



ACADEMICS

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Eve Cable ✓ @BA '22

"Sitting on the arts steps in my pyjamas crying because I had just slept through my first ever University midterm! Luckily my Prof accepted my groveling email and let me retake the exam!"





There can be so much happening in your first weeks of school it can be easy to forget about the reason you're here—academics! This section has all the info you need, including how grading and exams work. Understanding Minerva can be a pain at first, so make sure to check out our page on Course Registration. Here you can find all the tips for success, from studying and the best library spots, to tutoring, advising, and mentoring info. Get started on building your academic calendar and checklist with this section.

Course Registration

REGISTERING FOR COURSES THROUGH MINERVA CAN FEEL LIKE A DAUNTING TASK AT FIRST BUT YOU'LL GET THE HANG OF IT QUICKLY! THIS SECTION WILL HELP YOU MAKE SENSE OF ALL THE LINKS, ACRONYMS, AND BOXES YOU WILL SEE WHEN REGISTERING FOR YOUR CLASSES.

F.A.Q.

Q: MINERVA CRASHED AND I WAS NOT ABLE TO REGISTER FOR THE CLASSES I WANTED. WHAT DO I DO?

This has happened to everyone at least once! Try first talking to an academic advisor about your options, you can find more about this on page 42. Many students will change their schedule in the first few weeks of the semester so make sure to check Minerva for open spaces to get a spot. It is also a good idea to reach out to the professor to see if they can get you into your desired class. You can also sign up on seataalert.ca/mcgill which will alert you via email or text about when a spot opens in the class.

Q: WHAT IS "ADD/DROP" ?

The add/drop period runs from the first day of class until September 13 (and until January 17 in the Winter semester). During this time, you can change your schedule as much as you like without worrying about penalties. The Add/Drop will give you the opportunity to explore different subjects and times to figure out your schedule and what works best for you. Instructors are not allowed to assign any graded work during this time and are not allowed to penalize students for missing grades or assignments during the add/drop. If your professor is not following these rules, you can email the VP Academic of your department/faculty or SSMU VP University Affairs (ua@ssmu.ca). You can check page 30 for more information on your academic rights.

Q: WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN IT SAYS A CLASS HAS A "WAITLIST"? HOW DO I GET ON ONE?

Not all courses will have a waitlist. If a course page on Minerva says "WL Rem" (Waitlist Remaining) column, and the number is greater than 0, then there is space on the waitlist. Students who are on the top of the waitlist will be sent an email allowing them to register for the course within the next 24 hours. If the student does not register in the allotted time, they will lose their place on the waitlist. During this period, spaces that are open are reserved for the next student on the waitlist. Even if they seem to be available, no one else is allowed to register. If you are sent an invitation to register, you should accept or reject it as soon as possible to be considerate of the other students on the waitlist. You can check your status on the waitlist by going to "View Student Schedule by Course Section" within Minerva's Registration Menu.

Q: WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN U0 AND U1?

If you come to McGill as a student with advanced standing (you have at least 24 existing course credits equal to McGill course credits), you will be in U1. This will generally apply to students who already have enough AP or IB credits, went to CEGEP, or have transferred from another university. You can find out about your status online on Minerva by searching for "Registration Eligibility." If you are in U1, it will say if you are a "UG Level Year 1 New." If you have no credits prior to arriving at McGill (or less than 24 course credits), this means you are a U0. As a U0, you will have to complete your faculty's Freshman year program of 30 introductory level credits.

Textbooks

TEXTBOOKS AND COURSE-PACKS ARE VITAL TO YOUR SUCCESS IN CLASS. HOWEVER, BOTH CAN GET EXPENSIVE AND AS A UNIVERSITY STUDENT, YOU MAY BE ON A BUDGET. BELOW ARE SOME WAYS TO SAVE MONEY ON TEXTBOOKS. BE AWARE THAT SOME TEXTBOOKS HAVE SINGLE USE ONLINE ACCESS CODES PREVENTING YOU FROM USING A SECOND-HAND BOOK FOR CLASS. THE MCGILL LIBRARY IS A GREAT WAY TO GET ACCESS TO COURSE-RELATED MATERIAL INCLUDING DIGITAL COURSE PACKS. COURSEPACKS WILL BE FREE AT NO ADDITIONAL COST TO THE STUDENT.

