



The London 2012 Games*

* Improving language skills for 2012

www.languageswork.org.uk

**Languages
Work**



It's a multilingual world

94% of the population do not speak English as their first language.

You don't need to be fluent

A little language skill can make a lot of difference.

Languages improve your quality of life

Whether travelling or at work your understanding of others is improved and your earning potential is often higher.

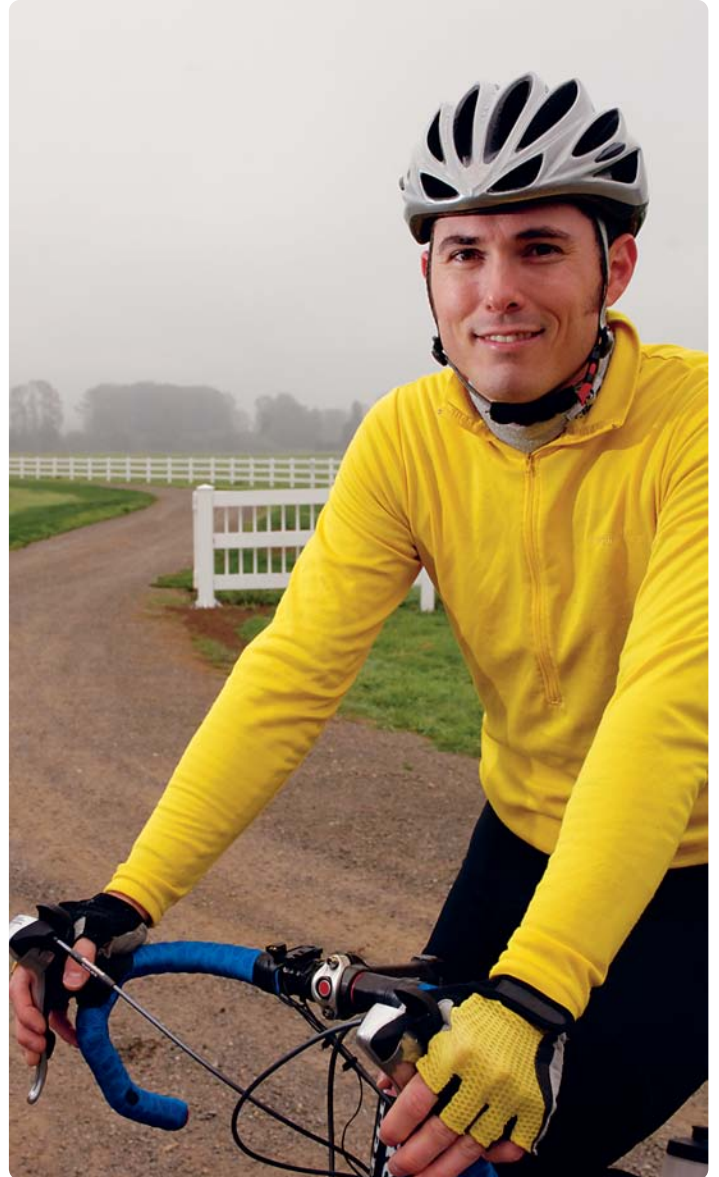


The time is now for languages

The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games will be an amazing sporting and cultural festival. It's also a great reason to improve your language skills not only so that you can get the most out of the event but also because these skills will be incredibly useful in work and life once the games are over.

We know that there'll be big boost to our tourism industry from a whole range of new visitors from around the world. The organisers want to make sure that all these people get a fantastic impression of our country - and that means people in all sorts of jobs using intercultural skills and gearing up their language ability to give visitors a warm welcome and attend to their needs.

Even without the games there are 32 million foreign visitors to Britain every year and countless jobs and professions where a little language ability goes a long way. So there's no better time than now to start developing language skills that'll really help you in life.



Jobs using languages

The sports official: John

Sports officials – from volleyball to rowing – will need to work with their counterparts from other countries. Here's an example of someone using their languages in this way from the world of tennis.

"English is the main language at international events, but my foreign language skills give me the edge over colleagues who speak English only. They make it easier for me to build good relationships with people and give me more credibility."

The journalist: Marc

Journalists and those working in PR and the media will find an international outlet for their talents. This is what Marc says about how languages have helped him get to the best stories first: "Journalists have to have a story no-one else can get in order to have good bargaining power. Interpreters and translators, especially when they're in the right place at the right time, have a skill that few people have. The combination can be extremely powerful. I feel more valued as a result."

The retail consultant: Farida

An influx of foreign visitors will bring some great retail opportunities. This is what Farida has to say about working with languages in Harvey Nichols.

"Being able to speak another language is an extra skill that really helps you to treat the customer as an individual and give them good service. A lot of UK retail companies benefit from having staff with language skills. Also, speaking another language gives you opportunities you wouldn't otherwise have."

