

# 5 Reasons Why You Should Learn a Foreign Language

---

Wednesday, April 13, 2016

⋮



*My name is Charlotte, and I'm a sophomore currently studying abroad in Granada, Spain. Along with about 23 other UNH students, I am taking part in the UNH-managed [Granada Program](#), offered through [COLA's Center for Study Abroad](#). I am sharing some of my experiences and observations of Spanish culture throughout the semester here on [UNH Tales](#). You can read all of my posts [here](#).*

I've been studying Spanish for almost 6 years now and, although it can be frustrating and I'm *still* far from being fluent, I'm so glad I've stuck with it. Learning a new language is one of the most challenging undertakings in life, but it is also incredibly rewarding. There will be many moments when you will feel incredibly stupid: struggling through forming even the most basic of sentences, not being able to remember the vocabulary terms you studied for hours, being totally confused by conjugating all those tricky verb tenses.

But then there are the times where you realize how cool it is to know a different language... How much wider your world is, how much broader your opportunities are.



I've been studying abroad since January, and it's been an incredible experience to feel my language skills growing stronger. There's simply no other way to progress rapidly than to immerse yourself in the country where the language is spoken. Since being here, I've picked up countless new vocabulary words, discerned speaking trends among native speakers, and gotten more comfortable in speaking and understanding Spanish.

I have learned invaluable lessons, and now I'm more convinced than ever of the importance of knowing a foreign language. Here are some of the rewards of such an undertaking:

## 1. You can truly experience new cultures.

Knowing the language of a country allows you to experience that culture in a much deeper and more profound way. I've found that the intricacies of a culture emerge

through how people express themselves more than anything else. There's no better way to learn about a foreign culture than engaging in conversation with locals.

## 2. You have more of an opportunity to get to know new people.

This is probably the best part of learning a new language! All of a sudden, your range of potential acquaintances and friends opens up immeasurably. How cool is it to be able to get to know people that you otherwise wouldn't have been able to communicate with? I feel like my world has widened in so many ways now that I know Spanish, especially because I have Spanish friends and can communicate with so many different people. I truly feel a global sense of community.



### 3. You communicate better in general.

I've found that I can express my ideas better since learning Spanish. I often struggle to find the exact words to express a concept in Spanish and have to find a way to explain it using different phrasing. This has been useful in teaching me how to communicate better in general. That said, it has been interesting to feel my grip on English loosening slightly while being here since all of my classes are in Spanish and I speak in Spanish for most of the day!

### 4. You are exposed to new ideas.



As Americans and English-speakers, we sometimes forget that not every great thinker and writer speaks our language. There are so many intelligent people in the world that have fascinating ideas to share, but, obviously, not everyone speaks English. Think of all the incredible literature that is available in other languages, or loses some of its beauty when translated. Knowing a different language opens up the world in so many ways, especially in allowing for increased exposure to new ideas.

## 5. You don't fear people who are not like you.

I repeatedly tell people that if studying abroad has taught me anything, it's that this world is so small. One way in which I feel like my world has become smaller is realizing all humans have things in common. Whether it was [wandering through the streets of Morocco](#) or sharing conversations with Spaniards, I came to see that we're not so different after all. Language acquisition allows for international experiences of richness and depth. And engaging those who might seem different from you will help you realize that kindness exists all over the world, and there is no reason to fear those who don't share your culture.

Inspired to start learning a language or pick up where you left off? Check out the many courses offered by UNH's [Languages, Literatures, and Cultures department](#) or find a study abroad experience through the [Center for International Education and Global Engagement \(CIEGE\)](#).

- WRITTEN BY:  
Charlotte Harris '18 | UNH Tales

#### UNH TALES



University of New Hampshire

UNH Today is produced for the UNH community and for friends of UNH. The stories are written by the staff of [UNH Communications and Public Affairs](#). Email us: [unhtoday.editor@unh.edu](mailto:unhtoday.editor@unh.edu).

[MANAGE YOUR SUBSCRIPTION](#)   [CONTACT US](#)

Like us on Facebook

Follow us on Twitter

Follow us on YouTube

Follow us on Instagram

Find us on LinkIn

UNH Today RSS feeds

UNH Today • UNH Main Directory: 603-862-1234  
Copyright © 2022 • TTY Users: 7-1-1 or 800-735-2964 (Relay NH)  
[USNH Privacy Policies](#) • [USNH Terms of Use](#) • [ADA Acknowledgement](#)