

Why Learn German?

Why choose German – or any other subject?

1. How might it be useful in my future?
2. What's in the course?
3. What are my chances of success?

Importance of Foreign Languages for UK businesses



- **A lack of language skills costs the British economy around 3.5% of GDP (2022: £79bn) in missed trade & business.**¹
- **57% of employers stated that foreign language skills are something they look for in candidates.**²
- Small and medium-sized businesses making use of language capabilities are **30% more successful in exporting.**³
- Nick Gibb, Minister for Schools: “Our economy needs people who can communicate across the globe and trade with overseas businesses.”⁴ **“You need to be able to speak the language of your suppliers and customers.”**⁵

Common misconceptions about German (1)



- It's hard
- It's ugly and doesn't sound nice!

German – a harsh language?

“I think that a description in any loud, stirring, tumultuous episode must be tamer in German than in English. Our descriptive words of this character have such a deep, strong, resonant sound, while their German equivalents do seem thin and mild and energyless. ‘Boom!’, ‘burst!’, ‘crash!’, ‘roar!’, [...]. These are magnificent words; they have a force and magnitude of sound befitting the things which they describe. But their German equivalents would be ever so nice to sing the children to sleep with....”

(Mark Twain, “The Awful German Language” 1880)

Common misconceptions about German (2)



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- Germans all speak excellent English
- It's not as useful as, say, French or Spanish

Is German useful? – a few facts!

- **97 million Europeans** (13%) have German as their 1st language. 63m (8%) have English, and 11% French, 6% Spanish.⁶

Other people think German is very important!...

- After English, German is the **most studied** vocational foreign language in Europe.
- 68% of Japanese students (school and uni) learn German.
- German is one of the **3 working languages** of the EU (with French and English).

So, why choose German?

1. Business and trade

- * Biggest economy in Europe, 3rd biggest in the world
- * The UK's biggest trading partner after the USA
- * German investment in the UK:
 - 2500 companies employing c. 450,000 people
 - e.g. Siemens (est. in the UK 1850); 12,000 employees in 38 locations. Siemens turbines generate about 50% of the UK's windpower.

Some German companies in the UK

Adidas, Puma (*sports gear*) – **Aldi, Lidl** (*supermarkets*) – **Bayer** (*Aspirin*), **Nivea**

BMW (*Mini, Rolls Royce*), **Daimler AG** (*Mercedes Benz, Smart*), **Porsche** (*cars*),
Volkswagen Audi Group (*Audi, Bentley, Bugatti, Ducati motorbikes, Lamborghini, MAN trucks, Scania trucks, Skoda, SEAT, Volkswagen*) – **Claas, Fendt** (*tractors, agricultural equipment*)

Bertelsmann (*Penguin books, Dorling-Kindersley books*) - **TUI** (*travel, tourism*)

Bosch (*automotive components, domestic appliances*), **Neff** (*domestic appliances*), **Braun** (*electrical*) – **Haribo** (*confectionary*)

Commerzbank, Deutsche Bank (*banking*)

Deutsche Bahn (*rail services, e.g. Arriva, Schenker*) - **Deutsche Post** (*DHL*)

E.ON (*gas, electricity*) – **RWE** (*renewable energy generation*) - **Siemens** (*domestic appliances, renewable power generation, wind turbines, medical technology, trains, etc.*)

Rank	Country	£ billion	% of total trade
1	USA	287.8	16.6%
2	Germany	137.4	7.9%
3	Netherlands	121.8	7.0%
4	China	112.6	6.5%
5	France	94.8	5.5%
6	Ireland	83.2	4.8%
7	Belgium	57.3	3.3%
8	Spain	56.6	3.3%
9	Norway	54.7	3.2%
10	Switzerland	53.6	3.1%

The UK's
top 10
trade
partners
2022



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German
37%



Spanish
35%



French
32%



Arabic
26%



Mandarin
21%

Languages rated
by managers in UK
firms as useful to
their business

Source: 2019 CBI/Pearson Education and Skills survey



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In demand

	Job postings per million	% change since 2016
German	1,221	▲ 11.6%
French	1,152	▲ 1.2%
Chinese	643	▲ 35.4%
Spanish	567	▼ -9.5%
Italian	531	▲ 17.7%
Dutch	207	▼ -11%
Polish	203	▼ -28.8%
Japanese	198	▼ -3.8%
Russian	195	▼ -7.9%
Arabic	146	▼ -21.6%

Source: *The Times*, 10.4.19

**Job postings with
languages
required**

So, why choose German?



2. Science

- Many links between German and UK universities, e.g.:
 - **Cambridge** – Ludwig-Maximilian-Universität, Munich
 - **Imperial College** – Technische Universität, München
 - **Cardiff** – Bremen
 - **Oxford** – Berlin University Alliance
- German is the second most commonly used scientific language after English, and among the most widely used languages on the web.

So, why choose German?

3. Culture

- Germany (and German) at the heart of European history and culture:
 - Literature:** Goethe, Schiller, Rilke, Sebald and many others
 - Music:** Beethoven, Bach, Mozart: all native German-speakers.
 - Art:** Dürer, C. D. Friedrich; Anselm Kiefer, Gerhard Richter
- **The Arts:** Huge focus in Germany in e.g. opera (82 opera houses, UK 6), music (130 orchestras, UK 15)
- **20% of all new books** published worldwide are in German

I have an A Level / degree with German - what now?

- Languages (including your own) are always tools to do other things with.
- At university, you can study around **60 subjects** together with German, from Accountancy (*at Aberdeen*) to Zoology (*Manchester*) – and that's not counting combining it with other languages.
- Few language graduates take up the traditional linguists' careers – teaching (at first!), translation, interpreting.

Common careers with German

Business

Finance

Journalism

Law

Civil Service

Diplomatic Service

Publishing

Advertising

Tourism industry

Teaching

Academia

Translating

Interpreting

Useful organisations:

British-German Association:

www.britishgermanassociation.org

Dresden Trust:

www.dresdentrust.org

Goethe Institut:

<https://www.goethe.de/ins/gb/en/index.html>

UK-German Connection:

<https://ukgermanconnection.org>