

HIAS MOODLE+ RESOURCE

# **Culture and Engagement in the Primary MFL Classroom**

**Making the Target Language come to life!**

Kerry Yates  
May 2026  
Final version

© Hampshire County Council

# Overview

## **This document contains...**

Information regarding the reasons for including culture in language learnings alongside practical suggestions for class teachers and Modern Language coordinators.

## **Points to consider when using this resource...**

Further ideas will be discussed at our network meetings and published on the HIAS MFL Moodle +

# Culture and engagement in primary MFL

The National Curriculum for KS2 languages includes a broad set of principles and programmes of study, which can frustratingly leave curriculum planning wide open to interpretation. Of course, the Curriculum and Assessment Review (DFE, November 2025) placed KS2 MFL at the centre of a “broad and rich curriculum” and emphasised the need for diversity to be reflected in the curriculum. Whilst we await more guidance including a core content for primary languages, the longstanding thread of a “liberation against insularity”, exposing pupils to a variety of cultures remains central to the curriculum. With the new white paper championing social, cultural and emotional development alongside mutual respect, it is clear that the cultural aspect of teaching languages in primary school remains a key priority. Pupils need to see the relevance of learning languages and appreciate the differences and similarities of the target language culture with their own. So with all the time pressures and constraints on the primary MFL curriculum, how do we ensure that culture remains relatable and engaging?

For many schools, Bastille Day on the 14<sup>th</sup> July is the perfect opportunity to crack out the croissants, decorate the dining hall and make some colourful bunting. In the past I had pupils making guillotines out of lollypop sticks, although I certainly wouldn't do that again due to the resulting mess across the classroom! It could be the perfect opportunity to hold a French Bake off competition or to encourage children to research different French cities or regions. Perhaps a café set up on the playground at lunchtime, would give older pupils the chance to serve as waiters. What better way to practise, “je voudrais” and “s’il vous plait!”. Whatever you do, involving as many adults and children as possible can create memorable experiences and create a real reason to

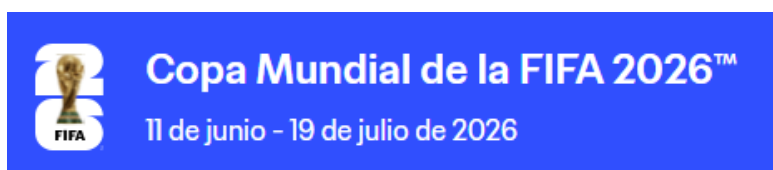


continue learning French. Including culture in the languages curriculum has never been easier, with the internet giving access to numerous videos showing French towns, schools, cafes and more. Sites such as “Easy French” use subtitles and context to make the language accessible. It's amazing how children soon spot the differences and similarities of a French high street – cars on driving on the right, yellow post boxes and café terraces ready to serve lunch in the sunshine.

For Spanish, how about a video of the “Tomatina” to inspire the children when learning Spanish? Spanish festivals are vibrant and exciting, so what better way to promote and celebrate the language? Visiting a school website in a Spanish speaking country can reveal differences in dress-code, subjects studied and school facilities; these can also be a great starting point for a class discussion when studying the topic of school. Perhaps each pupil could research a different Spanish speaking country and produce a factfile to share with their peers.



Stories and songs have always been popular in English and can be surprisingly easy to understand in French or Spanish. Learning colours using “Elmer” or food items in the story of “The Very Hungry Caterpillar” can bring the language to life and encourage choral repetition of key words. Most childrens’ books are available on You Tube with audio and subtitles to aid listening and reading skills. Many are available in bought schemes such as Language Angels or Kapow, but there are book suggestions on the HIAS Moodle in the Languages section. Choral reading and repetition not only brings the language to life, but is also an engaging way to practise phonics and intonation, thus improving confidence.



Sports events such as the Olympic Games and the upcoming World Cup offer a great excuse to get pupils engaged in considering the global significance of the Spanish speaking

world. The 2026 FIFA World Cup website contains lists of all the participating countries, a calendar of matches, team statistics and short videos about the host cities. With the website set to Spanish or French, this is a perfect starting point for introducing or reinforcing countries or colours in the target language, for example. Classes could create a chart to regularly update scores whilst practising numbers.

The European Day of Languages takes place on 26<sup>th</sup> September each year. Organised by the European Commission and the Council of Europe, the celebration encourages people of all ages to learn languages and celebrate the diversity of people and languages across Europe. Many schools use this day, or another around the autumn term to promote languages across the community. There are many suggestions of activities, as well as posters and resources on the EDL website: [European Day of Languages > Home](#). Something as simple as a class challenge to count to ten in another language, share something of their home language or culture or learn a poem or song in a different language can create a buzz around language learning at the start of the school year.

Finally, the key is to start small, but to keep conversations around languages, cultures and diversity alive and relevant. Keep an eye on our HIAS Moodle resources and our termly MFL network meetings, where ideas for culture and engagement in primary languages are often shared. For more information and to receive regular updates, please contact [Kerry.yates@hants.gov.uk](mailto:Kerry.yates@hants.gov.uk). I am also able to offer in school support with curriculum development, assessment and quality assurance.

# Modern Foreign Languages

HIAS Kerry Yates, MFL Adviser – [kerry.yates@hants.gov.uk](mailto:kerry.yates@hants.gov.uk)

For further details on the full range of services available please contact us using the following email:

[hias.publications@hants.gov.uk](mailto:hias.publications@hants.gov.uk)

## Upcoming Courses

Keep up-to-date with our learning opportunities for each subject through our Upcoming Course pages linked below. To browse the full catalogue of learning offers, visit our new Learning Zone. Full details of how to access the site to make a booking are provided [here](#).

- [English](#)
- [Maths](#)
- [Science](#)
- [Geography](#)
- [RE](#)
- [History](#)
- [Leadership](#)
- [Computing](#)
- [Art](#)
- [D&T](#)
- [Assessment](#)
- [Support Staff](#)
- [SEN](#)
- [TED](#)
- [MFL](#)

# Terms and conditions

## Terms of licence

Moodle+ subscribers are licenced to access and use this resource and have agreed to pay the annual subscription fee. This licence begins once the fee is paid and remains valid until the subscription period expires, unless renewed. This resource is intended solely for personal or classroom use. By using it, you agree that you will not copy or reproduce this file except for your own personal, non-commercial use.

This document/file must be used and shared in its original form. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools (Copilot, Gemini, Chat GPT etc) or automated systems to alter, rewrite, translate, or otherwise modify its content is strictly prohibited without prior written permission from the original author(s) or publisher. Unauthorised use of AI in this way may result in misrepresentation, loss of context, or breach of intellectual property rights, and may lead to corrective or legal action.

HIAS reserves the right to modify these terms at any time. Any changes will take immediate effect and supersede all previous agreements.

## You are welcome to:

- download this resource
- save this resource on your computer
- print as many copies as you would like to use in your school
- amend this electronic resource so long as you acknowledge its source and do not share as your own work.

## You may not:

- claim this resource as your own
- sell or in any way profit from this resource
- store or distribute this resource on any other website or another location where others are able to electronically retrieve it
- email this resource to anyone outside your school or transmit it in any other fashion.