

# Step Up to French A Level

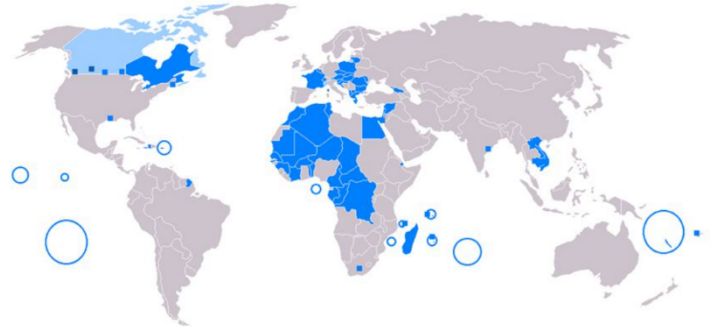
at Stepney All Saints

## Why French?

Congratulations on selecting French A Level. You have opened the door of opportunity! Studying French will enrich your life, giving you opportunities to travel abroad and to learn about different cultures and different ways of life. Studying a language will also enhance your life chances, as universities and employers tend to prefer candidates who can speak more than one language.

Did you know that linguists are better communicators and writers and have a better understanding of their own language too? Students who study languages do better in tests and learning a language will improve the functionality of your brain and improve your memory skills.

French is currently spoken by approximately 300 million people in a huge range of countries. Knowing French means you could communicate with a huge number of speakers around the world!



Studying A Level French will enable you to learn the French language and you will also gain an in-depth insight into the cultural, social, political, and artistic aspects of the French speaking country/countries you will study.

## A Level French – Introduction to the course

At A Level, we follow the AQA syllabus.



### What will I learn?

During this course you will develop your linguistic skills alongside your understanding of the culture and society of the countries where French is spoken.

### You will study:

- technological and social change, looking at the multicultural nature of Francophone society.
- highlights of Francophone artistic culture, French regional identity and the cultural heritage of past civilisations.
- aspects of the diverse political landscape of the Francophone world.
- the influence of the past on present-day Francophone communities.

Throughout your studies, you learn the language in the context of Francophone countries and issues and influences which have shaped them. You will study texts and film and will have the opportunity to carry out independent research on an area of your choice.

### Course structure

The AQA A level in French comprises three units.

Paper 1: Listening, reading and writing

Paper 2: Writing (Essay on a novel + a film)

Paper 3: Speaking (involving discussion on a topic of your choice)

### General Topic Areas for A level French

The topics you will cover are as follows:

Year 1	
<b>Aspects of Francophone society</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modern and traditional values</li> <li>• Cyberspace</li> <li>• Equal rights</li> </ul>	<b>Artistic culture in the Francophone world</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modern day idols</li> <li>• French regional identity</li> <li>• Cultural and Linguistic heritage</li> </ul>
Year 2	
<b>Multiculturalism in Francophone society</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immigration</li> <li>• Racism</li> <li>• Integration</li> </ul>	<b>Aspects of political life in the Francophone world</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Today's youth, tomorrow's citizens</li> <li>• Political engagement across generations</li> <li>• Popular movements</li> </ul>

## Transition Activities:

## How can you prepare for A Level French?

You are to be set three tasks. These are linked to skills you will need at French A Level. We will focus on:

1. Use of key language structures for A Level
2. Analysis of a film
3. Understanding how to research a French-language topic

### Key Language Structures for A Level Transition:

#### High Frequency Verbs

**avoir      pouvoir**  
**être      devoir**  
**aller      vouloir**  
**faire      savoir**

Create a wall chart displaying these verbs in all their forms and in the following tenses:

- present tense
- perfect tense
- imperfect tense
- simple future tense
- conditional tense

Memorise these verbs thoroughly and test yourself regularly.

#### **Sentence Starters**

Ce qui me frappe le plus... What strikes me the most is...  
Ce que je ne peux pas supporter... What I cannot bear is...  
Je m'inquiète beaucoup car... I worry very much because...  
Ce qui est bien c'est qu'on peut... What's good is that you can...  
L'avantage c'est qu'il y a... The advantage is that there is...

