



Why and how we learn foreign languages?

Age recommendation:	9–11 years
Key Stage:	KS2
Duration:	35–40 minutes (video 1: 4:48 minutes; activity: 15 minutes; video 2: 2:31 minutes)
Key words:	Bilingualism, multilingualism, language learning, motivation, relation between languages
Languages:	English (references to several languages)
Resources provided:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two videos on ‘Why and how we learn foreign languages’• Activity video on ‘Alex’s story’• Activity sheet on ‘Alex’s story’
Other materials:	None

AIM

The aim of the activity is to introduce children to the concepts of bilingualism and multilingualism and allow them to reflect on how and why we learn foreign languages. This is achieved through a combination of explanations, class discussions supported by the videos and an activity showcasing ten different languages. Children should be encouraged to recognise how languages can be related and how their existing linguistic abilities can help them to understand and learn other languages.

PREPARATION

The teacher watches the videos (including the one of ‘Alex’s story’) and prints the activity sheets.

As it will become evident in the first video, all children, including monolingual English ones, are encouraged to bring their own experience and reflect on their language awareness in this session.

ACTIVITY

1. Before watching the first video, the teacher introduces the session to the class.
2. The teacher shows pupils the first video focusing on the definition of ‘bilingualism’ and ‘multilingualism’ and some of the reasons why we learn foreign languages. The teacher can pause the video when indicated in the video to encourage class discussion. This will enable pupils to: share with the group which languages they speak or are familiar with (1:20); reflect on how they may be using language/s differently in different contexts (3:00); come with examples of why we might learn foreign languages (3:50).
3. The teacher shows the pupils the second video focusing on how we learn foreign languages. At the beginning of this video, the activity on ‘Alex’s story’ is introduced.
4. The teacher pauses the second video at 1:31 in order to allow the pupils to work on the activity. Sheets for the activities are distributed and the video on ‘Alex’s story’ is shown to

allow pupils to listen to the sentences. Pupils could be put into groups to work on the activity which consists of translating the ten sentences into English and guess which foreign language they are in. The activity is likely to take 10–15 minutes including a final discussion to check the pupil's answers.

5. The teacher can then play the final part of the second video where some conclusions on the activity and on how we learn foreign languages based on this are drawn.