

WHY GERMAN?

SIX GOOD REASONS TO OFFER GERMAN

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INSTITUT

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Germany is the 3rd largest economy worldwide, the largest economy in the European Union and the 2nd biggest trading partner of the UK.

German is the most widely spoken first language in Europe¹, and the EU as a whole is the biggest trading partner of the UK.

German is the most sought-after second language by UK employers.²

22,000 undergraduate and graduate programmes are offered in Germany yearly.

¹ German is spoken in Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein, parts of Switzerland, Italy, Belgium and Luxembourg.

In these 6 European countries, almost 100 million people speak German.

² According to a 2024 City Lit Study



GOOD REASON TO OFFER GERMAN NO. 1 EQUIPPING LEARNERS

German and French remain the two most desirable languages according to UK employers², yet the number of pupils learning German in school remains historically lower than those learning French and Spanish. This means that, at a time when **German is more sought-after than ever**, offering German as part of your curriculum **gives pupils an in-demand skill** and enhances your school's reputation.

Embracing **linguistic diversity** reflects positively on the school's commitment to providing students with a **well-rounded education**, contributing to the students' development as global citizens.

Language learning is regarded as an important part of a rounded education, with a 2023 poll from YouGov and the British Academy finding that **71%** of UK adults **support** the idea of making the **study of a modern language** compulsory in secondary school.



GOOD REASON TO OFFER GERMAN NO. 2

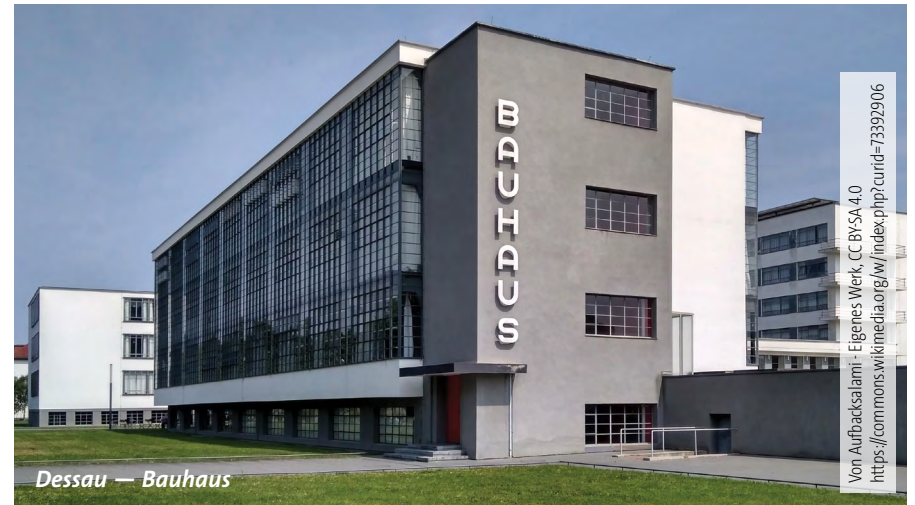
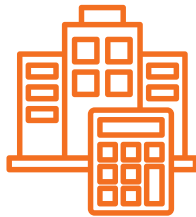
FUTURE DESTINATIONS

Germany is the UK's second biggest trading partner and German is the **language most in demand by UK employers** – close trade links mean that many businesses require German speakers in a variety of fields, and German speakers can expect to have more career opportunities.

The steep drop in EU migration since Brexit has disproportionately impacted UK businesses' ability to hire native German speakers, so they **increasingly rely on people from the UK with German skills**.

Around 2,500 German companies are located in the UK, employing over 400,000 people. German energy companies are playing an increasing role in the **transition towards renewables, a fast-growing industry sector both in Germany and the UK.**

Germany is also the second most used scientific language, making it very beneficial for careers in STEM and academia.



German can be combined with over 60 subjects at degree level – ranging from Archaeology and Law to Philosophy and Business – quite apart from other languages.

Learning German at school also enables pupils to attend universities across Germany: Germany is home to some of the world's **top universities** and boasts a **renowned vocational training system**. Plus:

There are no tuition fees, even for international students.

Germany offers **support for work and study in Germany** through organisations and funding programmes such as the German Academic Exchange Service DAAD, who support well over 100,000 international as well as German students and researchers every year.