The most common places for students to buy textbooks are:

LE JAMES MCGILL BOOKSTORE

680 Sherbrooke Street West / Mac Campus - Centennial Centre

lejames.ca

LE JAMES has the biggest selection of textbooks and course materials. Many professors order books directly to both locations, making it the most convenient option. Students can visit the bookstore in person or order materials online, have them shipped or pick-up in-store.

To order course materials online: bit.ly/3Gn43jW

To sign up to the newsletter: bit.ly/3wRUW67

PARAGRAPH BOOKSTORE

2220 McGill College Avenue

paragraphbooks.com

Paragraphe bookstore is a great location to get many of the course materials you will need for the semester. They have shelves labeled with different course numbers and the books the professor wants you to get for the class. They offer textbooks, books, and course packs. They will also often order in books for students if they are not available in-store already.

WORD (THE)

469 Milton Street

wordbookstore.ca

Word is a small independent book store that offers secondhand books focused on literature, philosophy, political science, and poetry. Most of the books offered are affordable so make sure to check out this spot, which is conveniently located in Milton-Parc. They also offer textbooks.

TIPS TO SAVE MONEY



RENT/BUY YOUR TEXTBOOKS FROM AMAZON.

They will sometimes be cheaper than LE JAMES. Students who have a valid .edu email address can join Amazon Prime Student, which has additional deals.

BUY AN EARLIER EDITION.

Once a newer version of a textbook is released, the older ones get a lot cheaper. Make sure to ask your professor if it is okay, since older editions may no longer have up-to-date information!

BUY YOUR TEXTBOOKS SECONDHAND.

LE JAMES will occasionally have used copies and have copies in limited supply, so check McGill Facebook groups and used bookstores (like The Word on Milton). Check online for a free version if it is an older text.

LOOK FOR AN OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE (OER) ON THE TOPIC YOUR COURSE COVERS.

OERs are free, online, online and frequently peer-reviewed academic resources. Check out openstax.org, bccampus.ca, the McGill library, or the SSMU OER webpage (bit.ly/3aY4rJK) to check if there is an OER for your course!

ASK YOUR PROFESSOR FOR HELP

It is a good idea to ask your professors to scan relevant readings or textbook passages and upload them to MyCourses. This might not always be possible, but some professors are more than willing to make all relevant information available online.

SHARE A TEXTBOOK

If you have a study buddy who is taking the same course as you, consider splitting the cost of a textbook. If you choose this option, think about whether it will be practical for you before purchasing.

Libraries



MONTREAL HAS MANY DIFFERENT TYPES OF PLACES TO GO STUDY, INCLUDING CAFES AND PARKS, BUT NOTHING COMPARES TO MCGILL'S LIBRARIES! THEY ARE PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT HOTSPOT FOR STUDENTS TO GATHER AND STUDY. THERE ARE SEVEN LIBRARIES IN THE DOWNTOWN CAMPUS, SO TAKE THE TIME TO FIND YOUR PERFECT STUDY SPACE IN THE FIRST FEW WEEKS OF THE SEMESTER. THE HOURS FOR EACH LIBRARY VARY, SO CHECK OUT MCGILL.CA/LIBRARY/BRANCHES TO MAKE SURE YOUR SPOT WILL BE OPEN WHEN YOU WANT TO STUDY!

MCLENNAN-REDPATH LIBRARY COMPLEX

3459 Rue McTavish

Best For: A great location to study as a group, with lots of different environments featuring varied seating arrangements and noise levels. Head down to the basement cafeteria for snacks and a study break.

BLACKADER-LAUTERMAN LIBRARY

Redpath Library, floor 3
3459 Rue McTavish

Best For: A semi-secret study space located up a back stairwell in McLennan, Blackader is the home of McGill's Architecture and Art collection. It also has a great view of campus.

SCHULICH LIBRARY OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

809 Rue Sherbrooke Ouest

Best For: Schulich Library is popular due to its 24/7 accessibility.

