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Wondering how long it takes to learn Korean? Whether you're dreaming of chatting with locals in Seoul, watching Korean dramas without subtitles, or just picking up a cool new skill, knowing the time investment up front can help you plan. In this guide, we'll break down exactly what to expect — from learning Hangeul in under 2 hours to becoming fluent in 1–2 years with smart strategies. Below is a free PDF guide for "How long does it take to learn Korean?" that you can download and take with you: Get "How long does it take to learn Korean?" Free PDF Guide Quick Summary How long does it take to learn a language like Korean? It takes three months (90 days) to develop basic conversational skills in Korean if you study for 7-10 hours per week. After one year of studying at this pace, you can become conversationally fluent. In this article, we'll provide you with ballpark estimates you can use as a starting point, which you can adjust based on your situation. How long does it take to learn Korean fluently? It will take about 1200 hours to reach a high intermediate level. You'll need additional practice, so you may want to double that number to 2400 hours to get towards fluency. That would be about 23 hours of study per week for two years— a realistic goal if you're serious about your Korean language journey. If you're curious about the word "fluent" in Korean, here's an article that will teach you how to say it. How Many Hours to Learn Korean? A Quick Breakdown Whether you want to master the basics or aim for full fluency, this chart will help you estimate your study time. Here's a quick breakdown of timelines based on common goals, Perfect for setting goals and tracking learning speed. GoalStudy Time NeededStudy Schedule Example Learn Hangeul60–90 minutes1 focused session or 3x 30 mins 3-minute conversation~90 days (90 hrs total)1 hr/day, 5–7 days/week Conversational fluency~1200 hours10 hrs/week = ~2.5 years Full fluency (high advanced)~2400 hours23 hrs/week = ~2 years Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) Here are other commonly asked questions related to how long it usually takes to learn Korean. How much time should I study Korean per day, week, or month? It depends on your goals. For casual learners, 1 hour/day or 5–8 hours/week is a great start. For fluency, aim for 20–25 hours/week (around 3–4 hours/day). Use the chart above to estimate total time needed for each goal. How long does learning the Korean alphabet take? You can learn the basics of Hangeul in just 60-90 minutes. This will teach you the basics of Korean characters, including vowels and consonants, so you can read most Korean words. 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Below are some things to consider, and we'll go over how much each step of Korean language learning approximately takes. The Fastest Ways to Learn Korean The quickest and best way to learn Korean is to be around the language as much as possible. There are many ways to accomplish this, so we'll give you suggestions. Attend Language Schools in Korea If you're aiming for immersive learning, studying in South Korea is the best way to surround yourself with Korean 24/7 — and absorb the cultural nuances firsthand. In these Korean language schools, starting from the bottom, you will typically study through 6 levels, with four levels a year. That would take you 1.5 years from the basics to graduating from the program. Each level lasts for ten weeks and includes 20 hours of classes per week. That means it will take 1200 hours in total to learn Korean using this method. This estimate of hours does not include homework and time spent outside of class practicing your skills. 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Instead of just focusing on getting the minimal homework done, try actively watching K-dramas and Korean movies to help with your Korean vocabulary or listening to K-pop songs to start. You can then practice through apps or language exchanges, talk with native speakers, and use eBooks or textbooks and Korean learning websites. You can try these to help develop your skills and achieve language proficiency faster. If you have the chance, traveling to Korea to attend language school is the absolute quickest way to learn Korean and become fluent in Korean. 4. Your Time Commitment The more time you invest consistently, the faster you'll learn. An hour a day can add up quickly over weeks and months. Sporadic studying, on the other hand, slows progress. 5. Your Attitude and Motivation Toward Learning Korean It's no secret that these two are the key to unlocking your language learning potential. Having a positive attitude toward learning Korean can help you stay highly motivated. 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Your Attitude and Motivation Toward Learning Korean It's no secret that these two are the key to unlocking your language learning potential. Having a positive attitude toward learning Korean can help you stay highly motivated. Your motivation is what keeps you studying, day after day, even on the days when you're feeling frustrated because you are working on some challenging new grammar. Do you want to know why learning Korean is fun? Find out here. Wrap Up We hope this was helpful. We look forward to hearing how you'll enjoy Korean movies and music and the Korean culture better as you learn Korean, too! Let us know how far you are with your Korean studies in the comments below! Get "How long does it take to learn Korean?" Free PDF Guide Was this post helpful?YesNo According to the FSI (Foreign Service Institute), it takes an estimated 88 weeks or 2200 hours to reach professional working proficiency in Korean.However, you can't exactly provide calculations for something as complex as learning a language. So in this guide I will explain some of the factors that will affect how long it takes for each person to learn Korean.Contents How Long Does It Take to Learn Korean?According to the FSI (Foreign Service Institute), Korean is considered a Category V language, marking it as "super hard" for English speakers to acquire.It's estimated that it would take approximately 88 weeks or 2200 hours to reach professional working proficiency, a level in which you would be comfortable in daily conversations and basic business contexts.Following these calculations, we can make some very rough estimates. It may take around:~200+ hours to reach beginner level~800+ hours to reach intermediate level~1600+ hours to reach an