

Similarities between GCSE and A Level

Where a GCSE gave you the basic tools to express yourself in a language and focused mostly on your own day-to-day experiences, A Level languages aim to broaden horizons by looking at the issues relevant to living in today's world and in particular, our target language cultures and societies. As such, the course builds on the skills gained in GCSE, but then enables you to access much more advanced topics such as current trends of French speaking society, social issues and artistic culture in the Francophone world.

Reading texts and listening passages are longer and more complex in terms of vocabulary, but online resources which you can access at home help to build your confidence with your reading and listening skills.

web: <http://web.aqa.org.uk>

Which other subjects does it combine well with?

A-Level language combines well with most subjects, as it will give you an extra edge in all professional areas in the future. As the subject is often centred on expressing opinions and analysing current social and cultural phenomena, some students find a useful overlap with social science subjects such as politics, history, geography, psychology, or English, where discussion of similar issues is also central to the course. Other students find that languages complement maths or science subjects well, as it gives an opportunity for discussion and communication practice where their other subjects give them less opportunity to express opinions about cultural and social issues.



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"I study French, German, Classical Civilisation and Maths with Mechanics. I hope to study French and German at University as I have a great interest in languages and other cultures.

Languages at Coombe are especially good as they have up to date resources, trips and specialist teachers who offer so much help and support – which is great as the jump from GCSE to A level can be quite difficult."

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opportunity

Coombe Sixth Form French A Level



What does studying French involve?

The course is designed to give students a profound understanding of French. Not only will they learn more about the mechanics of the language – like grammar and vocabulary – but also about how people live and use language on a day to day basis.

Overall, the focus in languages at A level shifts towards a greater understanding of the people and their cultural identity. By exploring how other nations and cultures deal with current issues such as immigration, the right to vote and contemporary Francophone music, many students also come to discover their own attitudes, principles and, perhaps, prejudices.

Of course, students will need to develop their ability to express opinions and justify their perspectives in a mature style. Throughout the course, you will encounter higher level structures which will enable you to express your newly formed opinions in both the written and spoken form. Focused study of grammar and small-group speaking practice sessions really help students develop the necessary language skills.

What skills will I develop and where could studying this subject lead?

Surveys indicate that language students and graduates are highly sought after in the current climate.

Employers need staff who can communicate effectively and show attention to detail, as well as having the specialist ability to deal with overseas contacts in their native tongue. The course trains students to present a coherent argument, use evidence correctly and succinctly, empathise with others and use advanced level thinking skills to find solutions – in short, all skills which lend themselves to working in, and managing, a successful team.

In this rapidly shrinking world, those who study language degrees combined with another discipline such as Law, Business, Journalism or Tourism (there are many more) find that they are valued higher than colleagues who do not have a skill in a language. Universities are responding to employers' demands and there is enormous growth in the number and type of combined course available.

How will I know if I will be good at it?

This course is well-suited to students who enjoy putting the world to rights!

Languages students are those who like to meet new people, who want to travel for work or pleasure, who enjoy exploring ideas, communicating viewpoints, drawing social comparisons, empathising with others and finding solutions. In order to get the most out of this subject, you should already be able to use a variety of tenses and be working easily at GCSE Higher level in speaking and writing.

Modules that you will cover and assessment details

Students will be assessed on their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills at the end of Year 13. The exam comprises of: a listening, reading and writing paper which covers culture, politics and aspects of French speaking society; a writing paper based on the film or novel that has been studied; and a speaking exam when students have the opportunity to present their individual research project.

Entry requirements / prior knowledge:

In order to be able to take a Language A Level at Coombe you need to have achieved seven 9-5 grades at GCSE and a minimum of a 6 grade in the language you wish to study.

In order to pass this subject successfully, you should already have a solid basis in the language, e.g. you should be able to use a range of tenses and be working easily at GCSE Higher Level.