**** NOTE: THIS LIBRARY IS CLOSED FOR RENOVATIONS BUT IS EXPECTED TO REOPEN IN FALL 2022 ****

MARVIN DUCHOW MUSIC LIBRARY

Elizabeth Wirth Music Building, 3-5, entrance on 3rd floor
527 Rue Sherbrooke Ouest

Best For: This ultra-modern, sun-filled library is renowned for its easy access to the RVC Cafeteria, Vinh's Too Vietnamese Restaurant, and Starbucks. All students can come here, not just music students, and they have lots of resources available, including pianos, audio equipment, LPs and turntables, and audio editing software. Students should note that those in the faculty of Music are given priority in this space.

NAHUM GELBER LAW LIBRARY

3660 Rue Peel, floors 2-5

Best For: The Law Library is for those students who really need to get their homework done. The library takes their no-speaking and no-eating policy very seriously, so make sure to leave your friends and snacks at the door. This area is usually filled with law and other graduate students and this may inspire you to get your work done. The view of Mount Royal is unbeatable as well!

BIRKS READING ROOM

William and Henry Birks Building, floor 2
3520 Rue University

Best For: The Birks Reading Room has a classic atmosphere that is different from other libraries on campus. It is located in the upper level of the Birks building on Sherbrooke. This location is a blast from the past as it is a cozy reading room with many shelves full of antiquated books.

ISLAMIC STUDIES LIBRARY

3485 rue McTavish

Best For: The Islamic Studies Library is at the centre of campus and is a great location for readings between classes. Also, it is a beautiful place to get work done as it is the most aesthetically-pleasing study spot. The library works in conjunction with the Institute of Islamic Studies to highlight and illustrate the scale of Islamic civilization.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION CENTRE

Burnside Hall, floor 5
805 rue Sherbrooke Ouest

Best For: A little-known study room, the GIC has open workspaces for group study, private review, or any other kind of academic prep you need to know.

LIBRARY RESOURCES



The library website is a great place to access information and resources that can aid you in research, help you navigate the library system, and provide you with access to countless materials ranging across all subject areas. However, the massive number of links can be a bit overwhelming and some students aren't aware of everything that is available to them. Here are some of the key resources offered on the library website.

AUDIO-VISUAL RESOURCES | bit.ly/3NyGR4r

There are a number of ways to access free TV shows, movies, and music through the library. Listed here are a few highlights, but check out the library website for all of your options!

KANOPY | mcgill.kanopy.com

This video streaming service offers thousands of documentaries, training films, and movies (including theatrical releases) across a wide variety of subject areas.

CRITERION ON DEMAND | bit.ly/3wJyKVw

An extensive collection of movies and documentaries, including blockbuster hits.

NATIONAL FILM BOARD (NFB) | bit.ly/3NCMwX6

A variety of animation, documentaries, experimental films and alternative dramas.

DRAM ONLINE | dramonline.org/

A streaming platform with mainly American sound recordings from independent labels and archives.

WORKSHOPS | bit.ly/3MMGBi5

McGill's libraries offer many informative and skill-building workshops. Check out the website to see your options and when they are held. Student might be particularly interested in research skills workshops (bit.ly/3PKxxfw).

RESEARCH MATERIALS



The library has lots of resources to help you with any research that you are conducting at McGill.

SUBJECT GUIDES | libraryguides.mcgill.ca/

The library offers extensive guides for researching specific subjects, including information about different types of resources and where to access them. They are compiled by resource librarians with specific knowledge in the subject areas to ensure that the

information is accurate and helpful. To find a guide, search for your subject at the link above or browse through the list of options. You can also reach out to subject liaison librarians (bit.ly/3aLQleg), who are knowledgeable about specific areas and available research materials.

NEWSPAPERS | bit.ly/3MJ5JR4

McGill students have access to a number of newspapers across different time periods and locations.

DATABASES | bit.ly/3PBI6BP

McGill students have access to over 1500 databases across a wide array of subject areas. Databases can be a great place to find articles, book chapters, and other materials about a particular topic. Consult the above link and filter by subject area or use the keyword search to find one that works for you!

CITATION GUIDES | bit.ly/3PIQIf9

When submitting academic work, it is important to have thorough and accurate citations. This website provides tutorials on using citation managers (Zotero and Endnote) and guides to using different citation styles.

