

Hard

Languages That Are
Difficult for Native
English Speakers

To achieve
language
proficiency...



1.69 years
(88 weeks)



2,200
class hours

العربية

Arabic



221 million
native speakers

Country with greatest
number of speakers:



Why it's so difficult: Arabic has very few words that resemble those of European languages. Written Arabic also uses fewer vowels, which can be difficult for those learning to read the language.

日本語

Japanese



122 million
native speakers

Country with greatest
number of speakers:



Why it's so difficult: Like Chinese, Japanese language learners need to memorize thousands of characters. Three different writing systems and two syllabary systems add to the language's difficulty.

中文

Chinese



1.2 billion
native speakers

Country with greatest
number of speakers:



Why it's so difficult: Chinese is a tonal language, in which meaning changes as you change the tone of a word. Plus, thousands of characters and a complex writing system make learning Chinese a formidable task.

한국어

Korean



66.3 million
native speakers

Country with greatest
number of speakers:



Why it's so difficult: Different sentence structure, syntax, and verb conjugations make learning Korean difficult for native English speakers. Written Korean also relies on many Chinese characters.