Why Learn A World Language?

- In an increasingly globalized world, the knowledge of a world language becomes an indispensable skill important not only for individual 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 the recent poll of The Economist showed.
- 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.

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For more information regarding Majors, Minors, courses, and other available resources in this language:

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The name "Yiddish" ("Jewish") originated some 10 centuries ago becoming by the 19th century the most widespread international and native language of Jews from Central and Eastern Europe until the 1970s. Written in Hebrew characters, Yiddish initially served as the European Jewish vernacular and written language. It is often called a “fusion language,” for it fuses Semitic and Slavic semantics, worldview and vocabulary with the morphological, grammatical and lexical Germanic base into one coherent linguistic system. Yiddish has a wealth of words conveying analytical argumentation, European Jewish folkways and traditional everyday Judaism, as well as ways of expressing fine nuances of personal human characterization and social mores, norms, and eccentricities. Yiddish has developed rich literature, theater and music, which will make it of great interest to students of the arts and humanities.

Who speaks Yiddish?

Yiddish is the historical language of the Ashkenazi Jews and not the Sephardic Jews. It is an Indo-European language (with a "Semitic soul") and it is native to Ukraine, Israel, United States, United Kingdom, Belgium, Canada, Russia, Poland, Germany, Moldova, Romania, Lithuania, Belarus and Latvia. It was the native language of over 10 million people at the beginning of the 20th century. Today it is the native spoken language of a number of relatively small but rapidly growing ultra-Orthodox communities, the so-called Hasidic or Haredi Jews in North America, Belgium, England and Israel of which there are around a half-million. A recent upsurge of several thousand young people in the US, Europe, and Israel have learned it, many of them becoming ardent cultural champions and even fluent speakers and readers of Yiddish.

Famous People of Jewish (Ashkenazi) Descent

- Nobel Prize for literature winners: Shmuel Agnon, Isaac Bashevis-Singer, Saul Bellow
- Leonard Cohen - Canadian musician, artist, writer
- Alan Dershowitz - American lawyer, political commentator
- Leonard Nimoy - American actor, author, Mr. Spock
- Cynthia Ozick - American poet, author
- Elie Wiesel - Nobel Laureate, author of Night

Why Study Yiddish?

Languages

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

Akan/Twi
American Sign Lang
Arabic
Avestan
Azerbaijani
Bamana
Bengali
Bosnian/Croatian/
Serbian
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
Kurdyg
Lakota
Latin
Macedonian
Mongolian
Norwegian
Old Church Slavonic
Pashto
Persian
Polish
Portuguese
Quechua
Romanian
Russian
Sanskrit
Spanish
Swahili
Tajik
Thai
Tibetan
Turkish
Turkmen
Ukrainian
Urdu
Uyghur
Uzbek
Wolof
Yiddish
Yoruba
Yucatec Maya
Zulu

Learn these everyday phrases!

- Welcome … Borekh-Habo (singular) / Brukhim-Haboim (plural)
- Hello (General greeting) … A gutn elef
- How are you? … Vi hert zikh?
- Fine, thanks! … s’geyt gut, a dank!
- Long time no see … Shoyn lang nit gez'en / abi me zet zikh
- What’s your name? … Vi heystu?
- My name is (name) … Ikh heys (name)
- Pleased to meet you … Mir iz a freyt zikh tsu trefn mit aykh...
- Morning greeting … Gutn morgn
- Afternoon greeting … A gut –novnt
- Nighttime parting phrase … A gute nakht