
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



Three key messages



English is not enough

A little language can make a lot of difference

Languages improve the quality of your life

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

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

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

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?

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

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



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

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.”



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 ...



Where to go next



Languages Work

Further support and signposting

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

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



**Languages
Work**

www.languageswork.org.uk*

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

