

Levels of linguistic ability and required time to learn a European language at that level, taken from the ASTM standards for Foreign Language Instruction

Classroom hours are listed. For each 5 classroom hours, there must be 3 hours of personal study to reach these goals.

ILR	Listening proficiency	speaking proficiency	Reading proficiency	Writing proficiency	Class time
0	No proficiency	No Proficiency	No Proficiency	No Proficiency	
0+ Survival proficiency	Able to understand short phrases based on memorized material. Slightly longer phrases must be repeated and include frequent pauses to be understood.	Able to satisfy immediate needs such as for lodging, meals, and transportation, using memorized or rehearsed speech only. No fluency.	Able to understand some isolated words and phrases such as personal or place names and street or store signs but not connected prose.	Able to note down intelligibly, if not perfectly, bits of information such as a name, an address or location, a date or a simple list of items.	
1 Minimal functional proficiency	Able to understand very simple statements, questions, and face-to-face conversations concerning some familiar situations and many basic needs. Repetition and slower speech are necessary for understanding.	Able to satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple conversations on familiar or rehearsed topics. Experiences frequent misunderstandings. <i>Examples</i> —Can exchange greetings, elicit predictable information, and explain routine procedures in a restricted way.	Able to understand very simple connected printed material. Able to get the main idea of short, frequently encountered materials such as invoices, forms, and charts.	Able to note down information to meet simple needs, statements, and questions on familiar topics. Ideas may not flow smoothly. Writing is generally comprehensible to natives accustomed to dealing with non-natives.	150
2 Limited Functional Proficiency	Able to understand most routine conversations spoken at a normal pace relating to social and occupational situations. Some difficulty understanding common structures and vocabulary remains; occasional repetition is still needed	Able to handle routine daily interactions that are limited in scope. Able to handle confidently, but not fluently, most social conversations on such topics as current events, work, family, etc. <i>Examples</i> —Can typically ask and answer predictable questions in the workplace and receive and provide straightforward direction.	Able to read with some misunderstandings straightforward familiar factual material. <i>Examples</i> —Descriptive or narrative writings such as routine reports, simple biographical information, standard business letters, and simple technical material written for the general reader.	Able to write with some accuracy and in some detail about routine matters as well as about most common or familiar topics. Writing is generally comprehensible to natives.	400

3 General Functional Proficiency	Able to understand almost all conversations spoken at a normal pace without repetitions, including discussions within the individual's occupation; readily understands phone conversations and broadcasts, but still experiences some difficulty with very fast speech, slang, and cultural references.	Able to speak the language with sufficient fluency and accuracy to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics. However, there are noticeable linguistic and cultural imperfections that limit the individual's ability to participate in more sophisticated interactions such as high-level negotiation. Can typically discuss particular interests and special fields of competence with ease. <i>Examples</i> — Can use the language as part of normal professional duties such as answering objections, clarifying points, justifying decisions understanding the essence of challenges, stating and defending policy, conducting meetings, delivering briefings, etc. Can reliably elicit information and informed opinion from native speakers.	Able to read with almost complete comprehension a variety of prose material on familiar and unfamiliar topics. Can typically understand news stories similar to wire service reports, routine correspondence, general reports, and technical material in the reader's professional field. Can get the main idea of more sophisticated texts but may not perceive subtlety and nuance.	Able to organize and express ideas in writing well enough to satisfy personal, social, professional, or academic needs. There may be occasional errors, but they rarely interfere with the native's comprehension. Sometimes able to express subtleties and nuances	650
4 Full Functional Proficiency	Able to understand all discussions, no matter how complex, within the listener's experience; able to understand most cultural references as well as manipulations of the language including persuasion, negotiation, conjecture, and humor.	Able to use language fluently and accurately on all levels pertinent to professional needs. <i>Examples</i> — Understands the details and ramifications of concepts that are culturally or conceptually different from one's own. Can set the tone of interpersonal, official, semiofficial, professional, and nonprofessional verbal exchanges with a representative range of native speakers (for all audiences, purposes, tasks, and settings). Can play an effective role among native speakers in such contexts as negotiations, conferences, lectures, and debates on matters of disagreement. Can advocate a position at length, both formally and in chance encounters, using sophisticated verbal strategies	Able to read fluently and accurately all styles and forms of language pertinent to professional needs.	Able to organize and express ideas in writing on all topics pertinent to personal, social, professional, and academic needs. Able to express subtleties and nuances in a wide variety of styles. Writing may, however, be recognized as the work of a non-native.	E

E Generally cannot be achieved in classroom. Requires extensive use of language in the native setting