

1. Learning one language is not enough

In today's world, speaking one foreign language is not enough. Students who speak several languages will increase their chances of finding a job in their own country and internationally. By learning another language, students are acquiring an additional asset and opening up new horizons, both personal and professional.

2. French is, alongside English, the only language spoken on the five continents

More than 200 million people speak French on the five continents. French is a major language for international communication. French is the second most widely learned foreign language after English, and the ninth most widely spoken language in the world. French, the second most widely taught language after English, is taught on every continent. The Francophonie, the international organisation of French-speaking countries, comprises 68 states and governments. France operates the biggest international network of cultural institutes, which run French-language courses for more than 750,000 learners.

3. A career asset

An ability to speak French and English is an advantage for finding a job with the many multinational companies whose working language is French in a wide range of business sectors, such as retailing, automotive, luxury goods and aeronautics. France, the world's fifth biggest economy, attracts entrepreneurs, researchers and top foreign students.

4. Discovering an incomparable cultural universe

French is often considered as the language of culture. A French lesson is a cultural journey into the world of fashion, gastronomy, the arts, architecture and science. Learning French offers access to the works of great French writers like Victor Hugo and Marcel Proust, and fine poets like Charles Baudelaire and Jacques Prévert in the original. It also means being able to listen to actors like Alain Delon and Juliette Binoche and enjoy understanding and singing along to entertainers like Edith Piaf and Charles Aznavour.

5. An advantage for studying in France

Speaking French opens up study opportunities at renowned French universities (such as the Sorbonne and Pierre and Marie Curie University) and business schools (such as HEC, Polytechnique, ESSEC), often on highly attractive financial terms. Students with a good level of French are eligible to apply for French government scholarships to enrol in postgraduate courses in France in any discipline and qualify for internationally recognised French degrees.

6. Visiting Paris and the rest of France

France is the world's number-one tourist destination and attracts more than 70 million visitors a year. A little French makes it so much more enjoyable to visit Paris and all the regions of France (from the mild climes of the Cote d'Azur to the snow-capped peaks of the Alps via the rugged coastline of Brittany) and offers insights into French culture, mentality and way of life. French also comes in handy when travelling to Africa, Switzerland, Canada, Monaco, the Seychelles and other places.

7. The language of international relations

French is both a working language and one of the two official languages of the United Nations, UNESCO, NATO, the European Union, the International Olympic Committee, the International Red Cross and international courts. Proficiency in French is a prerequisite for anyone planning on a career in international organisations.

8. A language that opens up the world

After English and German, French is the third most used language on the Internet, ahead of Spanish. An ability to understand French offers an alternative view of the world through communication with French speakers from all the continents and news from the leading French-language international media (TV5, France 24 and Radio France Internationale).

9. A language for thinking and debating

French is an analytical language that structures thought and develops critical thinking. It is the language of great philosophers (such as Descartes, Sartre and Derrida) and outstanding scientists (such as Pierre and Marie Curie, Pasteur, and Georges Charpak). Through French, children also learn how to argue a case and present different points of view, which is a valuable skill for discussions and negotiations.

10. The language of the Enlightenment

French is the language of the universalist ideals advocated by the philosophers of the 18th century Enlightenment, who helped spread the idea of human rights throughout the world.

11. A language that is fun to learn

Contrary to popular belief, French is not a difficult language. It is a language that requires precision but that can also express great subtlety. It is easy to communicate in French after just a few lessons. There are many methods on the market that make learning French enjoyable from the first years of school. French appeals to students because it is a soft, melodious, romantic language.

12. A language for learning other languages

French is a good base for learning other languages, especially Romance languages (Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and Romanian) as well as English, since fifty per cent of current English vocabulary is derived from French.

13. A high standard of teaching

French teachers are renowned for their dynamic, inventive style and high expectations. Since French has a reputation for excellence, students tend to be highly motivated and excel. France also runs in-service training for French teachers abroad so that the courses delivered are always of a high standard.

14. A creative language

French is often heard on the stage. Teachers like to organise plays in French and involve their students in French-language theatre festivals. Learning French helps children express themselves and gain self-confidence in front of others. Students also learn French through songs, thanks to a broad repertoire of contemporary and classic singers.

15. Many opportunities for exchange

Students can easily come into contact with French speakers of their own age, as pen pals or through the Internet. There are many types of stay and exchange programmes in France that offer enriching experiences. Thousands of French schools are twinned with schools around the world, creating links with the world's largest educational network.

16. A unique system of international French schools

Some 235,000 pupils are enrolled at 430 French schools in 130 countries. A full fifty-six per cent of the students are foreign, which makes the network of international French schools truly unique.

17. Promoting linguistic diversity

Speaking French makes a major contribution to the preservation of linguistic diversity in the world and avoiding the exclusive use of a single language in today's globalised world.