

Languages: WORK

Why studying languages will get you places ...

A great way to start getting to know and understanding other people more is by learning their language. You will learn more about their customs, history, the food they like to eat and the music they enjoy listening to. Talking to people in their own language makes them feel good and you won't have to depend on their speaking English. It is becoming much more of an everyday thing for people to travel and work abroad, and at home we see a wide range of languages and cultures around us. A recent survey of London schools found that students spoke about 300 different languages between them!

... if you go to Spain and you suddenly start speaking reasonable Spanish you can see the look of surprise and actually they're genuinely pleased – so I think that that alone, just the reaction that you get from people in these countries is worth it.

Gary Lineker (Sports presenter). Learnt Spanish while playing football for Barcelona

All you have to do is walk around any city in this country and you'll find pockets of other cultures. It's great!

Race Davies (actress)

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LANGUAGES GIVE YOU FREEDOM

Whether you are watching a TV programme, wanting to know if it will rain on your holiday, or getting to know more about someone you have just met, being able to do these things in another language is fun and gives you more freedom. The better you get, the more you will be able to do with your languages, whether it's enjoying a film in the language, buying or selling something, or winning an argument!

I can't stand being fenced in, I like to be free. I have got ... and will get so much more benefit from learning a language.

Lissa Clarke (retired bus conductor)



The guy was saying absolutely no, and the driver was insisting, and the man was saying if he takes one step further I will shoot him. Now, it took the translation for me to realise I was in grave danger and then to make a hasty get-away. If I'd known what was being said and how it was being said ... I would have gone a little earlier.

Sir Trevor McDonald
(relating a story of getting into danger in Lebanon, unable to speak the language)



YOU'LL LEARN MORE THAN JUST A LANGUAGE

When you learn a language you develop skills that are useful in lots of different situations, both at work and in your relationships with other people. Learning a language helps you with skills like:

- arguing and explaining your opinions;
- convincing people that your ideas are worth hearing;
- understanding someone else's point of view.

Being able to do these things will help you to become more confident.



LANGUAGES MIX WELL

Languages go really well with a wide range of subjects. Whether you are choosing your GCSE options, AS/A levels or a university degree course, you will find that a language will come in useful. Whatever career you are interested in, there are increasing opportunities to use your languages. For example, it will be easier to work with people from other countries, or in dealing with members of the public who speak other languages.

SEE THE WORLD!

Travel abroad can be much more interesting when you can speak the language of the country you are visiting. You will learn more about the countries where the language is spoken so you will have more idea of what there is to see and do. Even something simple like having a meal will be easier as you will understand the menu and be able to make good choices about what you might like. You might have the opportunity to go on an exchange or study visit where you will really be able to practise and have fun at the same time. If you continue with your languages through to university, there are lots of opportunities to study abroad.

I think a lot of people that can't retain languages naturally would be surprised at how well they do when they're in the environment of the language ... Listening to people speak the language and the rhythm and the colour of the language give you an awful lot of information about the meaning.

Toyah Wilcox (presenter and actress)



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I was quite a shy person when I first started working here. I was very shy in fact, I'd hardly even speak to people in English. It's through perhaps just working here, but definitely through the German. And it's also built up my confidence because I have something that perhaps not everybody has – the ability to speak a foreign language.

Matthew Cutmore, BMW apprentice

LANGUAGES CAN HELP YOU GET A JOB

Languages can be helpful in a wide range of jobs like organising international events, working on multilingual websites, in market research, as a bilingual secretary, in sales, tourism, as well as in jobs more commonly associated with languages like teaching, translation and interpreting. Some employers reward people with language skills, recognising that they are useful in a wide range of jobs.

People who speak other languages are very popular with employers. Here are some reasons why:

- 75% of the world's population do not speak English;
- 60% of British trade is with non-English speaking countries;
- 65% of people in Britain speak only their own language – every other country in Europe has a wider knowledge of languages.

