

# LANGUAGE DIFFICULTY CATEGORIES FOR ENGLISH SPEAKERS

Adapted from the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) Website



## CATEGORY 1

24 -30 Weeks  
(600-750 hours )

**French Spanish Norwegian  
Italian Portuguese Dutch**



## CATEGORY 2

36 Weeks  
(900 hours)

**German Swahili Malay**



## CATEGORY 3

44 Weeks  
(1100 hours)

**Thai Hebrew Tagalog Hindi  
Somali Russian Vietnamese**



## CATEGORY 4

88 Weeks  
(2200 hours)

**Arabic Japanese  
Korean Mandarin Chinese**

**Note: The closer the language is to English, the easier it is to learn. Therefore, Category 1 languages require less effort vs. a Category 4 language such as Japanese which requires more effort.**