

Year 8

MODERN LANGUAGES: SPANISH

Girls take up a second language, choosing between Spanish and German, in Year 8.

Key Stage 3 students are introduced to Spanish through the Michel Thomas method for schools, "Es posible". The method has a firm focus on structures and truly understanding how the language works. There is a lot of spoken and written translation, which the pupils find satisfying. They also learn how to manipulate sentences independently and show promising levels of spoken fluency. Spelling is frequently reinforced.

The method was originally developed by Michel Thomas who taught the likes of Raquel Welch, Emma Thompson, Woody Allen and Grace Kelly. It became well known in the UK following a BBC series called The Language Master broadcast in the late nineties.

The structure of the lessons can be compared to the logical principles of Direct Instruction, whereby skills are taught explicitly rather than the students learning by discovering or experiment. This might seem old-fashioned and dictatorial but we also build in thinking skills and experimentation after the initial teacher input. In the early lessons the teacher introduces cognates in the target language to show students how they can easily transform their existing vocabulary into Spanish. Hence, *c'est possible/ es posible/ é possível*. This means they start off with the idea that this is a subject they can access. The teacher then introduces short phrases which will serve as the building blocks for more advanced sentences. The new language is gradually built up through repetition, translation, recycling, and then adding more new structures.

Grammatical structures covered:

- 1st person verb endings
- Position of pronouns
- Questions
- Definite and indefinite article
- 3 types of infinitive
- Pronouns
- Tengo que ... for obligation
- Position and agreement of adjectives

- Ir + a for immediate future
- Comparatives
- Definitions of noun/ adjective/ verb
- The consecutive verb rule
- The present tense

Alongside the method we teach vocabulary topics as follows

Topics covered:

- Classroom vocabulary
- Classroom instructions
- Introductions
- School equipment
- Alphabet, numbers, ages, time and dates
- Countries and nationalities
- Family, pets and personal descriptions
- Likes and dislikes
- Places in a town and descriptions

Knowledge, skills and understanding

Skills

- Development of listening, reading, speaking and writing skills
- Using ICT, including the Internet and CD-ROMs, in the language laboratory
- Group or pair work
- Individual oral presentations
- Listening to recorded native speakers and the teacher
- Emphasis on correct pronunciation and spelling
- Expressing opinions

Assessment

Homework is an appropriate follow-up task, which could be written, learning of vocabulary or grammar, or oral presentation. Written work is assessed for accuracy, range and complexity, using self-review strategies. Oral work is assessed for fluency and accuracy. There are regular end-of-unit tests. At the end of the year

there is a final examination in the four skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing.