

TALK THE TALK

A GUIDE TO MAXIMISING YOUR PROSPECTS
USING LANGUAGES



GO FURTHER WITH LANGUAGES

Learning a language is a long-term investment – for you, your career and for society. Whether you picked up languages at home, school, online or travelling the world, your language skills are a great asset.

ENGLISH CAN GET YOU SO FAR

English is a global language, but in fact only about 6% of the world's population are native English speakers and an estimated three quarters do not speak English at all.

A recent CBI survey found that 72% of UK firms say foreign languages benefit their business, and around 1 in 10 are concerned about missing out on opportunities due to language skills shortages. Meanwhile, the number of languages spoken in London alone stands at an estimated 233.

If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart.

Nelson Mandela

KEY



The CV Snapshot reveals the steps our profiles have taken to using languages in their careers

If I'm selling to you, I speak your language. But if I'm buying, dann müssen Sie Deutsch sprechen.

Willy Brandt, former German Chancellor

BUT LANGUAGES WILL TAKE YOU FURTHER

Every language you learn will open doors to a world of exciting opportunities, allow you to tap into new networks, and enrich your education. And each one you tackle will make learning the next easier.

For employers, European languages continue to be the most 'useful', but those geared towards working in China, Turkey, the Middle East and other emerging economies are likely to grow in demand over this century.

▶ = native ▶ = good ▶ = some

Between them, our profiles speak 22 different languages! These icons will show you which ones they know and how well.

WITH LANGUAGES YOU GAIN:





Arsène Wenger

Manager, Arsenal Football Club

► French ► German, Spanish, Italian ► Japanese

I coached a team in Japan, and at first I didn't know any Japanese, so I coached in English instead. They gave me a translator but we lost the first few games. One day the chairman summoned me and I expected the sack! He said 'I have made a very big decision. I will sack the translator!' Luckily I persuaded him not to and we began winning games. But it just shows you that when you're abroad, you have to learn about the culture and how to communicate from the start. Learning the language helps you understand the people better.

Every time you learn a new language, the next one is easier to learn. When you speak Italian, Spanish becomes easier. With German, English gets easier.

📖 German and English at school in France / Economics Degree / Amateur Footballer / Manager's Diploma / Manager at various Football Clubs in Europe and Japan / Awarded the Légion d'Honneur, 2002 / Awarded an OBE, 2003

Rose Fenton

Director, Free Word

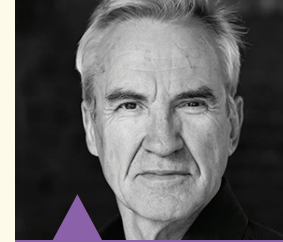
► French, Italian ► Greek

I started using languages from the age of six. My family was rather nomadic and used to take off for four months a year, staying in Turkey, Poland, Romania, and Greece. I went to a village primary school in Greece and was motivated by the simple desire to communicate with other children. This has opened international doors for me, enabling me to act as a cultural ambassador for the UK and Europe within the international festival scene.

📖 Latin, French and Spanish at school / English with Theatre and Italian Degree / Founded the London International Festival of Theatre / Freelancer, worked across Europe, Iran and the Middle East



Language is a powerful tool for action and the imagination. Through different languages we can walk in other worlds – it gives us courage to try new things.



Larry Lamb

Actor

► Spanish, Italian, German, French

A basic knowledge of French and German whetted my appetite for travel, and once I was abroad, I just could not stand acting out my food orders in restaurants – so I had to learn more. While I was working in Germany, I got involved with amateur theatre – and the rest is the story of who I am today. In the 1980s I started to do film and TV work across Europe, picking up a working knowledge of Spanish and Italian as I went – the French was a good base to build from.

Without languages my journey would have been a completely different one. Learn as many languages as you can! You will be a bigger person for it.

📖 Just about managed to pass French at school / Three month evening course in German / First job in Germany selling encyclopaedias to US Servicemen / Film and TV roles across Europe / Roles in *EastEnders*, *Gavin and Stacey* and many other films, TV shows and plays

Dame Ellen MacArthur

Yachtswoman & Charity Founder

► French ► German, Italian

I spent three months in a French boatyard before my first transatlantic race and learnt to speak fluently there. I could not have competed without it. I would not have integrated with the sailors, nor been as successful with my sponsorship. Languages opened up the warmth of a culture to me – the French really took me under their wing. I work with the French government now through my charity work and often present in French at meetings.