INTER-LIBRARY LOAN | bit.ly/38PWlgi

Want a book or other material that you can't find at the McGill library? McGill has a partnership with libraries worldwide, meaning that you can have materials sent in from other libraries. For more information on making a request, click the link above. Make sure to submit your request well before your assignment deadline as you may face delays in accessing materials, especially those from far-away libraries.

ARTICLE/CHAPTER SCAN | bit.ly/3MQgg2W

Do you need a digital copy of a material that the library only has in print? McGill students can request an article or chapter scan at the above link to be delivered to their McGill email address. Delivery time is typically 2 to 4 business days, but make sure to submit your request well ahead of your deadline in case of delays.

ROOM BOOKING | bit.ly/3PFDTwR

Library study rooms are a great place to hold a study or tutoring session, work on a group project, or ensure that your group has a quiet place to work during finals season. Rooms must be prebooked at the link above. Students can book study rooms for 2 hours at a time and up to 4 hours per week. Rooms can be booked up to 2 weeks in advance, so make sure to plan ahead!



MCGILL ASKS A LOT OF ITS STUDENTS ACADEMICALLY. ALTHOUGH YOUR FIRST SEMESTER MIGHT BE CHALLENGING, THERE ARE PLENTY OF WAYS TO MAKE SURE YOU STAY ON TRACK.

STUDY TIPS



It is their job to make sure you understand the content, so it can be really beneficial to approach them to get their help. It is great to establish a relationship with your professors in the long run as well.

★ UTILIZE A DAY PLANNER.

Use the calendar in the back of this book to help you keep track of your time, tasks, and events so you do not miss anything.

★ GO TO A STUDYING SKILLS WORKSHOP.

The Office for Students with Disabilities, Student Wellness Hub, and Campus Life & Engagement all offer these kinds of workshops throughout the year. Check out involvement.mcgill.ca to sign up for these workshops.

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★ TAKE A BREAK FROM THE LIBRARY.

You might benefit from taking a break from the library and trying a new setting, like a cafe or park.

★ DO NOT CRAM.

Everybody does it at least once, but make sure to spread out your studying over time so that you can retain information better and see the big picture.

★ TRY TO SLEEP, EAT WELL, AND STAY ACTIVE.

Taking care of yourself while you study can be hard, but it is vital for more focused studying and for your physical and mental health.

★ TALK TO YOUR PROFESSOR AND YOUR TA DURING OFFICE HOURS.

EXAMS



Exams can be tough at McGill, especially when it is your first time writing them at the university level. In order to alleviate the stress and confusion that comes around during Midterms and Finals season, there are a lot of resources available to support you.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: WHEN ARE MY EXAMS?

The tentative exam schedule is usually published around the fifth week of the semester. The final one will not come out until two weeks later. Make sure to wait for your final exam schedule to come out before you make any travel plans. McGill does not take travel as an excuse for missing an exam.

Q: WHAT DO I NEED TO BRING TO AN EXAM?

The most important thing to bring (besides yourself) is your student ID! You will need a valid student ID card in order to write your exam. Make sure to leave all your valuables at home and also do not forget to eat well and bring water for your exams.

Q: WHAT IS AN "EXAM ACCOMMODATION?"

Students who are registered with the Office for Students with Disabilities can request alternative exam accommodations. There is a seven day deadline to sign up for accommodations, so be sure to inform the OSD in advance. It is also important to let the OSD know if you would rather write your finals with the rest of your class. For more information on registering for exam accommodations, check out page 31 and 32.

Q: WHAT HAPPENS IF I DO NOT PASS MY EXAM?

If you receive a D, F, J or U on a final exam and are in satisfactory or probationary standing, you may be able to write a supplemental exam. Keep in mind that your original and supplemental grades will appear on your transcript and in your CGPA. Your supplemental exam will count for a large percentage of your final exam. Writing a supplemental exam costs \$35, and you can apply on Minerva. Some faculties will not allow supplemental exams (Agriculture, Environment Sciences, Management, Music, Engineering, etc).

Q: WHAT HAPPENS IF SOMETHING GOES TERRIBLY WRONG AND I CAN'T WRITE MY EXAM?

If you are not able to write an exam due to an illness, family death, or another serious reason, you can apply to defer your exam. If you are in the faculty of Arts and/or Science, first head to Minerva and fill out the deferral form (Student Menu > Student Records Menu > Deferred Exam Application). For all other faculties, contact your faculty's student affairs office.

