Foreign Language at Burke

Burke offers French, Spanish and Latin in classes ranging from Middle School to Advanced Placement.

In Spanish and French we focus on the traditional elements of language learning (reading, writing, listening, vocabulary, grammar) but our emphasis is on speaking. Our goal is to make the students “comfortably conversant” by the time they graduate.

The main focus of the Latin program is to bring students quickly to the level where they can read ancient authors with confidence. Additional goals of the program are for students to make connections to English vocabulary and grammar, to learn Roman history and culture and, in the upper levels, to analyze Latin poetry and prose.

In language classes, we use a variety of methods including skits, discussions, storytelling, reading, computer projects, memorization, and translation. We supplement class materials with TV programs, songs, art, news stories podcasts, telenovelas, and literature.

We take advantage of opportunities to use foreign language outside of the classroom, such as lunch clubs, cooking classes and field trips to the Mexican Cultural Institute, French Embassy, and Maison Française.

Frequently Asked Questions

How is foreign language taught in Middle School?
In 6th grade, students devote the entire year to a language of their choice. Classes meet two times per cycle. In 7th grade, in addition to developing their language skills, students continue to be exposed to the cultures and traditions of foreign language speaking countries. Classes meet four times per cycle.
In Spanish, we offer an advanced class for 6th or 7th graders who have previously taken Spanish before. After 7th grade in Advanced Spanish, students may take High School Spanish 2 as 8th graders. In 8th grade, students continue to study more vocabulary and grammar. After 8th grade, they will all be ready for High School level 2.

Do you have a foreign language requirement?
Yes, high school students are required to take 3 years of the same language.

How do you determine where to place a student?
Incoming High School students come to Burke in May, and take a test to determine their placement.

Do you offer independent study credit for other languages?
Yes, we can give credit for a course that meets our standards for class time and rigor.

Do you have any opportunities to study abroad?
We are planning a teacher-led trip to Spain this summer!