

Second Language Course Challenge Guide for Students and Families

French and International Languages Course Challenge



Table of Contents

Important Information to Start your Second Language

Course Challenge.....	3
Second Language Course Challenge Steps.....	4
Are you ready to challenge the course?.....	5
Student Responsibilities.....	6
Course Challenge Process Expectations.....	7
Programs of Study.....	8
Diagram: Course Challenge Procedure.....	9
Alberta Education Course Challenge Rules.....	10
Course Challenge Breakdown of Parts 1 and 2 Exam Components.....	11
Course Challenge Breakdown of Part 3 Exam Components.....	12
Sample Rubric for Oral.....	13
Sample Rubric for Written.....	14
Second Language Course Challenge Checklist.....	15

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Important Information When Considering Taking a Second Language Course Challenge

The process outlined in this guide is for students challenging a 30-level second language course.

At Edmonton Catholic Schools, 30-level second language course challenge exams are offered once a year (in a centralized format) during February-March sessions. A student can challenge **one** language course only per session.

A student can request a 30-level language course challenge via their school designate.

Students acquire proficiency under various circumstances and at different rates. Second language course challenges will enable students to demonstrate skills, knowledge and attitudes already **mastered** in the target language. The challenge process is based on the belief that students who have **mastered** learning in a particular language are to have the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding and receive recognition for it.

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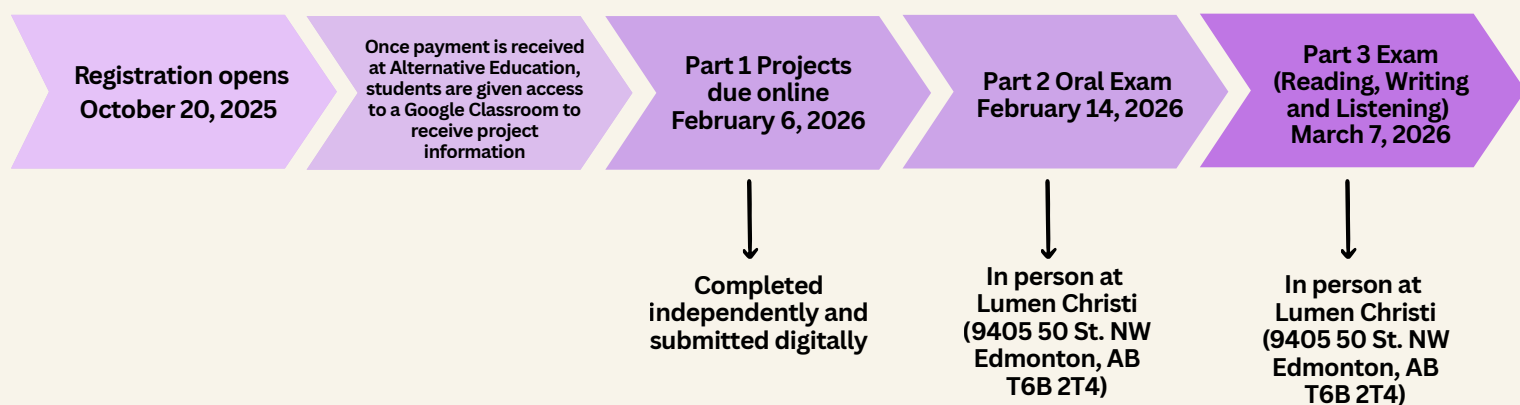
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Second Language Course Challenge Steps

- 1) The student meets with the school designate to learn more information about the course challenge. **Contact your school to learn who your school designate is.**
- 2) The student discusses the possibility of taking the course challenge with their families, as well as refers to the guide on **Page 5** to determine their proficiency and readiness for the course challenge.
- 3) The student formally indicates their intention to enter the Second Language Course Challenge process for a particular language by registering for the course challenge through Alternative Education. The student will then be provided with a link to a Google Classroom for project completion. ***The student does not receive the link for the Google Classroom until they have submitted payment to Alternative Education for the course challenge.**
- 4) Once they have joined the Google Classroom, the student begins preparing their two projects. This work is expected to be done independently and must be submitted by the deadline. Topics and assessment criteria vary from language to language, but generally resemble the sample provided in this guide.
- 5) After the **Part 1 Projects** submission deadline of February 6, 2026, the student will complete their **Part 2 oral exam with 2-4 examiners in person at Lumen Christi on February 14, 2026.**
- 6) The student completes the **Part 3 exam** (reading, listening and writing) **with an examiner in person at Lumen Christi on March 7, 2026.**



Are you ready for the Second Language Course Challenge?

