

Ten good reasons why you should learn a foreign language

1) To Increase Global Understanding

"A different language is a different vision of life"

-Federico Fellini, Italian Film Director

Learning another language gives the learner the ability to step inside the mind and context of that other culture. Without the ability to communicate and understand a culture on its own terms, true access to that culture is barred.

2) To Improve Employment Potential

"The English language alone is probably sufficient if all we need to do is buy our products abroad, if we need to purchase foreign goods and services. But when it comes to selling a product abroad, you have to understand the psychology and the belief structure of your client."

-Dr. Dan Davidson, President of the American Councils on International Education

If businesses are to effectively compete in a global economy, they must learn to deal with other cultures on their own terms. Companies that plan to do business abroad therefore have a dire need for bilingual or multilingual employees.

3) To Increase Native Language Ability

"Those who know nothing of foreign languages, knows nothing of their own"

-Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Research shows that knowledge of other languages boosts students' understanding of languages in general and enables students to use their native language more effectively. Foreign language learners have stronger vocabulary skills in English, a better understanding of the language, and improved literacy in general.

4) To Sharpen Cognitive and Life Skills

"We have strong evidence today that studying a foreign language has a ripple effect, helping to improve student performance in other subjects."

-Richard Riley, U.S. Secretary of Education under Bill Clinton

Because learning a language involves a variety of learning skills, studying a foreign language can enhance one's ability to learn and function in several other areas. Children who have studied a language at the elementary level score higher on tests in reading, language arts, and math. People who have learned foreign languages

show greater cognitive development in areas such as mental flexibility, creativity, and higher order thinking skills, such as problem-solving.

5) To Improve Chances of Entry Into College Or Graduate School

Today, most colleges and universities require a minimum of two years of high school foreign language instruction for admission. And once enrolled in an undergraduate program, students are likely to find that their college or university prescribes foreign language courses as requirement for the degree. For those planning to continue on to graduate study in most any field, knowledge of a second and sometimes even a third language is often a prerequisite for admission.

6) To Appreciate International Literature, Music, and Film

"The many great gardens of the world, of literature and poetry, of painting and music, of religion and architecture, all make the point as clear as possible: The soul cannot thrive in the absence of a garden. If you don't want paradise, you are not human; and if you are not human, you don't have a soul."

-Thomas Moore, Irish poet, satirist, and composer

Most of the world's literary and artistic works have been written in languages other than English. A translation of a text can never be fully true to the intent, beauty, style, and uniqueness of its original. To be able to fully appreciate literature, theater, music, and film in other languages, one must be able to access them in their original form.

7) To Make Travel More Feasible and Enjoyable

Some benefits include comprehending maps and signs, ordering properly in restaurants, being able to fully interact with locals, and asking for directions when you need to.

8) To Expand Study Abroad Options

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9) **To Increase Understanding Of Oneself and One's Own Culture**

"As the traveler who has once been from home is wiser than he who has never left his own doorstep, so a knowledge of one other culture should sharpen our ability to scrutinize more steadily, to appreciate more lovingly, our own."

-Margaret Mead, American anthropologist

Knowing another language and culture affords you the unique opportunity of seeing yourself and your own culture from an outside perspective.

10) **To Make Lifelong Friends**

"The most important trip you may take in life is meeting people halfway."

-Henry Boye

Source: Vistawide World Languages & Cultures
www.vistawide.com