



EF EPI

EF English Proficiency Index

A Ranking of 116 Countries and Regions by English Skills

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2024

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Executive Summary

English is well-established as the de facto language of communication between those who do not share another language, but that does not mean English proficiency levels are rising around the world. In fact, our data indicates the contrary. Language acquisition is a time-consuming undertaking. It can easily fall by the wayside when other challenges arise.

Worldwide there are many more people who understand some English now than there were 30 years ago. Most of those people do not speak English well enough to work or study with the same efficiency as they can in their native language(s), and yet many of them are using English in educational and professional contexts. The cost to individuals and organizations in missed opportunities, miscommunication and misspent hours is incalculable.

This report investigates where English proficiency is developing around the world. To create the 2024 edition of the EF English Proficiency Index, we have analyzed the results of 2.1 million adults who took our EF SET English tests in 2023.

Worldwide English proficiency in decline

The worldwide level of English proficiency has declined for the fourth year running, with 60% of countries in the index scoring lower this year than last. Although almost all of these national score changes are small, the downward trend appears to indicate a slackening of interest in developing English proficiency beyond current levels in many parts of the world. Note that all supranational scores are calculated based on national scores weighted by population, so changes in the proficiency level in young adults in India, for example, will have far more weight on the reported English level of young adults in Asia than the same proficiency change in Sri Lanka.

Persistent gender gaps

Compared to last year, women's English proficiency remained stable while men's declined, which has narrowed the gender gap; however, in forty countries men's English proficiency is significantly higher than women's (20 points or more), which is the same number of countries as last year. As in previous years, the gender gap is widest in the youngest cohort (14 points) and narrows progressively as cohorts age, down to just 3 points in adults over 40.

Weakening proficiency in Asia

Asia's English proficiency declined more than any other region in the world compared to last year. Although the speed of the decline was mainly driven by India and, to a lesser extent, China, very few countries in Asia saw their English proficiency improve in the past year. Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan have among the widest proficiency gaps in favor of men in the world.

Latin America plateaus

After years of rising proficiency, Latin America's regional average remained stable this year, with Brazil, El Salvador and Cuba losing more than 10 points while Mexico rebounded slightly after several years of decline, and Uruguay and Colombia continued their steady improvement. The region continues to have the widest gender gap in the world in favor of men, with men in nearly every country in the region at least 10 points ahead of women.

Steady gains in the Middle East

English proficiency in the Middle East has been improving slowly over the past decade, but small amounts of progress add up when they are steady. Last year the regional average moved out of the lowest proficiency band and this year Saudi Arabia's gains helped consolidate that placement. Adults 18-25 have made the most progress, an encouraging sign in this youthful region.

African women keep improving

Africa has improved its English proficiency this year as a region, although more countries lost a few points than gained them. Women's English proficiency improved the most and the continent remains the only one where women have consistently better English skills than men. All 8 countries with a significant gender gap in favor of women are in Africa including Ethiopia with the widest such gap in the world (+58 points).

Softening proficiency in Europe

The level of English proficiency in Europe has declined slightly, with a larger decline over the past four years within the EU than outside of it (-13 points for the EU compared to -2 for the European geographic region). Many of the countries with the highest English proficiency in the world saw a slight decline this year and no countries in Europe improved more than 10 points. Gender gaps in favor of men in Scandinavia, Czechia and Bulgaria remain strikingly high.

Recent graduates no longer in decline

The long downward proficiency trend in the 18-20 cohort stopped this year, although the rebound is too slight to indicate if a recovery will follow. Worldwide, other age cohorts are stable, but national trends are more volatile, with more than half of countries reporting a significant change (over 20 points) for at least one age cohort.

English proficiency correlates with other measures of economic and human development

English proficiency as measured at the national level correlates with a range of indicators of income, education, innovation, welfare, competitiveness and engagement with the wider world. Although the strength of these correlations varies from year to year, they have remained relevant over time, with correlations to calculated indices strengthening as correlations to single indicators like GDP and average years of education have weakened.

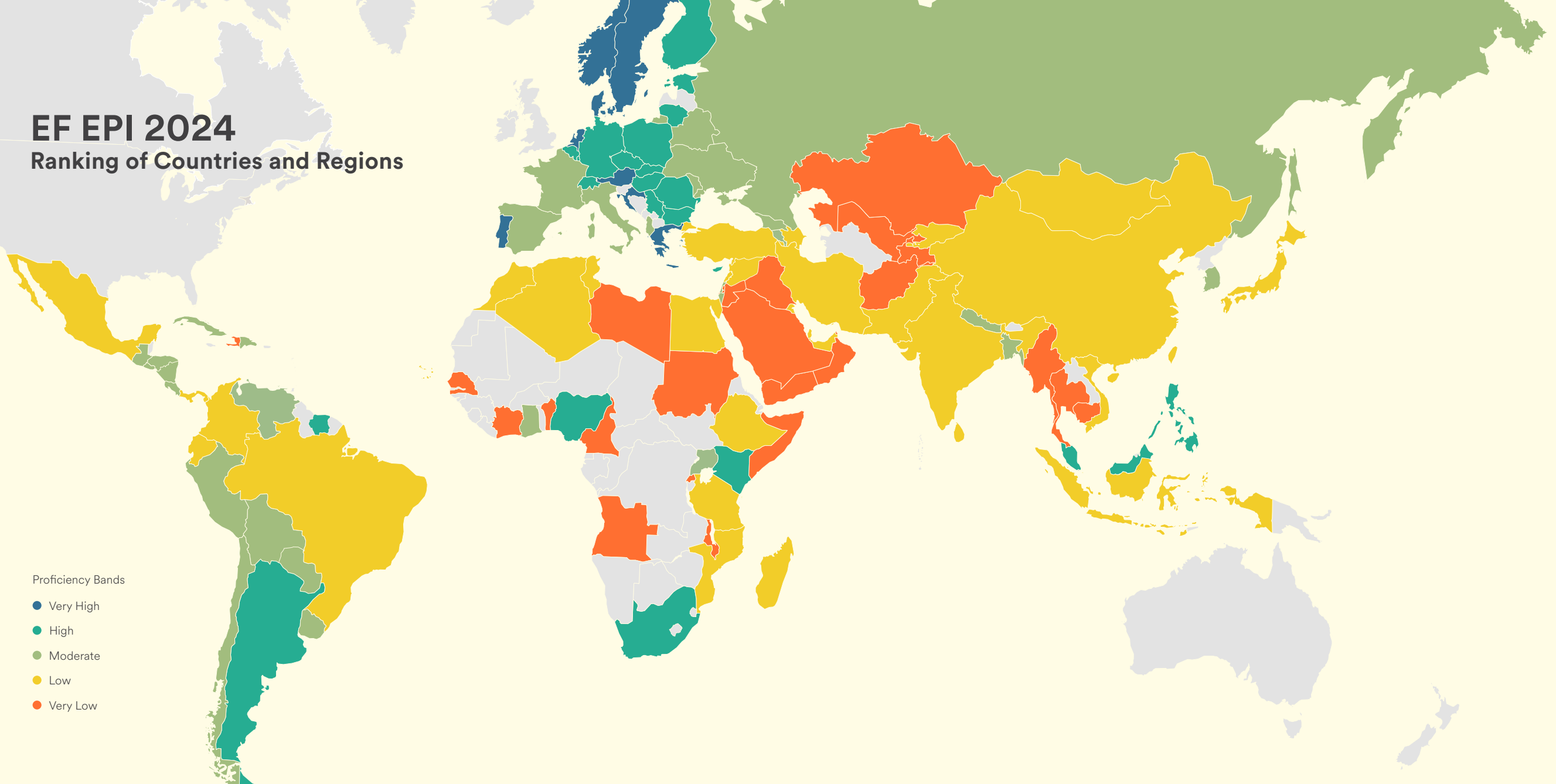
Public sector workers far behind private sector

The level of English proficiency in the public sector is far lower than that of the workforce as a whole. This is due in part to differential recruitment practices, with English indicated as a requirement in many private sector job listings. But the workplace itself also plays a role, as all evidence indicates that in most countries, adults continue to develop their English skills after leaving formal education thanks to the exposure to English they experience in the workplace. Public sector jobs, which by their nature are usually of a national or local scope, provide fewer opportunities to practice speaking English.

EF EPI 2024

Ranking of Countries and Regions

- Proficiency Bands
- Very High
 - High
 - Moderate
 - Low
 - Very Low



Very High Proficiency

01	Netherlands	636
02	Norway	610
03	Singapore	609
04	Sweden	608
05	Croatia	607
06	Portugal	605
07	Denmark	603
08	Greece	602
09	Austria	600

High Proficiency

10	Germany	598
11	South Africa	594
12	Romania	593
13	Belgium	592
14	Finland	590
15	Poland	588
16	Bulgaria	586
17	Hungary	585
18	Slovakia	584
19	Kenya	581
20	Estonia	578
21	Luxembourg	576
22	Philippines	570
23	Lithuania	569
24	Serbia	568
25	Czechia	567
26	Malaysia	566
27	Suriname	563
28	Argentina	562
29	Cyprus	558
30	Nigeria	557
31	Switzerland	550

Moderate Proficiency

32	Hong Kong (China)	549
33	Honduras	545
34	Georgia	543
35	Belarus	539
36	Spain	538
36	Uruguay	538
38	Armenia	537
39	Moldova	536
40	Ukraine	535
41	Costa Rica	534
41	Ghana	534
43	Albania	533
44	Russia	532
45	Paraguay	531
46	Italy	528
47	Bolivia	525

47	Chile	525
49	France	524
50	South Korea	523
51	Israel	522
52	Cuba	520
53	Peru	519
54	Uganda	518
55	El Salvador	513
56	Nepal	512
57	Venezuela	510
58	Guatemala	507
59	Nicaragua	505
60	Dominican Republic	503
61	Bangladesh	500

