

Pre-entry Preparation, Requirements and Recommendations

Welcome to A-level French at Comberton Sixth Form

Preparation

As you are probably aware, a foreign language needs to be maintained on a regular basis otherwise the recall of vocabulary and grammar usually becomes rusty. For this reason we ask you to do the following work before you start the course in September:

- 1. French Project:** You need to fill a piece of roughly A2 size card with a collage of information about yourself and things that you are interested in. You should bring it to your first lesson.

You could include photos, pictures, speech bubbles, written text, headlines, short articles that interest you or drawings. Below and to the right is an example from a previous AS French student. It should give you an idea of how you might like to lay it out and a guide as to how much to write.

You should provide information, in French, on the following:

- You (and your family if you wish)
- What you do in your free time
- Your summer break
- Your career plans/ where you see yourself in the future



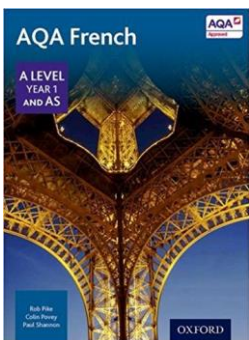
- 2. Grammar:** Please thoroughly revise the main grammar points covered in GCSE. This should include a revision of the present tense (regular and irregular verbs), past tenses (imperfect and passé composé), future tenses (using 'aller' and simple future) and the conditional tense. Other areas where students lose valuable points in their AS exams are adjective endings, negative sentences and the formation of questions in French. If you don't have a grammar book, we recommend this website as it has explanations and activities with answers: http://french.about.com/od/grammar/French_Grammar.htm

Please also translate these 10 sentences into French. Make sure you do not use an online translator, but rather look up any unknown vocabulary in the dictionary and check a grammar guide if necessary. Bring your work with you to the first lesson to hand to your teacher for marking. Please take your time over these and use a decent dictionary which gives you information about the word (see below for recommendations on dictionaries)

1. I like to watch TV but my parents prefer to listen to music.
2. My twin brothers go to a little primary school in the village
3. My friend is going to London today
4. It was sunny so I ate a picnic in the park
5. My mum and dad went to Scotland during the holidays. It rained the whole time!

6. I'm going to buy some books and a few DVDs
7. I think I will go to university and then I would like to travel around the world.
8. My dad only works in the office on a Monday and Tuesday. Wednesday to Friday he looks after my brothers.
9. I don't have any pets. Do you have any pets?
10. When did you start playing football?

Requirements



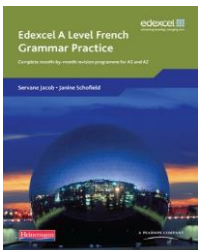
We mainly use our own resources and will create you topic booklets for each unit. We do also recommend this A level text book as a great means of revision or extension. Our previous students found it a very structured and practical way to revise for the Year 12 and 13 mocks for example.

Paperback

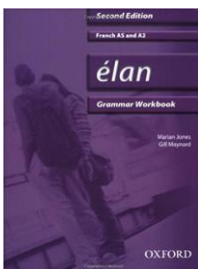
Publisher: Oxford University Press

ISBN: 978-0-19-836688-1

Grammar is an essential part of language learning. There are a lot of grammar reference books available should you wish to buy one, but practice is what really makes it stick! We will provide grammar explanations and practice activities but should you wish to purchase a book to work through at your own pace over the holidays and throughout the year we recommend the following which include an answer booklet.



(Edexcel A Level French Grammar Practice by Servane Jacob and Janine Schofield)



(Elan Grammar Workbook by Gill Maynard and Marian Jones)

You will also need the following equipment: **a folder, section dividers, pens, highlighters, pencil and a block of A4 lined paper.** You will not be given an exercise book and will be expected to hand in work on either lined paper (double spaced) or typed (double spaced).

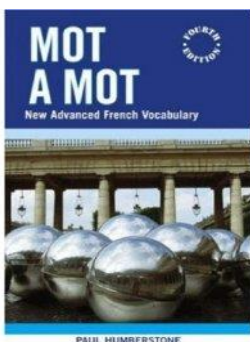
Recommendations

The books below are ones we *suggest* you buy before the course.

