



Spanish A Level Handbook



Why a language?

If you are looking for a future using communication skills, interpersonal skills, problem solving, team working, organisational skills and independence as well as excellent job prospects, then a modern language is for you. Languages are a personal skill and as such are an enriching experience with plenty of added value. We live in an increasingly global world where the ability to be able to speak another language is increasingly important.

Language study contributes to a broad general education and gives you invaluable practical and transferable skills for the future. In most careers nowadays language abilities are highly valued. You may choose to specialise in French/German at university or combine your language with other subjects such as Engineering, History, Media and journalism, Management and Business Studies, Teaching, Fashion Design, Travel & Hospitality Management, Accountancy, European Studies, or International or European Law.

What will I be doing during the course?

You will learn not just to speak or write about various subjects, but more importantly, to express an opinion about them.

The topics studied for the Year 12 course include the family structure and relationships, the digital world, youth culture, equality, Spanish regional identities, art & architecture & Hispanic cultural heritage.

The topics for the Year 13 course deal with immigration, integration, racism, dictatorships and the Spanish monarchy, politics & youth, and popular social movements in modern Hispanic society.

You will be working on tasks set by the teacher but also on more independent activities depending on what your interests or needs are.

You will have the opportunity to complete Work Experience in Spain.



Is it like GCSE?

No! Not really. You will be in a small class and will focus on topics which are important in today's world and to people of your age. Family, relationships, cinema are examples. The main similarity is that opinions and justifications are still key. You won't however be learning the answers to set questions - instead you will need to be independent and able to manipulate the language to suit what you want to say. Your increasingly in-depth knowledge of grammar will enable you to do this.

There is a big jump from GCSE to A level but you will be well supported with the transition and your teacher will ensure that you have a good grounding before taking you on to more complex language.

Expectations

- We expect you to have a good GCSE grade preferably 6 or above.
- You will need to be prepared to work independently, finding information and reading and listening to Spanish on your own.
- You will need to be prepared to have a go at speaking in class. Classes are small and everyone finds this difficult at first but practising speaking and giving opinions will be essential to your success.
- You will need to take an interest in the culture of Spain and other Spanish-speaking countries.
- You will need to keep your work organised and keep your own notes, including noting down & learning vocab regularly using a separate vocabulary book.

Year 12

The Year 12 course is made up of three units, which are assessed internally at the end of the Year.

Paper 1 is the Listening, Reading and Writing Paper. This lasts 1hour 45 minutes and represents 45% of the AS grade. Exams will be internal. The main difference from GCSE is that you will listen on a laptop and have individual control during the listening exam.

Paper 2 is the Writing exam. This last 1 hour 30 minutes and represents 25% of the AS grade. You will translate into Spanish and write an essay about the play we have studied.

Paper 3 is the Speaking exam. This last 12-14 minutes and represents 30% of the AS grade. You will talk about 2 sub-themes which will be the topics of two stimulus cards. You will have 15 minutes before the test to study the cards and make notes.

Year 13

Year 13 is also made up of three units.

Paper 1 is the Listening, Reading and Writing Paper. This lasts 2 hours 30 minutes and represents 50% of the A2 grade. Exams will be external. Listening and responding in Spanish, reading and responding to texts and translations into both Spanish and English.

Paper 2 is the Writing exam. This lasts 2 hours and represents 20% of the grade. You will write an essay about the play we have studied and a second essay about the film – each will have a choice of two titles.

Paper 3 is the Speaking exam. This lasts 21-23 minutes and represents 30% of the overall grade. You will talk about 1 sub-theme which will come from a choice of two stimulus cards. You will have 5 minutes before the test to study the cards and make notes. The second part of this exam will be a presentation and discussion of your Independent Research Project.

Year 13 Assessments

Paper 1: Listening, reading and writing

What's assessed

Aspects of Hispanic society
Artistic culture in the Hispanic world
Multiculturalism in Hispanic society
Aspects of political life in Hispanic society
Grammar

How it's assessed

Written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes
100 marks
50% of A-level

Questions

Listening and responding to spoken passages from a range of contexts and sources covering different registers and adapted as necessary. Material will include complex factual and abstract content and questions will target main points, gist and detail. Studio recordings will be used and students will have individual control of the recording.

All questions are in Spanish, to be answered with non-verbal responses or in Spanish (30 marks)

Reading and responding to a variety of texts written for different purposes, drawn from a range of authentic sources and adapted as

Paper 1: Listening, reading and writing

necessary. Material will include complex factual and abstract content and questions will target main points, gist and detail.

All questions are in Spanish, to be answered with non-verbal responses or in Spanish (50 marks)

Translation into English; a passage of minimum 100 words (10 marks)

Translation into Spanish; a passage of minimum 100 words (10 marks).

