

Why should we study a foreign language?

Did you know?



94%	of the people in the world do not speak English as their first language.
75%	of the people in the world do not speak any English at all.
60%	of British trade is with non-English speaking countries.
1 in 5	British companies say they are losing business because they do not have employees who can speak other languages.
the 5	business languages most in demand in the UK (as shown by recent surveys)) are, in this order: French, German, Spanish, Italian and Dutch.
between 8% and 20%	more is earned by people who use a foreign language in their job.
5	European countries have French as an official language.
Over 300	languages are spoken in London alone.

And now let's examine a few benefits:

CREATIVITY "Plurilingualism enhances creativity." (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2002:14)

CRITICAL THINKING "International and foreign language education is a break with the focus on our own society in order to find new perspectives which allow us to be critical of our assumptions." (Byram, 2002:47)

CULTURE "Part of the reason for having second or foreign languages in the curriculum is the signal which this provision sends regarding the room which a school very visibly makes for the study of other cultures." (Williams, 2001:47)

EDUCATION "Learners' heightened awareness, not only of other languages, cultures and peoples but also of themselves as cultural beings is a major contribution of language teaching to their education." (Byram, 1997:57)

ENGLISH MOTHER TONGUE "Learning a new language improves the use of English. Learning another language gives the learner valuable insights into the way the mother tongue works." (The Nuffield Languages Inquiry, 2000:31)





GLOBAL ENGLISH “One of the cultural shocks of September 11 is, overwhelmingly that English is simply not enough. We cannot understand the world in English, much less search out intelligence, build ever larger coalitions of friends, and heal some of the long-standing wounds of the past. We need to be aware as never before of foreign languages and of the ways in which languages identify and represent their cultures.” (Footitt, 2001)

HEALTH “Learning languages boosts brain power.” (BBC, 2004)

ICT “The rapid expansion of opportunities for e-business within a shrinking world is driving a need for languages ability. Customer expectations and the high stakes of winning or losing business require competence to deal in a customer’s language.” (Scottish Executive Ministerial Action Group on Languages, 2000:7)

IMMERSION “Immersing yourself in the culture is critical to making it work abroad.” (Gary Lineker)

KEY SKILLS “Communication across cultures will remain a key skill – the ability to communicate across cultures will be essential to national well-being and it is in the UK’s interests to wake up to the value of languages in cementing international relations.” (The Nuffield Languages Inquiry, 2000:17)

LIFELONG LEARNING “Languages are a lifelong skill – to be used in business and for pleasure, to open up avenues of communication and exploration, and to promote, encourage and instil a broader cultural understanding.” (DfES, 2002:5)

PROBLEM SOLVING “Learning another language develops your problem-solving skills.” (Language Undergraduate)

VALUES “Language learning has the potential for offering alternatives to inward-looking insularity, for addressing a lack of preparedness to engage with the notion of otherness and for tackling negative stereotypes.” (Pachler, 2000:72)

WORK EXPERIENCE “The year abroad is valuable in broadening work experience, social contacts and employability. It enables students to develop not only their language and cultural skills, but also key life skills of self-reliance and resourcefulness.” (The Nuffield Languages Inquiry, 2000:56)

If you want to consult the “New Report: 700 reasons for Studying Languages” from The Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies, click on the following address:

<http://www.llas.ac.uk/700reasons/orderform.aspx>

Famous last words...

“ If I am selling to you I will speak English but if you are selling to me, dann müssen Sie Deutsch sprechen.”

Willi Brandt, former German Chancellor