



Moving On Up!

Help, guidance and support
in your move from key stage 4
to post-16 language study

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The move from GCSE to post-16 language learning can be very challenging. You will be leaving your secondary school, joining a new FE or Sixth Form College, meeting new teachers and friends, learning new topics, acquiring new skills and be thinking about university and your future career.

This guide aims to help you prepare for the move and support you in your post-16 study. Although it is focused predominantly on language learning, it includes lots of advice and guidance which will be useful for other subjects too.

The guide covers many of the areas you may be worried about and offers practical help to deal with them. It also explains what you can expect and how you can help yourself to prepare, as well as providing sources of additional information and support.

Please read it carefully and keep it throughout your post -16 experience.



GCSE revision and exam success

Planning and preparation is crucial when revising for your GCSE exams. A revision timetable will help you to ensure that you are dedicating enough revision time to each subject. You should also make sure that you get enough rest and eat well. Your school and teachers will support you with your revision – try and make the most of opportunities such as revision classes. Attempting past papers is also a useful way to gain an understanding of the structure and level of questions.

You may find the following websites useful:

S-cool Revision www.s-cool.co.uk/

BBC Bitesize www.bbc.co.uk/gcsebitesize/

GCSE revising and revision www.gcse.com/

Top Marks www.topmarks.co.uk/

Open School for Languages www.mylo.dcsf.gov.uk/

The Revision Centre www.revisioncentre.co.uk/

Languages Online www.languagesonline.org.uk

Linguastars www.linguastars.com (requires subscription)

Language GCSEs consist of a number of skill areas which require different techniques and knowledge. In order to help you with some of these, listed below are some key tips and techniques.

Reading

- Read the text and get the gist, focusing on key words
- Take a positive approach and concentrate on what you do understand
- Use visual clues and verbal context. For example, you may be able to work out the meaning of a difficult word in a sentence if you know what the others mean
- Look at any examples to see what is required
- Look for grammatical clues. For example, if you can identify a plural, a verb, adjective, adverb or preposition, you will be in a better position to make an intelligent guess at a meaning
- Learn as much vocabulary as possible
- Check whether an answer should be given in the target language or in English
- Know the tenses (past, present and future)
- Know question words (who, why, what, where, etc) in the target language
- Never leave gaps. If all else fails, make a logical guess
- Check the number of marks for each question, to determine how much information you need to provide and judge how long to spend on it
- Don't spend too long on difficult questions – go back to them later

Listening

- Make the most of the reading time by making notes and anticipating what the answers may be
- Listen to the target language as much as possible in preparation
- Make sure you know the core vocabulary
- Think about how much you will write while listening – don't make so many notes that you miss the next bit
- You may prefer to make your notes in the target language
- Write down the sound of the words you don't immediately understand – you may be able to work them out later
- Look at the marks available for each question as this will give you an idea of how much information is required and how long to spend on it
- Always answer the question directly rather than writing down everything you hear
- Clues can be found in the tone of voices
- Answer all sections of the question, even if you have to guess
- Answer in the language required

Differences between language GCSE and A Levels

There are many differences between GCSE and A Level language study which can be a bit scary and overwhelming at first. This section outlines some of the key differences and what will be expected of you, along with advice to help you handle the differences confidently and competently.

At AS and A Level you will be exploring topics in greater detail and moving to wider issues concerning society and the world around you. Some of these issues may be fascinating to you and you will feel strongly about them. Others may not seem so interesting, but you will still need to discuss them with confidence and conviction.

So what are some of these topics?

Some are very broad, for example, environmental issues, world disasters, the rise of new political powers. Other topics will remain personal in nature, such as healthy living, marriage and relationships and young people's attitudes.

The table below outlines some of the key topics you may study at AS and A Level with the main awarding bodies.

Awarding Body	AS Topics	A Level Topics
AQA	Media Popular culture Healthy living/lifestyle Family/relationships	Environment The multicultural society Contemporary social issues Cultural topic
Edexcel	Youth culture and concerns Lifestyle: health and fitness The world around us Education and employment	Youth culture and concerns Lifestyle: health and fitness The world around us Education and employment Customs, traditions, beliefs and religions National and international events Literature and the arts
OCR	Aspects of daily life Leisure and entertainment Communication and media Education and training	Society The environment Science and technology: impact and issues Culture
WJEC	Leisure and lifestyles (examples include tourism, sport, healthy living) The individual and society (examples include relationships, youth culture, future careers)	Environmental issues (examples include technology, transport, sustainability) Social and political issues (examples include media, terrorism, world of work)

How will your work be different?

You will be expected to work more independently and take responsibility for your own learning. This will require you to research topics, form your own opinions and develop a much wider vocabulary.

Skills Required

Below are some of the skills that are needed to be successful at AS and A Level. You may already be competent in some of these, whilst your AS or A level course will help you to develop others further.