Germany is facing a shortage of skilled workers and is actively looking for foreigners to work in Germany. This concerns all kinds of careers. Thus, **having German language skills broadens the career opportunities enormously**.

Last but not least, having a second or third language on your CV is a significant advantage in general. Employers see this as a positive sign that a candidate has the **will and the stamina to pursue more challenging long-term goals**.

Willy Brandt
West-German Chancellor
from 1969-1974

“ If I’m selling to you,
I speak your language.
If I’m buying, dann müssen
Sie Deutsch sprechen.”

In a globalised world, businesses increasingly require individuals who can **communicate effectively with international customers** and suppliers. Research by the Confederation of British Industry and Pearson highlights that among firms seeking employees with foreign language skills, German is the most highly sought after language.

German is also a beneficial language for students interested in third sector and government work – especially within Europe. Germany plays a central role in the European Union and hosts key institutions such as the European Central Bank and numerous international NGOs. Proficiency in German can open doors to internships and careers in areas such as international development, environmental policy, and human rights, particularly in Berlin, Brussels, and Vienna—three major hubs for public sector and nonprofit work.

COMBINING GERMAN AT UNIVERSITIES

German can be combined with over 60 subjects at degree level at many universities, for example

- **HISTORY** at Cambridge
- **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS** at Swansea
- **PHILOSOPHY** at Edinburgh
- **INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS** in Belfast at Queen’s University
- **LAW** in Ireland in Dublin at Trinity College

James Culshaw
German at University of Glasgow

“ German has brought me a whole host of advantages: working in tourism during university holidays, spending a year living in Germany and forging friendships across borders. However, what drives me the most in my studies of German is the understanding of the Germanic origins of both English and Scots and the origins of my own culture.”

Agatha Ezenwa Ekhosuehi
Comparative Literature with German at UCL

“ I chose German as not only a challenge but also as a portal to a new culture and a new world. I also looked at the economic value in learning German since it’s an important language.”

Zach Austgen
International Relations and German at UCL

“ German was my grandfather’s language before he fled to the United States in 1940. Choosing to study German was at its core about trying to reconnect with that part of my family’s story. I’ve since uncovered so much more: a captivating political history, a grammar that is fascinating albeit at times baffling.”

Clara Price
German at Somerville College, Oxford

“ A German degree is the perfect combination of my interests: language, literature and history. And it opens doors for me: I am going on my year abroad to Braunschweig to undertake a paid publishing internship — even without an EU passport!”

Julia Patterson
International Business with German at Queen’s University, Belfast

“ I grew up in Luxembourg speaking German at school and Luxembourgish outside the classroom. Speaking and learning German connects me to my roots, but is also a gateway to understanding different cultures. Learning a language is the most powerful ways to grasp another culture.”

Students of German across the UK say:

GOOD REASON TO OFFER GERMAN NO. 3

BENEFITS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

90% of studies examining the impact of language learning on academic performance show that language **learners perform better across a range of academic subjects** than students who don't study a second language. Learning another language also **boosts pupil literacy**, which gives learners an advantage in other school subjects.

Other studies also show a measurable impact on **concentration and focus, memory, communication skills, empathy, and creativity**.

Plus, it doesn't have to be hard: English and German **originate from the same language family**. This means there are similar structures and it's easy to spot similar words in both languages, which boosts motivation for learning.



Goethe-Schiller monument in Weimar

GOOD REASON TO OFFER GERMAN NO. 4

STRONG ATTAINMENT

Across the four nations in the United Kingdom, **pupils taking German consistently outperform those taking French or Spanish** – across GCSEs, A-Levels, National 4s/5s, and Highers.

In **ENGLAND**, almost half of students taking an A-Level in German received an A or A* (47.1%), compared to less than 40% for French (39.1%) and Spanish (36.6%).

A-Level Outcomes
2024

ENGLAND

GERMAN

47.1%
A and above

FRENCH

39.1%
A and above

SPANISH

36.6%
A and above

Similarly, over half of German students sitting their A-Levels in **WALES** (52.0%) received an A or A*, compared to 40.1% for French and 34.4% for Spanish.