Complete the flow chart to find out if you are ready to challenge the exam.



Travel and Tourism
Shopping Vacations Everyday Activities
Community Situational Topics Friends and Family
People Around You School Clothing

Listening

Can you follow the main points and details in a natural-speed conversation between native speakers?

Yes

No

Can you understand spoken instructions with multiple steps and no visual supports?

Yes

No

Can you comprehend unfamiliar vocabulary using context clues in a spoken exchange?

Yes

No

Speaking

Can you initiate, maintain and end a conversation on a familiar topic without relying on a script?

Yes

No

Can you adapt your language register (formal/informal) depending on the audience?

Yes

No

Can you justify your opinion or persuade someone in the target language?

Yes

No

Reading

Can you read and interpret authentic texts (news, articles, blogs, advertisements) without a dictionary for every word?

Yes

No

Can you identify the writer's tone, intent or bias in a text?

Yes

No

Can you extract detailed information from complex reading materials (i.e. travel schedules, event posters)?

Yes

No

Writing

Can you write a clear, organized text or 80+ words using varied sentence structures?

Yes

No

Can you adapt your writing style for different audiences (i.e. formal letter vs. informal email)?

Yes

No

Can you use precise vocabulary and cohesive devices to connect your ideas smoothly?

Yes

No

Are you 100% confident in your oral language skills?

Yes

No

Are you 100% confident in your listening language skills?

Yes

No

Are you 100% confident in your reading language skills?

Yes

No

Are you 100% confident in your writing language skills?

Yes

No

YES to most or all? You may be ready to challenge the course!
NO to several? You might need more practice before challenging.

Student Responsibilities for the Second Language Course Challenge

It is the student's responsibility to ensure they attend and complete the projects and exams at the specified times. Students are responsible for getting themselves to and from the designated location of the centralized languages course challenge exams (**Part 2 and Part 3 exams are in person at Lumen Christi and Part 1 projects are submitted digitally through Google Classroom**). Dates and times are predetermined by Alternative Education and current dates can be accessed on the ECSD Alternative Education Website: <https://alternativeeducation.ecsd.net/second-language-course-challenge>. Students should read the information for exams and designated times 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 on Powerschool.

Important Note | Preparing for the Course Challenge Exam

The course challenge **school designate does not assist the student in preparing for the project or exam**, other than to supply, by request, information about the exams (i.e. deadlines, registration, etc.). **The school designate 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 Program of Studies website or alternatively on **Page 8** of this document.

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.

Important Note | Immersion & Bilingual Program Requirements

Students should be aware that credits earned through the Second Language Course Challenge process do not count toward the requirements of an ECSD 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 | Academic Records

A student's record or transcript is not affected by registering for or participating in the Second Language Course Challenge process **until the student completes the Part 3 exam**. Withdrawals or absences for any reason prior to Part B carry no penalty or annotation of any kind. A final mark is issued for every student who completes the Part B Exam, regardless of the student's level of achievement. Final marks appear on a student's transcript approximately six weeks following the Part B Exam. Students receive a "P" (Pass) for the 10 and 20-level courses, with a final mark from the course challenge for the 30-level course.

