Modern Languages

We offer GCSE French (AQA 8652), GCSE German (AQA 8662) and GCSE Spanish (AQA 8692). Pupils are strongly recommended to study at least one modern foreign language (MFL), though several boys opt to study two. Furthermore, for dual linguists, there is the option of studying French on Thursday afternoons.

With ever increasing globalisation, the knowledge of a foreign language has never been more important; with Brexit and the challenges it brings, this reinforces the case even more so for English speakers. Some companies are now expecting knowledge in another language. Law and investment banking firms may offer higher salaries to those with MFL skills, and certain companies (BMW, Siemens) require conversational ability as a requisite for employment.

It is, however, not just for better job prospects that taking a language at GCSE is worthwhile. The study of another culture and language is an enriching experience. A step up from Year 9, pupils study all of the following themes on which the exams are based:

Theme 1: Identity and culture
Theme 2: Local, national, international and global areas of interest
Theme 3: Current and future study and employment

In Years 10 and 11, pupils gain greater access to often individual lessons with our dedicated foreign language assistants in French, German and Spanish, giving access to a native speaker both to improve pronunciation and offer insights into another culture.

To dispel the myth that modern languages are difficult, essay heavy and require a lot of revision, results at the School at GCSE for all three MFLs are consistently good. The MFL course is very much skills based, which builds on work done at Key Stage 3, and is not open to cramming facts like in other subjects, which can make it a good balance with content heavy subjects to share workload over the two years.

Overview of course and exam content

GCSE French, German and Spanish all have a Foundation tier (grades 1–5) and a Higher tier (grades 4–9).

Pupils sit four exams: **Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking**. Each exam is worth 25% of the overall grade.

The speaking exam is structured as follows:

Role-play – 10 marks (recommended to last between 1 and 1.5 minutes at both tiers)

Reading aloud task and short conversation – 15 marks (recommended to last in total between 2 and 2.5 minutes at Foundation tier and between 3 and 3.5 minutes at Higher tier)

Reading aloud task - minimum 35 words of text at Foundation tier and 50 words at Higher tier

Short unprepared conversation

Photo card discussion – 25 marks (recommended to last between 4 and 5 minutes in total at Foundation tier, and between 6 and 7 minutes in total at Higher tier). Response to the content of the photos on the card (recommended to last approximately 1 minute at Foundation tier and approximately 1.5 minutes at Higher tier)

Unprepared conversation (recommended to last between 3 and 4 minutes at Foundation tier and between 4.5 and 5.5 minutes at Higher tier)

The writing exam is structured as follows:

Question 1 – translation of sentences from English into the target language, minimum 50 words in total (10 marks)

Question 2 - (overlap question) – student produces a piece of writing in response to three compulsory bullet points, approximately 90 words in total. There is a choice from two questions (15 marks)

Question 3 – open-ended writing task (pupil responds to two compulsory bullet points, producing approximately 150 words in total). There is a choice from two questions (25 marks)

"To have another language is to possess a second soul."
Charlemagne

At a Glance

Exam Board
AQA
GCSE French (8652), German (8662) and Spanish (8692)

Assessment Type
Pupils sit four exams:

- 25% Listening
- 25% Reading
- 25% Writing
- 25% Speaking

Head of Department
M Jackson
m.jackson@lsf.org