

EXPECTED LEVELS OF ABSOLUTE SPEAKING PROFICIENCY
IN LANGUAGES TAUGHT AT THE FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE
(Revised April 1973)

This chart was drawn up by the School of Language Studies of the Foreign Service Institute. It summarizes our experience with students as taught in our own classes rather than our judgments about the relative difficulty of these languages for speakers of English though there is undoubtedly some correlation. The expected speaking proficiency for a student with a given background and a given aptitude, in a given language, after a given number of weeks, will depend not only on the difficulty of the spoken language itself, but also on the amount of time and effort that the student has had to spend in concurrent study of the writing system.

GROUP I: Afrikaans, Danish, Dutch, French, Haitian Creole, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish			
<u>Length of Training*</u>	<u>Aptitude for Language Learning</u>		
	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Superior</u>
8 weeks (240 hours)	1	1/1+	1+
16 weeks (480 hours)	1+	2	2+
24 weeks (720 hours)	2	2+	3
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GROUP II: Bulgarian, Dari, Farsi, German, Greek, Hindi, Indonesian, Malay, Urdu			
<u>Length of Training</u>	<u>Aptitude for Language Learning</u>		
	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Superior</u>
16 weeks (480 hours)	1	1/1+	1+/2
24 weeks (720 hours)	1+	2	2+/3
44 weeks (1320 hours)	2/2+	2+/3	3/3+
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GROUP III: Amharic, Bengali, Burmese, Czech, Finnish, Hebrew, Hungarian, Khmer (Cambodian), Lao, Nepali, Pilipino, Polish, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Sinhale, Thai, Tamil, Turkish, Vietnamese			
<u>Length of Training</u>	<u>Aptitude for Language Learning</u>		
	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Superior</u>
16 weeks (480 hours)	0+	1	1/1+
24 weeks (720 hours)	1+	2	2/2+
44 weeks (1320 hours)	2	2+	3
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GROUP IV: Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean			
<u>Length of Training</u>	<u>Aptitude for Language Learning</u>		
	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Superior</u>
16 weeks (480 hours)	0+	1	1
24 weeks (720 hours)	1	1+	1+
44 weeks (1320 hours)	1+	2	2+
80-92 weeks (2400-2760 hours)	2+	3	3+

*The number of hours is the theoretical maximum at 30 hours a week.