

Why teach foreign languages in elementary school

According to the Center for Applied Linguistics, the early study of a second language offers many benefits for students including academic achievement, positive attitudes toward diversity, flexibility in thinking and sensitivity to language. The results of a recent survey show a rising awareness and increase in the teaching of foreign languages.

By the end of the program, children will be able to:

- * Understand basic vocabulary and structures that are essential for everyday communication.
- * Respond to simple questions and commands using words, phrases, and in some instances short sentences.
- * Read and write simple sentences.
- * Describe or demonstrate customs from Spanish speaking countries.

How to study Foreign Language

- * Always do homework immediately after class.
- * Make flashcards of all vocabulary words and verbs.
- * Repeat aloud in class and say the vocabulary words out loud when studying at home.
- * Don't be afraid to make mistakes.
- * Speak to others in the language.
- * Listen to CD's, radio stations, music in the language.
- * Watch television or rent videos in the language.
- * Go to an ethnic restaurant and order in the language ("Yo quiero Taco Bell" does not count!).
- * Name objects in your house, town, etc, in the language.
- * Don't pretend to understand when you really don't.
- * Memorize using image, sound, rhyme, etc.

Fifteen things studying a new language might do for you.

1. Broadens your experiences; expands your view of the world.
2. Encourages critical reflection on the relation of language and culture, language and thought; fosters an understanding of the interrelation of language and human nature.
3. Develops your intellect; teaches you how to learn.
4. Teaches and encourages respect for other peoples.
5. Contributes to cultural awareness and literacy, such as knowledge of original texts.
6. Builds practical skills (for travel or commerce or as a tool for other disciplines).
7. Improves the knowledge of your own language through comparison and contrast with the foreign language.
8. Exposes you to modes of thought outside of your native language.
9. A sense of relevant past, both cultural and linguistic.
10. Balances content and skill (rather than content versus skill).
11. Expands opportunities for meaningful leisure activity (travel, reading, viewing foreign language films).
12. Contributes to achievement of national goals, such as economic development or national security.
13. Contributes to the creation of your personality.
14. Enables the transfer of training (such as learning a second foreign language).
15. Preserves (or fosters) a country's image as a cultured nation.