



CIOL

Supporting language
professionals
worldwide



WORKING WITH

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

A guide to working as a translator



LEARN A LANGUAGE AND YOU'LL BE SURPRISED WHERE IT CAN TAKE YOU!

Are you choosing your GCSEs and not sure which subjects to take? You most likely have to do English, maths, and science at your school, but what else?

If you're not sure what kind of job you want to do, you could choose a mix of subjects that will keep your options open.

How about choosing a modern foreign language? Or maybe you already speak another language? There is a wealth of career opportunities for people who speak other languages. For instance, you can combine an interest in sports, working as a football translator, or interpreter for international media events, or you can work in IT or gaming, or maybe you would love a job that involves travelling.

If you read our real-life case studies, we hope these will inspire you too to choose a career built around a foreign language.



Chartered Institute of Linguists



A career in languages is highly-rewarding – if you enjoy being the boss of yourself, variety, exciting and challenging work, this is for you. Study languages and you'll be surprised where they take you!

Vasiliki Prestidge
MCIL Chartered Linguist



WORK WITH LANGUAGES AND EVERY DAY IS DIFFERENT

I'm here to disprove the popular rumour that "Google Translate will take your job over soon" and that "You don't need to study translation to be able to translate".

Don't worry – there is more than enough creative and exciting work for people with languages.

Every day is different

I'm running my own business working as a full time translator, interpreter, transcreator, culture insight consultant, and university lecturer.

Yesterday, I was working on the French Open, following the first ever Greek tennis player to claim the Grand Slam title at Roland Garros, by providing the creative copy from English into Greek for all sponsorship messages and live captioning for Greek national television.

Today, I am providing a private client with an English into Greek certified translation, and later, I'm delivering 5,000 words helping a new brand launch their website into Greek so that they can reach more Greek clients.

And tomorrow, I will be preparing for a high-level financial crime court case during which I will be interpreting between Greek and Japanese parties with the assistance of an English interpreter and colleague providing English as a pivot language between the two.

Our work brings people and cultures together

It helps everyone around the world access information, live entertainment, legal aid, and healthcare to list just a few aspects of life to which we contribute priceless value.

A career in languages is highly-rewarding. It doesn't come easily. But if you enjoy being the boss of yourself, variety, exciting and challenging work, this is for you. Study languages and you'll be surprised where they take you.



You will get to work with amazing people.

Rosa Insua-Salgueiro
MCIL Chartered Linguist
English to Spanish translator
and interpreter



SO, YOU WANT TO BE A TRANSLATOR?

You will be able to use your favourite languages

One, two, three languages, the sky is the limit...

You have studied hard to learn languages or maybe you were brought up in a bilingual household and you speak two or three languages and yes, you would love to use them in your job, every day of the week.

Never a dull moment

You will always be learning

Translators tend to specialise in specific subjects such as law or medicine. You will need to familiarise yourself with different terminology and cultural differences between legal systems (e.g., British vs. Spanish).

You will work with wonderful people

Wide network of contacts

Although translation is often considered a solitary profession, the truth is that you will get to work with amazing people, for example when

you join a professional translators' association such as the CIOL or ITI. Also, you will have the chance to work with some of your colleagues, that you have met, for example, at uni.

You can also become an interpreter

So, is there any difference?

Translators work with the written word, interpreters with spoken language. While their working techniques are quite different (translators often work with different dictionaries and resources and interpreters can only do their research beforehand), the subject matter of specialisation often overlaps. You can excel at being both an interpreter and a translator – I certainly do!

It's a rewarding career

You will be able to help others

At the end of the day, you will have helped a tribunal to make a decision about a child protection plan or a family to access the health system. Your work is not in vain, it certainly fits a purpose. And it's a very good purpose.

LANGUAGES LEAD TO EXCITING CAREER OPPORTUNITIES



You can combine your passion for sports with working as a football translator, or if you're into IT or gaming, video games translation and localisation is a huge market.

Jenni Radford
MCIL Chartered Linguist
Legal and business translator
from Spanish into English



Working as a Freelance Translator

I speak French and Spanish and now work as a freelance translator.

What's so great about being a translator?

Using my languages every day! What I like best is that my job can be used in so many different areas. I translate all sorts of different texts so it gives me the chance to use my other interests too.

For example, if you love TV and films, you could do audio-visual translation. If you love sports, you could work as a football or maybe Olympics translator, or if you're into IT or gaming, video games translation is a huge market at the moment.

I started out working for international companies, specialising in law or travel, and this led to using my languages full time.

Working remotely

Working remotely from home is clearly the future for many. For freelance translators, the digital workplace is the norm and translation offers the opportunity to work remotely from just about anywhere.