After submitting a deferral request, you must present documentation, like a doctor's note, to your faculty's office as soon as possible. However, your first exam deferral in faculties besides Medicine and Denistry does not require documentation. Deferred exams are generally scheduled about a semester later. For more information on exam deferrals, visit bit.ly/3LGJQXg and bit.ly/3sP0WM4.

Q: WHAT IS AN "EXAM CONFLICT" AND HOW DO I HANDLE ONE?

You have an academic exam conflict if you have:

- ★ Two exams at the same time
- ★ Three exams in one day
- ★ Three consecutive exams in twenty-four hours
- ★ Four exams in two days
- ★ Five exams in three days

You can also request religious accommodation for an exam, such as if your exam conflicts with a religious holy day or you are unable to attend due to religious obligations. Travel arrangements do not qualify as a conflict.

Usually, McGill will let you know if you have an academic conflict. If you are not alerted, or if you have a religious conflict, you must fill out a Final Exam Conflict Form and submit it to Service Point. The deadline for requesting accommodation is four weeks before the exam period begins. You can find the form at mcgill.ca/exams/final-exam-conflict-form.

Grades



Your Grade Point Average (GPA) for each term, as well as your GPA for your whole academic career (CGPA), is listed on your unofficial transcript in Minerva (go to Student > Student Records Menu > View Unofficial Transcript).

Below is the basic grading scale for McGill. Grades that are required to pass a class differ between faculties, so always check in with your faculty first.

TERMS TO KNOW



CUMULATIVE GRADE POINT AVERAGE (CGPA)

This is your GPA for your entire degree at McGill.

PASS/FAIL OR SATISFACTORY/UNSATISFACTORY OPTION (S/U)

Opting to take a course Pass/Fail means a course will not count toward your GPA — you either pass or fail the course. There are strict rules for taking a pass/fail course (e.g. you can only do it for electives and can only do it for a certain number of courses), so it is wise to see an advisor before choosing to take one.

ACADEMIC PROBATION: When you have a GPA that is below 2.0, you are placed on academic probation. You will be reinstated once you raise it to 2.5. If you fall below a 1.5, you will be placed in Unsatisfactory Standing and must request readmission to your program. Contact your advisor if you are in this situation.

K: On a transcript, this means "incomplete" because your deadline to submit work in a course was extended. If you are struggling to complete your course work, especially due to medical issues, and think you need some extra time, contact your academic advisor or a Student Advocacy group.

L: On a transcript, this means that you deferred a final exam. An "L" will stay on your transcript until you take the deferred exam and receive the grade for that course.

W: On a transcript, this means that you withdrew from a course with the permission of your instructor and the University.

GRADES	GRADES	NUMERICAL SCALE
	POINTS	
A	4.0	85-100
A-	3.7	80-84
B+	3.3	75-79
B	3.0	70-74
B-	2.7	65-69
C+	2.3	60-64
C	2.0	55-59
D	1.0	50-54 — CONDITIONAL PASS
F(Fail)	0	0-49 — FAILURE

SATISFACTORY PASS

Needed for courses that fulfill program requirements

CONDITIONAL PASS

A "D" grade, which can be cleared either through passing a supplemental exam or retaking the course

FAIL

Your grade point average is a 0.

Academic Advising

bit.ly/3yUI0iP

ADVISORS HELP YOU NAVIGATE THE COMPLEX ADMINISTRATIVE BUREAUCRACY THAT IS MCGILL AND HELP PLAN YOUR DEGREE! THEY ARE HERE TO HELP INTEGRATE INTO CAMPUS LIFE, PLAN YOUR CLASS SCHEDULE, HELP YOU REGISTER FOR CLASSES, AND KEEP YOU UPDATED ON OPPORTUNITIES RELATED TO YOUR DEGREE. THERE IS USUALLY A RUSH TO SEE ADVISORS AT THE START OF EACH SEMESTER, SO PLAN ACCORDINGLY AND PREPARE FOR LINES THAT STRETCH INTO THE HALLWAY. THERE ARE ALSO PEER ADVISORS, WHO ARE TRAINED TO HELP YOU WITH ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC CONCERNS. MAKE SURE TO CHECK OUT THE ADVISOR DIRECTORY TO FIND THE ADVISOR WHO CAN BEST HELP YOU!

