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Why Study German?

Learning a second language is something that a lot of Americans don't seem to think about. Most of us here in America feel that it is unnecessary to learn a second language: after all, English is spoken around the world. However, there are many people in this world who speak languages other than English. Furthermore, ease of communication is not the only reason for learning another language. Speaking a second and even third language is very healthy for the mind. It is something that everyone should have the opportunity to do at some point in life, though many, sadly, do not.

Learning another language like German helps the mind to grow by opening up new and interesting ways of thinking. It can reveal new things about your mother tongue as well as give you linguistic insights. For example, an English speaker learning German or Latin would learn a lot about the roots of familiar English words. I have found that learning German has given me some newer points of understanding in life, like understanding the expressions that my grandmother uses, and the reasons why languages sometimes use the words they do. Learning a widely-spoken language like German or Chinese can allow you to communicate with millions more people.

It also opens up wonderful travel opportunities. With German, travel to many places in Europe is enhanced and communication is more efficient. One can visit less touristy places to get a real feeling for the culture. Knowing the local language keeps one from looking foolish, plus the fun of conversing with local people really starts. I am greatly looking forward to my summer trip to Germany for this very reason.

School and work opportunities are additional benefits. On a résumé, being bilingual gives the applicant an edge. Colleges offer scholarships for languages here in Tucson, and having studied German will qualify me for such scholarships. This proficiency opens work and study opportunities abroad, a wonderful learning experience itself.

One reason that I enjoy learning another language is to talk or write with friends secretly. It is also fun to expand my vocabulary of insults and vulgar language. Everyone feels angry at times, and it is tough to control what one says. However, if you are speaking a language that many do not understand, the repercussions for momentary slips of anger are minimal. As for speaking secretly, it is very useful to keep eavesdroppers off your tail, or keep a little sibling out of a conversation.

Learning a second language is so much fun. I have found a lot of joy in learning German. It lets me understand the culture of my mother's family, and opens up my brain to new paths of thought. All schools should offer language courses early on. I believe that nobody should be denied the opportunity to expand their communication skills in this enriching way.