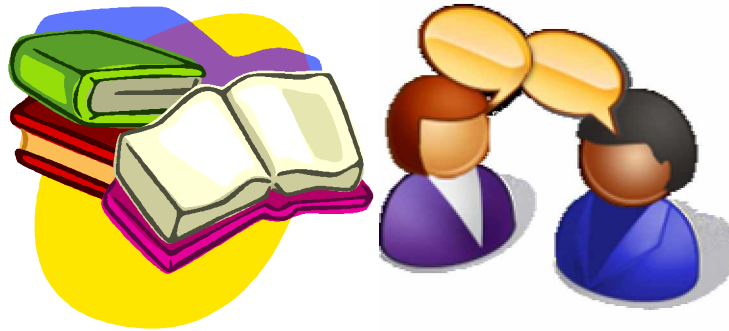


# *“What Can I do With a Major in...Comparative Literature & Languages?”*

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## **Facts About a Language Degree**

*Proficiency in more than one language is becoming an increasingly valuable skill today, and greatly enhances one's occupational possibilities. Also, with its emphasis on communication and skills in writing, speaking, reading and making connections between people, knowledge of a foreign language is an education in your language.*

## **Skills Possessed by Language Majors**

- Cross-cultural communication
- Understanding of cultural differences and ability to interact effectively with peoples of different backgrounds
- Knowledge of culturally specific behavior, customs, and values
- Language competence for speaking, writing, reading, and listening
- Understanding of target culture, history, literature, music, and folklore
- Appreciation of diversity, and sensitivity to cultural issues
- Awareness of differences in cultural perspectives
- Global experience and ability to adjust to new environments

*From the University of Manitoba's Student Counseling and Career Center website and Vistawide.com.*

**the career center**

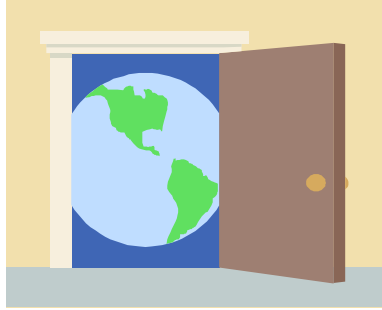


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# *Possible Job Titles for Language Majors*

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## **PRIVATE SECTOR: BUSINESS, INDUSTRY, and COMMERCE**

You'll be pleasantly surprised at the range of firms that hire foreign languages degree holders. Combining business knowledge with foreign language skills can make you marketable to almost any company. Here are some examples of ways that language skills can be used in the business world:

### **Environmental Firms**

You have a Spanish degree and a lifelong interest in the environment. You want to seek employment with an American-based international manufacturer of pollution control equipment now entering the Mexican market as a result of NAFTA. You hope to be part of the team preparing formal sales presentations for Mexican industries.

### **Sports Organizations**

Most of us have many interests in avocations other than just our college major. You may have been a Japanese major in college but also have a lifelong interest in skiing. Japan does not have as well-developed a skiing tradition as the United States, but it is growing rapidly. American ski products have widespread acceptance among the Japanese but require an American sales force and distribution network in Japan to compete. Your degree and skiing awareness combined make you a promising candidate for such a situation.

### **Advertising Departments and Agencies**

French yogurt, automobiles, films, and wine. German technology, Chinese fabrics, ceramic tile from Portugal, or knitwear from Scandinavian countries. There is a constant need on the part of foreign producers to find new markets for products. American advertisers know their markets better than anyone. They know how to communicate with potential markets and they know what types of appeals are most effective. Who better to be on an advertising team that service this type of ad agency customer than someone with a background in the language and culture of the product of origin.

### **Publishing/Editing**

*Editors* assign, review, rewrite, and correct the work of writers. They may also do original writing, such as producing editorials for newspapers or columns for magazines. In book publishing, they oversee the acquisition and selection of material, often working directly with the authors to achieve the final product. Most publishing companies employ several types of editors.

The executive editor generally has the final say about what will be published and how it will be covered and presented. Managing editors are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the editorial department. They make sure that materials conform to guidelines, and that deadlines are met. Associate and assistant editors give assignments to writers and reporters, oversee projects, and do much of the editing of text. Copy editors review manuscripts or reporters' copy for accuracy, content, grammar, and style. Editors also are performing more layout design and prepress functions as computerization moves these jobs from the production department to the editorial department.

### **Banks, Saving and Loans, and Credit Unions**

Joint ventures, new stock market centers continuing investment easements in other countries, and increasing foreign investments here at home have dramatically changed the face of banking. Even the smallest hometown bank is fully conversant with foreign exchange rates, and many can provide currencies from around the world in only a few days notice. The banker's market cannot afford to be local any longer. Individuals with a foreign languages degree and some appreciation of international relations and economics will find banking an exciting, cosmopolitan, and welcoming work environment.

