



EF EPI

EF English Proficiency Index

LOOKING AHEAD:

EFSET

The EF Standard
English Test

See page 5



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2015, English is widely accepted as the primary international language, and it is increasingly defined as a basic skill required of every student in every education system. Few countries continue to debate whether or not English should be taught. Instead, discussions of English instruction in public schools focus on which dialect of English is taught, how it is assessed, and how much English education is necessary. In continuing and professional education, where time and money are more carefully budgeted, adults learn English primarily for instrumental purposes.

The status of English today sets it apart from other foreign languages. In developed countries, educators and policymakers are more and more often discussing whether “English is enough,” and, if it is not, what accommodations should be made for other national and international languages in the curriculum. In developing countries, English is often tied to development goals, expansion of the service sector, and increased connectivity to the rest of the world. Each country approaches these questions from its own perspective, taking into account its distinctive history, internal linguistic landscape, and economic partners.

Increasingly, countries view English as a catalyst for development rather than a threat to national culture. However, much more will need to change before English can fulfill its potential to connect people to each other, spread information, and facilitate exchange. We believe the most essential shift needed is towards communicative teaching practices. In far too many countries, both rich and poor, English is still taught with little regard to its practical use. Until all English teachers are teaching English as a tool for communication, countries and individuals will not enjoy the full benefit of a global language.

This fifth edition of the EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI) ranks 70 countries and territories based on test data from more than 910,000 adults who took our online English tests in 2014. This edition continues to track the evolution of English proficiency, looking back over the past eight years of EF EPI data.

In this fifth edition, regions are still the strongest predictor of English ability. This “neighborhood” effect is particularly strong in parts of Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East. Adult English proficiency does not change overnight, but in this fifth index, we are able to confirm trends of progress, stagnation, and decline that emerged in previous reports. We see that:

- The average level of adult English proficiency in the world has risen slightly since last year, but this increase is far from uniform across countries, regions, and age groups. Many countries have seen no significant change, and a few have declined.
- The gap between the highest and lowest proficiency countries has widened, with the top-ranked country, Sweden, a full 33 points above Libya, in last place.
- Worldwide, English proficiency levels are highest among young adults aged 18-20. However, on a global level, the difference in English ability between age cohorts is extremely small for adults under 30. On a national level, the story is quite different, with some countries showing stark generational differences and others almost none.
- Women speak English better than men worldwide, in every region surveyed, and in almost every country. The gender gap is widest in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa and largely absent in the very high proficiency countries of Northern Europe.
- Europe continues to dominate the index, filling the highest proficiency bands. Northern and Central Europe are particularly strong, and their positions have strengthened over the past five years. France stands out in Europe for its low English proficiency.
- Asia has a high level of English skill diversity, with three countries in the High Proficiency band as well as several in the lowest proficiency band. Asia is by far the most populous region in the index, so this diversity is not unexpected.
- Latin America continues to be a low proficiency region, but its average proficiency level has improved. This year, for the first time, only three Latin American countries are in the lowest proficiency band.
- The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) have very weak English skills and are the only regions with declining adult English proficiency levels. Adults over 40 have the strongest English proficiency in MENA, unlike in any other region.
- Despite shifting rankings every year, the correlations between English ability and income, Internet connectivity, scientific research, and a range of other indicators remain strong and stable over time.

LOOKING AHEAD: INNOVATION IN LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT

As interest in the EF EPI has grown since its launch in 2011, we have seen a rise in demand among individuals, chief learning officers, and policymakers to effectively test English skills in a low-cost, convenient, and reliable manner. The existing standardized English tests, such as Cambridge English FCE, IELTS, TOEFL, and TOEIC, are high-quality but expensive.

Moreover, while there are millions of Cambridge English FCE, TOEFL, TOEIC, and IELTS test takers every year, they make up only a small fraction of the world's nearly two billion English learners. These individual English learners, as well as institutions such as companies and governments, do not have access to an affordable, high-quality standardized English test.

As a result, we developed the EF Standard English Test (EFSET). Offered at no cost, and built to the same standards as other standardized tests, the EFSET rests on a foundation of evidence-based research and analysis. Test items were created by experienced exam writers, carefully reviewed by a panel of experts, and piloted on a diverse group of learners in various language-learning settings. The resulting test data was then analyzed by psychometricians and test developers before being calibrated for inclusion in the operational EFSET.

In order to make high-quality English testing accessible to all learners, the EFSET is available online for free (www.efset.org). EFSET results will be used in future versions of the EF EPI and will improve the EF EPI as an international benchmark of adult English proficiency.



EF STANDARD ENGLISH TEST

PARTICIPATE IN THE EF EPI

TAKE THE FREE EFSET AT [EFSET.ORG](https://efset.org)



EF EPI 2015 RANKINGS

PROFICIENCY BANDS

- Very High
- High
- Moderate
- Low
- Very Low

VERY HIGH PROFICIENCY

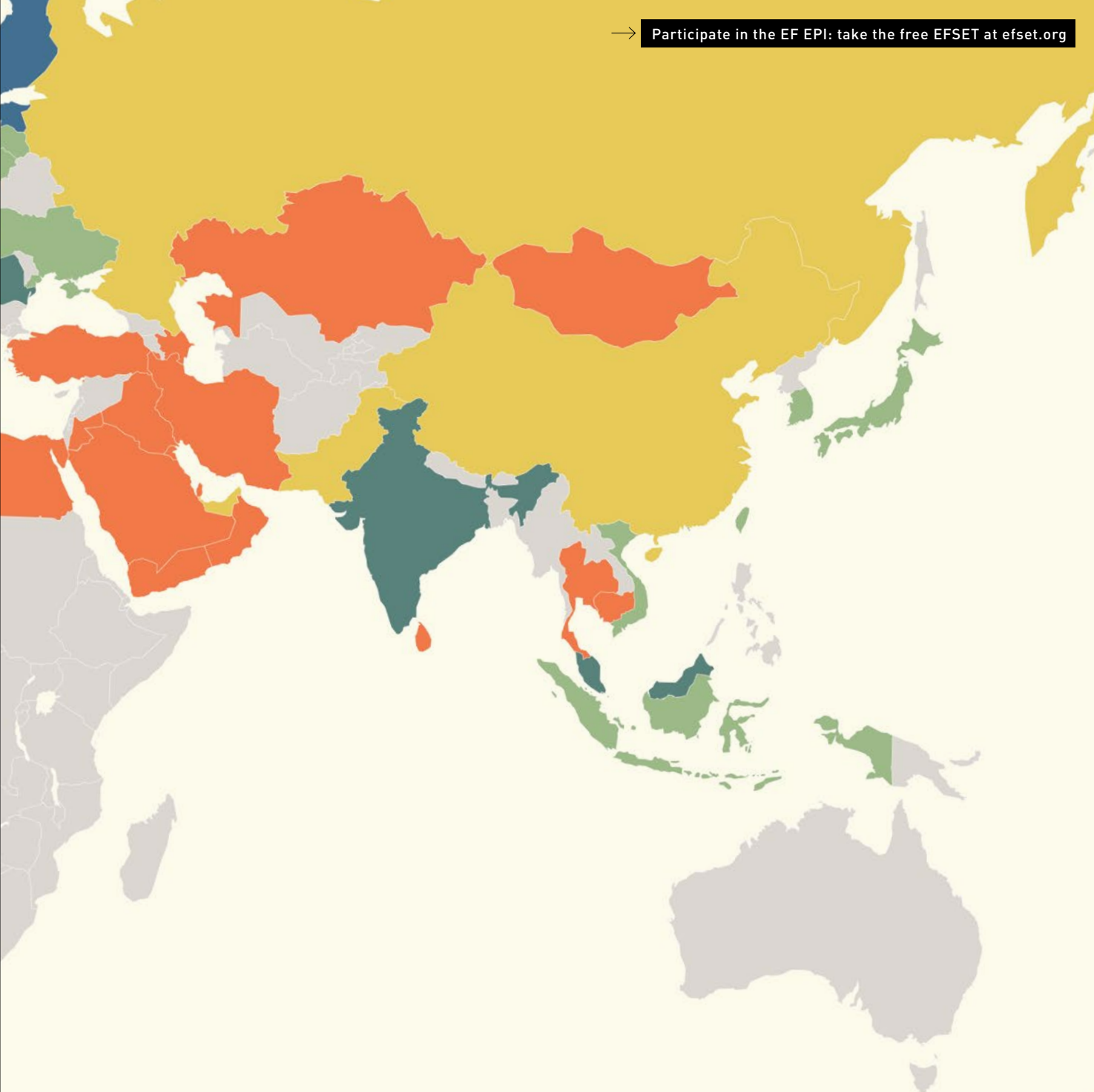
01	Sweden	70.94
02	Netherlands	70.58
03	Denmark	70.05
04	Norway	67.83
05	Finland	65.32
06	Slovenia	64.97
07	Estonia	63.73
08	Luxembourg	63.45
09	Poland	62.95

HIGH PROFICIENCY

10	Austria	61.97
11	Germany	61.83
12	Singapore	61.08
13	Portugal	60.61
14	Malaysia	60.30
15	Argentina	60.26
16	Romania	59.69
17	Belgium	59.13
18	Czech Republic	59.01
19	Switzerland	58.43
20	India	58.21
21	Hungary	57.90

MODERATE PROFICIENCY

22	Latvia	57.16
23	Spain	56.80
24	Dominican Republic	56.71
25	Slovakia	56.34
26	Lithuania	55.08
27	South Korea	54.52
28	Italy	54.02
29	Vietnam	53.81
30	Japan	53.57
31	Taiwan	53.18
32	Indonesia	52.91
33	Hong Kong	52.70
34	Ukraine	52.61



LOW PROFICIENCY

35	Peru	52.46
36	Chile	51.88
37	France	51.84
38	Ecuador	51.67
39	Russia	51.59
40	Mexico	51.34
41	Brazil	51.05
42	U.A.E.	50.87
43	Costa Rica	50.53
44	Uruguay	50.25
45	Pakistan	49.96
46	Guatemala	49.67
47	China	49.41
48	Panama	48.77

VERY LOW PROFICIENCY

49	Sri Lanka	47.89
50	Turkey	47.62
51	Yemen	47.60
52	Morocco	47.40
53	Jordan	47.33
54	Kazakhstan	47.04
55	Egypt	46.73
56	Iran	46.59
57	Colombia	46.54
58	Oman	46.34
59	Venezuela	46.14
60	Azerbaijan	46.12

61	El Salvador	45.52
62	Thailand	45.35
63	Qatar	43.72
64	Mongolia	43.64
65	Kuwait	42.65
66	Iraq	40.69
67	Algeria	40.34
68	Saudi Arabia	39.93
69	Cambodia	39.15
70	Libya	37.86

REGIONAL AND COUNTRY PROFILES

In the regional analyses that follow, we examine historical and emerging trends in English language learning. Brief country profiles provide facts and figures that illustrate local conditions and challenges for English education. More country-level data is available at www.ef.com/epi.



COUNTRY PROFILE GUIDE

COUNTRY NAME

Moderate Proficiency
EF EPI score: 52.50

#Rank out of 70 countries

1		Change from Last Year	+3.13 ↑
2		TOEFL/IELTS Scores	85; N/A
3		Mean Yrs of Schooling	9.8
4		Education Spending	19.2%
5		GNI per capita	21,060 USD
6		Population	17,363,894
7		Internet Penetration	66.5%
8		Languages	Spanish (official) 99.5%, English 10.2%, indigenous languages (includes Mapudungun, Aymara, Quechua, Rapa Nui) 1%, other 2.3%

1 This EF EPI score change is calculated relative to last year's edition, which uses data taken from 2013. Any change greater than or equal to 2.0 points (↑ ↓) indicates a significant shift in English proficiency. Any change of fewer than 2.0 points (↗ ↘) indicates a slight change. The global average change from last year is +1.45, with the range of -4.10 (Qatar) to +5.07 (Panama).

2 Sixty-nine countries have 2013 TOEFL scores, ranging from 61 (Saudi Arabia) to 100 (Austria). Twenty-nine countries have average 2013 IELTS General Training scores, ranging from 4.3 (Saudi Arabia) to 7.3 (Singapore).

3 Mean Years of Schooling is the "average number of years of education received by people aged 25 and older, converted from education attainment levels using the official duration of each level." The EF EPI countries' 2013 global mean was 9.2 years, with the range of 2.5 (Yemen) to 12.9 (Germany).

4 This World Bank statistic refers to the percentage of total government expenditure dedicated to education. The global average for EF EPI countries from 2010 to 2013 was 14.0%, with the range being 7.3% (Azerbaijan) to 31.3% (Thailand).

5 Gross National Income (GNI) per capita is based on purchasing power parity, converted into international dollars. One international dollar has the same purchasing power as one U.S. dollar in the U.S. The EF EPI countries' 2013 global average was 27,845 USD, ranging from 2,890 USD (Cambodia) to 128,530 USD (Qatar).

6 The populations of EF EPI countries range from 520,672 people (Luxembourg) to 1.36 billion (China). These 2014 statistics come from the CIA World Factbook.

7 Internet Penetration signifies the percentage of people in a country with access to the Internet. EF EPI countries' 2014 global average was 56.8%, with the range of 6.0% (Cambodia) to 95.1% (Norway).

8 Compiled from the CIA World Factbook, these entries order the languages spoken in a country from the most common to the least common, sometimes including the percentage of the population that speaks each language.

EUROPE

EF EPI AVERAGE: 55.65
POPULATION: 710,379,745
GNI PER CAPITA: 29,891 USD

PROFICIENCY BANDS

- Very High
- High
- Moderate
- Low
- Very Low



EUROPE PRIORITIZES ENGLISH AND PLURILINGUALISM

Europe has the strongest English proficiency of any region in the world. The European Union explicitly promotes “plurilingualism and intercultural education” in all member countries. These policies use a variety of levers with the aim of expanding European linguistic repertoires to include multiple languages with differing degrees of mastery.

WESTERN EUROPE SHINES

On average, Western Europe has stronger English proficiency than other parts of the continent. However, we find a diversity of English skills across Europe rather than a strong East/West divide.

Gathering data and exchanging best practices in national, regional, and international language education are notable strengths in Europe. The Council of Europe’s efforts in that direction allow countries to observe and learn from each other. Although there is still room for progress, Europe as a whole is well positioned to benefit from the connectivity and exchange that a common language facilitates.

STRENGTH IN THE NORTH

Adults in Northern Europe have exceptionally good English skills compared to other non-native English speakers. Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden have all been among the top five countries in every EF EPI. Estonia and Finland also post consistently strong results. Unlike most parts of the world, men in much of Northern Europe score at least as well as women.

However, there is still room for growth in Northern Europe. Although conversational English is widespread and daily exposure common, many students do not develop an adequate level of academic English to pursue tertiary studies in the language. Several countries have recently undertaken reforms to counteract this “ceiling effect.” English has a special status in these countries as a required subject for all students. At the same time, there are ongoing efforts to diversify people’s linguistic repertoires beyond English, and to value the linguistic diversity that may already be present.

ENGLISH AND GERMAN, SIDE BY SIDE

The German-speaking countries of Central Europe are unusual in that they have far higher English proficiency levels in the 18-20 age cohort than in other age groups. The

English skills of recent graduates in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland indicate that English instruction in these countries has recently become more effective. Although average adult proficiency scores in these countries have improved only slightly, strength in the youngest adults is a positive indicator for the future.

Poland has an effective education system, as demonstrated by the OECD’s PISA studies of math, reading, and science. Poland has seen a threefold increase since 2002 in adults aged 30-34 with university qualifications. English and German are the two main foreign languages in Polish schools, with about two-thirds of students learning English first and the other third choosing to begin with German. Almost all Polish students have studied both languages by the time they finish high school.

PLURILINGUALISM IN PRACTICE

Several European countries with high levels of English proficiency have more than one official language. Belgium, Luxembourg, and Switzerland exemplify how an education system can build each student’s linguistic repertoire over the course of a decade or more. These models help develop a range of skills and levels of competency in a student’s native language, other national languages, English, and other foreign languages. Designing a multilingual curriculum of this nature requires discussion and consensus about the role of each language, the skills needed to fulfill each role, and the development of those skills in a timely manner.

THREE LARGE ECONOMIES LAG BEHIND

The picture of English proficiency in Western Europe is not entirely positive. France, Italy, and Spain—three of the four largest non-English-speaking countries in Europe—are behind European Union averages. While Italy and Spain have both shown some improvements over the past eight years, France remains weak. In fact, France is so far behind its neighbors that its English

proficiency levels are akin to those of countries on the eastern edges of Europe. Whether due to a cultural aversion to English or an inability to reform its education system, France is on a different trajectory from its neighbors.

COUNTRIES WITH ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Russia and Ukraine also have English proficiency levels below European averages. These are very large countries with decentralized education systems and significant linguistic diversity.

