

Why English is the most important language in the world

Today, let's talk about why English is the most important language in the world. Considering the size of the country it beggars belief how the English language has remained at the forefront of languages students desire to learn. Of course, the question is why? There are *many* answers to this. In this lesson we will explore a few thoughts on this subject.

Originally, the British Empire helped spread the English language across a fifth of the world. This caused some resentment from locals - naturally so! Being 'forced' to learn a foreign language is not fun. Learning a language for 'fun' gets better results. Of course, other Empires tried to spread their languages but they didn't succeed quite like the British did.

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Spanish is spoken in Spain and across the Americas. German is spoken where Germans go on holiday - their colonies taken by the British after WWI. Russian was forced on the people of Eastern Europe. When the wall came crashing down its people kicked it out opting for English.

Then there is China... Twenty years ago English wasn't spoken in China much - except in Hong Kong! Today, it is highly popular - Chinese business has recognised this. Chinese students like to practice English together in parks - to circumnavigate the Chinese censors!

Why is English 'a must' for foreign students in other countries to learn today? *Simple - If you want a good job you need to speak English.* Job applicants are automatically expected to know it. In many cases students who know English have a definite advantage over those who do not.

Today, any job involving computer programming is in English so it is essential for IT people to know the language. Overall, English allows companies to create jobs, develop trade and expand business in foreign lands. It also allows people and companies *to communicate* with each other.

Category: English / History / Importance of English
Level: Intermediate / Upper intermediate

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EXERCISES

1. Speaking English as second language: Think of three things you know about speaking English as second language. Go round the room swapping details with others.

2. Dictation: The teacher will read four to six lines of the article slowly and clearly. Students will write down what they hear. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again. Self-correct your work from page one - filling in spaces and correcting mistakes. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total number of errors. Less than five is very good. Ten is acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than twenty - you need to do some work!

3. Reading: The students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

4. Vocabulary: Students should now look through the article and underline any vocabulary they do not know. Look in dictionaries. Discuss and help each other out. The teacher will go through and explain any unknown words or phrases.

5. The article: Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- a) What is the article about?
- b) What do you think about the article?
- c) **Discuss briefly the article**

6. The history of why English is spoken today: In pairs choose five things from the article. Then add five thoughts of your own. Write them below. Discuss together.

From the article	Your thoughts
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

7. Let's roleplay 1: Discussion FM: In pairs/groups. One of you is the interviewer. The others are one of the following people. You are in the *Discussion FM* radio studio in London. Today's interview is about: *Speaking English as a second language*.

1	Someone learning English
2	A Human Resources spokesperson in a company
3	A publisher of English language exercise books
4	A Ministry of Education spokesperson in your country

The teacher will choose some pairs to roleplay their interview in front of the class.

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8. Let's think! In pairs. On the board write as many words as you can to do with **English**. *One-two minutes*. Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

9. Let's roleplay 2: In pairs. You are in a classroom in your language school or company classroom. Start a conversation about 'Speaking English as a second language' *5-minutes*.

10. Let's do 'The Article Quiz': Have the students quiz each other in pairs. They score a point for each correct answer and half a point each time they have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

Student A

- 1) Where is Spanish spoken?
- 2) What do Chinese students like to do?
- 3) What does 'beggars belief' mean?
- 4) What does 'forefront' mean?
- 5) Where do they speak French?

Student B

- 1) Why is English a must?
- 2) Overall, English allows what?
- 3) German is spoken where?
- 4) Name the Empire.
- 5) How many EU East European States chose English as their second language?

11. Ten reasons to learn English: In pairs think of ten reasons to learn English. Write them below. Discuss together.

1 _____	6 _____
2 _____	7 _____
3 _____	8 _____
4 _____	9 _____
5 _____	10 _____

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

12. A week at a language school learning English: In pairs, imagine spending a week at a language school learning English. Discuss what you did.

13. Let's write an e-mail: Write and send a 200 word e-mail to your teacher about: **Speaking English as a second language today**. Your e-mail can be read out in class.

14. Sentence starters: Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

- a) English _____
- b) Learning English _____
- c) If I want a job _____

DISCUSSION

Student A questions

- 1) Does this lesson make a good debating point? Explain.
- 2) What advantages are there speaking English as a second language?
- 3) Is the article biased?
- 4) Is what is written a fair article or is it one sided?
- 5) What language might you like to try to learn next?
- 6) Did English help you get a good job?
- 7) Would you like to live in an English speaking country?
- 8) Is Russian making a comeback?
- 9) Do French people speak English and do English people speak French?
- 10) Have you learnt anything in today's English lesson?

