

Global understanding, professional success, personal growth: In today's global environment, the knowledge of other languages and cultures is an absolute necessity. The study of a foreign language has always been an integral part of what it means to be educated, yet this is even more urgent today. You often hear that English is becoming the lingua franca in much of the world, and that especially in Europe, most educated people speak English. So why should you bother to learn another language? Well, here are just a few reasons. In the first place, contrary to popular belief, not everybody speaks English. But even if this were true, unless you are able to speak another language with some degree of fluency, you will always be at a decided disadvantage. For one, your monolingual, monocultural view of the world will limit your perspective, your ability to really understand global events and interactions, even if you never leave the United States. For another, you will never truly be on equal footing with people from another culture if you know nothing of their language. But perhaps the most important reason to study another language is for your own growth as a person. Most people who have had the opportunity to live in another culture and learn another language will tell you that the experience changed their lives profoundly. Speaking another language challenges who we are, involves us in a process of becoming, and this is what growth is all about. Take advantage of this opportunity while a student in Duval County to learn another language.

Each opportunity for language acquisition offers our students unique advantages. Foreign language study enhances the young person's ability to master critical learning skills necessary for academic success. The following information addresses the particular advantages that each language provides:

Latin:

The study of Latin prepares students for the SAT's and provides them with a deeper understanding of English grammar. Exposure to Latin will significantly improve the student's vocabulary as approximately 67% of all English words have their origin in the Latin language. In addition to this a strong background in Classics is beneficial in the study of medicine. Understanding many of the bedrock concepts of our legal system is simplified by a knowledge of Latin. Latin will ultimately increase linguistic abilities as well as provide a deeper understanding of terminology found in science, mathematics, and music. Latin is the history, culture and people which gave birth to Western Civilization as we know it. The tremendous value of Latin as our students seek to learn about the contemporary cultures of the world and their history will be to cultivate the global and democratic outlook which enables them to become productive citizens in the twenty-first century.

Spanish:

500 million people across the world speak Spanish. It is the 3rd most spoken language worldwide. It is spoken natively by approximately 350 million people. The Hispanic population in the U.S. has grown by 60% in one decade. We recognize the extraordinary role that Spanish plays in every area of life in Florida. Spanish is becoming of greater importance in Europe as well. It is the official language of the United Nations, the European Union and other international organizations. Mastery of Spanish will increase the number of possibilities in the job market and permit an individual to move into geographical areas where English is not spoken. A knowledge of Spanish significantly increases the possibility to interact with other people in business, friendship and travel. Spanish is expected to soon be the first language of 50% of the population of the United States. Due to the economic growth of Latin American countries, they are important trading partners. Mastery of Spanish clearly offers multiple benefits in the business and social world.

French:

French is spoken by 500 million people in over 43 countries in the world. It is the only foreign language that can be useful throughout the world as well as in the U.S. and is the only language other than English spoken on 5 continents. French is spoken by our largest trading partner (Canada). Trade between France and the U.S. increased by 75% in recent years. The French are world leaders in business, medical research, technology, the arts and aerospace. The knowledge of French offers the student an edge in the increasingly competitive world market. SAT scores improve with French acquisition. France is the world's major tourist destination with 75 million tourists per year as well as maintaining the position of Europe's foremost investor abroad. A country of high technology (TGV is the fastest train in the world); France plays a premier role in the global business community. French is one of the 2 official languages of the Olympics, the United Nations, and French speaking Africa represents an area larger than the U.S.A. Over 20,000 English words have their origins in French. Employment opportunities are available in international business, international agencies, teaching, tourism, hospitality, diplomatic service, and research institutes and translating. French is the lingua franca of culture, including art, cuisine, dance and fashion.

