



KOREAN AMERICAN CENTER



ACTFL
Language Connects

Your Child's Korean Language Learning Journey: A Parent's Guide to ACTFL Proficiency



Understanding your child's progress in learning Korean is key to supporting their journey. This guide breaks down the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency levels, showing you what your learner "can do" at each stage of their language development. These levels describe real-world communication abilities, helping you see their tangible growth.

What Your Child Can Do at Each Level: The "Can-Do" Statements

The ACTFL framework outlines a continuous path of language development, from a beginner explorer to an expert communicator. Below, you'll find what your learner can typically understand, say, and share in Korean at each specific level, along with an estimated time it might take to reach that stage.

***Note on Estimated Time to Reach:** Korean is classified as a Group 4 language. This classification indicates that it is among the languages that typically require more study time for English speakers to reach proficiency compared to other language groups. The hours provided are general estimates for an average learner of Korean. This can vary significantly based on individual aptitude, consistency of study, and immersion opportunities. These figures represent cumulative study hours.

Proficiency Level	Interpretive Communication (Understanding)	Interpersonal Communication (Talking with Others)	Presentational Communication (Sharing Information)	Estimated Time to Reach*
Novice Low	Your learner is just starting to recognize a few Korean words, especially when accompanied by pictures or gestures, such as 'hello' or 'thank you' on a sign. Your learner can understand simple commands, such as "sit down" or "come here," when accompanied by gestures.	Your learner can say 'hello' or 'goodbye' and give their name using memorized phrases. Your learner can respond to simple greetings and introductions.	Your learner can introduce themselves with a practiced phrase, such as 'My name is [name].' Your learner can identify a few familiar objects in Korean, such as "apple" or "car."	Starting point
Novice Mid	Your learner can pick out some basic facts from simple Korean words and phrases, especially with pictures or gestures, like identifying common objects in a picture book. Your learner can understand short, simple questions about familiar things, like "Do you like apples?"	Your learner can ask and answer a few simple questions on very familiar topics, like 'What is this?' or 'How are you?' Your learner can use practiced phrases to ask for basic things, like "I want water."	Your learner can talk about themselves, their interests, and activities using a mix of memorized words and simple sentences. Your learner can fill out a simple form with their name and nationality in Korean.	Approx. 135-150 hours of study
Novice High	Your learner can understand the main topic and some isolated facts from simple Korean sentences, like in a short announcement or a text	Your learner can ask and answer simple questions on familiar topics, like 'What did you eat for lunch?' or 'Where is the	Your learner can present personal information about their life and activities, like their favorite color or what	Approx. 480 hours of study



	message about a familiar event. Your learner can understand simple, rehearsed instructions like "Please open the book."	park?' Your learner can ask for help or clarification in a simple way, like "What does that mean?"	they did yesterday, using simple sentences most of the time. Your learner can write a short note or list of items they need.	
Intermediate Low	Your learner can understand the main idea and key information in short, clear Korean informational texts, like a simple weather report. Your learner can understand the main points of a simple announcement at a train station.	Your learner can ask for and give information in conversations on familiar topics by creating simple sentences and asking appropriate follow-up questions, like ordering food. Your learner can manage a simple transaction, like buying a snack at a store.	Your learner can tell a simple story about their life or activities, like a weekend trip, using sentences and connected sentences. Your learner can write a short, simple email to a friend about their weekend plans.	Approx. 480 hours of study
Intermediate Mid	Your learner can usually follow the main message in paragraph-length Korean texts, even across different time frames, like a short blog post about daily life. Your learner can understand the main points of a simple news report about a local event.	Your learner can exchange information in conversations on familiar topics, creating sentences and series of sentences, and asking a variety of follow-up questions, like discussing hobbies. Your learner can ask for and understand directions to a familiar place.	Your learner can give straightforward presentations on various familiar topics, like their family or school, using sentences and connected sentences. Your learner can write a short description of their daily routine.	Approx. 720 hours of study
Intermediate High	Your learner can understand the main message and most supporting details across major time frames in conversations and discussions, like a simple news report. Your learner can understand the main points of a simple podcast about a familiar cultural topic.	Your learner can exchange information in conversations and some discussions on a variety of familiar and concrete topics, using connected sentences that may combine to form paragraphs, like planning an outing. Your learner can discuss their favorite movies or music with a friend, explaining why they like them.	Your learner can tell stories about school and community events and personal experiences, using a few short paragraphs, often across various time frames. Your learner can write a simple summary of a book they recently read.	Approx. 720 hours of study
Advanced	Your learner can understand the main message and some	Your learner can exchange information	Your learner can deliver presentations on some	Approx. 1320



Low	supporting details across major time frames in descriptive informational texts, like a simple article about a cultural event. Your learner can understand the main facts and some supporting details from a news broadcast about a local issue.	and ideas in discussions on a variety of familiar and concrete academic and social topics, using a few simple paragraphs across major time frames. Your learner can discuss their plans for the future or their career aspirations.	concrete academic, social, and professional topics, using paragraphs across major time frames, like explaining a historical event. Your learner can write a short report about a community event they attended.	hours of study
Advanced Mid	Your learner can understand the underlying message and most supporting details across major time frames in descriptive informational texts, like a detailed travel guide. Your learner can understand a detailed explanation of a complex process, like how a new technology works.	Your learner can maintain discussions on a wide variety of familiar and unfamiliar concrete topics, using probing questions and providing detailed responses across major time frames, like discussing current events. Your learner can explain a complicated situation they encountered and how they resolved it.	Your learner can deliver detailed presentations and elaborate on a variety of concrete academic, social, and professional topics, using organized paragraphs across major time frames, like presenting research findings. Your learner can write a detailed description of a place they visited, including historical context.	Approx. 1320 hours of study
Advanced High	Your learner can follow the flow of ideas and some nuances from different viewpoints in most fictional texts, like understanding character motivations in a novel. Your learner can understand the implied meaning or tone in a complex conversation.	Your learner can discuss, support, and sometimes debate opinions and advice on a variety of complex, concrete topics, often addressing hypothetical or abstract issues, and ask precise questions, such as debating a social issue. Your learner can confidently rephrase their ideas if they are not understood, ensuring clear communication.	Your learner can clearly and accurately present an argument with supporting evidence on complex concrete issues, and often deal with related problems hypothetically, like arguing for a policy change. Your learner can write a formal letter or report following appropriate conventions.	Approx. 2400-2760 hours of study
Proficiency Level	Interpretive Communication (Understanding)	Interpersonal Communication (Talking with Others)	Presentational Communication (Sharing Information)	Estimated Time to Reach*