Low Proficiency

62	Iran	499
63	Ethiopia	498
63	Vietnam	498
65	Turkey	497
66	Tunisia	496
67	Pakistan	493
68	Lebanon	492
69	India	490
70	United Arab Emirates	489
71	Panama	488
72	Tanzania	487
73	Sri Lanka	486
74	Colombia	485
75	Qatar	480
76	Morocco	479
77	Syria	473

78	Algeria	471
79	Mozambique	469
80	Indonesia	468
81	Brazil	466
82	Ecuador	465
82	Egypt	465
84	Mongolia	464
85	Madagascar	463
86	Azerbaijan	462
87	Mexico	459
88	Kyrgyzstan	457
89	Cape Verde	456
89	Kuwait	456
91	China	455
92	Japan	454

Very Low Proficiency

93	Myanmar	449
94	Palestine	448
95	Afghanistan	447
95	Malawi	447
97	Cameroon	445
98	Uzbekistan	439
99	Haiti	432
99	Sudan	432
101	Jordan	431
102	Senegal	429
103	Kazakhstan	427
104	Oman	421
105	Saudi Arabia	417

106	Thailand	415
107	Iraq	414
108	Benin	413
109	Tajikistan	412
110	Angola	409
111	Cambodia	408
112	Libya	405
113	Rwanda	401
114	Côte d'Ivoire	399
114	Somalia	399
116	Yemen	394

EF EPI 2024 Capital City Scores

Proficiency Bands

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



Very High Proficiency

Amsterdam	657
Copenhagen	633
Vienna	628
Helsinki	627
Lisbon	626
Zagreb	626
Stockholm	617
Berlin	615
Bern	614
Oslo	614
Athens	613
Warsaw	612
Cape Town	609
Budapest	606
Bratislava	604
Bucharest	601
Sofia	601

High Proficiency

Prague	596
Manila	592
Belgrade	590
Tallinn	589
Nairobi	586
Paris	586
Vilnius	585
Buenos Aires	584
Kuala Lumpur	584
Brussels	580
Lagos	578
Chişinău	577
Paramaribo	569
Montevideo	567
Tegucigalpa	563
Kiev	562
Seoul	562
Asunción	560
San José	557
Tblisi	556
Lima	553
Madrid	553
Santiago	552
Accra	551
La Paz	551

Moderate Proficiency

Minsk	548
Nicosia	548
Rome	548
Tirana	547
Beirut	544
Colombo	543
Erevan	541
Moscow	540
Brasilia	538
Tel Aviv	537
Dhaka	530
Islamabad	530
Caracas	529
Kathmandu	526
San Salvador	526
Algiers	525
Addis Ababa	524
Hanoi	524

Havana	523
Jakarta	523
Santo Domingo	522
Tunis	522
Quito	521
Dar Es Salaam	520
Kampala	520
Beijing	518
Guatemala City	518
Managua	517
Tehran	514
Bogota	513
Rabat	510
Ankara	505
Maputo	503
Bishkek	501

Low Proficiency

Tokyo	496
Abu Dhabi	489
Panama City	489
Doha	485
Antananarivo	483
Damascus	483
Cairo	481
Astana	469
Kuwait City	469
Dakar	466
Ulaanbaatar	466
Yangon	466
Bangkok	465
Baku	464
Mexico City	464
Lilongwe	459
Phnom Penh	457
Tashkent	457
Amman	455
Muscat	453
Kabul	451

Very Low Proficiency

Khartoum	442
Dushanbe	439
Port-au-Prince	437
Yaoundé	436
Cotonou	432
Praia	429
Baghdad	427
Tripoli	421
Sanaa	420
Riyadh	416
Kigali	412
Luanda	412
Abidjan	410
Delhi	406
Mogadishu	375

English proficiency scores for over 1200 regions and cities, as well as national and regional gender and age data, are available at www.ef.com/epi.

EF EPI 2024 Facts and Figures

Who are the test takers?

2.1M
Total Test Takers

54%
Female

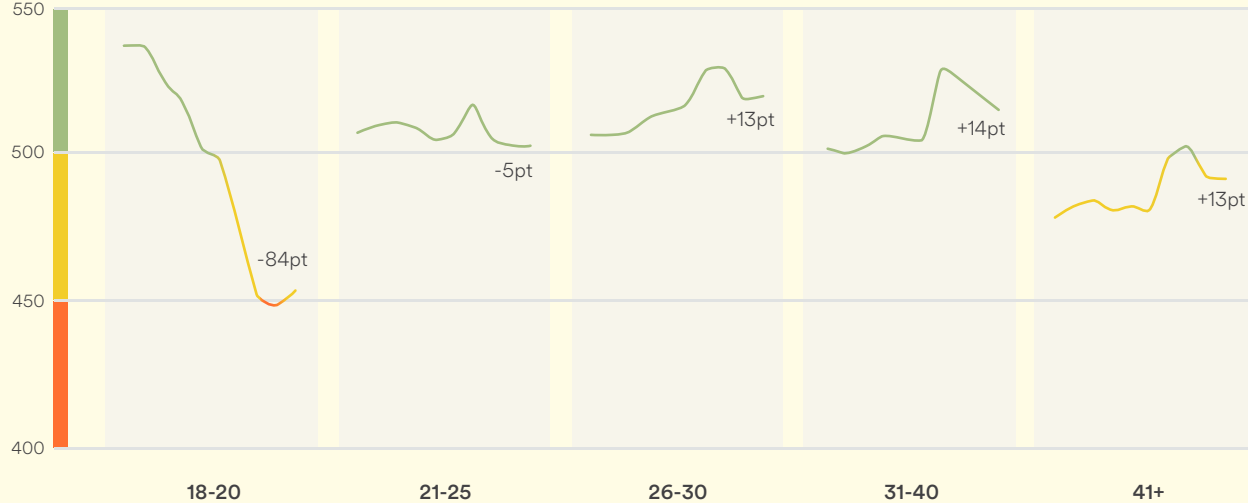
17%
born before 1990



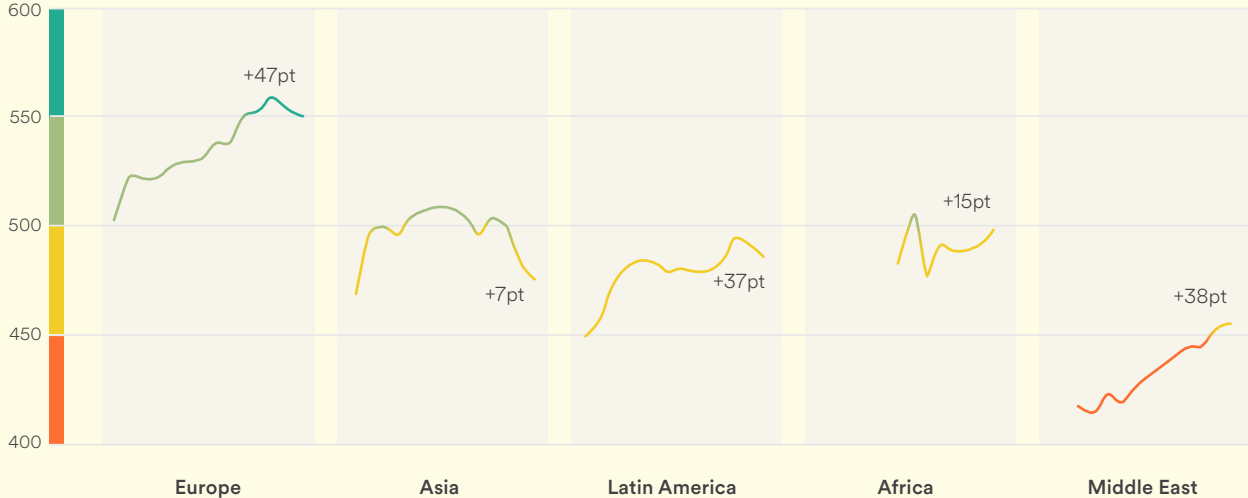
46%
Male

26 Years old
Median Age

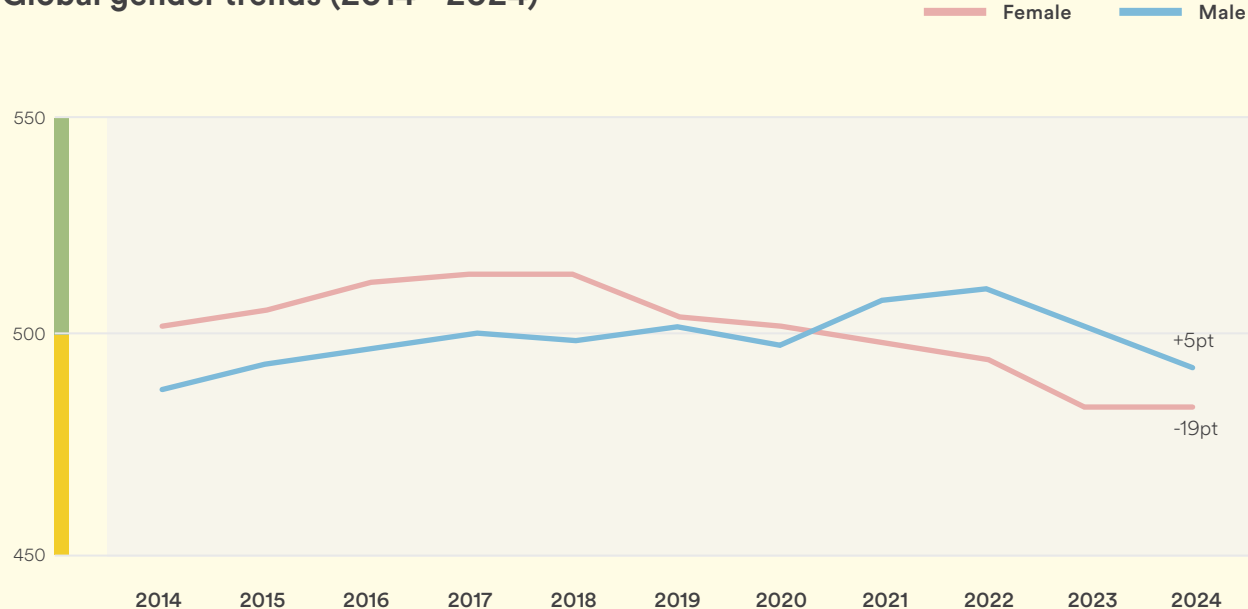
Global age trends (2015 - 2024)



