

# Grand Union Language Network Newsletter December 2025

December provides language teachers with a wonderful opportunity to explore how Christmas is celebrated in other countries. As well as ploughing on with our planned schemes of learning and end of unit assessments, there's an opportunity to draw parallels with how Christmas is celebrated in the UK and in other countries. This supports our learners to be curious about the similarities and differences in how we celebrate festivals, ultimately supporting them to be more respectful and culturally aware. Please let us know how you are supporting your learners to become global citizens in the run up to Christmas. Tag us in your social media posts #LanguageNetworks

## In this month's newsletter:

1. Delve into a round up of teaching resources available to explore how Christmas is celebrated across the world.
2. Read the [Languages recommendations from the Curriculum and Assessment Review](#).
3. Start the new year on the right foot, [with details of our CPD programme for the spring term](#).
4. Hear from Steph Azarpey, Swanswell's Language Network lead as she explores the [Translanguaging content on LEO](#).
5. Find out more about the [latest materials released by AQA and Edexcel](#) to support with the delivery of the new GCSE.



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## Resources to explore Christmas and Winter Festivals

[Languagenut Festive Blog 2025 - Languagenut United Kingdom](#)

Languagenut have created some FREE primary and secondary resources in French, Spanish and German exploring festive traditions. Did you know that in Provence in France, Christmas Eve traditionally ends with 13 desserts?

There's still time to do something a little bit different too. We recently heard a colleague from a neighbouring NCLE Language Network talk about her favourite lesson ever.



It's one where she explores traditions around the 6th December and her students end up with their shoes filled with goodies. You could also mention the Krampus too. Did you know can buy Krampus figures made of chocolate in German supermarkets?!



Visit the BBC Newsround site for information about 10 European Traditions you might not know about including the famous Tió de Nadal.

Spain



[Christmas: Ten European traditions you may not know - BBC Newsround](#)

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## The Curriculum and Assessment Review Recommendations

On the 5<sup>th</sup> November, the final report following the Curriculum and Assessment Review was published.

- As expected, the review recommended the removal of the Ebacc performance measure for secondary schools.
- There's a renewed commitment to language teaching in KS2, with an acceptance that the current KS2 programme of study needs to be updated, to clarify what 'substantial progress in one language' means.
- KS2/KS3 transition also features, with local authorities, MATs and schools being encouraged to explore a more coordinated approach to the teaching of languages cross- phase to support progression.
- Hopefully, the recommendation to not make any immediate changes to the brand new GCSE content will also be well received by secondary teachers!

[The CAR full report can be downloaded here](#)

NCLE and the teams at Trent & Tame, Grand Union and Swanswell will be on hand to support with the implementation of these recommendations over the coming months. More details coming soon. Please keep an eye on our social media channels and our newsletters!



## Trent and Tame National Priority Project Focusing on Transition between Ks2 and Ks3

Following the recommendations made in the Curriculum and Assessment review final report, the work TTLN are doing on transition as part of their NPP is even more relevant. Since June 2024, the TTLN team have been developing a compelling narrative to support young people to understand the value of learning languages. By highlighting the additional skills, knowledge and understanding developed in Language Lessons alongside linguistic competence. We hope this will increase intrinsic motivation for language learning from Ks2 – Ks5 and beyond.

### KS2

|  |  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| <p><b>Tejus</b><br/>The thinker</p>  <p>A problem solver, and flexible thinker. Tejus enjoys spotting patterns and making links, understanding that doing this supports him to know more and remember more.</p> | <p><b>Kian</b><br/>The communicator</p>  <p>An excellent communicator. Kian actively listens, and responds appropriately. His ability to communicate makes him a great person to work with in a team.</p> | <p><b>Athena</b><br/>The enthusiast</p>  <p>Curious about sounds, words, and grammar, Athena embraces the unknown. She understands that learning a new language takes time, but that it also opens doors to amazing adventures.</p> | <p><b>Bella</b><br/>The brave</p>  <p>Determined and resilient, Bella is always willing to try new things, to have a go (even when she's not sure) and to persevere when things get tricky. She embraces new friendships and prides herself on always being kind.</p> | <p><b>Gio</b><br/>The global citizen</p>  <p>Always curious to understand other people, their lives and their cultures, Gio seeks out and takes every opportunity to develop his knowledge and understanding about the world around him.</p> |
|--|--|--|--|---|



**Spots Patterns and Make Links**

**Why is learning how to spot patterns and make links important?**

- Spotting patterns helps our brain make connections between ideas. This makes it easier for us to remember new ideas.
- It can help us to make predictions about what happens next. This is very useful in Maths, science and when reading.