German:

If you are planning for any profession or career that might involve the European context, German is an excellent language to learn. In Europe, more people speak German as their native language (approximately 100 million) than English, French, Italian, or Spanish. In Eastern Europe, German ranks even before English as the major second language. Knowing German will greatly enhance your career opportunities in international business, Foreign Service, publishing and journalism, commerce and industry, teaching and scholarship and engineering. Germany plays a central role in the European Union, and is a major economic and political power. German has been and remains an international language in many disciplines, including philosophy, social sciences, physics, engineering, and medicine, music, and art history. Whatever you decide to major in, many important texts relevant to your field are to be found only in German. Knowing German most definitely improves job prospects, as well. Almost one thousand American companies do business with Germany, and over one thousand companies based in German-speaking countries have subsidiaries in the U.S. In all of these firms there is a need for workers with an understanding of both languages and of the differences between the two cultures. Knowledge of German not only helps one get a job, but often is a significant factor in advancement within a company. In a number of high-tech companies German is the language named as the foreign language they would most like job applicants to know. German is the language of many great thinkers, artists, and scientists. Whether studying philosophy, mathematics, music, history, theology, engineering, or literature these fields will be greatly enhanced by a knowledge of German.

Italian:

A knowledge of Italian is important for people in the arts, technology, business and many professions. It is also useful for students planning careers in art history, music, linguistics, education and international relations. Italian is the fourth language most spoken in US homes, according to the US Census Bureau. It is also spoken in Switzerland, parts of Africa, the Balkans, and the island of Malta. Italy is world leader in the culinary arts, interior design, fashion, graphic design, furniture design, etc. Those planning careers in these fields benefit greatly from knowing Italian. Art historians need Italian. Italy is filled with the world's greatest art treasures. Italy is a world leader in advanced technologies in robotics, electromechanical machinery, shipbuilding, space engineering, construction machinery, and transportation equipment. Italy has long been a magnet for the tourism industry: millions and millions of people visit Italy every year. By studying Italian you can learn some surprising things about your own culture. Over the centuries, Italy has produced some of the most remarkable cultural works in the western canon, from Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri to

Michelangelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel. Historically, too, Italy has always been of great importance. In the Middle Ages cities such as Florence and Venice were among the richest and most powerful of Europe; it was Italy that produced the Renaissance, the culture and values of which have provided the foundations of much of western life in the last five hundred years. Knowledge of the Italian language affords access to one of the West's richest cultural traditions as well as to one of Europe's most vital contemporary societies.

Chinese:

There are many benefits to studying Chinese. China is the most populous country in the world with over 1.4 billion people. Mandarin is spoken by almost one billion people the #1 spoken language in the world. One out of five people in the world is Chinese. Mandarin is spoken in the People's Republic of China, Taiwan, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, The Philippines and Mongolia. China is one of the world's oldest civilizations, over 5,000 years old. As China has the second largest economy in the world, knowing Chinese will allow students to compete effectively in the global economy of the future. It is one of America's largest trading partners. Many American companies do business in China, including Motorola, Coca Cola, and Ford. Knowing Chinese may be an edge when competing for a job. The demand for business people who know Chinese is skyrocketing. China is playing a major role in world affairs and will continue to do so.

Arabic:

Arabic is the language of a rich culture and civilization dating back many centuries. Arabic is spoken by over 200 million people, in an area extending from the Arabian Gulf in the east to the Atlantic Ocean in the west. Arabic is spoken by many of the more than four million people of Arab origin living in the United States and Canada. The United Nations adopted Arabic as one of its six official languages in 1974. In addition to the Palestinians, the governments of eighteen countries list Arabic as their dominant mode of expression: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Arabic is also an important language in many other countries of the world. Our lives are vitally connected to the societies of the Middle East. The study of Arabic gives profound insights into the cultural, religious, and political forces which motivate the inhabitants of that dynamic region—insights that our monolingual media seldom provide. A good knowledge of Arabic will greatly enhance the enjoyment of your travels to the world's greatest archeological sites. In the Jacksonville community there is strong support for Arabic instruction. The Arabic population is listed at 70,000 in Jacksonville representing nearly 9% of the population. Jacksonville ranks twelfth largest in the percentage of Arab Americans among all U.S. cities. The study of Arabic also offers our students employment opportunities in the military and the diplomatic corps. Proficiency in Arabic provides a valuable link to the rich cultural heritage for young people in our community. In addition to this, exposure to a critical language like Arabic provides students with a unique set of skills which are beneficial in mastery of challenging academic subjects.