Student B questions

- 1) What do you think about what you read?
- 2) Why did you learn English?
- 3) How old were you when you started to learn English?
- 4) Why do you think learning English is important?
- 5) What advice would you give anyone learning English?
- 6) How many languages do you speak?
- 7) Is it important to speak three or more languages? Explain.
- 8) Why are English people 'the laziest in the world' when it comes to learning another language?
- 9) Do you think English people should learn to speak a foreign language?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

SPEAKING

Let's discuss! Speaking English today

Allow 10-15 minutes – As a class / small groups / pairs / 1 to 1

20 things about why speaking English as a second language today is so important

The teacher can moderate the session.

GAP FILL: READING: edited

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Why English is the most important language in the world

Today, let's talk about why (1)_____ is the most important language in the world. Considering the size of the country it beggars belief how the English language has remained at the forefront of languages students (2)_____ to learn. Of course, the question is why? There are *many* (3)_____ to this. In this lesson we will explore a few thoughts on this (4)_____.

Originally, the British (5)_____ helped spread the English language across a fifth of the world. This caused some resentment from locals - naturally so! Being 'forced' to learn a foreign language is not fun. Learning a language for 'fun' gets better results. Of course, other Empires tried to spread their languages but they didn't (6)_____ quite like the (7)_____ did.

The French have fought a brave (1)_____ to try to expand their language around the world. They failed – a classic modern (2)_____ being when the 10 East European countries joined the EU. They chose English as their second spoken language. Only in Africa and French colonies does French (3)_____. Yet in the Far East their ex (4)_____ now prefer to speak English.

Spanish is spoken in Spain and across the Americas. German is spoken where Germans go on holiday – their colonies taken by the British after WWI. Russian was forced on the people of Eastern Europe. When the (5)_____ came crashing down its people kicked it out opting for English.

Then there is China... Twenty years ago English wasn't spoken in China much - except in Hong Kong! Today, it is highly popular – Chinese business has recognised this. Chinese (6)_____ like to practice English together in parks – to (7)_____ the Chinese (8)_____!

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answers

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Empire

English

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GAP FILL: LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Why English is the most important language in the world

Today, let's talk about why English is the most important language in the world. Considering the size of the country it _____ the English language has remained at the forefront of languages students desire to learn. Of course, the question is why? There are *many* answers to this. In this lesson we will explore _____ this subject.

Originally, the British Empire helped spread the English language across a fifth of the world. This caused some _____ - naturally so! Being 'forced' to learn a foreign language is not fun. Learning a language for 'fun' gets better results. Of course, other Empires tried to spread their languages but they didn't succeed quite _____.

The French have fought a brave battle to try to expand their language around the world. They failed - a _____ being when the 10 East European countries joined the EU. They chose English as their _____. Only in Africa and French colonies does French prevail. Yet in the Far East their ex colonies now prefer to speak English.

Spanish is _____ across the Americas. German is spoken where Germans go on holiday - their colonies taken by the British after WWI. Russian was forced on the people of Eastern Europe. When the wall _____ its people kicked it out opting for English.

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Why is English 'a must' for foreign students in other countries to learn today? *Simple* - _____ *you need to speak English*. Job applicants are automatically expected to know it. In many cases students who know English have a definite advantage over those who do not.

Today, any job involving _____ is in English so it is essential for IT people to know the language. Overall, English allows companies to create jobs, develop trade and expand business in foreign lands. It also allows people and companies to _____ other.

GRAMMAR

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

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Originally, the British Empire helped spread the English language across a fifth of the world. This caused (4)___ resentment from locals - naturally so! Being 'forced' to learn a foreign language is not fun. Learning a language for 'fun' gets better results. Of course, other Empires tried to spread (5)___ languages but (6)___ didn't succeed (7)___ like the British did.

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SPELLING TEST

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards, check your answers with your teacher, using the following ratings: **Pass = 12, Good = 15, Very good = 18, Excellent = 20**

1	important	11	communicate
2	English	12	computer programming
3	prefer	13	succeed
4	foreign	14	language
5	business	15	beggars belief
6	overall	16	question
7	essential	17	yet
8	popular	18	forefront
9	thoughts	19	desire
10	resentment	20	explore

ANSWERS

GAP FILL: Why English is the most important language in the world: Today, let's talk about why **English** is the most important language in the world. Considering the size of the country it beggars belief how the English language has remained at the forefront of languages students **desire** to learn. Of course, the question is why? There are *many* **answers** to this. In this lesson we will explore a few thoughts on this **subject**.

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