

French & International Languages Course Challenge

Course Challenge Guide for Students & Family



Table of Contents

Important Information to Start your Language Course Challenge ..	3
Language Course Challenge Steps	3
Student Responsibilities	4
Course Challenge Process Expectations	6
Programs of Study	7
Diagram: Course Challenge Procedure	9
Alberta Education Course Challenge Rules	10
Example Course Challenge Breakdown of Components	11
Example Rubric for Oral Portion	13
Example Rubric for Written Portion	14
Language Course Challenge Consent Form	15
Language Course Challenge Checklist.....	16

Success for each and every student is the goal of our work. Attention to continuous improvement, high expectations, innovation and relationships will enable all students to reach their potential. Student learning is at the heart of everyone's work at The Calgary Board of Education.

Last update: January 2026

CONTACT US

Languages

t | 403-817-7661

e | cbelanguages@cbe.ab.ca



Important Information to Start your Language Course Challenge

The process described in this guide is for **grade 10 to grade 12 students** registered in a CBE high school challenging a **30- or 35-level language course**. If the student intends to challenge a language course at a different level, or a course in an area outside of Languages, then different processes will apply. Students can approach their guidance counsellor or principal for more details.

The primary purpose of the CBE Language Course Challenge program is to assist students in meeting all requirements for high school graduation. Registration priority is therefore granted to students who require the program to meet graduation requirements in the current school year. Other students are also welcome to apply to the program. It is expected that many spots will be available for these students.

30-level language course challenges are offered twice per year in a centralized format. There are fall (October-November) and winter (March-April) sessions. A student can only challenge **one** language course per session.

A student requests a 30-level language course challenge via their high school's Language Course Challenge delegate **at the beginning of the semester and by the deadline announced by the high school**.

The Language Course Challenge Consent Form (page 15 of this document) must be signed and submitted to the high school's delegate no later than the date set by the school in **October (fall), or February (winter)**. Students should inquire about their school's deadline well in advance.

Language Course Challenge Steps

- The student reads this guide and discusses the steps and requirements with their family and school officials, as required.
- The student submits their Consent form to their high school's delegate.
- Students will be contacted approximately 10 days before the exam via email by Languages. The email will confirm registration and provide details about the audio sample and written transcript requirements for the portfolio. Information will **only** be sent to a student's CBE email address.



- The student prepares an audio sample and written transcript in the target language. This work is expected to be done independently. Topics and assessment criteria vary from language to language, but generally resemble the sample provided from French 30-3Y at pages 10-13 of this guide.
- The student attends the Part 1 Portfolio exam date and submits their audio sample and written transcript at registration. The student completes the Portfolio exam.
- The Portfolio is assessed by a teacher to determine the student's readiness to pursue the course challenge. The decision is shared with the student's principal (or delegate), who then shares it with the student. The principal may recommend ending the course challenge process at this stage if the student's success appears unlikely.
- The student completes the Part 2 course challenge exam on a separate date, time and location.
- In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible to complete the Part 1 and Part 2 components in different sessions.
- Students can access their course mark on [myPass](#) approximately 6 weeks after the Part 2 exam.

Student Responsibilities

It is the student's responsibility to ensure they independently prepare themselves to meet the outcomes stated in the Alberta program of study for the course being challenged. All work submitted must be the student's own. Any evidence of plagiarism or collaboration will automatically render the student's work invalid. Failure to complete and submit **any** components of the course challenge process as per the timeline may result in the termination of the course challenge process.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure they attend and complete the portfolio and exam at the specified times. Students are responsible for getting themselves to and from the designated locations of the centralized languages course challenge components (Part 1 Portfolio and Part 2 Exam). Dates, time and location are predetermined by CBE and will be shared with students when a challenge request is made. Students should read the information for their session carefully and should not presume that the location of a future exam will be the same as that of a past exam or session.

Students can access their course challenge mark once the course challenge process has been completed in [myPass](#) and/or from their high school principal (or delegate).



Teachers at the student's home school cannot provide guidance, tutoring or resources to students in the course challenge process.

Important Note | Preparing for the Challenge

The course challenge **supervising teacher does not assist the student in preparing for the portfolio or exam**, other than to supply, by request, the criteria for the tasks that will be completed. The supervising teacher cannot provide guidance, tutoring or resources. Similarly, teachers at the student's home school cannot be involved in the course challenge process.

