



## More than words: Real Life Stories

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

My name is Kelly Davies and I'm in my final year of university studying Spanish and Portuguese.

**2. What languages do you speak?**

I'm a native English speaker. I speak Spanish and Portuguese, and a little bit of Catalan.

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

Originally, I had to choose a language to study at school. I later chose to continue studying Spanish as it was something that I enjoyed and when I started looking at university courses, I was interested in the options of Portuguese and Catalan as additional languages. I hadn't considered picking up a new language from scratch, but I found Portuguese interesting because of its similarities (and differences!) to Spanish. Through learning Spanish, I had become interested in other languages in Spain such

as Catalan and Basque and I hoped for an opportunity to be able to learn more about them.

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

Learning and speaking another language definitely helps you to connect with people who are learning English as a second language, and to understand the challenges of learning a language later in life. I find that you make much stronger connections with people when you can speak to them in their native language, or at least try to speak to them. When I've travelled to other countries, I've found that people appreciate the effort of trying to speak another language and are always keen to help you improve.

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

I've definitely been fortunate to have had a number of opportunities that I wouldn't have had without learning a language and being a languages student. From the people that I've met whilst studying who have the same interests and speak the same languages to being able to spend a year abroad studying in Spain and Portugal, being able to speak other languages has allowed me to have some incredible experiences that I would not have had otherwise.

**6. What is your favourite foreign language word or phrase and why?**

I have to be a little cliché and say 'saudade' from Portuguese. It's said to be kind of untranslatable but has a similar meaning to yearning or nostalgia. I think it's a really interesting idea that there

are words that don't have an equivalent in English. It's definitely positive to be learning a language and finally be able to understand the meaning of words rather than just trying to translate everything in your head.

**7. Is there another language you would like to learn?**

I was lucky to be able to take some beginner's classes in Basque and Japanese whilst I was studying abroad and would love to be able to speak them properly. Basque is a language isolate, so it isn't related to any other language, which makes it something really different to learn. Also, Japanese is very different to English especially in terms of its alphabet so it would be very impressive to learn.

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

Don't be afraid to try something totally new! I never expected to

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study Portuguese and now it's a huge part of my degree. Learning a language will open up so many doors in terms of meeting new people and being able to visit new places. If you start with one language, you'll find so many more opportunities to keep learning. Languages are for anyone and you shouldn't feel scared to pick something totally new and different to learn if you think it's interesting.

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

For me, a big part of what I study is now based on a language that I never expected to learn. I think it goes to show that trying a new language can give you new opportunities that you never expected. You get the opportunity to learn about all of this culture, history, and literature that might spark an interest you never knew you had.

10. **At what point in your life did you realise how important / the value in knowing another language was?**

There must be so many examples of this! I have to say that whilst I was studying abroad, I realised that there are so many opportunities out there and things to see and knowing another language really gives you access to so much. It gives you the ability and freedom to be able to live in another country and use that language to communicate every day so you can see things and meet people that might have been impossible otherwise.