Regional trends (2011 - 2024)



Global gender trends (2014 - 2024)

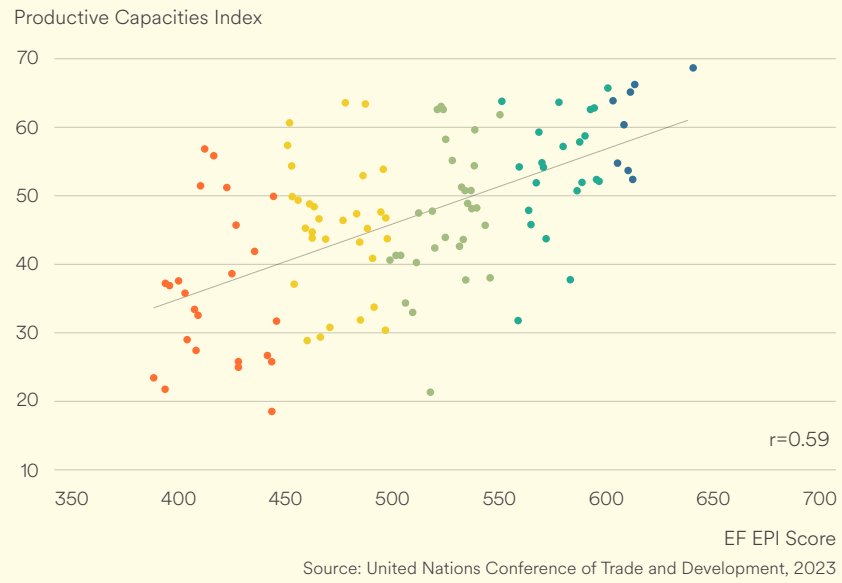


English and the Economy

English proficiency remains a reasonable indicator of a nation's ability to produce goods and services that generate economic growth, and it correlates well to national investment in helping people achieve their full potential by providing education, healthcare and a decent standard of living. Adults with strong English skills are a marker of a more flexible and outward looking workforce, especially when they are spread across all sectors of the economy.

GRAPH A

English and Productivity

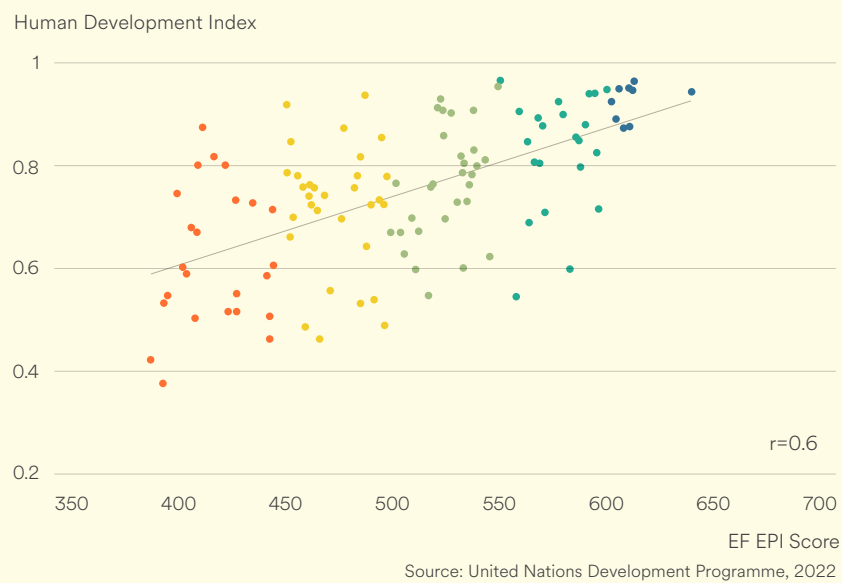


Proficiency Bands

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

GRAPH B

English and Human Development

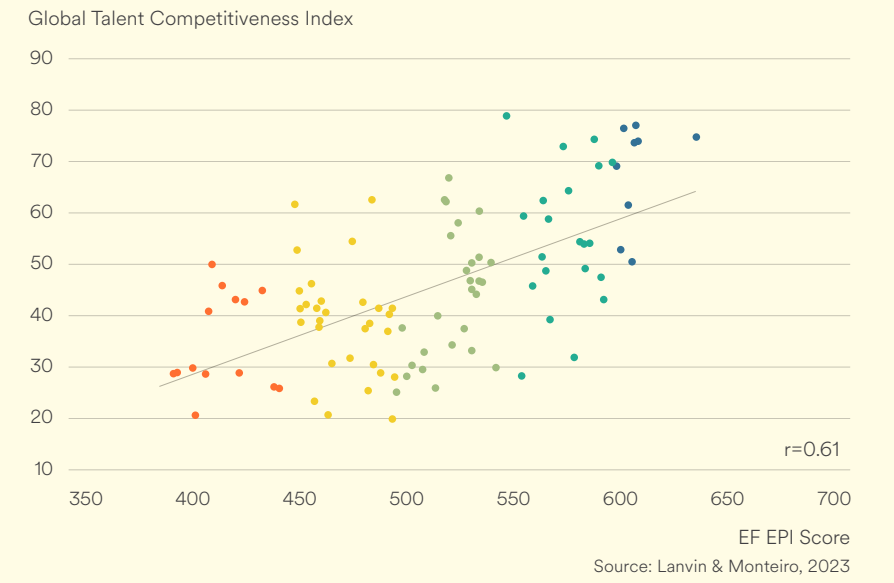


English and Innovation

Enhancing English proficiency lowers barriers to innovation by facilitating access to information and enabling professional collaboration between experts from diverse backgrounds. Whether this innovation occurs within the same office or between continents, freeing up the flow of ideas is efficient. While AI is already helping bridge some language gaps, the superior performance of English-based AI services may increase the value of English proficiency over time rather than eroding it, since English speakers will have access to far more powerful AI assistants than those available to others.

