



Inspiring Languages

The free, quick and easy way for schools and colleges to connect with employee volunteers who have used languages in their careers

inspiringthe**future**.org

Twitter: @Edu_Employers

Context

Across the country, language teachers face challenges in engaging young people in language learning and in studying for foreign language qualifications. Primary schools in England are grappling with the new requirement to teach languages at Key Stage 2. At the same time, whilst the number of young people studying foreign languages at GCSE has stabilised in recent years, language A-Level entries continue to decline.

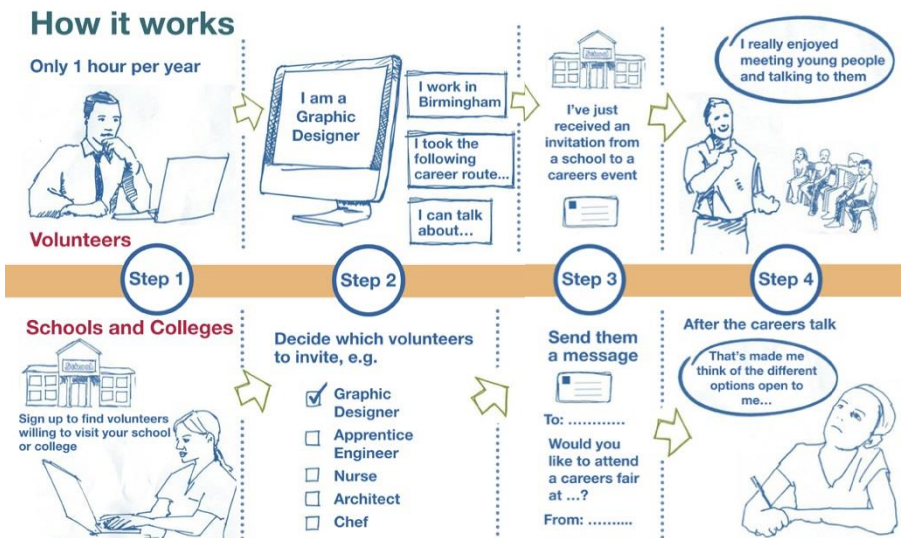
For pupils who do not grow up in bilingual households, school is **the** key site for intervention on languages. We know that learning languages enriches us as individuals and that languages can open doors to real opportunities later in life, but we also know that young people do not always appreciate this. Working alongside teachers, employers have a vital role to play in helping young people to understand that languages are a passport to a very wide and interesting range of careers and opportunities and in inspiring young people, at primary and secondary schools and colleges, to study languages.

Inspiring the Future provides a means of connecting young people at schools and colleges with employee volunteers who have used languages in their careers. This pamphlet sets out how *Inspiring the Future* works, how teachers can use it to invite people who use languages at work into their schools and colleges, and some examples of language-related activities that they have run using *Inspiring the Future*.

About Inspiring the Future

Inspiring the Future (www.inspiringthefuture.org) is the free, national service, run by the Education and Employers Taskforce charity, that connects more than 6,000 teachers from primary and secondary schools and colleges with an ever-growing pool (16,000 as of October 2014) volunteers across the country. When teachers register via the *Inspiring the Future* website and log-in to the secure online platform, they can see a list of all the volunteers available in their area.

When volunteers register and agree to spend an hour a year talking to young people about their job, they share information about their role and organisation, the activities they can help out with and their particular specialisms, such as apprenticeships or having used languages in their career. All this information is visible to teachers at schools and colleges based in the area the volunteer has said they are available to volunteer in. Teachers can then send messages and invitations to volunteers, via the secure *Inspiring the Future* portal.



Inspiring the Future and languages

Of the more than 16,000 *Inspiring the Future* volunteers who had signed up as of 9th October 2014, 1,612 were able to talk to young people about having used languages in their career. These volunteers, drawn from across the country, speak a diverse range of languages. They work in a very wide range of occupations and for organisations drawn from all sectors.

Our 1,612 *Inspiring the Future* languages volunteers have experience of using an average of 1.5 languages at work. French is the most commonly used language, followed by Spanish and German, but there are also Arabic, Japanese and Urdu speakers, amongst others.

