

Persian: a Snapshot

Persian language and culture

Persian, also known as Farsi, is the official language of modern day Iran, parts of Afghanistan and the central Asian republic of Tajikistan. It has more than 100 million speakers. Strongly influenced by Arabic, the written form is based on modified Arabic script known as Perso-Arabic. Persia is considered one of the cradles of civilisation and over thousands of years it has made huge contributions in the fields of art, architecture, poetry, science and technology, medicine, philosophy and engineering.

درود بر شما

(Dorud bar shoma - Greetings to you).

A major festival for Persian people living in Iran and all over the world is Nowruz, which means 'new day' in Persian. The festival marks the new year, the coming of spring and the renewal of nature. The British Council has created an attractive educational pack for primary age children related to Nowruz which includes lesson plans and activities:

https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/nowruz_pack_final_1.pdf



Persian in the UK

There are more than 4 million Iranians living abroad and, within Europe, the largest group lives in the UK. Over half are settled in London (esp. Barnet and Ealing) with smaller communities elsewhere including Newcastle, Sheffield and Glasgow.

Persian education

There are several Persian complementary schools in London including Rostam School founded in 1981 which takes its name from a hero in the Shahnameh (Book of Kings – Ferdowsi). The school teaches students from primary to GCSE and Advanced level and outstanding results are achieved. An effect of the pandemic has been to develop online teaching. This has worked well and teachers, parents and students have adjusted quickly to remote teaching and the possibilities offered by technological advances. Indeed it has enabled the school to go global and provide teaching for students in Germany, the Netherlands, the USA, Iran and all over the UK. The school keeps up-to-date in its teaching methods and emphasises creative approaches, including drama, to develop confidence and engage students with their learning. Staff take advantage of professional development opportunities in school and beyond, sometimes in collaboration with the Young People's Foundation (YPF) / National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education (NRCSE). Four UK universities currently offer degree level courses in Persian.



Examinations

Pearson Edexcel offers both GCSE and Advanced Level examinations in Persian.

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/persian-2018.html>

Supporting Persian speakers in your school

For advice on matters related to Persian contact Rostam School:

<https://en.rustamschool.co.uk>



[With sincere thanks to Manouchehr Hosseinpour for providing photos]