

How long to learn Spanish

How long does it take to learn Spanish? This is a common question from students who wish to learn Spanish. How long a student needs to learn Spanish will depend on several factors, with some taking a longer time than others. In this article, Nageeb Gounjaria argues that how long it takes will depend on several factors.

1 *Desired Proficiency level*

You can speak Spanish or any other language at different proficiency levels. For instance, a Spanish lawyer will use a much more sophisticated language (higher proficiency level) compared to a Spanish child (lower proficiency level), although both of them are fluent in Spanish! Consequently, if you simply wish to attain Beginner Level proficiency, 60-80 hours of learning will be sufficient. However, to reach an advanced level of proficiency, much more hours are needed!

2 *Available time for learning*

The time that you can set aside for learning Spanish will definitely affect your progress. Hence, it will take a busy person a much longer time to learn Spanish compared to someone with much more time at his disposal.

3 *Gaps in between classes*

How long it takes to learn Spanish also depends on gaps in between classes. Longer gaps between your Spanish classes makes it easier to forget what you have previously learned. Ideally, we recommend a maximum of 2 days gap in between lessons for maximum retention.

4 *Mother tongue influence*

Your mother tongue can affect how long you take to learn Spanish, especially Spanish pronunciation. For instance, some Japanese speakers have some difficulty saying a clear L or R sound because the Japanese version of these sounds is in between L and R. The same applies for Arabic speakers when it comes to B and P. The Arabic language doesn't have the P sound.

5 *Knowledge of another 'Romance' language*

Those who know another romance language (such as Italian and French) will be able to learn Spanish much faster than others. That is because many Spanish words share a similar root with Italian and French words, making it easier for the Italians and the French to correctly guess the meaning of those words, especially in written language.

6 *Knowledge of another foreign language*

If you already know a foreign language (especially another European language) with some similarities to the Spanish language - such as having the same alphabet, sentence structure, vocabulary and grammar pattern - it is easier for you to make sense of Spanish as a language.

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7 *Minimum hours for specific levels of Spanish proficiency*

Here's an idea of the **minimum** hours required to attain specific levels of Spanish proficiency. We mention learning hours instead of time frame (weeks, months, etc) as it is more accurate. For instance, a student may take 4 hours/month (if she takes 1h lesson/week) or 56 hours/month (if she takes 14h lesson/week).

Proficiency Level	CEFR	Others	French Faster
Lower Beginner	A1	60 - 100 hours	40 - 60 hours
Upper Beginner	A2	150 - 200 hours	60 - 80 hours
Lower Intermediate	B1	350 - 400 hours	80 - 120 hours
Upper Intermediate	B2	550 - 650 hours	120 - 180 hours
Lower Advanced	C1	800 - 950 hours	180 - 240 hours
Upper Advanced	C2	> 1000 hours	240 - 300 hours

* Note that some students will need more hours than others due to factors such as intellectual ability, available time for learning, gaps in between classes, pronunciation difficulties, etc.

Here's an idea of the learning hours required if you're not a zero beginner

Proficiency Level	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Starting as Zero Beginner	60h	80h	120h	180h	240h	300h
Starting as Lower Beginner A1	-	40h	80h	140h	200h	260h
Starting as Upper Beginner A2	-	-	60h	120h	180h	240h
Starting as Lower Intermed B1	-	-	-	100h	160h	220h
Starting as Upper Intermed B2	-	-	-	-	120h	180h
Starting as Lower Advanced C1	-	-	-	-	-	120h

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