

Universities blame 'societal shift' for axing foreign language degrees

Level 1: Elementary

Article summary: This article discusses how foreign language studies are changing in the UK. Many universities are ending foreign language degree programmes or closing entire language departments. At the same time, more and more young people are using online apps to study one or more foreign languages in their own time.

Time: 60 minutes

Skills: Reading, Speaking, Writing

Language focus: *Less and fewer*

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

6. *strategy*
7. *shift*
8. *societal*
9. *passion*
10. *multiple*

- b. Ask students to work individually or in pairs to complete the sentences using the words from the previous activity. Encourage students to read complete sentences to you when they give answers so that you can check their pronunciation of the key words.

Key:

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. <i>passion</i> | 6. <i>multiple</i> |
| 2. <i>Intellectual</i> | 7. <i>attractive</i> |
| 3. <i>awareness</i> | 8. <i>societal</i> |
| 4. <i>strategy</i> | 9. <i>foreign</i> |
| 5. <i>Iberian</i> | 10. <i>shift</i> |

1. Warmer

- a. The purpose of this activity is to encourage students to think about the reasons people choose to study foreign languages. Have students answer the question independently. They can tick as many options as they like and can add their own ideas. Then have students compare their answers in pairs. Finally, take a poll to see how many students ticked each option. To extend, have students share any other languages they want to study in the future.

2. Key words

- a. Ask students to work individually or in pairs to complete the definitions and then find the words in the article. Allow a few minutes for students to check answers in pairs or groups before checking answers with the whole class.

Key:

1. *foreign*
2. *attractive*
3. *awareness*
4. *intellectual*
5. *Iberian*

3. Comprehension check

- a. Students can work individually or in pairs to do this activity. Encourage students to underline the section in the article where they found the answers. Check answers as a class. To extend, correct the false statements as a class. Then have students quiz each other on other true and false statements about the article.

Key:

1. *False – They reduced programmes and closed departments.*
2. *False – There are cultural reasons to connect with people – apps can't do that.*
3. *False – People under 22 are the biggest users of Duolingo in the UK.*
4. *False – The UK does not have a national strategy for language learning.*
5. *True*
6. *True*
7. *True*
8. *True*

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4. Key language

- a. Remind students that we use comparisons to say how two people, places, things or ideas are different from each other. For bigger numbers and amounts, we use *more*. Write these sentences on the board: *I have more pens than you.* and *Films are more boring than songs.* Explain that when we want to talk about smaller numbers or amounts, we can use *less* or *fewer*. Ask students to work individually or in pairs to read the sentences from the article aloud. Then have them look at the rules and sample sentences to choose when we use *less* and *fewer*. Allow a few minutes for students to check answers in pairs or groups before checking answers with the whole class.

Key:

1. *fewer*
2. *less*

- b. Ask students to work individually or in pairs to complete the sentences using *less* or *fewer*. Allow a few minutes for students to check answers in pairs or groups before checking answers with the whole class. Then invite volunteers to share their own sentences with the class.

Key:

1. *fewer*
2. *fewer*
3. *less*
4. *fewer*
5. *less*
6. *less*

5. Discussion

- a. Students discuss the questions in pairs or groups. Ask them to justify their opinions, referring to their own experiences or beliefs whenever possible. Invite volunteers to share their answers with the class.

6. In your own words

- a. The purpose of this activity is to encourage students to reflect on what they learned in the article and how it could relate to real life. Tell them to imagine that they made a new friend from the UK online. The friend can be male or female. Tell them that the friend is going to start university next year and they need to decide if they should study a foreign language. Tell the students to write a letter to their new friends and encourage them to study a foreign language. They should include reasons why it's a good idea to learn a language. As an example, the students can include information about their own reasons for studying English. They can also recommend a language for their new friend to study. Ask them if they think it would be useful for students in the UK to learn the home language of their country or culture. Remind students to start their letter with *Dear* and the person's name. They can end it with a closing like *From*, *Sincerely* or *Best* and their own name.
- b. Have students share their letters with a partner. They should practise reading the letters aloud to feel more confident. Then students take turns to read their letters to the whole class. Offer students praise and encouragement as they read their letters aloud.