

# Should high school students learn a foreign language essay samples

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(Course #, Name)

## **Introduction**

For many decades, the compulsory education system in the United States and Europe was built upon tradition. As such, curriculum often included courses that no longer seemed relevant, such as Latin and Home Economics. Importantly, this traditional curriculum served students well for many years by helping them to prepare for adulthood, college, and striking out on their own. A brief review of today's society, however, indicates that a traditional approach may not be as effective as it once was in preparing students for their future. In particular, children that find themselves going through compulsory and secondary school in the 21st century face a far more complex and technologically laden learning experience. As a result, academic standards have increased significantly in recent years in order to ensure students are prepared to embark on highly technical careers or complex college programs. Based upon this, a modified curriculum has emerged over the past several years that is focused more on technology, business, and vocational trades, which indicates that academic planners have worked hard to align curriculum with the overall goals of students that go on to graduate. Importantly, there is one small component of curriculum that has become the topic of heated debate within today's schools. The curricular component being referred to here is the learning of foreign languages by high school students.

Essentially, many that participate in the debate argue that foreign language curriculum is archaic and no longer necessary in today's society due to the extensive capabilities of technology and computer applications. In contrast,

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there are many others that argue the exploration and learning of a foreign language can provide an individual with tremendous benefits throughout the remainder of their future careers and lives as a whole. Determining which side of the argument is correct will certainly not be a simple task. Ultimately, the best way to gain insights into this issue is by examining the problem in greater depth, as well as the specific solutions and associated benefits that could be implemented to effectively address the problem. In the end, it is believed that the bulk of research will support the conclusion that the learning of a foreign language can have a significant positive impact on a student's education, future career, and life as a whole.

## **The Existing Problem**

The desire and ambition to learn a foreign language has begun to decline significantly among today's high school students, particularly if learning the foreign language would occur in the classroom. This decline in interest among high school students appears to coincide with an increased interest in foreign language learning among adults, who often utilize more flexible and comprehensive language learning platforms such as Rosetta Stone. By reviewing this intriguing trend among adults, it becomes increasingly clear why the decline in interest among high school students is such a big problem.

## **Interest Dropping Among HS Students and Rising Among Adults**

First and foremost, adults are simply older versions of teenagers that have completed their own education and have become hard working members of

the workforce. As these adults gain experience within the workforce, they begin to learn that additional education and skill will help to differentiate them from their peers in order to help them land better paying jobs and live a more comfortable life. The fact that adults in mass have begun to embrace and advocate for the learning of foreign languages indicates that the need for such skills are expected to rise in the future. Those students that a proactive stance by learning a foreign language now, will exhibit far better mastery than peers that wait to learn foreign languages when they are older in order to enhance their employability.

## **Globalization**

The biggest problem that has emerged as a result of diminished interest in learning foreign language among high school students involves the fact that the need for such skills are expected to rise sharply in coming years. In particular, business experts and academics have extensively documented the tremendous changes that have come to pass over the last few decades. Continuous advances in technology have led to substantial enhancements to communication, particularly with regard to accessibility and speed. As a result of this technology boom, the world has experienced an exciting transformation known as globalization. Globalization refers to a state in which business, commerce, and communication are no longer limited to domestic borders, but rather, are almost stripped away completely causing a comprehensive intermingled economic network comprised of many different countries working together to enhance their own economic position. Importantly, globalization is expected to continue and become increasingly

prevalent in coming years as technology continues to advance over time. One of the most profound implications that has resulted from globalization is the increased communication between individuals from diverse national and cultural backgrounds. Specifically, in the past an individual might get a job out of high school and never meet or work with anyone from a foreign country throughout their entire career. This scenario is becoming far less likely in the 21st century as many of today's largest corporations are multinational, which often requires employees to actively engage team based activities with employees from foreign countries. Again, the trend of globalization is expected to continue into the future as long as technology continues to grow and advance. As a result, today's students will find themselves encountering culturally diverse foreign coworkers on an increasing basis, which can lead to significant communication issues if steps are not taken to learn foreign language. For those that argue English is the most prominent language in the world, it should be pointed out that this is not at all true. Rather, there are far more people in the world that speak Mandarin or Hindi than speak English. As a result, if today's students expect to be competitive within their field and engage in cooperative relationships with coworkers from foreign countries, these students need to focus their energy now and develop their foreign language skills before entering the workforce.

## **Solutions to the Problem**

Within the preceding section it was pointed out that the desire to learn foreign language has begun to wane significantly among 21st century high

school students. Further, it has been determined that this waning interest will cause a significant problem in the future as globalization requires individuals to become engaged in more culturally diverse work environments with a coworkers from a wide variety of different countries. The section that follows will serve as a response to this problem by outlining an effective solution to address the problem and to identify and examine the advantages and benefits of implementing such a solution.