Write 3 sentences using each of these sentence starters. Give your opinion on:

- Immigration and multicultural society
- Changes in society
- French culture

#### **Complex Connectives**

Ce que je trouve étonnant... - What I find astonishing...  
Comme je n'aime pas le conflit... - As I don't like confrontation...  
Puisque ce sera difficile... - Since this will be difficult...  
Grâce à... - Thanks to...  
À cause de... - Because of...  
Dès ce moment, j'ai décidé de... - From that moment, I decided to...  
Pendant que j'étais là - While I was there.  
Malgré - despite  
À la suite de - As a result of/following

Write 3 sentences using each of these connectives.

Research other connectives online and create a list.

Learn about other linking words from this website:[no website given?]

<https://www.frenchtoday.com/blog/french-vocabulary/linking-words>

#### **Subjunctive mood**

Autant que je sache..  
As far as I know...  
Il est important que je sois clair...  
It's important that I am clear...  
Il est nécessaire qu'on fasse ce qui est important dans la vie.  
It is necessary that we do what's important in life.  
Afin qu'on puisse... In order that you can...  
Il faut que je sois honnête... I must be honest  
Bien que je sache que ce n'est pas évident...  
Although I know it's not obvious...

Write 3 sentences using each of these subjunctive mood sentence starters.

Follow the link to this website and complete some research on subjunctive mood.

<https://www.frenchtoday.com/blog/french-verb-conjugation/understanding-french-subjunctive>

## Task 2

Write a film analysis. The film is "l'Ascension" by Ludovic Bernard starring Ahmed Sylla.

Work through the following to complete task 2:



Watch the trailer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=go9zvQcq5Jo>

Watch:

**L'Ascension** (Title in English = The Climb) – film by Bernard Sylla (Age rating 15. This film is currently available on Netflix + you can add English subtitles)

Can you find the French for the following vocabulary relevant for this film?

Comedy	Determined	Stubborn	Landscape
Friendship	courageous	Incredible	Script/screenplay
Poverty	Journey	Intrepid	Special Effects
Love Story	Self discovery	To prove yourself	Shot (camera angle)

To write your summary use the following bullet points:

1. **Introduction:** Title of the film, director and say who the main characters (*personnages*) are:

- Sami
- Nadia
- La Mère de Sami

Example: *Le film s'appelle « l'ascension », c'est un film français, réalisé par Ludovic Bernard. Les personnages principaux sont....*

2. **Characters (personnages):** Find adjectives in French to describe the main characters:

Example:

*Chaque personnage est différent. Je dirais que Sami est .....*

3. **Favourite character (personnage préféré):** Describe your favourite character and explain why:

Example:

*Mon personnage préféré, c'est ..... Parce qu'il/elle est .....*

*Mention age/personality/appearance/humour*

4. **Themes (thèmes):** What would you say the film is highlighting as social issues?

Example:

*La thème principale, c'est .....une autre thème importante, c'est...*

→ *l'amour*

→ *la pauvreté des familles d'origine Sénégalais*

→ *L'amitié*

→ *L'ambition*

→ *L'espoir*

5. **Cultural links (les liens culturels):** This film is a comedy with a French-Senegalese protagonist. What can you find out about the links between Senegal and France? Why is there a connection between the countries? What other French language comedies can you find? Make a list of 3 to watch.

6. **La Conclusion :** Say what you thought overall of the film.

Example:

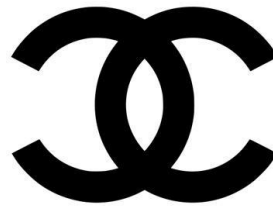
*Pour conclure, je dirais que ce film est .....*





As part of the speaking exam at A level, you talk about a topic of your choice. This has to be based on an area of interest linked to the French-speaking world. It is best to do this on an area of interest to you. In previous years students have chosen the following:

- Francophone African Dance Music
- Paris St Germain football club and Fifa Financial Fair Play
- Tensions between Police and ethnic minorities in France
- The traditions of French Fashion Design
- Muslim identity and Islamophobia in the French Republic
- The impact of right wing populist politics in France



These were all chosen by students based on their own areas of interest. The idea is that you should be an expert on your chosen topic.

Task 3 is to prepare a presentation on an area of interest to you that is linked to the French-speaking world. This would be a spoken presentation, however for this task it will be written.

