

Making the Choice on Learning French at Grade 6

This document provides information on the two French Second Language Program choices available for students entering Grade 6. Students who are in English Prime (with Intensive French) have the choice to continue in English Prime (with Post-Intensive French) or to enter Late French Immersion. Parents and their children are encouraged to consider both program options. The Late French Immersion program is only available where enrolment numbers warrant. French Second Language is compulsory until the end of Grade 10.

Both program options support French language learning through a literacy-based approach. Speaking, listening, reading and writing are developed in an integrated fashion. The key focus of Post-Intensive French is to continue developing students' second language through age appropriate topics. In Late French Immersion, students continue to develop their second language, while at the same time learning subjects such as science, social studies, and mathematics in French.

English Prime (Post-Intensive Grades 6 to 10)

In Grade 5, the amount of time given to Intensive French allows students to establish a base in French upon which to build. Post-Intensive French enables students to continue to develop their ability to read and write in French, as well as to maintain and improve their oral language skills. Students learn to read and write different types of texts and are introduced to a variety of new topics each year. The level of complexity of the language used continues to increase throughout the program. Each year in Grades 6 to 8, Post-Intensive French is offered two to four times per week for a total of 200 instructional minutes each week.

In Grades 9 and 10, the program follows the approach described above. Post-Intensive French is offered as a semestered 90-hour course each year, giving students a total of 180 hours of instruction over two years.



Late French Immersion (Grades 6 to 10)

Grade 6 is the second entry point for French Immersion in the New Brunswick school system. Students build on the French language skills developed in earlier grades. At the beginning of the school year, an emphasis is placed on developing students' speaking, reading and writing skills in French. This initial focus helps students transition more easily to learning subjects in French.

In Late French Immersion, Grades 6 through 8, the majority of subjects are taught in French resulting in a minimum of 70 per cent of instructional time in French over the course of the year. Students continue to have English language arts instruction to support development of first language skills.

In Grades 9 and 10, Late French Immersion students take a minimum of 50 per cent of their courses in French each school year.



Blended High School Program (Grades 11 and 12)

Instruction in French is compulsory until the end of Grade 10. Students are encouraged, however, to continue taking courses in French until the end of Grade 12 to strengthen their skills and help them achieve the oral proficiency targets (see below). The oral proficiency targets established for each program are based on the understanding that students will continue in the program of their choice until high school graduation.

French immersion courses in Grades 11 and 12 are open to all students who achieve an oral proficiency level of intermediate or higher at the end of Grade 10. Such courses include French language arts and a range of compulsory and elective courses offered in French. The availability of these courses may vary according to the size of the school. Students who do not reach the Intermediate level of proficiency have additional instructional opportunities to improve their French language skills in Grades 11 and 12 through Post-Intensive French courses.

Oral Proficiency Targets

Late French Immersion — Grade 6 Entry → Intermediate Plus by Grade 12

Post-Intensive French within English Prime → Intermediate by end of Grade 10

→ Working toward Intermediate Plus by Grade 12

Intermediate Plus Proficiency Description

Students at this level are able to satisfy the requirements of a broad variety of school, work, and everyday situations. They can discuss concrete topics relating to special fields of competence as well as subjects of current public interest. Normally they do not have to search for words. They often show a significant degree of fluency and ease in speaking, yet, under pressure, may experience language breakdown. Students may exhibit good control of language structures, but be limited in overall language production; or, conversely, may demonstrate ample speech production, but have uneven control of structures. Some misunderstandings will still occur.

Intermediate Proficiency Description

Students at this level are able to satisfy routine social demands and limited requirements in school/work settings. They can provide information and give explanations with some degree of accuracy, but language is awkward. They can handle most common social situations, including introductions and casual conversations about events in school and community and are able to provide autobiographical information in some detail. Students can give directions from one place to another and give accurate instructions in a field of personal expertise. They have a speaking vocabulary sufficient to converse simply, with some paraphrasing. Accent, though often quite faulty, is intelligible. They use high frequency language structures accurately, but do not have a thorough or confident control of grammar. In certain situations, diction would probably distract a native speaker.

Frequently Asked Questions

What if parents cannot speak French?

There is no expectation that parents of students in either program option must be able to speak French. Both program options are designed for children whose first language is not French.

What if my child is having learning difficulties?

All children have the opportunity to learn their second official language to the extent that they are able to do so. Program options can be adapted to address a full range of learners, including students on Special Education Plans. Resource teachers, in consultation with teachers and parents, personalize programs based on student strengths to support optimum success in learning. It is felt that with appropriate accommodations, modifications and support, all students can achieve success.

How can I help my child?

Parents can help by communicating regularly with their child's teachers. It is also valuable for parents to encourage their child to read and write in both English and French; to listen to French music, radio or television; and to speak to others in French when opportunities arise, such as in a store or restaurant.

For more information or to view the video on program options, visit <http://www.gnb.ca/0000/index-e.asp>