

A Level French (AQA)

Course outline:

'Teaching should enable students to express their ideas and thoughts in another language and to understand and respond to its speakers, both in speech and in writing. It should also provide opportunities for them to communicate for practical purposes, learn new ways of thinking and read great literature in the original language. Language teaching should provide the foundation for learning further languages, equipping students to study and work in other countries' (The Curriculum: Gallimaufry to Coherence.)

By studying French A level, you will gain a greater understanding of the countries and cultures where the language you are studying is spoken; you will develop key skills for communication and listening at a higher level; you will discover more about how language works and you will gain confidence in your use of the language.

St Peter's School aims to develop linguists who are open-minded and adaptable to new experiences and who belong in a multicultural world. You will explore a variety of different themes within the French culture in year 12, including:

Aspects of French-speaking society, including the changing nature of family, cyber-society, and voluntary work and Artistic culture in the French-speaking world, including heritage, music and cinema. You will also study a French film and learn how to analyse it in the target language.

In year 13, your studies will develop to include:

Social issues in the French-speaking world, including multiculturalism, diversity, crime, integration and racism, and Politics in the French-speaking world, the right to vote, immigration, strikes and unions. You will continue to study a French film, and also study and analyse a novel. You will also prepare an Independent Research Project, on a topic of your own choosing based on the culture of a French-speaking country.

How you will be assessed

Paper 1- Listening, Reading and Writing

Written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes

100 marks

50% of A-level

Questions

- Listening and responding to spoken passages from a range of contexts and sources covering different registers and adapted as necessary. Material will include complex factual and abstract content and questions will target main points, gist and detail. Studio recordings will be used and students will have individual control of the recording.

All questions are in French, to be answered with non-verbal responses or in French (30 marks)

- Reading and responding to a variety of texts written for different purposes, drawn from a range of authentic sources and adapted as necessary. Material will include complex factual and abstract content and questions will target main points, gist and detail.

All questions are in French, to be answered with non-verbal responses or in French (50 marks)

- Translation into English; a passage of minimum 100 words (10 marks)
- Translation into French; a passage of minimum 100 words (10 marks).

Paper 2: Writing

Written exam: 2 hours

80 marks in total

20% of A-level

Questions

Either one question in French on a set text from a choice of two questions and one question in French on a set film from a choice of two questions or two questions in French on set texts from a choice of two questions on each text. All questions will require a critical appreciation of the concepts and issues covered in the work and a critical and analytical response to features such as the form and the technique of presentation, as appropriate to the work studied (eg the effect of narrative voice in a prose text or camera work in a film).

Paper 3: Speaking

Individual research project plus

One of four themes (Aspects of French-speaking society: current trends, Aspects of French-speaking society: current issues, Artistic culture in the French-speaking world, Aspects of political life in the French-speaking world)

Oral exam: 21–23 minutes (including 5 minutes preparation time)

60 marks in total

30% of A-level

Questions

Discussion of a sub-theme with the discussion based on a stimulus card (5–6 minutes). The student studies the card for 5 minutes at the start of the test (25 marks).

Presentation (2 minutes) and discussion (9–10 minutes) of individual research project (35 marks).

Entry Requirements

You should have a grade 6 or higher at GCSE before starting the course. You need to have an interest in the foreign language as well as a desire to learn about the countries and cultures where that language is spoken. You should have good listening skills and a desire to communicate spontaneously verbally and in writing.

Where the course could take you

An A Level language qualification can lead to further study up to and beyond degree level. Employment possibilities are many and varied ranging from teaching, following a degree course, to working for a company in the UK or abroad, which has links with France and French-speaking countries. Employers in a wide range of industries such as tourism, retail outlets and international businesses in general welcome staff with language expertise.