

## **Extra-Curricular AIM French Classes**

The Accelerated Integrated Methodology has been developed French teacher Wendy Maxwell as a means of supporting students to learn to speak the language confidently. 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. The system is used extensively in Canada and is now in use in a number of schools in the Netherlands, Australia and New Zealand for the teaching of French, Spanish, English, Mandarin and Japanese. The Twyford Trust schools are the first school in the UK to be piloting this system and have already carried out trials in a number of local primary schools in a project supported by the London School's Excellence Fund.

### **What is involved?**

This methodology, taught exclusively in the target language, is based upon the use of stories, mime & gesture for the teaching of French. Specifically designed stories, written in the form of plays, become the focus for a range of motivating language activities that help students develop confidence and competence in the language as they progress through each story unit. These stories have a great emphasis on grammar, which is taught inductively.

### **How does it work?**

This approach allows language development to be supported and nurtured within the familiar, predictable context of a simple children's story which is the focus for each unit of work. Music is integrated with the story, and in each unit of this program, students will learn to perform a play. The vocabulary has been carefully selected as essential for students during the initial stages of their language learning. Another component of this program is the 'gesture approach', a technique which uses hand signs to help students learn and remember the core vocabulary used in the plays, songs and other activities. There is an equally strong emphasis on the development of all four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) through the programme. Activities are varied, so that students have the opportunity to work individually, in pairs, small groups and as a whole class.

### **How does this approach differ from the students routine language lessons?**

Language lessons also make good use of the target language and aim to encourage students to use both speaking and listening. However, the approach remains essentially an abstract one, with students learning grammar and vocabulary in the abstract and then using them in context. Inevitably, the approach is directed towards preparing pupils to take national examinations successfully. All too often, ultimately, pupils are able to recite orally or reproduce in writing a perfect French piece and to obtain a high examination grade, but do not feel confident to speak the language spontaneously. Whilst our main focus as a school is to aim for pupils to achieve the highest grades in their national language examination, we would like pupils to also achieve a level of fluency having studied it for five years. The AIM methodology focusses on overcoming student inhibitions by emphasizing performance as an integral part of language learning.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4t9oXZ6iXos&feature=player\\_detailpage](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4t9oXZ6iXos&feature=player_detailpage)

### **What are the outcomes from the course over the year?**

Students will produce a number of pieces of written work along with a series of short plays which they will be able to perform to parents and classmates.

### **What are the expectations of the students who take part in the programme /**

- Attend every lesson throughout the year and be committed to the course
- memorise a play and showcase to parents
- participate actively in class, in French only and work cooperatively within a small group while practising the play
- Work cooperatively with others in the class while answering questions, both orally and in written form
- learn the gestures covered in class
- learn the gesture associations
- participate in songs, and games with enthusiasm
- complete class work and hand occasional homeworks in on time
- keep corrections up-to-date
- Seek help when needed (asking in French only.)

### **Will they have homework ?**

In order to support the work covered in class and to ensure student success and independence, much of the homework will consist of practising the gestures and memorizing the play. Students should spend about 15 minutes, three times a week at home working on this. The student video/DVD is a useful tool to support the program and is used as the basis for homework without the need for parental assistance. Each pupil will be provided with one of these. Vocabulary sheets, a copy of the play and the song are provided to accompany and support the use of the student video/DVD.

### **How will I know how my child is doing?**

Students will be given an informal assessment after 12 weeks, 24 weeks and at the end of the course on their ability to:

- identify the words associated with gestures covered
- use French spontaneously, both with the teacher and with peers
- pronounce words correctly
- answer questions both orally and in writing
- re-tell the play, both orally and in writing

They will be given an effort grade reflecting how well they were able to:

- listen well
- learn to refine their language skills as they progress through the program
- co-operate with peers while working with a partner or in their play group
- participate with enthusiasm
- complete work on time
- Stay focused and productive in class.

**What resources will be required?**

- One pocket folder provided by the school. It is essential that pupils bring their materials each lesson
- Student video/DVD for home use.

**What is the structure of the course?**

| <b>Time of the Year</b> | <b>Autumn Term<br/>(12 weeks of teaching)</b>  | <b>Spring Term<br/>(9 weeks of teaching)</b>  | <b>Summer Term<br/>(9 weeks of teaching)</b>  |
|-------------------------|--|---|---|
| Pupils' achievements    | <p>Pupils have memorized the story of the "three little pigs".</p> <p>Pupils are able to write their own version of the "three little pigs" by manipulating the language creatively.</p> <p>Pupils are able to answer spontaneous questions on the story and beyond.</p> | <p>Pupils have memorised the story of "Les Amis"</p> <p>Pupils are able to write their own version of "Les Amis", manipulating the language creatively.</p> <p>Pupils are able to answer spontaneous questions on the story and beyond.</p> | <p>Pupils learn to adapt what they have learnt to the Year 7 curriculum to obtain a high level in their examination.</p> <p>Each week a different chapter is reviewed.</p> <p>Pupils are able to answer questions spontaneously about the topics covered in class in Year 7.</p> <p>Their oral examination is of a Level 6.</p> |

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|-------------------------|---|--|--|
| Showcase                | <p>Performance of the “three little pigs” to parents.</p> <p>Parents are invited to see pupils’ own written stories.</p> <p>Parents witness pupils talking spontaneously about the play</p> <p>Lesson Video extract including clips of pupils’ own written stories.</p> | <p>Performance at Year 7 and Year 8 Awards of the “three Little pigs” and spontaneous speech.</p> <p>Video Extracts of Lessons including clips of pupils’ own written stories.</p> | <p>Performance at Junior’s awards of “Les Amis” and spontaneous speech.</p> <p>Parents witness pupils talking spontaneously about the play and beyond.</p> |