Why Learn A World Language?

♦ In an increasingly globalized world, the knowledge of a world language becomes an indispensable skill important not only for personal enrichment, but also for broadening employment opportunities.

♦ According to a study from the University of Chicago, knowledge of a world language helps you boost decision-making skills.

♦ Students who study world languages score higher on standardized tests, as a study from York University in Toronto showed.

Students who study a world language for at least one year score an average of 38 points higher on the SATs.

♦ Knowledge of a world language increases your chances of landing a good job, as demonstrated in a recent poll in The Economist.

An MIT study shows that people who know two or more languages earn an average of $128,000 more over their lifetimes.

♦ Learning a second language has compelling health benefits, as suggested by a study from York University in Toronto that connects prevention of the onset of dementia with foreign language learning.
Why Study American Sign Language?

American Sign Language is the primary means of communication for members of the Deaf and hard of hearing community with each other and with society at large. ASL is also the recognized sign language of the Deaf community in the United States of America. Did you know that American Sign Language (ASL) is the third most common language in the US behind English and Spanish? As is the case with standardized spoken, written, and signed languages worldwide, ASL conforms to linguistic principles (e.g., semantics, syntax, morphology, phonology, and pragmatics). ASL is unique because it is a visual language; consequently, the brain processes linguistic information through the eyes. Learning ASL as an additional language can begin at any time and continue over the course of a lifetime. Students of ASL can become teachers, interpreters, social workers and most importantly, can interact with members of Deaf community.

Who Uses American Sign Language?

ASL is used predominantly in the United States and in many parts of Canada. ASL is a popular course offering in many high schools, colleges, and universities to fulfill modern and “foreign” language academic degree requirements across the United States.

Famous People Associated with American Sign Language

◆ Linda Bove - a talented performer born to Deaf parents, helped share ASL with America’s children and parents on the TV show “Sesame Street”
◆ Thomas Gallaudet - co-founder of the first educational institution for the deaf in North America after being inspired by a young deaf girl named Alice Cogswell
◆ Matt Hamill - Deaf mixed martial art expert and three-time NCAA Wrestling Division III National Champion, gold medalist in the Deaflympics, UFC fighter, and focus of the drama, The Hammer
◆ Nathie Marbury - passionate and highly acclaimed ASL teacher, storyteller, poet and interpreter trainer, who accomplished a long line of ‘firsts’ for black Deaf women
◆ Marie Philip - Deaf linguist, researcher of ASL & Deaf Culture, early activist for ASL’s recognition as an official language, a pioneer in the bilingual/bicultural movement, international teacher, and an icon in the Deaf Community
◆ George Veditz - former president of the National Association of the Deaf, one of the first people to film American Sign Language, and a tireless advocate of ASL

Course activities will incorporate all of the American Council on The Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL’s) five Cs.

Goal 1: Communication – A student communicates in ASL.
Goal 2: Cultures – A student gains knowledge and understanding of Deaf Culture.
Goal 3: Connections – A student makes the connection with other disciplines by acquiring information about those disciplines through the use of ASL and an understanding of Deaf Culture.
Goal 4: Comparisons – A student develops insight into the nature of language and culture through comparisons of ASL and Deaf culture and their own language and culture.
Goal 5: Communities – A student participates in the Deaf community through the use of ASL and with knowledge of Deaf culture.

Indiana University is home to as many as 70 world languages!

- Akan/Twi
- American Sign Lang
- Arabic
- Avestan
- Azerbaijani
- Bamana
- Bangla
- Bosnian/Croatian/
- Serbian
- Catalan
- Chinese
- Czech
- Dari
- Dutch
- Egyptian (Demotic)
- Egyptian (Middle)
- ESL
- Estonian
- Finnish
- French
- Georgian
- German
- German (Old High)
- Greek (Classical)
- Greek (Modern)
- Haitian Creole
- Hausa
- Hebrew (Biblical)
- Hebrew (Modern)
- Hindi
- Hungarian
- Indonesian
- Italian
- Japanese
- Kazakh
- Korean
- Kurdish
- Kyrgyz
- Lakota
- Latin
- Macedonian
- Mongolian
- Norwegian
- Pashto
- Persian
- Polish
- Portuguese
- Quechua
- Romanian
- Russian
- Sanskrit
- Spanish
- Swahili
- Tajik
- Thai
- Tibetan
- Turkish (Ottoman)
- Turkish
- Turkmen
- Turkmen
- Ukrainian
- Urdu
- Uyghur
- Uzbek
- Wolof
- Yiddish
- Yoruba
- Yucatec Maya
- Zulu