GRAPH C

English and Talent Competitiveness

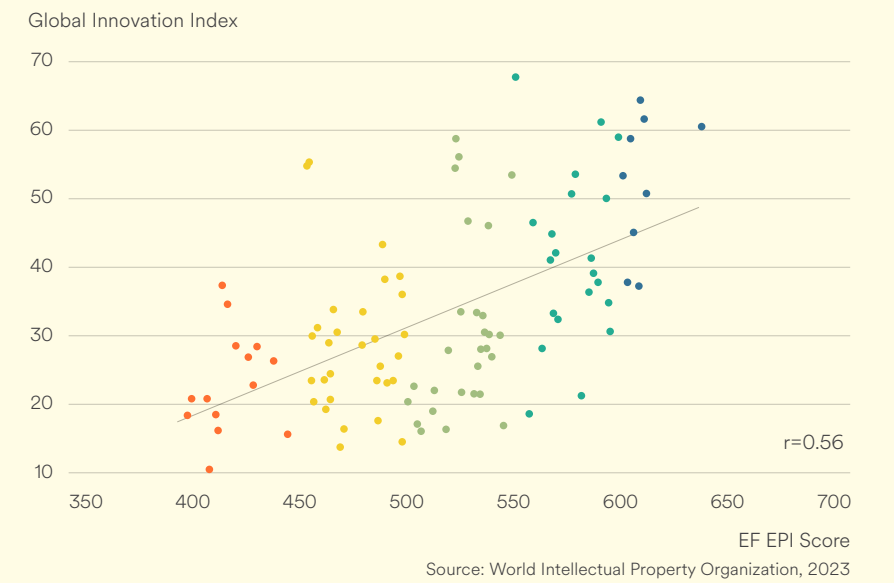


Proficiency Bands

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

GRAPH D

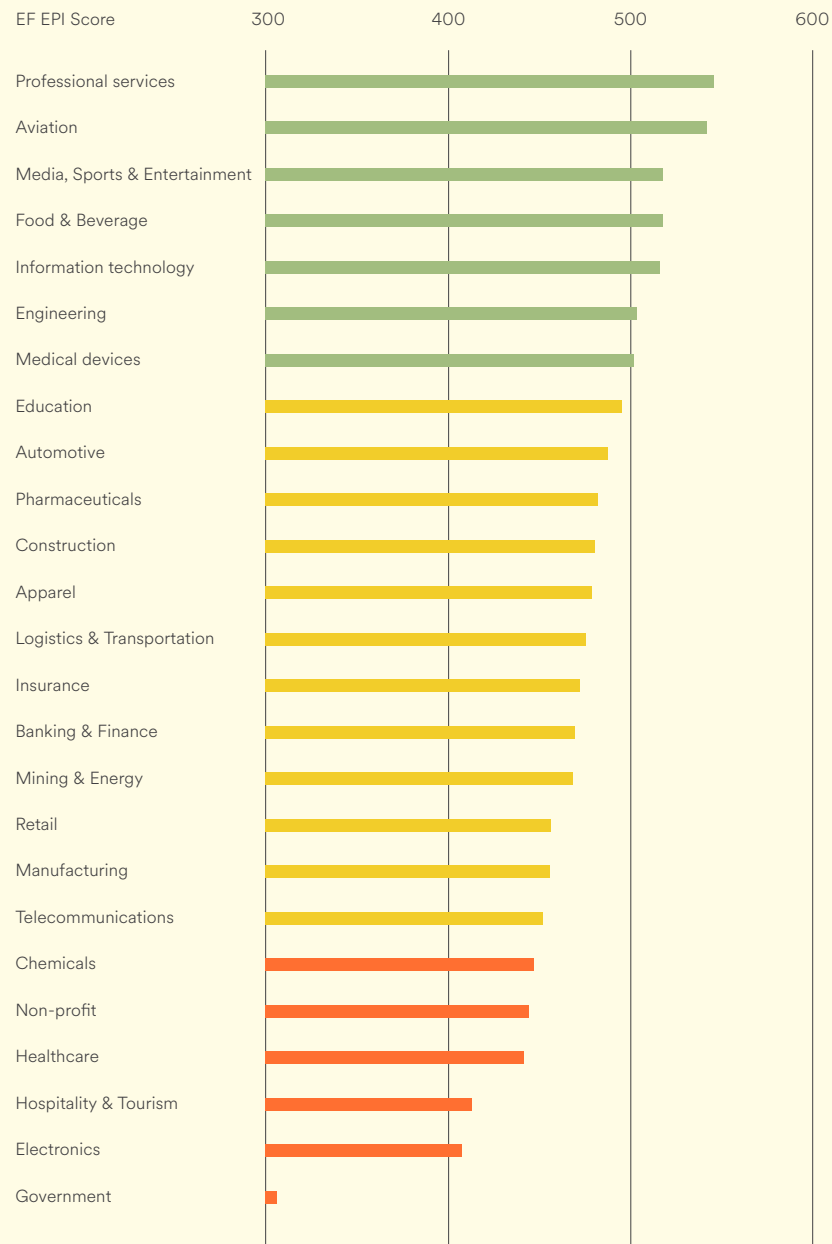
English and Global Innovation



English and Work

English is key to international collaboration in every industry and every industry is subject to the forces of globalization. Differences in levels of English proficiency between industries are largely the result of current or historic hiring and training practices, rather than a lack of demand for English skills in one part of the economy. Businesses with unusually strong English capabilities for their industry at the worldwide level are likely to be benefiting from the increased agility, while those who lag behind their industry globally, even if many of their employees have higher English proficiency than average for their home country, are still likely to suffer when competing in a globalized marketplace.

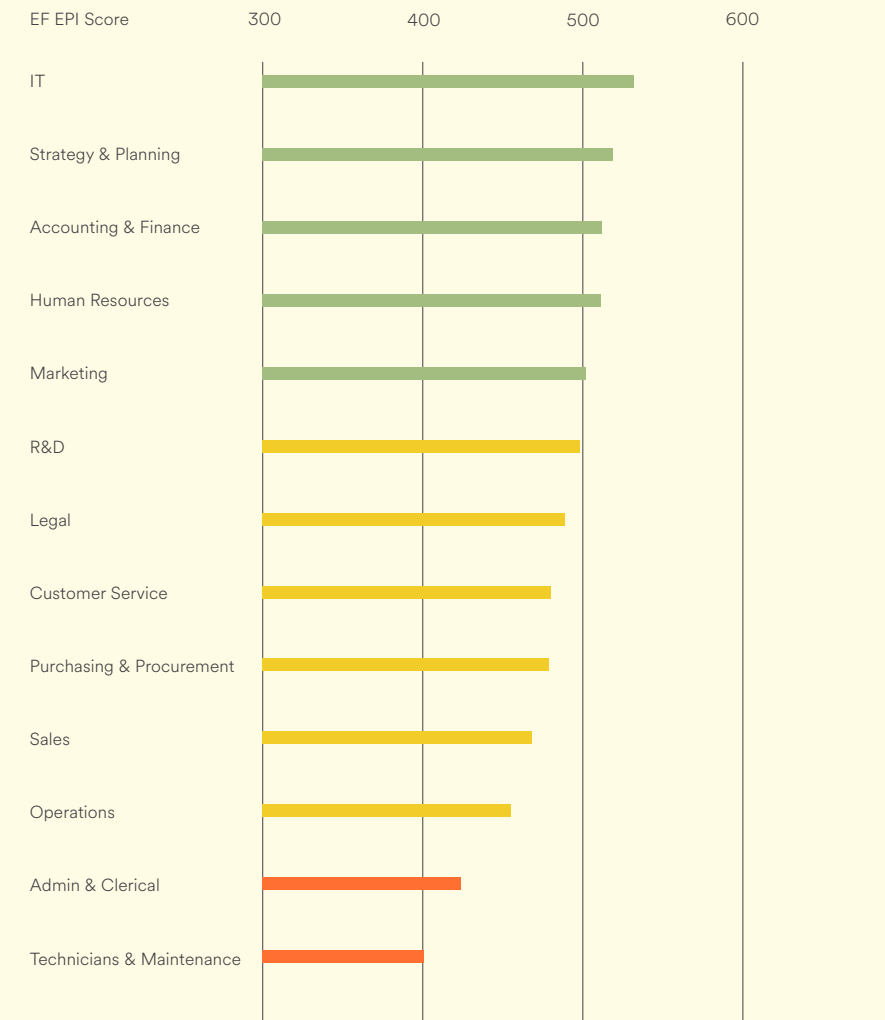
EF EPI by Industry



Proficiency Bands ● Very High ● High ● Moderate ● Low ● Very Low

For many professionals, having a lower-than-average level of English proficiency is a barrier to career progression and limits access to information. When a promotion means relocating to a more central office with more international teams, non-English-speakers are stuck. The problem is particularly acute for those in maintenance and clerical roles where English proficiency is weaker and opportunities to speak English at work more scarce. Employers can help by identifying individuals who may be struggling, funding targeted training programs and creating opportunities for teams from different countries to collaborate. Fields like programming, accounting and marketing, which appear near the top of this list, are especially suited to remote work, potentially putting candidates for these roles in competition with a more international pool of applicants.

EF EPI by Job Function

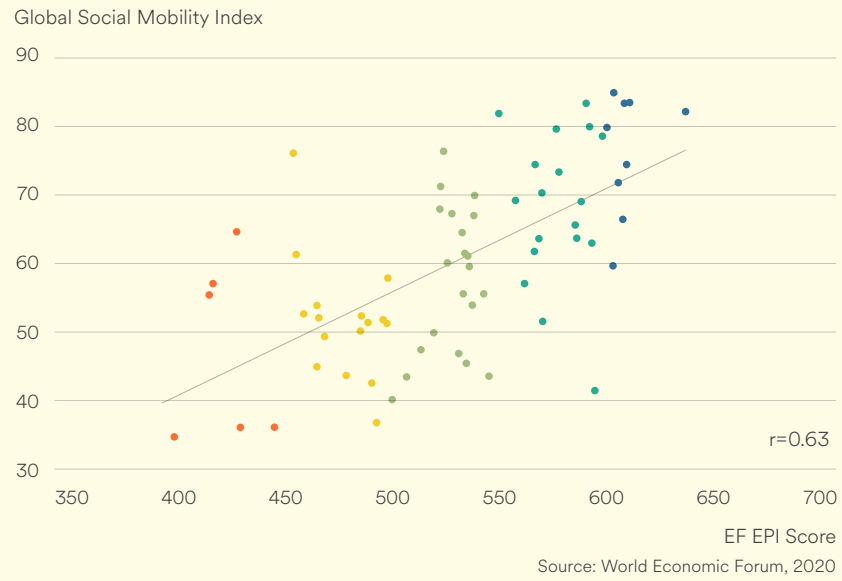


Proficiency Bands ● Very High ● High ● Moderate ● Low ● Very Low

English and Society

For individuals, English opens doors—broader access to information, a higher salary, more varied educational opportunities and greater independence from one's local labor market. As a consequence, improving the level of English instruction in an education system and supporting professionals in developing their English skills will help them realize their full potential, in the same way that other investments in education do so.

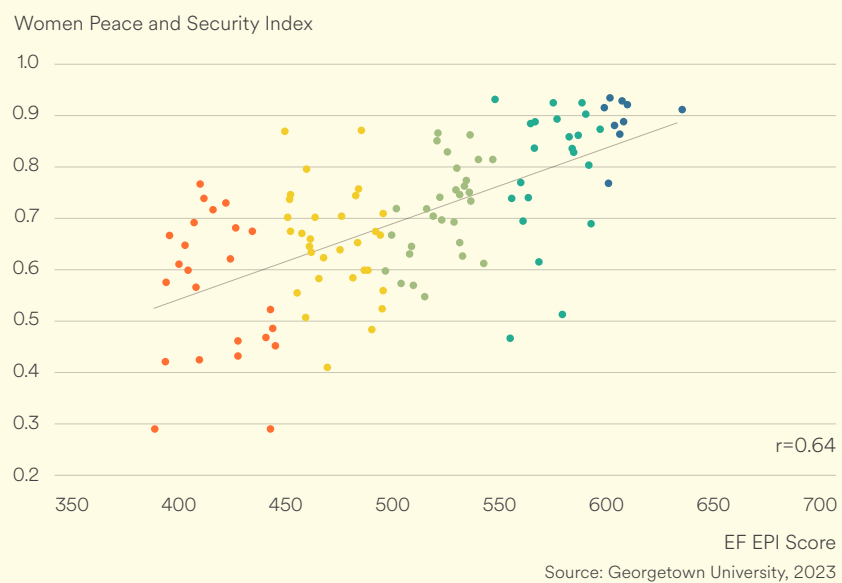
GRAPH E
English and Social Mobility



Proficiency Bands

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

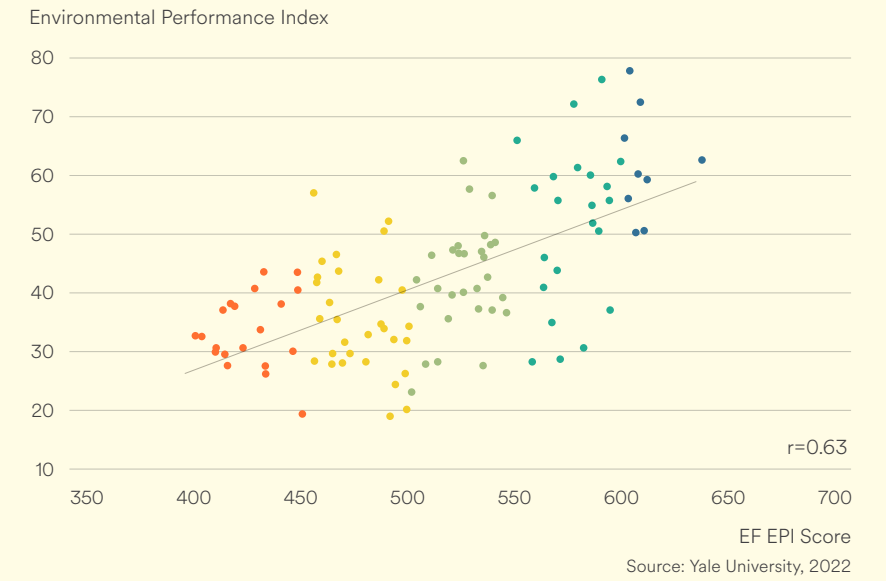
GRAPH F
English and Gender Equality



English and the Future

Speaking English allows people to engage with those outside their bubble, gaining awareness of their challenges and priorities, the injustices they suffer and their dreams for the future. Addressing the climate crisis requires an unparalleled level of international solidarity and resolve. From high-level diplomacy to multinational activism, essential scientific research to cross-border personal connections, English serves as a vital tool for worldwide understanding and collaboration.