advanced levelBut, there are a few factors that will affect how long it takes each individual to learn Koran. Factors that Affect How Long It Takes to Learn Korean How you organize your study timeSimply put, more time spent studying will boost your Korean language acquisition. However, as the saying goes, quality over quantity!Just because a learner spends 20 hours a week studying Korean doesn't mean they will be closer to fluency than a learner who spends only 5 hours weekly.It's important you consider how you spend your time. Organize your study sessions so that it best suits you and your schedule. Think:How many days of the week will you include Korean study?Will you study in the morning, afternoon or evening?Should you split the time into hours-long chunks, or spread them out throughout the day in 30-minute periods? Your motivation and disciplineOf course, if you're super pumped to learn Korean, that enthusiasm will certainly help you to learn faster and harder. But you can't always depend on motivation as the fuel for your language studies. If that's the case, you'll likely have more "off" days than "on" days.Along with your motivation and inspiration, you should focus on the power of discipline. Be firm and consistent with your studies, even if you don't feel like doing them for the moment.Try to establish reasonable deadlines beforehand: for example, you may say you'd like to become comfortable with the Korean alphabet in one week, familiarize yourself with a certain conjugation within two weeks and so forth. Your experience with language learningIt's generally accepted that if you've never learned another language before, then Korean can be more difficult to grasp at first. This is the case for any other foreign language. Those who have never learned a second language may need more time to get accustomed to the existence of linguistic differences and learn to steadily break away from the one language they're comfortable with.Meanwhile, a multilingual person may already come prepared to "shatter the rules" and know that not everything can have a direct translation to his or her native language. Some things they picked up from other languages can be applied to the next language they learn.But don't be discouraged if you don't have much experience learning a foreign language! There's a first time for everything and Korean is an excellent choice as a second language. Your choice of learning methodsAgain, quality over quantity! Learning Korean is tough work, so it's important to pick the right learning style that fits you.Here are a number of questions you should ask yourself:Do you prefer learning through visual, auditory or reading/writing means?Do you like to learn by yourself or with a group of other students?What kind of physical space best suits your study preferences? A room in your home? An actual classroom?Would you like physical or digital study tools?Studying in a manner that doesn't suit you can slow down your progress and stifle your motivation. Make the process of studying invigorating and comfortable, so that you can address the actual linguistic challenges more than the technical ones. Study materials and resources you useI also encourage you to diversify your learning resources, as opposed to just sticking with the same study tools. Don't be afraid to experiment with different materials–doing so can make for more productive language learning!Don't just depend on textbooks and classes. Using native Korean content as study material will quicken your learning speed and abilities. This includes material such as K-pop songs, K-dramas, Korean films, Korean foods, Korean books and so forth.Content that's originally created for native Korean speakers will:Show the language used in contextProvide more natural and authentic use of the languageGive hints of cultural aspects behind the languageTeach in a more interactive, inclusive manner that can stimulate your learning and interestBy immersing yourself in all things Korean, language practice will become an everyday, casual matter. One tool that is great for this, especially when you're just starting out, is the language learning program FluentU. Korean Compared to Other East Asian LanguagesHistorically, Korean (like most other East Asian languages) was influenced by the Chinese language. Its first written system consisted of Chinese characters, and there's still an entire counting system in use that's based on Chinese numbers.However, many linguists consider Korean a "language isolate." This means that it doesn't have a clear genealogy to any other language. This makes Korean linguistically unique and special.Korean has an exclusive (and rather straightforward) written alphabet called Hangul, which was commissioned by a king. In other words, you won't have to learn complex characters or various writing systems like in Chinese and Japanese.In terms of grammar and phonetics, Korean is somewhat similar to Japanese. It's common for Korean and Japanese natives to take to the other language without much difficulty. For a detailed guide on how to craft a Korean study plan, check out this guide:Ultimately, the length of your Korean learning journey will depend on so many things–some of which you can control, and others you can't.But instead of thinking about the number of hours or weeks, it's more important that you stay eager and curious. With those traits, you're bound to reach Korean fluency faster than you'd believe. If you're like me and enjoy learning Korean through movies and other media, you should check out FluentU. With FluentU, you can turn any subtitled content on YouTube or Netflix into an engaging language lesson. I also love that FluentU has a huge library of videos picked specifically for Korean learners. No more searching for good content—it's all in one place! One of my favorite features is the interactive captions. You can tap on any word to see an image, definition, and examples, which makes it so much easier to understand and remember. And if you're worried about forgetting new words, FluentU has you covered. You'll complete fun exercises to reinforce vocabulary and be reminded when it's time to review, so you actually retain what you've learned. You can use FluentU on your computer or tablet, or download the app from the App Store or Google Play. Click here to take advantage of our current sale! (Expires at the end of this month.) Wondering how long it takes to learn Korean? Whether you're dreaming of chatting with locals in Seoul, watching Korean dramas without subtitles, or just picking up a cool new skill, knowing the time investment up front can help you plan. In this guide, we'll break down exactly what to expect — from learning Hangeul in under 2 hours to becoming fluent in 1–2 years with smart strategies. Below is a free PDF guide for "How long does it take to learn Korean?" that you can download and take with you: Get "How long does it take to learn Korean?" 