

French 1A (Grades 6, 7, and 8)  
2011-2012

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### Course Description

French IA is one of the beginning level language courses open to 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students as part of a required course of study in the Middle School. Although grades in this class are not recorded on a student's high school transcript, French IA is considered equivalent to the first half of French I at the Upper School. French IA focuses on equipping each student with basic comprehension and production skills in everyday French. We use the immersion approach in order to learn both receptive language (listening and reading) and expressive language (speaking and writing). Although the main area of growth in French IA will be in receptive language, especially in listening comprehension, it is crucial that the students speak only in French during the class. Students are encouraged to come out of their comfort zones and to use all their senses and multiple intelligences through role-play, dialogue, poetry, song, movement, food, realia magazines, books, and language labs. Through these activities, students begin to think in French as opposed to translating from English. They learn to listen 'attentively' and 'empathetically' in order to internalize new phonemes and language patterns and, furthermore, to understand meaning within a cultural context that is not their own.

### Learning Objectives and Benchmarks

French IA Benchmarks in *Language Recognition Skills* are as follows: 1. Actively listens and discovers meanings of new words through direct association with visual clues and gestures; and 2. Reads short dialogues, letters, poems, and paragraphs focusing on familiar words and cognates to discover main ideas. French IA benchmarks in *Language Production Skills* are as follows: 1. Reacts to simple statements and questions in one or two word responses (1<sup>st</sup> trimester) and in short sentences (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>) with near-native pronunciation; 2. Applies core grammar concepts accurately in controlled oral and written exercises; and 3. Writes core vocabulary words and phrases following French spelling and grammatical rules.

### Preparation for Class/ Course Materials

*Discovering French Nouveau Bleu* 1 textbook, *Bleu 1* Workbook, *Bleu 1 Activité pour tous* Workbook, DVD's, CD-Rom programs, CD's, realia magazines and items, songs, poems, dialogue, and foods are all part of the French IA course materials.

### Methods of Instruction

The method of instruction for French IA is based on brain research and Gardner's multiple intelligences. For most of us, learning a language other than our maternal language is a challenging endeavor after the age of about eleven, which is when the language centers of the brain have reached maturity and become more fixed. Linguists say that the window for speech recognition starts to close down as early as ten months of age, though the circuitry for picking up syntax stays open until age five or six. The circuits of acquiring vocabulary never close.

Fortunately, the human brain is malleable and language learning at any age is a worthwhile experience on many levels. It strengthens the brain as new neurological connections are made, and the language areas of the temporal and frontal lobe grow. In order to help create and to build strong neurological connections for the French language, all of the multiple intelligences are targeted through reading, writing, music, movement, math, stories, magazines, songs, poems, pictures, cooperative groups, intra-personal work, language labs, realia items from France, current affairs, guests, and food. We create meaningful and emotional connections to the French language and culture in the school environment.

#### Assessment

Different point values are assigned to all aspects of the student's efforts to attain fluency in the French language. The student's accumulated points in different areas of academic performance will be divided by the total points possible at each marking period. Participation in class, staying in French, homework, preparation, materials management, dictations, recitations, quizzes, unit tests, projects, and the cumulative final exam are all areas of formal assessment in French IA. Each student maintain a portfolio of their work as a way of demonstrating their growth throughout the year.

#### Projected Course Schedule

French IA has four major units: Unit 1: Getting acquainted – Meeting French people; Unit 2: Everyday life in France – Buying, Eating, and Drinking in France; Unit 3: Daily Activities – Working, Studying, Watching TV, and Playing Sports; and Unit 4: People and Possessions – Share Info about Yourself, Friends, Possessions.