

Why should I consider learning French?

- You will be understood in 55 countries across five continents and by over 200 million people! French is the second most commonly taught second language in the world (after English), making it a real possibility that speaking French will come in handy practically anywhere you travel.
- French is one of the Romance languages like Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and Romanian. A knowledge of French will give you a head start if you want to learn one of these other languages.
- If you are a native English speaker, one of the best reasons to learn French is to help you understand your own language. Although English is a Germanic language, French has had an enormous impact on it. In fact, French is the largest donor of foreign words in English. Learning French will greatly increase the number of English words you know.
- French is a melodious and romantic language with a relatively quick learning curve. In short, French sounds great and relative to many foreign languages it's not too difficult.
- Studying French will allow you to appreciate other cultures in countries that speak French like: France, Canada, Belgium, Switzerland and many African nations. You will be able to develop an appreciation of the art, literature, music and cuisine of these countries.
- Knowing French will make you more competitive in the job market. Knowledge of a foreign language may increase your chances of finding a job, getting a promotion or a transfer overseas, or of going on foreign business trips. If you can communicate effectively with your business partners, it may help you to make sales and to negotiate and secure contracts.
- French is one of the most commonly used languages on the Internet. It is the official working language of the UN, NATO, UNESCO, the International Olympic Committee, the European Union, the International Red Cross and much more!
- Lastly and very importantly, a modern foreign language at Leaving Certificate is stipulated as an entry requirement by many colleges and universities in Ireland.

Leaving Certificate Ordinary Level – Exam Details

Oral exam (15 minutes) – usually before Easter (20% of marks)

Two written papers in June :

Paper One (2 ½ hours) – usually from 9.30 – 12.00

Section I: Compréhension Écrite (40% of marks)

Consists of four comprehensions
(The first two have questions in English which are answered in English, whilst comprehensions three and four have questions in French which you must answer in French.)

Section II: Production Écrite (15% of marks)

This section has three parts – A, B and C.
Each part has two options – a) or b). You must do two pieces of writing. In short, you choose two tasks from the six options given – the choice is good!

Section A

Choose between a) cloze test (letter) and b) a form to be completed.

Section B

Choose between a message and a postcard.

Section C

Choose between a diary entry and a formal letter.

After a short break:

Paper Two (about 40 minutes) – usually from 12.10 – 12.50

Listening Comprehension (25% of marks)

This paper consists of five sections.
The same CD is heard by both Ordinary and Honours level candidates. However, Ordinary level questions are easier. All questions are answered in English.