

WORLD LANGUAGES

Grade 9 Standards

1. COMMUNICATIONS

One of the most important goals of second language study is the development of communicative competence in the studied language. When individuals have developed communicative competence in a language, they are able to convey and receive messages of many different types successfully. These individuals use language to participate in everyday social interactions and to establish relationships with others. They converse, argue, criticize, request, convince, and explain effectively, taking into account the age, background, education, and familiarity of the individuals with whom they are engaged in conversation. They also use the language to obtain information from written texts and media and to interpret that information given the style, context, and purpose of the communication. In essence, a communicatively competent individual combines knowledge of the language system with knowledge of cultural conventions, norms of politeness, discourse conventions, and the like, in order to transmit and receive meaningful messages successfully.

In order to develop such competence, students must learn how interpersonal relations are conducted in the cultures in which the target language is spoken, how individuals use language effectively to achieve different purposes, how discourse conventions work, how oral and written texts are structured, and how the language system operates. They must weave this knowledge together in the process of transmitting and receiving meaningful messages.

Students bring the insights that they have obtained from having developed communicative competence in their first language to the study of a second language. They know how to request personal information from others, how to describe, how to argue, and how to explain. Depending on their age, they are able to obtain information from written texts and media and to interpret that information. When they do learn a second language, then, students already know how to transmit meanings effectively. They must learn how to do so by using a different language system and by following what may be very different rules of interpersonal interaction.

Developing Communicative Competence in Another Language

The study of the language system itself, while useful for some students, does not automatically result in the development of the ability to process language in real situations and in the ability to respond meaningfully in appropriate ways. We know, as opposed to long-held beliefs, that students do not acquire communicative competence by learning the elements of the language system first. It is not the case that students learn foreign languages most effectively by memorizing vocabulary items in isolation and by producing limited simple sentences. Even those students who learn grammar well and are able to pass test on nouns, verb conjugations, tense usage, and the like may be quite unable to understand language when it is spoken to them outside the classroom.

Indeed, an earlier emphasis on the learning of the language system to the exclusion of meaningful interactive activities in the classroom has led to frustration and dissatisfaction for students. Many adults complain today that although they “took” two or more years of foreign language and obtained high grades on grammar examinations, they are unable to speak the language at all. Some have argued that languages are badly taught and that language study to date has resulted in few people who can transact business in the languages studied.

Importance of Communication Strategies in the Development of Communicative Competence

We know that learners learn a language best when they are provided opportunities to use the target language to communicate in a wide range of activities. The more learners use the target language in meaningful situations, the more rapidly they achieve competence. Active use of language is central to the learning process; therefore, learners must be involved in generating utterances for themselves. They learn by doing, by training out language, and by modifying it to serve communicative needs. Regardless of their stage of language acquisition, learners require strategies that allow them to compensate for language which they have not yet mastered.

We now know also that “good learners” adopt an immense variety of strategies concerned with seeking communicative information and experiences, with deliberate learning through practice, and with developing a conscious awareness and control. These strategies include request clarification, monitoring their own and others’ performance, using various mnemonic techniques, using inductive and deductive reasoning, practicing sounds and structures subvocally or aloud, and using nonverbal communication strategies

- Students will use the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- Students communicate in a language other than English while demonstrating literacy in all four essential skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- Students communicate effectively and with cultural sensitivity in at least one language in addition to English.

1.A Students will engage in interpersonal communications, to provide and obtain information, express ideas, needs, feelings, emotions, and exchange opinions.

- 1.A.9.1 Discuss, orally or in writing, current or past events that are of significance in the target culture.
- 1.A.9.2 Exchange opinions on variety of topics.
- 1.A.9.3 Greet or introduce a person, and give background information about him.
- 1.A.9.4 Interact in the target language in a number of true-life situations chosen from a variety of contexts (e.g., asking for information).

1.B Students will understand and interpret ideas and information written or spoken in a language other than English.

- 1.B.9.1 Demonstrate an understanding of the main ideas and significant details of live and recorded discussions, lectures, and presentations on current or past events from the target culture or that are being studied in another class.
- 1.B.9.2 Read and understand the learning activity.
- 1.B.9.3 Understand the organization and roles of the learning activity (e.g., The Roman Family).

1.C. Students will write and speak in a language other than English to present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.

1.C.9.1 Communicate in writing using a variety of vocabulary for past, present, and future events and feelings about those events. (e.g., by writing a letter to a native speaker of the target language).

1.C.9.2 Effectively communicate orally in the target language regarding a past, present, or future event.

2. CULTURES

Since we are all to some degree at the mercy of the language habits of our own society, we are often prone to misread or misapprehend other societies and cultures. It is common among Western nations to view all Asian societies stereotypically as separate but identical components of “the Far East.” Of course, students of Chinese language and culture or Japanese language and culture soon shed such generalizations, for they discover that each separately identifiable language and culture, including regional groups within the same nation, creates a distinct and separate world, whether in China, Japan, or elsewhere in Asia. In the U.S., the example of American Sign Language (ASL) illustrates the same propensity, on the part of any group sharing the same language and culture, to create a unique social enclave for itself. ASL is not a mere visual transcription of American English, as many believe, but a separate language giving rise to a separate culture. The culture of those deaf persons who use ASL exhibits unique perspectives, practices, and products unlike any others.