The tour guide: Juliette

Tour guides and tourism information advisers always find another language useful, and this need will grow as we get nearer to 2012. Juliette uses her languages in the London Visitor Centre:

"My German and Japanese are basic, but still important. Even when visitors speak some English, it's useful to be able to understand their language. Sometimes mixing and matching languages makes communication easier."

The volunteer: Teri

The Games organisers say they will need 70,000 volunteers to help out as stewards and marshalls, shepherding athletes and spectators and even foreign orchestras! The ability to smooth over tense situations and help everyone enjoy the Games without stress is essential to this sort of role – and language skills are an important part of that. Here's a story from someone who acted as a bilingual volunteer. Teri found herself solving problems and helping football fans enjoy a special occasion at Wembley Stadium. She had a truly extraordinary day and really made a difference.

"When you've got a multinational crowd of thousands and fierce competition you definitely need people on hand who can speak different languages and mediate if necessary. It was the privilege of a lifetime to see how Wembley works from the inside, and all because I studied Spanish."



“Often it is the little things that really count when extending Britain’s warmest welcome. Even a few words in your visitors’ own language, or understanding their culture, gives them the immediate reassurance that one cares for them as individuals.”
–Deirdre Livingstone,
Visit Britain

The interpreter: Sophie

Specialist interpreters and translators are likely to be in strong demand for all sorts of roles from leaflets and signage to supporting athletes and VIPs, and to helping those that provide the services needed at a massive international event such as this. “What I like most about my job is the variety. As an interpreter you work with different colleagues all the time, in my experience, very intelligent and interesting people, and you interpret in all sorts of different meetings. You need to be able to keep cool under pressure and think on your feet, as well as having good public speaking skills and an analytical mind. Above all you must want to communicate ideas.”

Using Languages Work

Languages Work is a project aimed at increasing awareness of the value of languages in the workplace and beyond. Factsheets include:

- Careers in translation
- Building skills: Languages for the built environment
- Careers in translation and interpreting
- Engineering success: Languages for engineering
- Making sense: A career in translation or interpreting
- Mind your language: How languages can work for you
- Mixing it up: Combining a language with your chosen university course
- Spanish Skills: Using Spanish at work and play
- Use it or lose it: any language skill is an asset for life
- Work talk: A guide to languages and careers

You can download these or order hard copies from www.languageswork.org.uk/resources/factsheets.htm

Further Activities

For full interviews with all these and more, go to www.languageswork.org.uk/casestudies.

Find someone on this site who uses their languages as:

- a) an event organiser
- b) a PR manager
- c) a customer services officer

Which languages do they use and why?

Quiz

1

Which other language besides English is an official language of the Olympic movement?

2

Which was the language of the first Olympic Games?

3

Of the 205 countries which take part in the Olympic movement, how many have French, Spanish or Arabic as an official language:

- | | | | |
|-----------|------|------|------|
| ● French | ● 4 | ● 12 | ● 23 |
| ● Spanish | ● 10 | ● 17 | ● 20 |
| ● Arabic | ● 8 | ● 14 | ● 24 |

4

Match these athletes to their sport and their first language(s) as shown:

- | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| ● Dutch | ● Tia Hellebaut | ● Tennis |
| ● Oromo | ● Rafael Nadal | ● High Jump |
| ● Spanish/Catalan | ● Britta Steffan | ● Swimming |
| ● German | ● Alain Bernard | ● Swimming |
| ● French | ● Kenenisa Bekele | ● Running |

5

Match these British athletes to the foreign languages they speak:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| ● Ellen MacArthur | ● German, French |
| ● Gary Lineker | ● French |
| ● Jay Jay Okocha | ● French |
| ● Paula Radcliffe | ● German, Turkish, French |
| ● Jonny Wilkinson | ● Spanish, Japanese |

6

Which of these jobs are most likely to require skills in another language to ensure a successful London 2012 Olympic Games?

- Tour guide
- Booking officer
- Spectator control steward
- Sales assistant
- Journalist
- Event manager
- Airport security officer
- Sports official

7

Match the greeting with the countries in the following lists.

- | | |
|-----------|-----------------------|
| ● China | ● ようこそおいでくださいました |
| ● France | ● Добро пожаловать! |
| ● Germany | ● Benvenuti |
| ● India | ● स्वागतम् |
| ● Italy | ● ¡Bienvenidos! |
| ● Japan | ● أملا وسهلا |
| ● Iraq | ● Veet-eye Witaj! |
| ● Poland | ● 欢迎光临! |
| ● Russia | ● Herzlich willkommen |
| ● Spain | ● Bienvenue |

Find the answers at www.languageswork.org.uk/careers/olympics.htm