### **Public Relations Departments and Firms**

Every challenge presented to a public relations firm requires drawing deeply on the talents, resources, and expertise of its professional staff to make the best presentation of the client and the product. Imagine the difficulties of representing the fur industry, cigarette manufacturers, or any other controversial product, service or individual. Public relations work requires being constantly aware of sensitive to how images, words, and associations will be associated will be interpreted or understood by the public. Foreign languages majors are trained in sensitivity to language through the study of another language and have learned to deal with vocabulary in a precise way- a valued skill in public relations.

### **Software, Hardware, and Telecommunication Manufacturers**

This is an exciting, volatile, and exponentially growing field in which the foreign language major can not only play a major role but also help to define the future. People are needed in this industry who will listen to clients' ideas in Hong Kong and Malaysia and take them back to designers and software writers to create new products and new applications for the technology. If you have technical interest and are intrigued by communications and data processing, don't be surprised that this industry is equally interested in you.

### **Hospital and Other Health-Care Facilities**

Hospital and health-care administration that is sensitive to the needs of non-English speaking consumers is currently in demand. Many facilities are located in areas dominated by Laotian, Cambodian, Hispanic, European, Japanese, Chinese, and Korean populations. These health-care facilities must educate, inform and administer health care and all its associated tasks. The well-educated foreign language major will make a significant contribution to this effort.

### **Magazines, Newspapers, Radio Stations, Cable Networks, and TV stations**

A Spanish-language program on Sunday morning television, a Franco-American radio program, cable news direct from all points of the globe, and a host of ethnic magazines and newspapers

responding to the different heritages of their readers. Where do you fit in these industries? Perhaps you sell time on radio and TV programs, report on cultural events for a newspaper, or work in the production of a TV news broadcast.

### **Manufacturing Firms**

The most frequently overlooked area of employment for many foreign language degree holders in manufacturing. Pharmaceuticals, machine-tool parts, automobiles, plastics and polymers, and countless subcontracted components parts are constantly bought and sold around the world. Whether in South America, the Pacific Rim, Eastern Europe, or at an import-export desk here at home, foreign languages majors will find they do not want to ignore manufacturing.

## **EDUCATION**

Language teaching may involve teaching a foreign language to students who share the same native language as you, or teaching your own language to speakers of other languages. Language teachers work in a variety of educational establishments from primary/elementary schools to universities and colleges.

### **Public Schools**

Public school teachers through the high school level have participated in formal education and teacher training courses in order to obtain their certification. They have trained in teaching methods and classroom management and have prepared themselves to plan course outlines, select textbooks, assign work over the semester or quarter, and use visual aids and equipment effectively.

### **Private Schools**

The role of the teacher in the private school is determined by many variables: whether the school is residential or commuter, the cost of tuition, the type of student clientele it attracts, the degree to which the school is tuition-driven or supported by endowments, and any affiliations the school might have. One great advantage of many private schools is the smaller teacher-to-student ratio and the attention and concentration on the individual student development allowed by these numbers.

### **Colleges and Universities**

For the college educator at either the undergraduate or graduate level, there is a different audience. Although some undergraduates are required to study a language, they have several languages to choose from. After those minimum requirements are met, most of the student population in upper-level foreign language classes are interested in and dedicated to excellence in the discipline. College instructors have more flexibility in choosing texts, course materials, and class concepts.

### **Professional Language Schools**

For the teacher associated with the commercial language school, this is essentially a salaried position, full- or part time depending on the teaching load. Full-time positions tend to involve more classes per day than either public or college teaching, and may be paid based on the number of classes taught. There are not the same associated duties, although lesson planning may still be the teacher's responsibility. In some of these schools, materials, books and even day-to-day schedules are predetermined as part of an overall system that the school subscribes to.

## **GOVERNMENT LINGUISTIC POSITIONS**

Several Federal and State agencies require those with language skills and cultural knowledge to assist with meeting the goals of that specific organization. Here is a sampling of different agencies that translator positions are likely to be found: Diplomatic Corps, INS, Armed Forces, Court Interpreter, Federal Agencies, United Nations Intelligence (CIA, FBI, National Security), Social Work, Immigration and Customs, Overseas Dependents' Schools Peace Corps Aid Agencies.

### **CIA Linguist**

The ability to foster the acquisition and maintenance of foreign language skills is an imperative at the CIA because of the global nature our intelligence gathering efforts. Individuals with superior language skills can contribute to our mission of protecting America through research, examining foreign media and teaching critical language skills to others within the agency. It is an opportunity to leverage your unique skills through a meaningful career for the good of the nation.

**\*<https://www.cia.gov/careers/jobs/language-positions/view-jobs/index.html>**

### **FBI Linguist**

FBI Linguists play a vital role in the translation, transcription, reporting, and analysis of materials with national security ramifications. Terrorism, foreign counterintelligence, organized crime, air piracy, interstate criminal activity, public corruption, financial crime, bribery, civil rights violations, kidnapping, drug trafficking...investigating these crimes and others may all be part of your challenging career as a Linguist with the FBI. Combining your proficiency in a critical foreign language with the exciting science of investigative work, you will apply your unique skills and talents to protect the security and welfare of your country.

