

SIXTH FORM MODERN LANGUAGES

AQA (GCE FRENCH 2650/ GERMAN 2660/ SPANISH 2695)

WHY LEARN A LANGUAGE?

Modern Languages in the Sixth Form bring together the practical skills which can remain an asset for the rest of your life: in work, travel and leisure. Developing and debating your ideas in a foreign tongue will give you the confidence to communicate. You will learn to organise your thoughts and to present yourself with self-assurance and determination. One cannot become properly acquainted with a country and its citizens without knowing its language. As Britain and Europe continue to work closely together both politically and on a business level, speaking a language remains a vital skill. It is hugely rewarding to be able to converse with people in their own language and a language at A level will challenge you intellectually. The experience of another country's society, literature, cinema and attitudes is extremely enriching and provides us with a frame of reference for our own culture, enabling us to learn about and better understand our own way of life. Linguists are out-going, confident, ambitious and have an excellent appreciation of the world beyond Britain. They are also much in demand among employers.

All three A languages taught at Eltham are currently being studied by pupils at university level. We have had considerable Oxbridge modern languages success in recent years and provide additional tuition to pupils interested in pursuing this route. A modern language can be combined with almost any other subject at University. All languages courses provide students with the invaluable opportunity of spending a year abroad living, working, studying and growing up in a foreign country. It's an experience which stays with you for life.

Each year the media is full of gloomy tales of a decline in modern languages. These figures reflect the extraordinary decision made by the government to no longer make GCSE languages compulsory. A language demonstrates an ability to cope with a challenge and it will be like no other A level you take.

Each year, a few people opt to study two languages at A level. This is a perfectly usual choice for really strong linguists; we would not necessarily recommend it if you are not totally secure in your language.

A LEVEL LANGUAGES AT ELTHAM COLLEGE

The Department has much to offer in addition to the examined courses. The Modern Languages Society promotes the learning of languages at Eltham College and beyond. Its aim is to increase cultural awareness of the countries whose languages we are studying through a series of events, including cinema, ballet and theatre trips, visiting speakers and meetings at school. Recent theatre trips have included: *Cabaret* (Kander and Ebb), *The Trial* (Kafka), *En Attendant Godot* (Beckett), *The Life of Galileo* (Brecht), *Thérèse Raquin* (Zola), *Don Quixote* (Cervantes) and *The Seagull* (Chekhov). The Spanish Department is fond of dance and has taken trips to Sadler's Wells (*Havana Rakatan*) and to the West End musical *Evita*. Recent cinema trips have included *The White Rose* and *The Class*. Some languages trips are run in conjunction with the Upper Sixth Liberal Studies Programme, which this year ran a visit to the Moctezuma/Aztec exhibition at the British Museum.

The Department is exceptionally well resourced and has an up-to-date library of excellent European films. These can be borrowed on an individual basis and we organise periodic showings of films in the MRC.

All A Level languages are taught by two teachers. In addition, you will attend one extra 30 minute lesson per week with our resident languages assistants, whose responsibility is to prepare you for the oral component, which is a major element in any A level languages examination.

Our courses are broadly based to cater for the personal interests of pupils and introduce them, through another language, to aspects of other subjects, such as economics, politics, history, geography and literature.

ABROAD

All pupils who opt for an A level language are expected to participate in either an Exchange or a language study visit. The academic exchanges, the primary purpose of which is study abroad, are arranged on a reciprocal basis, the incoming partner receiving tuition at Eltham College. The College will do what it can to help where reciprocal hospitality is not possible and cases of financial difficulty receive attention through the Travel Club. It is hoped that dual linguists are able to spend time in each country. If the French, German and Spanish trips run simultaneously, it is often possible to make separate arrangements for pupils to travel to the country independently.

All **Spanish** students in Lower Sixth undertake a one week AS Level language study course during the Easter holidays. The academic visit usually takes place in Salamanca and provides intensive revision which is of particular benefit in preparation for the AS Speaking Examination and the cultural topic for the A2 paper. The Spanish Department has also run trips farther afield to Mexico and Cuba. It is hoped that we will run a trip to Cuba in February 2011.

All **German** students take part in the Exchange to the Bertolt Brecht Schule in Nuremberg. Usually the German group comes to London for a week just prior to February half term and they spend time in London with their teachers, as well as attending some school. We return to Nuremberg at the end of the Spring term and visit various Nuremberg sights. Recent trips have included the remnants of Hitler's rally grounds, the DokuZentrum and Albrecht Dürer's house. We have also taken a day trip to Munich to visit the Olympic Stadium and the city's art museums. In addition to the Exchange, there is often a three day trip **German** trip to Berlin. Sights visited include Potsdamer Platz, the Reichstag, the remnants of the Berlin Wall, the East German Stasi (Secret Police) prison and the Olympiastadion, venue of the 2006 World Cup Final. In recent years we have also run trips to Hamburg, Lübeck and Vienna. All of our trips depend very much on the enthusiasm of the students who opt for the subject.