The student can review the curricular outcomes of the language course they would like to challenge on [Alberta Education's Programs of Study website](#). A list of some commonly challenged language courses, with links to the program of study, is provided at page 7 of this document.

Important Note | Academic Records

There is no impact on a student's record or transcript from registering for or participating in the Language Course Challenge process until the student sits the Part 2 Exam component. Withdrawals or absences for any reason prior to Part 2 carry no penalty or annotation of any kind.

A final mark is issued for every student who completes the Part 2 Exam, regardless of the student's level of achievement. Final marks appear on a student's transcript approximately six weeks following the Part 2 Exam.

Important Note | Immersion & Bilingual Program Requirements

Students should be aware that credits earned through the Language Course Challenge process do not count towards the requirements of a CBE Language program certificate, such as the French immersion or Spanish bilingual programs. Credits may nonetheless assist students in meeting the requirements of the Alberta High School Diploma.

Important Note | Post-secondary Admissions

Students proceeding with the course challenge process should be aware that post-secondary institutions' policies vary widely regarding admission on the basis of a mark earned through a course challenge. Students should contact a prospective institution to ascertain if credits and marks earned through a course challenge are acceptable for admission.



Course Challenge Process Expectations

The following components are required for the successful completion of the course challenge process.

Part 1 Portfolio

The student is responsible for completing all components of the course challenge process.

- The required audio portion of the portfolio must be done at home prior to the Portfolio exam. The student prepares an audio sample on a USB key and a written transcript of the audio sample. The student will submit these components at Part 1 Portfolio exam session.
- The student must bring their own school ID, black or blue pens, pencils and erasers. The student may bring a dictionary and verb conjugation resources. There will be limited dictionaries, pens, pencils and erasers available on site. *Electronic devices are NOT permitted (e.g., phone-based dictionaries, smart watches, etc.).*
- **Materials submitted in the course challenge process will not be returned.**
- The Portfolio serves as evidence of a student's knowledge of the course outcomes and to inform whether the student should continue with the course challenge process.
- Teachers do not to give guidance, resources or tutoring for students to prepare for the Portfolio. Course challenges are completed independently by the student.

Part 2 Exam

- **Students will complete an interview, a listening comprehension exercise, a reading comprehension assessment, and a written production.** All language skill areas (listening, reading comprehension, written, oral production and interaction) are assessed.
- The teacher who assessed the student's portfolio will assess the Part 2 Exam.
- The student must bring their school ID, a black or blue pen, an HB pencil and an eraser. A dictionary and verb conjugation booklet may also be brought. There will be limited dictionaries, pens, pencils and erasers available on site. *Electronic devices are NOT permitted (e.g., phone-based dictionaries, smart watches, etc.).*
- Teachers do not to give guidance, resources or tutoring for students to prepare for the Part 2 exam. Course challenges are completed independently by the student.



Programs of Study

It is the student's responsibility to review the relevant Alberta Program of Study online to understand the skills required to succeed in the Course Challenge process. This information for some commonly challenged courses is available at the following links:

Arabic 35-3Y: [Arabic Language and Culture \(15-25-35 3Y\)](#).
(CBE Locally Developed Course - ask your school for a copy).

Cantonese 35-3Y: [Chinese \(Cantonese\) Language and Culture 3Y](#).
(CBE Locally Developed Course - ask your school for a copy.)

Filipino 35-3Y: [Filipino Language and Culture 3Y](#)
(CBE Locally Developed Course – ask your school for a copy).

French 30-3Y: <https://education.alberta.ca/media/160336/threey.pdf>
(follow all 30-3Y requirements in the rightmost columns)

French 30-9Y: <https://education.alberta.ca/media/160305/gr12.pdf>
(from page 15)

- Candidates challenging French typically register at the 9Y level.

