

Do I really have to study a foreign language? Yes! And here's why

By Elizabeth LaScala, Ph.D.

When preparing to apply for college, most students are aware that they must remain rigorous in core courses, like English and mathematics. However, many students do not think of foreign language as central to their applications. Many top colleges say otherwise. While two years of a foreign language is a common length of time for schools to require of applicants, many schools recommend three or four years and some highly selective schools prefer five. Students who take their first year of a foreign language in middle school can take four years of the same language in high school. It is important for students to note that these years should be in the same language. Consistency is key. If languages are your 'thing' you can add a second language but be sure to keep the

first.

Since, foreign language courses are a key component to any college application, future college applicants should be sure to research both the required and recommended number of foreign language courses at the colleges they hope to apply to and plan their high school courses accordingly. There is a rumor that the Ivy League colleges do not require foreign language. Each college website should be pretty clear about what they require. But even if a top college does not require a course, it does not mean they don't expect students to study it. In fact, you will be competing with students who have taken the most rigorous classes available at their high school in the five core academic areas, including the humanities, social sciences, laboratory sciences, mathematics, and foreign language. And if your high school does not offer a

course, many students will go out of their way to take a course in another setting – this shows initiative to learn, which colleges love to see in their applicants!

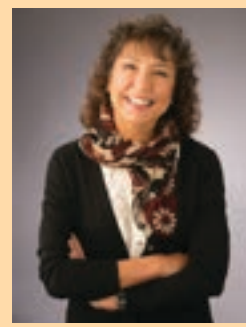
So, what should you do if language is not your favorite subject? I recommend you consider the following advantages:

- You can more deeply experience new cultures in ways that develop and encourage respect for diversity.
- You can acquire a greater opportunity to get to know new people as well as lessen fear of those who are unfamiliar to you, sometimes just because they are speaking a different language.
- You can learn to communicate better both orally and in writing. Often it is in the foreign language classroom that students gain the greatest understanding of grammar and expand their vocabulary.
- Through language and culture studies, you are ex-

posed to new ideas, thus broadening your perspective of the world.

The study of foreign language is a distinct advantage in the professional world. Job candidates who are proficient in more than one language have a competitive edge in the U.S. economy, where a large proportion of jobs involve work with immigrants and/or travel to and trade with foreign countries.

So why do colleges care so much about the study of foreign languages? Because the study of diverse languages and cultures is a gateway to greater understanding and appreciation for a wide range of other subjects, including art, music, cuisine, film, science, and philosophy. It educates and broadens the mind in limitless ways and is the true core of a liberal education and global citizenry.



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Elizabeth LaScala, PhD, brings decades of admissions expertise to personally guide each student through applying to well-matched colleges, making each step more manageable and less stressful. She has placed hundreds of students in the most prestigious colleges and universities in the US. Elizabeth attends conferences, visits campuses and makes personal contacts with admissions networks to stay current on the evolving nature of college admissions. She and her professional team offer resume development, test preparation, academic tutoring, value analysis, merit and need-based scholarship search and more.

Teen artists recognized at Visual Arts Competition awards ceremony



Photos Sora O'Doherty

By Sora O'Doherty

Seventeen teen artists were recognized on March 16 at the culmination of the 20th annual

High School Visual Arts Competition. The competition is open to all high school students who reside in or attend school in Orinda. The winning competitors were also given

prizes of \$250 for first place and best of show, \$150 for second place, and \$50 for third place. Honorable mention winners were given certificates.

Best of Show was awarded to "Captured Youth" by 11th grader Joseph Pak. In the 2D category, first place went to "Bystander Behavior" by Ellia Chaney, second place went to "A Luxury Death" by Andrea Liu, third place went to "Michelle" by Rachel Chan and Honorable Mention was given to "Crystallization" by Benjamin Wang.

In the 3D category, first place was awarded to "Problem Solving" by Aaron Jiang, second place went to "The Khalkotauri of Colchis" by Walter Yip, third place went to "Hush" by Alexandrina Gutu, with the Honorable Mention awarded to "On The Edge" by Phoebe Sulis.

"Farmer's Tool" by Chase Hammond took first place in the photography category. Second place was awarded to "Midnight Scare," by Sasha

Jayne, third place went to "Big World, Little People" by Katelyn Metherd, and Honorable Mention was presented to Sonya Barnett for her work, "Halo."

Jason Gutstadt took first place in the Digital Art category for "Dystopian," second place went to "Handy Dandy" by Natalie Hsu, third place was awarded to "Reality" by Anisa Huthman, and Honorable Mention went to "Things of Nature" by Lily Kalmar.

The competition was sponsored in part by the Bentley School and the Lamorinda Arts Alliance.

All of the winners, along with their schools and their teachers, as well as images of their artwork can be viewed on the Lamorinda Arts Council website:

<https://lamorindaarts.org/vac/>



Boys Team Charity Orinda Chapter Graduates its First Founding Class



Photo Ann Murphy

From left: Gio Bottene, Jake Disston, Ryan Gardner, Charlie Burke, Kyle Odmark, John Williams, Carson Beury, Rome Jiannalone, Kellen Baker, Nico Grinold, Alexander Fordyce, Bennett Destino, and Ethan Conley. Not pictured: Logan Haines, Colin Fraser, Matthew Hawkins, Hayden Westover

Submitted by Michelle Bea

This spring, boys team charity, Orinda chapter, will celebrate the graduation of its first founding class, the class of 2023. This dedicated group of 17 seniors has been committed

to philanthropic work since founding the chapter in 2016, when they were in the seventh grade.

Over the course of their time with boys team charity, the class will have collectively logged over 1,900 volunteer

hours over the past six years, working on philanthropic projects for groups including 10,000 Lunches, Aegis Moraga, Contra Costa County Food Bank, Glide Memorial, Grateful Gatherings, Loaves & Fishes, Make-a-Wish, Monu-

ment Crisis Center, Orinda Fourth of July Parade, Orinda Classic Car Show, Orinda Rotary, Special Olympics Northern California, White Pony Express, and Wagner Ranch Nature Area.

One of the philanthropies that the group supports, Grateful Gatherings (www.gratefulgatherings.org), helps families who are transitioning from homelessness/shelters to government subsidized housing furnish their homes and create a true "home." Charlie Burke, graduating senior, describes his favorite and most memorable volunteer opportunity working with Grateful Gatherings: "We first organized a drive to collect donated furniture and household items and delivered it all to a new home where the team and I then moved the furniture into the house and stocked and organized the bathrooms and kitchens. Once we were done, the family came back for the big reveal and we showed them around their new home. It was really moving to see their reactions and helped me realize how less than a day of our work can make an immediate and lasting impact on a family's life. Until my volunteer work with Grateful Gatherings, I did not realize the

hurdles a family faces when transitioning from homelessness/shelter into a more permanent apartment. It is not the end of their challenges, but our help – providing basic household items such as beds, a dining table, desks for children, linens, dishes and cleaning supplies – makes the transition easier."

Each year, classes organize a large capstone project. The Class of 2023 focused their efforts to support St. Mary's Center. St. Mary's Center is a community of hope, healing and justice dedicated to improving the well-being of seniors and preschool families in West Oakland by meeting basic needs for food, housing, and social connection. The team organized the collection and delivery of food and toiletries to donate to the organization.

Not only are these graduates dedicated to supporting philanthropy in our communities, they are involved in school leadership, committed students, athletes (representing just about every sport you can imagine), and so much more. We look forward to hearing about how these young men continue to dedicate themselves to their community as they go on in their post-graduation pursuits!