Having previously run an exchange for all Lower Sixth students, the **French** department has now introduced as one week AS and A2 language study course during the Easter holidays. The academic visit is likely to take place in Nice and provides specific coaching for the AS and A2 oral examinations. Some study time will also be spent on the cultural topics for the A2 paper. There have been numerous Sixth Form trips to Paris in recent years, and the French department may also offer a trip to Brussels, which would be of particular benefit to students

studying Politics or Economics. The French department is investigating the introduction of French debating. This academically rigorous extra-curricular option would allow students to compete with students of other independent schools and it is excellent preparation for the demands of the A2 oral examination.

Modern Languages are a natural A level choice for any pupil with an interest in Drama. The Department is always open to exploiting pupil talent and plans are afoot for a languages revue and cabaret show in autumn 2010.

Please note the trips and activities we run vary from year to year. Full reports of recent visits can be read in The Elthamian and at eltham-college.org.uk

SUBJECT COMBINATIONS

Language A Levels offer a rich and satisfying Sixth Form course for those who are seriously considering studying languages at university. They combine naturally with all arts and humanities; many scientists choose at least an AS language to give breadth to their study, and many scientists end up completing the full A level course.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE COURSES

These are the same for French, German and Spanish

AS

The AS course will cover:

- **Media:** TV, advertising and communication technology
- **Popular culture:** cinema, music and fashion/ trends
- **Healthy living/lifestyle:** exercise, health and well-being and holidays
- **Family/relationships:** relationships within the family, friendships and marriage/partnerships.

The AS specification has 2 units:

Unit 1: Listening, Reading and Writing (externally examined)

Written Paper: 2 hours

Weighting: 70% of total AS/ 35% of total A Level marks

Candidates will answer a range of questions based on approximately 5 minutes of heard material and on a selection of written stimulus texts. They will also respond in writing to a question based on one of the AS topics.

In all three languages you will have two teachers (four lessons of each) to prepare you for this unit. Course books used are: *Elan* (French), *Animo* (Spanish) and *Zeitgeist* (German).

Unit 2: Speaking Test

Speaking Test : 35 minutes (including 20 minutes preparation time)

Weighting: 30% of total AS/15% of total A Level marks

Candidates will discuss a target-language stimulus card based on one of the AS topics and take part in a conversation covering three further AS topics. The exam is conducted by a visiting external examiner.

A2

The A2 course will cover:

- **Environment:** pollution, energy and protecting the planet
- **The multi-cultural society:** immigration, integration and racism
- **Contemporary social issues:** wealth and poverty, law and order and the impact of scientific and technological progress
- **Cultural topic:** the study of a target language speaking region/community or the study of a period of 20th century history from a target language-speaking country/community or the study of a novelist/dramatist/poet from a target language-speaking country/community or the study of a director/architect/musician/painter from a target language-speaking country/ community.

The A2 specification has 2 units:

Unit 3: Listening, Reading and Writing (externally examined)

Written Paper: 2 hours 30 minutes

Weighting: 35% of total A Level marks

Candidates will answer a range of questions based on approximately 6 minutes of heard material and on a selection of written texts. They will also respond in writing to a question based on one of the four A2 cultural topic areas.

Unit 4: Speaking Test

Speaking Test 35 minutes (including 20 minutes preparation time)

Weighting: 15% of total A Level marks

Candidates will present a point of view based on a target-language stimulus card from one of the A2 topic areas and take part in a conversation covering three further A2 topics.

LANGUAGES AVAILABLE

FRENCH

French is spoken by over 300 million people as a native or second language and is also the official language in 29 countries over five continents. The ability to communicate in French is not only an essential skill for travel, but also in the world of work. French, along with English, is the official language used by the United Nations, UNESCO, NATO and a large number of other international organisations. France is the most visited country in the world, receiving over 79 million foreign tourists annually who enjoy its cities, countryside, mountains and beaches. Its capital, Paris, is not only one of the most culturally rich cities in the world but also a major European centre for law and trade.

GERMAN

German is mother tongue to more Europeans than any other language and is widely spoken across Central and Eastern Europe. Germany remains the powerhouse of Central Europe, and the development of Berlin in the past ten years has created a capital city unlike any other in Europe. A knowledge of German is extremely useful in the world of work: *“We import more from Germany than from any other country in the world; we export more to Germany than to any other country in the world bar the USA”* (Source: BBC News, November 2008) Germany is the most important European economic power, producing more than one quarter of the EU’s gross domestic product. Almost 1000 British companies, including all the major UK multinationals, have subsidiaries in Germany. The German language sits well with Science: it is the second most commonly used language in which to write a work of scientific research – especially engineering, chemistry and physics. In terms of complexity, German and English belong to the same West Germanic language family and share thousands of similar words and phrases, especially in terms of computer, telecommunications and medical vocabulary.

SPANISH

The importance of Spanish extends well beyond the Iberian peninsula. Spanish is the second international language and has over 350 million speakers. It covers most of Central and South America, and a significant minority of United States residents. Its cultural wealth includes a literature of world importance and fine art and architecture. Since the death of Franco in 1975, Spain has undergone an extraordinary transformation, joining the EU in 1986 and hosting the Olympic Games in Barcelona in 1992. It is now truly at the heart of Europe and its immense cultural contribution is now being recognised. Spain is also an extremely attractive country to visit, and its modernity and style have lasting appeal. For those who master the language, South and Central America offer remarkable interest and many language-based careers may include periods of time there. South America is considered a huge, untapped commercial market and knowledge of Spanish is a definite plus for many large companies.

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