**Spotting patterns and making links in Language Lessons**

- Link phonemes with graphemes to blend and pronounce words.
- Spot simple patterns (adjective agreement, word order).
- Make links between English and French grammar rules.
- Proactively look for links between TL words and English to decode unfamiliar words.

5 linguistic superheroes, help KS2 students become more aware of the skills they are developing in their language lessons

There's also clear signposting about why these skills are important as well as showing how the skill is developed in language lessons.

### KS3

In KS3 the additional skills developed in language lessons are marketed in a slightly different way. In KS3 we talk about how learning another language helps you to develop a CORE set of skills, which can help you now and in the future, regardless of the path you choose to follow.

**How does learning another language enrich your life, now and in the future?**

Alongside linguistic knowledge and the ability to be able to communicate in another language, learning other languages helps you to develop a **CORE** set of skills which can support you in language lessons, in other lessons at school and in your wider life.

|  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <br>Character | <br>Open-mindedness and a global outlook | <br>Responsive Communication skills | <br>Engaged Thinking skills |
|--|---|--|---|

If you are interested in finding out more about how our NPP could:

- Support you to raise the profile of languages in your school
- OR
- Support you to have a more effective transition between KS2 and KS3 please get in touch.
  - E-mail [ttlh@atlp.org.uk](mailto:ttlh@atlp.org.uk)



## CPD in the Spring Term delivered by the West Midlands Regional Language Network

Next term, the WMRLN will be hosting three virtual webinars. Each session will take place between 15.30 and 16.30

### **Wednesday 14th January** **Supporting HHCL GCSE** **qualifications**

Join the team from Swanswell and Amanda Millican from EMAS to discuss practical ways in which you can promote and support your students with their Home, Heritage, Community Language exams at GCSE and beyond.

Register:  
[WEBINAR: Supporting Home Language Qualifications at GCSE](#)

### **Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> January** **Using AI to develop spontaneous** **talk in the Language Classroom**

Join the team from Trent and Tame to consider how we can use AI to support the students in our classrooms to develop confidence and competence when speaking spontaneously.

Register:  
[Using AI to support with spontaneous speech development](#)

### **Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March** **Exploring different secondary MFL** **curriculum models**

Join the team from Grand Union as they share the findings of their NPP project on the impact of different secondary curriculum models on MFL uptake, motivation and engagement alongside the financial and logistical challenges of each model.

Register:  
[Microsoft Virtual Events Powered by Teams](#)

## Other CPD available in the Spring Term



### **Wednesday 28th January** **3.45pm – 4.45pm** **Every Voice Matters: Oracy for** **Disadvantaged and** **Multi-Lingual Learners**

Join our friends at the Staffordshire Research School for a virtual twilight session focusing on strengthening oracy for disadvantaged and multilingual learners.

Drawing on his experience as an Assistant Headteacher and an Evidence Lead for the Staffordshire Research School, John Marsh will bring a research-informed, practical approach showing how purposeful talk can boost learning, confidence and classroom engagement for all pupils. [Book your place here!](#)



### **Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February** **8.30 – 4.00** **Crowne Plaza, Birmingham**

#### **Driving Sustainable and Inclusive language education**

In a time of educational reform and shifting policy landscapes, school leaders are uniquely placed to shape and secure the future of languages education.

Developed by ASCL and NCLE, this timely and thought-provoking conference invites school and system leaders to explore how to lead languages strategically, ensuring they thrive within inclusive, sustainable, and globally-minded curricula.

For more information visit: [ASCL - ASCL Conference for Strategic Leadership of Languages](#)

## NCLE National Webinars in the Spring Term

### **Wednesday 21st January 2026** **16:00-17:00** **Languages for All – a social justice issue.**

In this webinar, we'll be exploring different curriculum models and pedagogical approaches which offer appropriate cognitive, cultural and linguistic challenge. How do we plan and deliver lessons which relate to the learners whom we teach? How do we create an ethos of success? You will hear from practising teachers from the UK and international experts.

Register here



### **Wednesday 11th February 2026** **16:00-17:00** **Talking Classrooms: practical ideas for** **promoting use of the target language.**

Using the target language as the medium of instruction as well as the object of study has always been contentious. With inspiration from practising teachers, discover how interaction in the target language is not only accessible but makes a central contribution to progress in language learning.

