
A guide to languages and careers*

***Languages Work is created to show the true value of languages in the workplace and beyond.**



www.languageswork.org.uk



Languages Work is a project operated by CILT, the National Centre for Languages and supported by the DfES.

**Languages
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Introductory page

CILT, the National Centre for Languages created the Languages Work brand with the support of the Department for Education and Skills in order to promote the true value of languages in the workplace.

There have been many misconceptions in the past about for example what jobs linguists can do, whether everyone speaks English anyway, the usefulness of basic language skills and so on. This slide show addresses all of these and more.

It is hoped that Languages Work can challenge, inspire and inform the audience to continue with their language study and eventually make use of their language(s) in the world of work. Whether they do a find a career with languages or not, we believe strongly that languages will improve the life experience of everyone.

This slide show is intended for use by key intermediaries such as careers advisers, language teachers and lecturers. It is recommended for use in front of groups aged 14 upwards. Information given on the slides and in the notes was correct in September 2004. It is also suggested that case studies on the Languages Work website and in the handbook, are used to bring our messages to life. The factsheet 'Work Talk' serves well as a handout to accompany this presentation (available to order via www.languageswork.org.uk, also on our CD-ROM and in the schools activity folder).

Three key messages



English is not enough

A little language can make a lot of difference

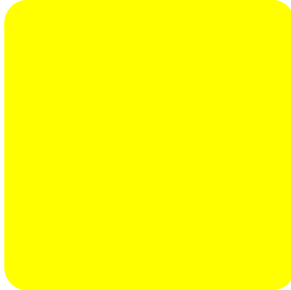
Languages improve the quality of your life

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Three key messages

This page introduces the three key messages behind Languages Work. The next three slides expand further.

English is not enough



94% of the world's population does not speak English as their first language

60% of UK trade is with non-English speaking countries

Over 300 languages are spoken in London alone

EU enlargement means greater need for new languages and contact with new markets

Customers addressed in their mother tongue are three times more likely to buy

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English is not enough

94%

This figure is sourced from David Crystal's Encyclopedia of Languages. There is a component statistic that 75% of the world do not speak English at all. The internet as an important globalising force is now more non-English speaking than English-speaking, with Chinese the fastest growing language. See www.global-reach.com for information on worldwide on-line population.

60%

This means that our English-speaking trade partners – e.g. Ireland, USA etc. – are in the minority. After the USA, Germany and France generate the most trade for UK exporters. These figures are provided by UK Trade and Investment. www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk

300

Statistics from Multilingual Capital by Philip Baker and John Eversley. Other regions have very multilingual populations: according to Sheffield Hallam University there are over 84 languages spoken in Sheffield. Your Local Education Authority may be able to provide figures. The changing linguistic make up of society is having important implications for social, educational and economic policy.

EU

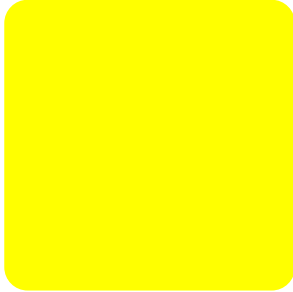
In May 2004, ten new countries joined: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Three times more likely

This was found by Forrester Research. www.forrester.com. Willi Brandt, the former German Chancellor, has been quoted as saying: "If you wish to sell to me, dann müssen Sie Deutsch sprechen."

There is a shortage of mother-tongue English-speakers for jobs at all levels in EU institutions. Yet only a third of UK graduates according to a recent survey by Hobsons (2002) have the confidence to go abroad to find work. 2/3 of their continental colleagues feel they are able to do this and strike out in the global job market.

A little language can make a lot of difference



UK businesses need people with language skills

- from basic to native speaker ability
- from switchboard to the boardroom

Importance of cultural understanding

Basic phrases can break the ice

Refresh or learn a new language throughout life

- evening classes, self-study
- time abroad, at home
- university language centres

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A little language can make a lot of difference

One in five UK companies involved in export or import is losing business because of language and cultural barriers, according to surveys by CILT (www.cilt.org.uk). There is evidence from CILT surveys that employees need language skills throughout the organisation, and this is very often in the frontline – the first point of customer contact.

