MIDDLE SCHOOL FOREIGN LANGUAGE - OVERVIEW

It is a basic tenet of the educational philosophy of the Chelmsford School System that students must be prepared to accept and discharge effectively their duties as citizens and live full, rewarding lives. To do so successfully, they must be educated in the realities of the modern world. Advances in technology bring with them political, social, economic, and cultural problems of great magnitude and complexity.

The solutions to such problems demand international cooperation, which, in turn, requires communication among the nations of the world. It is imperative that we learn to communicate more effectively with other nations, to understand them, and to get along with them, for without communication there can be no understanding. Without understanding there can be no civilized living.

Foreign language study is assuming, today, a new role of utmost importance. It becomes the gateway to new avenues of communication and prepares the student for world citizenship.

Rationale for Foreign Language in the Middle School

1. The earlier the start, the easier the mastery. In early adolescence, speech habits in the native language are not yet so fixed as to interfere seriously with the learning of new speech habits. At this age, students have a natural ability to memorize, reproduce unfamiliar sounds, and develop new speech habits.

2. The earlier the start, the higher the level of proficiency achieved. Research indicates that students with a longer exposure to a foreign language generally acquire more and better skills than those with a shorter exposure.

3. Foreign languages teach the basics. Research supports that foreign language study leads to the acquisition of skills transferable to other domains such as English vocabulary development, reading comprehension, and communication skills.

Introductory French (1711)

In this course students will be introduced to the language and cultures of the French-speaking world. They will learn to ask and answer simple questions and talk in the present about activities and people which relate to daily life. Topics will include greetings, school, people, common objects, time, and weather. Students will be able to function using the language in very structured and highly contextualized situations. There is a strong emphasis on acquiring vocabulary at this level. The development of intercultural understanding and appreciation is also an integral part of the course.

French 8 (1811)

This course is the continuation of French 7. Skills developed the previous year will be reinforced and expanded. Students will be able to carry on simple, face-to-face conversations using standard, memorized phrases in the present and the past. They will be able to read and understand highly contextualized material, and they will be able to write short, uncomplicated messages. Vocabulary and grammar covered will relate to familiar topics and practical needs. A variety of cultural topics will also be covered in each unit. At the end of the course, the students’ proficiency level will be assessed in order to determine their placement in French in grade 9 at the high school.
**Introductory Spanish (1721)**

In this course students will be introduced to the language and cultures of the Spanish-speaking world. They will learn to ask and answer simple questions and talk, in the present, about activities and people which relate to daily life. Topics will include greetings, school, people, common objects, time, and weather. Students will be able to function using the language in very structured and highly contextualized situations. There is a strong emphasis on acquiring vocabulary at this level. The development of intercultural understanding and appreciation is also an integral part of the course.

**Spanish 8 (1821)**

This course is a continuation of Spanish 7. Skills developed the previous year will be reinforced and expanded. Students will be able to carry on simple, face-to-face conversation using standard, memorized phrases in the present and the past. They will be able to read and understand highly contextualized material, and they will be able to write short, uncomplicated messages. Vocabulary and grammar covered will relate to familiar topics and practical needs. A variety of cultural topics will also be covered in each unit. At the end of the course, the students’ proficiency level will be assessed in order to determine their placement in Spanish in grade 9 at the high school.