulus related to their chosen general topic area

**Section B:** the teacher/examiner leads the student in a discussion that links the same general topic area and its sub-topics

**Unit 2:** There are 3 sections:

**Section A:** listening and responding to a range of target-language questions

**Section B:** reading and responding to mainly target language test types

**Section C:** writing 200-220 words in the form of a letter, report or article based on a target language stimulus

**Unit 3:** 11-13 minute assessment:  
Students outline their chosen issue for 1 minute, taking a definite stance. They then justify and defend their opinions for up to 4 minutes before the teacher/examiner changes the topic of conversation.

**Unit 4:** There are 3 sections:

**Section A:** a short translation exercise to transfer meaning from English to the foreign language.

**Section B:** an essay - either creative writing or discursive - based on the general topic areas.

**Section C:** a research based essay (240-270 words) linked to an area of interest that the student can relate to the culture and/or society of a target language country or community.

### **Why you should consider studying French, German or Spanish in the 6<sup>th</sup> Form**

In addition to building on the language skills mastered at GCSE level, studying one or more languages at AS/A2 level covers a huge variety of topic areas. If you are interested in languages and communication and enjoy learning about other cultures and ways of life, then this could be the course for you. There are a number of options in the course where you can choose your topic or question to suit your interests. Whether you want to use language for work, for further study, training, or for leisure, this course will equip you with the necessary skills and knowledge.

### **Comments from students who have studied languages in the past**

*"Although I found the research for the oral exam challenging, being able to choose my own topic meant that I could focus on something that interested me..."*

***"It was quite a jump from GCSE to AS Level, but I enjoy the topical discussions and it is interesting to look at current affairs from a different angle"***

*"I hope to be able to use my language skills in the future – working with the language assistants has improved my confidence and travelling abroad has been great fun."*

***"Lots of the work was based on newspaper articles, magazines and foreign news websites – even sports results!"***

*"Learning about a different language and culture in such depth has been a real eye-opener. It has really made me think twice about some of the things we do and say here..."*

### **Frequently asked questions**

#### **What GCSE grades do I need for languages at AS or A level?**

You must have at least a 'B' in GCSE in the language you wish to study at A Level. This is an academic course and students should feel confident in the 4 skills of Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking. You need to be interested in developing this understanding and broadening your knowledge of the countries and their culture.

#### **What type of resources will I use?**

This is a new syllabus so whatever language you choose the department will ensure that you have access to the most up to date resources, i.e., newspaper articles and magazines, educational websites, television reports or CDs, DVDs. Grammar Workbooks and Self-Study Booklets and CDs.

#### **Will studying a language assist me with my other A Level courses?**

Yes! Current Year 12 and 13 students find that issues discussed in language lessons overlap with topics studied in History (the effects of World War II), Sociology (family life, changing values), General Studies (current affairs, terrorism etc.) and even Business Studies, Economics and Geography! Likewise other subjects can help you gain a better understanding of the issues we discuss in language lessons.

#### **Still not quite sure about studying a language?**

Having a language at AS or A level will certainly improve your employability, in particular with companies that have international branches. A language is considered an academic subject and whilst studying a language is not always easy, it can be great fun. In the interests of cultural research we even sample food from time to time!

If you have questions about any aspect of the course, anyone of us in the department will be only too happy to help!

***Ros McFiggans, Head of Modern Languages***