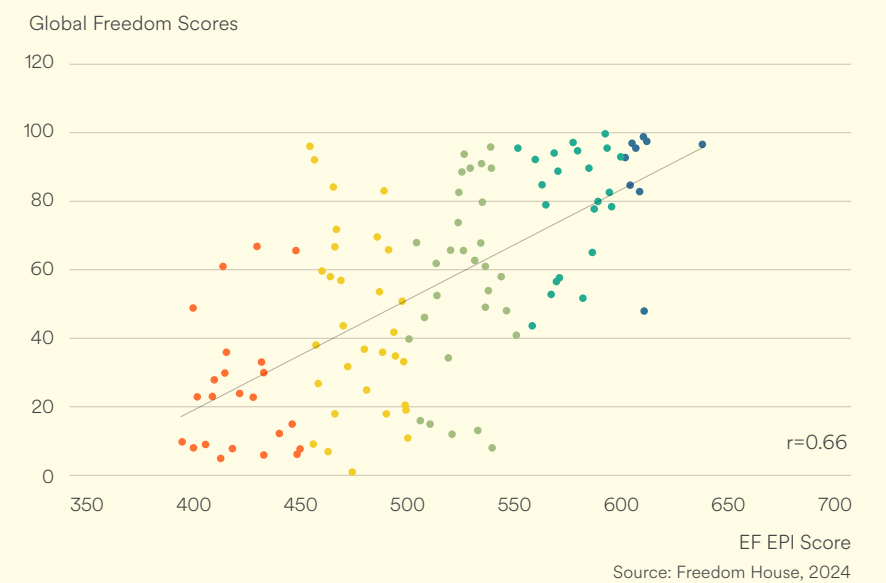
GRAPH G
English and the Environment

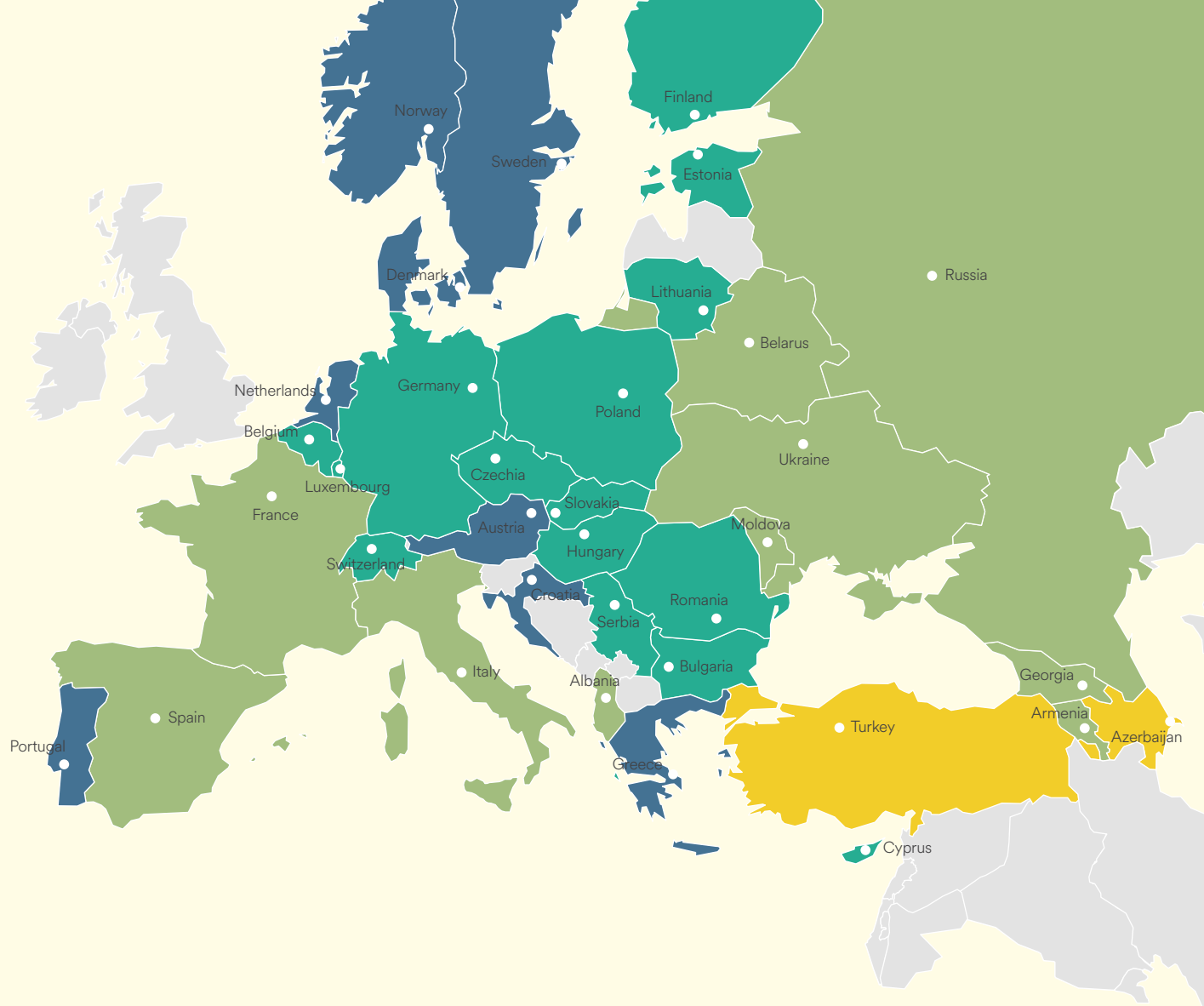


Proficiency Bands

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

GRAPH H
English and Freedom





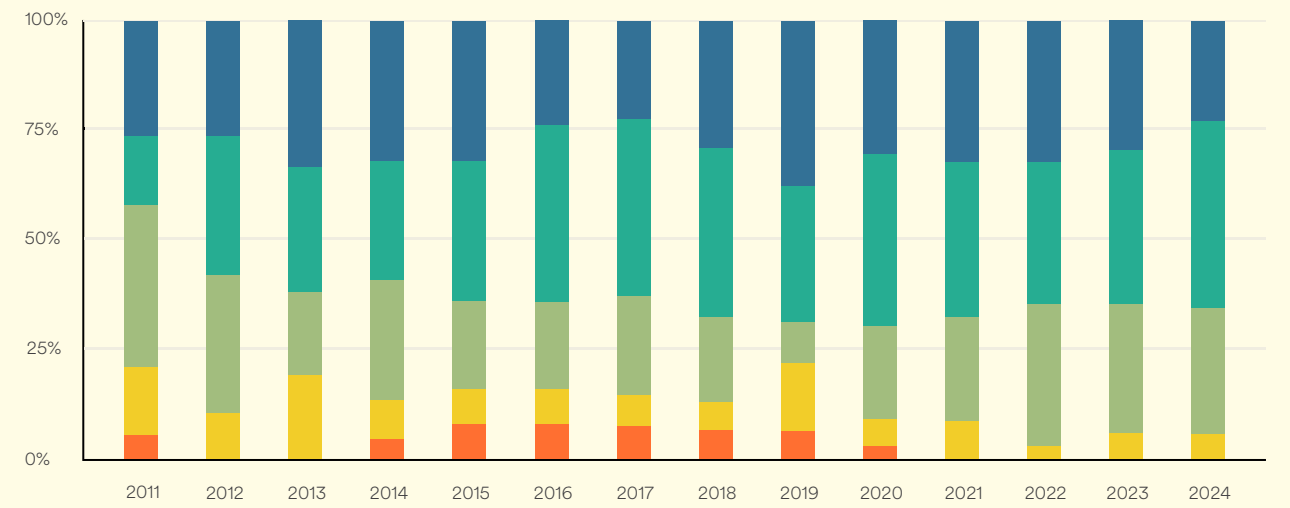
EUROPE

EF EPI Rankings

01	Netherlands	636	14	Finland	590	34	Georgia	543
02	Norway	610	15	Poland	588	35	Belarus	539
04	Sweden	608	16	Bulgaria	586	36	Spain	538
05	Croatia	607	17	Hungary	585	38	Armenia	537
06	Portugal	605	18	Slovakia	584	39	Moldova	536
07	Denmark	603	20	Estonia	578	40	Ukraine	535
08	Greece	602	21	Luxembourg	576	43	Albania	533
09	Austria	600	23	Lithuania	569	44	Russia	532
10	Germany	598	24	Serbia	568	46	Italy	528
12	Romania	593	25	Czechia	567	49	France	524
13	Belgium	592	29	Cyprus	558	65	Turkey	497
			31	Switzerland	550	86	Azerbaijan	462

