

Year 9

What does the Year 9 Languages curriculum look like and what is the rationale behind this?

The year 9 curriculum builds upon the language principles learned in year 7 and 8. Students' learning progresses incrementally from year 8 into year 9 as the core three principles through which they are taught remain the same:

- **vocabulary** (how to remember, recall and understand the meaning of vocabulary)
- **phonics** (how to pronounce and spell words in a language)
- **grammar** (how to recognise and manipulate language according to grammar principles)

We continue to teach **vocabulary** that consists of a range of word classes such as nouns, adjectives and verbs. Most words covered in Years 7 and 8 fall into the category of the 1000 most frequently used French words. In Year 9 these become even less high frequency, reflecting the vocabulary that students have already acquired. In Year 9 the vocabulary learned is often in the 1000 - 1,500 bracket. In this way, by the end of year 9, students are highly competent in their ability to recognise words and phrases in texts that are more complex and use less commonly occurring vocabulary, as well as in their ability to use increasingly more complex language in their own speech and writing.

The learning of **phonics** continues to be a priority in our curriculum in year 9. Through learning to pronounce, spell and recognise the different phonetic sounds in years 7 and 8, students are able to 'decode' the language in a way that builds both confidence and competence. In year 9 students are already competent in using phonetic rules to pronounce, spell and recognise items of vocabulary. This knowledge is therefore even further embedded in lessons in year 9 so that students have committed these rules to long term memory. This is achieved through repeated productive practice of spoken language and receptive practice through reading and listening in class and independently. Students therefore progress from previous years in their ability to recognise, recall and apply vocabulary in the receptive and productive modes. This therefore ensures that students are better able to produce language spontaneously and interpret and process language more effectively.

Grammar plays a crucial role in the year 9 curriculum. Students extend their grammatical knowledge developed in years 7 and 8 and acquire knowledge of new grammatical principles with increased complexity and challenge. The development of students' automaticity (the speed and fluidity with which they are able to recall and use the grammar concepts) remains central to lessons. With the continued targeted practice of the grammar concepts and vocabulary, students are able to recall, recognise and produce language in a manner that is more automatised than in previous years.

Curriculum Content

Students continue to acquire the phonics, vocabulary and grammar knowledge stated above until the final term of the year. In the final term in year 9 students begin the first topic on the Key Stage 4 GCSE specification. Beginning the GCSE course at this stage enables students to gain vital knowledge regarding the GCSE course outline and criteria for success across the four skills of reading, listening, speaking and writing before embarking upon learning the vocabulary and grammar relevant to the first topic. The topic taught in the final term is as follows:

- Family and relationships (GCSE Theme 1, Unit 1)

-Describing yourself, family and friends

-Describing how well you get along with friends and family

-Exploring the importance of marriage in today's society

-Describing plans for the future regarding marriage, relationships and family

Vocabulary taught:

The high frequency vocabulary taught in year 9 includes vocabulary from the word classes found in the year 7 and 8 curriculum (seen below in blue) and also includes more complex and less high frequency vocabulary (seen below in green)

- verbs
- nouns
- adjectives
- adverbs
- connectives
- time expressions (temporal markers)
- determiners/articles
- quantifiers/intensifiers
- superlatives
- comparatives
- relative clauses
- prepositions
- direct and indirect object pronouns
- ordinal numbers
- reflexive verbs
- quantity expressions

Grammar concepts:

In year 9 we explore the following grammatical concepts in the order below:

Media topic:

- Present tense of regular and irregular verbs (*in greater depth, complexity and with greater automaticity than in previous years*)
- Comparatives and superlatives
- Complex opinions using direct object pronouns
- The perfect and preterit tenses
- Modal verbs with infinitives (*in greater depth, complexity and with greater automaticity than in previous years*)
- The use of the conditional mood

Education and future plans topic:

- The use of the near future tense
- Relative and subordinate clauses
- Modal verbs with infinitives (*in greater depth, complexity and with greater automaticity than in previous years*)

Family and relationships (GCSE Theme 1 Unit 1 Topic):

- Present tense of regular and irregular verbs (*in all verb forms and in greater depth, complexity and with greater automaticity than in previous years*)
- Possessive adjectives (*in greater depth, complexity and with greater automaticity than in previous years*)
- Post-nominal and pre-nominal adjectives (*in greater depth, complexity and with greater automaticity than in previous years*)
- Adjective agreement (*in greater depth, complexity and with greater automaticity than in previous years*)
- Reflexive verbs
- The simple future tense
- Direct and indirect object pronouns

Once explored, the concepts and vocabulary seen above are regularly revisited and practiced throughout the year 9 course in order to ensure that students are able to commit them to long term memory.

Lesson Content

There is continuity with previous years in the structure of lessons in year 9. The number of words to learn remains the same as in years 7 and 8 as research has shown that, regardless of age, this is the optimum number of new items of vocabulary that students should be exposed to so that they do not experience cognitive overload. Each week students explore one of the concepts above and are given their ten to fifteen pieces of vocabulary to learn which complement the concept being studied. Just one grammatical concept is covered each week in order to ensure that students have fully embedded their learning of the grammar principle through carrying out targeted, repeated practice. The learning of each grammatical concept is therefore divided up into a sequence of three lessons. Across the three lessons students undertake the following activities in the order they appear below:

- Students are given the new vocabulary set to learn independently for homework for the learning sequence the following week
- Students are introduced to the *meaning and form* of the new vocabulary (students should already be familiar with the direct translation of this vocabulary as they will have been set the task of learning it for homework)
- Students recall, revisit and practice the phonetic concepts for this vocabulary set
- Students are introduced to the grammatical concept for this learning sequence
- Students practice recognising this concept using the new vocabulary through the receptive modalities of reading and listening in a meaningful context

- Students practice using the grammatical concept and new vocabulary through the productive modalities of writing and speaking in a meaningful context
- Students undertake a vocabulary test on the new vocabulary for this learning sequence to ensure that they have accumulated the vocabulary before moving on to the next learning sequence.

How does independent learning support our curriculum?

As we saw in years 7 and 8, the most beneficial independent learning that students can do in order to strengthen their language learning is to **learn as much vocabulary as possible**. As previously mentioned, in year 9 we therefore continue to set a vocabulary learning homework of ten to fifteen words for students to complete each week. In order for students to commit this vocabulary to long term memory we also revisit vocabulary from previous weeks and academic years and these are often added to the new vocabulary. The vocabulary is provided to students on a 'core language' sheet which contains the English translations of the vocabulary. The words are also placed onto the interactive online learning website 'Quizlet' each week, which is a very effective tool for students to use when learning vocabulary. In order to ensure that all of our students are making effective progress in vocabulary tests we have a benchmark figure of 60%. Should a student not achieve 60% in a vocabulary test we will ask that they retake the test the following lesson, with support from their teacher following a reminder of the best strategies for vocabulary learning. These strategies remain the same as in years 7 and 8, as the most effective approaches to learning vocabulary for all learners are applicable at every stage of the learning process.

Examples of these strategies may include;

- learning the vocabulary across the four modes of reading, writing, speaking and listening
- practising the vocabulary regularly and in short intervals-ideally every two to three days for approximately half an hour each time