



PHOTO CREDIT: OFFICE OF FRANCOPHONE AND FRANCOPHILE AFFAIRS - SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Pursuing Postsecondary Studies in French

A good choice for your child?

You and your children are probably well aware of the advantages of being bilingual. They may have spent a good number of years studying in French – in an immersion program, in a French school or possibly elsewhere.

But when it comes to deciding whether to continue their postsecondary studies in French, they may be wondering if their skills in Molière's language are sufficiently advanced, or if college or university courses might prove too difficult. How does one make such an important decision? We asked several students whose first official language is English and who opted for postsecondary studies in French.

Why did you choose to continue your studies in French?

"I had been studying in immersion for most of elementary school and all of high school, and I didn't want to lose the skill after working so hard to develop it," explains Sophia Andia, who is studying biomedical science. "My university has a large Francophone community and many incentives to take French courses, which made it even more favourable to pursue my degree partially in French."

International studies student Franscesco Balassone adds that "knowing more languages and expanding one's cultural vision is always an asset, and I would have hated to let all those years of schooling and culture go to waste."

Education student Jordyn White was up to the challenge! "I come from an English-speaking family with no French at home and part of me was worried about my level of French, as I had only started French immersion in Grade 7. Although I had always had a passion for the French language, I knew that continuing my studies in French would require hard work. I had challenged myself when I first entered the immersion program and only positive things had come out of that experience. Trying new things and working hard towards a goal have always given me such a rewarding feeling, so I took a chance on postsecondary studies in French, and I am sure glad I did!"

Mahleia Fabian, a primary education student, concludes by explaining that "speaking French is such a gift and being bilingual, or in my case trilingual, is not easy. But, seeing that I already put in twelve or thirteen years of work, I saw this as a chance to be able to share this gift with others, to share the opportunities I had, and to let them flourish with the gift that is being able to speak French."

What would you say to young people who hesitate to continue their postsecondary studies in French?

Benjamin Morgan, a music student, wants to encourage young people not to give up! "The more you study in French, the easier it gets. Every day, you see an improvement. Every day, it gets easier and easier."

Medical science student Natasha Rebecca Babcock adds that it is important not to “get caught up in the ‘What ifs’. If French is your second language, then it is likely that you will spend a little more time doing readings for class, or you may not have perfect grammar while answering a question. However, postsecondary education is about learning and developing your skills for a career, so you do not have to be perfect in the language in order to study. Your skills will develop as you go about your degree, and what better environment to enhance your abilities in French than somewhere meant for learning?”

As for Ethan Dungey, who is studying public and international affairs, he invites everyone to persist in “whatever brings you joy in life. If it's French, take advantage of French-language programs. If it's law, or art, or anything else, you deserve to be successful in a subject that makes you happy. And it is possible to undertake studies in French and another subject concurrently, as I do.”

How do you plan to use French in your career plan?

For Jasmine Ferreira, a medical student who plans to pursue a career in healthcare, “communication and comprehension skills in both English and French are vital. My decision to study in French will put me in a better position to provide care to French-speaking patients and visitors.”

Future educator Jordyn White adds that “the French language will play a huge role in my career, as I hope to become

a French immersion elementary school teacher. The teaching aspect of my career has been something that I have been interested in for a long time already but since discovering French, why not merge my two main interests together?! Personally, I believe that becoming bilingual has helped me become a better problem solver. I've been given many exciting professional opportunities and I am able to critically think in all other areas of study. There is nothing I would love more than to share the gift of becoming bilingual with future generations.”

The good news is that there are initiatives and programs to encourage and support those young Canadians whose first official language spoken is English who choose to pursue their studies in French.

The *Bursaries for Postsecondary Studies in French as a Second Language Program*, administered by the *Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne* (ACUFC) and funded by the Government of Canada, offers bursaries for students who are just beginning a college or university program. These bursaries are meant to encourage them to continue their studies in French thus perfecting their bilingualism, while studying in a field that interests them. The \$3,000 non-renewable bursaries are available at several colleges and universities across Canada. ■

For more information:
[ACUFC.ca/FSLbursaries](https://acufc.ca/FSLbursaries)

IT'S REWARDING TO BE BILINGUAL!



A \$3,000 BURSARY TO HELP GAIN A

SUPERPOWER

[ACUFC.CA/FSLBURSARIES](https://acufc.ca/FSLBURSARIES)



BURSARIES
FOR POSTSECONDARY
STUDIES
IN FRENCH
AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Canada