

# European Languages Day



## MFL essay competition winner - 2019

First Prize – Joseph Hoy – Year 9

### International Languages Day Competition

Nelson Mandela once said “If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart.”

Learning a language was once a hobby, but as the internet grows and the world is becoming increasingly connected, learning a language other than English is considered an essential requirement of the modern business person.

Research for the Department of Business shows that poor language skills and the presumption that International Business partners speak English, costs the UK economy 3.5% of the Gross Domestic Product.

The British Council found when asking the views of more than 600 employers that UK nationals that didn't speak a second language not only missed out on an inability to communicate and the cultural insight this may bring, but also on a more practical level missed out on the opportunity to gain International Business experience by living and working abroad. The missing out of these opportunities hold back these individuals and the country from positive growth.

The process of learning a language also has many benefits. The brain engages a number of different parts and the connectivity between these are boosted. This improves connectivity and causes higher mental function. It is the brain equivalent of going to the gym for a workout. This is supported by an experiment by Dr Thomas Bak, a Neuroscientist and Professor Antonella Sorace, a Bilingualist. This was carried out with 20 volunteers over a 4 week period for the BBC.

Our language is the most important part of our being, it helps us to learn about other people and their cultures. Adding a second language to our skills opens up new worlds and friendships.

By Joseph Hoy