German 30: <https://education.alberta.ca/media/381128/german-language-and-culture-10-3y-20-3y-30-3y.pdf>
(follow all 30-3Y requirements in the rightmost columns)

Italian 30: <https://education.alberta.ca/media/381136/italian-language-and-culture-10-3y-20-3y-30-3y.pdf>
(follow all 30-3Y requirements in the rightmost columns)

Japanese 30: <https://education.alberta.ca/media/381131/japanese-language-and-culture-10-3y-20-3y-30-3y.pdf>
(follow all 30-3Y requirements in the rightmost columns)

Mandarin 30: <https://education.alberta.ca/media/381125/chinese-language-and-culture-10-3y-20-3y-30-3y.pdf>
(follow all 30-3Y requirements in the rightmost columns)

Punjabi 30: <https://education.alberta.ca/media/381141/punjabi-language-and-culture-three-year-program-10-3y-20-3y-30-3y.pdf>
(follow all 30-3Y requirements in the rightmost columns)

Spanish 30: <https://education.alberta.ca/media/381142/spanish-language-and-culture-10-3y-20-3y-30-3y.pdf>



Ukrainian 30: <https://education.alberta.ca/media/381145/ukrainian-language-and-culture-10-3y-20-3y-30-3y.pdf>
(follow all 30-3Y requirements in the rightmost columns)

Programs of study for many other language courses can be consulted here:
<https://www.learnalberta.ca/ProgramsOfStudy.aspx>

↳ This site can generate lists of requirements for 30-level Language courses. Choose 'English', then under the 'Complementary Programs' menu, choose International Languages, and then select the appropriate Language & Culture (3-Year Program) course from those displayed.

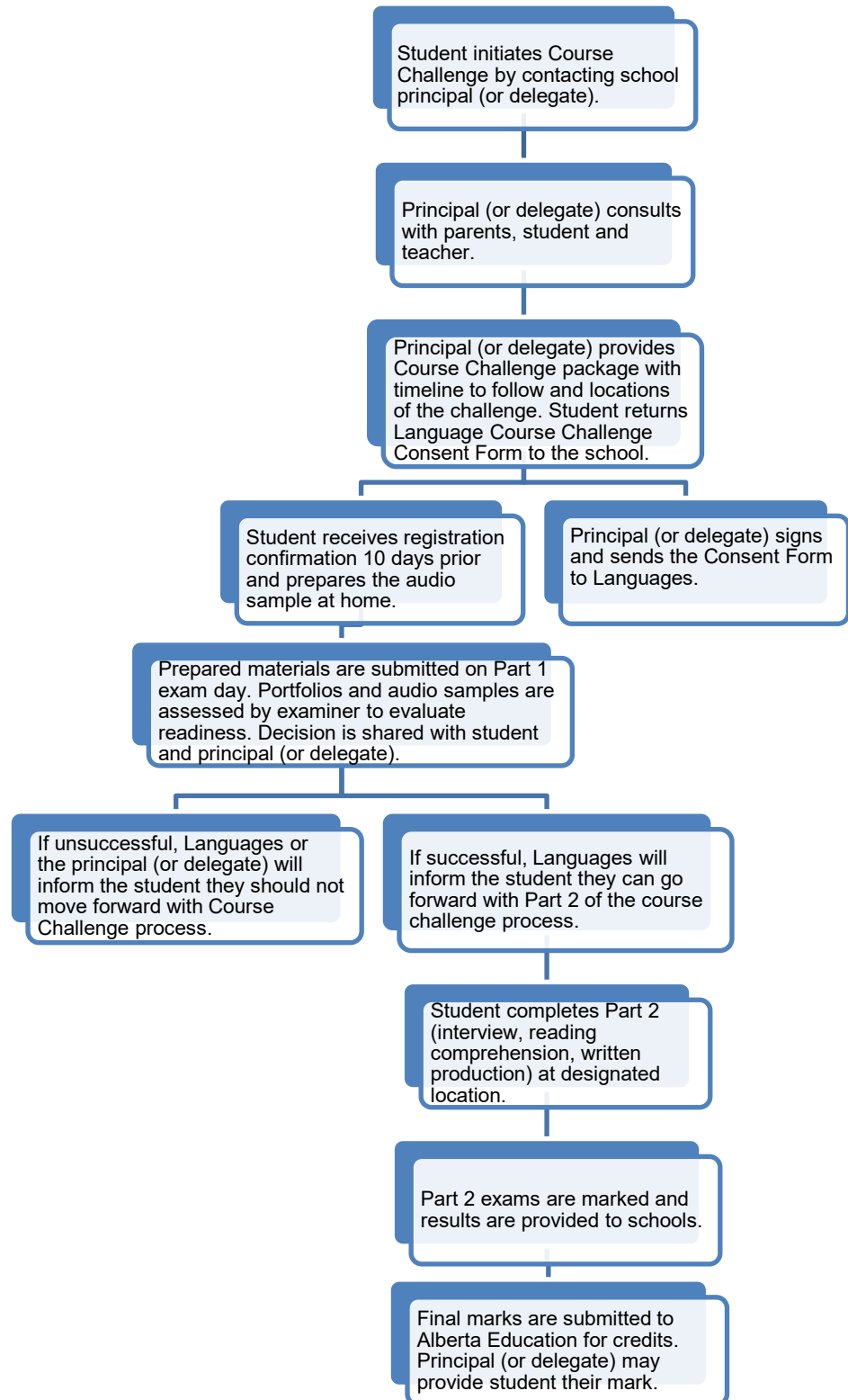
For some languages, the Programs of Study are locally developed or acquired by CBE and therefore are not available on Alberta Education's websites. For the programs of study for these locally developed courses, please request them from Languages at cbelanguages@cbe.ab.ca, using subject line **Languages – locally developed course**.