Second Language Course Challenge Process Expectations

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

Part 1 Projects (both projects are due February 6, 2026)

2 Projects

- The student prepares two projects that are submitted through the designated Google Classroom by the deadline.
- *Students must be prepared to speak orally about their projects during the in-person interviews.
- Failure to complete and submit any components of the course challenge process as per the timeline **will** result in the termination of the course challenge process.
- The projects serve to show evidence of knowledge of the course outcomes.
- Teachers do not to give guidance, resources or tutoring for students to prepare for the projects. **Course challenge exams are completed independently by the student.**
- **To accurately assess student language proficiency, students must submit authentic, original work. Authenticity refers to the originality of student work (meaning it is not copied or generated by AI) and that any external sources used are properly cited. While AI tools can be valuable, over-reliance on them may compromise the integrity of ideas. Therefore, students must exercise critical thinking, creativity and independent effort to produce authentic work that reflects genuine understanding and insights. If there are indications of plagiarism, the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) will be notified.**

Part 2 Oral Exam (February 14, 2026)

- The student will complete this portion of the exam (Part 2) in person at Lumen Christi (9405 50 St. NW Edmonton, AB T6B 2T4). The student will be provided a designated time and will have 30 minutes to prepare themselves before meeting with examiners for the prepared oral exams. **During the exam, students will discuss their previously-submitted projects and engage in 2 prepared interviews and 2 spontaneous interviews. During these interviews, the student will demonstrate their knowledge, skills and attitudes of the language being assessed. The language skill area of oral production and interaction are assessed.**

Part 3 Written Exam (March 7, 2026)

- The student will complete the written exam (Part 3) in person at Lumen Christi (9405 50 St. NW Edmonton, AB T6B 2T4).
- This exam will assess listening comprehension, reading comprehension and written production.
- The student must bring their school ID, a black or blue pen, an HB pencil and an eraser. **There will not be dictionaries or verb conjugation resources available on site.** Electronic devices are NOT permitted (e.g., phone-based dictionaries, smart watches, cellphones, etc.).

***Teachers do not to give guidance, resources or tutoring for students to prepare for the Part 3 exam. Course challenges are completed independently by the student.**

Programs of Study

It is the student's responsibility to review the relevant Alberta Programs of Study online to understand the skills required to succeed in the Second Language Course Challenge process.

The programs of study for commonly challenged courses is available at the following links:

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>

- Candidates challenging French typically register at the 9Y level

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)

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)

Filipino 30:

https://edmontoncatholicschools.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/D0035/EQo_Jkhu0fJL0u9iDx5XEvwBQbKGps5Wu_necgucThwGAQ?e=JIUZNy

Polish 30: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MWvCr6eTdle-laYBpvE-Un2XBeN76vStBrAROf3aE4E/edit?usp=sharing>



Only languages taught in Edmonton Catholic Schools (with the exception of Polish) are offered for the Second Language Course Challenge. Languages that are not taught will not be offered.

Flow Chart: Course Challenge Procedure

Course Challenge Diagram Procedure for Schools

The student initiates Course Challenge process by speaking to their school designate.
See Alternative Education website for school designates:
<https://alternativeeducation.ecsd.net/second-language-course-challenge>



The student consults with parents and teacher with support from the Course Challenge Guide for Families



The student registers for the course challenge through Alternative Education. Registration opens October 20, 2025 and students have until February 6, 2026 to complete the projects. Once registered, students make a non-refundable \$70 payment for the exam. This payment needs to be received by Alternative Education before the student is provided with a link to the designated Google Classroom to access the project topics.



Part 1 Projects: The student submits the course challenge projects (two projects) digitally through the designated Google Classroom on February 6, 2026.



Part 2 Oral Exam: The student will meet 2-4 examiners in person at Lumen Christi Catholic Education Centre (9405 50 St. NW Edmonton, AB T6B 2T4) on February 14, 2026 to complete the oral component of the exam.



Part 3 Written Exam: Exam begins at 9:00am sharp on March 7, 2026 at Lumen Christi Catholic Education Centre (9405 50 St. NW Edmonton, AB T6B 2T4).



Exams are marked and results are posted on Powerschool.



Final marks are submitted to Alberta Education for credits.

Alberta Education Course Challenge Rules

Alberta Education makes additional rules for students who enroll in a course challenge:

- A student may not challenge a course if they are currently enrolled in the course.
- A student may attempt a course challenge for a particular course only **once**. If the student is unsuccessful, the student can enroll in the course previously challenged.
- A student may not challenge a previously completed course.
- 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 the Spanish 30-level course challenge exam, while not having previously completed any high school Spanish courses, the student will also receive credit for Spanish 10 and Spanish 20. If the student had successfully challenged Spanish 30 after completing only Spanish 10, credit would be granted for Spanish 20, but not again for Spanish 10.** There are many nuances to this policy, so students should talk to their school designate about their specific situation to determine the course(s) for which they may receive credit.
- A student who challenges a second language course and is unsuccessful in completion, may subsequently choose to take the language course, if the course is available.