No access to a dictionary during the assessment.



Paper 2: Writing

What's assessed

One text and one film or two texts from the list set in the specification

Grammar

How it's assessed

Written exam: 2 hours

80 marks in total

20% of A-level

Questions

Either one question in Spanish on a set text from a choice of two questions and one question in Spanish on a set film from a choice of two questions **or** two questions in Spanish on set texts from a choice of two questions on each text.

All questions will require a critical appreciation of the concepts and issues covered in the work and a critical and analytical response to features such as the form and the technique of presentation, as appropriate to the work studied (eg the effect of narrative voice in a prose text or camera work in a film).

No access to texts or films during the assessment.

No access to a dictionary during the assessment.

Students are advised to write approximately 300 words per essay.



Paper 3: Speaking

What's assessed

Individual research project

One of four themes (ie Aspects of Hispanic society or Artistic culture in the Hispanic world or Multiculturalism in Hispanic society or Aspects of political life in Hispanic society)

How it's assessed

Oral exam: 21–23 minutes (including 5 minutes preparation time)

60 marks in total

30% of A-level

Questions

Discussion of a sub-theme with the discussion based on a stimulus card (5–6 minutes). The student studies the card for 5 minutes at the start of the test (25 marks).

Presentation (2 minutes) and discussion (9–10 minutes) of individual research project (35 marks).

No access to a dictionary during the assessment (including 5 minutes preparation).

Students may take the assessment only once before certification.

Assessments will be conducted by either the centre or a visiting examiner and marked by an AQA examiner.

Teaching

The A level course will be split between two teachers.

Year 12

In year 12 each teacher will concentrate on different topics and then one teacher will work on the literature (*La Casa de Bernarda Alba* – Federico García Lorca) while the other focusses on the Speaking element of your exam. You will cover the grammar learned at GCSE in more depth and more complex grammar will be added. It is essential that you have a sound grasp of grammar and are able to apply the rules in all contexts. You will be given HW tasks and expected to undertake practice in your own time.

Your speaking teacher will conduct your oral exam which will be marked internally.

You will be set a variety of HW tasks: listening, reading, writing and grammar exercises. You will also need to learn 30 words a week of your choice and will have a weekly vocab test and the results recorded. You will need an account on Quizlet to help with this.

You will take a fantastic Spanish film home to watch and review in addition every cycle or every four weeks.

Independent learning is the key to success in a language. You need to read and listen to Spanish on your own and find vocabulary. Just completing HW tasks will not be enough to get a really good grade. Your teacher will give you a sheet to help you record what you have done and will review it with you. Look at the resources list at the end for some ideas of what you could do. You can do extra verb practice, read the news or listen to Spanish music – as long as it's in Spanish, it doesn't have to be closely related to what you're doing in lessons unless you feel you need extra practice on that.

Year 13

Year 13 works in a similar way to year 12 although there is only a small amount of grammar to add at A2 so we have few explicit grammar lessons at this stage, although you may have lessons to revise what was covered at AS if necessary. You will have one teacher who is responsible for the speaking who will prepare you for your oral exam.

The other teacher will focus on the film element of the course (*El Laberinto del Fauno* – Guillermo del Toro).

Organisation

A well organised file is the key to success at A Level. If you keep to these guidelines you will have no difficulty in keeping yourself prepared for lessons and keeping up with what is expected of you.

Please label your file dividers as follows:

- General Information
- **Year 1**
- Los valores tradicionales y modernos
- El ciberespacio
- La igualdad de los sexos
- La influencia de los ídolos
- La identidad regional de España
- El patrimonio cultural
- Literatura – La Casa de Bernarda Alba
- Grammar
- Speaking
- **Year 2**
- La inmigración
- El rascismo
- La convivencia
- Jóvenes de hoy, ciudadanos de mañana
- Dictaduras y monarquía
- Los movimientos populares
- Film – El Laberinto del Fauno
- Grammar
- Speaking
- Useful websites
- IRP work

- When you are given handouts, please ensure that they are filed in the appropriate section of your folder. **If you miss a lesson for any reason, it is your responsibility to get a copy of anything handed out.**
- It is essential that you bring your file to every lesson.

It is your responsibility to take good care of the text books you are given. They must be returned to school at the end of the course in the *same state* that they were given to you.

- ✓ You will have a speaking lesson once a cycle. This is a compulsory lesson and if you know that you are going to be away you must inform your teacher, just as you would inform your class teacher. All prep for that lesson is compulsory too.
- ✓ Use your private study time to develop your independent study skills (not just to complete homework!). Use online resources Quizlet for vocabulary learning, languagesonline.org for revision of tenses, <https://www.rtve.es/radio/radio3/> for listening and keep a list of additional websites that you are given or find.