### **Begin Emphasizing the Value and Teaching Foreign Language at an Earlier Age**

One of the most effective solutions to the problem of waning interest among high school students to learn a foreign language is to simply emphasize the value of foreign language with students that are at a younger age. In addition, students should be exposed to and taught foreign languages at a younger age in order to circumvent the identified problem. According to a wealth of available research, young children have a much greater ability to learn and speak a second language than older children and adults. Further, younger children are often more closely connected to their family element rather than their social network of friends. As a result, the goals and objectives of younger children remain generally aligned with those of parents, guardians, teachers, and other elders rather than pursuing their own goals or the goals of friends, which is characteristic of children in late adolescence. In addition to the extensive research that supports the conclusion that younger children are far better equipped to learn and amass foreign languages, academic literature has emerged that indicates young children that learn a second language actually promotes great resilience in

their cognitive development. Ultimately, this literature helps to strengthen the argument that earlier exposure of young children to foreign language learning can have a substantially positive impact that have far reaching implications to individual development. In order to fully illustrate the effectiveness of the proposed solution to the identified problem, it is necessary to outline and examine the specific benefits that will arise as a result of solving the problem using this approach. A total of three specific benefits/advantages of teaching children foreign language at a younger age have been chosen for examination within the following paragraphs. These three benefits/advantages include increased awareness and understanding of cultural/societal diversity, enhanced knowledge, skills, and abilities to maximize future professional opportunities, and expand communication skills and abilities among peers that speak foreign languages, and each of these will be discussed in detail below.

### **Increased Awareness and Understanding of Cultural/Societal Diversity**

The enhancement of cultural and societal awareness and understanding represents a concept that is perpetually under emphasized throughout the world. As a result, there often remains misunderstandings and animosity among different cultures due to misconceptions and inability to overcome the language barrier. The solution of promoting early learning of foreign languages among young children would help children to become more accepting and knowledgeable about different cultures. As a result, these children will be more inclined to promote equality among those around them

without regard for race or ethnicity, which represents a sound ethos based argument.

## **Increased professional Skill Set to Maximize Professional Opportunities**

Another valuable advantage/benefit of early foreign language learning is the long term enhancement of individual skill sets to maximize professional opportunities. One of the most prominent ways that this is realized is through the pursuit of acceptance into college. In particular, colleges and universities throughout the world have begun to place increased value on being bilingual, trilingual, or multi-lingual. As a result, those that possess the necessary skills and abilities to speak two or more languages are typically afforded much better, more lucrative opportunities during their college years. College acceptance, for example, may be much easier for those that are able to speak multiple languages. In addition, being multilingual can help college students get into more prestigious universities, such as those in the ivy league, as well as secure academic scholarships and grants. The advantage of increased opportunity also transcends the professional career as the ability to speak foreign languages is a highly coveted and admired skill among organizational leaders. Further, the ability to speak multiple languages is a rare skill, which indicates that those with this ability will be regarded as more valuable as human capital to most businesses.



## **Enhance Communication Skills to Build Solid Network of Peers From Many Nations**

The final advantage/benefit associated with teaching foreign languages to children of younger ages involves the resulting enhancement of communication skills that can be used to build solid multinational peer networks. Although many people from foreign countries learn both their native language and the English language at a relatively early age, children within the U. S. often make little effort to learn the language of other nations. As a result, an extensive language barrier has persisted among many Americans with foreign counterparts that has negatively impacted and stifled opportunities and multicultural relationship building. When children learn a foreign language, it becomes considerably easier for these children to communicate with other foreigners, which effectively mitigates the negative implications associated with the persisting language barrier.

### **Conclusion**

Now more than ever, the learning of foreign languages has become profoundly important to today's youth if they wish to find success in their future academic and/or professional career. Waning interest in foreign language learning among today's high school students has led to significant communication problems with individuals from foreign countries as globalization has caused multinational interaction to become commonplace. In order to solve this problem, it is recommended that foreign language learning be started with children at a much younger age because younger children have a much greater aptitude to quickly learn and retain new languages. Further, exposing children to foreign language learning at a

younger age results in three particularly compelling advantages/benefits that include increased awareness and understanding of cultural/societal diversity, enhanced knowledge, skills, and abilities to maximize future professional opportunities, and expand communication skills and abilities among peers that speak foreign languages. Accordingly, the research and data presented in this report appears to strongly the conclusion that learning a foreign language can have a significant positive impact on a student's education, future career, and life as a whole.

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