Language	ITF volunteers using this language at work
Arabic	77
Cantonese	6
French	904
German	403
Italian	178
Japanese	60
Mandarin	79
Russian	118
Spanish	410
Urdu	101
Total Languages	2,336

Inspiring the Future languages volunteers include civil servants, lawyers, bankers, consultants, pilots, prison officers, engineers, chefs, TV producers and psychologists, working for organisations that range from the law firm Allen and Overy to the advertising and PR business WPP, via the BBC, Facebook, McAfee and Save the Children, among many others. A selection of the *Inspiring the Future* volunteers who are happy to go into schools and colleges and talk to young people about using languages at work is set out on the following page.

Inspiring the Future languages volunteers

Job Title	Organisation	Language(s)
Associate	Allen & Overy LLP	Mandarin
Senior Manager	American Express	Spanish
Structural and Civil Engineer	Arup	French, German
HR Director	Bank of America Merrill Lynch	Spanish, Urdu
Senior Broadcast Journalist	BBC	French, Mandarin
Marketing Executive	Berkeley Group	Italian
Project Manager	Bloomberg	French, German, Spanish, Italian, Mandarin, Russian, Japanese, Arabic
Senior First Officer	British Airways	French
Private Secretary	Cabinet Office	German, Arabic
Software Engineer	Capgemini	Urdu
Lawyer	Dechert LLP	French, Spanish
Principal Counsel	European Bank for Reconstruction & Development	German, Spanish, Italian
Head of PR	Experian PLC	German
Head of Operations, EMEA Sales & Business Development	Facebook	French, Arabic
Deputy Speechwriter to the Foreign Secretary	Foreign and Commonwealth Office	Russian
Software Engineer	GE Global	French
Statistician	H.M. Revenue and Customs	Russian
Head of Criminal Records Policy	Home Office	French
Senior Director	McAfee	Mandarin
Chief Executive	Northern Lights PR	Arabic
Communications Manager	Pearson Education	French, German
HR Manager	PepsiCo	French
Business Psychologist	RCA Business Psychologists Ltd	German
Materials Engineer	Rolls-Royce	French, German
HR Business Partner	Save the Children	Spanish
Social Media Executive	Skyscanner Ltd	German
Television Series Producer	Spungold TV	French, Spanish
Director of Sales	Standard Chartered Bank	Mandarin
Editor-in-Chief	Stilorama Media & Fashion	French, Italian, Arabic
Senior Legal Adviser	Ti Automotive	Mandarin, Russian
Director	View Architects	Spanish
CEO	WPP	French, Mandarin

This is a small sample of volunteers who have experience of using languages at work and who are registered on Inspiring the Future. Availability is linked to geographical area, so teachers are able to send invitations to the volunteers who are available in the area their school or college is based in. We are always looking for more volunteers, so please do spread the word to friends and colleagues who use languages in their work.

How do these volunteers use languages at work?

Some examples on how Inspiring the Future volunteers use, or have used, languages in their jobs are set out below.

I'm a Junior Associate Solicitor at a large corporate law firm in the City. I come from a non-law background - I did a Spanish degree and spent time living abroad as part of my degree. Opportunities to use languages at work are frequent - this year I was sent on a secondment to work in Spain.

Solicitor at a corporate law firm

I am a freelance marketing consultant, working with technology companies to launch new products (or a new company) in new markets. I set up a plan and implement it, from defining products, to creating a website and managing PR, and including writing marketing content to generate leads. I have always worked internationally and speak 5 languages.

Marketing Director at a marketing company

I manage a team of people creating, improving and deploying new processes for our customer operation organisation. I am also a certified project manager and support my team in using this methodology. I use languages where I can and work with people outside of the UK. I have to make sure that people understand what is being presented.

Manager at an IT company

I am designing buildings and bridges, collaborating with architects and building services engineers. I speak 4 languages fluently and like making use of these skills in my work.

Engineer at an engineering company

I am a freelance journalist, writer and journalism teacher who writes for national and international media, blogs, occasionally appears on television and who also trains journalists to be better reporters and writers. I worked as a foreign correspondent in Brazil and Mexico, speak Spanish and Portuguese and sometimes train in those languages. I also work as a media consultant.