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By rejecting non-essential cookies, Reddit may still use certain cookies to ensure the proper functionality of our platform. For more information, please see our Cookie Notice and our Privacy Policy. The complex interaction between all of these factors determines how long it will take you to learn Korean. But you don't just want to know all of the factors, do you? You want a timeline. You want numbers. You want to know just how long it will take you to learn Korean. Luckily for you, there are several studies that sought to tell us just that. But first, a disclaimer: In many of these studies, language proficiency or fluency is the bar set to determine whether or not the language has been "learned." As you may know, you don't necessarily need to be fluent to be able to speak a foreign language and to be comfortable interacting in that language. A low intermediate level can get you pretty far in Korea. Keeping this in mind, it's important to take these studies with a grain of salt and remember that you can and will be able to interact in Korean long before you're fluent. Guided learning hours required to learn Korean Realistic estimates in the field of linguistics have studied the number of hours really needed to learn a language like Korean. The Common European Framework for Reference for Languages, for example, uses the "Guided Learning Hours" framework to measure the amount of classroom time total needed to reach a B2 (high intermediate) level. It assumes that for every one hour of classroom time, learners will spend two hours of independent study time. In the end, this equates to a total of between 1,000 and 1,200 hours. Let's take a look at this in several different scenarios: 1. One 3-hour Korean course per week for 8 weeks, plus a weekly homework assignment (1 hour), plus independent practice of any type (2 hour). 3 courses per year. You will need between 25-30 courses. At 3 courses per year, it may take you between 8.3-10 years to reach an intermediate level. 2. One year of Korean language learning in school. (4 hours per week + 2 hours of homework + 2 hours of independent practice X 12 weeks X 2 semesters). Between 5-6.25 years to reach an intermediate level. 3. Dedicated independent study (1 hour per day). Approximately 3 years to achieve an intermediate level of Korean. 4. Total, active immersion (8 hours per day). Approximately 3 months to have an intermediate level of Korean. This calculation neglects so many factors, however, and still isn't a very accurate way of determining how long it could take you to learn Korean. The U.S. Foreign Service Institute Timeline for learning Korean In their study, the Foreign Service Institute examined a group of native English speakers between the ages of 30 and 40 who were studying foreign languages at their institute. The students' resulting levels were measured using the Interagency Language Roundtable Scale with the goal being to calculate how long it took students to reach "General professional proficiency" or higher. According to the FSI, the closer a language is to your native language, the faster you will learn that language. They divided their findings into five basic language categories based on the languages' similarity to English, which determined how long it took learners to reach general professional proficiency or higher. Let's take a look at their timeline: FSI Timeline Language Group I Languages Closely Related to English Afrikaans, Catalan, Danish, Dutch, French, Haitian Creole, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish 23-24 Weeks (575-600 Hours) Language Group II Languages similar to English German 30 weeks (750 hours) Language Group III Languages with linguistic and/or cultural differences from English Indonesian, Malaysian, Swahili 36 Weeks (900 Hours) Language Group IV Languages with significant linguistic and/or cultural differences from English Amharic, Bengali, Burmese, Croatian, Czech, Finnish, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Icelandic, Latvian, Lithuanian, Mongolian, Nepali, Pashto, Persian (Dari, Farsi, Tajik), Pilipino, Polish, Russian, Serbian, Slovak, Slovenian, Thai, Tamil, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese 44 Weeks (1,100 Hours) Language Group V Exceptionally difficult languages for native English speakers Arabic, Cantonese Chinese, Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, Korean 88 Weeks (2,200 Hours) Therefore, according to FSI findings, Korean is in Language Group V and it will take you around 2,200 hours to learn it. Korean may be one of the most difficult languages for English speakers to learn, but that makes it all the more rewarding! This study can be used to help you estimate how many hours it will take you to learn Korean and calculate how many weeks--or months, or years--based on how much time you want to dedicate per week. Keep in mind, however, that the quality of your study is more important than the quantity. Immersion experiences or daily practice can significantly limit how long it takes for you to learn Korean. Check out our Top 10 Korean hacks for some ideas on improving the effectiveness of your study time. Don't be discouraged. You can and will learn Korean faster than you expect. There are even cases (as the internet will surely tell you) of people who learn it in less than a year. Now that you know how much time it takes to learn Korean and which factors can help you achieve your goals faster, it's also important to keep in mind that language learning is synonymous with practice. That means that reaching a certain level doesn't guarantee that you will keep it for the rest of your life. Taking care of your Korean is like taking care of your pet: you have to feed it, cuddle it, and take it out for a walk every once in a while. In the end, YOU decide how quickly you become fluent in Korean and how good your skills remain. With the right attitude, dedication, situation, and motivation, any language is within your reach. For more, check out what to look for in the best Korean learning software. 가! Annyeonghigaseyo! Sujung Lee: Rocket Korean