- To be well-informed
- To be able to express opinions and reactions and to provide well-researched information
- To be able to prepare a topic in detail
- To respond fully when prompted, basing responses on factual knowledge
- To be able to present a logical argument coherently and clearly
- To be able to use abstract language
- To show initiative and imagination
- To use the target language spontaneously and with increasing fluency
- To use formal as well as informal language
- To use accurate pronunciation and appropriate intonation
- To show knowledge of, and an ability to use, a range of structures
- To use complex structures when appropriate

Your level of competence in these areas can be developed to a large extent through independent study and preparation. Help with this is covered later in the guide.

Worries?

During your first week at an FE or Sixth Form College you may feel inadequate in comparison to the other students. You may feel that you have forgotten everything. You will find a different atmosphere from the one you experienced in your previous school, and you may be unnerved at first by the different way in which you are treated by your new teachers.

In order to cope with your worries, look at these questions and answers.

Am I the worst?

Take comfort in the knowledge that most people will feel the same and that, just as when you arrived in your secondary school in Year 7, it will take time to feel at home.



Have I forgotten everything?

The three months since your GCSEs is a long time, but you will surprise yourself with how quickly it all comes back. It is a good idea to ask your Year 11 teacher about any materials you can use to prepare before your post-16 study begins, as this could be very useful to help you get off to a good start. Advice on how to prepare is also contained later in the guide.

How should I react?

Don't be shy of talking to your tutors and listen to their advice. Assume as much personal responsibility as possible for your progress. Establish a work routine as quickly as possible. Do not lose sight of the importance of Year 12, as mock exams, interviews and visits make Year 13 a very short year.

What can I do already?

Your language GCSE will have given you a good background and understanding of the language in day-to-day situations in both its written and spoken forms; for example, announcements, instructions, notices, advertisements and magazine articles.

You will already be able to use the language practically to find out information and to handle situations in which you might find yourself. You will have written language skills for purposes like leaving messages, writing postcards and short letters and creating school magazine articles about your life and experiences – and you can explain some of your thoughts and feelings about these.

Focus on the positives and the vocabulary and skills you have acquired already.



Preparing yourself

There are lots of things you can do to help you approach AS and A Level study more confidently.

Explore and investigate!

You need to be curious, so keep a scrapbook of newspaper or magazine cuttings on anything you find which concerns the country and language you are going to study. Your GCSE topics were mainly limited to personal matters and experiences. The next step is to try to develop a broader knowledge of the target language country's society, government, history, fashion, art, music and lifestyle. Use these as headings and try to find at least five people or things connected with each.

Read!

Read a "quality" newspaper in English, not only for factual information but also to see how a good writer plans logically, draws arguments together and defends views and beliefs. The same applies to watching TV programmes such as the news or debates/discussion-style programmes.

You will be required to do a greater deal of reading for your AS and A Level subjects. While you have time over the summer, try to read some "good" novels – if you don't know where to begin, ask one of your teachers from school or your new college.

Access foreign newspapers and magazines – these are usually available in your school and local libraries, or can be read online.

Read guide books to gain an understanding of topics such as the geography, main cities and towns, culture and food.

Look at AS and A Level study guides to help you gain an understanding of topics and key learning points.

Access past AS and A Level papers to gain a sense of what is involved.

You might find it useful to keep and refer to your GCSE work. Remember to keep vocabulary lists, dictionaries and revision guides and notes.

Listen!

Tune in to radio broadcasts and music from the country whose language you are studying. This will not only sharpen up your listening skills, but you will hear names of people who are important.

Watch!

Watch television programmes and films in the target language. The BBC website has links to online programmes in a wide range of languages.

Write!

Do you have a contact in the country you will be studying? Why not try to get a pen friend?

Express yourself!

Make a list of all the words and phrases you know which express your opinions and show your feelings. Make a start by writing some in English, such as: "In my opinion..." "I can't accept that..."; "I agree..." and find their equivalent. You will then be able to use them in class.

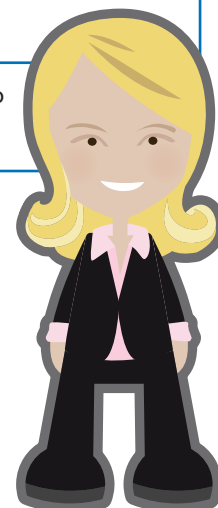
Useful sites

The Internet makes the world a very small place and enables you to gain an excellent insight into other cultures and access information quickly and easily.

Use your summer holiday to explore and research information on the relevant languages and countries you will be studying.

To help you get started, useful internet sites relevant for French, German and Spanish are listed in the table.