1. Think of something that interests you e.g. sport, music, identity politics, etc.

*Example: Music*

2. Narrow this down to an example of this in a French-speaking country. You will need to research this online.

*Example: La Musique Hip Hop Francaise*

3. Find out about the origins of your topic and compare with today.

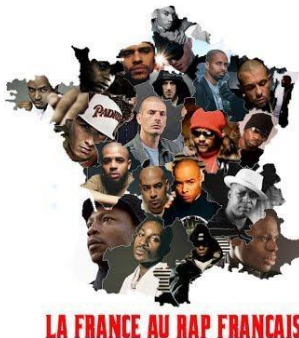
*Example: The origins of this music; how it has grown in popularity; the exploration of social issues through rap, etc.*

4. Prepare bullet points in French. You can use phrases from your research. Make sure you understand what they all mean.

*Example:*

- Le rap français et son influence culturel
- La médiatisation du rap pendant les années 1990
- Le clivage entre le rap « populaire » et « alternatif »

**A lot of the A level course is about expressing opinions, defending your opinions, and justifying your point of view. Start to think about your opinions on your topic area. You may change your opinions as you start learning about the issue.**



## How to learn French?

When learning a language, the saying that “practice makes perfect” is very appropriate. You develop a higher level of comprehension (listening and reading) if you expose yourself to the language every day. The simplest of actions can help you develop vocabulary e.g. putting on French subtitles on your favourite programme, changing the language settings on your email account to French, etc.

This second set of activities focuses on the kind of things you can do regularly to develop these habits and to develop a great level of French.

## Transition Activities:

### Preparing for A Level French

You are to be set a further three tasks. These are linked to skills you will need at French A Level. We will focus on:

4. Sentence structure /grammatical accuracy
5. Cultural awareness (- *exposure to French language music and culture*)
6. Vocabulary development + conceptual awareness (- *the how and why of things*)

### Task 1 – Sentence structure / Grammar

Complete a story on Duolingo every day

<https://stories.duolingo.com/>

Duolingo Stories is a way to practice your listening and reading comprehension using bite-sized interactive stories. By completing one every day you will get to revise and improve lots of language you have been learning so far in French. Each task takes around 5-10 minutes.

You can complete Duolingo stories on the internet or on a mobile app.

When you first register (select the free account), you will take a quick test which will help the app to tailor the work set to your level.

