



More than words: Real Life Stories

1. What is your name and what course are you studying?

Holly Cobb. I am in my second year of a French and Linguistics degree.

2. What languages do you speak?

My native language is English, but I am currently studying French at University, and studied Spanish up to A level.

3. When did you decide to learn another language and why?

I started learning French in year 7 – I had never properly studied languages before, and, although difficult at first, I found it so rewarding and decided to start Spanish in year 8. I found the challenge of expressing myself spontaneously and confidently both a challenge and a source of motivation, and so chose to carry on!

4. How has being able to speak more than one language helped you in your personal life?

Personally, being able to speak in a language other than English has been hugely beneficial. I have friends from France who I speak to in the foreign language, and I've been lucky enough to visit them. The cultural immersion this gives me, as well as exposure to a style of French not commonly found in textbooks or literature, has taught me so much, and given me fresh outlooks on life. I also really enjoy French and Spanish music, so being able to understand the lyrics has definitely broadened my musical horizons! I have seen Barbara Pravi and Zaz in concert in the UK and look forward to seeing Angèle this year too. Similarly with TV series, being able to understand other languages has massively increased the amount of shows I can watch.

To find out more information please visit:
go.pearson.com/MFLGCSE24



5. Has being able to speak another language opened any doors for you?

Definitely. This year, I will be moving to France for a year to be a British Council language assistant in a French secondary school, an opportunity that would have been a lot more difficult if not impossible had I not been able to speak French. I am really looking forward to working abroad and putting my language skills to test in a real world context.

6. What has been the most impactful thing about learning a language on your life to date?

It has afforded me the ability to connect with people whose paths I never would have otherwise crossed. From my course mates at university, to the people I have met at a weekly language exchange I volunteer at, I have had the opportunity to meet so many interesting people from all walks of

life, and I feel thoroughly enriched as a result.

7. What is your favourite foreign language word?

« Petit à petit, l'oiseau fait son nid »
- bit by bit, the bird makes its nest.
It's a beautiful French expression about making small steps to complete a goal.

8. Is there another language you would like to learn?

I would love to learn German – the early Germanic influences on both French and English are fascinating! I'd also love to visit Germany – it looks like such a beautiful country.

9. If you could give one piece of advice to students thinking about learning another language, what would it be?

Do not be disheartened if progress seems slow – especially at the early stages of learning a new language. You are having to rewire your brain to accept and apply new grammatical structures

To find out more information please visit:
go.pearson.com/MFLGCSE24



and sounds that sound very unusual in your native language, which is no mean feat! The benefits on the other side are worth every verb table painstakingly drawn out, every vocab test, and every awkward moment of silence when you don't know the essential word to convey your point!

10. What has been the most unexpected benefit of learning an additional language?

Those moments sat in a cafe or walking along the street when you realise you can understand a conversation – I have unintentionally heard some very amusing stories!

11. Can you give an example where knowing another language has helped you?

Many earlier linguists and philologists are French, so reading their essays and theories in the original language has given me a

much greater depth of understanding of the essence of their arguments than anything I could have gained in translation.

12. At what point in your life did you realise how important knowing another language was?

I volunteer at a weekly language exchange for anyone wanting to learn English. There have been some beautiful moments of connection, such as when two young children who had just moved to the UK managed to recite all their times tables in English, or when some of the older adults began to successfully carry conversations. When they began to tell us about the history and culture of where they grew up, as well as words in their language I truly realised how beautiful languages are, and how the more you know, the more you can appreciate the diversity and the richness of humanity.

To find out more information please visit:
go.pearson.com/MFLGCSE24