

If you are currently learning English in a school, college or institute of further education, you join approximately one billion other people around the world who are engaged in the same pursuit. But, why is English important?

- 5 After Mandarin, English is spoken by more people than any other language, and is the native language of more than 350 million people. More people speak English than those who speak the Arabic and French languages combined.

10 Moreover, English is the international language of diplomacy, business, science, technology, banking, computing, medicine, aviation, UN & NATO armed forces, engineering, tourism, Hollywood films and pop and rock music.

- 15 English can be fun too. For instance, the music of such stars as Elvis Presley, The Beatles, Led Zeppelin, Michael Jackson and Madonna has encouraged fans to speak the language of their idols, whilst others have enrolled in English classes to improve their understanding of the dialogue in films and TV shows.

20 Or perhaps they have embraced English to enjoy the writing of Stephen King, George Orwell or J.K. Rowling. They may even have an interest in speaking English just to converse with travellers from other countries, who communicate by using the English global interlingua while travelling abroad.

Spoken English is used in the best careers, the best universities, and is increasingly being used at job interviews. So like it or not, English is a very important language to learn.

Vance Carson, [www.thestar.com](http://www.thestar.com) (2007)

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