

Immersion French and Spanish

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The four immersion language courses at the Academy are divided into four separate classes. Advanced French, Advanced Spanish, Honors French and Honors Spanish. It is a unique learning environment for language students as students come from districts all over the state of Massachusetts and have had very different experiences and exposure to French and Spanish. The spectrum ranges from those with no previous French or Spanish to those who have an extensive background in these languages. Students are placed in either the Advanced or Intermediate (Honors) group based on ability, not on number of years studying the language. This is determined using a diagnostic listening and written exam given during the summer.

The primary goal of all the immersion languages courses at Mass Academy is fluid oral and written proficiency with high comprehension of the spoken target language. Therefore, all class activities, discussions, and projects are carried out exclusively in the target language. This technique provides students with the maximum amount of exposure to the target language.

Students in all language classes are actively involved in their own scholarship. For example, students keep a running journal of vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and grammar that they have discovered within class materials. By selecting exactly which words or structures need defining, learning is personalized for every student. As no two students are alike, no two student journals ever look the same.

All vocabulary and grammar structures presented by the instructor are embedded within meaningful activities, games, literature, film, or music. Students will be able to create meaning with the language as opposed to studying vocabulary lists or grammar structures in isolation without context.

Each student is graded based on his or her own progress in the target language and not by written tests or comparisons to other classmates. Progress is measured by assessing each individual's written and audio, and video portfolio. This method allows everyone, including those who have never taken French or Spanish, to succeed.

The class is student centered and project based and includes the following:

- Authentic films and video clips
- Authentic popular music analysis
- Games
- Portfolio development of verbal fluency, pronunciation, and written work
- Original texts, literature, and poetry
- Grammar learning through meaningful contexts
- Cooking, racecar building, and other project based activities
- Individual cultural and historical projects
- Authentic TV episodes
- Student presentations
- Digital storytelling and
- Scavenger hunts
- Yoga and meditation
- Student directed activities such as board games, debates, and card playing
- Original student written, filmed, and edited short movies