MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES - ITALIAN

What does the study of MFL involve?
Brentwood School offers an exceptionally wide and stimulating range of courses within Modern Foreign Languages at Sixth Form level which cater for all interests and abilities. At the heart of every course are language study and the acquisition of the practical linguistic skills sought by employers in many fields. Whichever level or qualification you choose, you will learn to understand, speak and write that language with some facility and be able to communicate with native speakers in a meaningful way. IB Ab Initio languages provide an important stepping stone towards fluency and, through these courses, students will gain the linguistic knowledge and confidence to deal with everyday situations in the target language.

Modern Foreign Languages in the Sixth Form are, however, much more than the study of a language on its own. In learning to understand and appreciate the cultures underpinning the languages taught, the many ways in which they have enriched human society, and by exploring similarities with and differences from their own cultures, students become imbued with the internationalist perspective so essential in an interconnected world. A country’s culture often finds its most profound and beautiful expression in its literature, and this duly forms a key component of Sixth Form modern languages’ study; indeed, in many ways it can be its most rewarding. It should also not be forgotten that in studying Modern Foreign Languages, students learn the principles common to all languages. Not only does this equip them to acquire other, superficially unrelated, languages, but invariably improves their understanding of and competence in their own. Finally, Modern Foreign Languages provides an invaluable social education. Through participation in our wide range of foreign exchanges and visits, our students become socially aware communicators able to adapt to all manner of environments.

Skills you will develop
As you will see from the above, the study of Modern Foreign Languages will equip you with myriad skills which will serve you well throughout university, your professional career and life in general. Among the most important of these are:

- The ability to understand, speak and write a foreign language at a level appropriate to the course being followed
- Appreciation and appropriate use of register in written and spoken communication
- Understanding and appreciation of other cultures
- Where appropriate, literary appreciation and criticism
- Independent study and research
- The ability to marshal, synthesise and present often complex material in a foreign language
- The ability to reflect, analyse and evaluate critically and present the conclusions coherently in oral and written form in a foreign language
- The ability to cope in and adapt to different social and cultural environments.

Opportunities for trips and further study
Sixth Form students of Modern Foreign Languages enjoy an outstanding wealth of opportunities to visit the countries where the languages they are studying are spoken and to explore aspects of their cultures. In Italian we have recently accompanied the Music Department on
their trip to Sienna and are looking into similar such ventures in the future. We also run a popular weekly film club which celebrates a rich Italian cinematic history and encourage our Sixth Form linguists to attend UKLO classes in preparation for the UK Linguistics Olympiad. This deepens considerably their understanding of how language works and enables them to pick up new languages with ease.

**Higher Education opportunities**
Modern Languages is a popular subject for a university degree and around 10-12 Brentwood students every year go on to read at least one modern language at university. The vast majority of these are Russell Group universities, and we have fine record of Oxbridge success.

Modern languages courses at university are extremely flexible and a language can be combined with almost any other subject. Popular combinations are a language and Management, Business Studies or Economics; other Old Brentwoods have successfully combined a language with, for example, Law, Music, Environmental Studies, History, Psychology or Chemistry.

A language is becoming an increasingly important adjunct to many other degree courses, including Medicine. In an increasingly competitive and globalised world, the ability to use a modern language other than your own gives you a vital edge in the professional world.

All MFL students seeking to read Modern Languages at university receive additional help to assist their application. Old Brentwoods are an excellent source of information and advice.

**Careers for MFL graduates**
Modern Foreign Languages are very highly respected as a qualification. After Medicine and Dentistry, graduate employment is highest amongst Modern Foreign Language graduates, and in particular in the many firms which have international branches. This is unsurprising when you consider what Modern Language graduates can offer.

Firstly, they possess that rare practical skill of effective oral and written communication in two or more languages. Moreover, they have the ability to synthesise, analyse and evaluate demanding material in another language and present this persuasively in written or oral form. The study of language also inculcates in them both a rigour and sense of creativity essential for many careers. Fourthly, the experience of the year abroad as part of their degree course means that Modern Languages graduates often have a maturity and adaptability which sets them aside from their peers and makes them attractive to employers.