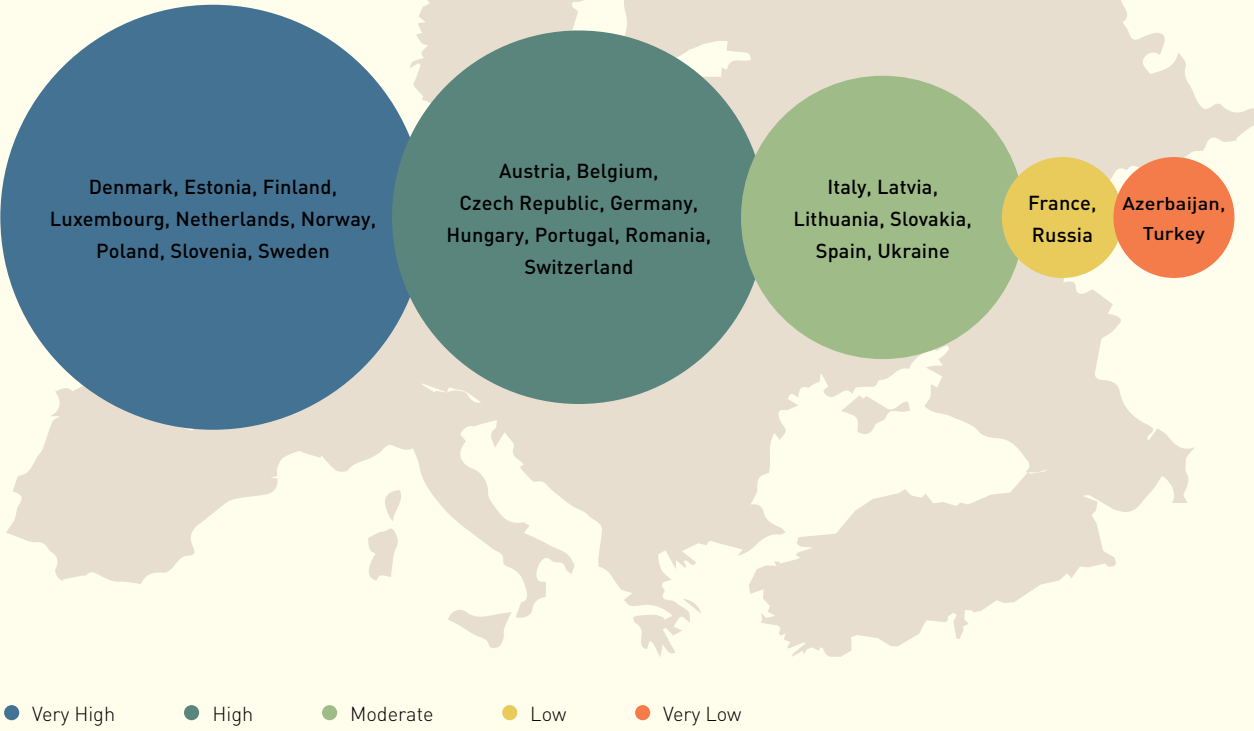
Similarly, adults in Turkey and Azerbaijan are far weaker in English than other adults in Europe. Azerbaijan is in the index for the first time this year, but Turkey’s proficiency level has been drifting downward since 2012. In Turkey, instruction in English is highly grammar-driven, with a repetitive curriculum and few communicative teaching methods. This emphasis on grammar and memorization discourages students, who have been rating their own mastery of English lower and lower each year despite hundreds of additional hours of instruction.

Turkey is well positioned to improve, however. The country’s English teachers are already well qualified to teach conversational English, and the large youth population means that any improvements in schools will be felt quickly in average adult proficiency levels.

CONCLUSION

Although English proficiency levels in Europe tend to be high and rising, there are some clusters of lower ability. From small, homogenous countries to larger, more diverse ones, Europe has many school systems and continuing education programs that are able to teach English at a high level. The European Union’s proactive stance on languages sets the global standard and is a source of inspiration for the teaching of foreign languages in general, and English in particular.

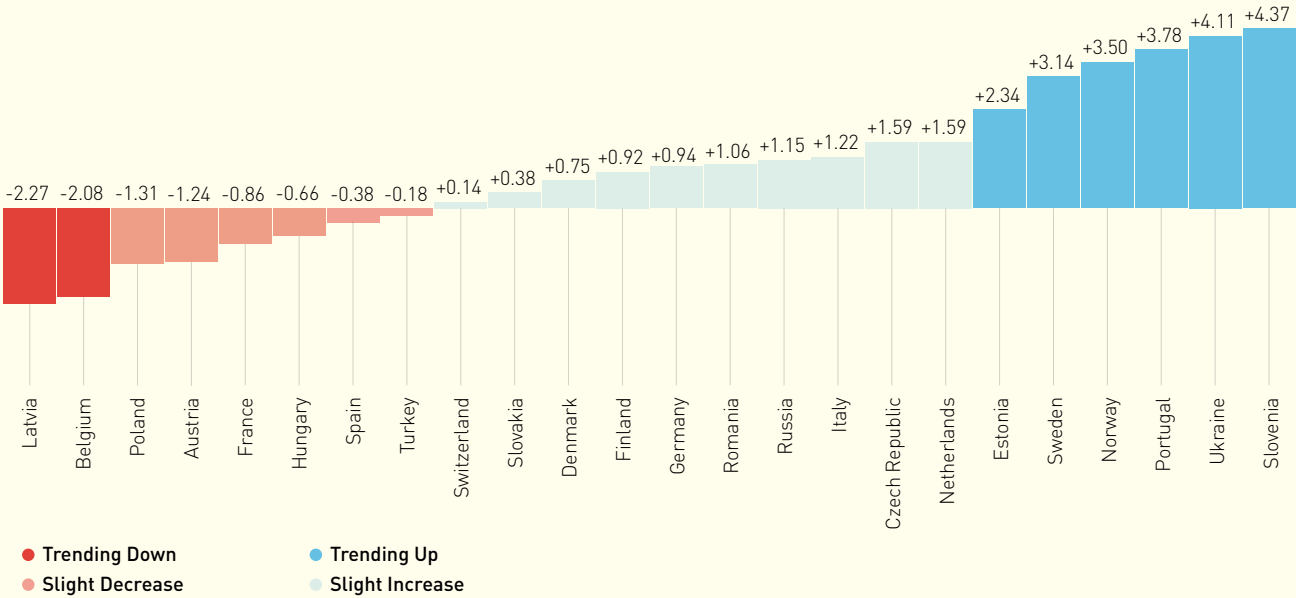
EUROPE



EF EPI TRENDS

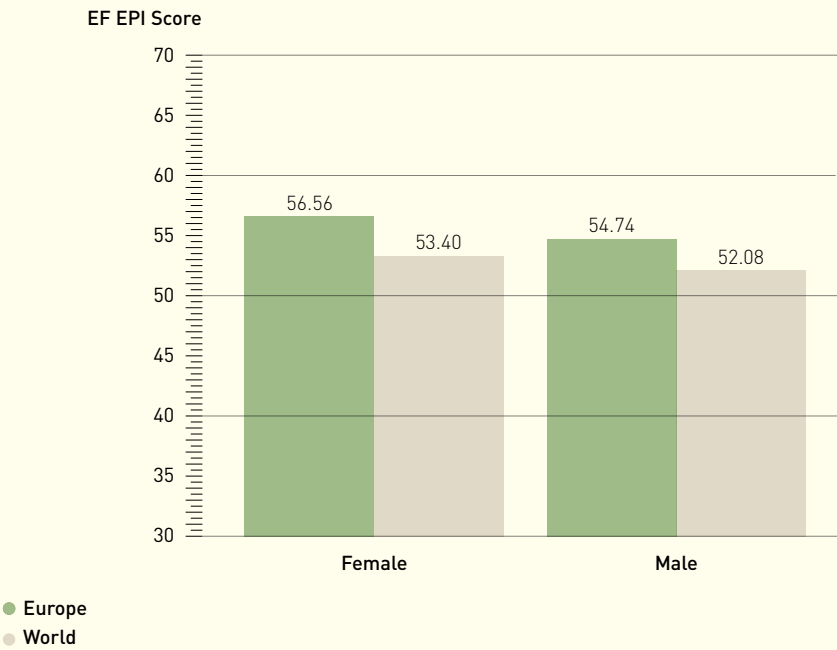
Despite its already strong English proficiency, Europe continues to improve. Six countries show a significant increase in their scores, meaning that they each gained at least two points. Only two countries show significant declines, but both have maintained high proficiency scores. The least proficient countries in Europe are stagnant from last year.

EF EPI Score Change from Last Year



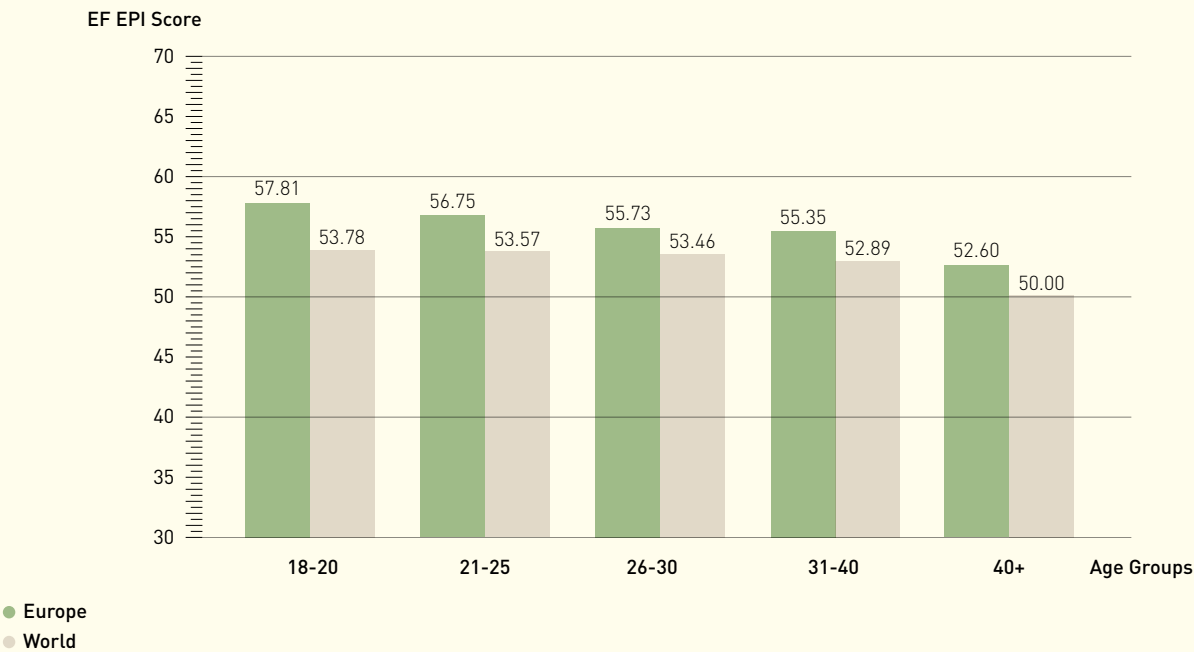
GENDER GAP

Europeans—both men and women—score significantly above global averages. In line with global trends, European women have higher proficiency levels than European men.



GENERATION GAP

Unlike all other regions, college-aged European adults have the best proficiency levels. This is indicative of improved teaching practices and predictive of higher average adult proficiency levels in the years to come.



SWEDEN

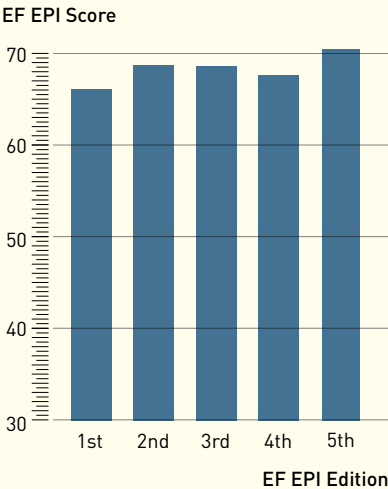


Very High Proficiency
EF EPI score: 70.94

#1 out of 70 countries

For the third time, Sweden holds the top position in the EF EPI. Sweden is one of the few countries in which men speak English better than women, although the difference between genders is slight. Sweden’s most recent education reforms, which include introducing teacher certification for primary school teachers and making English proficiency a requirement for entering national university programs, have proven to be cost-effective.

	Change from Last Year	+3.14 
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	94; N/A
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	11.7
	Education Spending	13.2%
	GNI per capita	46,170 USD
	Population	9,723,809
	Internet Penetration	94.8%
	Languages	Swedish (official), small Sami- and Finnish-speaking minorities



NETHERLANDS



Very High Proficiency
EF EPI score: 70.58

#2 out of 70 countries

	Change from Last Year	+1.59 
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	N/A; N/A
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	11.9
	Education Spending	11.9%
	GNI per capita	46,260 USD
	Population	16,877,351
	Internet Penetration	94.0%
	Language	Dutch (official)

DENMARK



Very High Proficiency
EF EPI score: 70.05

#3 out of 70 countries

	Change from Last Year	+0.75 
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	98; N/A
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	12.1
	Education Spending	15.2%
	GNI per capita	45,300 USD
	Population	5,569,077
	Internet Penetration	94.6%
	Languages	Danish, Faroese, Greenlandic (an Inuit dialect), German (small minority)

NORWAY

Very High Proficiency
EF EPI score: 67.83



#4 out of 70 countries

 Change from Last Year	+3.50 
 TOEFL/IELTS Scores	94; N/A
 Mean Yrs of Schooling	12.6
 Education Spending	15.0%
 GNI per capita	65,450 USD
 Population	5,147,792
 Internet Penetration	95.1%
 Languages	Bokmal Norwegian (official), Nynorsk Norwegian (official), small Sami- and Finnish-speaking minorities

FINLAND

Very High Proficiency
EF EPI score: 65.32



#5 out of 70 countries

 Change from Last Year	+0.92 
 TOEFL/IELTS Scores	96; N/A
 Mean Yrs of Schooling	10.3
 Education Spending	12.3%
 GNI per capita	39,860 USD
 Population	5,268,799
 Internet Penetration	91.5%
 Languages	Finnish (official) 94.2%, Swedish (official) 5.3%, other (includes small Sami- and Russian-speaking minorities) 5.4%

SLOVENIA

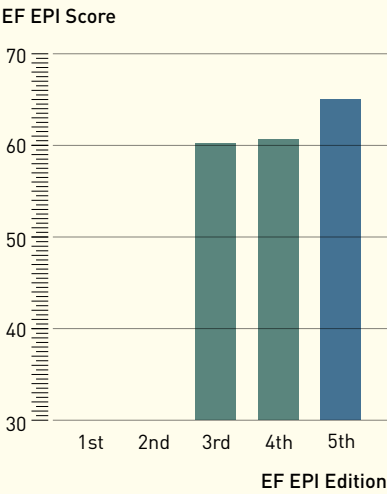
Very High Proficiency
EF EPI score: 64.97



#6 out of 70 countries

Adults in Slovenia have improved their English proficiency significantly, with one of the highest score increases in Europe over the past two years. Having consistently outperformed their OECD counterparts in international tests such as the TOEFL and PISA, Slovenian adults are some of the most proficient non-native English speakers in the world. Historically, Slovenia has had a culture of multilingualism. Today, English, along with German, has a special status in the national curriculum, and nearly all students study both languages.

 Change from Last Year	+4.37 
 TOEFL/IELTS Scores	96; N/A
 Mean Yrs of Schooling	11.9
 Education Spending	12.1%
 GNI per capita	28,650 USD
 Population	1,988,292
 Internet Penetration	72.7%
 Languages	Slovenian (official) 91.1%, Serbo-Croatian 4.5%, other or unspecified 4.4%



ESTONIA

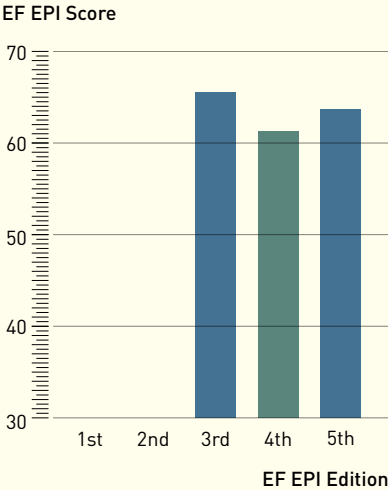
Very High Proficiency
EF EPI score: 63.73



#7 out of 70 countries

Estonia is a multilingual country, with all students studying English either as a second or third language. Russian-speaking Estonians study Estonian first, followed by English. Although it is one of the least developed European countries, Estonia’s adult English proficiency ranks higher than other countries with a much higher GNI per capita. Half of Estonian university students study English as part of their curricula, and Tallinn University encourages all students to reach a C1 level in a foreign language. As in all of the world’s highest proficiency countries, Estonia offers university-level instruction in English across departments.

 Change from Last Year	+2.34 
 TOEFL/IELTS Scores	94; N/A
 Mean Yrs of Schooling	12.0
 Education Spending	13.7%
 GNI per capita	24,920 USD
 Population	1,257,921
 Internet Penetration	80.0%
 Languages	Estonian (official) 68.5%, Russian 29.6%, other 1.2%



LUXEMBOURG

Very High Proficiency
EF EPI score: 63.45



#8 out of 70 countries

 Change from Last Year	N/A
 TOEFL/IELTS Scores	97; N/A
 Mean Yrs of Schooling	11.3
 Education Spending	N/A
 GNI per capita	57,830 USD
 Population	520,672
 Internet Penetration	93.8%
 Languages	Luxembourgish (official and national language), French (official), German (official)

POLAND

Very High Proficiency
EF EPI score: 62.95



#9 out of 70 countries

 Change from Last Year	-1.31 
 TOEFL/IELTS Scores	90; 6.3
 Mean Yrs of Schooling	11.8
 Education Spending	11.4%
 GNI per capita	22,830 USD
 Population	38,346,279
 Internet Penetration	62.8%
 Languages	Polish (official) 96.2%, Silesian 1.4%, other 1.1%, unspecified 1.3%

AUSTRIA

High Proficiency
EF EPI score: 61.97



#10 out of 70 countries

 Change from Last Year	-1.24 ↘
 TOEFL/IELTS Scores	100; N/A
 Mean Yrs of Schooling	10.8
 Education Spending	11.4%
 GNI per capita	45,450 USD
 Population	8,223,062
 Internet Penetration	80.6%
 Languages	German (official nationwide) 88.6%, Turkish 2.3%, Serbian 2.2%, Croatian (official in Burgenland) 1.6%, other 5.3%

GERMANY

High Proficiency
EF EPI score: 61.83



#11 out of 70 countries

 Change from Last Year	+0.94 ↗
 TOEFL/IELTS Scores	97; 7.0
 Mean Yrs of Schooling	12.9
 Education Spending	11.0%
 GNI per capita	45,010 USD
 Population	80,996,685
 Internet Penetration	84.0%
 Language	German (official)

PORTUGAL

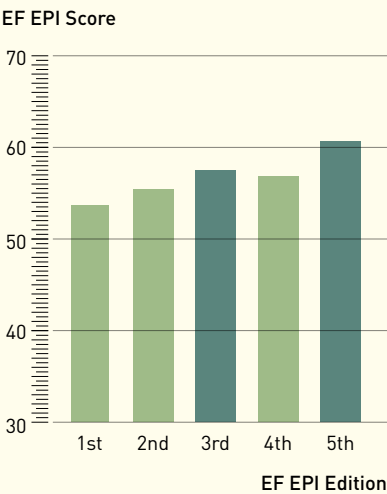
High Proficiency
EF EPI score: 60.61



#13 out of 70 countries

Despite significant improvement since 2007, Portugal’s English proficiency is average when compared to its neighbors in the region. Contrary to the global trend, Portuguese men are slightly more proficient than women. The level of English proficiency in Portugal is remarkably high given that the country has one of the lowest mean years of schooling in Europe. In 1989, English became a required subject for all Portuguese children. Assigning this special curricular status to English is a strategy shared by all of the highest proficiency countries.

