

## Why German remains a relevant language offering at Montgomery

*A collaborative compilation by*

*MTSD Language Instructors Lale Saatchi, Karin Lee, and William Dominick  
and Supervisor of World Languages Alma Reyes*

German is a wonderful language. Some of the hottest tickets in the US are to the NYC Metropolitan Opera's Wagner Ring cycle - sung in German. "Das Auto" is known to many who drive a German car and appreciate German engineering. Berlin and its Brandenburg Gate are the symbol for the end of the division of Europe and for peaceful revolution. The German economy is the driving force in Europe and worldwide. German companies have built some of their most modern production sites, with thousands of jobs, in the US. The upshot: The German language is important and can be a career maker. Why is German important you ask? ...

1. **The study of German improves SAT and ACT scores.** Learning German increases verbal IQ and wordpower in English because 26% of the English language is Germanic in origin. Many words in German sound and/or look the same as English words because the two languages share the same "grandparent."
2. **Knowledge of German increases lifetime earning potential.** As reported in the [Economist](#), the MIT economist Albert Saiz calculated that the average lifetime earnings bonus for an American college graduate who learns German is \$128,000 (for French: \$77K, for Spanish: \$51K).
3. **German is currently the only MHS language to offer an exchange program.** Students live with a German family for 3 weeks in the summer and then host a German partner for 3 weeks in the fall. Participation in the program is a part of college admission process which is never overlooked. Universities are interested in students with international experience and sensitivity to other cultures.
4. **German is offered in other districts** such as Hopewell, West Windsor, Hillsborough, Hunterdon (South Central North), Pennington school (private), Bridgewater- Raritan, Watchung Hills Regional, Hamilton HS West, Steinert HS East, Morris Hills Regional, East Brunswick and Cranford.
5. **College students from anywhere in the world can attend college in Germany for free!**  
[http://www.slate.com/blogs/browbeat/2014/10/10/germany\\_college\\_is\\_free\\_there\\_even\\_for\\_foreign\\_students\\_why.html](http://www.slate.com/blogs/browbeat/2014/10/10/germany_college_is_free_there_even_for_foreign_students_why.html)
6. **German is widely spoken.** Germany has the largest number of native speakers in the European Union (far more than English, Spanish, or French). German is among the ten most commonly spoken languages in the world. It is also a lingua franca of Central and Eastern Europe. And, as for "all Germans speak English anyway"? That's pure myth. German is an important scientific language and is the second most common language on the Internet.
7. **Germans are #1 in the world when it comes to travel.**  
40 million Germans spent 24.2 billion euros on travel to other countries in fiscal 2012 - and Germany itself is a major tourist destination. Americans are the second largest group to visit Germany.
8. **Germany is a significant economic entity.** The German economy ranks number one in Europe and number four worldwide. Its economy is comparable to that of all the world's Spanish-speaking countries combined. Germany is the world's second-largest exporter. From 2003-8 Germany was the world's largest exporter. It is now second to China, even though its exports continue to grow dramatically. It is the world's largest exporter of certain goods such as vehicles, parts, machines, chemical products, and metals. It is home to numerous international corporations. Direct investment by Germany in the United States is over ten billion dollars. Germany is the largest European trading partner with the United States. German is a key business language in the European Union and 2500 German companies do business in the US or invest in American companies. German investment in the U.S. is over a trillion euros, while the U.S. total in Germany is a trillion dollars. Each country's companies, through their subsidiaries, employ around 800,000 people in the other's work force. Over 2000 American companies conduct business in the German-speaking countries, and Germany is the sixth largest export market for American products.

9. **Germany is a leader in business and innovation.** The 2014 edition of the World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report ranks Switzerland 1st among the most competitive countries, with Germany 5th (Singapore is 2nd, the U.S. 3rd, Finland 4th). The Bloomberg business report for 2014 also ranked Germany 5th among the best current places to do business, while the UN Conference on Trade and Development's World Investment Prospects Survey (2012-2014) placed it 3rd. According to the GE Innovation Barometer 2014, a study undertaken by General Electric, Germany is the second-most innovative country in the world (the U.S. is first, Japan third). Germans are world leaders in engineering.
10. **German contributions to the sciences is unparalleled.** Twenty-two (22) Nobel prizes in Physics, 30 in Chemistry, and 25 in Medicine have gone to scientists from the three major German-speaking countries, while many laureates from other countries received their training in German universities. In *The Discoveries* (Pantheon, 2005), Alan Lightman's list of the 22 greatest scientific breakthroughs of the 20th century includes eight that were made exclusively by Germans, while two more had Austrian or German collaborators. Nobel Prize awards give another kind of indication. Scientists from the three major German-speaking countries have won 37 Nobel Prizes in Physics (most recently in 2007), 39 in Chemistry (in 2014), 31 in Medicine (2013), and one in Economics.
11. **Germany is a leader for social consciousness.** In 2014, the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy ranked Germany the most energy-efficient country in the world, and it is also a leader in the development of alternative energy. In addition, Germany is the second-biggest donor of aid to developing countries. A variety of international surveys confirm that Germany is one of the world's most admired countries, whether viewed from the perspectives of economics, quality of life, scientific achievement, culture, tourism, or ethical values. In 2013 it again led the annual [BBC World Service Country Rating Poll](#) as the world's most popular country, a position it has held since 2008, except when it came in a close second in 2012. Seven Germans and Austrians have received the Peace Prize.
12. **The German-speaking world has produced some of the most revered filmmakers of the 20th century –** from Fritz Lang to Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Wim Wenders and a new generation of transnational directors such as Tom Tykwer and Fatih Akin. German and Austrian filmmakers such as Lang, Billy Wilder and Ernst Lubitsch also have shaped the history of Hollywood.
13. **German-speakers occupy a prominent place on any list of the world's greatest artists and thinkers.** German is the language of prominent figures such as Goethe, Marx, Nietzsche, and Kafka, Mann, Brecht, and Grass. Mozart, Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, Schumann, Wagner, Mahler, and Schoenberg spoke and wrote German, as did Freud, Weber, Einstein, and Heisenberg, Kant, Hegel, and Heidegger. Eleven Nobel Prizes in Literature have been awarded to German-language writers. 18% of the world's books are published in German, and relatively few of these ever appear in English translation. Germany is in second place in the field of scholarly publications.
14. **German is the third most taught foreign language in the world** and after English the second most popular in Europe and Japan. 68% of all Japanese students study German. What do they know that we don't? German is indispensable for study in music, religion, philosophy, physics, and many other subjects. German is the language that is most often required or recommended in academic programs. While almost every academic discipline has a strong German tradition and in many cases, it is one that largely defines the field. In fact, the modern university itself, with its combination of teaching and research, is a German invention. Many of the Western world's most important works of philosophy, literature, music, art history, theology, psychology, chemistry, physics, engineering and medicine are written in German and continue to be produced in German. German is the second most commonly used scientific language in the world. 40% of scientists in the USA recommend the study of German.

