

Intro: Over the past several decades, the English language has become increasingly globalized, and it is now seen by many as the dominant language in international finance, science and politics. At the same time that English spreads around the globe, foreign language learning is on the decline in English-speaking countries. Monolingualism—the use of a single language, remains the norm. The drawbacks to monolingualism are many. Americans should be encouraged throughout their education to learn a foreign language—to become polyglots—because \_\_\_\_\_

1. Read through Source A, D, and E and find evidence to support a position.
2. Fill in the blank in the thesis.
3. Gather the evidence you would not to prove the thesis.
4. Draft out the first BP of your argument.

Source A

1. Google "Russell A. Berman." What did you find out about him? Is he credible?
2. How does Berman establish Haass' credibility?
3. How does Berman refute the claim that foreign language learning is "a luxury"?

Source D

1. Whom does Oaks work for? Does that influence how you read this source?
2. How does Oaks define "global perspectives"?
3. How does Oaks establish Porter's ethos? Why is that important?
4. How does Oaks prove her claim that "kids can think better"?

The following is excerpted from a Weblog maintained by NAFSA, a leading professional association based in the United States and dedicated to international education.

It seemed a notably strange coincidence that the day after the *Chronicle of Higher Education's* fascinating article about foreign-language acquisition and its remarkable contributions to the human mind and to society, *Inside Higher Ed* reported that George Washington University's arts and sciences faculty had voted by an "overwhelming" margin not only to remove its foreign languages and cultures course requirement, but also to set up the new requirements in such a way that introductory foreign language courses can no longer count toward fulfilling any degree requirement in the college. At the same time, GW's curricular reform is apparently "designed to promote student learning in areas such as global perspectives and oral communications."

One wonders how "global perspectives" can happen without foreign language. But Catherine Porter (a former president of the Modern Language Association), writing in the *Chronicle*, puts it rather more bluntly. The lack of foreign-language learning in our society, she states, is "a devastating waste of potential." Students who learn languages at an early age "consistently display enhanced cognitive abilities relative to their monolingual peers." This isn't about being able to impress their parents' friends by piping up in Chinese at the dinner table—the research is showing that these kids can *think* better. Porter writes: "Demands that the language-learning process makes on the brain . . . make the brain more flexible and incite it to discover new patterns—and thus to create and maintain more circuits."

But there's so much more. Porter points out, as many others have, that in diplomatic, military, professional and commercial contexts, being monolingual is a significant handicap. In short, making the United States a more multilingual society would carry with it untold benefits: we would be more effective in global affairs, more comfortable in multicultural environments, and more nimble-minded and productive in daily life.

One of Porter's most interesting observations, to me, was about how multilingualism enhances "brain fitness." My own journey in languages is something for which I cannot claim any real foresight or deliberate intention, but by the age of 16, I spoke English, Hungarian, and French fluently. I've managed, through travel and personal and family connections, to maintain all three. One thing I know for sure is that when I get on the phone with my mother and talk to her in Hungarian for 20 minutes, or if I have to type out an email to a friend in Paris, afterwards I feel like I've had a mental jog on the treadmill: strangely energized, brain-stretched, more ready for any challenge, whether it's cooking a new dish or drafting an op-ed. And the connective cultural tissue created by deep immersion in another language cannot be overstated. When I went to Hungary during grad school to research my thesis, I figured: no problem, it's my native tongue. Yes, but I first learned it when I was a toddler, and never since then. The amount of preparation I had to do to be sure I didn't miss nuance or cultural cues and didn't draw conclusions based on erroneous translation, was significant, but well worth it. Time and again, I've realized how language can transform our interactions with one another. Porter's article is a wake-up call that neglecting foreign-language learning is hurting our country in more ways than we realize.

Source D

Oaks, Ursula. "Foreign-Language Learning: What the United States Is Missing Out On." *Blog.NAFSA.org*. NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 20 April 2010. Web. 8 May 2013.



The following is excerpted from an article on a Web site devoted to higher education.

These are troubled times for language programs in the United States, which have been battered by irresponsible cutbacks at all levels. Despite the chatter about globalization and multilateralism that has dominated public discourse in recent years, leaders in government and policy circles continue to live in a bubble of their own making, imagining that we can be global while refusing to learn the languages or learn about the cultures of the rest of the world. So it was surely encouraging that Richard Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations and a fixture of the foreign policy establishment, agreed to deliver the keynote address at the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Annual Convention in Boston on November 19.