Recent advertising by HSBC demonstrates perfectly the importance of cultural understanding which does not have to be complemented by advanced language skills. An awareness of local customs and courtesies will make a big difference.

A lot of people complain that languages are difficult and that they will probably never be fluent. There needs to be an understanding that even a few phrases and basic knowledge of a language can make experiences more rewarding. It is worth relating the business experience to the ice-breaker that a few phrases can represent on holiday – it raises a smile and makes them realise you are making the effort. A foreign customer views it in exactly the same way.

There are lots of ways of picking up new knowledge of languages, or refreshing existing language skills. These suit every learner, whatever their age or stage of education.

School – language options on NVQ courses, taster classes, GCSE taken during A Levels.

College – work or leisure-related language learning, wider range of languages, evening/part-time courses.

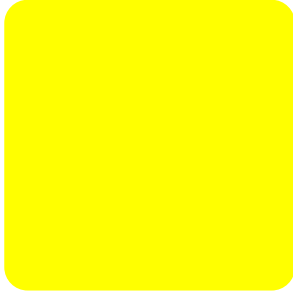
University – modules on a non-languages degree programme, voluntary study outside degree programme through language centre, time spent abroad during degree.

Work – training paid for by the employer, experience working abroad.

Other – different languages spoken at home, making the effort on holiday.

European Language Portfolio – can help to record language skills at all levels. www.cilt.org.uk.

Languages improve the quality of your life



Salary uplift for using languages at work

Improved employability

Additional grants for those training to teach languages

Opportunities to travel and see the world

Opportunities for promotion and new responsibilities

Develop other skills, e.g.

- improved communication skills
- proofreading and summarising
- independence, mental agility

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Languages improve the quality of your life

According to Reed (Languages in the workplace, 2001) an employer on average will pay 8% more for someone using languages in their job. Other agencies have quoted that uplift can be up to 20% for a very language-focused job (e.g. bilingual PA). Many employers (e.g. airlines) reward staff with an increment per language spoken. www.reed.co.uk/multilingual.

According to statistics from the Higher Education Statistics Agency, between 1996-2002, languages graduates were unemployed at the rate of 5.51% (4.67% for German graduates, 4.85% for French graduates). This is bettered by only Medicine, Education and Law. By comparison, 8.91% of Computing graduates are unemployed, as are 9.48% of Media Studies graduates. Source: Keith Marshall, Bangor University.

Those entering language teacher training receive additional funding to pursue and complete their PGCE, as Languages is a shortage subject. For more contact www.canteach.gov.uk or www.cilt.org.uk.

Those using languages at work (and indeed learning languages at university or in school) will very often benefit from chances to travel abroad and meet new people, through exchange programmes, periods of study, work placement, client meetings or exhibitions.

It is recognised that linguists develop other skills not directly related to speaking the language. Employers recognise the value of these and often employ languages graduates on this basis rather than ability to speak languages *per se*.

Practical advice



What do you want to do with your languages?

Are you experienced?

Who do you want to work for?

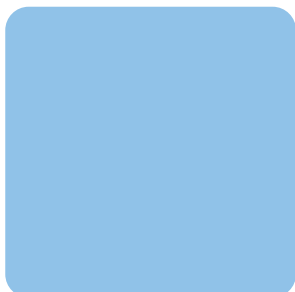
Are you talking my language?

Languages *
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Practical advice

Introductory page for the following four slides which give detail on the different career paths on offer, the importance of combining experience with languages, which organisations employ linguists, and which languages are needed where.

What do you want to do with your languages?



Specialist language occupations

- translation, interpreting, language teaching and training
- new angles: telephone interpreting, digital subtitling

Occupations with languages

- journalist, market researcher, accountant, software developer, engineer ...
- languages are complementary, not the key skill

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What do you want to do with your languages?

Specialist language occupations

These are the jobs most commonly signposted by careers advisers. There is a shortage of languages teachers, but both translation and interpreting are fiercely competitive fields. Only 2% of languages graduates in 2002 went into translation or interpreting. In all cases, the occupations require very specific qualities beyond fluency in languages. For more on translation and interpreting, go to www.languageswork.org.uk; www.iti.org.uk; www.iol.org.uk. For more on language teaching go to www.languageswork.org.uk or www.cilt.org.uk.

