FOREIGN LANGUAGE

What Can I Do With A Degree In Foreign Language?

GOVERNMENT

Area
- Translation/Interpretation
- Language Analysis
- Linguistics
- Diplomacy
- Civil Service
- Foreign Service
- Immigration/Naturalization
- Customs
- Intelligence
- Security and Protection
- Law Enforcement
- Journalism/Broadcasting

Employer
- Federal government organizations including:
- Overseas aid agencies
- Intelligence and law enforcement agencies:
  - Federal Bureau of Investigation
  - Central Intelligence Agency
  - Drug Enforcement Administration
- Department of State
- Homeland Security including:
  - US Customs and Border Patrol
  - US Citizenship and Immigration Services
- Department of Defense including:
  - US Armed Forces
  - National Guard
  - National Security Agency
  - Department of Commerce

Start Here, Go Anywhere

Saint Mary’s College of California
Agency for International Development (USAID)
Peace Corps, VISTA, Americorps
Library of Congress
Voice of America
US District Courts

**Information/Strategies**
- The government is one of the largest employers of people with foreign language skills. Consider studying a critical need language for the greatest number of opportunities.
- Complete an internship with a federal agency and maintain a high GPA to be a more competitive candidate.
- Learn government job application procedures. Plan to apply early and inquire frequently about job vacancies.
- Review special hiring authorizations to be hired and to advance more quickly.
- Participate in campus organizations and activities that promote interaction with international students.
- Attend a specialized school that teaches foreign languages for additional training.
- Live abroad and gain knowledge of politics and economics to prepare for a career in this field.
- Increase knowledge of geography, history, and international affairs.
- Join the armed forces as a way to get experience.
- Consider earning a graduate degree for more job opportunities.

**INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE**

**Area**
- Translation/Interpretation
- Banking/Finance
- Sales
- Customer Services
- Manufacturing
- Logistics and Transportation
- Engineering/Technical
- Computer and Software Services
- Research
- Operations Management
- Consulting
- Importing/Exporting
- Administrative Services
- Advertising and Marketing
- Human Resources
- Law

**Employer**
- Banks and financial institutions
- Import/Export companies
- International companies including:
  - Foreign firms operating in the US
  - US firms operating in foreign countries
- Manufacturers
- Retail stores
- Environmental firms
- Consulting agencies
- Sports organizations
- Telecommunications companies
- Computer and software firms
- Advertising agencies
- Professional associations
- Law firms

**Information/Strategies**
- Supplement coursework with business classes or earn a business minor.
Develop international competency by living and working abroad and by interacting with international students on campus.

Get involved in student organizations and seek leadership roles.

Research which companies do business with the countries in which your language of study is spoken.

Be prepared to start in a position in the US working for a firm with an overseas presence. Very few entry level positions are available in international business.

Some jobs will require graduate degrees in fields such as business, law, or related areas.

TRAVEL AND TOURISM

Area
- Translation/Interpretation
- Airline Services
- Management
- Booking and Reservations
- Travel Services/Guidance
- Ecotourism

Employer
- Tour and excursion companies
- Travel agencies
- Hotels/Motels
- Resorts
- Restaurants
- Airlines/Airports
- Cruise lines
- Railroads
- Bus lines
- Convention centers
- Chambers of commerce

Information/Strategies
- Take courses in hotel/restaurant administration or recreation and tourism management.
- Get a part-time job in a hotel or restaurant to gain experience.
- Spend some time abroad to learn about various cultures and traditions.
- Brush up on your knowledge of geography.
- Consider attending a travel and tourism school.
- Develop office skills such as working with computers.
- Show an attention to detail.
- Read international newspapers to keep up with overseas developments.

INTERPRETATION/TRANSLATION

Area
- Interpretation (Simultaneous & Consecutive)
- Business
- Conference
- Escort/Guide
- Judiciary (Court)
- Translation
- Legal
- Literary
- Localization
- Machine
- Medical
- Technical

Employer
- Freelance
- Educational services
- Business services
- Government agencies
- Healthcare organizations
• International organizations
• Nonprofit and social service organizations
• Courts
• Publishers
• Libraries

**Information/Strategies**

• Develop fluency in a second language. Seek out any opportunity to converse with native speakers to better learn the language.
• Learn a third language for increased job opportunities. Some languages such as Middle Eastern or Asian ones are in more demand than others.
• Gain experience through internships or volunteering.
• Seek certification or accreditation from an interpretation/translation organization.
• Being bilingual does not automatically qualify one to serve as an interpreter or translator.
• Learn to listen to one language while speaking another at the same time.
• Develop aptitude with computers and the Internet.
• Interpreters and translators who have expertise in a particular area such as law or medicine may find more opportunities.
• Develop skills in negotiation.
• Learn to work well under stress.
• Most people who work in this field freelance. Show ability, initiative and motivation as this is a very competitive field.