 Change from Last Year	+3.78 ↑
 TOEFL/IELTS Scores	95; N/A
 Mean Yrs of Schooling	8.2
 Education Spending	10.7%
 GNI per capita	27,190 USD
 Population	10,813,834
 Internet Penetration	62.1%
 Languages	Portuguese (official), Mirandese (official, but locally used)



ROMANIA

High Proficiency
EF EPI score: 59.69

#16 out of 70 countries



 Change from Last Year	+1.06 ↗
 TOEFL/IELTS Scores	91; N/A
 Mean Yrs of Schooling	10.7
 Education Spending	8.3%
 GNI per capita	18,390 USD
 Population	21,729,871
 Internet Penetration	49.8%
 Languages	Romanian (official) 85.4%, Hungarian 6.3%, Romany (Gypsy) 1.2%, other 1%, unspecified 6.1%

BELGIUM

High Proficiency
EF EPI score: 59.13

#17 out of 70 countries



 Change from Last Year	-2.08 ↓
 TOEFL/IELTS Scores	97; N/A
 Mean Yrs of Schooling	10.9
 Education Spending	12.2%
 GNI per capita	41,160 USD
 Population	10,449,361
 Internet Penetration	82.2%
 Languages	Dutch (official) 60%, French (official) 40%, German (official) less than 1%

CZECH REPUBLIC

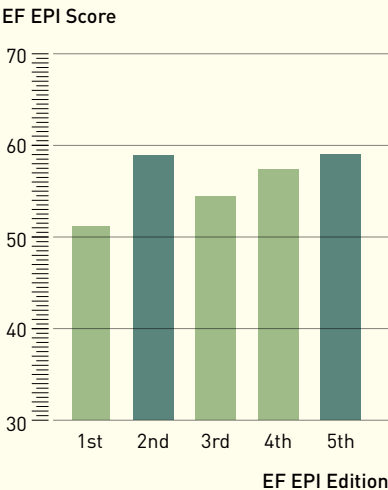
High Proficiency
EF EPI score: 59.01

#18 out of 70 countries



The Czech Republic returns to the High Proficiency band this year. Despite significant fluctuation in its scores since 2007, the country’s EF EPI score has generally trended upward. Most students study English as the foreign language of choice in the public education system. At 12.3 years, the Czech Republic’s mean years of schooling ranks fairly high in the world. Since 2005, the country has been consistently increasing its spending on its already efficient schools. In addition, the government has recently implemented policies aimed at improving its educational practices.

 Change from Last Year	+1.59 ↗
 TOEFL/IELTS Scores	91; N/A
 Mean Yrs of Schooling	12.3
 Education Spending	10.4%
 GNI per capita	26,970 USD
 Population	10,627,448
 Internet Penetration	74.1%
 Languages	Czech (official) 95.4%, Slovak 1.6%, other 3%



SWITZERLAND

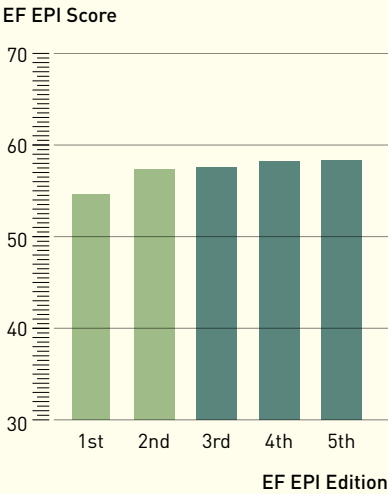
High Proficiency
EF EPI score: 58.43



#19 out of 70 countries

Switzerland has three official languages, none of them English, which makes the high level of English proficiency in the country all the more remarkable. Although all students learn at least two national languages in school, English has joined the national languages as a central part of the Swiss education system. As such, Switzerland provides a strong example of a successful multilingual education system. Aside from having one of the highest GNI per capita in the region, Switzerland also spends a higher percentage of its budget on education than most countries in Europe.

	Change from Last Year	+0.14 ↗
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	97; N/A
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	12.2
	Education Spending	15.9%
	GNI per capita	59,610 USD
	Population	8,061,516
	Internet Penetration	86.7%
	Languages	German (official) 64.9%, French (official) 22.6%, Italian (official) 8.3%, Serbo-Croatian 2.5%, Albanian 2.6%, Portuguese 3.4%, Spanish 2.2%, English 4.6%, other 5.1%



HUNGARY

High Proficiency
EF EPI score: 57.90



#21 out of 70 countries

	Change from Last Year	-0.66 ↘
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	92; N/A
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	11.3
	Education Spending	9.4%
	GNI per capita	22,660 USD
	Population	9,919,128
	Internet Penetration	72.6%
	Languages	Hungarian (official) 99.6%, English 16%, German 11.2%, Russian 1.6%, Romanian 1.3%, French 1.2%, other 4.2%

LATVIA

Moderate Proficiency
EF EPI score: 57.16



#22 out of 70 countries

	Change from Last Year	-2.27 ↘
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	89; N/A
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	11.5
	Education Spending	8.9%
	GNI per capita	22,510 USD
	Population	2,165,165
	Internet Penetration	75.2%
	Languages	Latvian (official) 56.3%, Russian 33.8%, unspecified 9.4%

SPAIN

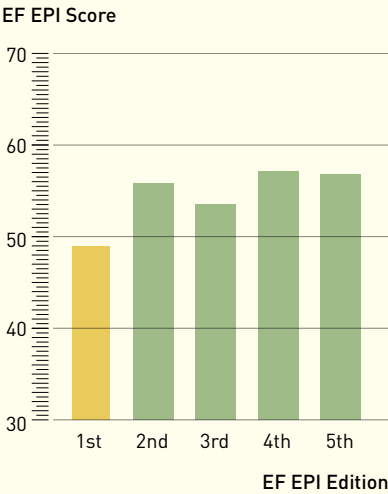


Moderate Proficiency
EF EPI score: 56.80

#23 out of 70 countries

Spain’s English proficiency has improved significantly. In recent years, the Spanish government has enacted major initiatives in bilingual schooling and language exchange. A large-scale bilingual education experiment in Spanish primary and secondary schools, launched in 2004, has shown that public education systems can prioritize English learning without harming learning outcomes in other areas. Spain’s EF EPI results also have one of the smallest gender gaps in the world.

	Change from Last Year	-0.38 ↘
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	89; 6.6
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	9.6
	Education Spending	10.9%
	GNI per capita	32,870 USD
	Population	47,737,941
	Internet Penetration	71.6%
	Languages	Castilian Spanish (official) 74%, Catalan 17%, Galician 7%, Basque 2%



SLOVAKIA



Moderate Proficiency
EF EPI score: 56.34

#25 out of 70 countries

	Change from Last Year	+0.38 ↗
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	90; N/A
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	11.6
	Education Spending	10.4%
	GNI per capita	25,970 USD
	Population	5,443,583
	Internet Penetration	77.9%
	Languages	Slovak (official) 78.6%, Hungarian 9.4%, Romany 2.3%, Ruthenian 1%, other or unspecified 8.8%

LITHUANIA



Moderate Proficiency
EF EPI score: 55.08

#26 out of 70 countries

	Change from Last Year	N/A
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	86; N/A
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	12.4
	Education Spending	13.6%
	GNI per capita	24,530 USD
	Population	3,505,738
	Internet Penetration	68.5%
	Languages	Lithuanian (official) 82%, Russian 8%, Polish 5.6%, unspecified 3.5%

ITALY

Moderate Proficiency
EF EPI score: 54.02



#28 out of 70 countries

	Change from Last Year	+1.22 ↗
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	91; 6.2
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	10.1
	Education Spending	8.0%
	GNI per capita	35,220 USD
	Population	61,680,122
	Internet Penetration	58.5%
	Languages	Italian (official), German, French, Slovenian

UKRAINE

Moderate Proficiency
EF EPI score: 52.61



#34 out of 70 countries

	Change from Last Year	+4.11 ↑
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	83; 5.8
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	11.3
	Education Spending	13.7%
	GNI per capita	8,970 USD
	Population	44,291,413
	Internet Penetration	41.8%
	Languages	Ukrainian (official) 67.5%, Russian (regional language) 29.6%, other 2.9%

FRANCE

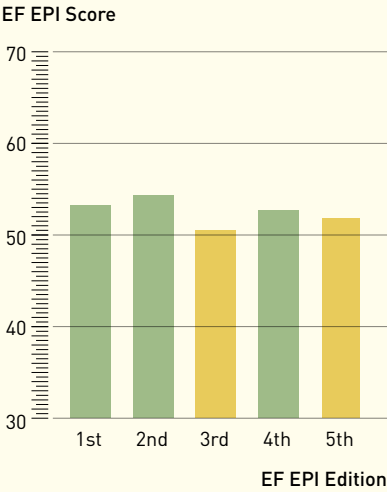
Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 51.84



#37 out of 70 countries

France has the lowest level of English proficiency of any country surveyed in the European Union, and a slightly lower level of proficiency than the average for adults around the world. The country’s EF EPI score has not changed significantly over the past eight years, although its rank in the index has dropped 20 positions as more countries have been added. Unfortunately, there is no evidence suggesting that France will improve in the near future. Recent French graduates and older French adults have an equivalent level of English proficiency.

	Change from Last Year	-0.86 ↘
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	88; 6.7
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	11.1
	Education Spending	9.9%
	GNI per capita	38,180 USD
	Population	66,259,012
	Internet Penetration	81.9%
	Language	French (official) 100%



RUSSIA

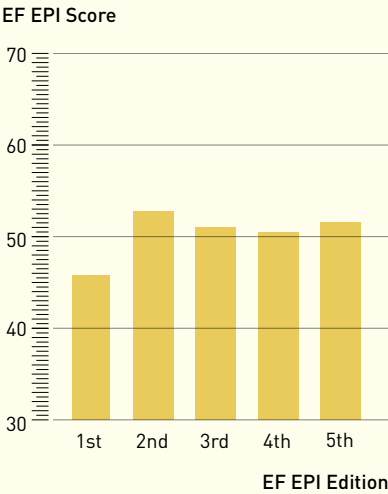
Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 51.59



#39 out of 70 countries

Russia's adult English proficiency is well below European averages, with a wide skills gap between women and men. With the upcoming 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia, the government has redoubled its efforts to teach basic English phrases to tourism professionals who will interact with foreign visitors. On the whole, Russia lacks qualified English teachers to deliver a high level of English education across its vast territory.

	Change from Last Year	+1.15 ↗
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	84; 6.4
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	11.7
	Education Spending	12.0%
	GNI per capita	24,280 USD
	Population	142,470,272
	Internet Penetration	61.4%
	Languages	Russian (official), Tatar, German, Chechen, other



TURKEY

Very Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 47.62



#50 out of 70 countries

	Change from Last Year	-0.18 ↘
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	76; 5.4
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	7.6
	Education Spending	8.6%
	GNI per capita	18,570 USD
	Population	81,619,392
	Internet Penetration	46.3%
	Languages	Turkish (official), Kurdish, other minority languages

AZERBAIJAN

Very Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 46.12



#60 out of 70 countries

	Change from Last Year	N/A
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	78; N/A
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	11.2
	Education Spending	7.3%
	GNI per capita	16,180 USD
	Population	9,686,210
	Internet Penetration	58.7%
	Languages	Azerbaijani (official) 92.5%, Russian 1.4%, Armenian 1.4%, other 4.7%



BUDAPEST

Europe as a whole is well positioned to benefit from the connectivity and exchange that a common language facilitates.

ASIA

EF EPI AVERAGE: 53.21
POPULATION: 3,503,467,893
GNI PER CAPITA: 10,319 USD



PROFICIENCY BANDS

- Very High
- High
- Moderate
- Low
- Very Low

ASIA REFORMS ENGLISH TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT

Since 2007, Asia’s adult English proficiency has improved more than any other region. With half of the world’s population, Asia has wide-ranging levels of proficiency, with a 20-point difference between Singapore and Cambodia. With their increasingly international economies, Asian countries invest in English training as a tool for accelerating globalization.

INDIA MOVES UP

This year, for the first time, India joins Singapore and Malaysia at the top of the rankings for the region. Kazakhstan and Vietnam have also made significant progress since last year, with the next highest score increases in the region. English skills in these countries are evolving faster than in almost any other.

At the other extreme, English proficiency has stagnated in China, Hong Kong, Japan, and South Korea, in spite of sizeable investments in training. Thailand shows the steepest decline in the region since last year and remains in the lowest proficiency band. Indonesia, Malaysia, and Taiwan have not improved from last year, but they score better than most other countries in Asia.

MALAYSIA FOCUSES ON TEACHERS

Malaysia’s average adult English proficiency remains in the High Proficiency band this year, as it has for all editions of the EF EPI. Despite its already strong proficiency, the country launched an ambitious national teacher training program in 2011. The Professional Development Programme for English Language Teachers (Pro-ELT) aims to raise teachers’ English skills to an advanced level (C1) and to develop their pedagogical skills, so that they can help students achieve bilingual proficiency in Malay and English.

The Pro-ELT program is part of a national education reform that aims to achieve 100% enrollment across all levels of schooling by 2020. It seeks to propel the country into the top third on international assessments such as PISA and TIMSS over the next 15 years, and to reduce achievement gaps between rich and poor, and between urban and rural areas, by 50%. These ambitious goals, paired with serious reform efforts, have begun to deliver better English training to Malaysian students.

CHINA CHANGES TESTING AND TRAINING

Despite China’s investments in English training, it remains stagnant in the Low Proficiency band. With a massive population spread across urban and rural areas, it struggles to significantly improve overall English proficiency. China’s English learning and test prep organizations have been moving online, expanding their reach beyond the major urban centers and into second-tier cities and more remote provinces. The number of online learners in China is expected to grow from 67.2 million in 2013 to 120 million by 2017.

In October 2013, the Beijing Municipal Commission of Education proposed a three-step reform of the English component of the National College Entrance Exam, or *gaokao*, starting in 2016. The proposed reforms include reducing the total score and weight of the English exam in the *gaokao* and allowing students to use their best score out of multiple exam sittings, instead of relying on the current high-pressure, one-day test. These changes aim to reflect students’ English proficiency more accurately and to reduce test-related stress, as well as to promote changes to the practice of learning English through rote memorization.

SOUTH KOREA’S ENGLISH FEVER

South Korea has the largest per capita private English education market in the world. South Koreans spent around 18.4 billion USD on private education in 2013, with one-third of that sum dedicated to English language learning. Despite this investment, South Korea’s adult English proficiency is not improving. In part, the boom in private-sector English education is a result of lapses in the education system; English is one of the few skills that South Korean schools fail to teach at a high level. Until South Korean schools teach English to all students as a tool for international communication, there is little reason to believe that South Korea’s “English fever” will abate.

JAPAN AND THAILAND PUSH FOR STANDARDIZATION

Japan’s otherwise effective education system has adopted English as a subject area, while not recognizing that it cannot be taught effectively via instruction and materials written in Japanese. After several failed attempts at reform, the Japanese government has begun subsidizing private-sector English exams, while using the results to push high schools and universities to teach more practical English skills.

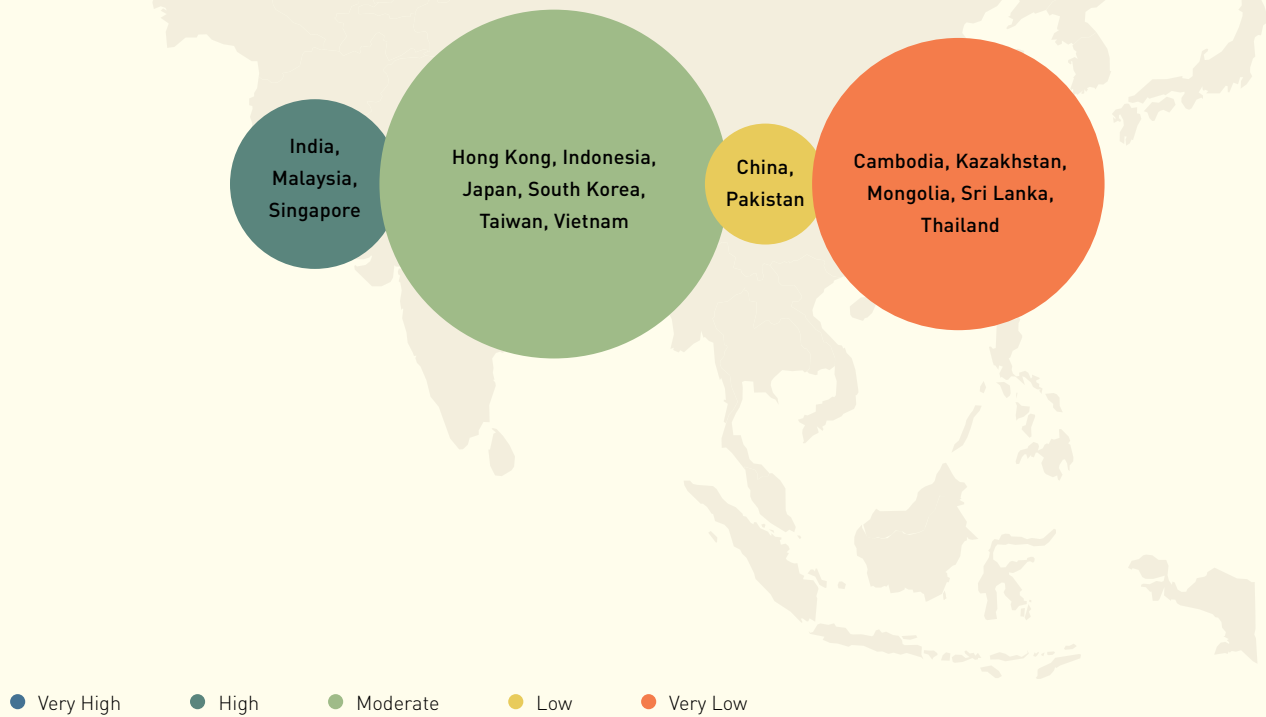
By moving away from tests made specifically for a Japanese audience, education leaders can measure where a given school system is failing, and they can better hold schools accountable for their results. However, because these private-sector English tests tend to be expensive, only a wealthy country like Japan can afford to subsidize them for every student.

Thailand’s English proficiency remains low despite the country’s large tourism industry. Starting last May, the Thai government mandated that schools align their English teaching to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in order to standardize teaching nationally. They also set the modest goal of a B1 level in English for all high school graduates.

CONCLUSION

Many countries in Asia have made English training a priority for their education systems and a lever for economic growth. Although a few countries in the region are already teaching English well, most are not. This is all the more striking because Asian education systems dominate internationally in math, science, and reading. With the region’s increasing importance in the global economy, Asia has much to gain from a workforce that is ready for cross-cultural communication.