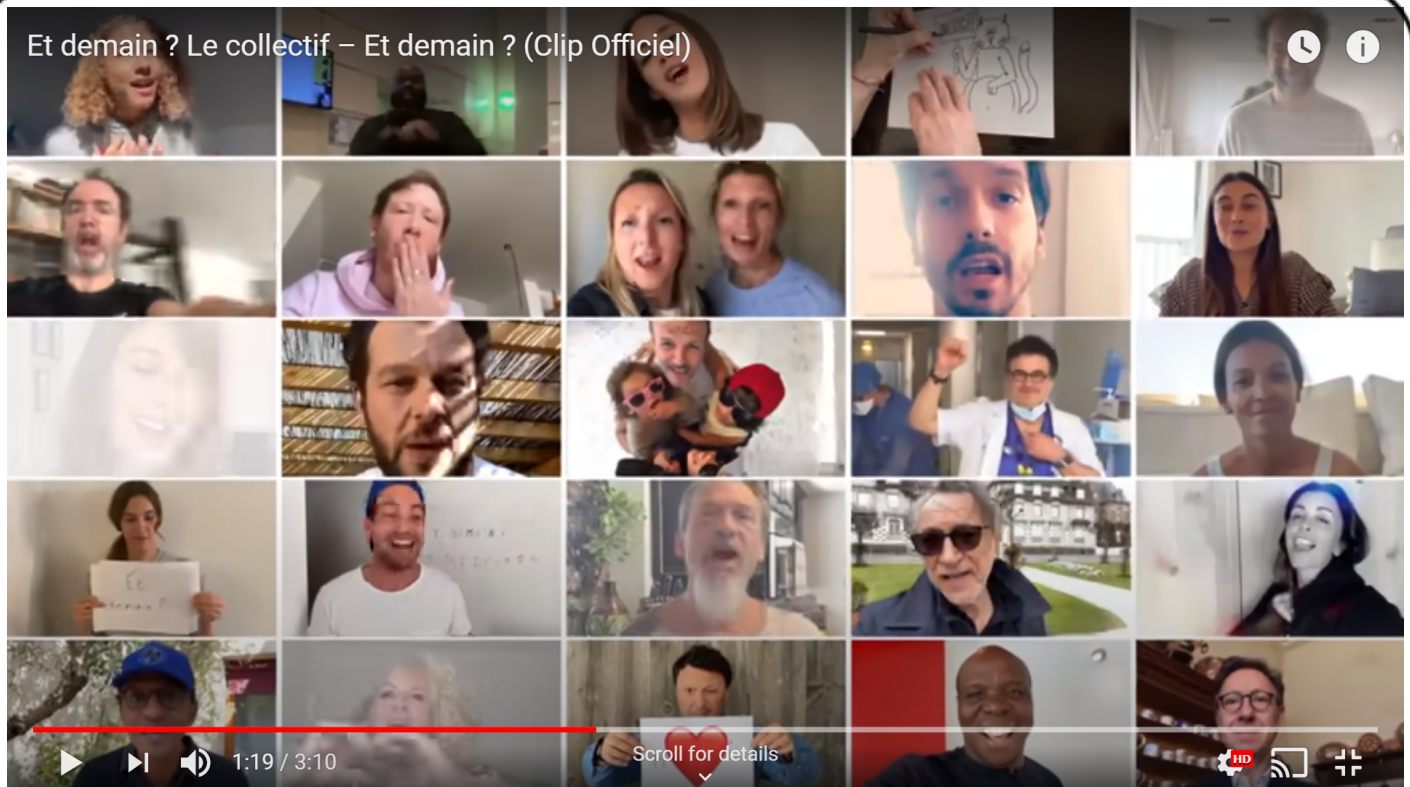


### Task 2 – Cultural awareness

As part of the speaking exam at A level, you will learn how to analyse texts and to infer meaning. Sometimes people imply meaning rather than saying things directly and when you understand the culture, this can further help to improve your comprehension.

We are going to look at a song by a large group called “le collectif”. Complete the following tasks:

- a) Go online and find out as much as you can about the song and the ensemble of artists and personalities involved in le collectif. Why was the song made? What was the impact of the song?
- b) Watch the video for the song “*et demain?*” (link on next page). Does the video help you to understand what the message of the song might be? If so, what do you think the message is?



Or click on the link - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eY803uik2BY>

## ***Et Demain?***

Il a fallu en arriver là pour nous rassembler  
Prendre conscience de l'importance de  
l'humanité  
Ce combat c'est le monde entier qui doit le mener  
Car y a pas de couleur ni de religion pour être  
confiné  
Il a fallu en arriver là pour les remercier  
Ces héros du quotidien qui sans compter  
Sacrifient leur vie au nom de notre santé  
Ces mêmes qui criaient dans la rue "venez vous  
aider"  
Et demain on fera quoi?  
On recommencera l'homme est comme ça  
Et demain, ça sera nous les maîtres du jeu, un  
point c'est tout  
S'aimer encore, danser encore  
Sourire encore, s'embrasser plus fort  
Pleurer encore, souffrir encore  
Et tenir encore, et chanter plus fort  
Ça fait du bien  
Il a fallu en arriver là pour qu'on se parle  
Qu'on recommence à s'amuser avec que dalle  
Pour qu'on s'appelle, qu'on se dise "je t'aime",  
"est-ce que t'as mal?"  
Avec le temps, on retrouvera le temps et la  
morale  
Et demain on fera quoi?