The range of careers open to Modern Linguists is therefore unusually large and extends well beyond the more obvious teaching, translation and interpreting pathways. Modern Language degrees can lead to successful careers in, amongst many others, the following areas: banking, finance and accountancy; law (including international law); civil service (including the Foreign Office and Defence) and local administration; business and management consultancy; journalism; advertising, marketing and PR; hospitality and tourism; retail and sales; work for charity and voluntary organisations (often abroad); media; culture, music and performing arts; recruitment and human resources.

Again, Old Brentwoods are an excellent resource to tap for guidance as to the uses to which Modern Foreign Language degrees have been put.
Ab Initio Italian is open to all non-native speakers who have not gained a certified qualification in Italian. If you have studied Italian at GCSE or IGCSE level, then you are not eligible to take Italian Ab Initio. This course may only be taken at Standard Level.

**Content**
This is divided in three themes, which each divide into sub-topics as below:

**Individual and society**
- Daily routines
- Education
- Food and drink
- Personal details, appearance and character
- Physical health
- Relationships
- Shopping.

**Leisure and work**
- Employment
- Entertainment
- Holidays
- Media
- Sport
- Technology
- Transport.

**Urban and rural environment**
- Environmental concerns
- Global issues
- Neighbourhood
- Physical geography
- Towns and services.

**Internal Assessment**
The Individual Oral (25%). This is around 10 minutes long and is done in February/March in the second year of the Ab Initio course. Candidates present on a visual stimulus and then are questioned on this. They are then asked two questions on their internal Writing Assignment. Finally 4-5 minutes are spent on questions and answers based on at least two topics from the main themes.

**External Assessment**

**Paper 1** Duration: 1hr 30mins  Weighting 30%
This is a text-handling paper with four passages (reading and comprehension)
The questions on this paper consist of question types such as true-or-false exercises, multiple-choice questions, short answer questions and gap-filling exercises.

**Paper 2** Duration: 1 hr  Weighting 25%
This is a writing paper. There are two sections to this paper. Section 1 requires you to write a minimum of 50 words and Section 2 requires you to write a minimum of 100 words. The focus here is register. You must produce different test types and use structures and vocabulary appropriate to the register.

**Written Assignment** (Weighting 20%)
This is done in the form of coursework and takes two hours. The essay is a comparative piece of writing, comparing an aspect of Italian culture to your own culture. It is 200-350 words in length, completed in the second year of the Ab Initio course.

**Entry Requirements**
The only entry requirements are that you must be a keen linguist and that you cannot have an official certification in Italian before commencing the course. Some knowledge of French or Latin would be useful.

**How the course is taught**
Students will receive six periods of work per cycle, which are usually taught by the same teacher. Additionally, students will have a weekly oral period, either individually or in a small group. Pupils will be expected to go to every language assistant lesson and they will also need to prepare material in advance of each class.

**Expectations/Homework**
Pupils are expected to complete all of their homework on time. There is an expectation that pupils will carry out independent learning as without doing this, owing to the accelerated nature of the course, the high grades will not be attainable. From the very beginning of the course much emphasis is placed on vocabulary acquisition, student participation, independent learning and research. This research will be necessary as preparation for formal examinations.

All students are expected to engage fully in lessons, complete homework on time, learn vocabulary and basic grammar thoroughly and attend extra-curricular activities when necessary.

The IB course has a significant creative element and pupils will need to be creative thinkers and not afraid to take risks. The expectation too, is that pupils will speak the target language during lessons wherever possible. Pupils will be expected to go to every language assistant lesson and they will also need to prepare material and exercises in advance of each class.

**Preparatory Work**
Students are provided with introductory material to study over the summer holidays before starting the course. Students are then tested on this material within the first week of term.