

# FOREIGN LANGUAGE

## What can I do with this major?

### AREAS

### EMPLOYERS

### STRATEGIES

#### GOVERNMENT

Translation/Interpretation  
Language analysis  
Linguistics  
Diplomacy  
Civil service  
Foreign service  
Immigration/Naturalization  
Customs  
Intelligence  
Security and protection  
Law enforcement  
Journalism/Broadcasting

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:  
US Customs and Border Patrol  
US Citizenship and Immigration Services  
Department of Defense:  
US Armed Forces  
National Guard  
National Security Agency  
Department of Commerce  
Agency for International Development (USAID)  
Peace Corps, VISTA, Americorps  
Library of Congress  
Voice of America  
US District Courts  
United Nations

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 application procedures for applying for government jobs. 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

Translation/Interpretation  
Banking/Finance  
Sales  
Customer services  
Manufacturing  
Logistics and transportation/Supply chain mgmt.  
Engineering/Technical  
Computer and software services  
Research

Banks and financial institutions  
Import/Export companies  
International companies including:  
Foreign firms operating in the US  
US firms operating in foreign countries  
Manufacturers:  
Automobile  
Retail stores  
Environmental firms  
Consulting agencies

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.

## AREAS

## EMPLOYERS

## STRATEGIES

### INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE CONTINUED

Operations management  
Consulting  
Importing/Exporting  
Administrative services  
Advertising and marketing  
Human resources  
Law

Sports organizations  
Telecommunications companies  
Computer and software firms  
Advertising agencies  
Professional associations  
Law firms

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 (e.g., business, law, etc.).

### TRAVEL AND TOURISM

Translation/Interpretation  
Airline services  
Management  
Booking and reservations  
Travel services/Guidance  
Ecotourism

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

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 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 management and technology skills.  
Maintain a travel blog.  
Show attention to detail.  
Read international newspapers to keep up with overseas developments.

### INTERPRETATION/TRANSLATION

Interpretation (Simultaneous and consecutive)  
    Business  
    Conference  
    Escort/Guide  
    Judiciary (Court)  
Translation  
    Legal  
    Literary  
    Localization  
    Machine  
    Medical  
    Technical  
Lexicography  
Steganography

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

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, service learning, 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.

**AREAS**

**EMPLOYERS**

**STRATEGIES**

**INTERPRETATION/TRANSLATION CONTINUED**

Gain experience with computers and relevant software programs.  
Interpreters and translators who have expertise in a particular area such as law or medicine may find more opportunities.  
Develop skills in negotiation and the ability to work well under stress.  
Most people who work in this field freelance. Show language expertise, initiative, and motivation as this is a very competitive field.

**SERVICE AND EDUCATION**

Translation/Interpretation  
Teaching  
Tutoring  
Educational administration:  
    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

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

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, law, etc.).

## AREAS

### ARTS, MEDIA, ENTERTAINMENT

Advertising and marketing  
Translation/Interpretation  
Journalism/Broadcasting  
Photography  
Writing  
Publishing/Editing  
Public relations  
Performing  
Film making  
Museum work  
Fashion

## EMPLOYERS

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

## STRATEGIES

Learn about the customs and culture of the country in which your language of study is primarily spoken.  
Supplement coursework with related classes (e.g., 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

- 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.
- Consider which language and culture appeals to you most and the level of foreign language ability you will need to acquire for success in your career. Possible languages to study (e.g., Spanish, German, French, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Hebrew, Arabic, Iranian languages, Indic languages, Turkic languages, etc.). Some languages will offer more job opportunities than other languages in various industries or geographic locales. Some are considered critical needs and will offer the most opportunities.
- Study related or adjacent courses (e.g., geography, history, civilization, foreign relations, international law, world economics, etc.).
- Attend a private language institute to learn additional languages and cultures.
- Utilize a number of learning methods to develop language fluency. Combine listen and repeat drills, textbooks, audio lessons, and learning apps.
- 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, service learning, and internships to improve your skills.
- Network with others in the field to learn about job opportunities.
- Obtaining international positions is competitive and difficult. Be 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 positions.