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FOR MORE INFORMATION
education.gouv.fr
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Modern foreign Languages in the French school system

From 6 to 18 years old, compulsory classes
The first modern foreign language begins at primary, the second in lower secondary (collège) and the third in upper secondary (lycée)

At the baccalauréat, 56 languages (45 foreign languages and 11 regional languages) can be assessed
Languages for all pupils from 6 to 18 years old

The objective shared by France and the European Union is to give each citizen the means to express themselves in and to understand a minimum of two foreign languages.

The teaching of modern languages is compulsory for all pupils from primary school to the baccalauréate. Proficiency in languages is one of the seven key competences of the ‘Socle Commun de Connaissances et de Compétences’ (The Common Core of Knowledge and Skills) that all pupils must have acquired by the end of compulsory schooling at the age of 16.

The syllabus draws on the ‘Common European Framework of Reference for Languages’ (CEFR). The levels to be reached are as follows: A1 for 10-11 year-olds, A2 for 14-15 year-olds, B1 at age 16 and B2 at age 18.

More than fifteen foreign languages are taught in lower secondary including German, English, Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Dutch, Portuguese and Russian.

Specific routes

Varied and modular courses are on offer for pupils to boost and deepen the learning of languages and cultures. They have their own assessments:

- **Sections internationales (International Sections)**
  - *International sections* have taken French and foreign pupils in primary, lower secondary and general upper secondary since 1981. They exist for the following languages: German, American English, British English, Arabic, Chinese, Danish, Spanish, Italian, Japanese, Dutch, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian and Swedish.
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  - *Sections européennes* and *sections de langues orientales* are intensive courses in a modern foreign language and the culture of a country offered to willing pupils at lower secondary school and including, from the age of 16, a general, technological or vocational discipline in a foreign language.
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  - The heritage languages and cultures are taught between the ages of 6 and 18 for three hours a week prioritising pupils whose families are immigrants or of immigrant origin and who make the request. These classes are taught by Algerian, Croatian, Spanish, Italian, Moroccan, Portuguese, Serbian, Tunisian or Turkish teachers seconded by their respective governments.

At the start of the 2011 academic year

- **for pupils:**
  - classes organised by skills sets with modular timetables allowing periods of intensive learning,
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  - compulsory acquisition - in initial training - of level B2 of the CEFR in a foreign language for all primary and secondary school teachers of all disciplines.

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