

“How to...” guide

Language and Culture Days

What is a Language and Culture Day?

A language and culture day is an event for school pupils which involves them in a range of activities not usually carried out in the classroom. The focus can be anything you like but popular topics include exploring different countries and cultures where taught languages are spoken and / or trying out new languages.

Why would I want to organise a Language and Culture Day?

Discovering how widespread certain languages are and meeting native speakers from all over the world is very helpful in encouraging young people to see the value of languages. Pupils have the opportunity to learn about different cultures and potentially meet people who use the language they are learning on a daily basis. The native speakers are likely to be a strong influence as they can demonstrate where their own language skills have taken them.

Essential considerations

- Where can you hold an event like this? You will need several rooms of varying sizes plus space for pupils to have a break. The best place to try first is in school, as this takes away any travel costs and hiring external premises can be expensive. You could also try your local university who may be more than happy to provide rooms and support for you.
- Which year groups should be targeted? This type of event often appeals to younger audiences and Year 8 or 9 can be ideal as they will be making their GCSE choices. It can work well as an end of school year motivator for Year 7s or even as part of induction day for Year 6.
- How large an event can you manage? If numbers are limited you need to decide carefully which pupils will take part and which won’t – it shouldn’t necessarily be just the brightest or best behaved students who are chosen, a mixture of pupils of various abilities and backgrounds can be a very enriching experience for all involved.

- Will you include only your own pupils or invite other schools? Organising an educational event is a great way to make valuable links with local schools in your area and can create excellent opportunities for future collaboration. Bear in mind how many pupils you can accommodate when considering how many schools to invite. It is worth letting them know at invitation stage if there is a limit to the number of pupils they can bring.
- Who can help you? Organising an event regardless of numbers can involve a lot of work, both before hand and on the day. Don't underestimate how much you will need and appreciate extra hands at any point – our sample "To Do List" (see resources and templates) will give you some ideas on what needs to be done before, during and after an event. As well as other staff in school, consider using older pupils who are studying languages. They can be powerful role models and spend time talking informally to pupils about their experiences with languages which can be very encouraging. Don't forget - they will also gain from the experience themselves. You could also try your local university as most employ undergraduates to work on various activities involving school children. They may be able to "loan" you a few students for a day or two.
- What time of year is most suitable? A Language Day can be run at any time of year but the two main considerations are availability of resources (venue and staff) and the impact on students involved. Most Year 9s (and many Year 8s) will be finalising their option choices in the early part of each calendar year so if you plan to influence those choices your event will need to be in the first half of the school year. Having said that, summer term events can be easier to find rooms and staff for as GCSE and A-level pressure is off.
- Who will take part? Start with your own school staff – you may be surprised to find where teachers in other departments and even support staff are from. Also look amongst your own pupils and their relatives, neighbours, etc. An event like this can have even more impact if familiar faces can be used. Another useful contact is the British Council who currently employ language assistants from all over the world to work in UK schools. Generally they work part-time and appreciate the experience they can gain from taking part in such events.

- What costs are involved in running such an event? You can run an event on a shoestring but there are likely to be some costs which need to be covered such as catering, supply cover for teacher absence, fees for visitors, prizes or goodies for the pupils, etc. Working in collaboration with other schools can be a useful way to reduce spread the cost.
- If you want to take pictures or videos of pupils, you will need photography permission slips signed by a parent or guardian for each pupil. Without this, no faces can appear in any photographs or video footage taken.

Getting started

- Arrange a date and venue
- Arrange speakers / workshop providers
- Agree a draft programme (to be finalised later when all details are confirmed)
- Agree the number of students you can accommodate and the logistics of the event. You will need a large area for the welcome and plenary plus a separate space for each smaller session. This could be separate rooms or a larger space which can be sub-divided.
- Decide who you will invite: which year group, other schools or just your own, etc. Remember if you are inviting other schools, the more notice and confirmed details you can give, the more feasible it will be for them to arrange
- Undertake a risk assessment – your school may already have one which can be adapted or have a look at the sample in the resources and templates section at the end of this booklet
- Finalise the budget ensuring that all costs will be covered
- Invite pupils / schools to participate – if you are just inviting your own students, send a letter home to parents to increase awareness and impact

- Organise a briefing for speakers, workshop providers and helpers in good time before the event to ensure everyone knows what is expected on the day
- Get as much publicity for the event as you can – contact your local newspaper and radio station. They may even want to come along and run their own reports! Remember permission slips from parents / guardians are needed for each pupil to be photographed or filmed
- You will find a more detailed sample “To Do” list. Remember it is just a sample to give you ideas of what might need to be done and what you might like to do, depending on time, budget and help available of course!