📖 French and German GCSEs / Planned to become a vet, but started competing in international sailing races / Founded the Ellen MacArthur Cancer Trust / Broke the record for fastest solo circumnavigation of the globe, 2004 / Awarded a DBE, 2005 / Awarded the Légion d'Honneur, 2008 / Founded the Ellen MacArthur Foundation



Once at sea, the weather reports, positions in the fleet, briefings and rulebook were all in French – so you could say that my life depended on understanding the language.




Zeinab Badawi

World News Presenter, BBC Television

► Arabic ► French, Russian

I was born in the Arabic-speaking part of Sudan and my parents continued speaking to me in Arabic after we moved to the UK. I've used it regularly since. During the Gulf War I could speak to ordinary Iraqis about their fear of invasions. It was also a common language when I interviewed Somalian refugees about their experiences in camps.

 History, Latin and Russian A Levels / Philosophy, Politics and Economics Degree / History and Anthropology of the Middle East Masters / Post-A Level Qualification in Russian and French

Focus on getting your languages to a good conversational level. That's what has helped me gain access to key informants and get a deeper insight into political developments.

Isabel Hilton OBE

Founder & Editor, chinadialogue.net

► French, Spanish, Chinese ► German, Brazilian Portuguese, Tibetan

When I started out it was difficult to get assigned to international stories. Having languages enabled me to land my first major newspaper piece (about China) and get sent to cover the Falklands War. The capacity to eavesdrop on casual conversations, form direct relationships, make jokes and speak to people at all levels of society – not just the upper classes who speak English – matters a great deal.

 Latin, French, German and Spanish A Levels / Chinese MA / Post-graduate researcher in China / Reporter, Scottish Television / Latin America Editor, *The Sunday Times* / European Affairs Editor, *The Independent* / Presenter, *The World Tonight*, BBC / Staff Writer, *New Yorker*



Apart from the pleasure of speaking other languages and all the possibilities that opens up, reading literature in its original language is like the difference between instant coffee and a good espresso.



Rosie Goldsmith

Broadcaster, BBC Radio

► French, German ► Italian

For work and leisure, languages are key to my pleasure! In 20 years at the BBC I've travelled the world, taking in Libya, Japan and East Timor and covered events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of apartheid. I have presented flagship radio shows like *A World in Your Ear* and *Crossing Continents* and today I'm in demand at cultural festivals and events in the UK and abroad.

 German, Latin and French A Levels / French and German Degree / Reporter, *Deutsche Welle* and Deutschlandfunk, Cologne / Foreign Affairs Reporter and Producer, BBC / Chair, Judge and Curator of European Literature Night, British Library / Artistic Director of High Impact: Literature From The Low Countries Festival

See languages as creative, mind-expanding and life-enhancing. Yes, you have to slog but break out, be bold! Languages boost business and your brain power!

Neela Mukherjee

UK General Merchandise Director, Tesco PLC

► Bengali ► Spanish, French

Speaking languages has enabled me to work and study in five different countries. They can be difficult and at times embarrassing but languages are invaluable business skills. Communicating and connecting with people at all levels, whether they are the CEO or a cashier, becomes increasingly important the more senior you become.

 English Literature Degree / Worked in advertising in London and NY, Young & Rubicam / Studied for an MBA in France and Singapore / Worked for *The Economist* / International Operations Developer, Tesco / Commercial Director Non Food, Tesco Malaysia



Always look for ways to broaden your horizons. Developing your personality is just as important as developing your CV and you never know what an experience outside of your comfort zone may teach you.




Richard Hardie

Chair, UBS Ltd

► French, Italian ► German

Languages have counted for more the more senior I have become. When I was Chairman of our Italian subsidiary, I spoke to every member of the firm at one time or another. I believe I gained their confidence that way. My language ability and strong intercultural awareness has allowed me to grow with the firm as it has expanded from its Swiss and London bases to over 50 countries.

