

Effective Local, National, and World Citizenship

In addition to providing you with knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are necessary in the workplace, the study of languages, literatures, and cultures, like the study of history, philosophy, or mathematics, helps you develop the analytic skills needed to be an effective participant in local and national discussions. Studying languages in the context of history, politics, and popular culture can help you follow international events with insight, opening up perspectives to make you an informed and responsible citizen of your country and of the world.

Language and the Internet

Language study introduces you to new realms of ideas, customs, habits, and values. In both professional and personal ways, the twenty-first century places demands on people's global knowledge. As the Internet has changed the way we think about the transfer of information, so has it eliminated the sense of distance between us and the citizens of other countries. Materials from around the world, for both business and pleasure, are available to every person who has access to a computer. Diverse cultures in contact with one another can create unprecedented opportunities for exchange, cooperation, and mutual benefit. International contacts are an integral part of many careers, and people without the skill and sensitivity to deal with other cultures are at a disadvantage.

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Language Study in the Age of Globalization

The College-Level Experience

KNOWING another language enriches your personal life, expands the range of professional opportunities open to you, and increases your power to act as a citizen of the world. At the college level you can begin a new language or build on your knowledge of a language that you have already studied. College may also be the first chance you will have to study languages such as Russian, Chinese, Japanese, or Arabic. Forget the myth that you have to learn languages as a child: in the classroom young adults can be faster and more effective learners than small children.

Improved Career Prospects

Competition for the best jobs and for admission to top-rated graduate and professional schools is intense. Directly and indirectly the study of languages and their cultures and literatures will provide you with important job-related knowledge and skills that can give you a competitive edge. These include the ability to solve problems and to think analytically and creatively, to communicate effectively and confidently in writing and in person, and to act with versatility and flexibility. Leaders and decision makers must be able to access information, to understand it, and to interpret it critically; linguistic and cultural knowledge is essential to meeting these challenges. Because you can communicate and connect with people of other cultures and nationalities, you will be able to establish and maintain personal and professional contacts. In business, any cross-cultural effort for cooperation, sales, or negotiation will benefit from your experience of other languages and their communities. To be an effective professional, such as a doctor, lawyer, educator, artist, or scientist, communicating and investigating new knowledge in other languages as well as in English are essential in the increasingly international workplace. Exposure to another culture through its language will position you more favorably for success in your career, whatever career you may choose.

