

Frequently Asked Questions

FRENCH

Question: What topics does the course cover?

Answer: In the first year you will cover some topics that you are already familiar with from your GCSE course (family, technology and volunteering) alongside with cultural heritage of the French-speaking world, and Francophone music and film. In the second year, the topics are mostly concerned with social and political issues of the French-speaking countries, such as immigration, diversity and political engagement of young people. One big difference between the GCSE and A-level courses is that all topics are related to the French-speaking world, giving you a detailed understanding of social, cultural, political and historical aspects of these countries.

Question: What works will I study?

Answer: As part of the course, you will study, discuss, analyse and evaluate a cult film 'La Haine' directed by Mathieu Kassovitz and a novel 'No et Moi' written by Delphine de Vigan.

Question: How many lessons are there per week?

Answer: You will have 4 weekly lessons (each is one hour long) with your French teacher and one weekly speaking lesson in small groups with our French conversation assistant. Our French conversation assistant will help you prepare for your speaking exam at the end of the course.

Question: How much homework is there?

Answer: In addition to your 5 contact lessons a week, we will expect you to do 4-6 hours a week of homework and independent study.

Question: Is A-level French a big step from GCSE?

Answer: The answer to this question is individual. Some students find the transition easier than others. However, to make the transition as smooth as possible for everyone, we start the course with an induction unit to revise basic grammar and vocabulary from your GCSE course. This induction unit also helps to bridge differences between learners. I also think that the current GCSE French course prepares students better for learning on the A-level French course.

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Question: What is the learning style like within French?

Answer: You will learn through independent work, pair work and group work. Activities in the classroom will include grammar and vocabulary games, pair translations, and listening and reading comprehension tasks. There will also be group and class discussions. You will have a textbook, two grammar workbooks, dossiers and access to the electronic textbook and other resources to support your French studies.

Question: How will I be assessed on the course?

Answer: You will be assessed throughout the course through vocabulary tests, end of unit tests, speaking assessments and mock assessments. All of these assessments will allow us to track your progress and achievement, predict your final grade, and intervene when necessary.

Question: What is the final assessment like?

Answer: At the end of your course, you will sit a final exam composed of three papers. Paper 1 includes listening, reading and translation. You can gain 100 points on this paper and it is worth 50% of your final A-level grade. Paper 2 requires you to write two essays on the works (La Haine, No et Moi) that you have studied on the course. You can gain 80 marks in this paper and it accounts for 20% of your final A-level grade. Paper 3 is a speaking assessment that will be carried out by your French teacher, recorded and sent to AQA. This assessment is composed of a stimulus card (similar to a GCSE photo card) and a discussion of your individual research project. This project can be on any topic as long as the topic is related to a French-speaking country. In the past students have researched topics such as gastronomy, French education system, terrorism in France, Tour de France, Coco Chanel to name but a few. You can gain 60 marks in the speaking exam, which will account for 30% of your final A-level grade. There is no coursework element.

Question: What awarding body do you use?

Answer: AQA

Question: What support can I access if I am struggling?

Answer: There are weekly workshops and a student mentoring scheme. Due to lower numbers of students on the course compared to other subjects, you can expect your teachers to intervene and offer you support early on in the course. You can also refer to study guides and practice grammar books in the library.

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Question: What are the entry requirements?

Answer: You will need Grade 6 in your French GCSE and Grade 4 in English Language. Please refer to the prospectus [here](#) for general and subject specific entry requirements.

Question: Are there normally any trips that I can go on?

Answer: Yes, we organise trips to the Institut Français in South Kensington, London for an immersion day, which includes a tour of the French library, a talk on a specific topic (immigration, cinema, music, etc.) and a screening of a French film related to the topic of the day. We have also organised a trip to Bordeaux, but have been unable to repeat it due to travel restrictions.

Question: What subjects can I study alongside French at Collyer's?

Answer: French combines very well with any subject because it offers a unique set of skills that are transferrable to other areas. Some of the topics discussed in French (especially those in the second year) relate very well to other subjects. Many of our students combine French with Art, Photography, History, Spanish, German, English Literature, English Language, Geography, Environmental Science, Biology, Chemistry, Maths, Business, Media studies, Film studies, Philosophy, Psychology and Sociology.

Question: What do students who have studied French normally do after Collyer's?

Answer: There is a number of students who decide to carry on with French at university level and usually combine it with another language (French and Spanish, French and Russian, French and Arabic) or even another subject (French and Criminology). We also have some students who continue with their studies in France (studies at a film school, tennis academy). The majority of students opt for A-level French as a facilitating subject to help them secure a place on a university course of their choice and to give them a competitive edge in employment. Knowledge of French opens many doors as French is the official language of 32 countries and of international organisations such as the European Union, the United Nations, World Trade Organisation, World Health Organisation and many more. French is the fifth most widely spoken language in the world and the second most widely learnt language in the world.