Why Foreign-Language Study is a Good Idea for Every Student

We assume if you have reasons to learn a particular language (to study, work, travel, or live abroad or for resources not fully available in English translation), you already know why it is important. Here are reasons to study any language besides English or whatever you regard as your native language:

1. Many employers, professional schools, and graduate schools see serious study of a second language (potentially, a double-major) as evidence that you can (a) put yourself more easily in others' (colleagues', clients') shoes and (b) communicate more effectively even in English.

2. You will never know your own language and culture more deeply than by studying another--by looking at it from the outside. Learning to thrive with the unfamiliar is often linked to creativity in many intellectual and professional contexts.

3. Language learning teaches you to think more clearly and sharpens your brain's ability to make sense of the world.

4. Deep study of another culture through its language brings home how much of value will never be made available in English.

5. Puzzling out another language and culture will help you understand (and empathize with) the difficulties of non-anglophone immigrants, colleagues, clients, and travelers in the U.S., even if you never leave American shores.

6. Learning another language well makes it easier to learn any language in the future. Even if you never need this, the experience--especially if you study abroad--will make you far more confident in your ability to face any intellectual or professional challenge.

7. Foreign-language courses fit easily into study plans: offered on highly varied schedules, they provide a stimulating (and fun!) break from problem-set driven, heavy-reading or arts courses.

Wesleyan offers:

Arabic language and culture: [http://www.wesleyan.edu/academics/faculty/aaissa/profile.html](http://www.wesleyan.edu/academics/faculty/aaissa/profile.html)

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Classics (Greek and Latin): [http://wesleyan.edu/classics/](http://wesleyan.edu/classics/)


German studies: [http://wesleyan.edu/german/](http://wesleyan.edu/german/)

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Romance Languages & Literatures (French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish): [http://wesleyan.edu/romance/](http://wesleyan.edu/romance/)

Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies program: [http://wesleyan.edu/russian/](http://wesleyan.edu/russian/)

Any other language: [http://www.wesleyan.edu/lcts/silp.html](http://www.wesleyan.edu/lcts/silp.html)