

What's the Point in



Tag
স্বাগত
saluton
здраво
Hello
bonjour
ρωρτη
नमस्ते
saluton
გამარჯობა
안녕하세요

ciao
שלום
こんにちは
Sveiki
رحبا
tere
你好
hello
Hej
შეგობრად



Modern Foreign Languages?



To help you understand the value of modern foreign languages?, we've spoken to a number of professionals who still use the skills, qualities and knowledge they gained from the subject at school in the work they do today. Turn over to find out who they are, what they do and what they had to say....

What's the point in Modern Foreign Languages?

The Managing Director

I learned French at school because my family moved to France for my father's work when I was 9. When I started working after university, I never imagined it would be so helpful. I worked for an international company and we had offices in France, and French speaking clients in France as well as the Middle East. Being able to speak the language gave me a unique opportunity to build deeper relationships more quickly with people who I needed to be able to successfully work with.

Alexandra Haggard, Managing Director at Russell Investments

The Engineer

I am a civil engineer and bridge designer based in London. I have worked on projects in many countries, and often the standards and regulations are written in languages and scripts I do not know. However, the laws of nature and the mathematics that describe them are universal. Knowing the very basics of a foreign language has helped me to understand the requirements and given me prior understanding of topics.

Angus Low, Bridge Designer

The Emergency Programme Specialist

I can think of two incredible ways I've used foreign languages in my professional career. Firstly, I lived and worked in Ecuador, assisting refugees fleeing the violence in Colombia. I couldn't have done that job if I didn't speak Spanish. Secondly, even in roles where only English is required, if I meet an Italian or a Korean or any other colleague from one of these countries, I switch to their mother tongue. You will not believe the things you can get done and the way you relate to others because you speak their language.

Ara Yoo, Emergency Specialist at UNICEF

The Consultant

Being bi-lingual and having learned French and German in school has helped me get into most of the companies I have worked for. My job entails scoping high volume, high complexity projects, breaking these down to easy-to-manage projects, and using 'outside the box' approaches to resolve issues.

Cindy Squires, Managed Services Consultant at CEB

The Learning and Development Assistant

Studying French at A-level enabled me to move to Paris for a year after I left university, where I taught English to primary school pupils. That experience was really helpful - I had to do things like open bank accounts, apply for jobs, and go to interviews all in a different language, which was challenging. When I then moved to London to get a job I had learnt lots of transferable skills. Studying any language (even if you don't live in the country) opens your eyes to different cultures and helps you develop your own communication style.

Elinor Crich, Learning and Development Assistant at Holman Fenwick Willan Law Firm

The Issue Resolutions Specialist

I have worked in multi-national companies in customer services and credit control, using my languages to communicate with customers and colleagues around the world. Without these language skills I wouldn't have got the job. There are definitely roles that require language skills, so having this knowledge broadens your job opportunities and employability.

Heidi Pocock, Issue Resolutions Specialist at Verizon Enterprise Solutions

The Programme Administrator

I'm from Lithuania where I completed my undergraduate degree. In addition to English, I've studied Russian. Without learning English I wouldn't be here in the UK and wouldn't have a job at a university. I communicate with students across the world and many of them are from Eastern European countries where people speak Russian. Therefore, both languages I've learned are helping me in my job and also in wider life.

Inga Olsauskiene, Programme Administrator at Royal Holloway University

The BBC Journalist

As a BBC reporter, the aim is to tell stories and report the facts. The more languages you speak, the more stories you can tell. With A-level French, I have been able to report from France, gathering information and fixing and conducting interviews without the hassle of finding a translator. French is spoken in many African countries, some Pacific Islands and parts of Canada. I wish I'd learnt Spanish and Portuguese. Reporting from Latin America sounds good to me!

Janet Cohen, Broadcast Journalist at the BBC

The Google Director

I'm a Brit living in California. I learnt French and Spanish at school, never guessing that I would live in a part of the world when Spanish is a second language. The biggest reason I am glad I speak languages is because it improves my ability to connect with people: people often respond best when you speak their language. As the world gets more global, being able to speak a different language can be a point of connection, helping you to get to know people better (both business clients and people in your own teams). If you have taken the time to learn a different language, you will understand better how challenging it can be for people to work in a language that is not their mother tongue, and that further builds empathy with people. Once you stop worrying about grammar and get stuck in and give it a go, you can just enjoy communicating and learning about other cultures and countries. I think languages makes me a richer person overall and better at my job.

Gayle Tait, Director at Google LLC



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