These occupations have all moved with the times, and in all cases technology plays a vital role. Digital media have meant translators now working in TV studios and in website creation and localisation. Interpreters may now be able to work from home via the telephone.

Occupations with languages

These represent the vast majority of opportunities to use languages at work. It is important for the individual to recognise that other skills will be central to the job and sine qua non. Languages enable the individual to perform the professional function in liaison with other countries or with a different range of people. The job titles given here are just a few examples of possible career paths, the choice is probably endless.

The Languages Work handbook and website have collected case studies of individuals working with languages.

On reed.co.uk in July 2004, over 3% of all jobs had an explicit requirement for a language – over 6,000 opportunities based in the UK on their site.

Are you experienced?



Need to combine languages with work-related expertise or experience

Ways of doing this:

- get work experience during vacations
- combine language(s) with non-language subject at university
- work for multilingual recruitment agency in holidays
- use gap year or year abroad before or during university to work in a foreign country
- take a work-related course in adult or further education
- Teach English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in a relevant country

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Are you experienced?

Languages come alive when they are coupled with experience in an occupational area. This applies to specialists just as much as non-specialists. A translator will need to specialise in for example legal French.

Schools and colleges

The local Regional Language Network (www.cilt.org.uk/rln) or Education Business Partnership may be able to help identify local companies that use languages who may be interested in placements. Many colleges offer work-related language courses.

Universities

It is very popular to combine languages with non-language subjects – this is much sought after by enlightened employers. Examples include French with Media Studies, Engineering and Italian, but the range is almost infinite. Many non-languages programmes allow optional study of language modules which may be tailored to the professional requirements e.g. German for Scientists.

Specialists will be able to take a year abroad – they should consider using this time to work as well as to study.

For advice on languages in higher education, try the Subject Centre – www.lang.ltsn.ac.uk.

Working life

Many agencies specialise in supply staff with language skills. See www.languageswork.org.uk.

TEFL – find out more at www.tefl.com.

Who do you want to work for?



Industry sectors that need languages

- business services, central government, contact centres, engineering, financial services, marketing, media, technology, travel and tourism, voluntary and charitable sector ...

Functions where languages are used most often

- sales, customer service, marketing

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Who do you want to work for? 1

These industries are profiled in the Languages Work handbook and on the website, but languages are used in many more industries besides. The AGCAS handbook Using Languages also provides good detail on different industries (www.agcas.org.uk, also on-line at www.prospects.ac.uk).

There is evidence that functions where communication is most important need languages the most (Languages in the workplace, Reed 2001). They may often also be frontline roles.

Who do you want to work for?



Characteristics of organisations that use languages

- multinational or internationally networked
- Web-based
- foreign-owned
- facing non-English speaking customers

“With increasing globalisation the majority of young people entering education today can expect to work either abroad, or be managed here by a foreign company for a period in their lives.”

Who do you want to work for? 2

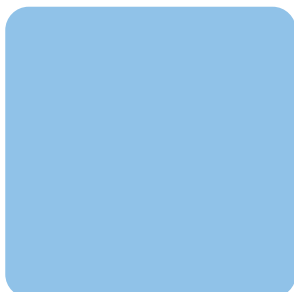
Organisations that use languages can be identified according to these characteristics.

There is a chart which can help the individual research suitable organisations in the Languages Work handbook. There is also further advice on finding work, which can also be found on www.languageswork.org.uk. The relevance of non-English speaking customers is especially found in the public services in the UK, who serve many people from ethnic communities do not speak good English. The internet is clearly a multilingual medium, and several UK owned sites choose to translate their sites in order better to serve their global audience e.g. www.easyjet.com. Foreign investors in the UK are very often keen to hire staff who speak their own language, and other languages relevant to their market and suppliers. Car manufacturers provide good examples of this, e.g. Peugeot and Nissan.

This quote is from Stephen Hagen's book, *Languages and culture in British business: communication, needs and strategies* (CILT, 2004). This trend is further reinforced by the nature of UK businesses' relationship with overseas clients:

“With 70% of businesses having some international contact they are also likely to come into contact with non-English speaking clients or suppliers.”

