

Oulu Capital
of Northern
Scandinavia



About A2 language selection and teaching

OULU



A2 language

- **The A2 language starts from grade 5. It is studied 2 hours/week in grades 5 and 6. Studies continue up to and including the end of grade 9.**
- **The optional languages offered by schools are agreed upon by districts comprising several schools.** More information about languages on offer in your area is available at the school your child attends.
- **The A2 selection area is mainly comprised of the lower comprehensive schools from which the pupils move on to the same upper comprehensive schools.**
- Language groups are formed **in cooperation with Oulu-based schools of other education providers as well. In 2017, Oulun Normaalikoulu school transitions to the same schedule in terms of age for choosing the A2 language,** meaning that in the future, groups can be formed in cooperation with them.
- **The A2 language is included in the optional subjects in grades 5 and 6, making the number of weekly school hours the same for all pupils.**
- **This means that a pupil opting for an A2 language does not select other optional lower comprehensive subjects. However, those studying A2 Swedish may select 2 weekly hours of optional subjects for grade 6.** (The option is also presented in the chart in slide 7.)

A2 language studies in upper comprehensive

- In **grade 7, the A2 language is studied 2 hours/week**. The studies increase the pupil's school hours/week by 2 hours.
- **As of autumn 2018, the new curriculum states that the A2 language is studied for 3 hours in grades 8 and 9.** In these grades, two of the A2 language hours are included in optional studies, while 1 hour is studied as a lesson hour exceeding the total number of hours/week for the grade.
- **According to the curriculum, those studying an A2 language are thus able to select 4 weekly hours of other optional subjects per year in grade 8, and 2 hours in grade 9.**

This is also presented in the chart in slide 4.

- More information about all selections at the comprehensive level can be found [here](#).



About A2 Swedish in upper comprehensive

- In grade 7 in upper comprehensive school, both A2 language hours exceed the total number of school hours for the grade, meaning that those studying A2 Swedish only exceed the total number of hours by 1 hour, since B1 Swedish is studied one hour/week in grade 7
 - cf. other A2 languages, which exceed the total number of hours for grade 7 by 2 hours/week per year
 - In grade 8, B1 Swedish is studied 2 hours/week per year, meaning that two out of the three hours of A2 Swedish are from the B1 quota. The third hour of A2 Swedish causes the number of lesson hours to be exceeded by one hour.
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- In grade 9, B1 Swedish is studied 1 hour/week per year, meaning that two of the A2 Swedish hours (3 hours/week per year) come from optional subjects, and one is replaced by an hour of B1 Swedish.

Selection of specialised class and A2 language studies

- In grade 2, pupils may apply to [specialised classes](#) starting from grade 3, specialising in arts, sports, or music. The tests for specialised classes are held annually in February.
- The distribution of lesson hours in specialised classes and their effect on A2 studies is still to be approved. This information will be updated following approval.
- At the moment, it is known that the majority or all A2 hours cause the confirmed number of lesson hours to be exceeded in both lower and upper comprehensive.

A2 language studies and transportation

- **School transportation matters related to language studies follow the general principles regarding school transportation in Oulu.**
- **Those studying a second foreign language must be guaranteed safe transition from one location to another to attend A2 language lessons.**
- Safety aspects also apply to transition from home to another school (first lessons of the day) and/or home from another school (last lessons in the afternoon).
- In case the transition is not safe, the pupil may be compensated for transportation by bus as a primary means of transportation to attend lessons in a second foreign language.



