

What jobs can you do with a language bachelor's degree?

Linguist

National average salary: £31 000 per year

A linguist studies language, focusing on its structure and variation. Their job duties include analysing documents to translate information, collaborating with other linguists, studying languages and cultures, making sense of language patterns and transcribing audio files. This position can be a beneficial option for those who major in languages since they focus on studying language closely.

Teacher

National average salary: £31 000 per year

Schools employ language teachers, particularly in modern foreign languages. French, Spanish and German are some of the most popular languages taught in schools. There are also specialist schools and colleges where graduates in a more diverse range of languages can find employment as a teacher. Classics graduates can focus on teaching Latin, and an increasing number of students study languages like Chinese, Japanese and Arabic. Teachers can also work in adult education or even focus on primary school teaching if they want a broader background in educating young people.

Translator

National average salary: £28 000 per year

A translator accurately converts written documents from one language into another, with the translated document reading as if it were originally written in the target language. Translators may work in specific sectors and industries or translate a specific type of document, such as user guides or technical manuals. You may work with a company or with an agency responsible for allocating jobs to you.

Interpreter

National average salary £27 000 per year

Interpreters translate spoken information from a source to a target language so that people who don't speak the source language can understand the information. Interpreters aim to translate the meaning of the spoken words accurately and impartially. Interpreters commonly work in healthcare, law and for governments.

Copy editors

National average salary: £26 000 per year

Copy Editors are skilled writing professionals who review written documents for accuracy and make or suggest the necessary changes. They have the strong language skills required to improve the clarity and style of writing and check for spelling, grammar and syntax errors. Copy editors may work in one or more languages, according to their expertise.

Speech and language therapist

National average salary: £35 000 per year

Speech and language therapists support patients who have problems with speech, communication and concentration. The role includes work with patients of all ages who have a variety of conditions. It may consist of help with eating, drinking and swallowing. This career requires post-graduate training.

Policy Analyst

National average salary: £36 000 per year

Policy analysts research and author policy documents for local and national government. The documents they produce may help to frame governmental policy and legislation. Politicians use the information supplied by policy analysts in debating key issues and briefing the public or press.

Linguistics Lecturer

National average salary: £33 000 per year

Lecturers in linguistics are linguistics graduates who have undertaken post-graduate study and research in linguistics and can lecturer undergraduates on the subject. They're responsible for preparing and delivering lectures, course materials and assessments. They may also have administrative duties within their university department.

Technical writer

National average salary: £33 000 per year

Technical writers produce detailed documents that provide essential information about products, including instruction manuals, product descriptions, how-to guides and specifications. These technical documents are often written in multiple languages for different countries.

Language specialist

National average salary: £37 000 per year

Language specialists have achieved a high level of fluency and cultural expertise in a particular language. They provide translation and interpreting services and cultural insights to ensure that communications across languages are culturally sensitive. Language specialists often work in the security services of countries on classified or diplomatic projects.

Civil Servant (range of salaries)

Civil servants are government executives who work on behalf of the government to develop and administer governmental policy. While the role of a civil servant is politically impartial, they implement the plan of government ministers. Civil servants work in various departments, including Health and Social Care, Work and Pensions and Education.

Communications Officer

National average salary: £27 000 per year

Communications officers create and disseminate public relations content on behalf of organisations. They produce content with clear, engaging messaging across multiple channels, including print and social media. Communications officers work on national and international campaigns and may need to be multi-lingual.

Marketing Executive

National average salary: £26 000 per year

Marketing executives are skilled professionals in the promotion of products and services. They can use a variety of techniques and channels to generate business or consumer interest and leads. Marketing executives also require strong data management and analytical skills to track the performance of their campaigns.

Speech Coach

National average salary: £27 000 per year

Speech coaches work with executives and other professionals to build and strengthen their speaking skills. They're experts in the use of language to engage and persuade. They often use proprietary techniques for delivering their training and may also provide speech writing services to their clients.

Journalist

National average salary: £25 000 per year

Journalists are writers who author news stories for media publications and broadcast channels. They conceptualise and research news stories, pitch those stories to editors and, if the articles are allowed to proceed, they write them.

Publisher

National average salary: £27 000 per year

Publishers are responsible for the production of a written work by an author. They're involved in project managing book publication and are interested in copy editing, marketing and negotiating sales. They also work closely with professionals like editors, illustrators and typesetters while preparing the book.

Tourism and Tour guide work

National average salary: £14 000 – 40 000 per year

Working in the hospitality industry is likely to give you day-to-day opportunities to use your language skills. This could be in a high-end hotel or working in a large city like London or Oxford as a multi-lingual tour guide for visitors. Some of this work may be seasonal and can combine with ongoing study or other employment. There are also opportunities in this field to be self-employed or work for large companies such as those that organise coach tours.

Tutor

National average salary: £37 000 per year

Private tutors provide one-to-one and small group tuition and educational support to students in various academic subjects. They usually are employed to work within private households but may be recruited to work in schools or online. An agency often employs tutors to teach a roster of students.

Museums and Galleries

National average salary: £27 000 per year

If you have an interest in art, history or science, employment in a museum or gallery can offer a rewarding way to utilise your language skills. Providing tours to groups from around the world can be a challenging way to hone and perfect your technical language in the relevant area. Being able to talk about artistic techniques, historical artefacts or scientific discoveries in your chosen language requires focus and further study to maintain your accuracy and fluency.

Much like being a tour guide, the role is likely to involve dealing with questions and engaging in conversation with large numbers of people in your chosen language. Regular conversations like this keep your language skills sharp and mean that you're constantly practising and developing your skills.

Jobs that use transferable skills from a language degree

Some language graduates want to utilise the skills they've developed during their degree but don't want to use the language as a daily part of their chosen career. A wide range of generalist graduate roles simply require a degree, possibly with a 2:1 grade as a minimum. A language degree can qualify you for any of those roles, but there are also plenty of jobs open to any graduates where language degrees can provide applicants with a significant advantage, such as:

Working for an international organisation

This could be in almost any discipline, from technology to banking to charity work. You might not use your language skills on a day-to-day basis, but there may be occasional translation and interpretation work that you can assist with. A language degree also provides a certain level of cultural understanding.

This less tangible but very valuable knowledge can be hugely helpful for companies trying to establish or grow their presence in a particular country. Understanding culture, history, religion and social dynamic in a country or region can help a company tailor the way they interact with potential clients or decision-makers in the area. The background that comes with a language degree can support these efforts. There are several global consultancy firms, which are large graduate employers, who also value these skills.

Postgraduate qualifications in law

Although some people choose to study law at university, plenty of people pursue it as a career, having gained their undergraduate degree in a subject they're passionate about. This means that many language graduates choose to pursue a career in law by undertaking a postgraduate diploma. A modern language can still prove useful as a lawyer develops their career. It may provide opportunities to work for clients around the world or specialise in international law.

