

## **COURSES IN SERBIAN LANGUAGE**

- New programme for learning Serbian as a non-native or second language
- Appropriate for young people aged 12 to 18
- Accredited by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia
- Composite, broad-based and modern programme
- Programme created for and relevant to young people

### **WHY LEARN SERBIAN?**

Learning a language is a long process because language is a living thing and always changing with the times. No community exists without language, it is what makes us unique and different from others – it is the way in which we give names to our internal and external worlds. It reflects our thoughts, opinions and experiences. We use it to express our needs, to establish our presence and belonging to the world – to our family, friends, people at work, neighbours, and to strangers.

It is always useful to speak other languages. There is even a certain power to be had from a good knowledge of other languages, especially in today's climate. The more rare languages, the ones which like Serbian are not so well known, are particularly prized. At the same time, Serbian is one of the more widely spoken languages in south-eastern Europe. With a knowledge of Serbian, you can understand Bosnian and Croatian perfectly, even Bulgarian; it also opens doors on other Slavonic languages like Russian, Czech, Macedonian and Slovene.

Language, however, loses some of its strength when used infrequently. The Serbian which we teach our children at home, whether the language of both parents or just one, our children cannot maintain it alone. We need "assistants" for them to sustain and develop their Serbian. Parents and the immediate family are the first to teach our children the language of their family. But, when living abroad, this natural process of acquiring and enriching the language faces problems. It takes much more effort and good will to preserve and support the language used at home in an environment dominated by the language of the wider community in which the child is living. Therefore, it is important that the teachers entrusted with this task are reliable and trained and the programme they follow is relevant to the children's interests and linguistic level.

## **FOUNDERS OF THE NEW PROGRAMME**

The Round Table, which offers a forum for representatives from all associations of the Serbian diaspora in Great Britain, facilitates and supports collaboration in the diaspora community. The Working Group of the Round Table for the Serbian Language was established in 2011 to promote the learning and teaching of Serbian in Great Britain, especially among the young. Their attempts to persuade the British authorities to reintroduce GCSE and A-Levels in Serbian did not meet with success because of the requirement that there be a large number of candidates. So, the Working Group began to offer courses in Serbian based on the current GCSE model for modern languages. The courses have not received official recognition in the British or Serbian school system.

With the aim to offer a course in Serbian which will be similar to GCSE, the Working Group decided to explore the possibility of co-operation with the Azbukum Centre for Serbian Language and Culture. Azbukum has been operating since 1995, promoting exclusively Serbian as a foreign or non-native language. Its methods and teaching materials are considered across the world as the best for learning Serbian. Importantly, Azbukum's programmes have been officially accredited by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia since 2017.

## **NEW PROGRAMME – the basics**

The Working Group and the Azbukum Centre for Serbian Language and Culture will initiate the new programme for learning Serbian for young people in the diaspora community in Great Britain.

The aim is to provide a systematic, attractive and proven programme for learning Serbian outside Serbia. The course is designed as a composite programme of weekend classes and access to Azbukum's latest online platform of interactive language study. The plan and programme of the new course has been created by a team of specialists in the Azbukum Centre and is accredited by the Serbian Ministry of Education.

On successful completion of the course, students receive a Confirmation of Attendance and can, if they wish, take a test to be awarded an official Certificate as proof of their level of knowledge of the Serbian language.

## **PROGRAMME STRUCTURE**

Classes will be held on Saturdays over three hours in groups of students on a similar linguistic level. They will be taken by teachers who have been trained in Azbukum's method for teaching Serbian. Students must take a preliminary test before the first class to assess their linguistic level and be assigned to the appropriate group.

At the beginning of the course students receive their learning materials for use in group activities (lessons, exercises, audio recordings). Besides these, they receive a password for accessing Azbukum's online platform and additional materials specifically prepared to follow the content of the group activities. Students may access the platform whenever they wish; as a rough guide they should spend 30 to 45 minutes each week doing various exercises in listening, reading, writing or working on other tasks, quizzes and games.

All learning materials are composed of attractive and carefully designed content with the expectations and interests of young people in mind. The topics, rhythm of work, types of exercise and games, whether in textbooks or online, are appropriate for the 13 to 18 age group.

The programme is designed to accommodate multiple linguistic levels. The new, composite programme is intended for levels A2, B1 and B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages which provides a standard scale for learning, teaching and assessing linguistic proficiency recognized across Europe and beyond. A2 is equivalent to the basic GCSE level, B1 to the higher GCSE level, while B2 is equivalent to A-Level standard in the British public exam system. The topics taught in the new programme are similar to topics offered in the GCSE schemes of teaching for modern languages: family, friends, everyday activities, education, health, sport, environment, ecology, new technology etc. There are also units available with episodes from Serbian history and culture. All topics are followed by texts in the Cyrillic and Latin alphabets, audio recordings, exercises for comprehension and developing vocabulary, grammatical explanations, games, quizzes and revision tests as an aid to learning.

Azbukum's team of experts is constantly improving and updating its programme making a huge contribution to the study of the Serbian language. Azbukum's course for Serbian is prepared for children and young people in Great Britain, based on the Centre's long experience in the field and accredited by Serbia's Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development. With Azbukum students have a secure, recognized and proven course of Serbian language using modern methods and teaching materials.

## **FOR COMPLETE BEGINNERS – We can accommodate them too!**

If someone is interested in the new programme but does not have prior knowledge or very little knowledge of the language, they may firstly register on Azbukum's online course for beginners' Serbian. There are two routes to achieving level A1 of the European Common Framework; a course for complete beginners (level A1.1) and a course for those with some minimal prior knowledge (level A1.2). Having achieved level A1, they can join the students on the regular programme at their weekend classes and have access to their online platform.

## **WORK PATTERNS**

Classes will be held in the period from the beginning/middle of September to the middle of June. Twenty five to thirty meetings at weekends for three hours of group work are planned, with another 30 to 45 minutes of individual work using the online platform each week. Work on the online platform can be undertaken when the student wants and has the free time available. All online material corresponds to the material and plan of work for weekend classes. Students have 30 "fields" to master at each level.

## **CLASS ATTENDANCE AND CONFIRMATION OF ATTENDANCE**

Every student is advised to attend as many weekend classes as possible and to regularly complete online homework. This is the only to success and progress in the language and to prepare for the final test. All students who attend 75% of weekend classes and complete 100% of the online programme will be ready to take the final tests and will receive a written Confirmation of Attendance awarded by the Azbukum Centre. Students who pass the final test will also receive a Certificate of Knowledge of the Serbian Language for the appropriate level. Both documents, the Confirmation and Certificate, are accredited and recognized qualifications. They can be used as official documents for registration at universities in Serbia, Great Britain and throughout the world. They can also be used as proof of knowledge of Serbian when applying for employment.

## **PROGRAMME PRESENTATION**

A presentation of the NEW PROGRAMME for parents is planned for the end of June. Interested parents are requested to contact the Azbukum Centre to reserve their places for an online/Skype presentation: [azb@azbukum.edu.rs](mailto:azb@azbukum.edu.rs)

The programme content and the manner of the online platform's operation will be presented. Your children are also welcome to attend the meeting.

A promotional video is being prepared alongside the online/Skype presentation which will be available to view from June on You Tube.