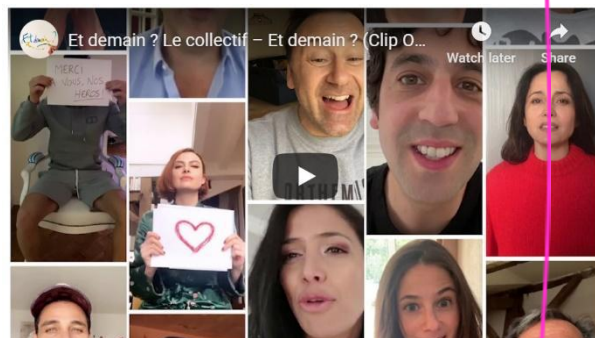
On recommencera l'homme est comme ça  
Et demain ça sera nous les maîtres du jeu, un  
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Pleurer encore, souffrir encore  
Et tenir encore, et chanter plus fort  
Ça fait du bien  
S'aimer encore, danser encore  
Sourire encore, s'embrasser plus fort  
Pleurer encore, souffrir encore  
Mais tenir encore, et chanter plus fort  
S'aimer encore, danser encore  
Sourire encore, s'embrasser plus fort  
Pleurer encore, souffrir encore  
Mais tenir encore, et chanter plus fort  
Ça fait du bien

- c) Have a look through the lyrics for the song + highlight any sentences that help explain what the song is about.
- d) Now read through an article from “Le Parisien” answer a couple of questions. This article is written about the song and how it was made.

**Le Parisien**

## “ET DEMAIN?”, LE CLIP DU COLLECTIF

Ils sont 350 artistes, personnalités, réunis dans un clip et une chanson au casting vertigineux. Tout le monde ne chante pas, loin de là, mais chacun a envoyé, confiné depuis chez lui, un petit message vidéo pour remercier le personnel soignant. Ils sont rassemblés sous la forme d'un impressionnant kaléidoscope qui défile pendant un peu plus de trois minutes. Une démarche au profit de la Fondation Hôpitaux de Paris/Hôpitaux de France, complétée par un [appel aux dons sur les réseaux sociaux](#).



- e) Highlight parts of the text that support your view on what the song is about. Also, what does the last phrase tell you about the objective of the song?

### Task 3 – Vocabulary development + conceptual development

When covering all the General Topic Areas for A level French you will encounter a wide range of vocabulary. Knowledge of a wide range of vocabulary is a key feature of high attainers at French A level. This is a skill that you can develop independently by having regular contact with the language. An easy way of doing this is checking headline news and working out meanings. At the same time this helps you to develop greater awareness of issues and concepts and to develop your own views which is another important element of A level French.

In Task 3 you will look at news and current affairs websites and work out what some of the articles are discussing. This will help you to develop your cultural awareness of what is happening in France and other French-speaking communities.

It is generally best to start with international news as you will be more familiar with what is going on. Use the following two websites:



<https://savoirs.rfi.fr/fr> - part of the Radio France International website dedicated to French learners

<https://savoirs.rfi.fr/fr/apprendre-enseigner/langue-francaise/journal-en-francais-facile> - News bulletins in “easy” French with transcripts posted alongside the bulletin

**HUFFPOST**



<https://www.huffingtonpost.fr/international/> - international section of the French language news site

Go to one of these websites and select a headline. To work out what the article is discussing you may want to use an online dictionary. Use the following: [www.wordreference.com](http://www.wordreference.com) – this is used by professional translators and is one of the best.

Once you have selected your headline, pick out the key words, look up ones you do not know and produce a summary in English.

### Example 1:

This is taken from the *RFI savoirs* website:

The headline is asking what should be done about the statues of former slave owners and slave traders which appear throughout France.



ARTICLE

#LE RACISME

Lee, Colbert, Faidherbe et les autres : que faire des statues des esclavagistes?

### Example 2:

This is taken from the <https://www.huffingtonpost.fr/international/> website:

## L'Angleterre rouvre ses pubs pour la suite du déconfinement

Les Anglais revivent mais loin d'être vaincu, le coronavirus qui a tué 44.000 personnes dans le pays a repris de la vigueur à Leicester.

The headline talks about the easing of lockdown restrictions and the reopening of pubs in the UK while cases of Coronavirus are increasing in Leicester.

- Do this at least once a week and keep a record of the new vocabulary.
- Learn the new words as you go along.

## Support materials

The best online translator is [www.wordreference.com](http://www.wordreference.com)

**WR** Linguee

Another very useful website is [www.linguee.com/French-english](http://www.linguee.com/French-english)

Avoid Google Translate. This is not a very accurate tool and is best avoided unless it is for single words. Use WordReference and Linguee instead. The above websites also exist as free apps for your phone.