The event

- See the sample programme under Resources and Templates which gives a sample programme for both full day and half day events based on students in groups attending a carousel of activities
- Remember to factor in time for breaks, especially if you are holding a full day event
- It is a good idea to hold another short briefing with staff on the morning of the event to iron out any last minute misunderstandings
- Remember to have a Plan B in case speakers cancel at the last minute or are running late
- When all the pupils have arrived, the event manager should deliver a short welcome talk and include information on “who’s who”, a brief run through of the programme, expected conduct and nearest toilets and fire alarm procedures (the last two are essential if you are hosting external visitors)
- If you are inviting other schools to attend, you should expect at least one to arrive extremely early and at least one to arrive extremely late. Have some contingency plans for what to do with early arrivals (some wordsearches based on the theme of the day can be a great distraction!). You may wish to consider in advance how long you will wait for late-comers before starting without them

- Ensure someone is responsible for circulating workshops to ensure they all finish on time – one over-running workshop can throw timings of an event off and impatient pupils can get restless!

Follow up

- It is important to have all pupils and teachers complete an evaluation sheet at the end of the event. This will allow you to gather opinions of the day which can be very helpful when planning more events
- Using the results of the evaluation form, write a report of your event. This can be circulated to Senior Leaders in school (and can be used as a lever to encourage permission for future events if needed), the schools who attended, speakers, etc.
- Write an article for your school newsletter and if you have display screens, create a PowerPoint display of photographs and quotes from the event
- If you didn't have local press attendance on the day, send your article to them too as they may still print it. Ensure you mention and thank everyone who took part
- Organise a competition for pupils who took part in the event. This may be designing a poster based on certain aspects of what they learnt or writing an article. This can make the impact of the event continue over time and if the winning entries are displayed in school, a wider audience can be reached

RESOURCES AND TEMPLATES

Celebrating China – Chinese Language and Cultural Event (sample programme)

| Time | Activity | Room |
|--------------|--|------|
| 12.45 – 1.00 | Arrival and registration | |
| 1.00 – 1.10 | Welcome and introduction to the afternoon | |
| 1.10 – 1.45 | <i>Group 1 – Language workshop</i> <i>Group 2 – Calligraphy workshop</i> <i>Group 3 – Tai Chi workshop</i> | |
| 1.45 – 2.20 | <i>Group 1 – Tai Chi workshop</i> <i>Group 2 – Language workshop</i> <i>Group 3 – Calligraphy workshop</i> | |
| 2.20 – 2.40 | Break | |
| 2.40 – 3.15 | <i>Group 1 – Calligraphy workshop</i> <i>Group 2 – Tai Chi workshop</i> <i>Group 3 – Language workshop</i> | |
| 3.15 – 3.30 | Evaluation and closing | |

Event “To Do” List

This list is intended as a guide to help you in planning what needs to be done to organise a language day in your school. This is not an exhaustive list and you may find items which are irrelevant if you do not have the time or budget, you may think of more items which need to be added!

The list has been broken down into subheadings for ease of use.

| GENERAL ADMIN | WHO? | WHEN? | ✓ |
|---|-------------|--------------|---|
| Conduct risk assessment | | | |
| Put pupils in numbered groups for workshops (mix schools / friendship groups if possible) | | | |
| Create a registration list with names of schools and pupils attending | | | |
| Produce name badges for all pupils with name, school and group number | | | |
| Produce name badges for all staff | | | |
| Create information pack for all participants with a copy of the programme, blank paper and a pen. Include any leaflets or handouts in the pack. | | | |
| Create evaluation forms for pupils and staff | | | |
| Produce a certificate for each pupil | | | |

| VENUE AND CATERING | WHO? | WHEN? | ✓ |
|--|-------------|--------------|---|
| Book rooms and venue | | | |
| Check equipment in rooms is appropriate (i.e. computers, internet access, etc) | | | |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Book catering and refreshments | | | |
| Send any special dietary requirements to catering | | | |

