FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE LANGUAGE DIFFICULTY RANKINGS



How long for an English speaker to become proficient. (by /u/Fummy)

Category 0 (English Speaker)

Category I (24 weeks, 600 hours)

Category II (30 weeks, 750 hours)

Category III (36 weeks, 900 hours)

Category IV (44 weeks, 1100 hours)

Category IV* (More than 44 weeks)

Category V (88 weeks, 2200 hours)

Category V* (More than 88 weeks)

Unclassified (Not taught by FSI)

FSI may give these categories different names but for the purposes of this map Cat I-V* are used to differentiate. The Foreign Service Institute (FSI) has created a list (based on their experience training US diplomats) to show the approximate time needed to learn a specific language as an English speaker.

i.e. the number of weeks of study time to reach

General Proficiency in Speaking (S3) and Reading (R3). FSI students have 25 hours of class per week. Not including an additional 3-4 hours of self-study per day.

(~40 hours of total study) Total Class hours are given here.

* Languages with a (*) are generally concidered harder than the rest of their category.

National borders and official languages are followed for the most part. With a few exceptions such as Tibetan and the Celtic languages. Swahili is shown where it is official. For clarity English is not shown in India, Pakistan, etc.

source: https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Wikibooks; Language Learning Difficulty for English Speakers