Edmund Burke School | High School (Grades 9-12)

World Languages

When a student fulfills Burke’s language requirement (3 years of the same language), they ideally will be comfortable conversing, reading, and writing. Optimally, they will demonstrate significant progress in their listening, speaking, reading, and writing proficiency.

Our faculty use interactive teaching styles and develop a collaborative, risk-taking classroom culture that focuses on creative and flexible thinking – drawing upon different methods (skits, discussions, storytelling, reading, games) and materials (TV programs, songs, art, news stories, podcasts, telenovelas, authentic literary sources). They emphasize both building proficiency and individualizing each student’s language acquisition journey.

Required Courses

- **Spanish or French 1**: Students work on all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) with the aim of developing their ability to use the target language. Students refine simple narrative and descriptive abilities at the novice level in the present and past tenses, as well as the near future. In class, students discuss current events along with the culture and history of French or Spanish-speaking communities.

- **Spanish or French 2**: This level emphasizes a combination of conversation, reading, writing, and listening. The course objective is to increase students’ competence in the language, such that they can converse, read, and understand the target language and can express themselves, orally and in writing, all at a novice level.

- **Spanish or French 3**: These courses emphasize conversation and slightly more sophisticated writing, introducing more grammar and vocabulary. The course objective is to improve students’ competence in the target language, so that students can converse, read, and understand the target language and express themselves, orally and in writing, at the intermediate level.
Elective Courses

- Spanish 4
- French 4
- AP Spanish Language and Culture
- AP French Language and Culture
- Independent Studies*

(* in 2019-20, students are completing Independent Studies in American Sign Language, Chinese, and Japanese)

Study Abroad and Field Trips

Burke students have the chance to travel to French- or Spanish-speaking communities during the summer, in order to experience a full immersion in the language and culture.

In the summer of 2019, Spanish students had the option to travel to Valencia, staying with local families and doing community service abroad. French students traveled to Paris and experienced the culture and the language first-hand with host families.

Here in DC, we use the language outside the classroom through field trips to the Mexican Cultural Institute, French Embassy, Maison Française, and National Gallery of Art, as well as lunch clubs, cooking classes, and service-learning experiences.

Preparation for College

Students conclude our World Languages program with:

- level of comfort with the target language
- ability to express themselves, orally and in writing, at the intermediate level or above
- significant practice conversing, reading, and understanding the target language
- an ability to think critically and respectfully about the cultures of French-speaking or Spanish-speaking communities