

French – GCSE Curriculum Overview (Years 10–11)

Curriculum Intent

At GCSE, French builds on the strong phonics-led and grammar-focused foundations established at Key Stage 3, enabling students to communicate with increasing accuracy, independence and confidence. Across the two-year course, students develop secure control of vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure while applying language across a broad range of themes linked to their own lives and the wider world. The curriculum is carefully sequenced to strengthen listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, deepen grammatical understanding across multiple time frames, and prepare students effectively for GCSE examinations through sustained practice, cultural engagement and structured consolidation.

Structure of the GCSE French Course

GCSE French is taught as a coherent two-year programme, with clear progression from consolidation and extension in Year 10 to fluency, independence and examination readiness in Year 11.

Across both years, students develop:

- accurate pronunciation and listening skills through continued phonics revision
- secure control of present, perfect, imperfect and future time frames
- increasing grammatical sophistication, including verb patterns, word order and pronoun use
- the ability to express opinions, justify ideas and narrate events in extended responses
- cultural understanding of France and the wider francophone world

Themes are revisited and strengthened over time, enabling students to apply language flexibly and with increasing confidence.

Year 10 – Extending Range and Building GCSE Foundations

In Year 10, students consolidate Key Stage 3 language while extending their ability to communicate across all GCSE themes.

Language and Grammar Development

Students strengthen control of present, perfect, imperfect and future time frames, revisiting regular and irregular verb conjugations and applying negation accurately. They develop confidence with two-verb structures, modal verbs, object pronouns and question formation, alongside more complex sentence patterns such as comparisons, conditional forms and extended descriptions. Grammar is taught explicitly and revisited regularly to support accuracy and retention.

Themes and Application

Language is applied across themes including my personal world, lifestyle and wellbeing, my neighbourhood, travel and tourism, media and technology, and studying and future plans. Students describe daily life and relationships, narrate past experiences, express opinions and outline ambitions. Reading and listening activities include longer and more authentic texts, supporting comprehension for both gist and detail.

Cultural Understanding

Students explore cultural aspects of France and the wider francophone world, including education, work, immigration, environmental issues and contemporary society. Cultural learning supports vocabulary development, contextual understanding and engagement with authentic perspectives. Structured speaking and extended writing tasks are embedded throughout the year, preparing students for GCSE-style responses.

Year 11 – Accuracy, Independence and Examination Preparation

In Year 11, students refine and apply their language skills with increasing accuracy, fluency and independence, while preparing directly for GCSE assessment at foundation or higher tier.

Advanced Grammar and Sentence Control

Students consolidate all major time frames and develop confidence switching between present, perfect, imperfect and future tenses within extended responses. They work with reflexive verbs, relative clauses, impersonal structures and complex negation, alongside increased precision in adjective agreement and pronoun placement. Grammar is revisited systematically to ensure consistency and accuracy across all skills.

Themes, Communication and Cultural Depth

Students revisit all GCSE themes, including personal world, neighbourhood, lifestyle and wellbeing, media and technology, studying and future careers, and travel and tourism. They develop confidence expressing and justifying opinions, narrating events and responding spontaneously to questions. Cultural understanding is deepened through study of francophone art, media, fashion and global contexts, supporting both exam performance and wider cultural literacy.

Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing

All four skills are developed in an integrated way. Students prepare for the read aloud, role play, photo card and general conversation tasks, practise translation in both directions and complete extended writing tasks with increasing fluency. Regular mock examinations and targeted feedback support progress and examination readiness.

Spring Term, Year 11 – Consolidation and Examination Readiness

In the Spring term of Year 11, curriculum time is deliberately structured for consolidation and preparation. Students:

- revisit core grammar, phonics and vocabulary
- strengthen recall across all themes and time frames
- practise exam-style questions under timed conditions
- refine speaking responses and spontaneous communication
- address individual gaps through targeted revision

This ensures students enter the final examination period with confidence, accuracy and clear strategies for success.

Assessment and Progression

Assessment across Key Stage 4 includes regular retrieval practice, extended writing tasks, speaking assessments, translation exercises, mock examinations and exam-style listening and reading tasks. Assessment is used to inform teaching, identify gaps and support sustained progress.

By the end of Year 11, students can understand and produce extended spoken and written French, apply complex grammatical structures accurately and communicate ideas clearly and confidently across a wide range of contexts. GCSE French provides a strong foundation for further language study and supports wider literacy, cultural understanding and communication skills.