

The Straight Story on FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Please read the following information about the differences among foreign languages to better assist you in your language choices. REMEMBER: 2 years of the same foreign language are required for graduation, but colleges love to see more!

Languages Other Than English at Centennial High School focus on proficiency. Our goal is to give students meaningful contexts in which they can communicate proficiently. In levels 1 and 2, ASL, French and Spanish follow thematic units where speaking, writing, listening and reading are all based on the topic of the unit. Courses are conducted 90% in the target language. It is our goal that upon completion of LOTE studies at CHS that our students will:

1. communicate with confidence at the highest possible proficiency level, willing to take risks.
2. appreciate and respect all world cultures, approaching them with an open mind and enthusiasm.
3. participate and contribute to society as a responsible global citizen and life-long learner.

* It should be noted that all languages require memorization and practice outside of the classroom.

* In Spanish and French, students will be expected to speak! In ASL, students will be expected to be silent (“voices turned off”) and communicate through signing.

* Students will get out of the class what they put into it, so it is important to choose carefully!

Here are some things to consider about each language when making your choice.

AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE

- ASL isn't English, so when signing, word order is different than English. This can get confusing to some. It is not always a direct translation and signing things the wrong way could be offensive to deaf people.
- It is A LOT of memorization! Students need to stay awake so they can SEE what is being said in class. Students will be exposed to other signers besides the teacher to learn about variations in signing.
- The appreciation for the Deaf culture is very important! Students need be sensitive to what the deaf culture does and why it's part of that culture. There are different norms and cultural differences within the deaf community, even though these people are also Americans.
- Students are expected to stand up and present to the class from time to time too.

FRENCH

French is “easy” because:

- Students don't have to know all the verbs tenses for everyday conversation.
- Many food words in English come from French.

- Spanish grammar and French grammar are very similar.
 - Both are Romance languages
- Many cognates exist. (words that look like an English word and have the same meaning)

French is “difficult” because:

- Spelling in French is not usually phonetic.
- Nuances in pronunciation can be difficult and unpronounced letters abound.
- Adjectives come after the noun, which has a gender, and must agree with it.
- French grammar and word order are not like English grammar and word order.

Reasons to take French:

1. Be understood in 55 countries across five continents and by over 200 million people.
2. French is the third most common language on the Internet. Connect with pen pals, visit foreign websites and find student exchange opportunities.
3. Get a head start on learning other Romance languages like Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and Romanian.
4. Develop critical, creative thinking and problem solving skills. French also provides the base for more than 50% of the modern English vocabulary, which improves performance on standardized tests.
5. Open the doors to art, music, fashion, food, architecture and literature.
6. Be more competitive in the national and international job market in disciplines like business, medicine, aviation, law, transportation technologies, global/international distribution and luxury goods.
7. French is the official working language of the UN, NATO, UNESCO, the International Olympic Committee, the European Union, the International Red Cross and much more!

SPANISH

Spanish is “easy” because:

- Students have more prior exposure. Spanish is all around us here in Texas.
- Spanish is more phonetic than English (easier to spell).
- Many cognates in English.

Spanish is “difficult” because:

- Students must know many verb tenses for even everyday conversations.
- Adjectives come after the noun, which has a gender, and must agree with it.
- Spanish grammar and word order are not like English grammar and word order.
- Everyone thinks it is easy – it is not. All language-learning takes hard work and effort!