French A Level

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Dr Catherine Ames

EXAM BOARD

AQA

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A-Level French at The Grey Coat Hospital covers an integrated programme of study with a focus on language, culture and society. It explores how French-speaking society has been shaped, socially and culturally, and how it continues to change.

It will enable you to enhance your linguistic skills and promote and develop your capacity for critical thinking on the basis of your knowledge and understanding of the language, culture and society of the French-speaking world.

If you are curious about francophone culture and society and are keen to express your ideas in ever more sophisticated ways then you will very much enjoy this course.

A-Level French is a highly respected course and can lead to a number of different university disciplines and future careers.

SKILLS REQUIRED

- Control of the language system to convey meaning, using spoken and written skills, including an extended range of vocabulary, for both practical and intellectual purposes as an increasingly confident, accurate and independent user of the language
- Ability to interact effectively with users of the language in speech and in writing
- Engagement with critically and intellectually stimulating texts, films and other materials in French, developing an appreciation of sophisticated and creative uses of the language and understanding them within their cultural and social context
- Understanding about matters central to francophone society and culture, past and present
- Ability to learn other languages
- Capacity for critical and analytical thinking
- Independent research skills

EXAMINATION RESULTS

French results are exceptional. In 2018 we were congratulated for our results which were the best in the country in terms of progress. In 2026 outcomes remained outstanding: 53% A*-A, 80% A*- B and 93% A*-C. Many of our students go on to study French at university, often as part of a Joint Honours degree including at Oxbridge and Russell Group Universities as well as overseas.

PROGRAMME OF STUDY

Listening, Reading and Writing

2 hours 30 minutes

50% of total A Level

Writing

2 hours

20% of total A Level

Speaking

21–23 minutes (including 5 minutes preparation time)

30% of total A Level

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

We offer a trip to Paris and Versailles. This is a fantastic opportunity to improve your French and learn about French culture first-hand. We also make the most of the wealth of cultural opportunities on offer in London including visits to exhibitions, plays, films and concerts, for example, a study day at the British Film Institute on la Nouvelle Vague. Students are also able to follow each year a conference online organised by the BFI by experts of the film they will study.from the French-speaking world. We also hold regular “French Thinkers” workshops to explore the diversity of French thinking.

FUTURE CAREERS

Studying French can lead to a wide variety of very well respected university degrees and future careers. You might choose to study French on its own or combine it with another subject such as History or English as part of a joint honours degree. There is also a huge variety in content: some degree courses for instance will allow you to focus on specific content areas such as Literature or Politics so it is important to choose the right course for you.

Having French A-Level on your CV will be very attractive to future employers in a very wide range of sectors. Some careers might not be directly related to French but there could be opportunities to use your language skills. Many big graduate employers are multinational organisations and are keen to recruit candidates who are willing to work overseas and can liaise effectively with international colleagues. Studying French is likely to develop interpersonal and communication skills that graduate recruiters value, as well as other key strengths.

In financial terms, The Guardian newspaper reported that in careers such as sales, marketing or technical support, languages can open doors for you, and that having a language can add between 10% and 15% to your salary.

At The Grey Coat Hospital we regularly promote a range of university taster days and summer schools and we have an established link with the London Centre for Communications and Culture and Pembroke College, Oxford. We also run specific Oxbridge preparation sessions and mock interviews.

PROGRAMME OF STUDY

Students study the following themes and sub-themes **in relation to at least one French-speaking country.**

- Social trends (for example the changing nature of family)
- Social issues (for example positive features of a diverse society; criminality)
- Artistic culture (for example French cinema and music)
- Political life (for example politics and immigration; the right to demonstrate)
- Grammar (see the AQA scheme of work for details)
- Works: Literary text(s) and/or films (Albert Camus, *L’étranger* and *La haine,* Mathieu Kassovitz)
- Individual Research Project (a subject or a key question which is of interest to you and which relates to a country or countries where French is spoken).

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