 French and German exchange visits whilst at school / Italian summer course, Perugia / Modern History and French Degree / Year abroad in Dijon / Chartered Accountant / Chief Operating Officer for Europe, Middle East and Africa, UBS Investment Bank

Language learning should get the same priority that it has overseas. As the message sinks in that we still have to export to survive, a financial premium will develop for British staff with language skills.

Neil Bentley

Deputy Director-General & Chief Operating Officer, Confederation of British Industry

► French, German ► Italian

I represent the CBI to media, government and business-lobbyists overseas, particularly focussing on Brussels, Washington DC, Beijing and New Delhi. My knowledge of languages and sensitivity to new cultures has been essential: from the practicalities of conversing and reading documents or newspapers to successfully striking up working relations abroad.

 French, German and English A Levels / Gap year working on French campsites / French, German and European Politics Degree / German Industrial Relations PhD / Researcher and Writer, European industrial relations magazine / Europe, Middle East and Africa HR Lead, EDS



We all operate in a global environment. Employers are crying out for people with good language skills and an international outlook to help them export. It is a skill that really shines out on a person's CV.



Baroness Jean Cousins

Crossbench Peer & Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages

► French, Spanish ► German

Though I haven't used languages directly, they've been helpful on various projects over the years. Around the time of Pinochet's coup, I helped establish the Chile Solidarity Campaign, involving a mass demonstration and acting as personal interpreter for President Allende's widow. More recently, I went to Peru as a parliamentary volunteer, became acquainted with the local variety of Spanish and worked with NGOs. Languages are critical to our education, economy and international influence. I campaign passionately for this in Parliament.

 French and Latin A Levels / Gap year *au pairing* in Madrid / Spanish and French Degree / Secretary, United Nations Association / Leadership roles in various third sector, corporate social responsibility and government organisations / CEO, The Portman Group / President, Peru Support Group / Vice-President, Chartered Institute of Linguists

I started university wanting to be a UN interpreter, but decided later I wanted to be the one making the speech! Learning languages gave me the sense of doors opening and horizons broadening.

Rt Hon Tom Brake MP

Deputy Leader of the House of Commons

► French ► Russian, Portuguese

When I worked in the IT industry, the company I worked for was taken over by a French organisation. I was the obvious person to go on the odd business trip to Paris. Since working in politics, I have been able to use French or Portuguese when meeting foreign parliamentarians.

 Went to school in France / Physics Degree / Computer Programmer, Cap Gemini / MP for Carshalton and Wallington



Learning a language does require some hard slog at first, but it will be of great benefit later on, particularly should you need to learn another one!

Jean Lambert

Member of the European Parliament for London

► French, Italian

When the Green Party began developing links with newer European Green parties, it was very useful to have someone who could speak French. Although the meetings were held in English, it helped break down barriers. In my work now, I am able to work with a wider range of colleagues and not only native French-speakers: colleagues from Poland, Hungary, Romania, Italy, Spain and other countries often have French as their preferred additional language.

📖 English and French A Levels / Attended Anglo-French Summer Schools and an exchange trip to Paris / French and Italian Degree / PGCE / Secondary school teacher, taught English, French and Drama / Joined the Green Party / Became the first 'honorary' Green Group representative in the European Parliament



Learning languages has been life-changing. There are many parts of the world where it is perfectly normal for people to speak two or more languages.



Languages are essential tools to help people fulfil their potential. It's critical to widening opportunities and promoting social and economic integration.

Rushanara Ali MP

Member of Parliament & Shadow Minister for International Development

► Bengali

As a bilingual person and MP to a diverse constituency, I know the importance of language education. I helped establish LanguageLine, which provides a national telephone interpreting service in over 100 languages to help organisations deal with emergencies and I am currently supporting projects teaching English as a second language.

📖 Early childhood in Bangladesh / Philosophy, Politics and Economics Degree / Research Assistant, helping set up Futureversity and LanguageLine / Research Fellow, Institute for Public Policy Research / Civil Servant in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Home Office / Associate Director, The Young Foundation / MP for Bethnal Green and Bow

Jacqueline Minor

Head of UK Representation, European Commission

► French ► German, Portuguese, Dutch

When I arrived in Luxembourg, I could write a mean critique of Racine but was incapable of holding a conversation in the lift; I spent the first few months staring intently at my feet to avoid embarrassment. Total immersion in French at the Court made for very quick progress. Without it, I could not have pursued this fascinating career. Although English is now widely used, many water-cooler conversations still take place in French.

