

Source: www.languageintelligence.com

Levels of Proficiency

How fast you learn a language depends on which language you are learning and on how you approach the task. You learn a language quicker if it is closely related to a language you already know. An English speaker learns Spanish, French, or German faster than he does Czech, Korean, or Japanese. A Chinese speaker, on the other hand, learns Korean, Japanese, or Thai faster than he learns English or Italian. (See chart below.)

	French	Italian	German	Spanish	Portuguese	Dutch	Russian	Polish	Czech	Danish	Swedish	Norwegian	Finish	Chinese	Japanese	Korean	Thai	Hindi
Levels of Proficiency	hours						hours						hours					
Level 1A-B Basic Functioning	80-120						100-150						120-180					
Level 2A-B Limited Proficiency	160-240						200-300						240-360					
Level 3A-B Adequate Proficiency	240-360						300-450						360-540					
Level 4A-B Full Proficiency	320-480						460-690						600-900					
Level 5 Near-Native Proficiency	400-600						500-750						1600 +					

Level 1A-B Basic Functioning

Get along in basic social, travel and business situations

- ◆ Understand greetings, announcements, courteous and useful expressions, time and directions;
- ◆ Meet and greet people, introduce others, extend invitations, order in a restaurant, book lodgings;
- ◆ Make a simple phone call to set up an appointment;
- ◆ Answer slowly spoken questions by a native speaker accustomed to foreign visitors;
- ◆ Give biographical information about yourself, family and associates;
- ◆ Read signs, short phrases and instructions;
- ◆ Compose basic sentences; write a brief note or e-mail.

Level 2A-B Limited Proficiency

Handle matters of every-day life

- ◆ Understand simple statements, questions and instructions on subjects of personal and professional interest;
- ◆ Talk in past, present and future tense about yourself, work, business and company;
- ◆ Make an uncomplicated job-oriented presentation;
- ◆ Make inquiries about everyday matters of some complexity;
- ◆ Discuss general subjects with native speakers;
- ◆ Read faxes and general business letters, compose paragraphs understandable to a native speaker;
- ◆ Write brief personal letters and jot down essential information.

Level 3A-B Adequate Proficiency

Work with native speakers on projects and handle unexpected situations

- ◆ Able to follow negotiations and to make contributions, both on concrete and abstract topics;
- ◆ Give clear explanations and handle ensuing queries; Make detailed inquiries;
- ◆ Request elucidation of misunderstandings using exact logical sentences;
- ◆ Participate in general conversation that may include use of hypothetical issues, in a group of native speakers;
- ◆ Understand a number of idiomatic expressions;
- ◆ Read newspaper articles and technical papers and understand their essence;
- ◆ Write quite understandable reports, business letters and faxes.

Level 4A-B Full Proficiency

Be an equal partner in general and business discussions with native speakers

- ◆ Follow conversations at normal speed between two native speakers, on subject matter within your experience;
- ◆ Command of the language is adequate to lead meetings and negotiations;
- ◆ Deliver efficient presentations and convincing addresses;
- ◆ Able to defend your point of view;
- ◆ Get information from persons who do not cooperate willingly and insist on a statement of particulars;
- ◆ Deal with unexpected, delicate or painful situations;
- ◆ Read and understand all styles and forms in newspapers and magazines;
- ◆ Write comprehensive business letters, reports, and drafts of contracts requiring fluent and accurate use of the written language.

Level 5 Near-Native Proficiency

Able to speak, read and write the language as an educated native speaker

- ◆ You are truly in command of the language;
- ◆ Recognize, understand and use delicate variations in tone and meaning;
- ◆ Employ a broad vocabulary;
- ◆ Use the palette of synonyms and antonyms with sophistication in relevant social and cultural context;
- ◆ Understand and use idioms appropriately;
- ◆ Have also mastered all previous levels