***Why study a foreign language?***

**Here are fifteen things studying a new language might do for you. Language study:**

1. broadens your experiences; expands your view of the world
2. encourages critical reflection on the relation of language and culture, language and thought; fosters an understanding of the interrelation of language and human nature
3. develops your intellect; teaches you how to learn
4. teaches and encourages respect for other peoples
5. contributes to cultural awareness and literacy, such as knowledge of original texts
6. builds practical skills (for travel or commerce or as a tool for other disciplines)
7. improves the knowledge of your own language through comparison and contrast with the foreign language
8. exposes you to modes of thought outside of your native language
9. a sense of relevant past, both cultural and linguistic
10. balances content and skill (rather than content versus skill)
11. expands opportunities for meaningful leisure activity (travel, reading, viewing foreign language films)
12. contributes to achievement of national goals, such as economic development or national security
13. contributes to the creation of your personality
14. enables the transfer of training (such as learning a second foreign language)
15. preserves (or fosters) a country’s image as a cultured nation

**What Are the Benefits of Knowing a Second Language?**

Students of foreign languages score statistically higher on standardized tests conducted in English. In its 1992 report, College Bound Seniors: The 1992 Profile of SAT and Achievement Test Takers, the College Entrance Examination Board reported that students who averaged 4 or more years of foreign language study scored higher on the verbal section of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) than those who had studied 4 or more years in any other subject area. In addition, the average mathematics score for individuals who had taken 4 or more years of foreign language study was identical to the score of those who had studied the same number of years of mathematics. These findings are consistent with College Board profiles for previous years.

Students of foreign languages have access to a greater number of career possibilities and develop a deeper understanding of their own and other cultures. Some evidence also suggests that children who receive second language instruction are more creative and better at solving complex problems. The benefits to society are many. Americans fluent in other languages enhance our economic competitiveness abroad, improve global communication, and maintain our political and security interests.

***Why French?***

While any language will be useful for some jobs or for some regions, French is the only foreign language that can be useful throughout the world as well as in the United States. French as a foreign language is the second most frequently taught language in the world after English. The International Organization of Francophonie has 51 member states and governments. Of these, 28 countries have French as an official language. French is the only language other than English spoken on five continents. French and English are the only two global languages.

When deciding on a foreign language for work or school, consider that French is the language that will give you the most choices later on in your studies or your career.

**French, along with English, is the official working language of:**

the United Nations

UNESCO

NATO

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

the International Labor Bureau

the International Olympic Committee

the 31-member Council of Europe

the European Community

the Universal Postal Union

the International Red Cross

Union of International Associations (UIA)

**French is the dominant working language at:**

the European Court of Justice

the European Tribunal of First Instance

the Press Room at the European Commission in Brussels, Belgium

One example of the importance of French can be seen in a recent listing of international jobs (8/25/08) distributed by the US State Department: 78 required or preferred French, 27 a UN language (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish), 17 Spanish, 10 Arabic, 5 Russian, and 3 German, 1 Chinese.

Of the various types of professional positions for which international organizations recruit, five required French, two Spanish, one Portuguese, and one Arabic, according to the fact sheet released by the UN Employment Information and Assistance Unit Bureau of International Organization Affairs U.S. Department of State, December 1, 2000.