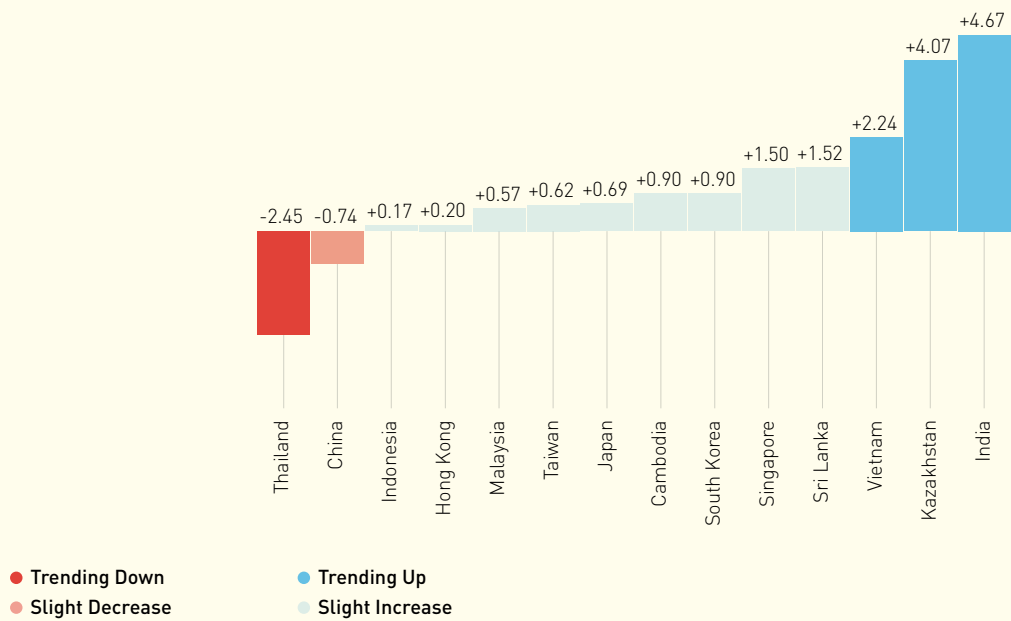
ASIA



EF EPI TRENDS

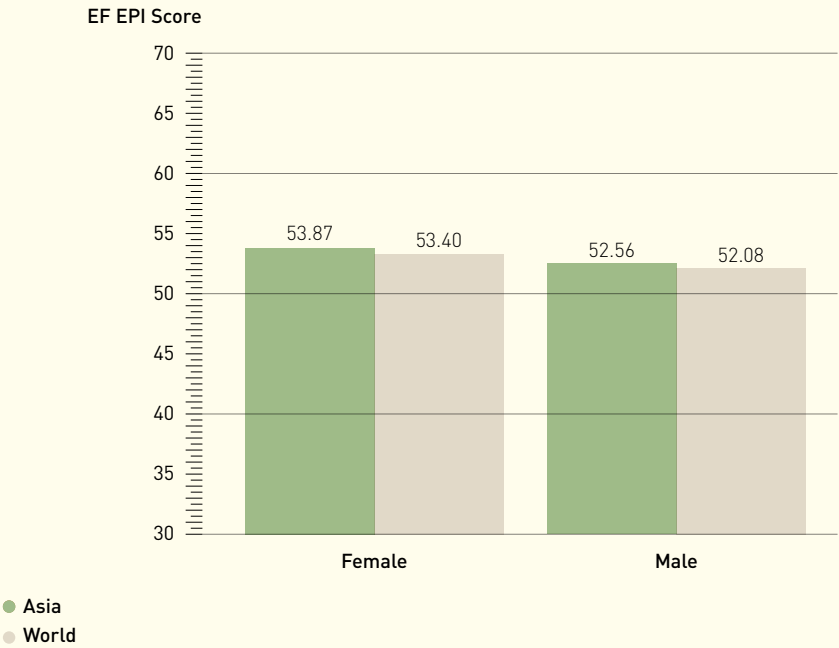
Despite investment in English training throughout the region, most Asian countries, including the wealthiest ones, have not seen significant changes in their EF EPI scores from last year. Thailand is the only country that declined significantly, while India, Kazakhstan, and Vietnam all showed significant improvements.

EF EPI Score Change from Last Year



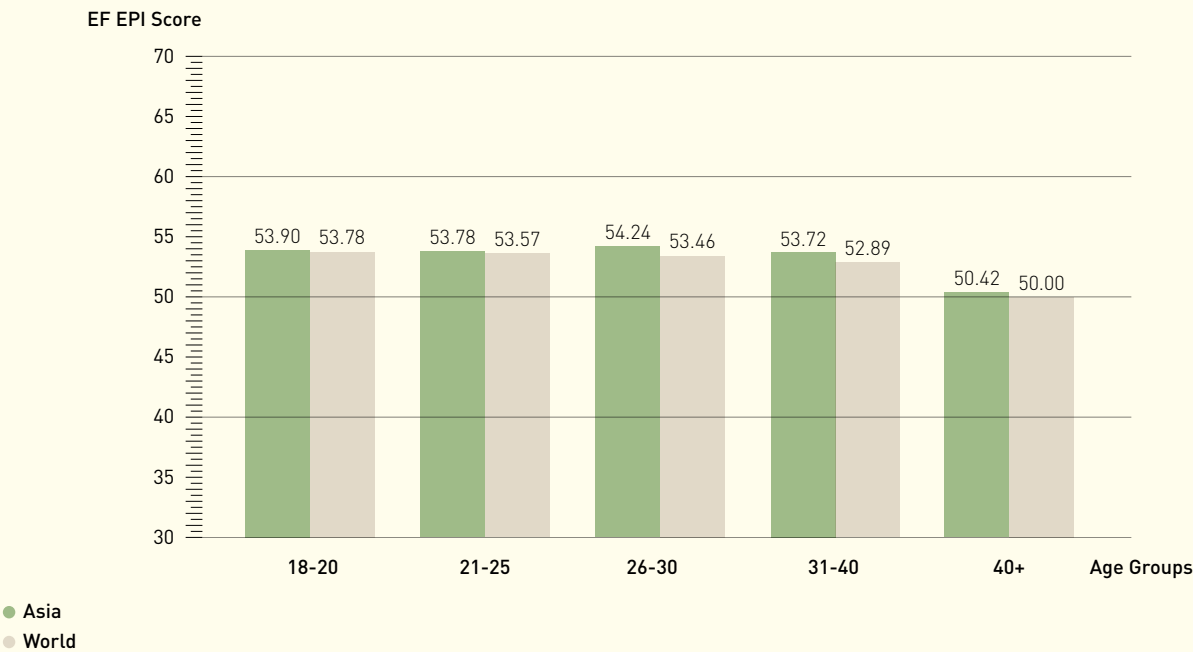
GENDER GAP

Both Asian women and men score slightly above global averages, with Asian women performing better than Asian men.



GENERATION GAP

Asia has met or risen above global averages this year. Adults over 40 have significantly lower proficiency than adults under 40.



SINGAPORE

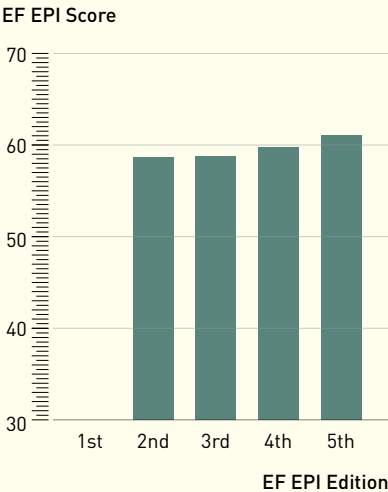
High Proficiency
EF EPI score: 61.08



#12 out of 70 countries

Starting from an already strong base, Singapore’s English levels have improved further over the past six years. A densely populated, multilingual, multiethnic country, Singapore is one of just a handful of countries in Asia where English is both an official language and a lingua franca. Singapore scores well in many social and economic indicators, including Internet penetration rates, GNI per capita, average years of schooling, and the ratio of spending on education to total government expenditure. Singapore’s education system has consistently been rated one of the best performing in the world by the OECD.

 13	Change from Last Year	+1.50 ↗
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	98; 7.3
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	10.2
	Education Spending	17.5%
	GNI per capita	76,860 USD
	Population	5,567,301
	Internet Penetration	73.0%
	Languages	Mandarin (official) 36.3%, English (official) 29.8%, Malay (official) 11.9%, Hokkien 8.1%, Tamil (official) 4.4%, Cantonese 4.1%, Teochew 3.2%, other 3.4%



MALAYSIA

High Proficiency
EF EPI score: 60.30



#14 out of 70 countries

 13	Change from Last Year	+0.57 ↗
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	89; 7.0
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	9.5
	Education Spending	21.0%
	GNI per capita	22,530 USD
	Population	30,073,353
	Internet Penetration	67.0%
	Languages	Bahasa Malaysia (official), English, Chinese (Cantonese, Mandarin, Hokkien, Hakka, Hainan, Foochow), Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Punjabi, Thai

INDIA

High Proficiency
EF EPI score: 58.21



#20 out of 70 countries

 13	Change from Last Year	+4.67 ↑
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	91; 6.2
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	4.4
	Education Spending	12.9%
	GNI per capita	5,350 USD
	Population	1,236,344,631
	Internet Penetration	15.1%
	Languages	Hindi 41%, Bengali 8.1%, Telugu 7.2%, Marathi 7%, Tamil 5.9%, Urdu 5%, Gujarati 4.5%, Kannada 3.7%, Malayalam 3.2%, Oriya 3.2%, Punjabi 2.8%, Assamese 1.3%, Maithili 1.2%, other 5.9%

SOUTH KOREA

Moderate Proficiency
EF EPI score: 54.52

#27 out of 70 countries



 Change from Last Year	+0.90 ↗
 TOEFL/IELTS Scores	85; 5.5
 Mean Yrs of Schooling	11.8
 Education Spending	25.0%
 GNI per capita	33,360 USD
 Population	49,039,986
 Internet Penetration	84.8%
 Languages	Korean, English (widely taught in junior high and high school)

VIETNAM

Moderate Proficiency
EF EPI score: 53.81

#29 out of 70 countries



 Change from Last Year	+2.24 ↑
 TOEFL/IELTS Scores	78; 5.9
 Mean Yrs of Schooling	5.5
 Education Spending	21.4%
 GNI per capita	5,070 USD
 Population	93,421,835
 Internet Penetration	43.9%
 Languages	Vietnamese (official), English, some French, Chinese, and Khmer, mountain area languages

JAPAN

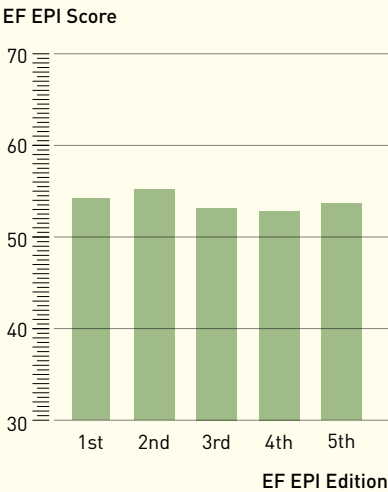
Moderate Proficiency
EF EPI score: 53.57

#30 out of 70 countries



Japan’s English proficiency is not improving. While all students now study English at some point during their educations, English has only been taught in Japanese primary schools since 2011, and instructional methods at all levels rely on transcription to the Japanese alphabet, memorization, recitation, and, at higher levels, translation. There is little emphasis on English as a tool for international communication. A series of education reforms has been implemented in an attempt to improve English proficiency, so far with no measureable impact on adult skills.

 Change from Last Year	+0.69 ↗
 TOEFL/IELTS Scores	70; 5.6
 Mean Yrs of Schooling	11.5
 Education Spending	9.5%
 GNI per capita	37,550 USD
 Population	127,103,388
 Internet Penetration	86.3%
 Language	Japanese



TAIWAN

Moderate Proficiency
EF EPI score: 53.18



#31 out of 70 countries

	Change from Last Year	+0.62 ↗
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	79; 6.0
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	N/A
	Education Spending	N/A
	GNI per capita	N/A
	Population	23,359,928
	Internet Penetration	N/A
	Languages	Mandarin Chinese (official), Taiwanese (Min), Hakka dialects

INDONESIA

Moderate Proficiency
EF EPI score: 52.91



#32 out of 70 countries

	Change from Last Year	+0.17 ↗
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	82; 6.2
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	7.5
	Education Spending	18.1%
	GNI per capita	9,270 USD
	Population	253,609,643
	Internet Penetration	15.8%
	Languages	Bahasa Indonesia (official), English, Dutch, local dialects

HONG KONG

Moderate Proficiency
EF EPI score: 52.70



#33 out of 70 countries

	Change from Last Year	+0.20 ↗
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	83; 6.3
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	10.0
	Education Spending	18.2%
	GNI per capita	54,270 USD
	Population	7,112,688
	Internet Penetration	74.2%
	Languages	Cantonese (official) 89.5%, English (official) 3.5%, Putonghua (Mandarin) 1.4%, other Chinese dialects 4%, other 1.6%

PAKISTAN

Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 49.96



#45 out of 70 countries

	Change from Last Year	N/A
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	90; 6.2
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	4.7
	Education Spending	10.9%
	GNI per capita	4,840 USD
	Population	196,174,380
	Internet Penetration	10.9%
	Languages	Punjabi 48%, Sindhi 12%, Saraiki (a Punjabi variant) 10%, Pashto (alternate name, Pashtu) 8%, Urdu (official) 8%, Balochi 3%, Hindko 2%, Brahui 1%, English (official), Burushaski, and other 8%

CHINA

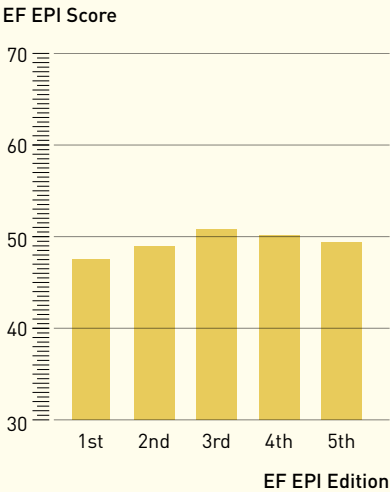


Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 49.41

#47 out of 70 countries

China's vast territory, large population, and adult English-learning needs all lend themselves well to online learning opportunities. As a result, many private English education companies in the country are expanding their online offerings, using the Internet to reach more remote areas. Despite the rapid expansion of online learning in China, less than 50% of the population has access to the Internet, hindering the delivery of online instruction.

	Change from Last Year	-0.74 ↘
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	77; 6.0
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	7.5
	Education Spending	N/A
	GNI per capita	11,850 USD
	Population	1,355,692,576
	Internet Penetration	45.8%
	Languages	Mandarin (official), Cantonese, Shanghainese, Fuzhou, Hokkien-Taiwanese, Xiang, Gan, Hakka dialects, minority languages



SRI LANKA



Very Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 47.89

#49 out of 70 countries

	Change from Last Year	+1.52 ↗
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	85; 6.3
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	10.8
	Education Spending	8.8%
	GNI per capita	9,470 USD
	Population	21,866,445
	Internet Penetration	21.9%
	Languages	Sinhala (official and national language) 74%, Tamil (national language) 18%, other 8%

KAZAKHSTAN



Very Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 47.04

#54 out of 70 countries

	Change from Last Year	+4.07 ↗
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	80; N/A
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	10.4
	Education Spending	13.0%
	GNI per capita	20,680 USD
	Population	17,948,816
	Internet Penetration	54.0%
	Languages	Russian (official) 95%, Kazakh (official, Qazaq) 64.4%

THAILAND

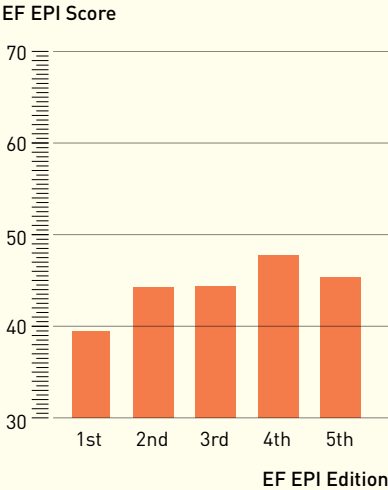


Very Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 45.35

#62 out of 70 countries

Thailand’s school system performs poorly on international assessments across all subject areas. The average years of schooling there is also lower than the regional average, meaning that Thai adults are less educated than many other Asians. Adult English proficiency in Thailand is also weak despite the demand for English skills in the country’s tourism industry. A low GNI per capita means that although the elite can invest in private schools and English tutoring, those options are not available to everyone.

	Change from Last Year	-2.45 ↓
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	76; 5.3
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	7.3
	Education Spending	31.3%
	GNI per capita	13,430 USD
	Population	67,741,401
	Internet Penetration	28.9%
	Languages	Thai (official) 90.7%, Burmese 1.3%, other 8%



MONGOLIA



Very Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 43.64

#64 out of 70 countries

	Change from Last Year	N/A
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	70; N/A
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	8.3
	Education Spending	12.2%
	GNI per capita	8,810 USD
	Population	2,953,190
	Internet Penetration	17.7%
	Languages	Khalkha Mongol (official) 90%, Turkic, Russian

CAMBODIA



Very Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 39.15

#69 out of 70 countries

	Change from Last Year	+0.90 ↗
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	69; N/A
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	5.8
	Education Spending	13.1%
	GNI per capita	2,890 USD
	Population	15,458,332
	Internet Penetration	6.0%
	Languages	Khmer (official) 96.3%, other 3.7%

With their increasingly international economies, Asian countries invest in English training as a tool for accelerating globalization.



SHANGHAI

LATIN AMERICA

EF EPI AVERAGE: 51.26
POPULATION: 547,066,813
GNI PER CAPITA: 14,744 USD



PROFICIENCY BANDS

- Very High
- High
- Moderate
- Low
- Very Low

LATIN AMERICA PUSHES FOR BETTER ENGLISH RESULTS

Latin America has been on a positive trajectory since 2007, but adult English proficiency remains weak in the region. Of the 14 Latin American countries featured in this index, all but one have improved since last year. However, with the exception of two countries, Latin American English proficiency is low.

GOVERNMENTS PRIORITIZE ENGLISH

In recent years, policymakers and economists in Latin America have made education reform a top priority for advancing economic development. In 2014, several countries launched national initiatives for improving English language teaching in public schools.