Course Challenge

Breakdown of Parts 1 and Part 2 Exam Components

Sample 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 two projects, 4 oral interviews, a written composition as well as reading and listening comprehension assessments.**

PART 1 PROJECTS (15%)

For the projects, the student will complete two projects before the deadline and submit them through the designated Google Classroom on **February 6, 2026**. This occurs before the in-person course challenge exams.

PART 2 ORAL EXAM (25%)

The student will arrive at Lumen Christi (9405 50 St. NW Edmonton, AB T6B 2T4) to sign in 45 minutes before their exam interviews begin. After signing in, the student will have 30 minutes to prepare, by reviewing their projects and prepare what they will say for the 2 prepared interviews.

The examiners will ask the student questions related to their projects and engage in casual conversation. Students are expected to respond spontaneously to various questions.

Please see the rubric on **Page 13** for further descriptors.

PART 3 WRITTEN EXAM (Listening, Reading and Writing) (60%)

See next page for an exam breakdown of Part 3.

Course Challenge

Breakdown of Part 3 Exam Components

PART 3 WRITTEN EXAM (Reading, Listening and Writing) (60%)

For this exam, the student must bring their own school ID, black or blue pens, pencils and erasers. The student may bring a non-digital dictionary and a non-digital verb conjugation resource. Dictionaries will not be provided.

During the exam, students will:

- listen to audio samples and answer multiple choice questions to demonstrate listening comprehension
- read a variety of texts and answers multiple choice questions to demonstrate reading comprehension
- write 2 separate compositions in the target language, each 80-100 words. Each composition must demonstrate an understanding of the contexts by using appropriate sentence structure, grammar and vocabulary.

Reading Comprehension (20%)

The student will have reading comprehension texts and each text has comprehension questions to follow.

Listening Comprehension (20%)

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

Written Production (20%)

The student will complete written compositions based on topics from the program of studies.

Please see the attached rubrics on **pages 14** for further descriptors.

Each component of the exam must be completed in order to successfully complete the course challenge exam.

Sample Rubric for Oral

Example: French 30-3Y Course Challenge (rubrics and 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.

Sample Rubric for Written

Example: French 30-3Y Course Challenge (rubrics and 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.

Second Language Course Challenge Checklist

Fall 2025

Please see your school designate for the course challenge and registration process.

Please contact ECSD Alternative Education (alternativeeducationprograms@ecsd.net or 780-441-6080) if you have registered but have not received a confirmation prior to the exam.

Part 1 Project Checklist (due February 6, 2026)

- ☐ I have created **TWO PROJECTS**, each in the proper format.
Both projects are informative and visually appealing.
- ☐ I have sourced my information.
- ☐ I have submitted my digital projects **electronically** through the appropriate Google Classroom by the due date: **February 6, 2026**.

Part 2 Oral Exam Checklist (February 14, 2026)

In-person Oral Interviews at Lumen Christi (9405 50 St. NW)

- ☐ I am prepared for my in-person oral interviews, with a general idea of the topics (including my projects).
- ☐ I will arrive on time to register and have 30 minutes to prepare for my interviews. **If I arrive late, I will not be granted more time to prepare.**

Where: Lumen Christi Catholic Education Centre (9405 50 St. NW)

When: February 14, 2026 at my designated time provided closer to the date (arrive 45 minutes early)

Part 3 Exam : Reading, Listening and Written Components Checklist

In person at Lumen Christi (9405 50 St. NW)

I have:

- ☐ school ID (or government ID)
- ☐ black or blue pens
- ☐ an HB pencil
- ☐ an eraser
- ☐ a non-digital dictionary (if you would like to bring one)
- ☐ a non-digital verb conjugation book (if you would like to bring one)

Where: Lumen Christi Catholic Education Centre (9405 50 St. NW)

When: March 7, 2026 at 9:00am sharp (please arrive 15 minutes early)