📖 German and French at school / Law Degree / Masters thesis on European Law / Taught courses on European Law at University / Référétaire (Law Clerk) to several British Judges, European Court of Justice / Worked in the Directorate-General for the Internal Market, European Commission / Director for Consumer Affairs, European Commission



Speaking other languages not only gives you a literal understanding of what someone is saying: it can also help you to grasp how they approach an issue or how they would resolve a problem, which is crucial in any multicultural setting.



Speaking languages shows respect, builds bridges and allows you to make friendships around the world. Most people are really pleased when someone makes the effort to speak their language and will want to help you use it more.

Meg Munn MP

Member of Parliament & Former Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs

► French, German, Spanish, Italian ► Hindi, Arabic

Having language skills has opened the world to me. In my social work career they came in useful when working with families from overseas and my languages were one of the reasons I was appointed as a Foreign Office Minister. Languages enabled me to get a wider perspective on issues by comparing different countries' responses first hand. I was able to make stronger links with European colleagues and give interviews to foreign journalists.

📖 French and German A Levels / French, Hindi and Linguistics Degree / Social Work Masters / Social Worker at various councils / Assistant Director for Children's Services, City of York Council / MP for Sheffield Heeley



Dr Judith Smith

Director of Policy, Nuffield Trust

► French ► German

Studying languages gives you a wonderful rounded education. There are not many jobs where written and oral communication, clear thinking, and persuasive arguments are not core requirements! You can do the applied learning later.

Apart from spending my trainee elective placement in a French hospital and organising an NHS study tour to France (where we learnt as much about the NHS – seen from the perspective of abroad – as we did about the French system), I have not used languages in my work. However, the broader skills of analysis, research, writing and presentation are the bread and butter of my job today.


 French and German A levels / French Degree / Year abroad in Dijon / NHS Management Trainee / Diploma in Health Services Management / MBA / Health Services Management PhD / Academic Director of the NHS Management Training Scheme

Daniel Kempf

Special Constable, Durham Constabulary Police Force

► Polish ► German

Since coming to England I've had one aim – to become a top Police Officer! I use my language skills daily and am glad to be the main point of contact between the Polish community and the police. I helped them handle the murder of a Polish woman a few years ago by liaising between local and Polish police teams. It's very rewarding to be able to communicate with others and help when nobody else can.

 English at school in Poland / Taxi driver in Darlington – where I got up to speed in English very quickly! / ESOL English course / Volunteer Police Officer / Winner of County Durham Special Constable of the Year, 2011 and 2012



We are living in a completely new Europe. There is never-ending opportunity out there and learning languages can help you become what you want to be.



Lizzie Fane

Founder, ThirdYearAbroad.com

► Italian, French ► Mandarin

You'll impress with your personal year abroad formula. You spent the summer volunteering in Mexico, your first semester working for a Parisian law firm, the second interning for a Spanish startup and the next summer *au pairing*? An employer could teach you how their business works in a fortnight, but they can't teach you a new language in that time.

When you learn another language, you get insights into the traditions, the art and the mindset, and it transforms your own way of thinking. It has made me much more open-minded, independent and confident, leading me to start my business while I was still at uni. Opportunities still pop up thanks to my language skills – new business prospects aside, I've just got back from a free trip to Sorrento!


 Italian and History of Art MA, minors in French and Mandarin / Year abroad studying and working in Florence / Business Plan Competition Finalist / Retail Assistant, mydeco.com / Marketing Assistant, wexo.co.uk

Nick Holzherr

Founder, Whisk.com & *The Apprentice* Runner-up

► German, Swiss German

I speak both traditional High-German and a Swiss-German dialect as my mother is Swiss. While studying German, I spent a year in Frankfurt. I loved it – working in a different culture, meeting people from around the world and having lots of travel opportunities within reach. Languages definitely give you an edge over other job applicants, even if employers don't explicitly ask for them.

 International Business and German Degree / Year abroad working at Deutsche Bank, Frankfurt / Birmingham Young Professional of the Year, 2011 Winner



Three years after graduating, I've run three different businesses. I use my German skills regularly – almost all business has an international element. I hope to use them even more as my business expands abroad.