If effective, these teacher training programs will have an impact on children still in the school system. Young adults in Latin America already have the highest English proficiency in the region, and they are not far behind global averages for their cohorts. However, there are few national programs in Latin America that are designed to teach English to adults.

REFORMS IN CHILE AND PANAMA

Chile is the top-performing Latin American country in both the OECD and UNESCO's international education assessments, and it is one of the top Latin American countries in the EF EPI. In 2003, the Chilean Ministry of Education launched the English Opens Doors Program, one of the earliest national English language training initiatives in Latin America. The program has recruited and trained over 2,000 foreign English-language volunteer teachers, hosted total immersion English camps and competitions, and supported professional development for Chilean teachers. Since her reelection in 2014, President Michelle Bachelet has tasked the program with reaching 1,000 Chilean schools during her term in office.

Since last year, Panama's EF EPI score has improved more than that of any other country in the world. Despite this progress, most Panamanian adults still lack the English skills necessary to work across borders. Having identified English as a key driver for the Panamanian economy, President Juan Carlos Varela launched the Panama Bilingual Program in 2014. The program includes local and overseas

teacher training, additional lessons taught in English for elementary school students, and after-school English classes for secondary school students. The program's goal is to create 25,000 bilingual teachers and 260,000 bilingual students over the next four years.

MEXICO AND BRAZIL AIM HIGH

Despite Mexico's strong economic and social ties with the United States, English proficiency among adults remains low. In an attempt to leverage geographic proximity, the Mexican government launched Project 100,000 last year. By 2018, the program plans to have sent 100,000 Mexican students to the United States for short-term, intensive English language courses. In return, the United States has promised to send 50,000 students to study in Mexico by 2018. These bilateral initiatives aim to strengthen linguistic competency on both sides of the border.

Brazil is also betting that international contact will improve English skills. In 2013, Brazil's Ministry of Education created English Without Borders to prepare university students for graduate studies in English-speaking countries. Since its launch, English Without Borders has tested and trained hundreds of thousands of students at more than 120 public universities across all Brazilian states.

In late 2014, the Ministry announced that English Without Borders would be renamed Languages Without Borders and include seven additional languages. These major initiatives recognize that Brazilian students entering the global workplace need stronger language skills.

In preparation for the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, the Brazilian Ministry of Education and Ministry of Tourism together launched Pronatec Turismo in 2012, offering free English and Spanish lessons to over 150,000 tourism professionals in 120 cities. Professionals can

choose from 54 sector-specific courses to improve their business English skills. Brazil's English level has improved slightly from last year, but this progress has not significantly expanded the number of competent English speakers in the Brazilian workforce.

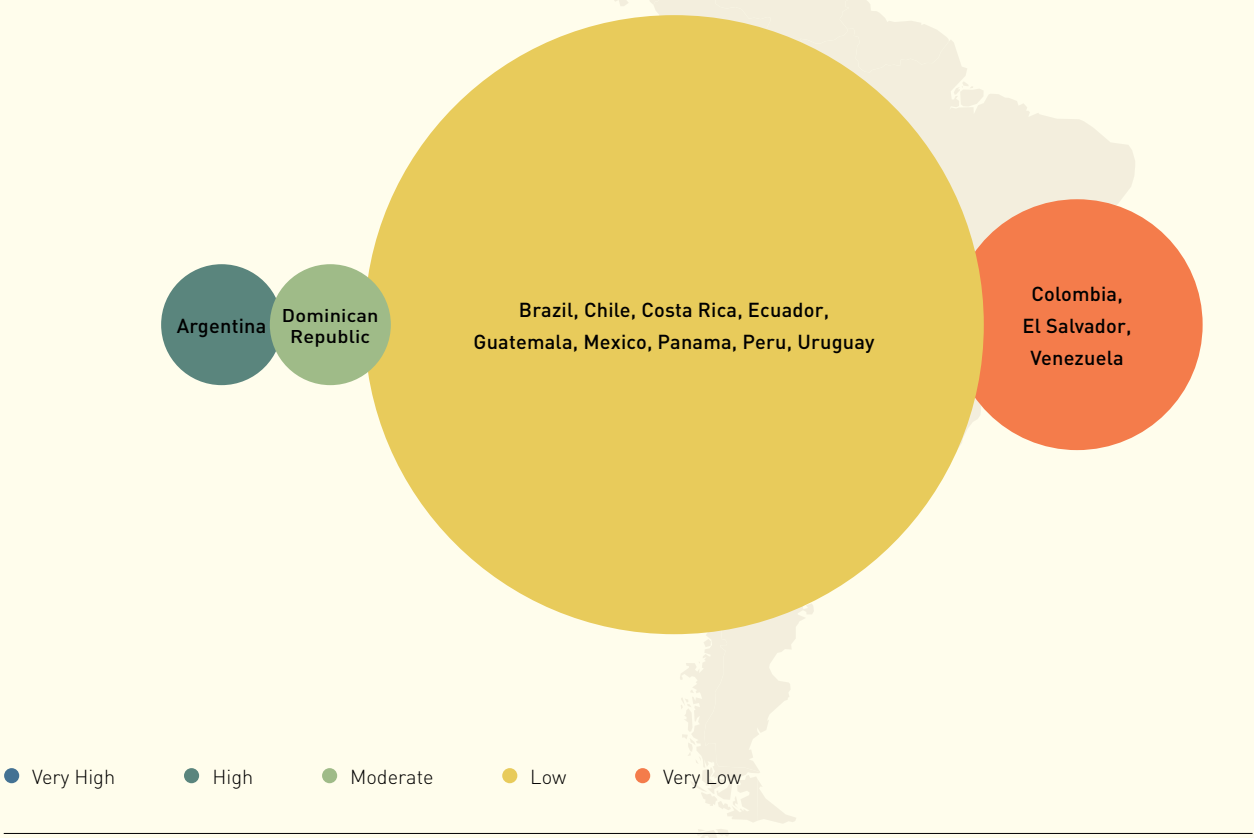
COLOMBIA HOPES TO REVERSE TREND

Colombia is also investing in English training. President Juan Manuel Santos announced in July 2014 that his government will invest 690 million USD over the next 10 years to increase the number of university graduates with a B2 level of English, train 12,000 English teachers, and subsidize private English lessons for 40,000 professionals. With its low levels of spending on public education and weak English skills, Colombia still has many opportunities to improve proficiency.

CONCLUSION

Latin American countries have an array of new governmental programs focused on augmenting or overhauling English education, most of which have been launched in the past three years. These programs emerged first as campaign promises, so they reflect a desire among Latin Americans to strengthen their public education systems and give students and professionals better opportunities to participate in the global economy. It remains to be seen where these programs will lead.

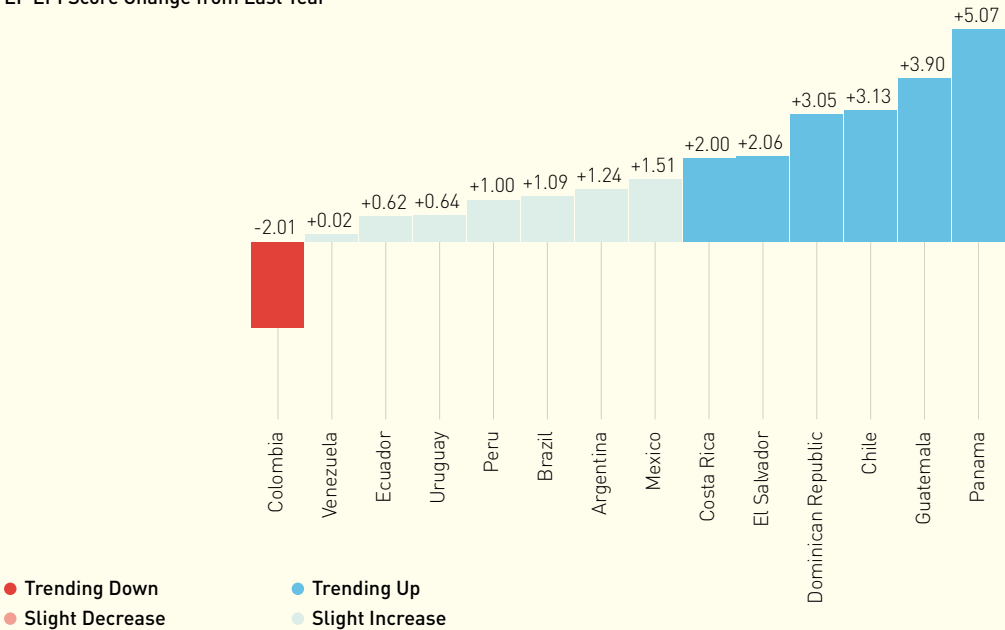
LATIN AMERICA



EF EPI TRENDS

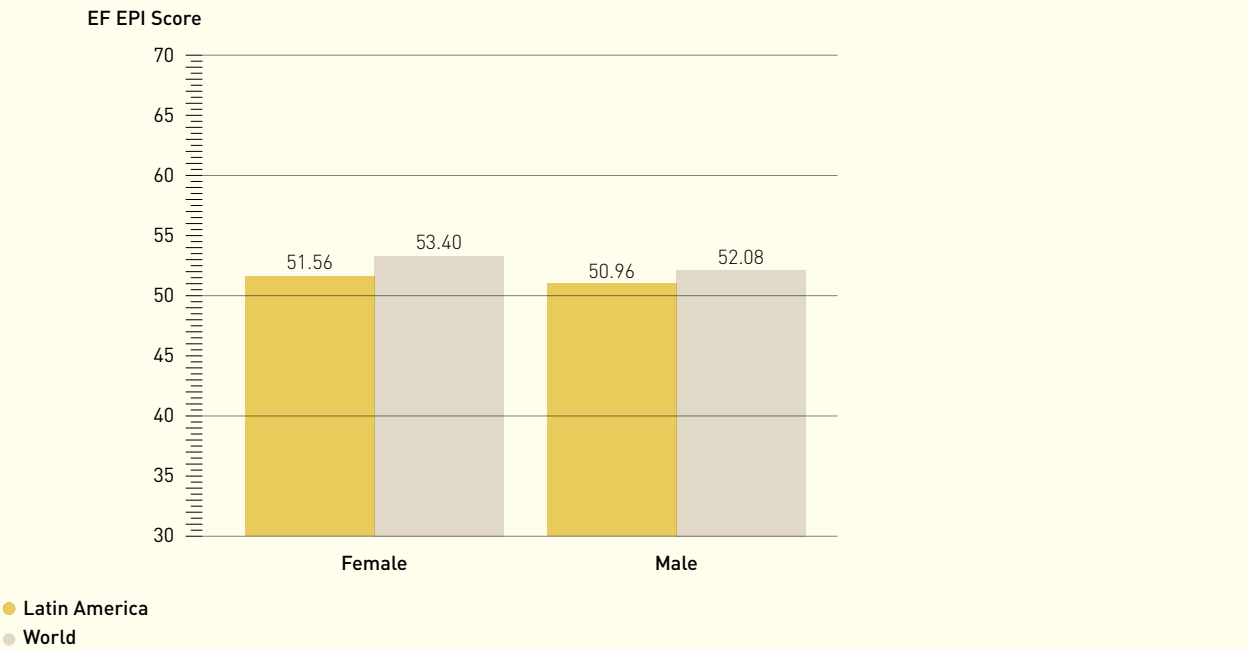
Latin America improved the most of any region in this year’s EF EPI, with Panama showing the largest improvement in the entire index. All but one country in the region have stagnated or shown an upward trend from last year’s proficiency levels, with six countries showing significant improvements.

EF EPI Score Change from Last Year



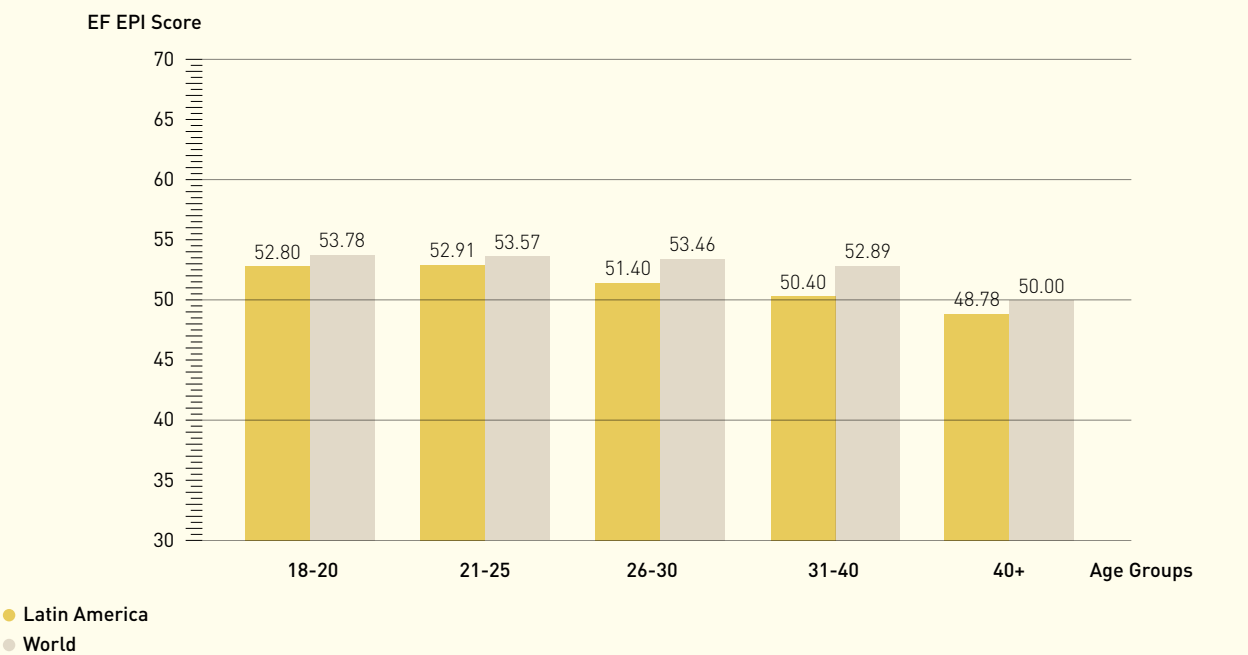
GENDER GAP

Scores for both men and women in Latin America fall below global averages, but the difference between genders is smaller than elsewhere.



GENERATION GAP

Scores for Latin American young adults (aged 18-25) are closer to global averages for their cohorts than are mid-career professionals (aged 26-40), who lag behind their global peers.



ARGENTINA

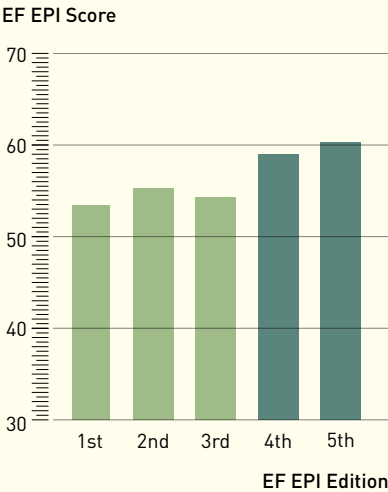


High Proficiency
EF EPI score: 60.26

#15 out of 70 countries

Adults in Argentina have the best English proficiency in Latin America, in line with European averages, and they have made significant progress over the past eight years. Argentina has the highest literacy rate in the region, as well as one of the highest TOEFL scores in the world. While Argentina spends less of its national budget on education than many other countries in Latin America, it has one of the highest average years of schooling in the region.

	Change from Last Year	+1.24 ↗
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	93; N/A
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	9.8
	Education Spending	14.7%
	GNI per capita	N/A
	Population	43,024,374
	Internet Penetration	59.9%
	Languages	Spanish (official), Italian, English, German, French, indigenous languages (Mapudungun, Quechua)



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



Moderate Proficiency
EF EPI score: 56.71

#24 out of 70 countries

	Change from Last Year	+3.05 ↑
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	82; N/A
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	7.5
	Education Spending	20.6%
	GNI per capita	11,630 USD
	Population	10,349,741
	Internet Penetration	45.9%
	Language	Spanish (official)

PERU



Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 52.46

#35 out of 70 countries

	Change from Last Year	+1.00 ↗
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	87; N/A
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	9.0
	Education Spending	15.2%
	GNI per capita	11,160 USD
	Population	30,147,935
	Internet Penetration	39.2%
	Languages	Spanish (official) 84.1%, Quechua (official) 13%, Aymara (official) 1.7%

CHILE

Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 51.88

#36 out of 70 countries



 Change from Last Year	+3.13 ↑
 TOEFL/IELTS Scores	85; N/A
 Mean Yrs of Schooling	9.8
 Education Spending	19.2%
 GNI per capita	21,060 USD
 Population	17,363,894
 Internet Penetration	66.5%
 Languages	Spanish (official) 99.5%, English 10.2%, indigenous languages (includes Mapudungun, Aymara, Quechua, Rapa Nui) 1%, other 2.3%

ECUADOR

Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 51.67

#38 out of 70 countries



 Change from Last Year	+0.62 ↗
 TOEFL/IELTS Scores	80; N/A
 Mean Yrs of Schooling	7.6
 Education Spending	10.3%
 GNI per capita	10,720 USD
 Population	15,654,411
 Internet Penetration	40.4%
 Languages	Spanish (Castilian) (official) 93%, Quechua 4.1%, other 2.2%

MEXICO

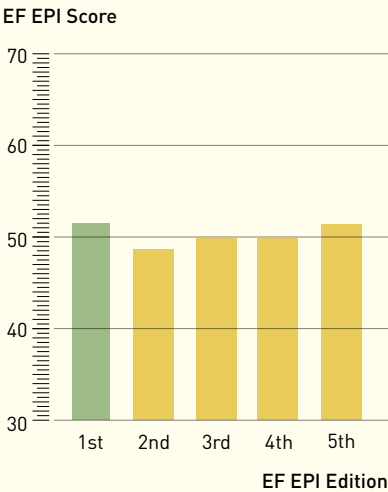
Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 51.34

#40 out of 70 countries



Mexico’s English proficiency is average for the region but low when compared to countries around the world. This situation is somewhat surprising given Mexico’s close ties to the United States and high rates of emigration. The ratio of Mexico’s spending on education to total public expenditure is among the highest in Latin America. It is common to sell or inherit teaching positions in Mexico; as a result, the country has many unqualified English teachers. In 2013, the government launched a large-scale education reform to address this issue.

