

THE WORLD LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

Syosset Central School District

8th to 9th Grade Transition Q&A

1. What are my options for studying world language in 9th grade, if I am doing well in middle school world language?

Since learning a language requires many years of study, most students continue learning the same language all the way through 12th grade. This is the best option for building language proficiency. In addition to Chinese, French, Italian and Spanish, we offer American Sign Language (ASL), Japanese, Korean, Latin and Russian at the high school. In fact, many Syosset High School students study two (and sometimes even three!) languages at the same time. You can do this as a 9th grader, if you have time in your schedule.

2. What are my options if I have not been successful in middle school world language?

One option for students who struggle in world language is Exploring Latin, a course that includes learning about mythology, vocabulary study, and other literacy skills. Another option may be to take a level one course in ASL, Japanese, Latin, Korean, or Russian. Switching from French, Italian or Spanish to a different language should be discussed with your guidance counselor or the World Language Coordinator. Take advantage of this opportunity to learn a language that interests you!

3. Would you explain the difference between honors and standard-level courses?

Learning to communicate in the target language is the goal in both honors and standard level. Honors classes are a good fit for students who have a special interest in language learning. The pace is fast. The honors curriculum covers double the amount of material compared to the regular class. Because of the fast pace, teachers do not spend a lot of class time reviewing. Rather, honors students should expect to spend time studying and preparing for class independently. Honors level classes are weighted slightly higher in GPA calculations. In regular classes teachers spend more time on each topic, which gives students more time to absorb and practice what they are learning. Expect your language skills to get stronger, whatever the level!

4. How much homework does each class get?

Learning a language requires effort, and doing work outside of class time is a part of that. Homework should be expected in both honors and regular level classes.

5. Can 9th grade students switch from honors to regular classes, and vice versa?

Generally, students stay at the same level throughout high school. You can reach high proficiency levels in both programs by working hard and continuing to study your language through to 12th grade. Some students who have been in regular-level classes take SUPA, a college-level class, in 12th grade. Your world language class should challenge you, but feel doable. It may be possible to switch from honors to regular (and vice versa). If you feel out of place, speak with your teacher and ask what they recommend. Your teachers care about you and want you to be successful. They know you well, and know our program, so it's best to follow their recommendation.

6. How many credits in WL do students need to graduate from high school?

Most students in Syosset go beyond the minimum New York State graduation requirements and study World Language for all four years of high school.

World Language graduation requirements are:

Regents Diploma: 1 credit, plus pass a Checkpoint A Exam

Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation: 3 credits, plus pass a Checkpoint B Exam

7. What types of assessments does each class do?

Assessments are similar to those you experienced in middle school. This includes integrated performance assessments, quizzes and tests, writing assignments, speaking activities, and reading. Language learning is cumulative, meaning each step forward depends on what you've learned before, so the level of difficulty increases a little bit at a time.

8. What is the advantage of taking honors?

Honors students reach high levels of proficiency over the years. The honors courses culminate in a college-level course in 12th grade, which gives students an opportunity to challenge themselves further. The honors courses also lead to the New York State Seal of Biliteracy, a special designation placed on students' diplomas to recognize their language skills. Additionally, more competitive colleges and universities look favorably on students taking the most challenging classes possible.

9. Will I be required to speak in the target language?

Of course! The only way to learn how to speak a language is by doing it. In all world language classes expect to spend a great deal of time speaking the language. Our goal is that all classes be conducted at least 90% in the target language. The more the language is used in class, the more you will learn.