

Spanish at Samuel Whitbread Academy

Intent

We believe that languages are an essential tool to broaden one's horizons and enhance communication and social skills. With our KS5 curriculum, we encourage, support and challenge students to discover the Hispanic culture as well as inspire them to form opinions about contemporary trends and issues which could relate to their lives. Learning a language is a key element in developing empathy, respect, integrity and determination for the world.

Spanish at A Level is an enriching experience and provides students a broad-range of skills and knowledge. We base our teaching on the core understanding and communication skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking. We focus on informing and challenging stereotypes and preconceptions about Spanish speaking societies around the world and how Spanish people are and have shaped the Hispanic culture we know today.

Our intention is to develop learners who build confidence in their own abilities, learning about the world they live in and providing them with real world experiences so that they have the skills they need to travel, recognise and accept cultural differences, and have a successful career.

Implementation

The teaching of A Level Spanish is delivered by passionate teachers and split into themes, and then sub-themes. Throughout the two-year course students continue to deepen their understanding of what makes the Spanish speaking world so popular, relevant and unique. Our lessons are structured to support an effective transition from the GCSE course where some topics overlap and are explored deeper at A-Level. The use of the target language in and out of lessons is essential, both from the teacher(s) and students.

We follow the AQA A Level curriculum and support material which provides helpful topic review and assessment points for students. The four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating) are embedded in all lessons, students are supported and challenged, mainly through questioning. Assessments happen formally at the end of units and provide students with tools to improve and correct their work, leading to progress over the course.

The study of a Spanish book and a Spanish film will stimulate the students' curiosity and provide with a range of opportunities to discuss and argue key themes which relates to our curriculum. In addition, prep time is set regularly and requires students to read authentic material such as news articles, podcasts or interviews. Students will therefore experience reading Spanish from a variety of sources and authors, and collect key information (including facts, opinions, statistics...) which will directly enhance their understanding of the French societies around the globe. Tasks are given and check by the class teacher(s) and used as reference in speaking tasks where students are consistently challenge to support their ideas with evidence.

Implementation	Key Stage 5: Year 12	<p>The start of year 12 focusses on the key elements that provides students with the essential tools to communicate effectively and confidently: grammar. It aims to build on GCSE knowledge and address potential gaps in students’ knowledge. It is quite intensive but necessary to reach accuracy and confidence.</p> <p>The sub-themes taught by teacher(s) aim at exposing students to knowledge they can easily relate to as teenagers. We talk about what makes Hispanic society so unique: the traditional values and morals, cyber-society, and the importance of equal rights. Then we slowly introduce our first authentic work from a Spanish speaking artist: <i>El laberinto del fauno</i>, a film by Mexican director Guillermo del Toro which introduces the world of cinema and gradually ease students in discovering the life of an artist, as well as more intricate topic such as Spanish history. Students enjoy watching the film and analysing techniques, dialogues and discuss the key themes. The following sub-themes relate more to Spanish lives and require students to really broaden their horizons as to how Hispanic societies are living differently to them.</p> <p>Throughout year 12 and 13 students continue to review, complete more analytical tasks and write essays on both the film and the book. The Independent Research Project (IRP) is a core element of the speaking exam and is entirely dependent on students’ preparation as no feedback can be given by their teacher(s). It asks of students to build on the curriculum themes and decide on one part of the Hispanic world that fascinates, intrigues or shocks them. They decide on the topic, conduct their own research only accessing authentic sources and have to present it on the day of their speaking exam, a presentation which will be followed by a discussion with the examiner. The IRP is introduced in more details in the Summer term when they are about to leave for the summer holidays.</p>
	Key Stage 5: Year 13	<p>Year 13 is a natural continuation of the A Level course which tackles the more complex themes, mainly around politics and social issues in the Hispanic world. This is where students are challenged to form opinions as young adults, ready to step into the real world. The sub-themes include politics, immigration and integration, racism, monarchies and dictatorships. Finally, the study of the book <i>La casa de Bernarda Alba</i>, by Spanish author Federico García Lorca, reinforces study habits developed through the study of the film, as well as re-using vocabulary and analytical approaches.</p> <p>When approaching Internal Progression Exams (IPEs) and Mock speaking exams, lessons tend to revisit and assess more regularly the students’ abilities to communicate effectively, without major errors, as well as understanding a variety of Spanish speakers about these current issues. Students are held accountable for researching and remembering facts and figures about recent events, elections and issues. That contributes in making them actors and thinkers in the real world.</p>

Students are regularly assessed to check their understanding and progress within each of the sub-themes they are taught in Key Stage 5.

Our assessments include:

- End of sub-theme tests in listening, reading, writing and translation
- Mini-IRPs where specific topic are given by teacher(s) for students to research and present
- Essays
- Peer and self-assessment of lesson tasks
- IPE exams throughout Year 12 and 13 including speaking exams

Feedback and questioning will require students to realise their main errors in grammar and challenge them to think further. The students' response, in Spanish, will increase their confidence and build their resilience prior to final exams.