

# Languages

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A lot of people at my school ask me why is that I do languages, generally in an attempt to make fun of me trying to better myself by accepting the languages of others, and ask me why I am not doing a 'worthwhile' subject, like DT.

Now, I am not sure if its just me, but which seems more worthwhile to you, learning vocabulary to be able to understand and communicate with people beyond the small group of islands we live on, or gluing one piece of wood to another to make a pretty box which will most likely lie forgotten and unused somewhere in the attic? I'm not getting at people who do DT (aside from the person who keeps telling me to stop "wasting my time" with French.....

....), but I cannot see how learning languages can be anything but beneficial.

Granted, it's strenuous, but virtually any subject is, and the one factor that affects the difference between them is your own desire to do the subject, and in my case, my passion is languages. Language is, put simply, the greatest tool that we have ever used. No superlative is enough to encompass the broad reaches of language and its richness. The effects of tongues can be seen everywhere we look. Even as I right this I am listening to an album which includes songs in Latin, Irish and English; I am writing this on a piece of software called 'word'; I am able to read through what I have written. Languages are God- they are omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient.

How? Well, languages are everywhere that we look, as I have already detailed. They are omnipotent as words can bring down Governments, start a revolution, end a war or write a document on the importance of language. Finally, language is omniscient as all known things are thought about using

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words and therefore languages include all things. However, this isn't all what languages mean to me. "He who is ignorant of other languages is ignorant to his own," says Goethe and this is, I think, the crux of why people need languages to understand other people. Without knowledge of who you are, you cannot even begin to contemplate understanding others! Languages are a passage into the mind of others.

Languages have personalities that reflect the people who speak them. This is part of what attracted me to learn French. I have only been lucky to journey thither thrice and as a result I have had a little contact with the French people and their culture. However, I threw my studies of the French language, I feel that I now know more about France than I do about any other country save England. The language has enriched my life and broadened my mind. Perhaps I am the one who's wrong, perhaps we are just meant to stay at home, staying as far away from anyone beyond Britain as possible, and leaving ourselves isolated, but I don't honestly care if I am wrong for it or not.

Without languages society falls. We can't arrange business meetings, hold important government debates, and holidays will be virtually impossible! You're a lot more likely to find a receptionist at an Italian hotel who speaks Italian than you are to find one that speaks fluent English, and even if you do find one, that doesn't mean every other single person that you will meet in Italy will. To be fair I don't speak Italian either, but if I ever choose to go to Italy, I will at least take some time to learn a bit of the language, even if it's just the set phrases they give you in the dictionary. I believe that as many people as possible should try to learn a second language up to a high

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standard. It is almost an insult to go abroad without learning some useful phrases in the local language. It makes me shudder when ever I hear people moaning about how difficult it was to get understood when abroad, and I think to myself “ why not try talking in their language rather than your own?” It is an unfortunate trade of the English to do this in my experience, and it is one that we must quickly rid ourselves of, before everyone else decodes to stop learning English to give us a taste of our own medicine! Mono-linguists should be forced to stay within English-speaking countries until they have learned another language.

Well we wouldn't want that would we? But maybe that would make people stop being so ignorant. Languages are special, and people need to be careful how they use them. But they also have to use them more often.