A good tip is to visit an advisor at least once a year to ensure you are on the right track. Many students are confused or make mistakes about their course requirements and checking in can help you avoid graduating later than planned.

WHO DOES THE ADVISING

FACULTY ADVISORS

WHERE?

Find them in the Student Affairs Office of each faculty.

WHAT?

- ★ Advise you on general issues related to your faculty.
- ★ Offer guidance on choosing majors and minors and planning credit loads.
- ★ Assist you in transferring faculties and understanding program rules.
- ★ Help manage your academics during times of difficulty.

DEPARTMENTAL ADVISORS

WHERE?

Go to your department website to see which professor is the advisor for your program (Major, Minor, Honours, Joint Honours, etc) and their office hours. It is recommended that you send an email about your goals first so that they can prepare once you meet.

WHAT?

- ★ Advise you on the issues related to your specific program.
- ★ Assist with course approvals, ensure you are reaching departmental graduation requirements, and evaluate course equivalency requests.
- ★ Provide information on specific courses, internships, and scholarships.
Offer support and referrals during academic or personal difficulty.

PROFESSORS

WHO?

Although not official advisors, they can help with your specific field of interest.

WHAT?

- ★ Advise you about the latest research trends and recommend readings.
- ★ Share and brainstorm potential essay ideas or research topics.
- ★ Discuss potential research opportunities.
Write recommendation letters.



Tutoring

Your first year at McGill comes with adjusting to new study strategies, tactics, and schedules. Classes at McGill are known to be hard so it is normal to seek out extra assistance. Try contacting one of the resources listed below for advice on new habits and for help on difficult subjects. Working with a tutor can help you prep without having to cram and will also alleviate stress.

You should also reach out to your departmental association for free tutoring, but do it sooner than later.

MCGILL TUTORIAL SERVICE

mcgill.ca/tutoring/

Tutoring.service@mcgill.ca

McGill's Tutorial Service offers academic assistance from qualified and vetted students. It costs eighteen dollars an hour, but first-year students get the first hour free! If you are an Indigenous student, a Varsity athlete, a Mastercard Scholar, registered with the OSD, or on academic probation, the cost of a tutor is subsidized and sometimes even free. All students that are enrolled at McGill are eligible to request a tutor, register for a webinar, or benefit from their self-directed learning materials. To request a tutor, fill out the form at: bit.ly/3LGXrxH.

MCGILL WRITING CENTRE

mcgill.ca/mwc/

mwctutorial@mcgill.ca

The McGill Writing Centre offers up to seven hours of support per semester and will help you with any stage of the writing process. Note that they do not proofread your essays, but can actively help you to build the writing skills needed for the future. The Centre books fast during the paper-writing season, so make sure to get a space early and register for an appointment here: bit.ly/3MHpwX3.

ENGINEERING PEER TUTORING

bit.ly/3wlASDI

Epts@mcgillus.ca

Sponsored by the Engineering Undergraduate Society (EUS) and McGill Engineering Student Service (MESC), EPTS is a free tutoring service for undergraduate Engineering students. This service has upper-level undergraduate tutors from all departments available for weekly drop-ins to help U0/U1 students with many of their courses. EPTS tutors also offer free midterm and final review sessions for U0, U1, and upper year (300+) level courses.

THE SCIENCE UNDERGRADUATE SOCIETY (SUS)'S PEER TUTORING SERVICE

bit.ly/38PkSr4

Suspeertutors@gmail.com

The SUS's service provides 100% free one-on-one tutoring, group tutorials, help desks, and review sessions from qualified student volunteers.

ARTS UNDERGRADUATE SOCIETY (AUS) ESSAY CENTRE

bit.ly/3IU7oOt

Aus.essaycentre@gmail.com

If you are struggling with an essay and need help with grammar, citations, structure or simply want someone to proofread your work, the Essay Centre tutors can provide free peer editing services when you bring a physical copy of your essay. They are very helpful when it comes to figuring out citation rules and will provide editing assistance in either French or English. Visit their website to meet the tutors and to figure out which is your best option to get help.

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