A-Level Outcomes**
2024

** pupils aged 17 only by subject group

WALES

GERMAN

52.0%
A and above

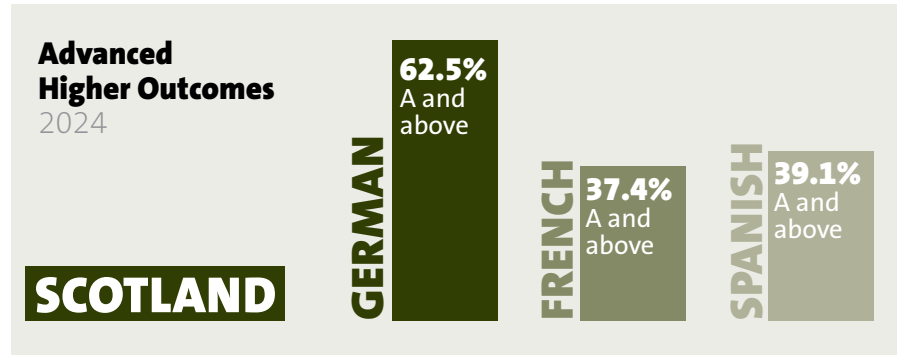
FRENCH

40.1%
A and above

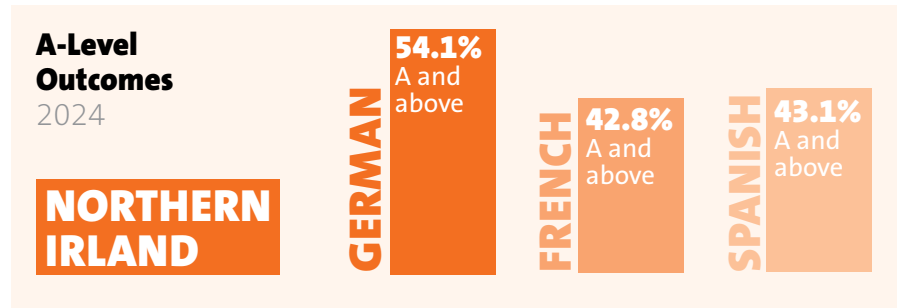
SPANISH

34.4%
A and above

In **SCOTLAND**, 62.5% of pupils taking German as an Advanced Higher subject achieved an A – significantly more than those taking French (37.4%) or Spanish (39.1%).



In **NORTHERN IRELAND**, German had the highest proportion of top grades, with 23% of entries receiving an A*, more than double the rate for French (13.2%) and nearly three times that of Spanish (8.1%).



All the data above reflects results from 2023/2024. Scan the QR code for a more detailed breakdown of exam results for each UK nation.



Leipzig — Neues Rathaus



GOOD REASON TO OFFER GERMAN NO. 5

GERMAN BROADENS CULTURAL HORIZONS

Learning German fosters a deeper understanding of German culture, history, and contributions to the world. This cultural enrichment promotes **tolerance** and **cross-cultural appreciation**.

The relations between the UK and Germany are very close, politically, economically and culturally. There are many personal links between the British and the German people. Around 450 partnerships between British and German cities and towns foster direct contacts.

German is an official language in six European countries and is also used as an internal **working language in the European Union** alongside English and French. It is the most widely spoken native language in the EU.

German is also called **The Land of Poets and Thinkers** – its rich cultural, scientific, literary and musical history offers students and teachers a wide range of works to incorporate into their learning and teaching.



GOOD REASON TO OFFER GERMAN NO. 6

HIGH-QUALITY SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS

The Goethe-Institut offers a wide range of support that makes it easier to offer German and to support your teachers. Programmes include:



- **Teaching support** during short-term staffing shortages and German courses for non-specialist teachers and students through Vorsprung Deutsch
- **Free professional coaching** and upskilling for your department through the German Expert Mentor (GEM) network
- **Grants and scholarships** for teachers, including for in-person professional development in Germany
- **German Clubs:** Provision of current, high-quality teaching materials and lesson plans, including German Clubs teaching material and the Gimagine Award which is usable as a **Duke of Edinburgh skill**.
- Various **competitions, events, career fairs, film screenings, youth exchange programmes**, and other motivational initiatives throughout the year including trips to Germany.
- New **virtual exchange “e-Space”** which brings together schools in Germany and the UK, enabling virtual immersion from the classroom.

e-Space



goethe.de/gimagine

SOURCES





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