

French

Why study French?

There are lots of benefits to learning a language at A level. They include:

Developing your language skills in both French and your mother tongue
Gaining an understanding of another culture
Having the time to reflect on various aspects of modern society
Enhancing your employment prospects

By taking this subject as a deaf student, you will be challenging many people's expectations of what deaf people can achieve.

What does the course cover and what is expected of you?

Social Issues and trends

Aspects of French-speaking society: current trends

- The changing nature of the French family
- The 'cyber-society'
- The place of voluntary work

Aspects of French-speaking society: current issues

- Positive features of a diverse society
- Life for the marginalised
- How criminals are treated

Political and Artistic Culture

Artistic culture in the French-speaking world

- A culture proud of its heritage
- Contemporary francophone music
- Cinema: the 7th art form

Aspects of political life in the French-speaking world

- Teenagers, the right to vote and political commitment
- Demonstrations, strikes – who holds the power?
- Politics and immigration

Literary texts and films

Students must study one film and one text or two texts. There is a list of set texts/ films to choose from.

Individual research project

Students must identify a subject or a key question which is of interest to them and which relates to a country or countries where French is spoken

Work in class is mainly oral with a lot of individual work with the "assistant". The normal language of the classroom is French but grammar is tackled in English and is mainly "remedial" work on basic structures, not fully mastered at GCSE. Listening tasks are all done with "live" speakers. You are never required to work with CDs. Reading materials are mainly taken from up-to-date magazines and newspapers. In Year 13, cultural topics are chosen according to a student's interests. Oral work includes role-playing and discussion of topical issues. Skill in using a dictionary is important.

In Advanced level study you should expect to spend 5-8 hours a week on work outside the classroom. This will include assessments set by teachers and background reading, preparing for and writing essays.

Where can it take you?

You will have acquired valuable listening and speaking skills and a broadening of general knowledge. A qualification in a foreign language is evidence of high general linguistic ability when applying for jobs or for higher education. You can choose to continue with French at University as a single honours or combine it with a wide range of other subjects. Key language careers are Travel and Tourism, Translating and Interpreting, Teaching, Law, Journalism and Marketing.

Entry requirements

Students intending to study AS and 'Advanced level' French should aim to obtain a Grade 6 at GCSE French.

Course assessment

This is a linear course. This means that students opting for an A Level in this subject will be committing to a two year linear course, with all units examined at the end of Year 13. AS Levels will still exist and can be taken as a stand-alone qualification at the end of Year 12, but students taking this option and then continuing to study the subject in Year 13 would have to sit all the A Level units as linear exams to gain that qualification. There are 3 exams at the end of Year 13.

Paper 1 – Listening, Reading, and Writing

2 hours 30 minutes

110 marks (50% of A level)

Paper 2 - Written exam

2 hours

80 marks in total (20% of A-level)

Paper 3 - Speaking exam

21–23 minutes (including 5 minutes preparation time)

60 marks in total (30% of A-level)

Exam Board

AQA

Student View

I decided to pick French because I enjoyed the topics at GCSE, and thought carrying on would be a challenge. I especially enjoyed developing my writing skills and learning new vocabulary - sometimes I learn words that I don't even know in English! At A level, there are topics like immigration and crime which can be extremely useful in terms of general knowledge.

To any student considering French, I would recommend it as it is a really good challenge. You can develop your language skills and find out more about French culture.

Teachers Tip

You are usually in very small groups and the course can be tailored to your interests. Speaking and listening assessments are carried out by the class teacher, so you will be familiar with their speech patterns. To develop your language, go online and read newspapers and magazines. Enjoy watching French films and try watching them with French subtitles.