

Three years of Bilingual Leaving Certificate at St. Kilian's

Vicky, Kristina and Oisin – three bilingual students with a completely different background – were interviewed by Frau Jäger, Head of German Department (2007-2010).

What Bilingual Leaving Certificate students of 2010 say:

Vicky

started learning German at St. Kilian's Secondary School in 2nd year

I chose Bilingual History and German Language & Literature because ...

I was encouraged by Ms O'Brien, the school guidance counsellor, and the German Department to take the German Language and Literature course. I had already chosen History as a subject and Ms O'Brien and my German teachers believed that I was capable of doing Bilingual History.

What I gained most from these classes:

When I began the German History course, I had difficulties with the historical language. With the Language & Literature course, it was the grammar that threw me. However, the standard of my spoken and written German has vastly benefitted from the course. My capacity to understand the language has also improved.

I would recommend the Bilingual Leaving Cert to ...

anyone who enjoys languages and has an interest in history.

My plans for the future:

Next year I hope to receive my first CAO choice: German and Philosophy in UCD. I really have enjoyed the Bilingual History and German Language & Literature course and wish to further improve my German. I hope to do an Erasmus year in Germany as part of my BA course also. Careerwise, who knows?

Kristina

grew up bilingually (English-German) and joined St. Kilian's in kindergarten

I chose Bilingual History and German Language & Literature because ...

it is a unique programme offered by this school, which allowed me to take on a new challenge. In these times it was important to me to have something to make me stand out when I apply for a job in the future.

What I gained most from these classes:

I gained a lot from these classes. Being taught history by two different teachers¹ was excellent as I plan to study History at University and the different perspectives gave me an opportunity to prepare for lectures. The German classes helped me to maintain a high standard of German as I was constantly exposed to the language at a very high level.

I would recommend the Bilingual Leaving Cert to ...

anyone who is interested in History, has a decent standard of German, is willing to work for the exams and wants something special to add to their CV.

My plans for the future:

I hope to study History and German and Philosophy in UCD. I am positive that having done the Bilingual Leaving Cert will be of great advantage to me. I hope to go on and become either a teacher or a journalist. Who knows. Maybe I'll end up teaching the Bilingual History course to a new generation of students in the future.

¹ World History is taught through German by a German History teacher, whereas Irish History is taught through English by an Irish History teacher

Oisin

came to St. Kilian's Secondary School in first year with some German background

I chose Bilingual History and German Language & Literature because ...

I have always had an interest in German and the idea of a Leaving Cert that was different from the rest of the country, greatly appealed to me. Strangely, before I started this course, History was one of my least favourite subjects; now it's one of my favourite!

What I gained most from these classes:

I definitely improved my German language skills. Studying History through German definitely enriched my vocabulary. Now I am able to write a full German essay just like in English. It also helped me pass the Sprachdiplom II on level C1 (which is the 2nd highest level within the European Framework of languages) with ease. With this Leaving Cert, I have something different. Not only does it look good in Ireland, but it gains me access to German universities, too. It has definitely broadened my options for the future. Also, with the ever closer ties between countries in Europe, being multi-lingual is certainly an advantage.

I would recommend the Bilingual Leaving Cert to ...

any students who are relatively competent in German. Do not be put off by Junior Cert History – it is a completely different approach. If you have the chance, I would recommend going to Germany for a few months in Transition Year. The German you will learn in this time will act as an invaluable aid when trying to get through your course if you are unsure about being able to do it, anything is possible with some work and commitment.

My plans for the future:

I am planning on studying Law with German Law in Trinity College. With this course I will be able to do an Erasmus year. Once I have this unique dual-degree my options will be endless! I haven't decided yet if I will stay in Ireland or I will go to Germany. I could even work in between the two countries. With French as a Leaving Cert subject, too, the EU would offer me great job opportunities.