

HOW TO EARN ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR YOUR LANGUAGE SKILLS

Knowing more than one language has multiple benefits. You can communicate with more people. There are proven cognitive benefits to support multi-tasking and improve memory function. You learn to see the world from others' perspectives. There are many professional opportunities for people with any level of bilingual skills across the economy. Many people take language classes in high school and in college for all of these reasons. Many people grow up in bilingual households.

So how can you certify the skills you already have and how can you continue to grow your bilingualism?

1. Certify your skills and earn free credit

Since you do not need an introductory class, you can demonstrate your proficiency and earn credit. There are many ways to do this.

AP classes in High School	AP Language score of 3 = 4 hours of credit for LAN* 112 AP Language score of 4 = 8 hours of credit for LAN 112 and 115 AP Language score of 5 = 8 hours of credit for LAN 115 and 116
Seal of Biliteracy	The Seal = 8 hours of credit for LAN 111 and 112. NOTE: This is credit for the minimum proficiency required for the Seal. Many students who earn the Seal of Biliteracy have higher levels of skills and <i>may be eligible for additional credit</i> via proficiency exams or CAP credit (see below).
Proficiency Exams at ISU	The Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures offers proficiency exams in the languages we teach (Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Latin, and Spanish). Register for the exam and pass to earn free credit. Students with the Seal of Biliteracy may wish to test for LAN 115 or 116 credit and may be able to begin at the 200-level. Spanish at ISU also offers an oral proficiency exam for SPA 214, which many students who grow up speaking Spanish can pass. That's 3-credits for \$10 and it counts toward the minor or major.
Proficiency Exams at Language Testing International (LTI)	For languages not taught at ISU, students can take a proficiency exam in nearly any language in the world to show their written or oral skills. LTI proficiency exams cost \$145 (2025).
Credit for Acquired Proficiency (CAP)	Take a language class at the university and, upon successful completion with a C or better and receive up to eight free credits for the prior courses in the sequence. For example, if you pass Spanish 116 with a C or better, the registrar will add CAP credit for SPA 112 and 115.

* LAN = the language. ISU offers AP credit for Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Latin, and Spanish.

2. Keep building your language skills

Why stop with certifying your skills? Language learning is a lifelong process. You can always keep building your vocabulary and your confidence, practice formal and informal language, learn about other cultures and communities that speak the language.

ISU offers SPA 120 for Heritage Speakers of Spanish. A student who places into and completes 120 may need only three more courses for a Spanish minor, one of which is SPA 214, which you can also test out of!) That's just two more classes for a minor and only a few more for a major!

Classes in the major will allow you to explore advanced topics in the language and cultures of the Spanish-speaking world, preparing you to be a well-informed bilingual professional in any field.

3. Language Clubs and Honor Societies

Get involved with language clubs and/or Honor Societies to attend conversation hours to practice your skills at any level and attend—or organize—cultural and social events with a community of students and faculty who love to learn about other people and places.

4. Study abroad, internships, volunteer work, civic engagement

There are so many ways to put your language skills to use outside of the classroom. You can study abroad and get to know host families and new friends. You can get an internship or volunteer with an organization that needs bilingual skills—often for academic credit.

5. Learn a new language.

What's better than knowing two languages? Knowing three or more! ISU offers classes in Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Latin, and Spanish. Pick up another language and see where it takes you!



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