

# Languages, Culture and Citizenship\*

We live in a multicultural and multilingual world. There are differences in the way we look at things whether we live in a small village, a large town or a big city. Understanding these differences will help us to become better citizens. One way of doing this is through language learning. Not only are we able to communicate more easily, we also have a better understanding of people's lifestyle and culture.

This cultural understanding can be of great benefit in your working life both to you and your employer. This is because in order to work successfully in the ever-developing global economy, you need to have an appreciation of ideas, traditions, customs and lifestyles that are often very different from your own.

These activities are designed to help you reflect on how your language learning can help your understanding of different cultures.

\* Activity sheet



# 1

Who do you think made the following comments and why?

**a**

'They come over here and live in their own communities, speak their own language and refuse to learn ours ...'

**b**

'It will be important for me to express myself in Spanish as soon as possible. I'll make a real effort because it will help me integrate.'

**c**

'We're all after the same thing – this greater idea of common humanity and how we get past these hatreds and resentments that have built up between us.'

# 2

We use these words every day in English but where do they originate from? See if you can match them up. The first one is done for you. Use a dictionary or the Internet to help you.

Word

Original language

**Commando**

**Welsh**

**Bungalow**

**Turkish**

**Sauna**

**Hindi**

**Parachute**

**Bengali**

**Athlete**

**Afrikaans**

**Shampoo**

**French**

**Patio**

**Italian**

**Corgi**

**Finnish**

**Kebab**

**Spanish**

**Typhoon**

**Chinese**

**Opera**

**Greek**

Can you think of three reasons why we use so many words from different languages?

1.

2.

3.

# 3

If you could learn another language, which language would it be and why?

# 5

Now, with your partner or in your group, design a poster which reflects your discussion of one or more of the above. When you have finished, list the skills and ways of working you needed as a group to make the poster. Are any the same as the list in Question 4?

# 4

As citizens of the world, we may often find ourselves working alongside people from other countries who speak a different language and have different values, attitudes and beliefs. If we are to work well together, we need to develop a range of approaches and skills. With a partner or in a small group, look at the following list and try to think of a situation where you might need to use them.

**Tolerance**

**Appropriate behaviour**

**Ability to communicate**

**Knowledge of other cultures**

**Respect**

**Ability to see things from a different point of view**

#### Answers to Question 1

- a. Spanish resident on the Costa del Sol talking to a British journalist about the number of British people buying property in the region. Recent research has revealed that more than two million Britons want to move to Southern Europe, joining the hundreds of thousands who already own villas, apartments or rural retreats, and spend either part or all the year abroad. Not many have the language skills to match!
- b. David Beckham, footballer, on his move to Spain to play for Real Madrid.
- c. Brad Pitt, actor, talking about the film 'Troy' and the parallels between the war in Iraq and the ancient dispute between the Trojans and the Greeks.

#### Answers to Question 2

Commando = Afrikaans  
Bungalow = Bengali  
Sauna = Finnish  
Parachute = French  
Athlete = Greek  
Shampoo = Hindi  
Patio = Spanish  
Corgi = Welsh  
Kebab = Turkish  
Typhoon = Chinese  
Opera = Italian

For more, go to  
[www.etymonline.com](http://www.etymonline.com)

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.

To find out how languages can work for you, go to

[www.languageswork.org.uk](http://www.languageswork.org.uk)