Portuguese:

Portuguese is the mother tongue of more than 200 million people in 4 continents. A knowledge of Portuguese provides students with improved business opportunities on a local and global level. Brazil is the number one country with whom Florida trades. As a career and Logistics Academy, First coast High School will offer Portuguese to its students during the 2008-2009 academic year. This will provide employment opportunities in our community for these young people. The First Coast High School connection to Jaxport and the implementation of the Junior Achievement program have resulted in a unique connection with a high school in Brazil. Jacksonville students are currently creating products to sell to the students in Brazil and the young people in Brazil

are doing the same for their First Coast counterparts. Technology plays an intricate role in this student business venture to enhance communication. On the local level, two trips have been organized recently to Brazil which included the mayor and members of the Chamber of Commerce. The Governor also accompanied the group. Various corporations were interviewed along with one aviation company. A special representative from Brazil, Joshua Rodrigues, has been appointed as the Jaxport business liaison with Brazil. Proficiency in Portuguese is clearly a marketable skill in commerce, banking, computer sciences and nursing. Portuguese language skills will expose students to a rich culture including music and literature as well.

Turkish:

The U.S. Department of Education indicates that there is a national need for training in diverse and critical languages. Turkish is the 20th most commonly spoken language of the world from Eastern Europe to Central Asia and Siberia and yet it is one of the less commonly taught languages in the U.S. According to The Wall Street Journal “The U.S. Commerce Department has identified Turkey as one of the 10 emerging markets that will drive global growth in the next 15 years”. 150 million people worldwide speak Turkish. Since pre-historic times Turkey has been the vital bridge between Europe and the Middle East. Its mighty Ottoman Empire consolidated much of Eastern Europe and the Middle East into one great civilization until the early 20th century. For Americans, Turkey’s liberal political and intellectual climate bridging East and West, traditional and modern is a comforting environment. Learning Turkish gives access to many new opportunities for business, scientific and technological research, and for scholarship and journalism. Currently, students in Turkey are learning English at a record rate, while few Americans learn Turkish: to offset that imbalance of skill and opportunity, there is great need for Americans to meet the creative challenge of learning Turkish. Turkish is a key for accessing Turkic languages spoken by tens of millions of people in the Near East, the former Soviet Union, China and the Balkan’s – all regions of vital strategic importance in the world today. Business partnerships with Turkey and the USA are steadily growing, creating an ever-increasing demand for educated Americans fluent in Turkish and with knowledge and understanding of both cultures. Studying Turkish exposes the student to a rich cultural heritage and employment opportunities with government corporations and other organizations promoting productive alliances with the Middle East.

Apart from helping you acquire a useful skill and an understanding of another culture, study of a foreign language can be a transformative experience, changing the way you think not only about your own culture, but about yourself and your place in the world. Study a foreign language, and stick with it!

American Sign Language:

American Sign Language (ASL) is the preferred language of the Deaf community in the United States and much of Canada. Recent data indicates that ASL is the fastest growing language in the USA and is estimated to be the fourth most commonly used language on the North American continent. This unique language uses visual-gestural modalities of manual signs, facial expressions, and body signals to convey complex linguistic information as well as rich Deaf traditions of visual poetry, narratives, and theater. ASL studies also provide Deaf cultural insights into the values and outlooks of Deaf people, and social and educational aspects of deafness.

In 2001, the Florida State Legislature passed a law making American Sign Language equal to all foreign language courses. In doing so ASL became a popular option for high school world language graduation requirements. This legislative recognition also established ASL as an admission requirement to any public community college or university in the state of Florida, but more importantly the Florida Bright Futures Scholarships program fully funds ASL an acceptable eligibility option.

Finally, ASL students gain practical training for entering a range of professions. As social, community, legal and educational services have expanded nation wide, many career possibilities have opened up for those interested in professional work in deaf-related fields. ASL studies provide excellent preparation to students for professional careers as sign language interpreters, sign language instructors, counselors, government specialists, audiologists, speech pathologists, program administrators, community service personnel, and many other related vocations.