1. The most important thing to have is access to a proper dictionary. In the past students have bought the large Collins dictionary and while we would still recommend this in many ways we are obviously aware that students will mainly want to access dictionaries on their phone.

You may have made do with a smaller, 'beginner' dictionary for GCSE and/or used www.wordreference.com. These will still have a use at times, but more often than not you will need to gain more information about the usage of the word you are looking up than either of these (or indeed most online dictionaries) can offer. As an alternative to the hardback mentioned above you can purchase this as an app if you prefer. Finally, a great website is www.linguee.fr it gives you examples of the words in context and A level students have found this an invaluable resource when trying to work out the best word to use.

2. We also strongly recommend 'Mot à Mot' by Paul Humberstone:



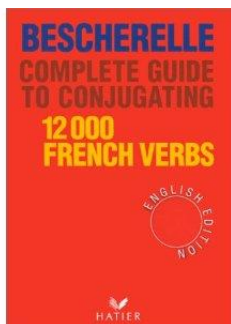
Paperback: 118 pages

Publisher: Hodder Education

ISBN: 9781444110005

It is divided up into topic areas and lists the sort of language you will need to be able to use in the oral and written exam.

3. The 'Bescherelle Complete Guide to Conjugating 12 000 French verbs (English Version)' is a very useful book to have beside you while you are writing. Many of our students have said they found it indispensable.



Hardcover: 174 pages

Publisher: Editions Hatier

ISBN: 9782218065910

There is an emphasis on achieving high levels of accuracy in your verbs and tenses so this little book might be a good companion. Again, you may find you prefer to access an online resource and www.wordreference.com offers a good verb conjugator as well.

Other than the books and summer work to complete, the following suggestions are also good ways to ensure you achieve as highly as possible in your exams and are really able to speak and understand as much French as possible. Remember that learning a foreign language is more than just gaining knowledge; it is also a skill. To be a successful linguist you need to get the balance right between learning new vocabulary, improving levels of accuracy and being able to translate accurately but also simply having a go at speaking as much as possible, not being put off when you don't understand every single word and finally exposing yourself to as much French as possible. Here are some tips and things you might want to start doing over the summer holidays:

- This is a brilliant news site that has the news in a variety of languages so you just need to select French. The beauty is that you can watch the news clip and it also has the transcript below. <http://www.euronews.net/>

- Work on the GCSE and A level vocabulary on www.quizlet.com (You should do this regularly and re-test yourself on word lists as often as possible.)
- Listen to the radio in French. <http://www.nrj.com/> is a good one aimed at young people/teenagers. You can then select all the different genres from rap, to chill out etc. NRJ French is a good one to choose as it plays the most French music. If you hear a song you like google it to find the lyrics. Radio Garden is another good resource where you can select a region anywhere in the world to tune into.
- The website www.tv5.org has lots of current affaires/news items with accompanying activities.
- This website <http://www.bonjourdefrance.com/index/indexgram.htm> has lots of brilliant activities and grammar exercises.
- This website has lots of practice of language and grammar. Choose 'français' and then 'AS resources' : <http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/rgshiwyc/school/curric/HotPotatoes/index.htm>
- Keep up to date with international news as a lot of the comprehension tasks require a fairly good knowledge of current affaires. You should also have a dip into the national French newspaper 'Le Monde' at www.lemonde.fr . Another great site is <http://fr.euronews.net/> as you can watch news clips in French and then watch it in English to see how much you have understood. Finally <https://www.1jour1actu.com/> is a good site to access and the app is free to download.
- The BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/french/> has a huge range of activities aimed at all levels.
- Get back to primary school! Keep a box with word cards in it so you can write your new words down as you learn them (French on one side, English on the other) and test yourself or get tested. French books aimed at children are a great way to learn and enjoy being a child again!

If you have any queries about your course preparation please contact Mrs Róisín Cox (Head of MFL) rcox@combertonvc.org