



More than words: Real Life Stories

Sara Darling is a freelance travel journalist, whose articles have been published around the world.

I started learning languages at school and kept going with French for GCSE. I'd always wanted to travel and thought it might come in handy.

In class I soaked up the language and had fun discovering different cultures, writing to a pen pal who was based in La Rochelle and learning about her life.

Once I knew the basic grammar and vocabulary, I realised how many doors speaking French could open: it became easier to talk with native speakers, I gained lots of confidence, and it gave me a real sense of freedom.

Learning the language has been brilliant for communicating and finding out more about new destinations. Being able to chat with the locals and read signs means I can travel on my own. It also means I've been able to mingle with influential French speakers at dinners and events in the travel writing industry.

Being bilingual has definitely helped me stand out in my career, and has even got me invited to bonus trips and events as a result. I've had so many opportunities. Next stop: perfecting my Spanish and learning Italian...

Languages: English (first language), French, Spanish

Favourite foreign phrases: in French, "petits nuages pelucheux" (little fluffy clouds); in Spanish, "pavonearse" (strutting around like a peacock!)



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