Information	French	German	Spanish
Search Engines	www.google.fr www.fr.yahoo.com	www.de.yahoo.com www.google.de	www.google.com/intl/es/ www.es.yahoo.com/
Government departments	www.Diplomatie.gouv.fr	www.bundesregierung.de/Webs/Breg/EN/Homepage/home.html	www.la-moncloa.es/index.htm www.congreso.es
Culture	www.frenchculture.org	www.goethe.de	www.spanish.about.com/ www.mec.es/sgci/uk
Museums and Libraries	www.Bnf.fr	www.dhm.de www.d-nb.de	www.bne.es/es/LaBNE/
Media	www.Liberation.fr www.Radio-france.fr www.bbc.co.uk/languages/	www.dw-world.de/ www.bild.de/ www.spiegel.de/ www.bbc.co.uk/languages/	www.elpais.es/ www.rtve.es/rne/index.htm www.antena3tv.es/ www.bbc.co.uk/languages/
Language	www.francophonie.org	www.goethe.de	www.mec.es/sgci/uk
Opinion Polls	www.Bva.fr www.lfop.fr		
Regional information	www.Region-bretagne.fr	http://www.brandenburg-tourism.com/	www.andalucia.com/
Tourism	www.Franceguide.com	www.germany-tourism.co.uk www.deutschland.de	www.spain.info



The Future.....

Studying a language at university

Even if you aren't planning to continue your language learning at university in the form of a specialist degree, you may still want to combine language learning with another subject or continue with or start a new language in your own time. Whatever your preference it is very likely there will be an opportunity for you at university. This section outlines the main ways in which you could continue to study a language at university.

Beginners/ab initio

If you have basic skills in a language or want to start a new one there are many opportunities for beginners, also known as ab initio learners, at university. Some universities offer degree courses in less widely taught languages such as Russian, Arabic or Japanese which are open to beginners. Opportunities for beginners are also offered as part of a university wide language programme in the form of modules or short courses.

Short courses and modules

Many universities run university wide programmes which enable the vast majority of students, regardless of their subject, to study a language as part of their course or on an extra-curricular basis. Whether you are an ab initio learner or a skilled linguist there will be an opportunity for you.

Specialist Language Degrees

Many universities offer specialist language degrees where you focus on one language. The majority of these are four year courses which often involve a compulsory year abroad.

Combined and Joint Degrees

If you want to continue with learning a language or perhaps start a new one at university, but don't want to specialise too much, a combined or joint degree may be right for you. This is an excellent way to combine a language with another subject area to give you a complementary set of skills for your future career and open up opportunities that might not otherwise have existed. More unusual combinations can help to make you stand out in the graduate employment market.

International Opportunities

Studying or working abroad as part of your university studies is a fantastic way to build on your language skills, immerse yourself in the culture, meet new people and add to your CV. There is no better way to learn about a language and culture than by being surrounded by it!

Most universities that offer language related degrees or courses, and even those that don't, also provide students with opportunities to study or work abroad. Other subject areas often involve a work placement and many universities will allow you to do this abroad. This is a fantastic opportunity to utilise a language you have previously studied but not continued with at university, or to learn a new one. Subject areas that usually offer such opportunities include Business Studies and Tourism.

The majority of UK universities also support the Erasmus Programme which provides UK undergraduates with the opportunity to study or work in another European country and provides funding to support this. To find out more about Erasmus visit www.erasmus.ac.uk

Careers

Language skills can open up all sorts of exciting career opportunities for you – think beyond teaching, interpreting and translating. For example:

- Journalism
- Medicine
- The Secret Service
- Importing
- Customer services
- European patent work
- International law
- The European Commission
- Immigration
- The Diplomatic Service
- The Armed Forces
- Hotel management
- Airline work
- Cruise ship work
- Tourist information service
- Tour operating
- Exporting
- International marketing

Employers regard language skills as very important and your earning power may also be greater than those without language skills.

Here are some interesting facts:

- At least half of the UK's 'richest' under 30's (53%) count languages among their skills
- 74% of UK businesses need foreign language conversational skills to help build business relationships (CBI Education & Skills Survey 2009)
- 70% of UK companies have customers abroad
- BMW believe that employees with language skills are worth more in the labour market.

More information

For more information about all the areas covered in this guide you may find the following website helpful.

The **'Why Study Languages?'** website contains resources and information regarding the advantages of language skills and information about studying at university.

www.whystudylanguages.ac.uk

The **The Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies** website contains resources and information regarding the advantages of language skills and information about studying at university

www.llas.ac.uk

CILT, the National Centre for Languages, holds a wide range of information regarding all areas of language learning

www.cilt.org.uk

The **AimHigher** website contains general information and advice about studying at university along with information about specific universities and courses

www.aimhigher.ac.uk

The **Languages Work** website provides information about relevant careers and a range of case studies

www.languageswork.org.uk

Connexions offers a wide range of information, advice and guidance in relation to learning and careers and can put you in touch with a personal advisor

www.connexions-direct.com

The **University and Colleges Admission Service (UCAS)** website holds information about all university courses available at UK universities

www.ucas.com

The **Erasmus (British Council)** programme offers university students the opportunity to study abroad as part of their course. Their website details the programmes they offer

www.erasmus.ac.uk



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