Distance teaching

- **According to the curriculum and the City of Oulu language programme, teaching in a second foreign language may also be provided as distance teaching.**
- Teaching utilising long-distance connections promotes equal opportunities for pupils to participate in varied, high-quality comprehensive education regardless of the size or location of school.
- **Distance teaching arrangements at comprehensive school level are described in chapter 5 in the curriculum entering into force on 1st Aug 2016 ([national](#) and local documentation).**



Commitment to A2 language selection

- **The optional A language is optional until the selection decision is final. From that point on, commitment to the choice of language may be expected throughout comprehensive school (Finnish National Board of Education guideline)**
- In some cases, discontinuation of the studies may have to be considered. In such cases, **the Finnish National Board of Education and the City of Oulu guidelines** are followed :
 - After having selected an A2 language, the pupil studies it until the end of comprehensive education. The pupil may be released from studying an optional language in case the studies place a considerable strain on him/her due to illness or other factors affecting the pupil's welfare. In such cases, guardians may request exemption from the studies due to a clearly stated reason in writing, after having first discussed the matter with the language teacher. The letter/e-mail is sent to the school's principal, the language teacher, and the pupil's homeroom teacher, and the matter is discussed with them. In addition, the matter is reviewed by the student welfare group, after which the principal makes a decision on the matter. Decisions regarding discontinuation of studies are only made in spring at the end of the school year, not during the school year, unless the situation is highly unusual.

Final grading of A2 studies

- Receiving a mark for completed studies in the final report card requires that the syllabus is completed with a passing grade. **However, the Finnish National Board of Education has ruled that if requested by the pupil's guardian, the numerical grade for an optional language may be omitted from the final report card.**
- In case the pupil's guardian requests in writing that the pupil's numerical grade for a language studied as an optional subject is omitted from the final report card, the grade is left out and replaced with "Pass" in the report card.
- NB! The proficiency levels used for English (=A1 in Oulu) are higher than those for other A languages.



The A2 selection process in 2016

- The pupil makes the selections regarding optional subjects starting from grade 5 in the spring term of grade 4.
- Instead of optional subjects, the pupil may select an optional language starting in grade 5 (A2 language). In case the pupil does not select an A2 language, he/she selects other optional subjects offered in the school.
- For a language group to be formed, a minimum of 12 pupils must select the language in question, either in their own school or in a cooperation area comprising several schools.
- Pupils and their guardians make the selections regarding optional subjects in weeks 14 to 15 (4th–15th April, 2016). The selection is made at [Wilma](#), both for A2 languages and for other optional subjects.
- The groups are formed as a cooperative process between schools as soon as possible once the selection period has ended. The pupils and their guardians are personally informed of the results of the selections.



Forming A2 groups

- **In grade 5, a language group is formed provided that at least 12 pupils have selected the language in question either in the school or in the language selection cooperation area.**
- **In forming the groups, the pupils' secondary options are taken into consideration.**
- **Foreign language teaching may also be provided as distance teaching.** The alternative of distance teaching is available in the schools that have decided to adopt distance teaching as a method of providing language studies. The option is mentioned in the selection form for such schools. The suggested distance groups are comprised of pupils from different districts, and the group is formed provided that practical considerations, such as schedules and teacher resources, are available to support the formation of the group.



THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN CHOOSING A LANGUAGE

- The ability to understand and speak several languages is a useful skill, and readiness to communicate with different people and cultures is vital in today's world. **Language skills really do open doors!**
- In language studies, the emphasis is on communication and interaction skills as well as cultural knowledge. Learning a language is an active, manifold and multichannel process, **and an early start in language learning makes it possible to acquire a genuine and deep understanding of a new language and culture.**
- **When choosing a language, it is vitally important that the child is interested and willing to learn a new language.**
- Besides perseverance, language studies require enthusiasm, willingness to learn and curiosity! The most important thing is that children are able and unafraid to express themselves in a foreign language. The attitude towards mistakes and errors is tolerant and lenient.
- Parents can help by helping with homework (asking words etc.) and by listening as the child reads passages aloud. The parents do not have to know the language the child is studying, but showing an interest is important.

LINKS

- [Kielivalinnat Oulussa](#) (Basic education)
- [Kielivalinnat Oulussa](#) (Upper secondary)
- [eLukio](#) (Distance learning)

- [Suomen kielenopettajien liiton kielivalintasivut](#)
- [Kielitivoli](#) – (information for teachers and guardians, games for pupils)
- [Kielitivolin paikalliset sivut](#) (Presentations on foreign languages)

- [Tietoa mm. OPOille](#) (Information for student counsellors)