

## Modern Languages

The importance of competence in one or more modern languages is well recognised today. Language skills – no longer confined to the purely linguistic professions – are an important adjunct to an increasing range of careers, and our students must be prepared to take up opportunities for work in other countries or, indeed, be able to compete with workers from elsewhere in the world. It is equally important in today's world to gain an understanding of the cultures of our neighbours. Sixth-form language study offers valuable insights into the literary tradition, political systems and current affairs of our EU partners and beyond. Moreover, the modern languages courses will complement a wide range of other academic subject choices to complete a rounded academic profile.

### **A-level French, German and Spanish**

These courses build on the skills acquired up to GCSE, combining the practical aspects of language learning with insights into the culture of the country concerned. Students will be introduced to a wide range of material dealing with current affairs, social issues, history, politics and literature. They will gain a sound knowledge of the language, which will equip them both for further specialist study if they so wish, or for more practical applications in the world of work and leisure.

The department has a dedicated ICT resources area for sixth form individual study and class use. Students are encouraged to keep abreast of current affairs in other countries by consulting press articles on the internet or in the publications to which the department subscribes. In addition, we have a good range of literary texts in all three languages for further personal study. Specialist teaching is supplemented by weekly oral classes with our French *assistante* or the German or South American GAP students.

Topic areas covered in the A-level course include the following:

- Aspects of French/German/Spanish-speaking society: current trends
- Aspects of French/German/Spanish-speaking society: current issues
- Artistic culture in the French/German/Spanish-speaking world
- Aspects of political life in the French/German/Spanish-speaking world

Please see more detail on [the following pages](#).

### **Assessment**

The A-level examinations consist of an oral examination and tests including listening, reading, writing and translation skills, as well as an essay in French/German/Spanish based on the set book/play and film.

Mrs STEPHANIE STRATFORD  
[head of French](#)

Mr ANTON KENDALL  
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Mrs NELLY PORTER  
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# A level languages at St Swithun's

## Why study A level languages at St Swithun's?

- Passionate, dedicated, knowledgeable, experienced and approachable teachers who are experts in their field
- Small, personal class sizes
- Regular conversation classes with our native speaker assistants
- A range of approaches to your learning with a variety of teaching materials
- Develop your fluency and accuracy, but also learn about the countries and the cultures so that you can view the world from a wider perspective
- Improve your self-confidence through social interaction
- Access to up-to-date media in the language
- Study a film, and a book or a play
- Many universities now offer courses involving both languages and Engineering, Medicine, Law and Politics
- Learning languages helps you to develop useful life skills like mental flexibility, creativity, higher order thinking, problem solving, conceptualising, reasoning, and handling unfamiliar situations quickly and effectively
- Open up a huge range of possible careers and get the edge over monolingual candidates - languages are highly regarded by employers, and language university graduates have one of the highest employment rates in the UK (You also get to live abroad for a year as part of your university course)
- It's easy to buy in your own language...but what about if you want to sell?
- Travel overseas later in life and be able to get to know the culture and the people properly
- 75% of the world's population do not speak English as their first, second or even third language
- Approximately 70% of British businesses are not happy with the language skills of potential employees and recruit from abroad. Get ahead!
- Research is often published in non-English speaking books and journals
- It's fun!



## Q&A

- **Which subjects are offered?** French, German and Spanish over two years. (There is also the option of Italian GCSE in L6.)
- **Which exam board is followed?** We follow the new AQA syllabus.
- **Can I take the one year AS examination only?** No, we do not offer the one year course.
- **How are Languages A levels assessed, and what is the weighting of each paper?** There is no coursework and all papers are sat at the end of the course.

Paper	What is assessed	How it is assessed
<b>Paper 1:</b> Listening, Reading and Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The four sub-themes that are covered in the course</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes</li> <li>• 100 marks</li> <li>• 50% of A level</li> </ul>
<b>Paper 2:</b> Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One text and one film, or two texts from the list set in the specification</li> <li>• Grammar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written exam: 2 hours</li> <li>• 80 marks</li> <li>• 20% of A level</li> </ul>
<b>Paper 3:</b> Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual Research Project</li> <li>• One of the four sub-themes that are covered in the course</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oral exam: 21-23 minutes (including 5 minutes preparation time)</li> <li>• 60 marks</li> <li>• 30% of A level</li> </ul>

- **What skills will I develop?** You will be able to develop your GCSE language skills to give more detailed and informed opinions on a variety of topics, constantly improving your accuracy and fluency in both the written and spoken form. The course help you to build your self-confidence through social interaction, and you will be able to study and critique a film and a book or a play. Furthermore, you will gain an in-depth knowledge of the culture of the language concerned, enabling you to see the world from a different perspective. Additionally, studying a language helps you to hone useful life skills such as mental flexibility, creativity, higher order thinking, problem solving, conceptualising, reasoning and handling unfamiliar situations quickly and effectively.
- **What can I do with a Languages A level?** It is widely accepted that having a second language is highly regarded by employers. There is a huge range of possible careers and language university graduates have one of the highest employment rates in the UK. Furthermore, if you study languages at university, you can often live abroad for a year as part of the course, and many universities now offer combined courses with foreign languages, including Business Studies, Economics, Engineering, Law and Medicine. Equally, having a second language enables you to benefit more if you travel overseas later in life as you can get to know the culture and the people properly; 75% of the world's population do not speak English as their first, second or even third language.

- **Which topics are covered?**

**French**

Social issues and trends

Current trends in French-speaking society

- Changing nature of the family
- Cyber society
- Voluntary work

Current issues in French-speaking society

- Diverse society
- Life for the marginalised
- Treatment of criminals

Political and artistic culture

Artistic culture

- Cultural heritage
- Francophone music
- Cinema

Political life

- Politics and young people
- Demonstrations
- Politics and integration

**German**

Social issues and trends

Aspects of German-speaking society

- Changing nature of the family
- Cyber society
- Fashion, music and television

Multiculturalism in German-speaking society

- Immigration and integration

Political and artistic culture

Artistic culture

- Festivals and traditions
- Art and architecture
- Berlin

Political life

- Germany and the EU
- Politics and young people
- German reunification

**Spanish**

Social issues and trends

Aspects of Hispanic society

- Modern and traditional values
- Cyber society
- Equal rights

Multiculturalism in Hispanic society

- Immigration and integration

Political and artistic culture

Artistic culture

- Modern day idols
- Spanish regional identity
- Cultural heritage

Political life

- Politics and young people
- Monarchies and dictatorships
- Popular movements

- **Which books/plays and films will I be studying?** Currently we study the following:

**French:** Kiffe, kiffe demain, Au Revoir Les Enfants

**German:** Der Besuch der Alten Dame, Goodbye Lenin

**Spanish:** La casa de Bernarda Alba, Volver

- **How can I make the most of studying a language at A level?** As well as guiding you on how best to study we also recommend a range of websites for independent reading and extension, both in terms of language and culture. What is more, we have a range of foreign language books and films in the department that you can borrow.

- **How many classes and teachers will I have?** You will have 5 one-hour classes a week, shared between 2 teachers.