What do I love about my work? The possibility of working from home or anywhere in the world as long as I have my laptop and good Wi-Fi access.

Karine Chevalier-Watts
MCIL Chartered Linguist



A TRANSLATOR'S WORK IS MORE VARIED THAN YOU COULD EVER IMAGINE

I started learning languages at high school in the French port of Marseille. Later on I took a gap year to work as a French language assistant in Dorset and after finishing my studies I moved back to the UK with my English husband.

I've had the most varied and interesting international career, from teaching French to British business people to running a wine-broking agency with clients from all around the world, using my translating and interpreting skills along the way. I now run my own language service working with companies worldwide.

What do I love about being a translator?

- It's more varied than you could ever imagine: one day I'm translating websites and marketing materials, another day I'm subtitling for movies and documentaries or translating for fashion and cosmetics, press and media.

- Being able to work with different people from different nationalities, cultures and backgrounds.
- The freedom of being self-employed, of being able to manage my own timetable.
- The possibility of working from home or anywhere in the world as long as I have my laptop and good Wi-Fi access

I have never regretted my choice of career as it has given me access to incredible experiences and enabled me to meet amazing people from everywhere in the world. I do hope some of you will follow in my footsteps and have as great a career as I have in this wonderful, worthwhile profession.



My language skills have opened the door to many job opportunities.

Rachel Wingfield
MCIL Chartered Linguist
Freelance Translator and Language Tutor



I WAS DETERMINED TO TRAVEL, DISCOVER NEW CULTURES AND MEET PEOPLE

I'm from France and studied English and German at school. I enjoyed learning languages so much that later I decided to learn Italian too.

I wanted a career using my language skills because I was determined to travel, discover new cultures and meet people. I spent a year in the UK as an Erasmus student, and decided to stay and work here.

I'm happy to say that I've been lucky enough to do exactly what I set out to do! My language skills have opened the door to many job opportunities, and I have worked in a wide variety of interesting jobs in many different areas.

For example, my first job was in import/export where I translated sales material, and was in charge of customers in France, Germany and Italy – using my language skills and gaining new experience at the same time.

My strong language skills were key to getting a job in marketing for a media company where I was in charge of European business development, carrying out market research and translating sales material. I was in contact with clients across Europe and travelled to meet them in person.

Travelling and meeting customers was a very rewarding part of my career, and I went on to work in other parts of the world, such as Japan, Hong Kong, Thailand and the USA.

I am now working for myself as a freelance translator and language teacher. I enjoy being my own boss and continuing to do something I love – using my language skills for a living!



A different language is a different vision of life.

Natalia Racheyskova
MCIL Chartered Linguist



LEARNING LANGUAGES LEADS TO TRAVEL AND FRIENDS ALL AROUND THE WORLD!

When you learn a foreign language, you are also learning a foreign culture – a way of life, food, music and movies – and you become a ‘citizen of the world’.

You might be lucky enough to have grown up in a bilingual or multilingual family and already see the great advantages this brings.

Languages lead to a more rewarding career

Adding a foreign language to your chosen career will always make you more valuable in your work. A doctor, a teacher, an engineer, an astronaut, to name just a few, can live and work in many different countries, experience different cultures and develop a deeper understanding of the wider world outside their country.

Travelling to other countries

Even if you don’t speak a foreign language perfectly, don’t let it stop you! If you make the effort to use the local language, people will love it and will want to try out their English on you!

Getting started

I’m Russian and started working as a translator there. At weekends I worked as a tour guide taking English-speaking tourists around my home city which I really enjoyed!

Life is never dull

Working as an interpreter is never dull – you’re always meeting interesting people and hearing their amazing life stories! Working as a translator is also exciting because you can work in so many unexpected ways – I once translated a travel guide to Amsterdam into Russian. When I later visited Amsterdam for a weekend, I was thrilled and proud to be using my own guide to get me around the city!

Languages can be fun

You do have to work hard to learn languages, but above all it is huge fun and leads to a life of travel and making friends around the world.

I hope I’ve inspired you to feel that to learn a different is a different vision of life.

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worldwide



ABOUT CIOL

CIOL (Chartered Institute of Linguists) is the leading professional body for people using foreign language skills at work, setting the standard for linguists worldwide. Membership offers professional recognition, and our range of membership grades leads to Chartership, recognised worldwide as the gold standard for practitioners, whatever their profession, publicly understood as a badge of quality and competence. We offer many benefits and services, such as mentoring and access to networks. Our awarding organisation, CIOL Qualifications, delivers fully regulated professional language qualifications, such as the Diploma in Public Service Interpreting and the Diploma in Translation, recognised by government departments, agencies, business, universities and schools.

For more information on membership and qualifications, visit ciol.org.uk

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