

Students who elect not to take LOTE courses must certify satisfaction of the “e” requirement by one of the following methods:

- Earning a satisfactory score on a recognized test (such as SAT II: Subject Test, AP test or Higher Level International Baccalaureate exam) or a proficiency test administered by a UC campus or another university;
- Two years of formal schooling at the sixth-grade level or higher with grades of C or better in an institution where the language of instruction is other than English;
- In cases where the options above are not available, certification by the high school principal, based on the judgment of language teachers, advice of professional or cultural organization with an interest in maintaining language proficiency or other appropriate source of expertise.

(<http://www.ucop.edu/a-gGuide>)

## 7) What is the difference between the SAT II – Subject Test and the AP Exam in Chinese?

The SAT II – Subject Test in Chinese is designed to measure achievement of study in high school. It tests reading, writing, listening and speaking. Historically, the District’s heritage language students who take the SAT II do extremely well. In 2004-2005, 99% of District students who took this test earned a score high enough to test out of their LOTE requirement for entry to the University of California.

AP exams are generally designed to measure achievement of college level study. This test will require students to read and apply their language skills in order to demonstrate familiarity with the language, culture and literary themes. The Advanced Placement examination and course for Chinese are currently under development and will be offered for the first time in 2006-2007.

## 8) Can I take Chinese at De Anza College or from some other institution?

De Anza’s modern language classes are similar in rigor to the Fremont Union High School District’s levels 1 to 4. Taking Chinese classes at DeAnza may be a good option for some students who attend schools where Chinese is not offered or who cannot fit the course into their high school schedule. If you want to take Chinese at De Anza, talk to your counselor in advance to arrange for credit. No credit will be given if the course is not approved in advance. Students who take courses at De Anza earn college credit. In order to provide evidence of completing these courses, students should submit a transcript from De Anza with their college application.

## 9) Can I or should I take AP Chinese without having taken any Chinese courses in high school?

This may be an option for advanced language students who demonstrate their readiness on the District placement test. Doing so would allow interested students to provide evidence of a high level of proficiency in Chinese and ensure that they meet their LOTE requirement in one year. The course will be an opportunity for advanced level speakers to apply their skills to get a deeper understanding of literary themes in Chinese. But before taking this step, students should consider whether adding this course will be the best choice in preparation for college and whether other courses might be more important. This decision depends on what other courses you have already taken and the major and college(s) you plan to apply to; it may be different for every individual. Some advanced language students may decide to take the AP exam without the coursework to free themselves to take other things. If you have questions about whether Advanced Placement is a good option for you, consult with your guidance counselor.

### QUESTIONS?

Cupertino High School—408-366-7300

Fremont High School—408-522-2400

Homestead High School—408-522-2500

Lynbrook High School—408-366-7700

Monta Vista High School—408-366-7600

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# Are You Thinking about Taking Chinese?

## A Guide for Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced Students of Chinese Language

Mandarin is one of four language courses offered in the Modern Language Department of the Fremont Union High School District. The District’s Mandarin courses are designed to serve the needs of students at a variety of levels of experience with the language. Some students enter the program with little or no exposure to Mandarin; others may have been exposed to Chinese at home or in a community Chinese school, but may not know how to read, write, or speak the language well. Still others know Mandarin quite well, but are interested in going deeper into their study and use of the language.

Most of our high schools offer year-long courses at four levels: Chinese 1, 2, 3, and 4 (Honors). If enrollment warrants it, classes are sometimes offered that combine students from more than one level in a single class. Classes are designed to prepare students to meet the recommended California content standards for Modern Language which are based on standards for foreign language classes established by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Advanced Placement Chinese will be offered for the first time in the 2006-2007 school year. This course will be designed to prepare students for the Advanced Placement exam in Chinese Language and Culture that will also be offered for the first time in 2006-2007.

## 1) Why should I study Chinese?

Learning a foreign language strengthens your understanding of other cultures and helps prepare you for educational and career opportunities in the future. Any of the languages offered in the Fremont Union High School District would be valuable to study.