Freelance journalist and media consultant

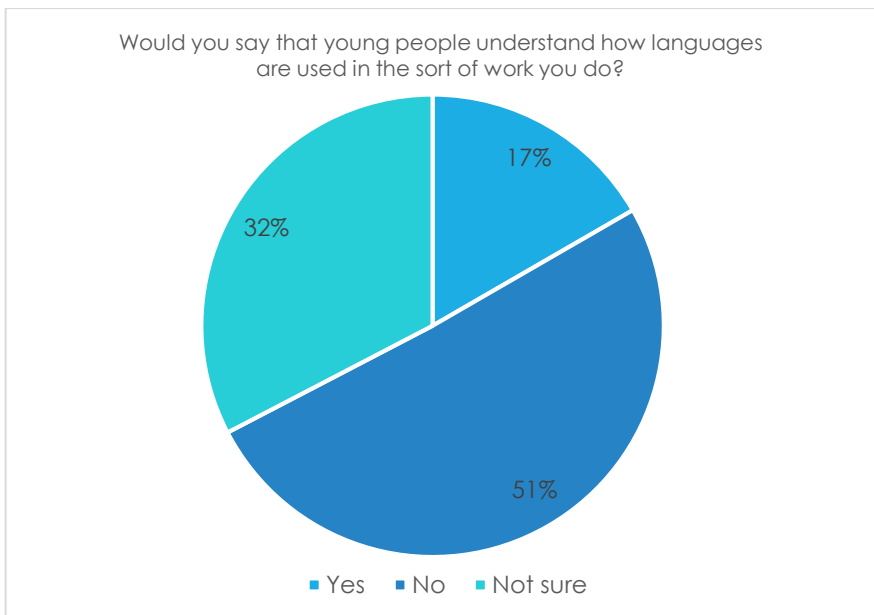
I am responsible for selling large scale IT consultancy and systems integration services to banks and insurance companies. I develop relationships with senior people in large clients and help identify ways my company can help their businesses grow and prosper. I have lived and worked in both the UK and Russia. I was not strong at languages at school, but since leaving have become fluent in both French and Russian and this has greatly enriched my life experience.

Business Development professional at an IT services company

How do volunteers perceive the value of languages?

The Education and Employers Taskforce surveyed *Inspiring the Future* volunteers who use, or have used, languages at work in October 2014 to identify key messages about the importance of languages for young people. A total of 146 volunteers, who do a very wide range of jobs for a very wide range of organisations, responded to the survey.

Some important findings and messages for young people emerge from the survey. For example, more than half of respondents said they did not think young people understood how languages are used in their chosen field and a further 17% were unsure.



In addition, most respondents believed that young people who only speak English would be at a disadvantage in their particular field of work. Overall 70% of respondents agreed that monolingual school leavers would be at a disadvantage, and 74% agreed that monolingual graduates would be at a disadvantage in the jobs market, compared to young people who speak one or more foreign languages.

Key messages for young people

Key messages from *Inspiring the Future* volunteers who use languages at work (and who took part in the October 2014 survey) to young people are as follows:

Languages open doors to a very wide range of interesting careers:

Languages are not just for translators and teachers. Many people, doing many different and interesting jobs across all different sectors, use languages in their professional lives and most respondents (70%) believe they have been able to apply for a wider range of jobs because of their language skills.

Fluency is not the be all and end all: Many people who use languages at work are not fluent in all the languages that they use. Basic proficiency – the ability to greet people in their own language, interact with them, make small talk and build relationships – is useful in the workplace and preferable not being able to speak a language at all. Some language competence is always better than none.

Speaking a foreign language can help career progression: Two thirds (66%) of respondents agreed that their language skills gave them an advantage when they applied for their current job and three quarters (75%) agreed that their language skills have given them an edge in applying for jobs during the course of their career.

Young people should take advantage of the opportunities to learn languages whilst still in full-time education: Most respondents (78%) recommend that young people wanting to get into their line of work should capitalise on the opportunities to learn languages that are available at school and university.

Bilingualism by young people who speak a different language at home is a real asset: 95% of survey respondents agreed that bilingualism by young people who speak a different language in the home is likely to be very useful in the jobs market.

Using *Inspiring the Future* to invite volunteers

To help young people understand the benefits of learning languages, many primary and secondary school teachers have already used *Inspiring the Future* to invite languages volunteers into their schools.