Important Note | Course Challenge Offerings

Although every effort will be made to provide course challenge opportunities in many languages at each session, it may not be possible for CBE to offer every language in every session. The above list of languages acts as a general guide to language course challenge opportunities and is not to be understood as a commitment that a challenge will be possible for that course in every session. Please view the checklist at the conclusion of this Guide to view expected offerings for the upcoming session.



Diagram: Course Challenge Procedure



Alberta Education Course Challenge Rules

A student may not challenge a course if they are currently enrolled in the course.

The student may attempt a course challenge only once.

If the student is unsuccessful, the student can enroll in the course previously challenged.

Alberta Education makes additional rules for students who enroll in a course challenge. Among them and of note:

- A student may attempt a course challenge exam (Part 2) for a particular course **only once**.
- A student may not challenge a previously completed course.
- A student may not pursue a course challenge for a course in a lower-level sequence if the student has been awarded credits in a higher-level sequence. For example, if a French immersion student has previously completed French Language Arts 30, no extra credits will be earned for successfully challenging French 30-3Y.
- Students who successfully challenge a language course will receive credits for lower grade level courses in that sequence, if they have not already received credits for lower grade level courses in that language. For example, if a student successfully challenges German 30 while not having previously completed any high school German courses, the student will also receive credit for German 10 and German 20. If the student had successfully challenged German 30 after completing only German 10, credit would be granted for German 20, but not again for German 10. There are many nuances to this policy, so students should talk to their guidance counsellor or principal about their specific situation to determine the course(s) for which they may receive credit in passing.
- A student who challenges a course, either successfully or unsuccessfully, may subsequently choose to take the course, if the course is available. The highest final mark earned will appear on the student's transcript.



Example Course Challenge Breakdown of Components

Example of a FRENCH 30-3Y COURSE CHALLENGE

The French 30-3Y course challenge consists of several components. A student initiating a French course challenge must complete a portfolio, an oral interview, a written composition as well as reading and listening comprehension assessments.

PART 1 PORTFOLIO & AUDIO EXAMPLE

The required audio portion of the portfolio must be done at home prior to the Portfolio exam. The student prepares an audio sample on a USB key and a written transcript of the audio sample. The student will submit these components at check in during the Part 1 Portfolio exam session. The student must bring their own school ID, black or blue pens, pencils and erasers. The student may bring a dictionary and verb conjugation resources. There will be limited dictionaries, pens, pencils and erasers available on site. During the Portfolio exam, students will produce three written French paragraphs, each 150-200 words, based on the four contexts below. Each paragraph must demonstrate an understanding of the contexts by using appropriate sentence structure, grammar and vocabulary.

- **Personal context:** personal life and relationships
- **Educational context:** school life, related activities and future educational plans
- **Public context:** community life, stores, restaurants and other social venues
- **Occupational context:** job, employment and careers

The portfolio will be used as an initial demonstration of the student's knowledge, skills and attitudes to show their readiness for a French 30-3Y course challenge.

It may be decided after the submission of the portfolio that the required knowledge, skills and attitudes as described by the Program of Study have not been attained. At this time, the principal (or delegate) and/or designate may decide to not continue.

PART 2 COURSE CHALLENGE EXAM

Reading comprehension (25%)

The student will have reading comprehension texts based on the four contexts. Each text has comprehension questions to follow. No resources such as, but not limited to, dictionaries (print or electronic) or verb conjugation booklets may be used. The student will have 60 minutes.



