

Elementary Proficiency in a Second Language

To assist you in developing long-term verbal skills and intercultural awareness, Lafayette College requires demonstration of elementary-level proficiency in a second language. The College offers instruction in Chinese, French, German, Ancient Greek, Modern Hebrew, Japanese, Latin, Russian and Spanish. Native speakers of English can fulfill the College's language requirement by successfully completing Elementary 101-102 (a two-semester course sequence), Elementary 103 (a one-semester course for high beginners, which is the equivalent of 102), or any higher-level language course (*e.g.*, Intermediate 111). (*For exemption policies, please see below.*)

Registering for Classes

Language classes at Lafayette College are relatively small, and seating is on a first-come, first-serve basis. Please consult placement guidelines *before* you preregister because it will increase your likelihood of obtaining a seat in the appropriate level language course. After you have preregistered, the language department will consult your high school transcripts, placement test scores, and other official records (*e.g.*, the language proficiency section on the Common Application). If the department determines that you have signed up for a course in error, you will be moved to the appropriate course level of the same language and informed of the change before the start of classes. If the course list is already full, your name will appear at the end of a wait list. If a seat does *not* come available, you have several options, including the option to take a different language or to wait a full semester or academic year until the appropriate level language course is next offered. If you decide to wait, please consult your academic adviser about fulfilling a different general education distribution requirement in the meantime.

General rules of thumb for determining your language level:

- If you have NO prior experience in a language that you wish to study at Lafayette College, please register for Elementary 101. (Please note that this course level is normally *reserved* for true beginners.)
- If you have experience speaking or studying a second language and you wish to register for the same language at Lafayette College, please consult relevant placement guidelines and specific requirements as listed in the Course Catalog. (For example, if you studied Spanish for two or more years in high school, you are *ineligible* to take Spanish 101.)
- Lafayette College's elementary-level proficiency requirement in a second language does not state *which* language you should take. Indeed, if you did not excel in a particular language in high school, there may be very good reasons for you to consider switching to a new language in college. If you did excel at a second language, then you must take the appropriate course level if you wish to continue your language studies at Lafayette.
- Past experience is one of several factors the language department uses in determining level. For example, if you have completed multiple years of language studies in high school (*e.g.*,

AP or 4th-year honors), the language department might place you in Intermediate 111-112 or Advanced 211. (Remember that you always have the option to start a new language if you prefer studying Elementary 101-102 to continuing your studies at a more advanced level in a language you have already studied.)

Second-Language Requirement Exemption Policies

Lafayette College provides several options for students who wish to seek exemption from general education requirements in the Common Course of Study. As regards the elementary-level proficiency requirement in a second language, standardized testing is the primary way to demonstrate equivalency. If you have never taken a College Board test in the target language, the Office of the Dean of the College administers optional SAT subject tests during the first-year student orientation weekend.

Achievement testing:

The Registrar's office accepts College Board test scores to exempt students from Lafayette's elementary-level proficiency requirement. For languages other than English, students need a score of 3 or above on the appropriate AP exam or 500 or above on the appropriate SAT subject test in order to receive exemption. In certain cases, the Registrar's office awards course credit for high achievement on AP or IB exams; however, this policy does not extend to SAT subject tests. Furthermore, requirement exemption and course credit are not available for other forms of testing such as WebCAPE, which the language department uses as an online tool to assist students in finding the correct course level prior to registration.

Transferring course credit:

Students are welcome to apply to transfer course credit for language courses from an approved college or university. The Registrar will grant exemption from the corresponding general education requirement if course credit is awarded. Grades, however, only transfer if students are on a program affiliated with Lafayette's Office of International and Off-Campus Education.

Non-native speakers of English:

For students whose second language is English (*e.g.*, some international students), a passing score on TOEFL is sufficient to obtain exemption from the College's elementary-level proficiency requirement.

Heritage speakers:

Heritage speakers of a language that is not tested by the College Board should make an appointment with the department head of Foreign Languages & Literatures for information about how to seek exemption from the College's elementary-level requirement in that language. Please note that students need to demonstrate elementary-level *reading* proficiency in the target language in order to receive exemption.