



French Opens Up The World

The Endless Benefits of Studying French

PAULINE DIDES, *Maternelle and Lower School Principal*

As the Principal of the Preschool and Lower School at the French American International School, I am continually inspired by the richness and diversity that the French language brings to our educational community. In this article, I am delighted to share my perspective on the benefits of studying French, a language that truly opens up the world to our students.

First and foremost, French is more than just a language—it is a gateway to an entire world of culture, history, and art. By learning French, students gain access to a rich tapestry of literature, music, cinema, and cuisine that spans continents and centuries. From the poetry of Baudelaire to the films of Truffaut, from the culinary delights of French cuisine to the masterpieces of French art, the French language offers a window into a vibrant and dynamic cultural landscape.

Beyond its cultural significance, French is also a practical and versatile language with global reach. As one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, French is spoken by millions of people across five continents and is an official language of international organizations such as the United Nations, the European Union, and UNESCO. For students aspiring to careers in international diplomacy, business, or academia, proficiency in French can open doors to opportunities around the globe.

Studying French fosters cognitive development and enhances academic skills in students of all ages. Research has shown that learning a second language, such as French, improves memory, problem-solving abilities, and multitasking skills. It also enhances linguistic awareness and can lead to greater proficiency in English and other languages. By challenging students to think critically and communicate effectively in a different language, French education cultivates intellectual curiosity and prepares students for success in our increasingly interconnected world.

At French American International School, our commitment to respect, integrity, inclusion, collaboration, and curiosity is reflected in every aspect of our French language program. We believe that by embracing these values, our students develop a deep appreciation for diversity, empathy for

others, and a sense of responsibility to contribute positively to their communities and the world.

In addition to linguistic proficiency, studying French at our school provides unique opportunities for students to immerse themselves in the language and culture both inside and outside the classroom. Our students experience hands-on learning during field trips in and around the city of San Francisco, where they engage with French-speaking communities and explore cultural landmarks. They also embark on overnight trips to the Santa Cruz area, where they practice their language skills in real-life situations, broadening their vocabulary and deepening their understanding of the French language.

Furthermore, our Grade 5 exchange program offers students the chance to connect with French students and experience life in France firsthand. From hosting French students in their homes to traveling to Strasbourg and staying with their correspondents, our students develop lasting friendships and gain invaluable insights into the French language and culture.

Furthermore, our bilingual education allows students to participate in prestigious math contests such as Kangourou des Maths and La Course aux Nombres, just like their peers in France or at French schools abroad. This interdisciplinary approach to learning enhances students' problem-solving abilities and exposes them to different mathematical concepts and techniques.

Finally, during the Festival and Printemps des Arts, our school collaborates with local French artists, scientists, and organizations to create enriching learning experiences that embrace the unique cultural and intellectual landscape of San Francisco. From visiting museums and galleries to attending performances and workshops, our students engage with the vibrant arts and sciences scene of the city, further enriching their French bilingual experience.

In conclusion, the benefits of studying French at French American International School are immeasurable, encompassing cultural enrichment, cognitive development, academic achievement, and global citizenship. By embracing the study of French, our students are empowered to navigate the complexities of our multicultural world with confidence and compassion. As we celebrate the transformative power of the French language, we continue to inspire and empower our students to become thoughtful, engaged citizens of the world.