Listening Comprehension (25%)

The student will complete listening comprehension exercises based on the different fields of study from the Program of Studies.

Oral Interview (25%)

The content of the portfolio will be used as the basis for the oral interview. The teacher may ask you further questions to elaborate on the student's experiences. The interview will be approximately 10-15 minutes in length.

The evaluation is as follows:

Communicative Acts

- Message – 30%
- Coherence – 10%

Linguistic Repertoire

- Language Structures & Discourse Development - 30%
- Vocabulary – 10%
- Pronunciation and Intonation – 20%

Please see the attached example rubric for further descriptors.

Written Expression (25%)

The student will complete written compositions based on topics from the program of studies. No resources such as dictionaries (print or electronic), verb conjugation or writing guides may be used.

The evaluation is as follows:

Communicative Acts

- Message – 35%
- Coherence – 15%

Linguistic Repertoire

- Language Structures & Discourse Development – 35%
- Vocabulary – 15%

Please see the attached rubric for further descriptors.

Each component must be completed to successfully complete the course challenge.



Example Rubric for Oral Portion

Example: French 30-3Y Course Challenge (rubrics & weightings may vary)

	COMMUNICATIVE ACTS		LINGUISTIC REPERTOIRE		
	Message	Coherence	Language Structures & Discourse	Vocabulary	Pronunciation & Intonation
0	The student has not reached the standard described by any of the descriptors given below.		The student has not reached the standard described by any of the descriptors given below.		
1-2	The message has not been developed with the necessary components.	The message is not organized in a logical structure. The fluidity is not evident.	The use of language structures is inaccurate. The sentences are poorly constructed. The many errors render the message incomprehensible.	The vocabulary is mostly inadequate.	The intonation and rhythm are not accurate. The pronunciation impedes the message.
3-4	The message is partially developed with few details to support the necessary components.	The message is partially organized in a logical structure. The fluidity is partially evident.	The use of simple language is partially accurate. The sentences are sometimes well constructed. The errors impede the clarity.	The range of vocabulary is simple with many errors.	The intonation and rhythm are sometimes accurate. The pronunciation is sometimes clear and correct.
5-6	The message is mostly developed with some details to support the necessary components.	The message is mostly organized in a logical structure. The fluidity is mostly evident.	The use of language is generally accurate. The sentences are mostly well constructed. The errors sometimes impede the clarity.	The vocabulary is simple but generally accurate.	The intonation and rhythm are generally accurate. The pronunciation is mostly clear and correct.
7-8	The message is developed with details to support the necessary components.	The message is organized in a logical structure. The fluidity is evident.	The use of language is accurate. The sentences are well constructed. The few errors do not impede the clarity.	The use of vocabulary is accurate.	The intonation and rhythm are accurate. The pronunciation is clear and correct.
9-10	The message is well developed with relevant details to support the necessary components.	The message is well organized in a logical structure. The fluidity is very evident.	The use of appropriate grammatical and syntactical structures enhances the clarity.	The use of vocabulary is precise and rich.	The intonation and rhythm show precision and fluidity. The pronunciation is consistently clear and correct.



Example Rubric for Written Portion

Example: French 30-3Y Course Challenge (rubrics & weightings may vary)

	COMMUNICATIVE ACTS		LINGUISTIC REPERTOIRE	
	Message	Coherence	Language Structures Discourse Development	Vocabulary
0	The student has not reached the standard described by any of the descriptors given below.		The student has not reached the standard described by any of the descriptors given below.	
1-2	The message has not been developed with the necessary components.	The message is not organized in a logical structure. The fluidity is not evident.	The use of language structures is inaccurate. The sentences are poorly constructed. The many errors render the message incomprehensible.	The vocabulary is mostly inadequate; the spelling impedes intelligibility.
3-4	The message is partially developed with few details to support the necessary components.	The message is partially organized in a logical structure. The fluidity is partially evident.	The use of simple language is partially accurate. The sentences are sometimes well constructed. The errors impede the clarity.	The range of vocabulary is simple with many errors. The spelling may impede intelligibility.
5-6	The message is mostly developed with some details to support the necessary components.	The message is mostly organized in a logical structure. The fluidity is mostly evident.	The use of language is generally accurate. The sentences are mostly well constructed. The errors sometimes impede the clarity.	The vocabulary is simple but generally accurate. The spelling does not usually impede intelligibility.
7-8	The message is developed with details to support the necessary components.	The message is organized in a logical structure. The fluidity is evident.	The use of language is accurate. The sentences are well constructed. The few errors do not impede the clarity.	The use of vocabulary is accurate. The spelling rarely impedes intelligibility.
9-10	The message is well developed with relevant details to support the necessary components.	The message is well organized in a logical structure. The fluidity is very evident.	The use of appropriate grammatical and syntactical structures enhances the clarity.	The use of vocabulary is precise and rich. Correct spelling is consistently used.