**Reference sources:**

Boston University: <http://www.bu.edu/mlcl/home/why-study-german/>  
German Missions in the United States: <http://www.germany.info/doDeutsch>  
Dartmouth University: <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~german/why/>  
University of Iowa: <http://clas.uiowa.edu/dwllc/german/why-study-german>

## Chart provided by: The Economist

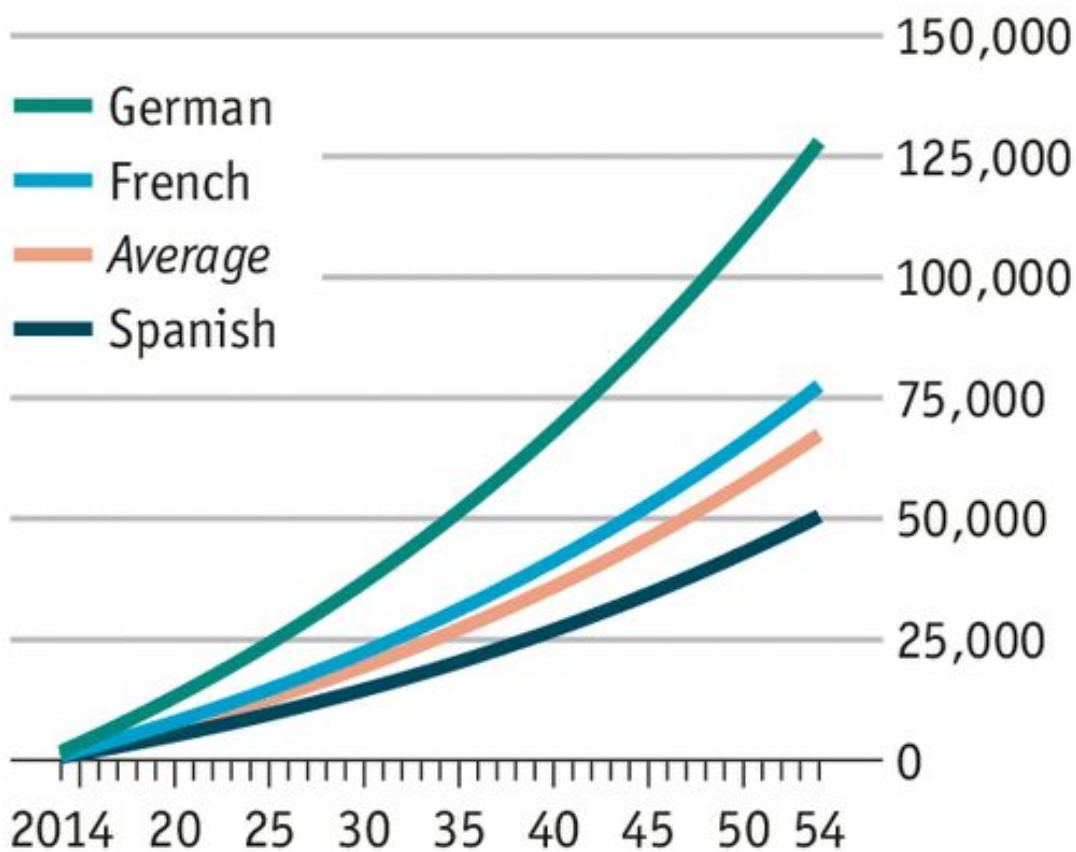
The total worth of a foreign language over a 40 year career assuming a starting salary of \$45,000 (in 2014) with regular raises is illustrated below. The chart provided below shows how much learning French, German, and Spanish is worth over your whole career. It also provides an average worth.

As you can see, the average worth of a foreign language is about \$67,000, Spanish is worth \$51,000, French is worth \$77,000, and **German is worth \$128,000**. All these numbers are in 2014 dollars. And again, these numbers assume a starting salary of \$45,000 with regular raises.

Taking into account the numbers provided by Saiz,

### Accumulated language bonuses

Forecasts, €



Source: *The Economist*