**\*<http://www.fbijobs.gov/124.asp>**

### **NSA Linguist**

As an NSA Language Analyst, your work has a powerful impact in providing the most complete and accurate Signals Intelligence picture to U.S. policymakers, military commanders, and Intelligence Community members. Working directly with the original written or spoken language, you are the first person to determine the relevance of intelligence collected, to analyze, and to put the information into context. You may even be called upon to research and understand a culture in which a specific language is spoken.

- NSA is particularly interested in individuals who are proficient in Asian or Middle Eastern languages.

**\*[http://www.nsa.gov/careers/careers\\_1.cfm](http://www.nsa.gov/careers/careers_1.cfm)**

## **TRAVEL SERVICES**

### **Tour Guides**

Tourist guides are an essential part of the tourism industry. They conduct organized tours for groups of tourists in a wide range of locations throughout the world including international travel hotspots, industrial establishments, parks, public buildings, and art galleries. Tourist guides

inform visitors about the historical, political, cultural, and/or commercial significance of the site being visited. Language skills lend themselves well to this field.

Typical work activities include:

- conducting organized tours (by coach, car or on foot) in a region or large city and introducing visitors to places of interest;
- communicating engagingly with large groups of people;
- offering specialist knowledge of subjects, such as natural history, art or architecture.

### **Travel Agents**

Travel agents help travelers sort through vast amounts of information to help them make the best possible travel arrangements. They offer advice on destinations and make arrangements for transportation, hotel accommodations, car rentals, and tours for their clients. They are also the primary source of bookings for most of the major cruise lines. In addition, resorts and specialty travel groups use travel agents to promote travel packages to their clients.

Travel agents are also increasingly expected to know about and be able to advise travelers about their destinations, such as the weather conditions, local ordinances and customs, attractions, and exhibitions. For those traveling internationally, agents also provide information on customs regulations, required papers (passports, visas, and certificates of vaccination), travel advisories, and currency exchange rates. In the event of changes in itinerary in the middle of a trip, travel agents intercede on the traveler's behalf to make alternate booking arrangements.

### **Flight Attendants**

Major airlines are required by law to provide flight attendants for the safety and security of the traveling public. Although the primary job of the flight attendants is to ensure that security and safety regulations are followed, attendants also try to make flights comfortable and enjoyable for passengers. Additional language skills will open up opportunities to travel internationally.

### **Hotel and Restaurant Staff / Management**

In the competitive hotel and resort employment market, candidates need an edge; a quality that makes their resume jump out from the rest of the pile. In this industry, perhaps more than any other, bi- or multilingualism can easily give you the upper hand over unilingual candidates with similar skills and work history.

Hotel and resort companies realize that as this diverse group of guests travels from Greece, France, Japan, Germany and other countries to vacation, they appreciate comforts from home in their hotel and lodging accommodations. Sometimes a friendly "Hello" in their own language is enough to make the hotel stay a positive, memorable experience for a traveler.

# Career Resources for Comparative Literature & Language Majors

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## Specific Resources

**CDS International Inc.:** <http://www.cdsintl.org/>  
**German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD):** <http://www.daad.org/>  
**Study Abroad Scholarships, Fellowships and Grants:** <http://www.studyabroadfunding.com>  
**Study Abroad Programs:** <http://www.studyabroad.com/>  
**Hofstra Study Abroad:**  
[http://www.hofstra.edu/Academics/HCLAS/Abroad/index\\_Abroad.cfm](http://www.hofstra.edu/Academics/HCLAS/Abroad/index_Abroad.cfm)  
**Transitions Abroad:** <http://www.transitionsabroad.com/>  
**International Business Directory:** <http://www.hoovers.com/free/>  
**Language Related Employment Worldwide:** <http://www.europa-pages.com/jobs/>  
**Job Search for Language Professionals Worldwide:** <http://www.languagejobs.org/>  
**Job Database for Bilingual Professionals:** <http://www.bilingual-jobs.com/>  
**CIA Language Positions:** <https://www.cia.gov/careers/jobs/language-positions/view-jobs/index.html>  
**US Agency for International Development:** <http://www.usaid.gov/careers/>  
**International Civil Service Commission (Choose in the drop down menu: Links to Job Opportunities in the UN System):** <http://icsc.un.org/>  
**US Intelligence Agency Jobs:** <http://www.intelligence.gov/3-career.shtml>

## General Resources

**\*CareerSearch:** <http://www.careersearch.net/Hofstra>  
(username-hofstra, password-career)  
**Occupational Outlook Handbook:** <http://www.bls.gov/oco>  
**Riley Guide:** <http://www.rileyguide.com>  
**\*Spotlight On Careers:** <http://www.spotlightoncareers.org>  
(username-lacn, password-holland)  
**\*Vault:** [http://www.vault.com/cb/careerlib/careerlib\\_main.jsp?parrefer=6123](http://www.vault.com/cb/careerlib/careerlib_main.jsp?parrefer=6123)  
(You will be prompted for your Novell username and password)  
**Federal Gov't Jobs and Internships:** <http://www.makingthedifference.org/index.shtml>

\*These websites require you sign in using a username and password.

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