The relationship of language and culture is such a tight weave that “language” and “culture” really cannot be teased apart and compartmentalized; they are best taught in closely integrated conjunction with each other by emphasizing the full meaning conveyed by words, phrases, or idiomatic expressions that have a clearly identifiable cultural component.

The thorough integration of language and culture both in a target language and in the native language should help move students even closer to the lofty educational ideal of becoming genuinely cultured citizens

- Students gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures.

2.A. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the traditions, perspectives, practices, and products of the culture studied, including human commonalities as reflected in history, literature, and the visual and performing arts.

2.A.9.1 Explore and describe the relationships among the products, practices, and perspectives of the culture.

2.A.9.2 Identify, analyze, and discuss various patterns of behavior or interaction and the values and mindsets typical of the target culture studied.

2.A.9.3 Learn about and participate in age-appropriate cultural practices, such as games, sports and entertainment.

3. CONNECTIONS

Language is the vehicle by which we acquire and share information and ideas. In order to help students make linguistic and conceptual connections, teachers of foreign languages use three important approaches to curriculum development. First, they become knowledgeable about the content of other subject areas, examine the kinds of vocabulary and language functions required to teach and learn this content, and shape their language teaching accordingly. Second, they collaborate in the design and teaching of units in which knowledge of language and culture plays a key role. Third, they help students and other teachers locate and use foreign language resources for cultural knowledge and information not readily available in English.

Connections through Vocabulary and Language Structures

The teaching of second language skills can take place through the interweaving of discipline-specific content into the foreign languages curriculum. In this way, students not only gain knowledge of the target language but further their content knowledge as well. For example, the classic Kindergarten-First Grade science experiment, “Does it float, or does it sink?” is easily discussed in another language, since it is based upon observation. Learning how to describe objects as “light, lighter, heavy, or heavier” and “large, larger, small, or smaller” in a foreign language helps students acquire and remember vocabulary while reinforcing science concepts.

Similarly, specific language structures and vocabulary are required of middle or high school students when they predict what will happen next in stories, analyze aspects of the European medieval feudal system in history class, or follow instructions about how to chest-pass a basketball in physical education class. The teacher of foreign languages can help students converse, interpret, write about, or make oral presentations on all these subjects in a language other than English.

Connections through Projects

Some projects are designed from the outset to integrate content from a number of disciplines. For example, during September’s monarch butterfly migration from the United States to Mexico, elementary school students could begin a study of the life cycle of butterflies in science, discussing the concepts in English and Spanish. They could map the routes followed by the butterflies (geography); tract and graph monarch butterfly sightings, and calculate the distance of their flights (mathematics); study and draw the symmetry of their body and wing patterns (math and art); and write short notes in Spanish (foreign languages and language arts) about the monarchs to be sent to Mexican students who are their “learning partners” in the project.

At the middle and high school levels, teachers of foreign languages could collaborate with teachers of history, English, and the arts to explore thematic units such as the immigrant experience, ancient and modern models of democracy, or classical and world mythology and theater. High school electives also help students use their language skills.

Connection through Cultural Knowledge and Information Available in Languages Other than English

Knowledge of a foreign language, literature, and culture can give students insights they could have in no other way. The student of classical languages who has read the myth of Pyramus and This, and who later studies Shakespeare’s plays, will have a greater appreciation of how Shakespeare used the myth in both Midsummer Night’s Dream and Romeo and Juliet, and may even recognize a survival of the ancient lovers’ tale when watching a performance of Leonard Bernstein’s West Side Story. Students of civics and government who have also studied Latin will have a deeper understanding of concepts such as *habeas corpus*, *ex post facto*, and *de jure*. A Modern languages student will observe in mathematics the

differences in the use of periods and commas in numbers in the English and metric systems, and will also notice that rules of spelling, order, and capitalization for days, weeks, and months differ from one language system to the next.

Finally, despite the widespread use of English as an international language, there are still connections to knowledge of the past and present that are only available to the person who can read, interpret, and understand another language. That student has direct access to historical primary source documents, contemporary fiction and nonfiction, magazine articles, television broadcasts, and multimedia materials from other cultures and countries.

- Students make connections with other subject areas and acquire information.
- Students use the target language to connect with other disciplines and to acquire and process information.
- Students read, listen to, and talk about age-appropriate school content, folk tales, short stories, poems, and songs written for native speakers of the target language.

3.A Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language and its culture.

3.A.9.1 Recognize the similarities and differences found in the concept of family and how this compares to the same in diverse cultures within the United States.

