



Learning a language is a choice.

Learning to communicate in a non-native language, an essential asset in our global community, requires commitment and perseverance. You need to **choose to learn** the language. You have to choose to become an active participant in the learning process. Language learning is not an academic undertaking it is a social undertaking. Are you willing to make mistakes? Are you willing to invest time to practice the language?

Proficiency and performance

Proficiency helps us stop talking about grades that don't really tell us how we're doing and instead talk about levels that tell us what we can do and where we are headed next. See graphic on other side.

Performance is doing stuff with language. It is how we show the language from our proficiency level on a topic or topic(s). In your language classroom, you will be asked to perform a variety of tasks. It is from those performances that we assign your proficiency level.

Time investment = proficiency level

Language acquisition is a complex process that involves communication, grammar, structure, comprehension and language production along with reading, writing, speaking and listening. Mastering a foreign language takes time, dedication and hard work therefore we want you to study your language for the longest period of time possible but at least for four years (2 years of middle school and at least 2 years at high school) so you can complete the graduation requirements at HWRHS. Most colleges require 3 to 4 years of consecutive language study in high school.

How not to make your language selection?

Not based on what your friends are taking...

What language interests YOU? What do YOU want to be able to do with the language?

Not on the number of speakers...

One fifth of the planet speaks Chinese. Mandarin Chinese is the mother tongue of over 873 million people, making it the most widely spoken first language in the world.

There are 328,518,810 Spanish speakers worldwide, putting it second only to Chinese for total number of native speakers.

Not because you think it will look good on your resume or college application...

The "most spoken" language will depend on **where** you are and **where** you see yourself in the future.

Before you make your decision here are some things to think about...

- Where do you see yourself in the future?
- How do you plan to use your language?
- Why do you really want to learn a language?
- What about the language interests you? Music? Travel? Culture? Literature? Films?
- Are you willing to commit to daily practice / deliberate practice to master vocabulary and concepts?
- Will you have opportunities to continue in the same language at your college of choice?
- Proficiency is measured in terms of four skills: speaking, reading, listening and writing.

- Languages have varying degrees of difficulty and the level of proficiency attained correlates to the duration of study.
- Many students who attain intermediate high to advanced low proficiency are able to test out of college language requirements.
- In order to compete in a global community and workforce, students who attain intermediate high to advanced low proficiency in a non-native language will have an edge over those who do not.

Where is the language spoken?

In addition to the People’s Republic of China and Taiwan, Mandarin Chinese is also spoken in the important and influential Chinese communities of Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, the Philippines, and Mongolia.	Spanish is the official language of 21 countries. It serves as the most commonly taught foreign language in the United States. It is also an official language of the United Nations, the European Union, World Trade Organization, and North American Free Trade Agreement.
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Which language is easier?

Rather than say one language is harder than the other focus on what interests you but know that the languages **are different**.

Mandarin Chinese	Spanish
Few easily recognizable words	Many easily recognizable words (Cognates)
Tonal	Phonetic
Pictographic Characters and Pinyin	Same Alphabet as English
No verb conjugations	Verb Conjugations

Both languages will...

Follow a similar proficiency based curriculum	Use the target language 90% of the time
Require that you complete work outside of class	Require that you use online sources
Use the ACTFL Can Do Statements as indicators for achievement	Broaden your horizons
Provide opportunities for travel to target language countries and/or access to the target culture	

To be successful in a either Mandarin Chinese or Spanish you must...

Understand the language acquisition process	Know your learning style (visual, auditory or kinesthetic)
Learn proper pronunciation	Pay attention to syntax
Memorize words and phrases	Listen to the target language
Read in the target language	Speak with native speakers
Write in the target language	Mindful DAILY Practice
Actively participate in YOUR LEARNING!	
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