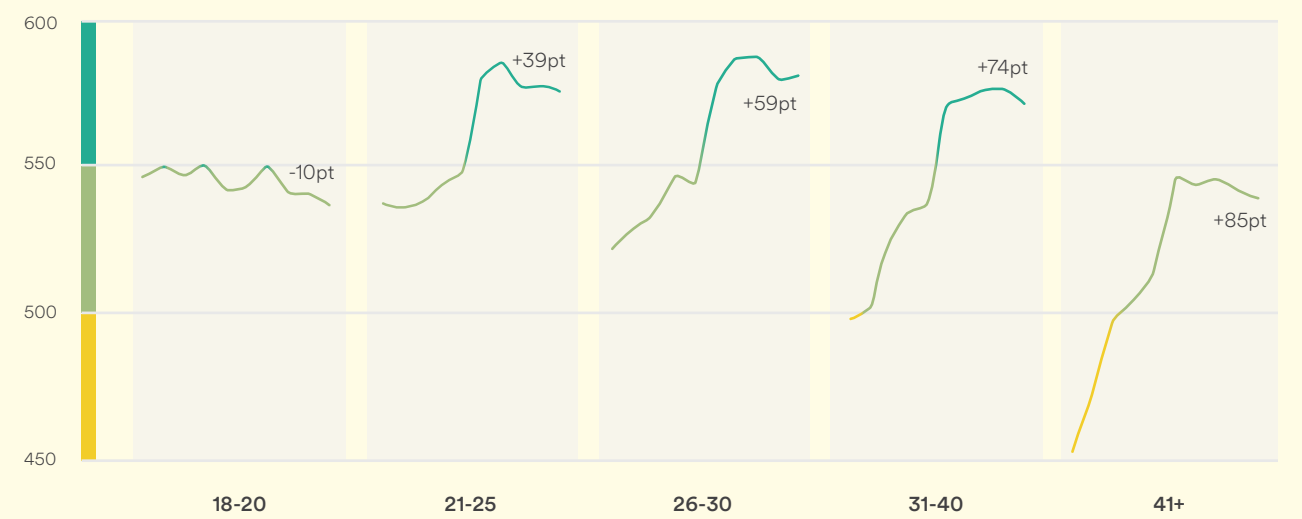
Proficiency Bands ● Very High ● High ● Moderate ● Low ● Very Low

Proficiency distribution (2011 - 2024)

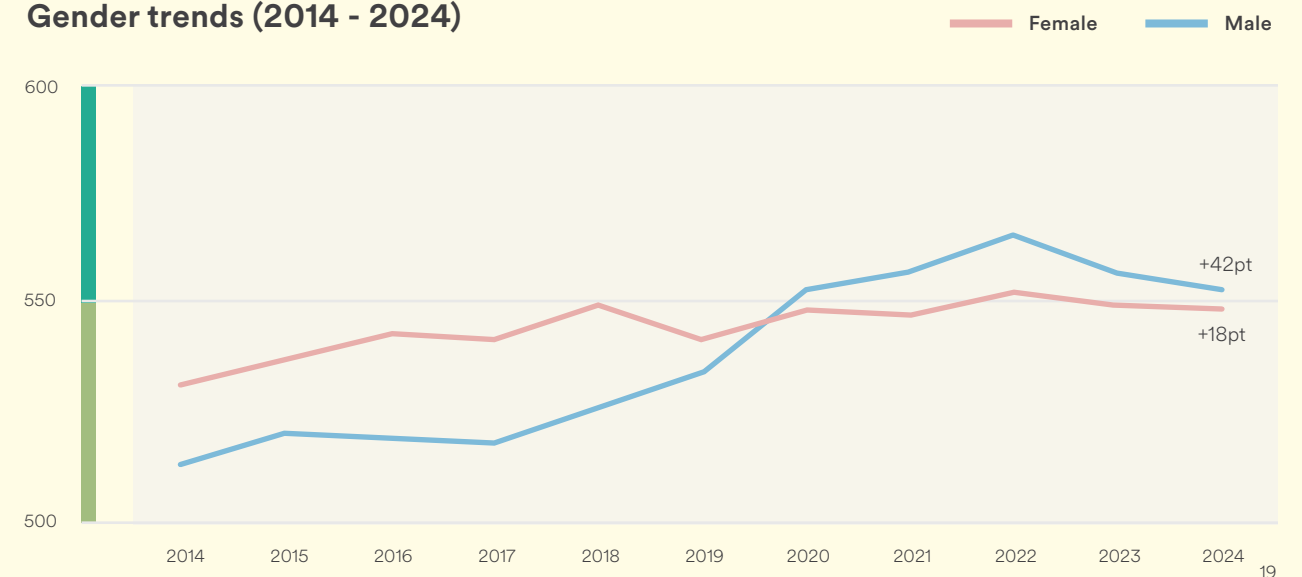


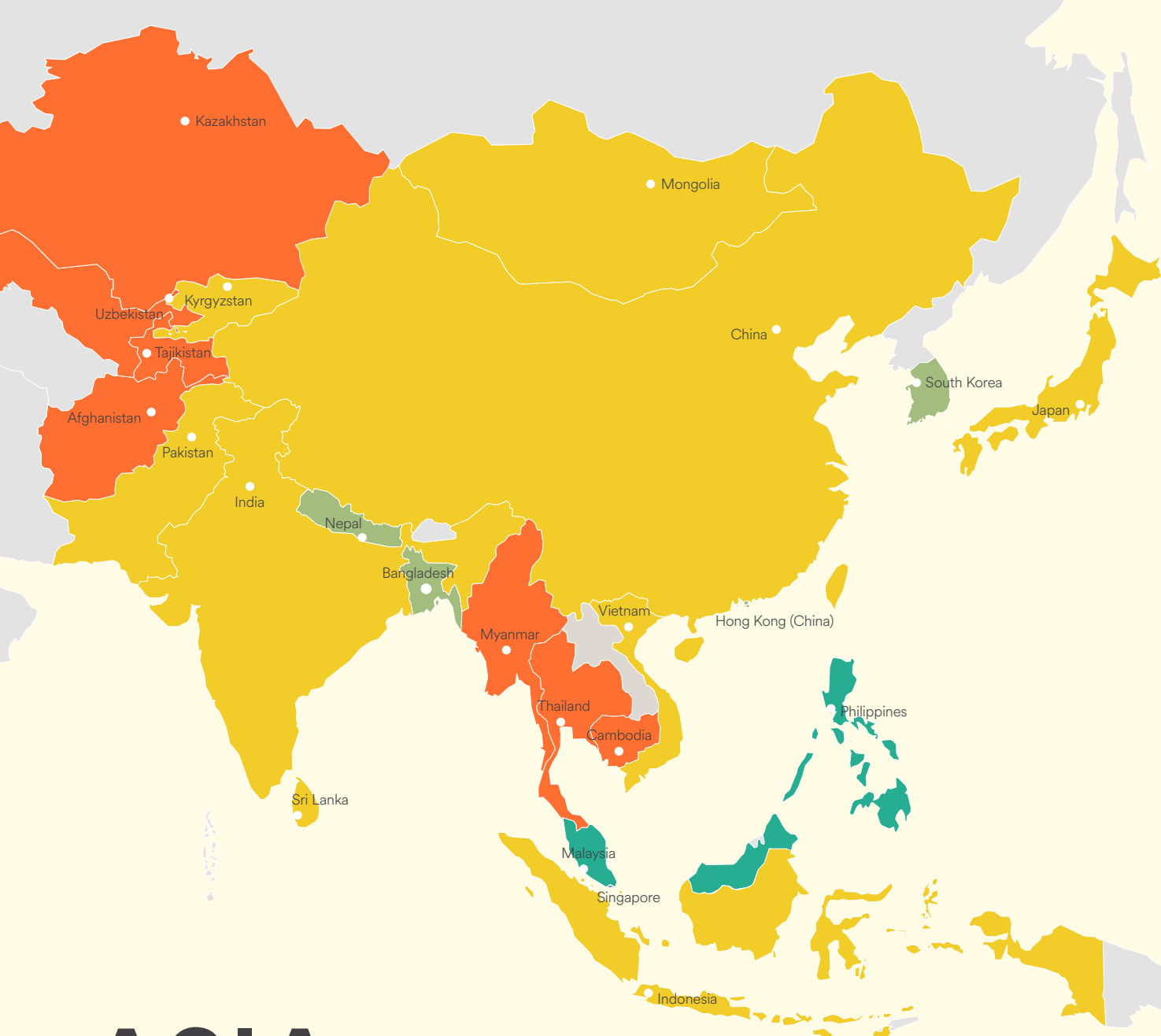
Percentage of European countries in each proficiency band over time

Age trends (2015 - 2024)



Gender trends (2014 - 2024)





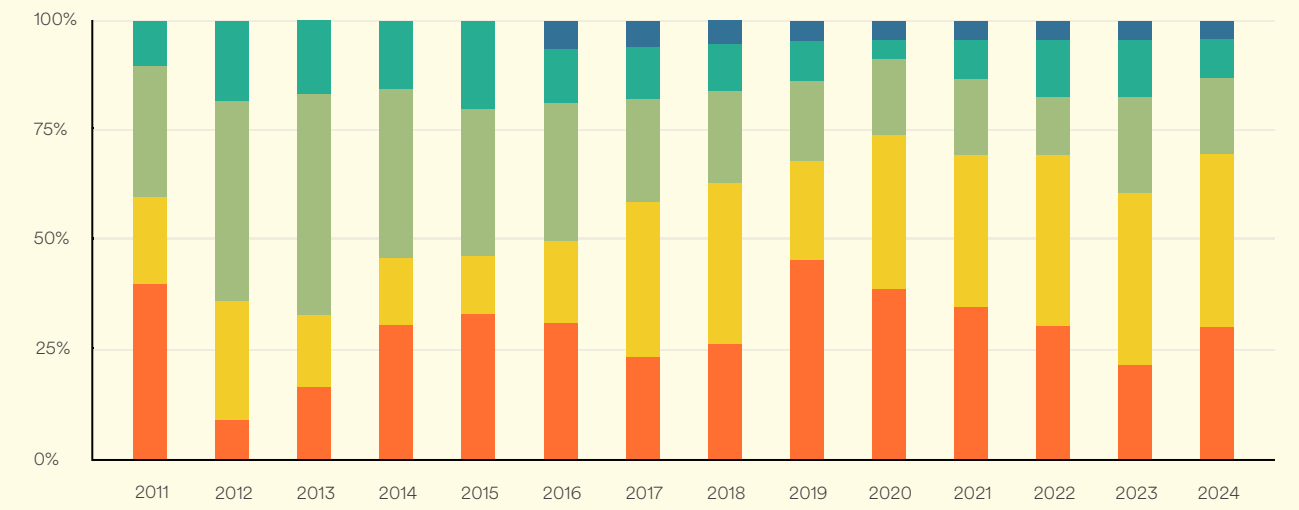
ASIA

EF EPI Rankings

3 Singapore	609	63 Vietnam	498	93 Myanmar	449
22 Philippines	570	67 Pakistan	493	95 Afghanistan	447
26 Malaysia	566	69 India	490	98 Uzbekistan	439
32 Hong Kong (China)	549	73 Sri Lanka	486	103 Kazakhstan	427
50 South Korea	523	80 Indonesia	468	106 Thailand	415
56 Nepal	512	84 Mongolia	464	109 Tajikistan	412
61 Bangladesh	500	88 Kyrgyzstan	457	111 Cambodia	408
		91 China	455		
		92 Japan	454		