3.A.9.2 Use research information as a basis for expressing opinions that reflect knowledge of the target culture.

3.B Students will use the target language to reinforce and expand their knowledge of other disciplines and to acquire new information and knowledge.

3.B.9.1 Acquire information from a variety of sources written in the target language about a topic being studied in other school subjects.

3.B.9.2 Demonstrate an understanding about concepts learned in other subject areas in the target language, including weather, math facts, measurements, animals, insects, or geographical concepts.

3.B.9.3 Explore information about a topic being studied in the target language classroom to integrate with other school subjects.

4. COMPARISON

Students benefit from language learning by discovering patterns both familiar and distinctive among language systems and cultures. They learn about the nature of language, linguistic and grammatical concepts, the communicative functions of language in society, and the interaction between language and culture.

When students begin the study of another language, they often assume any new language will be like their own, except it will have different words. Soon they notice that elements that they often ignored in their own language may be very important in the second language. This awareness of linguistic differences not only enhances students' ability to use the target language, but also provides insights into the use of English. As students learn ways of predicting how language is likely to work in an unfamiliar setting, they make fewer naive assumptions about other languages based solely upon limited knowledge of their own language.

The long-term study of another language also leads students to discover different cultural perspectives. As students begin to hypothesize about cultural systems in general, some students may make comparisons on their own, others learn to do so over time. Good language programs help foster this reflective process in students from the earliest levels of language learning. Inter-cultural comparison expands a student's view of the world. It creates an awareness of alternative views of other cultures. Since students are stimulated into pondering topics that they had always just accepted, this inter-cultural comparison also provides insights into the student's native language and culture.

- Students develop insight into the nature of language and culture by comparing own language and culture to another.

4.A Students will demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.

4.A.9.1 Understand and apply the target-language pronunciation, intonation, stress patterns, and writing conventions in a variety of contexts.

4.B Students will demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.

4.B.9.1 Analyze the relationship between the products and perspectives in the cultures studied and compare and contrast these with their own.

4.B.9.2 Compare nuances of meanings of words, idioms, and vocal inflections in the target language and their own.

5. COMMUNITIES

Guam is home to people who speak many languages, and there are many opportunities for students to practice their language learning in our island community. In addition to the customary definition of community as a group of people living in the same locality, the word is also used to denote any group having common interests. Therefore a group of students learning the same language can be considered a community. Opportunities for participating in language activities within and across such communities exist throughout Guam, regardless of location or ethnic composition of the school.

Computer technology, media sources, and letter writing allow students to participate in the community of speakers and learners of the target language, or with students learning the same language in the same or village or districts. Face-to-face interaction and exchanges of information may occur in communities where native speakers of the target language reside, or between classes learning the same language.

Connection to Communities

Students become highly motivated to learn a second language when they see immediate applications in the real world for the skills they are learning in the foreign language classroom. In helping students to

connect their classroom knowledge to real-life experiences teachers bring together elements from all of the other strands. Students can use their ability to communicate in the target language coupled with their understanding of culture to participate within and between schools, locally and globally. This participation will inevitably involve connections to other disciplines, and will help students to develop further insights through comparisons to their own language and culture.

From the very beginning stages of a Kindergarten program, students can participate in their communities by performing songs and dances at local festivals or telling stories to other groups of students. Students at the same level can exchange biographical information, and advanced students can assist beginners. Students can also use their skills to participate in school and community service projects. This has the added benefit of encouraging civic participation in the communities in which they live. It will also benefit students become aware of the varieties among dialects, rates of speech, and styles of expression among native speakers of a language, and the accompanying cultural implications.

Teachers also need to educate students about the possibilities of using their second language in future careers. The worldwide economy is dependent on technology and information services. As United States businesses expand domestic and international markets, their employees will benefit greatly from knowing another language. These skills will allow them to obtain information directly from other countries, and to engage in face-to-face negotiations in political and business situations.

Knowledge of other languages and cultures also opens the door to many types of leisure activities. On their television screens and on their computer monitors, Guamanians as with all other Americans travel to other countries and interact with speakers of other languages. They realize that competence in more than one language, and knowledge of other cultures, empower them to experience more fully the artistic and cultural creations of those cultures.

5.A. Students will speak, read, and converse in languages other than English within and beyond the school setting.

5.A.9.1 Establish and/or maintain interpersonal relations with speakers of the language.

5.A.9.2 Perform for a school or community celebration.

5.B. Students understand the world as an interdependent community and develop cross-cultural interpersonal and group skills to communicate, solve problems, resolve conflicts, and make decisions.

5.B.9.1 Participate in a career-exploration or school-to-work project which requires proficiency in the target language and culture.

5.C. Students will show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.

5.C.9.1 Communicate orally or in writing with members of the other culture regarding topics of personal interest or community or world concern.

5.C.9.2 Listen to music, sing songs, or play musical instruments from the target culture.

5.C.9.3 Participate in a career-exploration or school-to-work

project which requires proficiency in the language and culture.