Are you talking my language?



Five most popular languages for UK exporters

- French, German, Spanish, Italian, Dutch

Increasing demand for world and Eastern European languages

- Arabic, Japanese, Chinese, Portuguese, Russian ...
- Polish, Czech, Estonian, Greek, Latvian ...

Public services need different languages

- British Sign Language, Hindi, Swahili, Turkish, Urdu, Welsh ...

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Are you talking my language?

According to CILT surveys across the UK, these are the top five languages needed by exporting businesses. This demonstrates the importance of contact with Europe and the value of this market to UK plc (although French and Spanish especially are relevant to markets outside Europe e.g. Africa and Latin America).

In diplomatic and commercial spheres, other languages are coming to the fore. Chinese as an emerging market has enormous potential. By 2020 it is expected to be the most used language on the internet ahead of English. EU expansion brings a range of lesser studied languages into play, but also the languages that are spoken as lingua franca in these countries – principally German and Russian.

There is quite a different range of languages needed by UK public services. They reflect the languages spoken by the local population. Languages are seen increasingly as an equal opportunities issue in the healthcare sector for example, and the number of opportunities for those speaking community languages whether because of family influence or through education, can be expected to increase. It should be remembered that British Sign Language and Welsh are both official UK languages.

Where to go next



Languages Work

Further support and signposting

Languages 
Work

Where to go next

Introductory page for the following two slides, on Languages Work products and information, and other sources. The key principle behind Languages Work is that it collects and signposts good information on languages and careers. The intention is not to generate extensive new material.

Languages Work



A range of products and information for individuals, teachers and advisers

- *Handbook for languages and careers*
- *Activity folder for schools*
- CD-ROM containing video clips and key materials
- regularly updated website with careers case studies
- factsheets for younger and older learners
- posters and postcards

Languages
Work 

Languages Work

The Languages Work brand is supported by a core range of products which can be used by intermediaries such as careers advisers and teachers, and students alike.

Handbook

Aimed at careers advisers but of use to all those looking for information on languages and careers. Profiles different industries and provides advice on finding work. Can be ordered via the website. Also includes CD-ROM.

Activity folder

Contains lesson suggestions and activities for use by teachers. Pack also includes CD-ROM, factsheets, activity sheets, posters and postcards.

CD-ROM

This has over half an hour of clips from videos promoting languages, and has general pieces, celebrities and working individuals talking about languages. Many Languages Work materials are collected on here for easy reproduction. Included in the activity folder or with the handbook or can be ordered via the web.

Website (www.languageswork.org.uk)

There are four entry points for different target groups, from school pupils to adults returning to work. There is also a dedicated section for those providing information and advice.

Factsheets

Produced for learners younger than 14, and those 14+. The first factsheet 'Mind you language' is very promotional in nature and shows the value of languages throughout life. The second 'Work Talk' provides comprehensive information on languages and careers and extensive signposting (intended as a handout to accompany this presentation – order from www.languageswork.org.uk, or save and print from the CD).

Promotional materials

Colourful posters and postcards carry our key messages - can brighten up the classroom or noticeboard.

Further support and signposting



Careers factsheet *Work talk* provides signposting for

- careers organisations
- languages organisations
- multimedia resources
- job sites and course search sites

The endorsing logo when used by information providers is a sign of quality



Further support and signposting

The careers factsheet 'Work Talk' has comprehensive signposting to other organisations, resources and websites which can help both the language learner and teachers and careers advisers. Signposting from the Languages Work website is also available under Links and Further Support.

The Languages Work logo can be used to stamp materials related to languages and careers which are approved by CILT, the National Centre for Languages. Look out for this in information provision for all sectors of education.

www.languageswork.org.uk*

***Visit our website for further inspiration and advice on languages in the workplace and beyond.**



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**Languages
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Final slide

The website is the most frequently updated and comprehensive resource in Languages Work range. It signposts other relevant resources and the rest of the Languages Work range. As such it is probably the best starting point especially for learners and advisers just starting to explore languages and careers.