

Number of hours required to reach each TRKI level

The Russian Ministry of Education publishes guidelines about the number of hours of study required to pass a particular level, which are shown in the table below. However, we believe all of the figures in this table should be treated as approximate: first, because they are designed for students who are studying Russian in Russia, and therefore tend to progress more quickly than those studying outside a Russian-speaking environment; secondly, a number of other factors (e.g. aptitude, frequency of study) clearly mean that they cannot apply equally to all students.

Please also bear in mind that at the higher levels the hours of formal study suggested may appear quite small, but it is assumed that a significant amount of additional time will have been spent in a Russian-speaking environment.

TRKI Level	Hours per level	Total hours
Elementary	80–90	+/- 100
Basic	+150	+/- 250
1st Certificate	+345	+/- 600
2nd Certificate	+540	+/- 1100
3rd Certificate	+210	+/- 1300
4th Certificate	+150	+/- 1450

Equivalencies

The table below shows how the TRKI levels match up with the CEFR, as well as approximate equivalence with UK academic exams and the four recognised levels used by the UK Foreign Office (FCO).

TRKI	CEFR		UK Academic	FCO
Elementary	Basic User	A1	Breakthrough	GCSE lower grades
Basic		A2	Waystage	GCSE higher grades Confidence/ Survival
1st Certificate	Independent User	B1	Threshold	'A' Level, Pre-U Functional
2nd Certificate		B2	Vantage	lower degree
3rd Certificate	Proficient User	C1	Effective Operational Proficiency	upper degree Operational
4th Certificate		C2	Mastery	Extensive

Some notes on the CEFR

The CEFR was published by the Council of Europe in 2001. It aims to establish common levels of language proficiency across Europe languages. The aim is to say (for example), "Jean-Paul's German is the same level as Dieter's French"; or, from an employer's point of view, "Jean-Paul can do the same things in German as Dieter can do in French".

The **usefulness** of the CEFR levels when comparing two different languages is a subject of much debate among language teachers. We have strong reservations about how practical it is to compare proficiency in Russian with proficiency in, for example, French. In particular, we think the stated number of hours taken to get from one level to the next needs to be treated with great caution.

Despite these reservations, it is clearly useful to have a measure of proficiency in Russian as a foreign language that crosses international boundaries: the TRKI tests taken by our candidates in London are the same as those taken by students in France, China, and so on – and in Russia itself. This means, for example, that when our students attend courses in Russia they can supply meaningful information about their current level. Equally, a number of our students have studied Russian elsewhere in Europe, and a TRKI qualification gives us a much clearer idea of what they have studied previously.