[Register here](#)

## What's new on LEO?



Steph Azarpey

“I’ve really enjoyed working through the content in the expert view pathway looking at the concept of Translanguaging. In this section Professor Li Wei, Dean of UCL Institute of Education (IOE) and Jason Anderson, Associate Professor at the University of Warwick explore how the perspective of translanguaging can help us to understand how the linguistically diverse learners in our classrooms can make the most of their full language repertoire.”

“Embedded amongst the videos, are pause for thought boxes which help the reader to take stock of the concepts introduced to date, and summarise the main messages.”

- Whether it's different languages, dialects, registers, or ideolects, people naturally draw on their full linguistic repertoire to make meaning, shifting between, within, and across languages depending on context and audience. This is what is meant by translanguaging.
- Translanguaging challenges the idea that languages should only be taught in the target language. It offers a multilingual vision of communication that reflects learners' lived experiences, rather than separating or ranking their languages.
- When learners are encouraged to use all their linguistic resources, it strengthens identity, confidence, and creativity, and supports deeper learning of the named or target language.
- Translanguaging is not so much about changing what we do in the classroom, but more about changing how we see the language resources our learners bring.
- Taking a translanguaging lens allows teachers to better recognise and support the full linguistic identities of their learners, creating a more inclusive and open classroom culture.

[Click to register for your free LEO account](#)

[Click to go directly to the Translanguaging Content](#)

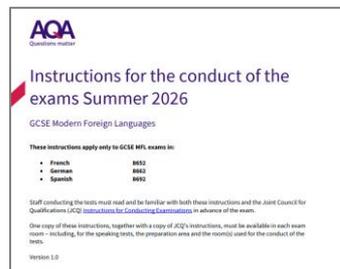


“In part 2 of the translanguaging content, we hear from Jason Anderson who encourages language teachers to reevaluate how we view and make use of the other languages in our classrooms, i.e. the languages spoken by our multilingual learners. There’s even an option to have the subtitles play in another language! 😊 A great way to keep your subject knowledge up to date!

## Updates from AQA and Edexcel about support for the new GCSE



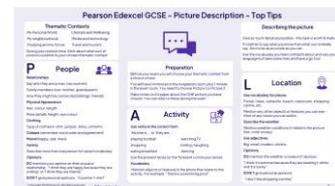
The AQA MFL Instructions for the Conduct of Exams (ICE) document for Summer 2026, is now available to [download from the AQA website](#).



You can also access on demand and live sessions on the new speaking exam through the [new AQA professional development portal](#) from Mon 8th Dec.



Edexcel have released a series of speaking support mats in [French](#), [Spanish](#) and [German](#)



On demand recordings of ‘unpacking the speaking’ and ‘conducting the speaking exam’ training. [GCSE Modern Languages \(2024 Specifications\) Training - YouTube](#)

Sign up for live CPD sessions <https://pdacademy.pearson.com/>

Student speaking support videos: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLJl5Fr3KefBuRzLDDoOixLqzB3DvmNFw>

Student support booklet on the speaking exam: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/GCSE/Modern-Languages/pearson-gcse-mfl-2024-student-speaking-support.pdf>

Speaking crib sheet for teachers to use in speaking exams: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/GCSE/French/2024/forms-and-administration/gcse-2024-fgs-speaking-crib-sheet.docx>

Information on the Sequencing Tool: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/news-policy/subject-updates/languages/digital-sequencing-tool-demo.html>

Video walking you through the tool: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/news-policy/subject-updates/languages/digital-sequencing-tool-demo.html>

ON DEMAND

**GCSE French: Preparing for 2026 (Paper 2) (on-demand)**

This recorded AQA training course will strengthen teacher confidence in supporting students in preparation for 2026 exams. This course is designed to help teachers familiarise themselves with delivering the new...

1 event | Reference: FREGZ01

LIVE

**GCSE Spanish: Preparing for 2026 (Paper 2)**

This AQA training course will strengthen teacher confidence in supporting students in preparation for 2026 exams. This course is designed to help teachers familiarise themselves with delivering the new specification...

6 events | Reference: SPAGZW1

LIVE

**GCSE German: Preparing for 2026 (Paper 2)**

This AQA training course will strengthen teacher confidence in supporting students in preparation for 2026 exams. This course is designed to help teachers familiarise themselves with delivering the new specification...

2 events | Reference: GERGZW1