**SERVICE AND EDUCATION**

**Area**

• Translation/Interpretation
• Teaching
• Tutoring

• Educational Administration Including:
  • Student Affairs
  • Study Abroad Programs
  • International Houses or Cultural Centers
  • International Student Services
  • Linguistics
  • Civil Service
  • Social Work
  • Mission Work
  • Library Science
  • Health Services
  • Counseling
  • Nonprofit or Public Interest Law
  • Research

**Employer**

• K-12 schools, public and private
• Universities/Colleges
• Pre-schools
• Professional language schools
• English language institutes
• Overseas dependents’ schools
• Foreign study exchange programs
• Libraries
• Adult education programs
• Religious and volunteer organizations
• International organizations
• Law enforcement agencies
• Social service agencies
• Nonprofit organizations
• Hospitals

**Information/Strategies**

• Obtain state teacher licensure for K-12 teaching.
• Earn a graduate degree for college or university teaching opportunities.
• Develop superior written and oral communication skills in the English language including proper sentence structure and comprehensive vocabulary.
• Minor or double major in another subject that you could also teach.
• Get experience as a teaching assistant or tutor.
• Become familiar with the cultural base of your language (literature, art, politics, etc.) as well as with cultural traditions.
• Consider teaching English as a foreign language (overseas). Research courses and certifications for teaching English to non-native speakers.
• Volunteer with government programs such as VISTA or community programs such as ESL classes.
• Work abroad through volunteer programs or missions.
• Plan to take both written and oral examinations to become an interpreter.
• Notify local hospitals, schools, and chambers of commerce of your availability to translate or interpret for international visitors.
• Earn a graduate degree in a field of specialty, e.g. Student Affairs Administration, counseling, or law.

**ARTS, MEDIA, ENTERTAINMENT**

**Area**
- Advertising and Marketing
- Translation/Interpretation
- Journalism/Broadcasting
- Photography
- Writing
- Publishing/Editing
- Public Relations
- Performing

**Employer**
- Museums
- Foreign news agencies
- Book publishers
- Newspapers
- Magazines
- TV networks
- Radio stations
- Film companies
- Recording companies
- Internet media companies
- Advertising firms

**Information/Strategies**
- Learn about the customs and culture of the country in which your language of study is primarily spoken.
- Supplement coursework with related classes such as journalism, photography, art, etc.
- Spend time studying or working abroad.
- Complete one or more internships in your field of interest.
- Work at campus and local newspapers or radio and television stations.
- Read international newspapers to keep up with developments overseas.
- Listen to foreign broadcasts.

**GENERAL INFORMATION STRATEGIES**
- Choose an additional academic area of study to supplement the foreign language, preferably one that requires a high degree of technical skill. Most people with foreign language ability use those skills to assist
them in a different career field such as business, education, journalism, law, etc.

- Choose which language and culture appeals to you most. Consider the level of foreign language ability you will need to acquire for success in your career. Possible languages to study: Spanish, German, French, Russian, Japanese, Chinese, Italian, Hebrew, Arabic, and Portuguese. Some languages will offer more job opportunities than other languages in various industries or geographic locales.
- Related courses to study include geography, history, civilization, foreign relations, international law, and world economics.
- Plan to attend a private language institute to learn additional languages and cultures.
- Travel to a foreign country or study abroad in international exchange programs to develop your language skills and international/intercultural competency.
- Study and practice your foreign language skills by reading foreign newspapers, magazines, and books.
- Seek opportunities to interact with international students on your campus or members of your local community. Host international students, join relevant student organizations, and participate in international campus events.
- Watch foreign movies and listen to foreign broadcasts to maintain your fluency.
- Volunteer your language skills to churches, community organizations, and programs that work with people who speak your target language.
- Correspond with someone from a foreign country.
- Contact professional associations and read their publications to learn about job opportunities.

