



French

Introduction

The French Program aims to help students learn and make sense of the parts of the French language that are practical, and meaningful. The French program is designed to target language used in common social situation with cultural and linguistic messages embedded within. We hope that this process will trigger students to compare and analyse their own language and question the origin and structure of its words and grammar. This can only improve their understanding of both their English as well as any other language they study in the future. We also cover cultural and historical aspects of French speaking and European culture with special attention to France. The French program reflects the principles of the Western Australian Curriculum and students in years 3 to 7 are progressing in each of the major strands: Listening, Responding and Speaking, Viewing, Reading and Responding, Writing Cultural understandings and Language conventions.

How do children progress in French?

Children in the early years learn a range of topic based on basic vocabulary, basic form, such as pronouncing the alphabet in French, colours, numbers to 20, names of family members, pets, school items, weather and food etc. As students progress in age and year level, they are introduced to more extensive range of topics and larger vocabulary within those familiar topics. Towards the later years students write and read more in French. Students will then be learning the basics of grammar, sentence structure and more vocabulary along the way. Finally, students will put all their skills and knowledge together to start making proper phrases and sentences, which are meaningful and target specific social situation in French. This means that by the end of year 6, they are expected to be able to speak, read and write basic phrases in French related to topics, such as;

- . Introducing self and friends or family.
- . Present personal details in speaking and in writing.
- . Describing themselves physically and in personality.
- . Speaking and writing about their birthday and their parents and friends.
- . Writing and making a birthday card in French.
- . Talking about a person and describing his or her characteristics.
- . Expressing likes and dislikes about various things in life.

Activities and Resource

To achieve such outcomes, students are introduced to a wide range of resources and activities such as performing role-play with peers and recording instructions for

assemblies, miming, read and making children's books in French, participating in language games and practice speaking, singing along and dancing to French music, write birthday cards, make slideshow presentations about a particular theme, write short text, use interactive computer lessons, research cultural aspects of France, and view language related videos.

The foreign language teaching methodology known as Accelerative Integrated Method (AIM) uses gestures, music, dance, and theatre to help students learn. Students in Pre-Primary to Year Three are taught French using the AIM method

The basic premise of AIM is that students learn and remember better when they do something that goes along with the words they are saying. For example, while the students say *regard* (to look), they hold their hands in front of their eyes in the shape of binoculars.

This "Gesture Approach" includes defined gestures for hundreds of essential French words, known as "Pared Down Language." The gestures are then combined with theatre, storytelling, dance, and music to help students remember and use the language.

Teachers have found great success with this integrative approach to language learning; in fact, some students achieve results comparable to those in full immersion programs, even when the AIM-educated students only study the language for a few hours a week.

AIM is particularly well-suited for children, but it could be adapted for older students.

Accelerative Integrated Method was developed by French teacher Wendy Maxwell. In 1999, she won the Canadian Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence, and in 2004 The H.H. Stern award from the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers. Both of these prestigious awards are given to educators who show great innovation in the classroom.

Finally, it is worth pointing out that learning another language including French is proven to contribute positively to children's self esteem, social skills and confidence. This is attributed to the methodology used in learning, the interactive and social nature of activities and the diversity of resources the children are exposed to when learning another language. It is also widely accepted that second languages learning does help students improve their understanding of English and other learning areas.