There is a great demand for language teachers and translators, but people with languages can work in almost any job where contact with people from other countries might be necessary. Here are some examples:

- finance, e.g. working for a company that does a lot of business abroad;
- language services, e.g. translation, interpreting or advising companies of cultural differences they need to take into account when meeting customers from another country;
- pharmaceuticals, e.g. sales and marketing;
- technology, e.g. helping people to solve technical problems on a helpdesk, technical sales to overseas markets;
- new media, e.g. working on multilingual versions of websites for different audiences;
- engineering, e.g. managing projects in other countries;
- social and civil services, e.g. providing interpreting facilities and language support at local health centres;
- customer support services, e.g. working in any type of business helping customers who might be in different parts of the world;
- education, e.g. teaching in any sector from primary to university, developing effective teaching methods;
- transport and distribution, e.g. a lorry driver responsible for delivering goods to other countries;
- travel and tourism, e.g. working for a holiday company as a tour guide or even researching new holiday packages to offer;
- fast-moving consumer goods, e.g. marketing brands sold in the high streets of countries around the world.

WHICH LANGUAGES SHOULD I STUDY?

This can really depend on what you want to do with your languages so it is best to think carefully about why you want to learn a language – what type of work are you looking for, do you enjoy learning a particular language? For Engineering, French and German are very important languages because of the number of engineering businesses from those countries. In International Diplomacy, languages like Mandarin (Chinese) and Arabic are of great value. Community languages like Urdu, Bengali, Gujarati and Turkish are important for local authorities and other Government bodies, for instance organisations that work with refugees. Your local Citizens Advice Bureau or health centre will need access to staff who can speak languages like these fluently.

Try this activity

Go to the BLIS Jobs website: www.blis.org.uk/jobs. Follow the 'Search' link. Select the language you are interested in and try a national or regional search to get an idea of the variety of jobs available. If the search facility does not list the language you are interested in, try the Reed database at www.reed.co.uk and type the language into the keyword box and then search. You should see that the types of jobs are really varied.



I think the benefits that come from being in meetings, understanding things, being able to write e-mails, just the ease of communication, it breaks down barriers. It's unbelievable how that can help the business.

Daniel Lay, BMW apprentice

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

There are lots of websites which will help you to decide what you want to do when you finish studying. You should also talk to your school or college careers officer about the options and have a look at the careers resources available.



Deciding what to do next?

Aim Higher

www.dfes.gov.uk/aimhigher

If you're between 14 and 16 then this site will help you to decide what options to take in Year 9 and what to do after Year 11.

After 16 – What's New?

www.after16.org.uk

This website is designed to give advice to 16-year-olds about deciding what to do next – it focuses on the needs of young disabled people.

S-cool

www.s-cool.co.uk

This website gives you lots of information about choosing subjects whether you're 14, 16 or thinking about university. It also gives you information about some of the things you can do with the subjects you choose, or if you've got a particular career in mind, you can find out more about it.

Which Way Now?

www.dfes.gov.uk/whichwaynow

This website gives you all kinds of advice about what options to choose in Year 9. It includes information about specific subjects including Languages.

Considering university?

Aim Higher – BBC website

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/aimhigher

If you have doubts about going to university, take a look at some of the stories on this website from people who thought the same – you may be surprised!

Languages for Life

www.les.aston.ac.uk/langlife

This website gives profiles of students studying at the University of Aston about why they are studying Languages, how they felt about spending time living abroad, as well as examples of people who are using languages in their jobs.

Studying Languages at University

The Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies and CILT have produced a leaflet which explains the range of courses and types of subjects you can study with languages at university. For a free copy, contact CILT on 020 7379 5110, e-mail careers@cilt.org.uk or visit the CILT website at www.cilt.org.uk/he/factsheets.htm.

The world of work

Connexions Direct website

www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u

The Connexions Direct website includes a 'Jobs4u' section. You enter your favourite subjects including Languages and get an idea of the kind of jobs that might be open to you.

CILT, the National Centre for Languages

CILT has published a factsheet 'A student's guide to careers using languages'. To obtain a copy call 020 7379 5110 or e-mail careers@cilt.org.uk. If you want to know about the sorts of jobs you might do after studying Languages, then you can also visit www.cilt.org.uk/careers.

The Work Train

www.worktrain.gov.uk

A national jobs and learning website.



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