Haass is a distinguished author, Oberlin- and Oxford-educated, and an influential voice in American debates. The good news is that in his talk, "Language as a Gateway to Global Communities," Haass expressed strong support for increased foreign language learning opportunities. He recognized the important work that language instructors undertake as well as the crucial connection between language and culture: language learning is not just technical mastery of grammar but rather, in his words, a "gateway" to a thorough understanding of other societies. . . .

Haass claims that in an era of tight budgets, we need convincing arguments to rally support for languages. Of course that's true, but—and this is the bad news—despite his support for language as a gateway to other cultures, he countenances only a narrowly instrumental defense for foreign language learning, limited to two rationales: national security and global economy. At the risk of schematizing his account too severely, this means: more Arabic for national security and more Mandarin, Hindi, and, en passant, Korean for the economy. It appears that in his view the only compelling arguments for language-learning involve equipping individual Americans to be better vehicles of national interest as defined by Washington. In fact, at a revealing moment in the talk, Haass boiled his own position down to a neat choice: Fallujah or Firenze. We need more Arabic to do better in Fallujah, i.e., so we could have been more effective in the Iraq War (or could be in the next one?), and we need less Italian because Italy (to his mind) is a place that is only about culture.

In this argument, Italian—like other European languages—is a luxury. There was no mention of French as a global language, with its crucial presence in Africa and North America. Haass even seems to regard Spanish as just one more European language, except perhaps that it might be useful to manage instability in Mexico. Such arguments that reduce language learning to foreign policy objectives get too simple too quickly. And they run the risk of destroying the same foreign language learning agenda they claim to defend. Language learning in Haass's view ultimately becomes just a boot camp for our students to be better soldiers, more efficient in carrying out the projects of the foreign policy establishment. That program stands in stark contrast to a vision of language learning as part of an education of citizens who can think for themselves.

Haass's account deserves attention: he is influential and thoughtful, and he is by no means alone in reducing the rationale for foreign language learning solely to national foreign policy needs. . . . Yet even on his own instrumental terms, Haass seemed to get it wrong. If language learning were primarily about plugging into large economies more successfully, then we should be offering more Japanese and German (still two very big economies after all), but they barely showed up on his map.

The much more important issue involves getting beyond instrumental thinking altogether, at least in the educational sphere. Second language acquisition is a key component of education because it builds student ability in language as such. Students who do well in a second language do better in their first language. With the core language skills—abilities to speak and to listen, to read and to write—come higher-order capacities: to interpret and understand, to recognize cultural difference, and, yes, to appreciate traditions, including one's own. Language learning is not just an instrumental skill, any more than one's writing ability is merely about learning to type on a keyboard. On the contrary, through language we become better thinkers, and that's what education is about, at least outside Washington.

**Source A**  
Berman, Russell A. "Foreign Language for Foreign Policy?" *Inside Higher Ed*. Inside Higher Ed, 23 Nov. 2010. Web. 8 May 2013.

**Population 5 Years and Older Who Spoke a Language Other Than English at Home by Language Group and English-Speaking Ability: 2007**

Characteristic	Total people	English-speaking ability			
		Very well	Well	Not well	Not at all
<b>NUMBER</b>					
<b>Population 5 years and older</b>	<b>280,950,438</b>				
Spoke only English at home	225,505,953	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Spoke a language other than English at home	55,444,485	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
		30,975,474	10,962,722	9,011,298	4,494,991
<b>Spoke a language other than English at home</b>	<b>55,444,485</b>	<b>30,975,474</b>	<b>10,962,722</b>	<b>9,011,298</b>	<b>4,494,991</b>
Spanish or Spanish Creole	34,547,077	18,179,530	6,322,170	6,344,110	3,701,267
Other Indo-European languages	10,320,730	6,936,808	2,018,148	1,072,025	293,749
Asian and Pacific Island languages	8,316,426	4,274,794	2,176,180	1,412,264	453,188
Other languages	2,260,252	1,584,342	446,224	182,899	46,787

**Source E**  
"Population 5 Years and Older Who Spoke a Language Other Than English at Home by Language Group and English-Speaking Ability: 2007." Table in "Language Use in the United States: 2007." *United States Census Bureau*. United States Census Bureau, April 2010. Web. 8 May 2013.