

The many benefits of being multilingual

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Unless you can understand the above statement follow the article's advice. In fact, go ahead and follow it either way.

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Learning a second language may not be the most exciting thing to do in the world (especially with the new Super Mario Bros game out), but there are far too many reasons why it is a good investment. Most importantly, the world is becoming an extension of the United Nations, defined less and less by individual countries' physical boundaries. True, English is considered to be "the universal language," but that should not deter the pursuit of other

languages.

I'll start off with the most selfish of reasons that I've heard: it looks great on a resume when applying for jobs. That's right, you could get hired quickly. It makes sense. Since the world is indeed becoming "a small world after all," employees who speak a second language are showing that they have the patience to learn even a little bit of a second language and are also willing to have an open mind when speaking to foreign customers.

To take this idea to a national level, it helps to break down the stereo-

type that Americans are bigoted and unintelligent when it comes to the world past California and New York. If every person who has gone through public education could learn at least one other language then maybe that would help future students compete with students overseas, not only in the business realm, but on a more fundamental, literally mind-opening level.

Scientifically speaking, learning a second language activates parts of the brain that are barely used in other fields (kind of the same concept as music). Learning other lan-

guages may help stimulate the brain and, as a happy consequence, create a smarter you. But selfish benefits aside, each individual becoming smarter can also be coupled with the more selfless reasons.

By learning at least one other language, cultural barriers are broken down. Learning about different cultures is part of learning a language. This helps to add to the ever-growing diverse world. In fact, that could even be applied to our backyard. This country is a melting pot. It would be helpful to know another language. Without improving cultural diversity, many ideas and principles that we have today might have been overlooked.

The most important reason of all doesn't fit into a selfless or selfish category because it spans both sides of the spectrum. If you would like to fully understand English (or any native language for that matter), you might want to begin by learning another language. By learning a second language, you might actually be re-learning your first (take grammar rules, for example). Next time you think about learning a second language and how time-consuming and tedious it can be, just remember it is an investment.

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