- ▶ French was once the dominant language of arts and European culture. Along with English, French is the working language of international organizations like the United Nations, UNESCO, and NATO.
- ▶ Japan is a key trading and strategic partner of the United States. Knowledge of Japanese offers you the opportunity to understand a rich Asian culture with which the United States and other countries do a great deal of business.
- ▶ The Hispanic community is our nation's largest minority population. Nearly every job in the public and private sectors in the United States is affected by the need to communicate with Spanish speakers.
- ▶ Chinese is a language spoken by more than 1.3 billion people worldwide. China is predicted to become the world's largest economic center by the year 2030. Recently the U.S. State Department designated Chinese a "critical language" for the nation.

## 2) How many modern language courses am I required to take in order to graduate from high school and get into college?

Students are not required to take any language other than English in order to graduate from the Fremont Union High School District. Modern Language courses are considered electives and you are required to take *one year each from two of the following three subject areas:* modern language, fine arts, or applied academics.

University of California admissions, however, requires that students demonstrate mastery of a language other than English at level 2 and recommends that students demonstrate skills at level 3 or higher. Students meet these requirements by taking course work or tests. Other competitive colleges and universities generally have similar requirements and recommendations.

## 3) How do I know what level of Chinese to take?

If you are interested in taking Chinese, you may be asked to answer questions about your previous experience with Mandarin and be given a test to determine appropriate placement. Students continuing in the District's program are generally assigned to the next level course on recommendation of their Chinese teacher. Preliminary placement in courses is generally done in the spring and summer before the start of the school year, but adjustments are often required in the early fall after school starts and actual enrollments are determined. If you have questions or concerns about the level of course to which you are assigned, contact the Assistant Principal, Guidance Resource Teacher, or Chinese teacher at your school.

## 4) Can a student with no Chinese background succeed at learning Mandarin?

**ABSOLUTELY!** Growing numbers of students around the country from all ethnic and language backgrounds are taking Chinese. The Fremont Union High School District has increasing numbers of students who take Chinese without having any previous exposure to the language and do very well.

Students in our District have a unique opportunity to study the language with peers whose heritage language is Chinese and in a community where Mandarin is used in homes and businesses.

The District wants to encourage any student who is interested to consider taking Chinese. Entry level classes are designed to ensure that novices of any ethnic background feel that they can be successful.

## 5) What if I have gone to a community Chinese School and already have some Chinese language skills?

**GREAT!** You may already have a head start on learning Chinese and you may have already earned some elective credit toward high school graduation. Students who attend approved Chinese schools earn elective credit on their high school transcript if their language course grades have been submitted to the Fremont Union High School District by the school. But these courses do not count toward your modern language requirement for college admission.

The placement test will help the District determine what level course is best for you. Depending on your level of language skills, it may be recommended that you enter the program at level 2 or higher.

If you are interested in being admitted to a competitive college, it is never a good idea to take courses that are too easy for you. College admissions offices want to see that you are taking a well-rounded and rigorous course of study. Entering the District program at higher levels will help you finish your college entrance requirements sooner and will free you to take other courses you may need or are interested in taking.

The University of California (UC) considers successful completion of a higher level of course as evidence of having completed the previous level of courses even if you have never taken those lower level courses. Guidelines for admissions to UC on the UC website state "*...When an applicant has successfully completed advanced work in an area of sequential knowledge (mathematics, language other than English (LOTE)) with a grade of C or higher, the student is presumed to have completed the earlier course work even if the earlier courses do not appear on the student's academic record.*"

(<http://www.ucop.edu/a-gGuide>)

## 6) If I am already bilingual, can I "test-out" of the course requirements for college admissions?

**YES**, as a matter of fact, you are encouraged to do so. You can take a SAT II – Subject Test or AP Exam without taking a LOTE course. UC admissions guidelines recommend that bilingual students consider this option in order to free themselves to take other courses they need or are interested in taking. Guidelines for admissions to UC on its website state "*The intent of the LOTE requirement is to ensure that freshmen have a minimal level of competence in a language other than English; ...Generally, bilingual students are considered to have met the requirement and may choose not to enroll in LOTE courses. These students may be better served by enrolling in additional electives or, if their English is limited, English as a second language.*"