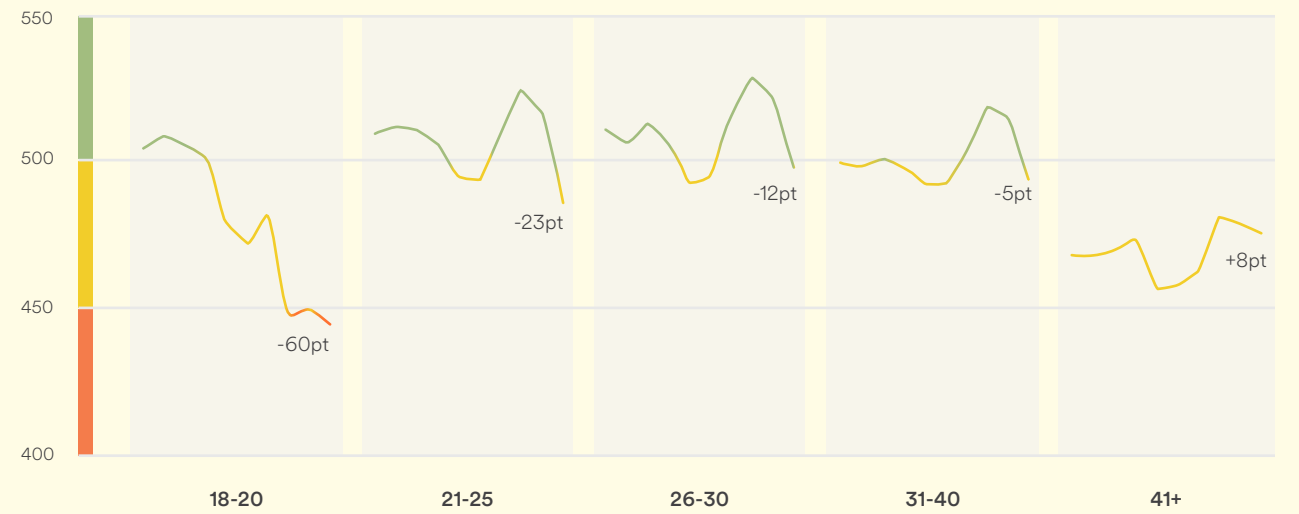
Proficiency Bands **Very High** **High** **Moderate** **Low** **Very Low**

Proficiency distribution (2011 - 2024)

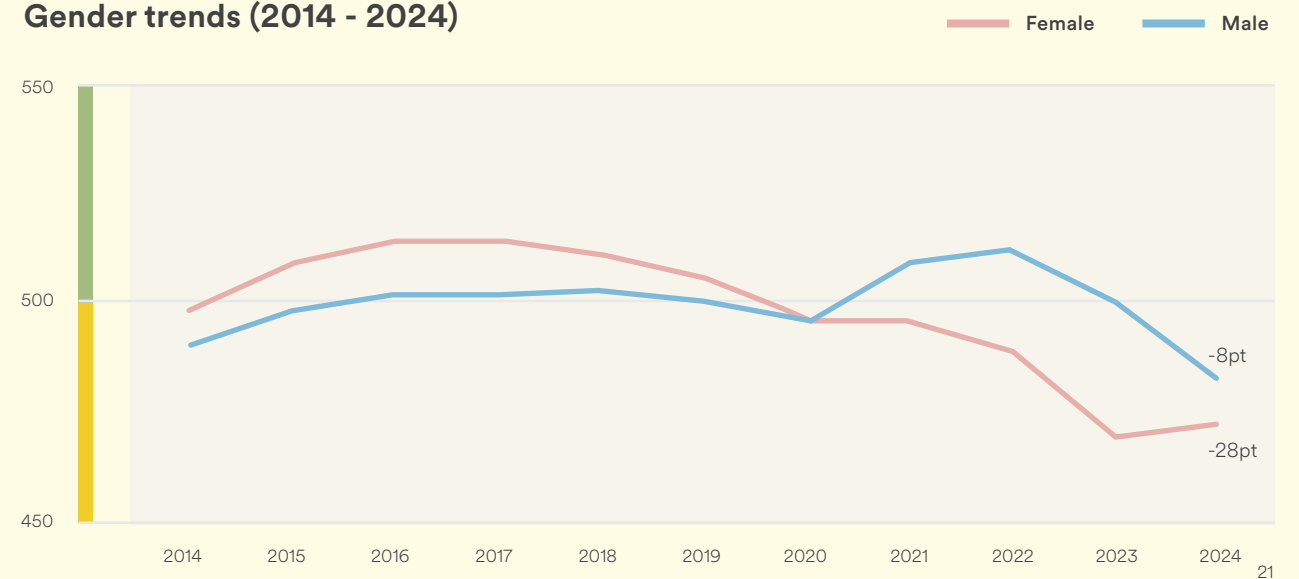


Percentage of Asian countries and regions in each proficiency band over time

Age trends (2015 - 2024)



Gender trends (2014 - 2024)



LATIN AMERICA

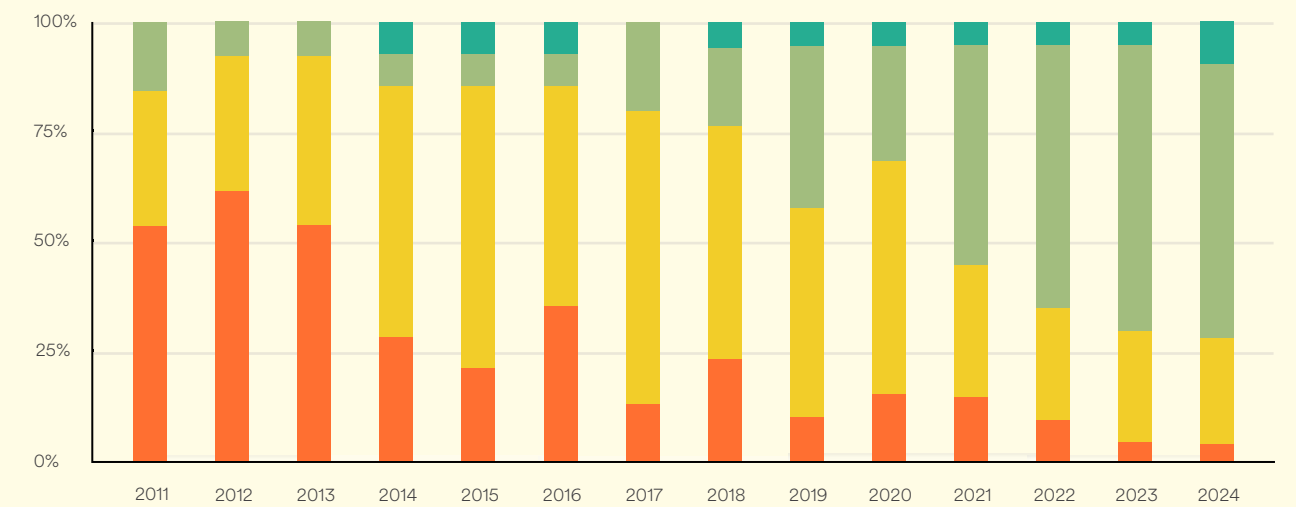


EF EPI Rankings

27	Suriname	563	57	Venezuela	510
28	Argentina	562	58	Guatemala	507
33	Honduras	545	59	Nicaragua	505
36	Uruguay	538	60	Dominican Republic	503
41	Costa Rica	534	71	Panama	488
45	Paraguay	531	74	Colombia	485
47	Bolivia	525	81	Brazil	466
47	Chile	525	82	Ecuador	465
52	Cuba	520	87	Mexico	459
53	Peru	519	99	Haiti	432
55	El Salvador	513			

