

English Course PTSI 1

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Course organisation

34 weeks roughly → Semester 1 from September, 2nd to January, 23rd

Semester 2 from January, 25th to June 26^{th(-ish)}

4 supervised tests (3/12 – 13/02 – 2X/04 – mock exam week of 7/06)

+ oral interrogations

Schedule of classes

Wednesday 8 am to 10 am, room B312.

+ You will have **oral interrogations** (**khôlles**) **once every fortnight**. These oral interrogations are mandatory (=compulsory). They should begin on September 21st.

The aim of this class is to:

- **Prepare you for your competitive entrance exams (whatever they may be, of course!), but also:**
- **Develop self-reliance** in language learning.
- **Enrich your knowledge and appreciation on topical issues** related to the English-speaking world.
- **Enhance your communication skills in both writing, speaking and interacting with other people in a foreign language.**
- **Improve your capacity to argue convincingly.**

Contents:

- reading
- writing
- translating (just a tiny bit ☺)
- **listening comprehension activities**
- **speaking activities**

Assessment semester 1

- 60% supervised test (1 in class and 1 on the first Saturday, December 6th)
- 30% oral interrogation grades (relax the first 3 orals are not graded!)
- 10% class assignments and vocabulary and grammar tests
- homework and participation could count if the group is not collectively committed enough

Rules and tips

- One requirement for this class is that **you participate**. You are part of a smallish group, and this should allow everyone to chip in.
- If something occurs that keeps you from attending, **send an email and make sure you justify your absence from an administrative point of view**. Unjustified absences are penalising, so make sure you clear up any misunderstanding.
- **Any absence requires catching up for any missed class** (eg. Ask a friend if he/she can help you by lending his filer).
- Please **be on time**. Classes will often start with a quick presentation / speaking activity, and it is unnerving for the speakers to be interrupted by latecomers – not to mention that it is rude to the others.
- Make sure you keep on top of things for your oral interrogations and personal work.
- Laptops and mobile phones should not be used in class unless asked by the teacher.
- Smart watches and mobile phones are banned from test rooms.
- There is absolutely no point in cheating! What counts at the end of the day is your progression towards perfection in order to get the best possible grade in 2028!!

// Survey of the class for holiday reading and listening. Purchase **An Apple A Day**, by Jean Max Thomson, Ellipses
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The best ways to learn a foreign language...
(or elaborating your own strategy to improve in English ☺)

1. What different ways of learning a new language can you think of?

2. Do you **reckon** (=believe) people from certain countries learn English more easily? Why? Why not?

3. Listening comprehension. (tracks 18 – 19 – English Unlimited Advanced - CD1)

– Conversation 1

a) How and with whom did Norman learn conversational English?

b) According to him, why do Germans speak good English?

c) What are the **incentives** (=motivations) to learn English in Germany?

– Conversation 2

a) What do we learn about Pilar's level of English when she first went to Britain?

b) What do we learn about the people she spent time with?

c) What do we learn about her experience of learning French?

4. Vocabulary.

Listen again to the conversations and fill in the blanks.

a) The school education there helped me to grips with the most important vocabulary in order to

b) Conversational English, I mostly learned in the context of having had to native English speakers.

c) That helped me a lot to a little bit more.

d) So, tell me about coming to the UK for the first time and being in this culture and the language.

e) It was very difficult to even

f) I French some time ago, but no I didn't quite the language.

Vocabulary acquisition.

Why might vocabulary acquisition be a problem? What different ways of acquiring **vocabulary** in a foreign language do you know of? Which are the most useful to your mind?

What is the difference between **active vocabulary** and **passive vocabulary**?

5. In pairs, talk about all the foreign languages you took up. Talk about how you learnt them and how well you speak them. Report to the class using vocabulary from the exercise above.

6. Do you think it's important to “master a language completely and sound like a native speaker or is it fine to retain your own accent and make a few mistakes so long as you get your message across?”

7. Do you think the following **statements** are true? Why? Why not? Relate these to your personal experience.
a) Learning a new language can lead you to adopt a different identity.

b) It's difficult to translate directly from one language to another.

c) Learning a new language can be a violent process.

8. Which areas of your English do you think you need to work on? Tick the boxes if necessary ;-)

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| ☐ idiomatic expressions | ☐ pronunciation problems | ☐ grammatical accuracy |
| ☐ exam practice | ☐ writing accurately | ☐ Anglophone culture and civilisation |
| ☐ speaking fluently | ☐ listening comprehension | ☐ active vocabulary |

English and French in numbers...

9. How many words are there in the English language? In the French language?

10. How many words do you think you need to master in English to come across as a fluent English speaker?

11. How many phonemes are there in the English language? In the French language?

HWK for Wednesday, September 10th.

a) **Write** a short paragraph talking about your strong and weak points, your priorities to improve your English and try to elaborate a plan for what you can do both in class and at home to reach your goal. Use vocabulary from the grid below and from p. 81 in your book. Ask two questions to get some help from others to improve. Read the paragraph you wrote out loud 3 to 4 times and be prepared to read it to the class next time.

b) **Reading and speaking:** go to the Guardian website and select an article to read from the editorial section.

Talking about strong / weak points	Discussing a plan
1 I (don't) feel confident ...	8 I'd find ... a great help / really useful.
2 I'm quite / reasonably happy with my ... , but ... is another story.	9 I'd benefit from ...
3 My strong point / main problem is ...	10 ... might be the answer / solution.
4 I have a hard time ...	11 I think the best way to do this is ...
Talking about priorities	12 ... would be worth investigating.
5 My main aim / priority is to ...	13 ... might be worthwhile / worth a try.
6 An important area for me is ...	14 I've considered ...
7 Personally, I need to work / focus / concentrate on ...	15 I probably need more practice in / exposure to ...

Be ready to sum it up to a friend next time. Start a logbook with the specific vocabulary you feel is important to remember. Anki is a great tool but you also need to train on spelling words. Furthermore, writing helps memorize. Last but no least, handwriting training is important!

c) **Vocabulary and grammar acquisition:** **Revise (/or learn) irregular verbs (the first 60 verbs on the list, until “to freeze” included) + work on Unit 4 in your book needs to be anticipated (check out the grammar and exercises, and learn the vocabulary)**

/!\ Your homework altogether represents a total of minimum 2 hours between now and next Wednesday... BUT the teacher insists you stop at 2 hours!