Languages are a highly regarded and notoriously difficult subject but they offer you a wealth of cultural knowledge, transferable skills as well as increasing future opportunities, even if you don't choose to study them further. As a challenging subject, you need to keep the following tips in mind:

1. Be organised – lessons are fast and packed with content. You need to be able to pick up your learning from your organised notes outside the classroom.
2. Positive attitude – languages are hard but you'll find it's a bit like interval training; there are some steep learning curves but you'll see progress after them. Keeping positive will ensure you get to the end in one piece!
3. Independent study – you must regularly review your work (this booklet has some tips on how) and test your knowledge. There are so many different skills to learn a language that just doing past papers isn't enough. Not doing any work in between lessons will show and hinder your progress.
4. Reflect on your progress – analyse past papers/assessments plus the feedback from your teachers to identify areas to work on. Complete proactive tasks to help you make progress.

Mindset

Achieving the best grade is more than learning the specification. To truly excel in languages, you have to develop the key skills and the right mindset. There are often leaps between the key stages, particularly between KS4 and KS5. There is also a gap between skills for most people: listening is always deemed one of the most difficult skills along with translation whereas a lot of people find reading harder. A language isn't one skill: it's all of them together and while some students seem to just "get it", they'll probably really struggle further down the line. Studies show that students who achieve most highly are those who work the hardest, have honed their learning skills and reflect on their progress regularly.

A growth mindset appreciates that you can improve your ability and performance. Time and research show that those students with a growth mindset regularly outperform their peers. Focus on yourself and your progress instead of how everyone else is doing.

Some useful resources

Key resources

Various resources are essential for all A Level students, and your teacher will be able to help you choose one or may suggest you order one through the school. These include:

- A good dictionary.
- A good AS/A2 level vocab book e.g. Palabra por Palabra or an organised Quizlet account if you prefer.
- A grammar reference & practice book e.g. the AQA Grammar & Translation Workbook for both Year 1 & Year 2.
- A verb table book – 501 Spanish verbs.
- A book for practising your verbs.

Resources for Independent Study

EXTRA GRAMMAR / STRUCTURES PRACTICE

- Languageonline is useful for basic grammar recap www.languagesonline.org.uk
- Verbs online is a site where you can test yourself at verb forms <http://www.verbs-online.com/>
- wordreference.com is a great & easy to use dictionary (use the 'dictionary' option). The site also has a 'conjugation' tab where you can look up different tenses easily, and a synonyms tab too. <https://www.wordreference.com/es/translation.asp>

TOPIC BASED / CURRENT AFFAIRS

It's vital as part of your studies to have an idea about current affairs in Spanish speaking countries. The internet is the perfect way to do this and you can find more accessible things to visit than standard Spanish news sites.

Spanish newspapers

Read a foreign language newspaper.

El País has its own website <http://elpais.com/> so that you can read the paper online. You do not have to read the paper cover to cover, just scan the headlines and pick out ONE article that grabs your attention. You could also use <http://www.elmundo.es>

This website is a more light-hearted newspaper which covers global stories as well as gossip.

<http://www.20minutes.es> Also try <https://www.20minutos.es/videos/> This is the TV Channel for this newspaper.

In Spain there is also a news website for young people: <https://primerasnoticias.com/> It has sections on the Internet and Mobile Technology; Science and Wildlife; Education; Culture; Sport; Society and Health. A glance today contained articles about addiction to technology, secrets of Mexico and FC Barcelona to name but a few.

Also remember to keep up-to-date with Latin American affairs by using <https://www.bbc.com/mundo> for general news, or country-specific news outlets like <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/> for Argentina or <https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/> for Mexico.

Spanish radio

The great thing about listening to the radio is that you can get on with something else at the same time. Listen live using the RTVE site. It can take a while to buffer so be patient.

RTVE Radio 3 <https://www.rtve.es/radio/radio3/> or M80 radio <https://radiofy.online/m80-radio>

Online radiobox <https://onlineradiobox.com/es/> allows you to choose from a range of radio eg Muy Buena or Los 40 principales.

OTHER

- You will be expected to attend individual speaking lessons with other adults – we will timetable these for you and they will be compulsory.
- TV Some TV providers allow you to access foreign language TV programmes – see if yours does & start watching Spanish TV e.g. soaps (use google to find out what's popular). You may also be able to find some Spanish tv on Netflix.
- Film Use google to research famous Spanish films such as Volver and download or buy them. We have some in the department which we can lend you as long as you sign them out & bring them back – if you notice we have some glaring gaps in our collection let us know & we may be able to buy the DVD which you can then borrow.
- Music – Use the internet to research Spanish bands & download some you like. Google the texts and listen to them, trying to work out the meanings.

