



Benefits of language learning in the real world

As school leavers contemplate their futures, one important skill with the power to open doors and change lives stands out: the ability to speak more than one language.

We've been speaking to university students, language mentors, professionals, police forces and even international footballers who have experienced the transformative power of languages firsthand. Here, they share snippets from their own language learning journey:

Taking on the challenge helped me broaden my horizons

- *Samantha Riley, French and Spanish student*

Just like the 56% of secondary learners who perceive language learning to be too hard, Samantha wasn't sure about taking a language at GCSE. She never found learning French easy, however she decided to take the challenge and has never looked back.

I am so glad I decided to study languages. The professional advantages are enormous, I can work and find opportunities in numerous places! Being able to speak more than one language has really broadened my horizons and whatsmore, it's helped me socially too, I have more friends who speak Spanish than I do English!



deciding what subjects to take for my GCSEs and really being unsure on whether to take the plunge with French. One of the best decisions I have ever made!

Language learning has opened so many doors

- *Sara Darling, travel journalist*

When asked, 7 in 10 secondary learners felt that learning languages would help them live abroad. Sara thought the same. But what she didn't realise was that being able to speak another language would offer so much more.

I didn't realise how many doors speaking French could open. Once I knew basic grammar and vocabulary, it became easier to talk with native speakers, it allowed me to immerse myself in their culture, it gave me a real sense of freedom, and personally, I gained so much confidence.

Being able to chat with the locals and read signs meant I could travel on my own and languages became more than living abroad. I've been able to mingle with influential French speakers at dinners and events in the travel writing industry and have even got invited to bonus trips and events.

Being bilingual has definitely helped me stand out in my career

- *Wish De Leon, MFL Mentor*

Wish learnt Tagalog (Filipino) in school and when he was an undergraduate student, he learned Spanish, German, French, Japanese and Korean. Like 65% of all UK secondary school students, and almost half of the general public, he believed learning another

language was important and he certainly wasn't wrong.

When I was a child, I never expected or imagined I'd live in different countries and travel the world. I didn't know what was waiting for me - a whole new world of opportunities.

Being able to note that I am bilingual on my CV has helped me secure fantastic jobs in multinational companies like CocaCola and the airline, Lufthansa. I soon realised companies need people who can speak multiple languages so straight away, it gave me an advantage over other applicants. However, it's not just employment opportunities languages have expanded, it has widened my social network and opened my mind to different ideas and cultures. Language learning all started with a small spark, and it's turned into so much more.

Speaking languages gives you more than you think

*- Ashleigh Thompson,
Professional Writer*

Ashleigh started her language learning in school with French and continued her language studies into university with Spanish, but it wasn't just living abroad and experiencing new cultures that turned out to be a benefit for Ashleigh.

I have found myself living in Madrid, making some of my best memories, building new friendships I couldn't have made otherwise and helping others in ways I could never have

imagined. However, the most unexpected benefit of learning a language for me is being able to think quickly on my feet and improvise. I find I can talk my way around most tricky situations!

Bringing benefits to the workforce at large

Speaking different languages can impact and benefit an entire workforce and whole communities too, something Merseyside Police has discovered with their bilingual officers.

*- Sergeant Matusiak - Merseyside
Police's Community Engagement Team*

We know as a force just how valuable it is to have officers and staff who speak another language. Altogether in Merseyside Police, we speak 44 different languages.

What that means in real terms is being able to engage at a higher level with 44 different communities. Merseyside, and especially Liverpool, has a proud history of diversity and cultural exchange, so for us as a force it's particularly important to live up to that.

The very nature of the job of policing means you come across people at some of their worst, most vulnerable moments and it can make such a difference to someone if you can provide support in their first language, offer comfort or reassurance to them in the language that makes them feel safe. It is so powerful and so important.

Languages on the international stage

There are so many other situations where knowing a language can help someone make friends, integrate with new cultures and even make someone feel more confident in a new environment. One of the many benefits discovered by England and Bayern Munich footballer, Eric Dier. He shared with us how languages have been an integral part of shaping the person he is today.

[Watch Eric's interview](#)

Take the jump

While the classroom is vital for laying the foundations, the true power of languages unfolds when you take what you have learned into the real world.

From fostering friendships and career prospects, to simply exploring a new city, languages unlock a world of experiences.

So, whether someone's passion is travel, communication, or personal growth, learning a language is a great investment. By taking the leap and embracing the challenge, people around the world can embark on their own language learning adventures!