| ORGANISING THE PROGRAMME | WHO? | WHEN? | ✓ |
|---|------|-------|---|
| Create draft programme | | | |
| Book workshop providers and ask for any equipment needs (IT, etc) | | | |
| Confirm programme timings and allocate rooms | | | |
| Send a copy of the programme to everyone taking part and to important people (reception desk, senior staff, etc) | | | |
| Get your Headteacher or another senior member of staff involved – perhaps a welcome talk, presenting prizes / certificates at the end, etc. | | | |

| STAFF | WHO? | WHEN? | ✓ |
|---|------|-------|---|
| Contact staff and senior pupils for assistance both in advance of the event and on the day | | | |
| Give everyone a copy of the “To Do” list and allocate tasks to each person. Ensure everyone knows what they are expected to do and when | | | |

| BUDGET | WHO? | WHEN? | ✓ |
|--------------------------|------|-------|---|
| Confirm budget | | | |
| Create spending forecast | | | |
| Monitor spending | | | |

| CONTACT WITH SCHOOLS (if inviting other schools) | WHO? | WHEN? | ✓ |
|---|------|-------|---|
| Send letters or emails inviting schools to attend – best to approach named contacts where possible | | | |
| Acknowledge bookings and confirm number of places | | | |
| Send a copy of the final programme, maps and directions, any forms to be completed and a covering letter to schools at least 4 weeks before the event | | | |

| MATERIALS | WHO? | WHEN? | ✓ |
|--|------|-------|---|
| Purchase stationary and any materials needed | | | |
| Purchase themed food (such as tortillas, etc for Spanish event) | | | |
| Contact embassies and language organisations for freebies – flags, pens, posters, etc. | | | |
| Ensure you have a stocked first aid box in school, purchase one or any missing items | | | |

| ON THE DAY | WHO? | WHEN? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|--|-------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| Have briefing with all helpers before the event to ensure everyone knows what their responsibilities are | | | |
| Decorate the school – flags, posters, directional signs for rooms and toilets, etc. | | | |
| Ensure rooms are set up as needed with computers logged on, IT equipment checked and working | | | |

| AFTER THE EVENT | WHO? | WHEN? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|--|-------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| Thank all helpers and external staff | | | |
| Pay any invoices promptly | | | |
| Evaluate questionnaires and circulate feedback to staff and workshop providers | | | |
| Create collage of photographs to be displaying on screens, on a notice board in school and on school website | | | |
| Circulate photographs to invited schools | | | |

RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

Location: _____

Environment/Activity/Equipment: _____

Hazard Identification Reference

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|------------------|--------------|---------------------|----------------|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|----------|---------------|------------|
| (a) Confined Spaces | (b) Falls from Height | (c) Striking by Mobile Plant | (d) Trip or Slip | (e) Collapse | (f) Manual Handling | (g) Electrical | (h) Hazardous Substances | (i) Radiation | (j) Noise & Vibration | (k) Fire | (l) Explosion | (m) Others |
|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|------------------|--------------|---------------------|----------------|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|----------|---------------|------------|

| Severity (S) | Likelihood (L) | Risk Factor (R) | S x L= R |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 Negligible - all in a day's work | 1 Improbable | <4 Risk may need to be controlled | LOW |
| 2 Minor - minor injury with short term effect | 2 Remote - unlikely | 4-6 Risk must be controlled | MEDIUM |
| 3 Severe - major injury/disability (reportable) | 3 Possible - may or could well occur | 7-9 Hazard must be controlled | HIGH |
| 4 Extreme - fatal | 4 Probable - expected to occur, several times | >9 Hazard must be avoided | VERY HIGH |

| Hazard Ref. | Hazard Description | People at risk | Initial Assessment | | | Control Measures | Residual Risk | | | Action/Comments – by whom and when |
|-------------|----------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|---|----|--|---------------|---|----|------------------------------------|
| | | | S | L | R | | S | L | R | |
| D | Tripping/slipping on steps/floor | All Visitors | 2 | 2 | <4 | High-visibility edging on steps / signs | 1 | 2 | <4 | |
| G | Tripping on electrical cables | All Visitors | 2 | 2 | <4 | Ensure cables are kept away from walkways / taped to floor | 1 | 2 | <4 | |
| K | Breakout of fire in the building | All Visitors | 3 | 1 | 4 | Inform all visitors of fire exits & procedures | 3 | 1 | 4 | |
| M | Allergic Reaction to food | All Visitors | 3 | 1 | 4 | Check all food allergies with visitors prior to visit | 3 | 1 | 4 | |



Completed by: _____ Date: _____ Copies to: _____

Reviewed by: _____ Review Date: _____