 Change from Last Year	+1.51 ↗
 TOEFL/IELTS Scores	86; 6.1
 Mean Yrs of Schooling	8.5
 Education Spending	19.6%
 GNI per capita	16,020 USD
 Population	120,286,655
 Internet Penetration	43.5%
 Languages	Spanish only 92.7%, Spanish and indigenous languages 5.7%



BRAZIL

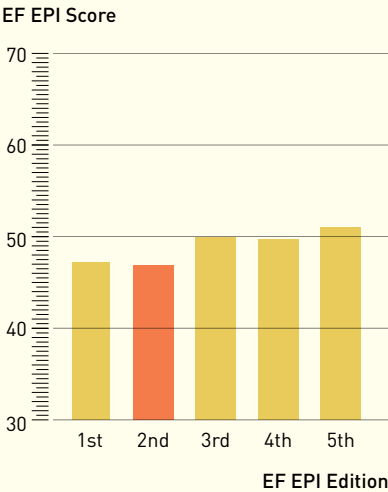


Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 51.05

#41 out of 70 countries

English proficiency in Brazil remains weak, despite several major education reforms and the implementation of new English teacher training programs. Brazil has harnessed the momentum of the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the Rio 2016 Olympics to build enthusiasm for English learning. A number of large new English chain schools and massive online English-learning platforms attest to that success. As the most populous country in Latin America, Brazil faces the same challenges as other very large countries trying to modernize their workforces.

 13	Change from Last Year	+1.09 ↗
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	83; 6.5
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	7.2
	Education Spending	14.6%
	GNI per capita	14,750 USD
	Population	202,656,788
	Internet Penetration	51.6%
	Language	Portuguese (official and most widely spoken language)



COSTA RICA



Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 50.53

#43 out of 70 countries

 13	Change from Last Year	+2.00 ↑
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	93; N/A
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	8.4
	Education Spending	N/A
	GNI per capita	13,570 USD
	Population	4,755,234
	Internet Penetration	46.0%
	Languages	Spanish (official), English

URUGUAY



Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 50.25

#44 out of 70 countries

 13	Change from Last Year	+0.64 ↗
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	93; N/A
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	8.5
	Education Spending	14.9%
	GNI per capita	18,940 USD
	Population	3,332,972
	Internet Penetration	58.1%
	Languages	Spanish (official), Portunol, Brazilerio (Portuguese-Spanish mix on the Brazilian frontier)

GUATEMALA

Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 49.67

#46 out of 70 countries



 Change from Last Year	+3.90 ↑
 TOEFL/IELTS Scores	82; N/A
 Mean Yrs of Schooling	5.6
 Education Spending	20.6%
 GNI per capita	7,130 USD
 Population	14,647,083
 Internet Penetration	19.7%
 Languages	Spanish (official) 60%, Amerindian languages 40%

PANAMA

Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 48.77

#48 out of 70 countries



 Change from Last Year	+5.07 ↑
 TOEFL/IELTS Scores	84; N/A
 Mean Yrs of Schooling	9.4
 Education Spending	13.0%
 GNI per capita	19,300 USD
 Population	3,608,431
 Internet Penetration	42.9%
 Languages	Spanish (official), indigenous languages (including Ngabe, Bugle, Kuna, Embera, Wounaan, Naso Tjerdi, and Bri Bri)

COLOMBIA

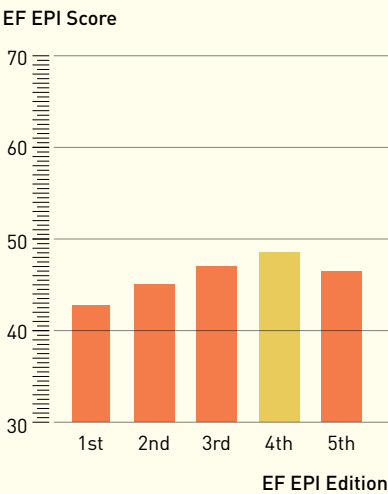
Very Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 46.54

#57 out of 70 countries



Colombian adults speak little English. Most notably, recent high school graduates score significantly lower than the global average for their age cohort. In many Colombian schools, English teachers are underqualified. Seventy-five percent of Colombian English teachers have a B1 level of English or lower. Given the country’s wide income inequality and weak economy, many Colombians find English learning in the private sector and English immersion programs unaffordable.

 Change from Last Year	-2.01 ↓
 TOEFL/IELTS Scores	81; 5.8
 Mean Yrs of Schooling	7.1
 Education Spending	16.9%
 GNI per capita	11,960 USD
 Population	46,245,297
 Internet Penetration	51.7%
 Language	Spanish (official)



VENEZUELA

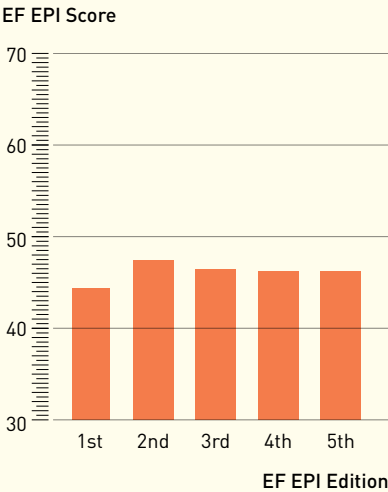
Very Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 46.14



#59 out of 70 countries

Adult English skills in Venezuela are consistently weak. Despite mandatory education, poverty and social disparity limit educational opportunities for a substantial portion of the population. Venezuela’s ratio of education spending to government expenditure is the highest in the region, and one of the highest in the world, but poor educational outcomes persist. The country’s Internet penetration is one of the highest in Latin America, making online tools for English learning a realistic option.

 Change from Last Year	+0.02 ↗
 TOEFL/IELTS Scores	83; N/A
 Mean Yrs of Schooling	8.6
 Education Spending	20.7%
 GNI per capita	17,900 USD
 Population	28,868,486
 Internet Penetration	54.9%
 Languages	Spanish (official), numerous indigenous dialects



EL SALVADOR

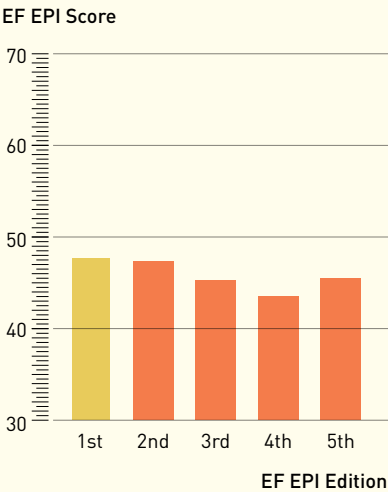
Very Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 45.52



#61 out of 70 countries

El Salvador has the weakest English proficiency in Latin America. High crime and poverty rates in the country prevent students from attending school, leaving many without the basic literacy, numeracy, and language skills necessary for the job market. Foreign aid helps to fill learning gaps, but it is far from sufficient. Less than one in four people in El Salvador have access to the Internet, and its GNI per capita is one of the lowest in the world.

 Change from Last Year	+2.06 ↑
 TOEFL/IELTS Scores	85; N/A
 Mean Yrs of Schooling	6.5
 Education Spending	15.9%
 GNI per capita	7,490 USD
 Population	6,125,512
 Internet Penetration	23.1%
 Languages	Spanish (official), Nahua (among some Amerindians)





SÃO PAULO

In recent years, policymakers and economists in Latin America have made education reform a top priority for advancing economic development.

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

EF EPI AVERAGE: 44.85
POPULATION: 371,362,139
GNI PER CAPITA: 17,132 USD



PROFICIENCY BANDS

- Very High
- High
- Moderate
- Low
- Very Low

MENA CONTINUES TO STRUGGLE WITH ENGLISH

The Middle East and North Africa have the lowest levels of English proficiency in the world, and overall proficiency is declining. Despite enormous progress in expanding access to primary education, increasing the number of girls in school, and reducing barriers to education in rural areas, MENA school systems are not making significant progress in teaching English.

A LONG ROAD AHEAD

Many of the countries in the region spend more per pupil than countries in Asia with similar levels of development, but this higher investment is not delivering better results. Jordan, Qatar, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates—the only countries in the region that participated in the 2012 OECD PISA testing—were all well below OECD averages in math, science, and reading, and three of them were among the six lowest-performing school systems in the study. In terms of English proficiency, both women and men are markedly behind global averages, and the gender gap in MENA is significantly wider than in any other region in the world.

JUST GETTING BY IN ENGLISH

The U.A.E. has weak English proficiency compared to most countries, but it is slightly more proficient than other countries in the MENA region. English is pervasive in the U.A.E. thanks to a highly multinational society and a large, trade-oriented economy.

Any discussion of English proficiency in the U.A.E. must note the fact that fewer than 20% of the more than nine million residents of the country are Emirati citizens. The EF EPI classifies test takers based on their country of residence, not their country of origin. This gives an accurate sense of the level of English in the adult population, but because many of the people who completed our tests in the U.A.E. have been educated in school systems abroad, their levels of English proficiency cannot be used to evaluate the education system in the U.A.E.

As in many other countries, English in the U.A.E. serves as the default language between people with different native languages, but unlike elsewhere, that lack of a shared native language in the U.A.E. is the norm rather than the exception. It is surprising that English proficiency is so low in the country given the language's pervasiveness. Exposure and usage usually drive proficiency, but in this case people seem to be just getting by.

MAGHREB EMBRACES ENGLISH

Although historically tied to France through trade, colonialism, and emigration, countries in the Maghreb are increasingly seeing English as a way to modernize their workforces and strengthen their access to Europe. English proficiency levels are still extremely low in this region, but pilot projects are aiming to raise them.

For example, the British Council and the government of Algeria have launched a three-year teacher training project, SEEDS, which aims to reach all 32,000 secondary school teachers in the country, delivering both face-to-face and online English training via a network of inspectors and trainers. Their goal is to raise English exam scores on the national high school exit test, as English scores are currently lower than those in any other subject area.

SEPARATING ENGLISH FROM WESTERN CULTURE

We might expect socially conservative countries like Saudi Arabia and Yemen to reject English because of its cultural associations with the West. Instead, public opinion surveys consistently find that English is widely accepted as an essential tool for international communication. It is this instrumental view of English that has allowed these countries to adopt it wholeheartedly. English is the only foreign language taught in schools in Saudi Arabia, and it is the language of instruction in many university-level courses. There is an increasing demand, however, for more culturally relevant teaching materials in English.

Saudi Arabia's education system, like many in the MENA region, relies heavily on rote learning and memorization to prepare students for exams. These ineffective teaching methods mean that most students entering university in Saudi Arabia need remedial English courses before they can begin their studies. English is the official operating language of the state-run Saudi

Arabian Oil Company, and remains a requirement in many professions in the Kingdom. Despite this strong demand for English skills, the education system will need significant reform before it is ready to train a modern, English-speaking workforce.

STRUCTURAL DIFFICULTIES IN EMPLOYMENT

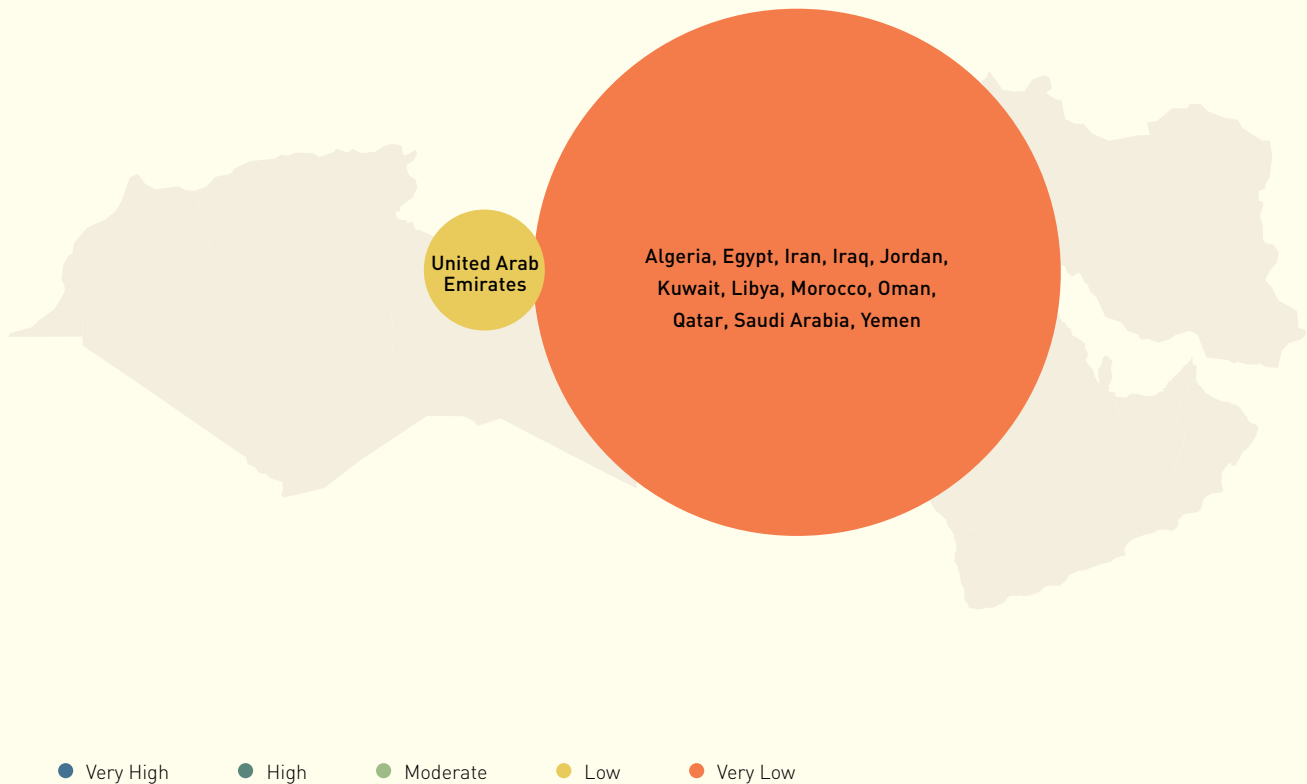
One of the major difficulties for effective education reform in MENA is the structure of the labor market. In many countries the public sector employs as much as half of the formally employed workforce, a far higher percentage than that of most economies outside the region. Regulations protect companies with government connections from competition, subsidize their fuel costs, and impose trade barriers to keep foreign firms out—all of which have stifled private sector growth. Most of the employment sector in MENA is informal, with only 19% of working-aged people having formal employment.

Unemployment rates are very high among young people in the MENA region, even those with university degrees. The difficulties of legally migrating to Europe and other parts of the world leave many young graduates with a choice between being underemployed at home or living in precarious conditions abroad. These inefficiencies in the labor market make education reform even more challenging. The benefits of reform will not necessarily be apparent in either economic growth or increased employment levels, and the incentives for young people do not drive them towards educational achievement.

CONCLUSION

For the MENA region as a whole, reforming education systems, while essential, will not be sufficient to align economic incentives with educational objectives, whether in English or in other fields. In particular, countries must increase the availability of technology and restructure their economies in order to encourage private enterprise.

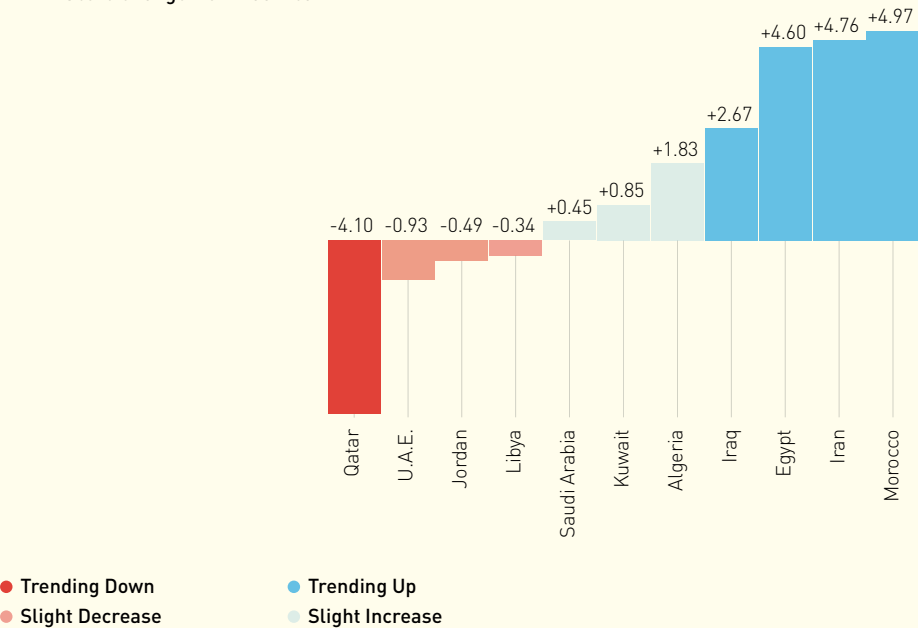
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA



EF EPI TRENDS

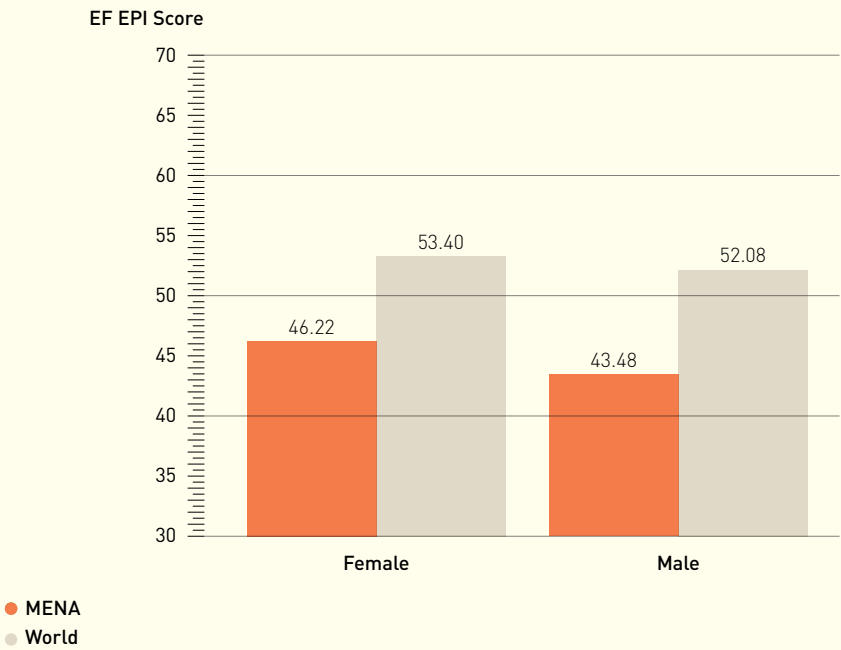
MENA shows the widest range in score fluctuations from last year, with changes of nearly five points on both ends. Despite significant improvements from four countries, all of MENA, with the exception of the United Arab Emirates, remains in the lowest proficiency band.