Language Course Challenge Consent Form

One of the ways CBE offers personalization of learning is by offering a course challenge opportunity. Any high school course can be challenged when a student is able to demonstrate they possess the knowledge, skills and attitudes of a particular course as specified by the program of study.

Please complete and submit to your school principal or course challenge designate.

Student Name: _____ **CBE ID:** _____
(Last Name, First Name, Initial) (Student ID Number)

School Name: _____ **School Year:** (YY-YY) _____

Language Course Name: _____ **Current Grade:** _____
(For Filipino 30 or Italian 30, use CCSD registration form instead)

IPP Accommodations (if applicable): _____

Student Mailing address: Apt / Suite #: _____ Street: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

CBE Student Email: (edu) _____ **Student Phone Number:** _____

I acknowledge the following:

- I have had an opportunity to read and/or discuss the guidelines on participating in the course challenge with my child.
- I understand that challenging a course does not always mean credits will be granted. To be awarded a final mark for the course, a student must have successfully attempted ALL components of the course challenge, which may include a Diploma exam.
- I am registered as a fee-paying international student (if applicable).

Print Parent / Legal Guardian Name **Signature Parent / Legal Guardian** **Date (mmm-dd-yyyy)**

Print Parent / Legal Guardian Name **Signature Parent / Legal Guardian** **Date (mmm-dd-yyyy)**

Authorization for Collection of Personal Information

Personal information is collected under the authority of the *Education Act* and Alberta's *Protection of Privacy Act (POPA)*. This information will be used to support the student with the language course challenge requested above. Personal information may be input into automated systems for processing and management purposes. It will be treated in accordance with the privacy protection provisions of POPA. If you have any questions regarding the collection of this information, contact the Languages department at 403-817-7661 or cbelanguages@cbe.ab.ca.

Office Use Only		
Classification: <input type="checkbox"/> Category 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Category 2		
Print Principal / Delegate Name	Signature Principal / Delegate Name	Date (mmm-dd-yyyy)



WINTER 2026

Registration confirmations are sent via email approximately 10 days prior to each Part. Please contact Languages if you registered but have not received a confirmation by the Monday prior to the exam.

Part 1 Portfolio Checklist

For the 2025-2026 school year, portfolio writing will take place at:

Western Canada High School

641 17 Avenue SW, Calgary T2S 0B5

- Arabic 35
- French 30-3Y
- French 30-9Y
- Cantonese 35
- German 30
- Japanese 30
- Mandarin 30
- Punjabi 30
- Spanish 30
- Ukrainian 30

St. Mary's High School

111 18 Ave SW, Calgary T2S 0B8

- Filipino 35*
- Italian 30*

*These course challenges are administered in partnership with the Calgary Catholic School Division.

On **Saturday, March 14, 2026**, Part 1 Exam, you must check in no later than **8:30 a.m.** at your designated site.

You must bring your:

- audio sample on USB memory stick (this **will not** be returned) *
- written transcript of your audio sample (write out what you said)
- school ID (or government ID)
- black or blue pens
- a HB pencil
- an eraser

You may also bring:

- a dictionary in your language, and/or a translation dictionary
- a printed verb conjugation book (electronic devices will not be used as a resource)

*Please remember that your audio sample is chosen from a DIFFERENT field of experience (topic) than your three written samples that you will prepare and submit on your Part 1 exam day at your designated writing centre.

Part 2 Exam Checklist

If your portfolio review is successful, you will be invited to complete the Part 2 Exam on **Saturday, April 18, 2026 at 8:30 a.m.** at your designated site (same place as Part 1).

You must bring:

- ID, pens, pencil, and eraser

You may also bring:

- dictionary or verb guide