

# Language Ambassadors

## Profile



**CLAIRE MCCARTHY**

**Occupation:** Teacher

**Degree/University:**  
MA Applied Translation, London Metropolitan University

**Languages spoken (native and learned):**  
English, German, Russian

“Learning languages is not just about picking up a textbook and learning the vocabulary and grammar. It gives you the chance to learn about other cultures and ways of thinking. You learn that not everyone thinks and behaves in the same way. It gives you the chance to experience other countries in a way you would not be able to without an understanding of the language. It can mean difficult situations can be overcome without problems as you can talk them through with someone in their own language.”

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“My interest in languages began with my French teacher at school. He made language learning interesting and fun, whereas up until then it had been all about learning verb conjugations. He appeared to know something about every language in the world and when he offered to teach us some Russian after school I jumped at the chance. I realised that learning other languages didn't just mean I could understand what people from other countries were saying but that it opened up their society, culture and history to me. I love history and through studying Russian I could understand things that had been written by Lenin, studying German meant I could understand speeches given by Hitler. As I have continued to study languages at university and in my free time it has meant I can travel with ease. I have been to so many extraordinary places and I have met so many interesting people, who I may well have not been able to talk to if I couldn't speak their language.”