

AS/A2 MANDARIN CHINESE

Head of Department – Mrs V. K. Allen

EXAMINATION BOARD: EDEXCEL

SYLLABUS TITLE: CHINESE (Mandarin)

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

The minimum requirement is a grade A at GCSE, but we expect the majority of students to have a grade A* as this is a demanding course.

THE COURSE CONTENT

A level courses in Modern Foreign Languages are designed to follow on naturally from GCSE. This means equal importance continues to be given to the four skill areas of *Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing*.

The AS course is based upon four topic areas:

- Food, diet and health;
- Transport, travel and tourism;
- Education and employment;
- Leisure, youth interest and Chinese Festivals.

The A2 course is further development of the above topics plus an additional topic: the Environment. In addition to your timetabled lessons there is a requirement to attend weekly sessions with the foreign language assistant. All lessons will normally be conducted in Chinese as this is the best way to develop your skills for the A level exam.

Wherever possible, students will conduct further research into the history and culture of China. Resources are available from the Modern Languages department and from the Library. These will enable students to explore and develop a deeper understanding of contemporary society and culture. Students will also be encouraged to make use of the reading trees in the Library and LA2 to improve their vocabulary and reading comprehension in the language.

ASSESSMENT

AS comprises of two units:

Unit 1: Spoken Expression and Response (15%)

Students speak for five minutes based on a stimulus prepared on the day. For example, one of the stimuli could be a photograph and notes on the Mid-Autumn festival. Students then prepare a response in speech form on this topic.

Unit 2: Understanding and Written Response (35%)

Section A will be a short listening comprehension. Section B will be a reading comprehension with some Chinese-English translation. Section C will be a written task of 180-200 in the form of a letter, report or article.

A2 comprises of one further unit:

Unit 3: Understanding, Written Response and Research

Section A will be is reading comprehension. Section B will be an English-Chinese translation. Section C will be an essay of 250-300 characters. Section D will be a research-based essay about an area of interest to the student. Most of this finally section will have been prepared in class.

HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES AND RELATED CAREERS

An A level in any Modern Language is evidence of ability and the broadening of horizons. An A level in Chinese is no exception. The ability to manipulate language, and the memory required to recognise and produce characters are skills which are highly valued. Studying Asian languages requires a different way of learning and an opening of the mind to appreciate executing everyday tasks in a way which is often completely alien to one's own. Once perception is changed, the students have a unique way of seeing the world around them. Knowing a language is valuable in its own right and employers appreciate a language qualification even when the jobs they seek to fill require no specialist language ability. Being a linguist offers students many transferable skills: effective communication; excellent listening skills; precise evaluating and analytical skills; and putting texts or speech into cultural context.

If you choose to do a degree in Modern languages, an increasing number of universities have altered their focus from the traditional translation/literature courses in favour of a stronger emphasis on modern usage. Courses are also available in which subjects such as science, engineering or business management are taken with a language.

Linguists can find employment opportunities in broadcasting, purchasing, commerce and industry, international organisations, interpreting, translating, teaching and the Civil Service. You can improve your career prospects with a modern language in such fields as law, accountancy, journalism and insurance. Competence in one foreign language can often be a stepping stone to others. Some students of Chinese have gone on to study Japanese, Korean and Cantonese.