Toni Lorenzo

Partner, Lewis Silkin

▶ Spanish ▶ Italian ▶ French, Russian

I have no doubt that my languages influenced the decision to hire me here. I have many overseas clients with interests in the UK and regularly advise in Spanish and Italian. One of my most interesting recent professional experiences was being asked to be an expert witness on English employment law in the Spanish courts where I was cross-examined in Spanish.

 Spanish and Italian Degree / Law Degree / Hotel Representative in Spain and Italy / English and Spanish Teacher across Europe / Worked at the London Tourist Board / Specialised in Employment Law

Don't believe them when they tell you languages are not important. They are! Even if people from abroad speak English, they will always do more business with you if you speak their language.

Rachel Nicholson

Human Rights Officer for Advocacy and Research, East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

▶ French ▶ Luganda, Kiswahili

I struggled with French at school and got some of my worst marks in it! But after a while, something clicked. I never expected to study French further, but having worked at it, I realised a year abroad would help me become really fluent. Since graduating I have needed French in every single job and internship I've done. Professionally, it has been invaluable and has allowed me to work in fascinating places.

 French and Latin A Levels / History with French Degree / Erasmus year in Montpellier / Understanding and Securing Human Rights Masters / Deputy Co-ordinator, APPG on the Great Lakes Region of Africa, Houses of Parliament / Associate, Africa Division, Human Rights Watch



I frequently communicate with our francophone contacts in Burundi, Djibouti and Rwanda. At international meetings – even if interpretation is provided – the most interesting and useful conversations often take place on the side lines.



Languages, travelling and exposure to different cultures broaden your horizons both practically and personally. They open doors on the person you are going to be tomorrow.

Tiziana Oliva

Director of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean Group, VSO

▶ Italian ▶ French ▶ Spanish, Arabic, German

Without my love for languages and a desire to communicate across borders I would not be where I am today. English and French have been essential for following my chosen career. Right now my wish, which would also be very useful career-wise, would be to learn Arabic really thoroughly.

 German, French, English and Travel Business Studies at school in Italy / Studied and lived abroad / Development Studies Degree / Human Rights and Social Change Masters / Worked on the front desk of a hotel / Manager, CARE in Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Dafur / Regional Programmes Manager for Central and East Africa, Merlin

Noa Epstein

CEO, Middle East Education through Technology

▶ Hebrew ▶ Arabic, Swedish, Spanish

At 14 I joined a peace organization that brings together Arab and Israeli youth and wanted to be able to speak to the families of my Palestinian friends. Languages have been a huge plus. They enable me to build stronger professional relationships, manage investor relations and make a strong lasting impression on people.

 Studied and lived in Israel, Sweden, the UK and USA / International Relations Degree / Countrywide Programme Manager, Peace Now / Department Manager, The Peres Centre for Peace / MBA / Woman of the Future Award Winner, 2011 / Global Business Lecturer, Oxbridge Academic Programmes / Consultant, Google



Practise speaking to native speakers – there is nothing more frustrating than not being fluent in conversation. Even if the particular professional direction you end up taking is currently unclear, learning another language is a must.

In 2011 the [British Academy](#) launched a four-year programme to support Languages in the humanities and social sciences. The Academy's programme is committed to a range of research support, partnerships and other activities, seeking to demonstrate the value and importance of languages for the health and wellbeing of education, research, individuals and society at large. The British Academy for the humanities and social sciences has been supporting the best in UK and international academic research for over a century. Established by Royal Charter in 1902, the Academy is a Fellowship of over 900 leading UK scholars and social scientists which works to further our understanding of the past, present and future through research, policy reports, publications and public events.



The [European Commission Representation in the UK](#) is the voice of the European Commission in the UK and ensures that political, social and cultural life in the UK is understood at the European Commission's headquarters. The Representation provides information about the European Union across the UK through outlets such as public libraries, business advice centres and education services. The Representation works with teachers, schools, universities, cultural and other organisations on a wide range of projects and initiatives to promote the importance of learning foreign languages, which can help improve young people's employability and lead to increased mobility in today's global labour market, as good language skills allow people to seize professional opportunities abroad and find work in businesses and organisations operating internationally. The Representation has offices in London, Belfast, Cardiff, and Edinburgh.