

September 2016

Dear Parent/Carer,

This letter is to make you aware of how the brand new WJEC GCSE French/Spanish is composed and to show you how you can support your child.

The GCSE is made up of the following components:

- 25% Speaking
- 25% Listening
- 25% Reading
- 25% Writing

All exams are at the end of Year 11 and students can be entered for Foundation Tier or Higher Tier. Students can only be entered for one tier across all exams. The grading system has also changed to 9-1. 9 being the highest and 1 the lowest.

The themes covered over the two year GCSE will be:

Identity and culture	Local, national, international and global areas of interest	Current and future study and employment
<p>Youth Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self and relationships • Technology and social media <p>Lifestyle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and fitness • Entertainment and leisure <p>Customs and Traditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and drink • Festivals and celebrations 	<p>Home and Locality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local areas of interest • Transport <p>France and French-speaking countries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local and regional features and characteristics • Holidays and tourism <p>Global Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment • Social issues 	<p>Current Study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School/college life • School/college studies <p>World of Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work experience and part-time jobs • Skills and personal qualities <p>Jobs and Future Plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying for work/study • Career plans

The Listening Exam

This consists of a 35 minute exam for Foundation Tier and a 45 minute exam for Higher Tier and is worth 45 Marks overall.

Students will be required to respond to a range of questions in English and French. Question types will be multiple choice, gap fill, true or false, short answer responses.

The types of spoken language heard will include monologues, conversations, discussions, interviews, announcements and messages.

Together: we care, we challenge, we excel

The speaking Exam

There are three tasks – a role-play, a photo card discussion, and a general conversation and it is worth 60 marks in total.

Students have 12 mins preparation time and then they are examined for 7-9 mins for Foundation Tier and 10-12 mins for Higher Tier.

The role play is a scenario which targets key vocabulary and structures as prompted on the stimulus material. Essentially it is a short conversation asking and answering questions with some unexpected questions.

The photo card discussion will cover a different theme from the role play. They will be given a photo and two seen questions to respond to during the discussion. An additional two unseen questions will be asked by the examiner.

The conversation will cover two of the three broad themes (outlined above). Part 1 will be based on a theme of the student's choice and Part two will cover content not covered in the role-play or photo card discussion.

The Reading Exam

This is a 1 hour exam for Foundation tier and 1 hour 15 mins for Higher tier. Question types will be multiple choice, gap fill, true or false, short answer responses, completing information in tables and longer responses.

The material in the paper will be from a range of contexts such as adverts, adapted newspaper articles, adapted literary texts, emails, messages and letters. Students will also be required to translate short passages into English.

The writing exam

Foundation Tier

Students will be required to produce the following:

- A short text in French or Spanish
- A short text with specified content (approx. 60 words)
- an extended piece of writing such as an email or letter or promotional material with specified content (approx. 90-120 words)
- a translation of simple sentences from English into French or Spanish

Higher tier

Students will be required to produce the following:

- an extended piece of writing such as an email or letter or promotional material with specified content (approx. 90-120 words)
- an extended more complex piece of writing such as an email, letter, web page, article or report with some specified content (approx. 150 -180 words)
- a translation of a short passage into French (50-55 words)

HOMEWORK

It is worth noting that students will not be able to use a dictionary during any of their exams. Therefore grammar and vocabulary learning will be a major part of home learning, as what we do in class will need to be reinforced. Students will be given 1hr of homework each week. The homework will comprise of vocabulary learning, either online via www.vocabexpress.com or in the vocabulary booklet issued to students or grammar learning. I have invested in an online programme called 'vocab express' which will help students learn vocabulary and test them on their knowledge. This will be monitored closely, as I will be able to see how much time is being spent on language learning and see any results of tests issued. A login will be issued to the students within the next couple of weeks. In class tests will also be held once a week and students will be expected to pass with at least 70%. If not they will be required to do a retest in the following lesson. Failure to complete homework without a good reason will result in students having to do it in a detention.

RESOURCES

To help support your child in their language learning, I would advise students to have access to their own dictionary. I recommend the Oxford School Dictionaries, which can be purchased reasonably cheaply on amazon or in any bookshop. I would also recommend getting a revision guide which has been tailored to the new style GCSE. These will become available in the new academic year.

Exercise books and folders

We want students to be proud of them and make sure that everything they put in it is of the very best quality and shows off the 100% effort they have put in! Their book will be an invaluable tool for revision and will clearly show the progress made. We will expect exercise books to be:

- Neat
- Organised
- No graffiti
- The date, weather and learning objective written in every lesson
- Any sheets neatly stuck in

We would also like students to get an A4 lever arch file and 10 dividers so that we can organise speaking conversation work and grammar learning. Students are expected to have their exercise book and file every lesson, as this will be a valuable learning tool. Books and folders will be marked regularly and students will be expected to go back through and look for the feedback given and any questions to answer as well as make improvements to their work to show any progress made.

If students are away it is their responsibility to ask their teacher about what has been missed and catch up on any work.

Revision

Master classes are held every lunchtime and Monday – Thursday after school 3:10 – 4:30. This is a fantastic opportunity to come and get one to one support with their preparation. I only require that the students let me know if they are attending in advance so that I can arrange staffing. I will also be giving KS4 language students access to a computer room at lunchtimes where they can work on any assignments or homework. A newsletter will also be issued containing links to a drop box with all exam resources as well as QR codes to exam revision, vocabulary and grammar support.

Please do not hesitate to contact me via email k.jones@tavistockcollege.devon.sch.uk if you have any questions or queries.

Many thanks in anticipation of your support.

Kathleen Jones
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