EF EPI Score Change from Last Year



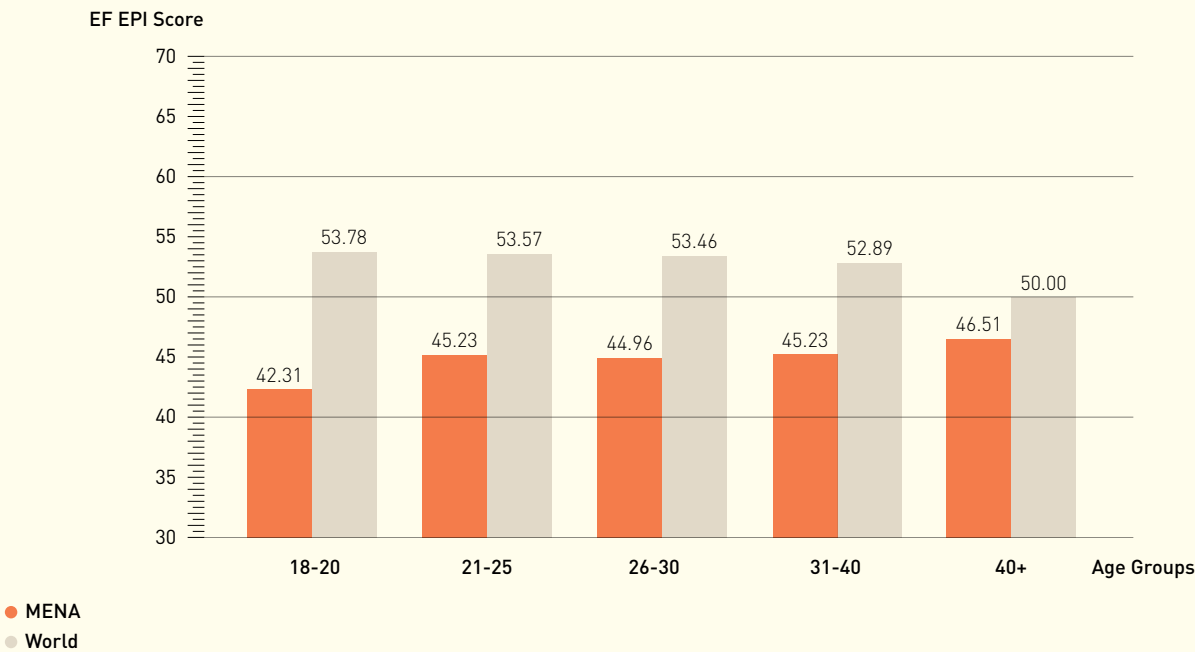
GENDER GAP

Scores for both women and men in the MENA region are significantly behind global averages, with women scoring better than men by an unusually large margin.



GENERATION GAP

Adults over 40 have the best English skills in the MENA region. This differs from global trends, where younger adults and mid-career professionals tend to have the best English.



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

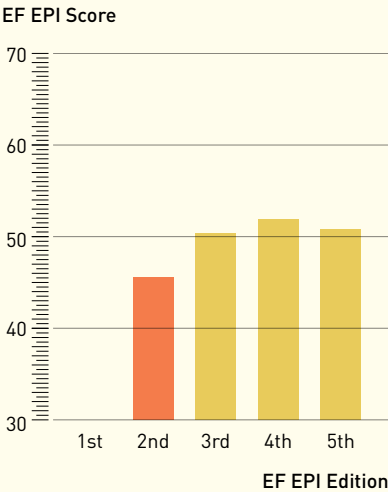


Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 50.87

#42 out of 70 countries

Adults in the United Arab Emirates are the best English speakers in the region, although their proficiency is still low compared to the top countries in other regions. While the national language is Arabic, English is the de facto language in workplace communication, in part because only a small portion of the working population in the U.A.E. is Emirati. Over 80% of the population is foreign. Given that English is so often a prerequisite in the U.A.E.’s international work setting, it is surprising that adult English proficiency is not higher.

 13	Change from Last Year	-0.93 ↘
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	76; 4.4
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	9.1
	Education Spending	N/A
	GNI per capita	59,890 USD
	Population	5,628,805
	Internet Penetration	88.0%
	Languages	Arabic (official), Persian, English, Hindi, Urdu



YEMEN



Very Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 47.60

#51 out of 70 countries

 13	Change from Last Year	N/A
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	70; N/A
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	2.5
	Education Spending	12.5%
	GNI per capita	3,820 USD
	Population	26,052,966
	Internet Penetration	20.0%
	Language	Arabic (official)

MOROCCO



Very Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 47.40

#52 out of 70 countries

 13	Change from Last Year	+4.97 ↑
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	79; N/A
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	4.4
	Education Spending	18.3%
	GNI per capita	7,000 USD
	Population	32,987,206
	Internet Penetration	56.0%
	Languages	Arabic (official), Berber languages (Tamazight (official), Tachelhit, Tarifit), French (often the language of business, government, and diplomacy)

JORDAN

Very Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 47.33

#53 out of 70 countries



 Change from Last Year	-0.49 ↘
 TOEFL/IELTS Scores	78; 6.1
 Mean Yrs of Schooling	9.9
 Education Spending	N/A
 GNI per capita	11,660 USD
 Population	7,930,491
 Internet Penetration	44.2%
 Languages	Arabic (official), English (widely understood among upper and middle classes)

EGYPT

Very Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 46.73

#55 out of 70 countries



 Change from Last Year	+4.60 ↑
 TOEFL/IELTS Scores	83; 6.2
 Mean Yrs of Schooling	6.4
 Education Spending	9.9%
 GNI per capita	10,790 USD
 Population	86,895,099
 Internet Penetration	49.6%
 Languages	Arabic (official), English and French widely understood among educated classes

IRAN

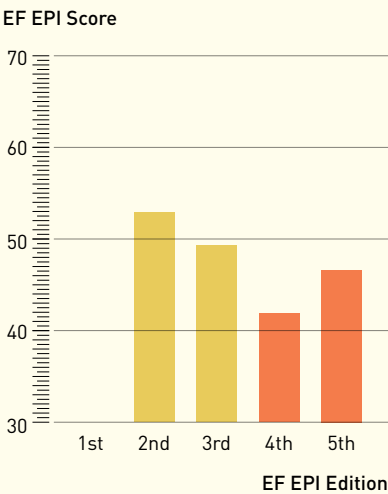
Very Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 46.59

#56 out of 70 countries



Although Iran’s EF EPI score has improved nearly five points from last year, the overall trend for the past six years is less positive. Public spending on education in Iran is above regional averages, but students on average spend fewer years in school than their peers in the Middle East. For most students, English learning only begins at secondary school. State provision for English education is widely considered substandard, and many students turn to private institutes for a more learner-centered pedagogy.

 Change from Last Year	+4.76 ↑
 TOEFL/IELTS Scores	82; 6.2
 Mean Yrs of Schooling	7.8
 Education Spending	17.0%
 GNI per capita	15,610 USD
 Population	80,840,713
 Internet Penetration	31.4%
 Languages	Persian (official) 53%, Azeri Turkic and Turkic dialects 18%, Kurdish 10%, Gilaki and Mazandarani 7%, Luri 6%, Balochi 2%, Arabic 2%, other 2%



OMAN

Very Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 46.34

#58 out of 70 countries



 13	Change from Last Year	N/A
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	65; N/A
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	6.8
	Education Spending	10.9%
	GNI per capita	52,780 USD
	Population	3,219,775
	Internet Penetration	66.5%
	Languages	Arabic (official), English, Baluchi, Urdu, Indian dialects

QATAR

Very Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 43.72

#63 out of 70 countries



 13	Change from Last Year	-4.10 ↓
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	77; N/A
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	9.1
	Education Spending	7.4%
	GNI per capita	128,530 USD
	Population	2,123,160
	Internet Penetration	85.3%
	Languages	Arabic (official), English commonly used as a second language

KUWAIT

Very Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 42.65

#65 out of 70 countries



 13	Change from Last Year	+0.85 ↗
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	72; N/A
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	7.2
	Education Spending	13.4%
	GNI per capita	84,800 USD
	Population	2,742,711
	Internet Penetration	75.5%
	Languages	Arabic (official), English

IRAQ

Very Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 40.69

#66 out of 70 countries



 13	Change from Last Year	+2.67 ↑
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	65; N/A
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	5.6
	Education Spending	N/A
	GNI per capita	14,930 USD
	Population	32,585,692
	Internet Penetration	9.2%
	Languages	Arabic (official), Kurdish (official), Turkmen (a Turkish dialect) and Assyrian (Neo-Aramaic) (both official in areas where speakers constitute a majority of the population), Armenian

ALGERIA

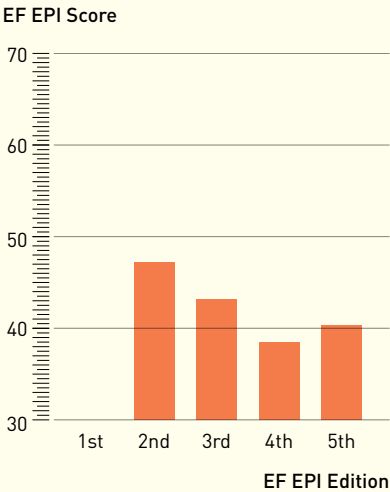


Very Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 40.34

#67 out of 70 countries

Algeria’s English proficiency is very low and, overall, declining. Adults in the country have some of the weakest English skills surveyed. While English is primarily a language for business and science in Algeria, it is not widely used beyond these fields. The country’s linguistic landscape is dynamic but largely excludes English: Arabic is the national and official language, French remains common in some circles, and several Berber dialects are widely spoken.

	Change from Last Year	+1.83 ↗
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	73; N/A
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	7.6
	Education Spending	11.4%
	GNI per capita	13,070 USD
	Population	38,813,722
	Internet Penetration	16.5%
	Languages	Arabic (official), French (lingua franca), Berber dialects: Kabylie Berber (Tamazight), Chaouia Berber (Tachawit), Mzab Berber, Tuareg Berber (Tamahaq)



SAUDI ARABIA



Very Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 39.93

#68 out of 70 countries

	Change from Last Year	+0.45 ↗
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	61; 4.3
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	8.7
	Education Spending	17.7%
	GNI per capita	53,640 USD
	Population	27,345,986
	Internet Penetration	60.5%
	Language	Arabic (official)

LIBYA



Very Low Proficiency
EF EPI score: 37.86

#70 out of 70 countries

	Change from Last Year	-0.34 ↘
	TOEFL/IELTS Scores	73; N/A
	Mean Yrs of Schooling	7.5
	Education Spending	N/A
	GNI per capita	28,080 USD
	Population	6,244,174
	Internet Penetration	16.5%
	Languages	Arabic (official), Italian, English, Berber (Nafusi, Ghadamis, Suknah, Awjilah, Tamasheq)

ENGLISH, ECONOMICS, AND QUALITY OF LIFE

English spread its influence as a language of international trade and diplomacy first under the British Empire, and then during the postwar economic expansion of the United States. In many countries, English replaced French as an indicator of the well-educated upper class. Globalization, urbanization, and the Internet have dramatically changed the role of English in the past 20 years.

Today, English proficiency is less associated with the elite, and it is not as closely tied to the United States or the United Kingdom as it once was. Instead, English is becoming a basic skill for the entire global workforce, in the same way that literacy has been transformed in the last two centuries from an elite privilege into a basic requirement for informed citizenship.

It is truer than ever today that English makes it easier to do business around the world. The World Bank and the International Finance Corporation’s **Ease of Doing Business Index** (Graph A) ranks the regulatory environments of economies around the world by how conducive they are to starting and operating a business. The index has ten sub-indices, including the ease of starting a business, trading across

borders, enforcing contracts, and resolving insolvency. In countries where English is not an official language, the ease of doing business closely correlates with the strength of English skills.

An increasing number of companies headquartered in non-English speaking countries (including Honda, Nokia, Rakuten, Renault, and Samsung) have adopted English as their corporate language. Countries and companies that wish to stimulate entrepreneurial growth should take note: English skills are a key component for creating a business-friendly environment. English plays a role in generating opportunities, determining employability, and expanding horizons. As such, English is key to a country’s economic development.

The interaction between English proficiency and **Gross National Income per capita** (Graph B) seems to be a virtuous cycle—improving English skills drives up salaries, which in turn encourages governments and individuals to invest more in English training. In many countries, higher English proficiency corresponds to **fewer young people who are unemployed or not in training** (Graph C).

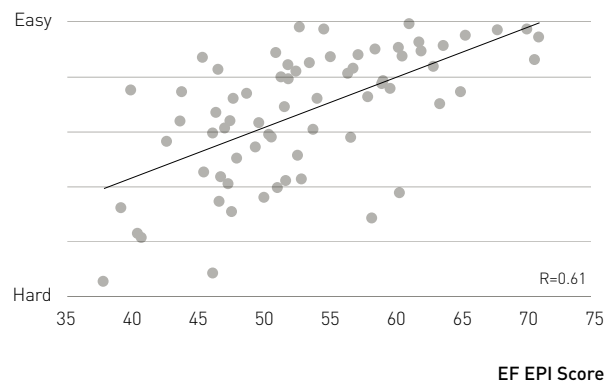
Indices of quality of life, such as the **Human Development Index** (Graph D), also correlate positively with the EF EPI. The Human Development Index measures education attainment, life expectancy, literacy, and standards of living. A few countries have low or moderate English proficiency and high levels of development. However, all High and Very High Proficiency countries are rated “Very High Human Development” on the HDI.

Too often, English communication skills are viewed as a luxury, taught well only in private schools and study abroad programs. The evidence presented in this report shows that English is a core skill today. As such, it has a special status, and can be taught and tested at a level equivalent to native language reading and math skills. Considering the increased importance of English over the last 20 years, a strong working knowledge of the language will be even more important when today’s children enter the workforce.



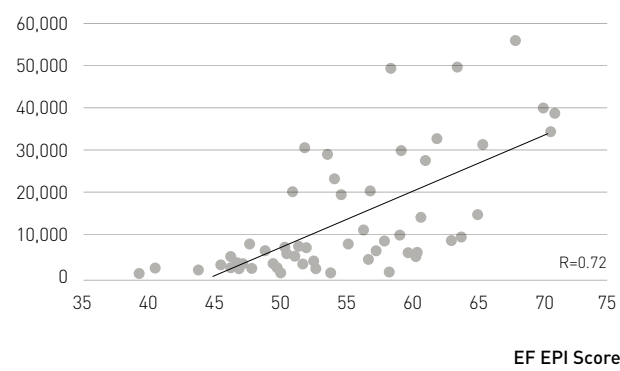
GRAPH A: ENGLISH AND THE EASE OF DOING BUSINESS

Ease of Doing Business Score



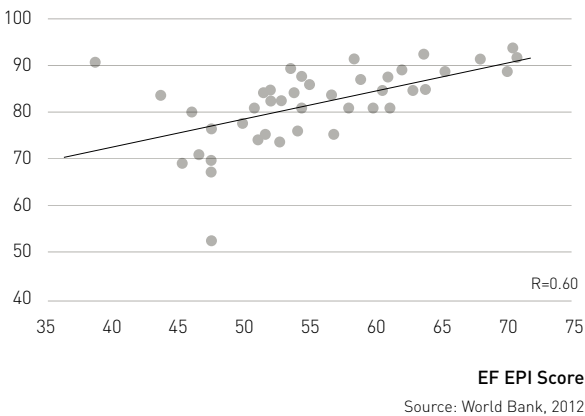
GRAPH B: ENGLISH AND INCOME

Adjusted Net National Income per capita (Current USD)



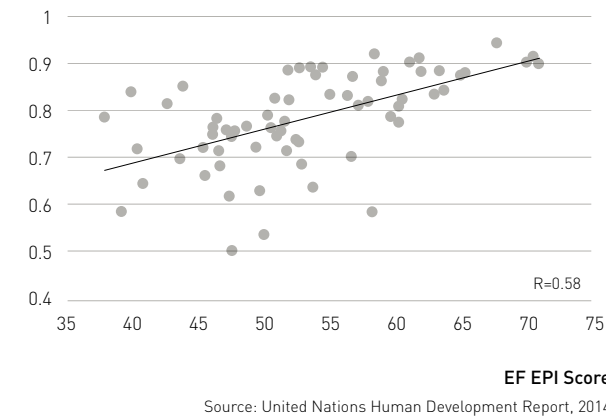
GRAPH C: ENGLISH AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING

Total Share of Youth in Education, Employment, or Training



GRAPH D: ENGLISH AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Human Development Index (HDI)



ENGLISH AND INNOVATION

One common challenge for multinational companies is to create cohesion within culturally diverse workforces. English serves as a bridge that connects employees across countries and cultures, weaving networks for innovation.

The information technology sector relies on international communication. According to a 2014 survey by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, the top 10 programming languages in the world are all English-based. Two of these, Python and Ruby, were created by non-native English speakers. Countries with better English skills also produce more **high-technology exports** (Graph E) with high research and development intensity, such as aerospace products, computers, pharmaceuticals, scientific instruments, and electrical machinery.

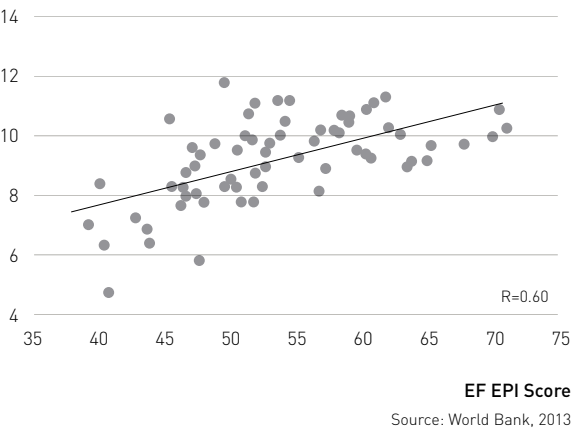
English is likewise critical to science and engineering. Countries with higher English proficiency have **more researchers** (Graph F) **and technicians per capita** (Graph G), as well as **larger expenditures for research and development** (Graph H). The ability to learn from the research of others, participate in international conferences, publish in leading journals, and collaborate with multinational research teams is dependent upon excellent English.