Primary

'The children at our school have been learning French and we are holding a French/Languages day for the European Day of Languages. Would you be available to come in to talk to 55 Year 5 children about how you have found languages useful in the workplace and why it helps to learn languages?'

Teacher at a Primary School in Wimbledon

Secondary

'I am a teacher of MFL in a secondary school in the North East of England. We teach French here as the main language and offer German as a second language, though uptake in recent years has been low. I am looking to show my students how languages work in the world of work as many student see them as irrelevant for the areas in which they wish to work. I am looking for someone who would be willing to chat with a group of approx 30 - 60 students about their career progression and the role languages took in it'

Teacher at a Secondary School in Durham

'We would like 2 judges for our International Language Festival which is now in its 25th year. The festival celebrates students' cultural diversity, knowledge and skills through showcasing their home languages as well as those studied. Your role would be to nominate 4 winners: best role play/drama performance; best home language group/individual; best individual performance; best song/act among students aged 11-13.'

Teacher at a Secondary School in Hounslow

'Hi. We are planning a project to link languages and employability and would like to invite volunteers to come in to talk to students about how they use languages in their professional lives or / and to show that a language degree doesn't always lead to becoming a MFL teacher! We are planning lunchtime career talks once a month on Fridays 12:40-1:30 and a career event in March.'

Teacher at a Secondary School in Lewisham

'I run a Careers Club once monthly on a Wednesday lunchtime and wondered whether you could speak to our students about publishing/careers with languages. It is a very informal event, speakers normally talk to students and /or use a PowerPoint followed by an opportunity for questions.'

Teacher at a Secondary School in North Yorkshire

Examples of *Inspiring the Future* language activities

Head of MFL at Melbourn Village College, Cambridgeshire

'I invited in a volunteer who is a Senior Consultant at an IT consultancy business as we were celebrating the European Day of Languages and needed someone to talk about the importance of languages in an assembly. We felt that someone that actively uses language skills in business would be a great speaker for such a day. Clearly as a languages department, we want students to understand the application of languages in working world as this is a key motivation to them opting for a language at GCSE.

'The talk certainly helped to reinforce the message that we as teachers give the students on a daily basis. The volunteer tried to link their talk to his current work with car firms that the students immediately recognised. He went to great effort to tell his personal story and I think this gave the talk a greater impact. I would definitely use *Inspiring the Future* again and I think this is exactly what schools need as it's often so hard to find people who are prepared to give freely of their time to come in to talk to students.'

Director of Specialisms, Gumley House Convent School

Gumley House Convent School hold an Annual Language Festival. They invited in two *Inspiring the Future* volunteers with a language background to act as judges. The purpose of the event was to celebrate students' cultural diversity, knowledge and skills through showcasing their home languages as well as those studied through performances. The volunteers that attended were from a not for profit organisation and from Brompton Bicycles.

How can I get involved?

As a **teacher**:

1. Register for *Inspiring the Future* on behalf of your school or college at www.inspiringthefuture.org
2. Log into *Inspiring the Future*. Go to '**Find Volunteers**' and in the search filters under '**Filter volunteers by their specialism**' select the language you are interested in e.g. **Languages - German**
3. This will list all the volunteers that have indicated they could talk about their use or study of the language in question, within your geographical area
4. Click on **View** to see their profile details and then click the **Message** button to invite them to your school/college to give a talk or session at a date and a time of your choice
5. Fill in the short feedback form which will be sent to you after the activity date has passed and do let us know any additional comments by emailing enquiries@inspiringthefuture.org

As a languages **volunteer**:

1. Register for *Inspiring the Future* as a volunteer or employer at www.inspiringthefuture.org
2. When completing your profile, under the question '**Do you have experience at work of any of the following**', select the languages you can speak from the drop down menu
3. You can also add further details about your language use in the section titled '**Please tell us if there is any other information you think may be of interest**'
4. You will then be registered an *Inspiring the Future* languages volunteer and schools and colleges in your chosen area will be able to see your profile and invite you in
5. Fill in the short feedback form which will be sent to you after the activity date of your visit has passed and share any additional comments by emailing enquiries@inspiringthefuture.org