

\$\$World Languages = Career Opportunities\$\$

Monolingualism is an economic system and individual opportunity killer, but there is a cure.

Each language you study beyond your own opens alternate windows to every subject accessible at school, to the millions of people who speak the language, and to their cultural contexts. We recognize it to be an indisputable, though not well-known fact, that foreign language study can [enhance your brain's function development and preservation](#). On this page I will show you yet another secret that unsuccessful and xenophobic people don't want you to know; the study and mastery of world languages will open many career doors and put money in your pockets.

In an age of specialization, we have allowed some of the most esoteric sub-disciplines to caricature language study. Very few people are interested in jargon-bound theoretical studies of hermetic or difficult-to-read authors. The results of a good world language program generally have little to do with these activities. Consider the people represented on the following site:

You Wouldn't Know They Majored in French

<http://www.utm.edu/staff/globeg/frenchdegree.html>

Here are 150 people who studied a foreign language, frequently along with some other subject. There are no teachers or professional translators, but all have exciting careers in which they are successful, and in most cases they are greatly assisted by their mastery of a language other than their native English. This would be true if I did the same thing with other languages. Double majors are a growing phenomenon in academe, and [studies](#) reveal that a foreign language is the first or second most popular component. There is a new breed of college degree, combining foreign language with other disciplines, like economics, business, political science or engineering. In a number of the Americas highly ranked private colleges foreign language are among the most popular majors. Do these students know something that is hidden from their counterparts in mid-ranked public institutions? Indeed yes! You can get many jobs with international expertise that you can't get with the average major. The [April 23, 2012 issue of Newsweek](#) ranks foreign-language majors tenth most useful from a study of all majors to determine those "most likely to lead to less unemployment and higher earnings, and which are in industries projected to grow in the next decade according to research from Georgetown University and data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics."

We are short-handed in the area of foreign-language skills, as the following articles will prove:

[America's Foreign Language Deficit \(Forbes\)](#)

[Deficiency in Foreign Language Competency: What Is Wrong with the U.S. Educational System?](#)

[The hidden skill deficit: Short supply of international trade skills limits Canada's growth](#)

[Globalized economy continues to drive demand for foreign language proficiency](#)

[U.S. falls behind in foreign languages](#)

The same is true in other Anglophone countries. For example an article in FE Week states that " In the UK, The National Employer Skills survey in 2011 indicated that a shortage of foreign language skills left 27 per cent of vacancies in administrative and clerical roles unfilled, while research for a British Academy report revealed that language skills were often needed for PR, sales and marketing roles."

I have selected some other recent articles underscoring the career practicality of foreign-language skills in a variety of situations:

[Is English no longer the international language?](#)

[One Skill That Will Instantly Make You a Better Job Candidate \(2012\)](#)

[5 Skills That Will Drastically Improve Your Professional Street-Cred \(Brazen Careerist\)](#)

[Foreign language skills translate in career \(September 10, 2012\)](#)

[Foreign language skills provide sharp edge in the job market \(2011\)](#)

[A Job In Any Other Language \(August 2012\)](#)

[Learning a foreign language could be the passport to a bright future - principal](#)

[Job Market Booming Overseas For Many American Companies \(12/28/10\)](#)

[Marketing and Using Your Foreign Language Skills at Work \(Psychology Today, 2013\)](#)

[International Business and Foreign Languages \(2013\)](#)

[7 business skills desperately needed in today's economy \(Sept. 10, 2012\)](#)

[The Language Business - LinkedIn articles](#)

[EMPLOYERS WANT INTERCULTURAL SKILLS FINDS IPSOS REPORT \(2013\)](#)

[Recent reports stress the importance of language skills for business \(Dec. 21, 2012\)](#)

Business schools, outside of the international pioneers like the Darla Moore School of Business, the Thunderbird School of Business, the Warton International Program, are beginning to focus on the need for real international skills in the business community:

[B-Schools Are Speaking the Language of Business](#)

[The Language of Business - Foreign language proficiency is on the rise in global MBA programs](#)

[Thinking Globally: Foreign Language Study For MBAs](#)

