

## ■ IB Group 2 Languages – General Information

### **Introduction**

The study of languages plays a fundamental role within the IB Diploma, which is aimed at promoting understanding between people of different backgrounds and cultures. All IB Diploma students must study at least one language in Group 2. At Taunton School, there are five language options as follows.

### **Options**

#### ***German A2 Higher Level***

This is the option for a German native, or near-native, speaker who wishes to return to Germany to study after completing the IB Diploma. It involves the study of language, literature and current affairs. The German government requires at least A2 level German for university entrance.

#### ***French, German or Spanish B Higher Level***

This is for competent and keen linguists who have found GCSE level straightforward and are looking for the next level of challenge. They should understand how to manipulate tenses and the importance of detail in grammatical accuracy. They should also be keen to develop their oral and written fluency and be willing to grasp opportunities to practise and visit the target language country. Much of the course will focus on the study of current affairs but there is also a literary component. It is for those students who are already considering continuing with languages to degree level and in their future careers, and they would relish the chance to travel to other countries and to absorb the culture. An A\* grade at GCSE is recommended to continue at this level.

#### ***French, German or Spanish B Standard Level***

This is for students who are keen to speak and write more fluently and who feel that they have the ability to build further on their GCSE studies. General grammar competency is required and students should already be able to form tenses and use a fairly wide range of vocabulary. As with Higher Level, much of the course will focus on the study of current affairs but there is also a literary component. For these students Languages are not their academic priority but they understand the importance of communication in the modern world and aim to incorporate a language in their lifestyle or work after school and university. An A\* or A at GCSE is recommended to continue at this level.

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*What is the difference between studying a language at A Level and as Language B for the IB Diploma?*

Both these courses are for good linguists. The difference between the IB and A level courses is more in the way that each is studied than in the content covered. The IB course will cover more literature but the topics are similar to those studied at A level. An IB student will be asked to work more independently and to be more creative with their language work, showing a well-read background and a good level of critical awareness. The A level course focuses equal attention on all four skills – Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking, whereas the IB course has a greater emphasis on Speaking and Writing. As A Levels are modular, the A level student will follow a more prescribed course and be tested in June of the L6th and January of the U6th before the final exams in June of the U6th. All the IB exams are in May of the U6th.

### ***Mandarin or Spanish ab initio Standard Level***

This is for those who would like a new start from any languages they may have studied before. Mandarin is likely to be the more difficult of the two options unless the student has some relevant experience or prior knowledge. Students are advised to opt for Spanish if they have reached their ceiling with studying French. These courses are suitable for students who do not have the required level for either of the Language B courses or for those who would like to learn something completely new. Students should be aware that they will need to be able to assimilate a foreign language fairly quickly and that they will be expected to reach a level just higher than GCSE in two years. At least a B in a language at GCSE is recommended to start a new language at this level.

### ***Latin Higher or Standard Level***

This is for students who have studied Latin at GCSE and would like to continue to develop their understanding of classical language and culture. The Higher Level course is essential preparation for those considering studying classics at university or who appreciate the transferable skills that an in-depth study of Latin language and literature can develop. The Standard Level course gives much of the same grounding, without requiring the same depth of study and is a good choice for a linguist who appreciates the technical aspects of the language and has an interest in how the Roman language and civilisation has influenced the development of Western culture. It is also a good choice for any who would find the oral aspects of the Group 2 modern languages particularly challenging. An A\* in GCSE Latin is recommended for Higher Level and at least an A at GCSE Latin for Standard Level.

(Note that Latin at either level may only be available if sufficient numbers opt to make the classes viable).

For further information on any of the above Group 2 language options, refer to the separate information sheet for that language.