- Research job postings on the Internet to get an idea of jobs in which knowledge of a foreign language is useful.
- Participate in summer programs, co-ops, and internships to improve your skills.
- Network with others in the field to learn about job opportunities.
- In general, international positions are competitive and difficult to obtain. Be very proactive in developing the skills and experiences international employers seek.
- Get your foot in the door in domestic positions because many international employers promote current employees into international ones.

**Careers in Modern Languages**

University of North Carolina, 
[www.uncwil.edu/stuaff/career/Majors/language.htm](http://www.uncwil.edu/stuaff/career/Majors/language.htm)

International Careers Page 
[www.duke.edu/~lpmaskel/international_page.html](http://www.duke.edu/~lpmaskel/international_page.html)

International Career Resources 
[www.duke.edu/~lpmaskel/intl_general.html](http://www.duke.edu/~lpmaskel/intl_general.html)

Language Major Careers 
[www.uncwil.edu/stuaff/career/Majors/language.htm](http://www.uncwil.edu/stuaff/career/Majors/language.htm)

Univ. of St. Thomas 

UC Berkeley 
[http://career.berkeley.edu/Infolab/CareerFields.stm](http://career.berkeley.edu/Infolab/CareerFields.stm)

Guides for Specific Careers 
[www.jobstar.org/tools/career/spec-car.cfm](http://www.jobstar.org/tools/career/spec-car.cfm)
Job Web
http://www.jobweb.com/

Occupational Outlook Handbook
www.bls.gov/oco/

The Job Hunters Bible
http://www.jobhuntersbible.com/

O’Net
http://online.onetcenter.org

Exploring Majors
Kansas State University
http://www.k-state.edu/acic/majorin/modernlanguages.htm

University of Manitoba
www.umanitoba.ca/counselling/careers.html

University of Tennessee
http://career.utk.edu/students/majors.asp

University of Delaware
www.udel.edu/CSC/mrk.html

MonsterTrak.com
http://content.monstertrak.monster.com/tools/careerconverter/

Job Postings
Best Bets for Working Abroad
http://globaled.us/rfsa/programsabroad.html

Bilingual Jobs - Bilingual Professionals & Career Seekers
www.bilingual-jobs.com

CIA
http://www.odci.gov/employment/language.html

Department of State
Info on jobs in Spanish speaking world.
www.laneta.apc.org

The Embassy Page
www.embpage.org/

ESL Job Center
http://www.eslcafe.com/jobs/

MonsterTRAK
http://www.monstertrak.com

Overseas Jobs
www.overseasjobs.com/

Resources for International Job Opportunities (Riley Guide)
www.rileyguide.com/internat.html

United Nations
http://www.un.org/

US Agency for International Development
http://www.usaid.gov/

The World Bank
http://www.worldbank.org/

The World Health Organization
http://www.who.int/en/

World Hire Online
www.hire.com

Professional Associations
Associations and Societies
www.ntu.edu.sg/home/ctng/assoc.htm

Yahoo! Professional Organizations
www.yahoo.com/Economy/Organizations/Professional
Google.com
www.google.com

American Association for Applied Linguistics
www.aaal.org/

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
www.actfl.org/

American Translators Association
www.atanet.org/

National Association for Bilingual Education
www.nabe.org/

Foreign Language Associations
www.discoverfrance.net/France/Language/DF_lang_assn.shtml

International Association for Language Learning Technology
http://iall.net/

Modern Language Association
www.mla.org/

**Miscellaneous Resources**

This site will translate text or web sites back and forth between English and Spanish, French, German, Italian or Portuguese. Free http://www.learnplus.com/

The Electronic Embassy
http://www.embassy.org/

Web of Culture
http://www.globalbusinessleadership.com/

Yahoo.com - Spanish Internet sites
http://dir.yahoo.com/Social_Science/Linguistics_and_Human_Languages/Languages/Specific_Languages/Spanish/

Yahoo.com - French Internet sites
http://dir.yahoo.com/Social_Science/Linguistics_and_Human_Languages/Languages/Specific_Languages/French/

United Nations
www.un.org

Yahoo’s Index of Country Information
www.yahoo.com/Regional/Countries/

Agora Language Marketplace

National Capital Language Resource Center
www.cal.org

United Nations
www.un.org/

American Field Service
www.afs.org/

All About Spain

Para traducir texto en este sitio al español, el chasquido en el eslabón abajo:
www.freetranslation.com/

Small Business Association
www.sba.gov/espanol/