The explanations and demonstrations of the importance of world languages are as complex as the study of

international economics, so let's start with five areas. 1) **Exports**. In 2012, the value of US exports was about \$2.2 trillion. When you consider that every \$1 billion export dollars support or create 6060 US manufacturing jobs, this is a lot of money. While you may be able to make a first sale in English with good contacts and a great product, you are going to need a foreign language and other international knowledge to do what is fundamental in sales: know your customer. In statistical reality, English is [losing ground](#) in the representation of native speakers as a percent of the world population. On the other hand, with thousands of languages spoken, it is not surprising that [over half the world's population is bilingual or multilingual](#). The percent of native English speakers as internet users fell to [43% by 2011](#), and continues to fall. Lack of foreign-language skills is not like being without a business skill; rather it is like not being able to read, do basic math, interpret your surroundings, gather basic information. The wealth of the world is shifting. The US ranks 133rd in the world in GDP growth rate. The money is going to more and more countries where English is not a default second language. American business needs many more who can speak to people where the money has gone.

We must attract some of this money to the United States as 2) **foreign direct investment**, which totaled \$194 billion in 2010, down from the \$310 in 2008, but about \$1.7 trillion over the last ten years. European countries and Japan are still by far the most heavily invested in the US economy. Generally, the [5.6 million jobs in American domestic offices of foreign companies pay 33% more](#) than average domestic jobs in the same industry.

In 3) **tourism**, according to [an ITA document](#), international visitors spent "\$14.3 Billion in February 2013, up 5 Percent from February 2012." Overall, travel and tourism-related industries supported 7.7 million jobs in 2012. Can there be any doubt that some of them required foreign-language skills?

4) **Translation and Interpretation**: The extent of the US industry is difficult to estimate. Companies devoted to these skills come in a variety of sizes. There are licensed and unlicensed consultants. Of course, there are in-house translators and interpreters in skilled hire areas like project management, sales, design, IT, public relations and other departments. One of the perennial problems is that many companies go with cheap subcontractors and unlicensed labor. The [Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook](#) predicts a job growth of 42% between 2010 and 2020. Shortages of translators and interpreters are constantly noted:

[Brussels and the translator shortage](#)

[UN Interpreters Make Sure Nothing Is Lost In Translation](#)

[Interpreting in a Globalised World \(English\)](#)

[Not lost in translation: Local courts grapple with interpreter shortage](#)

5) **Government**: I cannot overemphasize the seriousness of the federal government's shortage of internationally skilled workers to the point where it is a real threat to national security, and with relatively little in-house capacity, our government is [outsourcing](#) billions of dollars of translation and interpretation work to large companies.

[SHORTAGE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE SPEAKERS IN GOVERNMENT \(May 21, 2012\)](#)

[Need for Bilingual Employees Stressed \(October 17, 2012\)](#)

[Government has foreign language deficit \(Washington Post, May 21, 2012\)](#)

Witness also the establishment of a

[National Language Service Corps](#)

These five areas are only representative of many more that are easy to spot with database job searches like

[ACTFL Jobs Central](#)

[BilingualJobs](#)

[Careerbuilder.com - Find Jobs](#)

[Chronicle of Higher Education - Jobs](#)

[Foreign Language Jobs \(Indeed\)](#)

[Foreign Language Jobs \(careerbuilder.com\)](#)

[International Jobs Center](#)

[Job Search - CNNMoney.com](#)

[Langjobs](#)

[Language Jobs 4U](#)

[Languagejobs USA](#)

[Language Talent](#)

[Lingua-jobs](#)

[The Linguist List Jobs Area Index](#)

[Monster.com](#)

[Multilingual Careers](#)

[NAIS Career Center](#)

[Simply Hired](#)

[Top Language Jobs](#)

[Translation Jobs and Projects \(Freelancer\)](#)

[TranslatorsCafe.com - Jobs](#)

[USA Jobs - Working for America](#)

There are a number of other initiatives which will develop and point out language-related work:

[U.S. Language Enterprise Advocacy Launches Initiatives](#)

[Ensuring America's place in the global economy by building language capacity in the schools \(Senate testimony, 2012\)](#)

Now you know and have seen the truth. If you have the talent, the will and the opportunity to learn another language, never doubt that it will lead to a positive step in your career. If we are not careful, knowing a second language may well become part of the rich/poor divide forming in our country. Protest any effort to eliminate foreign language study from K-12 and post-secondary institutions.

There are still large numbers of tragically uninformed and unbelievably stubborn people, who will swear that English is all you need. Tell them about this essay.

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