

Languages and Cultural Awareness*

Speaking another person's language can help you to understand their culture and outlook on life – a good way to break down barriers that divide people.

All communities take a pride in their customs and their way of seeing the world. Cultural understanding can be of great benefit in your career as it develops an appreciation of ideas, traditions and lifestyles which are often very different from your own. This also applies to ethnic communities in the UK, the visually and the hearing impaired as well as different countries and nationalities.

This activity sheet is designed to help you think about your language learning and cultural awareness, as well as your place as a citizen of the world.

*Activity sheet



1

With a partner or in a small group, think of the word 'Bread'.
What picture comes into your mind? Draw it.

Look at what your partner or group members have drawn.
Is it the same? If so, why do you think that is? If not, why not?

2

What other words for types or shapes of bread do we have
in English? Why is this?

Look at what your partner or group members have written.
Is it the same? If so, why do you think that is? If not, why not?

3

What do we have to think about when we're translating from one
language to another? Is it enough just to think about the words?
What else do we learn when we learn a language?

4

With a partner or in a small group, think about words like these:

Respect

Friendship

Dignity

Do you think these words translated into different languages would mean the same thing? How might they differ in other cultures?

5

Think about expressions like:

Breadwinner

Bread and butter

Daily bread

What do they mean? How do you think they came about? Do you think other languages have similar expressions? If you were trying to translate these words and expressions into another language, what would you have to bear in mind?

6

Take this sheet home and see what answers other members of your family give, especially to Questions 4 and 5.

7

In your group or pair, prepare a small presentation (around 10 minutes) for the rest of the class on why language learning can help you become a better world citizen.

While you are learning languages, you should remember:

Not everyone speaks English – it's a multilingual, multicultural world.

You do not have to be fluent in a language – there is room for all levels of ability in all types of work.

Languages improve the quality of your life and your understanding of how other people live and think.

If you are considering whether to continue to study languages, there are lots of websites which will give you information about your options. You should also talk to your teachers and ask your Connexions Personal Adviser for advice.

Remember, languages work well with a range of subjects. At university, it is possible to combine language learning with almost any subject.

Go to

www.languageswork.org.uk

and find out how you can continue your language learning through further and higher education.