By a wide margin, researchers in the United States publish the most scientific papers every year, and the United Kingdom ranks third in publication numbers, after China. However, despite its publication volume, Chinese research accounts for only 4% of global citations in science publications, compared to 30% for U.S. research and 8% for the U.K. This disparity indicates that Chinese research is less well integrated into the global knowledge economy.

Countries with low English proficiency also demonstrate unusually low levels of international collaboration on research. In 2011 only 15% of scientific papers published in China cited an international collaborator, compared to more than half in Belgium, Denmark, and Sweden. This inability to access the research published by others and to contribute to international innovation is a significant challenge for countries lacking English skills.

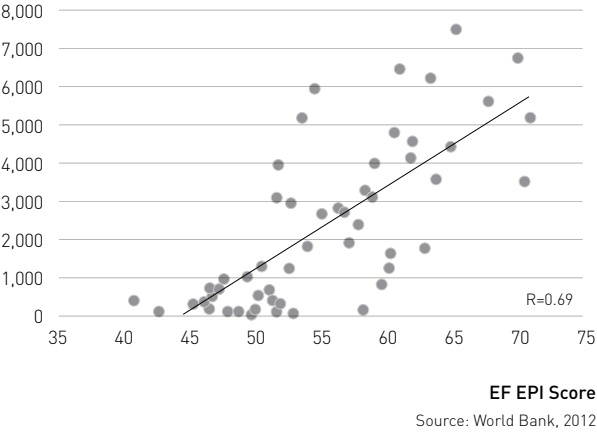
GRAPH E: ENGLISH AND HIGH-TECH EXPORTS

High-Technology Exports (Log Scale)



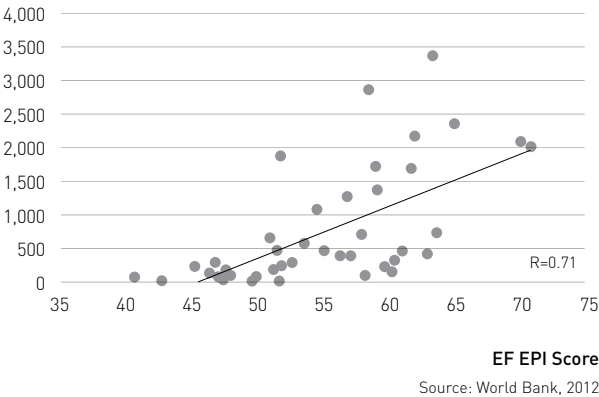
GRAPH F: ENGLISH AND THE NUMBER OF RESEARCHERS

Researchers in R&D per Million People



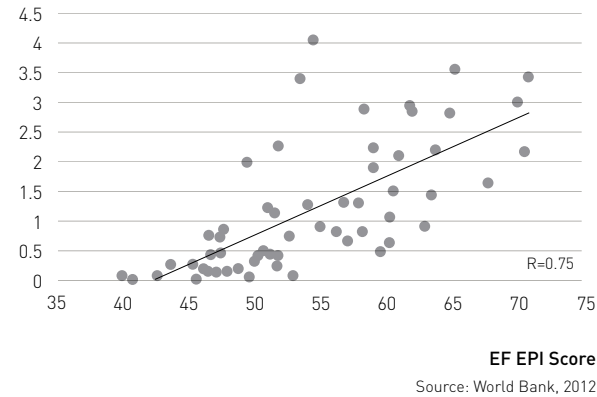
GRAPH G: ENGLISH AND THE NUMBER OF TECHNICIANS

Technicians in R&D per Million People



GRAPH H: ENGLISH AND SPENDING ON INNOVATION

R&D Expenditure (% of GDP)



ENGLISH AND CONNECTIVITY

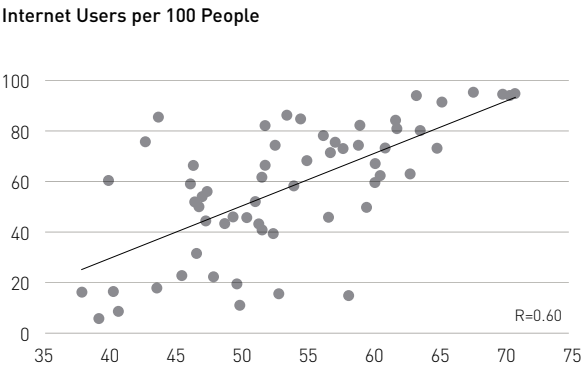
Technological advances are helping students learn English more effectively. In countries where English proficiency is high, Internet penetration is also high. English skills correlate positively with countries' number of **Internet users** (Graph I). In many countries, self-paced learning, MOOCs, and classroom twinning are all enabled by access to the Internet both at home and in schools. Technology still has a great deal of untapped potential in the foreign language classroom.

Learning English online is a self-reinforcing activity: better English skills allow people to access more online tools and resources, and accessing these resources improves people's English. About 56% of all online content is in English. In countries with lower English proficiency, online tools make English learning more individualized, more interactive, and more accessible.

The Groupe Speciale Mobile Association (GSMA) and the Mozilla Foundation estimate that by 2017, mobile broadband connections in the developing world will reach three billion, half of which will be smartphone connections. Mobile technology will empower billions to join the Web, interacting with each other as well as with researchers, entrepreneurs, scholars, and other creative people.

When people without a shared native language meet, as they regularly do online, they most often communicate in English. The combination of the Internet, a global communication platform, and English, a global language, enable the rapid, transnational cross-pollination of ideas and innovation around the world.

GRAPH I: ENGLISH AND INTERNET PENETRATION



EF EPI Score

Source: World Bank, 2013





CONCLUSIONS

With every passing year, education systems, organizations, and companies shift and adapt themselves to a world in which English is the modern lingua franca. Today, the ability to communicate in English is a requirement in sectors and positions that were exclusively monolingual even a decade ago. As English becomes more pervasive, there is also growing recognition of the subtleties of building a linguistic repertoire. Not everyone has the same abilities in English, nor do they need them.

In this edition of the EF EPI, we have seen that, while demand for English speakers in the workforce is constant, English proficiency among adults is not progressing universally. Unlike consumables like flip-flops or computer chips, a rising demand for English skills does not guarantee a greater supply. Mastery of a language is difficult and expensive. Adult skill sets, particularly for complex tasks like speaking a language, have built-in inertia. In addition, adult English skills are largely determined by public school systems, not often known for their agility. Inertia and stability are not inherently negative, however. They also underlie consistently high adult English proficiency levels in some parts of the world.

Countries with high English proficiency share a number of effective strategies:

- **Setting English apart from other foreign languages.** Public debate on the role of English in the economy and the education system aligns public and private investment priorities, while at the same time easing the tension between English and other competing national and foreign languages.
- **Focusing on practical communication skills from day one.** Effective English education emphasizes fluency, speaking, and listening, particularly in beginners. Many education models are no longer prioritizing an ideal standard English accent. Pedagogy that emphasizes memorization over communication is outdated and ineffective.
- **Training English instructors to teach English for communication.** If well designed and executed, training programs for aspiring teachers and professional development for established teachers are smart investments. They bear fruit for several generations of students.
- **Developing effective English assessment tools.** Different situations, needs, and learner objectives require different evaluations. It is particularly important to reform high-stakes exams because of the way they influence pedagogy across the board. Making high-quality assessment tools free and accessible to corporate and individual adult learners is in line with other open-access trends in continuing education.
- **Supporting workplace and private sector training for adults.** In many cases, adult learners have frequent opportunities to interact with native English speakers at work, strong motivation to improve, and money to invest in upgrading their skill set. Adult English training must be included in broader discussions about English education.
- **Investing in technology and online learning tools.** For adult English learners, alternative classroom formats are especially beneficial. MOOCs, guided online self-study, and holiday immersion courses can be combined to support working adults who are motivated to improve their English on their own time.
- **Considering English within the framework of other educational reforms.** In countries with low levels of educational attainment and high levels of inequality, giving all students access to at least a decade of good public education, including instruction in English, inevitably leads to better English proficiency among adults.

Although it takes a great deal of effort to change course, steering a country, region, or company towards a future with an English-speaking workforce cannot be considered misguided. Economically speaking, English is here to stay, at least for the next several decades. We hope that by examining the level of English skills among adults around the world, we can contribute to discussions about these strategic decisions.

METHODOLOGY

The EF English Proficiency Index is increasingly cited as an authoritative data source by journalists, educators, elected officials, and business leaders. EF is pleased to contribute to this ongoing global conversation about English language education.

In order to use the EF EPI effectively, readers must understand its methodology. The EF EPI is constructed each year from results on a set of English tests completed by hundreds of thousands of adults around the world during the previous calendar year. The data for this fifth edition was calculated using results from 910,000 test takers who completed two different EF English tests in 2014.

THE TESTS

One test is open to any Internet user for free. The second is an online placement test used by EF during the enrollment process for English courses. Both include grammar, vocabulary, reading, and listening sections.

The open online test is a 30-question adaptive exam, meaning that each test taker's questions are adjusted in difficulty according to his or her previous correct and incorrect answers. An analysis was conducted of 26,000 test takers who completed multiple versions of this adaptive exam to establish a uniform and consistent method for scoring across them. The non-adaptive placement test is 70 questions in length. All scores have been validated against EF's course levels. The test administration is identical for both tests, with test takers completing the exam on computers.

TEST TAKERS

Although the sample of test takers for the EF English Proficiency Index is biased towards respondents who are interested in pursuing language study, the sample is balanced between male and female respondents and represents adult language learners from a broad range of ages. Female respondents comprised 49.7% of the overall sample, and the median age of adult respondents was 28 years. 98.5% of adult respondents were under the age of 60. Male respondents tended to be slightly older, with a median age two years greater than that of female respondents. Because respondents are motivated to be tested due to their interest in learning English, the sample will consist primarily of working-aged adults, with a bias towards students and people at the beginning of their careers.

Only countries with a minimum of 400 test takers were included in the index, but in most cases the number of test takers was far greater. Countries with fewer than 100 test takers on either of the two tests were also excluded, regardless of the total number of test takers. A total of 70 countries and territories were included.

We recognize that the test-taking population represented in this index is self-selected and not guaranteed to be representative of the country as a whole. Only those people either wanting to learn English or curious about their English skills will participate in one of these tests. This could skew scores lower or higher than those of the general population.

There is no incentive for test takers to inflate their scores artificially on these low-stakes tests by cheating or cramming, as the results do not lead to certification or admission to a program.

These tests are free and online, so anyone with an Internet connection can participate. Almost all of our test takers are working adults or young adults finishing their studies. People without Internet access or unused to online applications are automatically excluded. In countries where Internet usage is low, we expect the impact of this exclusion to be the strongest. This sampling bias would tend to pull scores upward by excluding poorer, less educated, and less privileged people. Nevertheless, the open-access methods of Internet tests have proven effective in gathering very large amounts of data about evolving English proficiency levels in the global workforce.

SCORE CALCULATION

In order to calculate a country's EF EPI score, each test score was normalized to obtain the percentage of correct answers for that test. All the scores for a country were then averaged across the two tests, giving equal weight to each test. Regional and global averages were weighted by the populations of each country within each region.

Each country has been assigned to a proficiency band based on its score. These proficiency bands allow recognition of groups of countries with similar English skill levels and comparison within and between regions. The proficiency bands are aligned to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and EF's course levels. The Very High Proficiency band corresponds to CEFR level B2. High, Moderate, and Low Proficiency bands correspond to CEFR level B1, with each band corresponding to a single EF course level. The Very Low Proficiency band corresponds to CEFR level A2. See page 65 for more details about the specific abilities of English speakers in each band.

OTHER DATA SOURCES

The EF EPI is created through an entirely different process from the one used by public opinion research organizations such as Euromonitor and Gallup, or by the OECD in skills surveys such as PISA and PIAAC. Those studies select survey participants using age, gender, level of education, income, and a variety of other factors to compose a survey panel. Their survey panels tend to be small, with at most a few thousand participants per country, but because they have been composed using complex sampling methods, they are considered representative of the entire population.

Another source of data about English proficiency comes from national education systems. Many countries test the English skills of every high school student using a standardized national assessment. The results of that exam may or may not be made public, but educators and government officials use the data to assess the efficacy of education reform and pinpoint areas for improvement.

Unfortunately, those national assessments are not comparable to each other, and they are not administered to adults, so although they give a good indication of English proficiency among high school students in a single country over time, they cannot be used to compare students between countries, nor can they tell us anything about adult English proficiency levels.

The EF EPI does not aim to compete with or contradict national test results, language polling data, or any other data set. Instead, these data sets complement each other. Some are granular, but limited in scope to a single age group, country, or test taker profile. The EF EPI is broad, examining working-aged adults around the world using a common assessment method. There is no other data set of comparable size and scope, and despite its limitations, we, and many others, believe it to be a valuable reference point in the global conversation about English language education.

RELATED EF EPI REPORTS

The EF EPI research series has three separate reports: this main EF EPI report, which looks at adult English proficiency; the EF EPI for Companies (EF EPI-c), which examines workforce English; and the EF EPI for Schools (EF EPI-s), which tests secondary school and university students around the world. This year, we are publishing the EF EPI fifth edition and the EF EPI-s first edition. The EF EPI-c second edition was published in 2014. All reports are available for download at www.ef.com/epi.

EF EDUCATION FIRST

EF Education First (www.ef.com) is an international education company that focuses on language, academics, and cultural experience. Founded in 1965, EF's mission is "opening the world through education." With 500 schools and offices in more than 50 countries, EF is the Official Language Training Supplier of the Rio 2016 Summer Olympics. The EF English Proficiency Index is published by EF Learning Labs, the research and innovation division of EF Education First.

EF EPI

COUNTRY SCORES

A look at changes in English skills over the past year:

The EF EPI score change is the difference between a country's EF EPI fourth edition and fifth edition scores. Any change greater than two points—positive or negative—indicates a significant shift in English ability. The EF EPI fourth edition used test data from 2013, and the fifth from 2014.

COUNTRY	EF EPI FOURTH EDITION	EF EPI FIFTH EDITION	SCORE CHANGE
ALGERIA	38.51	40.34	+1.83
ARGENTINA	59.02	60.26	+1.24
AUSTRIA	63.21	61.97	-1.24
AZERBAIJAN	—	46.12	new
BELGIUM	61.21	59.13	-2.08
BRAZIL	49.96	51.05	+1.09
CAMBODIA	38.25	39.15	+0.90
CHILE	48.75	51.88	+3.13
CHINA	50.15	49.41	-0.74
COLOMBIA	48.54	46.54	-2.01
COSTA RICA	48.53	50.53	+2.00
CZECH REPUBLIC	57.42	59.01	+1.59
DENMARK	69.30	70.05	+0.75
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	53.66	56.71	+3.05
ECUADOR	51.05	51.67	+0.62
EGYPT	42.13	46.73	+4.60
EL SALVADOR	43.46	45.52	+2.06
ESTONIA	61.39	63.73	+2.34
FINLAND	64.40	65.32	+0.92
FRANCE	52.69	51.84	-0.86
GERMANY	60.89	61.83	+0.94
GUATEMALA	45.77	49.67	+3.90
HONG KONG	52.50	52.70	+0.20
HUNGARY	58.55	57.90	-0.66
INDIA	53.54	58.21	+4.67
INDONESIA	52.74	52.91	+0.17
IRAN	41.83	46.59	+4.76
IRAQ	38.02	40.69	+2.67
ITALY	52.80	54.02	+1.22
JAPAN	52.88	53.57	+0.69
JORDAN	47.82	47.33	-0.49
KAZAKHSTAN	42.97	47.04	+4.07
KUWAIT	41.80	42.65	+0.85
LATVIA	59.43	57.16	-2.27
LIBYA	38.19	37.86	-0.34

COUNTRY	EF EPI FOURTH EDITION	EF EPI FIFTH EDITION	SCORE CHANGE
LITHUANIA	—	55.08	new
LUXEMBOURG	—	63.45	new
MALAYSIA	59.73	60.30	+0.57
MEXICO	49.83	51.34	+1.51
MONGOLIA	—	43.64	new
MOROCCO	42.43	47.40	+4.97
NETHERLANDS	68.99	70.58	+1.59
NORWAY	64.33	67.83	+3.50
OMAN	—	46.34	new
PAKISTAN	—	49.96	new
PANAMA	43.70	48.77	+5.07
PERU	51.46	52.46	+1.00
POLAND	64.26	62.95	-1.31
PORTUGAL	56.83	60.61	+3.78
QATAR	47.81	43.72	-4.10
ROMANIA	58.63	59.69	+1.06
RUSSIA	50.44	51.59	+1.15
SAUDI ARABIA	39.48	39.93	+0.45
SINGAPORE	59.58	61.08	+1.50
SLOVAKIA	55.96	56.34	+0.38
SLOVENIA	60.60	64.97	+4.37
SOUTH KOREA	53.62	54.52	+0.90
SPAIN	57.18	56.80	-0.38
SRI LANKA	46.37	47.89	+1.52
SWEDEN	67.80	70.94	+3.14
SWITZERLAND	58.29	58.43	+0.14
TAIWAN	52.56	53.18	+0.62
THAILAND	47.79	45.35	-2.45
TURKEY	47.80	47.62	-0.18
UKRAINE	48.50	52.61	+4.11
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	51.80	50.87	-0.93
URUGUAY	49.61	50.25	+0.64
VENEZUELA	46.12	46.14	+0.02
VIETNAM	51.57	53.81	+2.24
YEMEN	—	47.60	new

CEFR LEVELS AND CAN-DO STATEMENTS

PROFICIENT USER	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently, and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic, and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors, and cohesive devices.
INDEPENDENT USER	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue, giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise while traveling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes, and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
BASIC USER	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to most relevant areas (e.g., very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate during routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment, and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

QUOTED FROM THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE
All countries in the EF EPI fell into bands corresponding to levels A2-B2.
No countries had average scores placing them at either the lowest level, A1, or at one of the highest two levels, C1 and C2.

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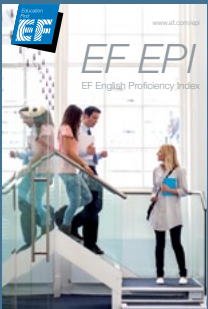
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EF ENGLISH PROFICIENCY INDEX
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EF EPI

EF English Proficiency Index

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