

FRENCH: THE MOST PRACTICAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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 U.S. 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 European Court of Auditors in Luxembourg.
- the Press Room at the European Commission in Brussels, Belgium

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Importance of French in school and work

Historically France and the French language have had an enormous influence over American society. France was the U.S.' first ally. French thought played a dominant role among the founders of the U.S. in the 18th century, and it continues to shape America today through the influence of such intellectual currents as poststructuralism and post-modernism. In the humanities and the social sciences, many of the most important writings have come from France. Students and researchers who know French have access to these works for several years before they are translated into English. Many significant works are never translated and remain accessible only to those who know the language. In addition, most graduate schools require knowledge of at least one foreign language, and French remains the most commonly used language after English.

When employers and universities look at applicants, they do not start looking at the bottom of the list to see who has done only the minimal amount of requirements necessary or taken the easiest route available, they start at the top of the list and look for those students who have risen above the rest. High school students should consider studying at least four years of a foreign language, College students should seek to earn a minor in French or have French as a primary or secondary major. With French they have access to the most widely spoken foreign language in the world after English, and they become familiar with a culture that significantly influences our own. The French economy is one of the strongest in the world and is increasingly a leader in technological innovation. In sum, French is the language of the future.

Please visit the Web version of this article at [www.fl.vt.edu/french/why_french.html], as this information is updated frequently.

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<https://www.frenchteachers.org/>

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