

Benefits of being bilingual:

Why we should learn a second language

Sep 20, 2013 By Veronique de Miguel



There are many benefits to being bilingual including increased tolerance and job opportunities. (Photo Shutterstock)

Many Hollywood celebs know the advantages of being bilingual, especially Latino stars who embrace their Hispanic heritage and proudly speak their native Spanish language.

Salma Hayek, Sofia Vergara, Shakira, Ricky Martin, Penelope Cruz, William Levy, Antonio Banderas, Daisy Fuentes, Thalia and Marc Anthony are some of the approximately 60 mainstream celebs that remain true to their Latino roots by speaking Spanish, according to Latina Magazine.

Are they just following a hot trend? Is it fashionable to be bilingual and speak Spanish? Maybe it is, but this is not the reason why it is good to be bilingual.

The top three spoken languages in the world are: Mandarin Chinese with 882 million speakers; Spanish with 325 million speakers; and English with between 312-380 million speakers. Being bilingual in English and Spanish opens a world of opportunities. For instance, imagine all the countries you can visit in Latin America, the Caribbean and let's not forget Spain, where you'll be able to communicate with the locals. It makes traveling more fun.

Let's take a look at all the benefits of being bilingual.

Advantages to being bilingual

First of all, bilingualism promotes overall cognitive development because a bilingual individual encounters the world from two different language perspectives, which prevents them from having a limited experience. Plus, this extended way of thinking facilitates the approach to cognitive problems and higher levels of abstract thinking.

This is a great “academic” explanation, but here are the practical reasons you should be bilingual:



Being bilingual in English and Spanish can open doors your for in the workforce.

- It gives you access to two cultures and makes you more tolerant and open to others. By being able to communicate in two languages, you are free to learn about diverse cultures, traditions and social behaviors as well as be a part of them. People who speak two languages have two windows open to the world to enrich their life.
- Being bilingual makes it is easier to travel, find a job and belong to this new global world inside and outside of the U.S.
- Studies have shown that [bilingual people have better task switching capacities](#) because of their acquired ability to inhibit one language while using another. In other words, speaking two languages forces your brain to recognize two different languages systems. So, basically, you become smarter. Did you know that people who speak more than one language tend to make fewer errors in their driving? A side benefit, but a benefit nonetheless!
- According to [Livingbilingual.com](#), being bilingual “promotes mental agility and helps [delay neurological disorders](#) like dementia and Alzheimer Disease.” According to some studies, monolingual adults tend to show the first signs of dementia at the average age of 71. This is in contrast to bilingual individuals who show their first symptoms around 76 years old.
- You will find it much easier to learn a third language when you are bilingual. Plus, your English will be enhanced as you are more aware of language structures, grammar, literacy and language skills.
- [Bilingual adults and children](#) seem to have social and emotional benefits like being able to internalize negative states like anxiety, aggression, anger, loneliness or low self-esteem less frequently. They have greater tolerance and less racism. It seems likely that bilinguals would be more tolerant of differences and more open to diversity.

- Globalization makes [bilingual individuals more valuable](#) in their future search for work. Bilinguals may also be bridge-builders between different language communities, so they are essential for personal and professional networking. Studies show that bilinguals earn more money on average in the United States. As companies become more international, there is a greater need for employees who are fluent in more than one language.
- According to a study, bilinguals tend to make better rational and financial decisions.

To sum it up, bilingual individuals have better social skills, more job opportunities and an edge on delaying Alzheimer's disease. We hope this article helped encourage you to learn a new language.

Infographic: 5 reasons why you should be bilingual

5 Reasons Why It's

good to be

BILINGUAL

Bilingualism promotes cognitive development and higher levels of abstract thinking.

Makes you more marketable in the workforce.

It's easier to learn a third language when you know two.



Makes travel a breeze when you can communicate with the locals.

Studies have found that it can help delay dementia and Alzheimer's.



Infographic by voxxi.com

Infographic on the benefits of being bilingual. (Illustration by VOXXI)

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