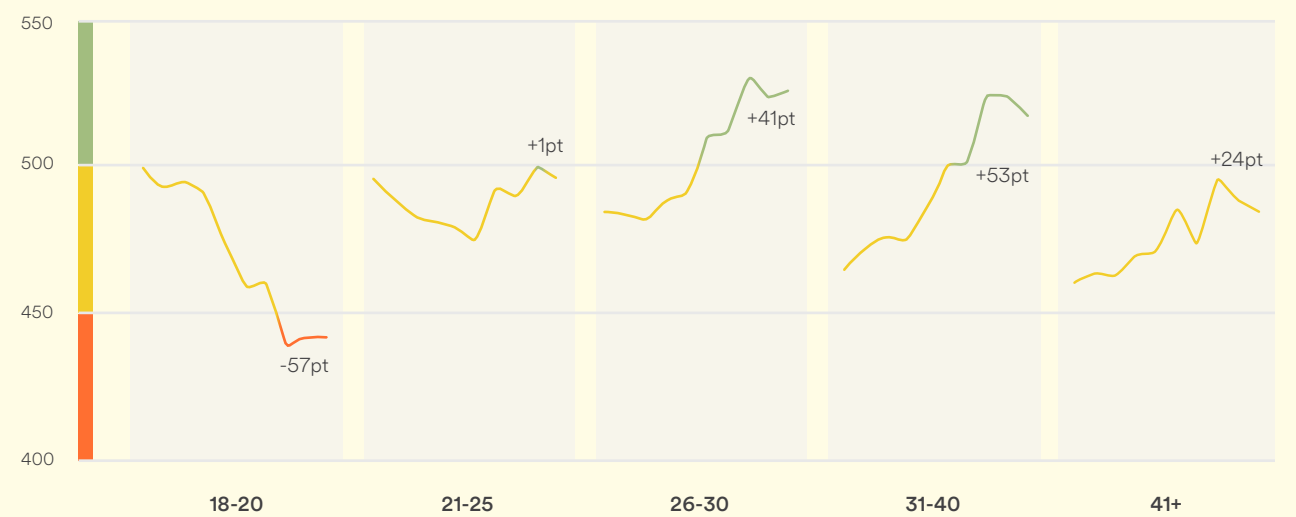
Proficiency Bands ● Very High ● High ● Moderate ● Low ● Very Low

Proficiency distribution (2011 - 2024)

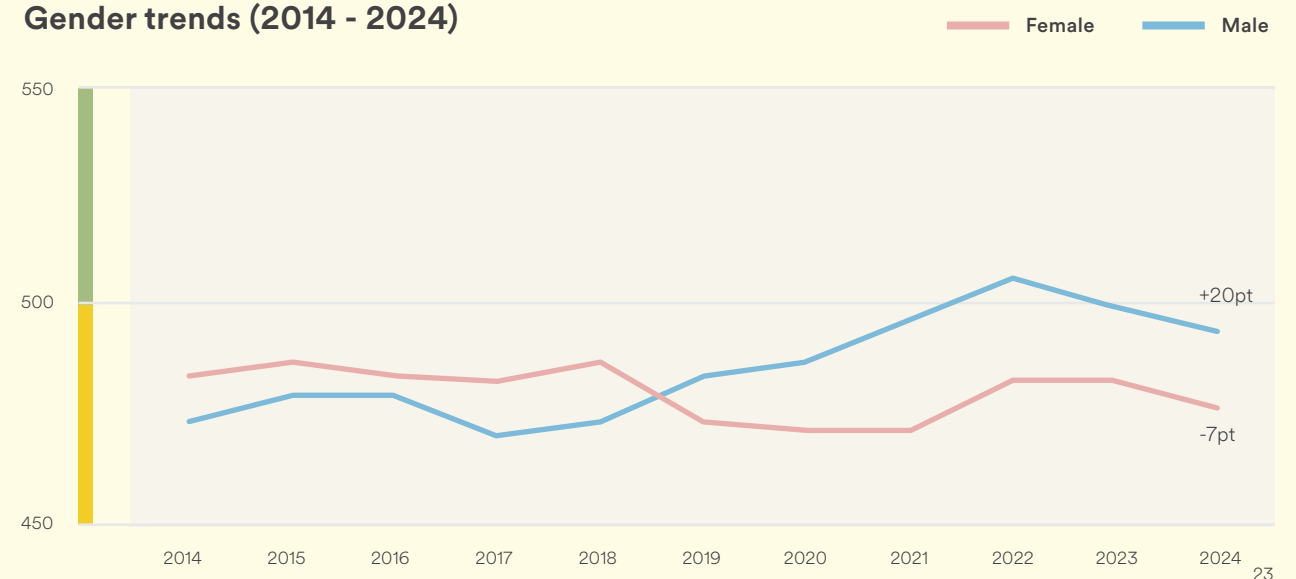


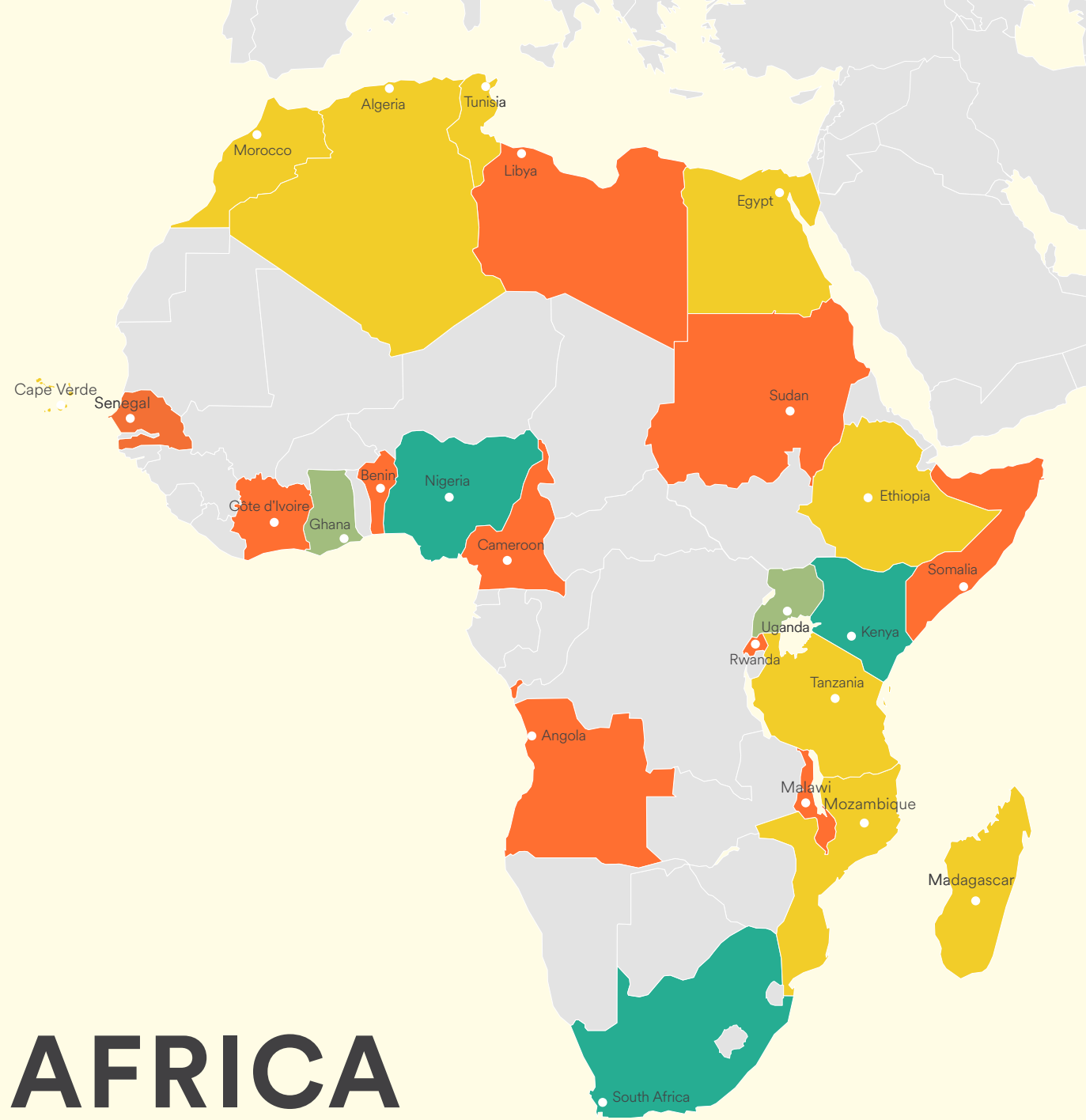
Percentage of Latin American countries in each proficiency band over time

Age trends (2015 - 2024)



Gender trends (2014 - 2024)





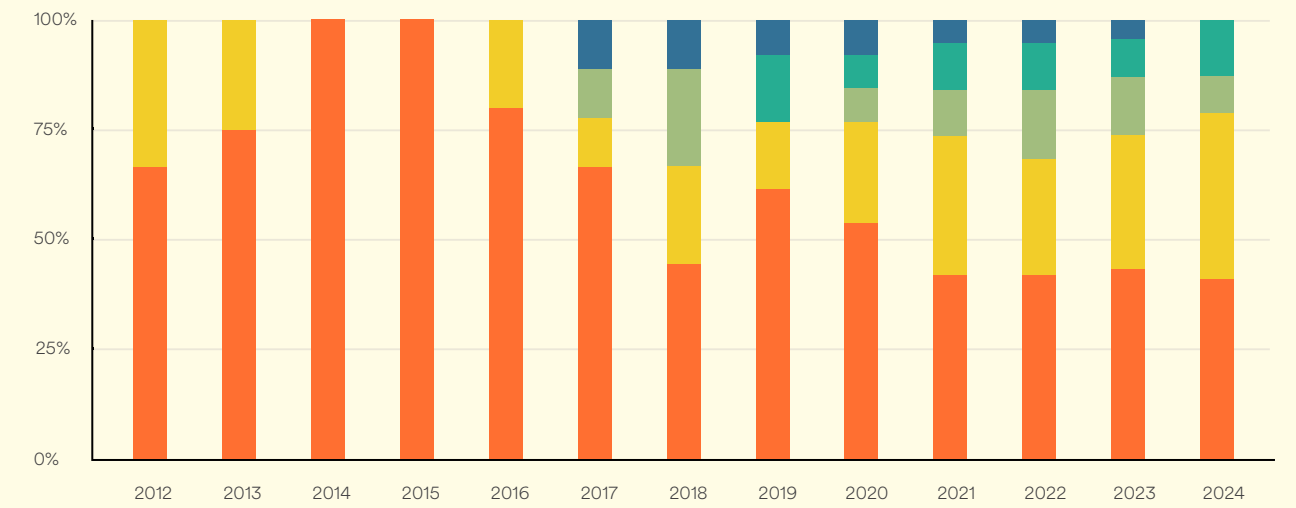
AFRICA

EF EPI Rankings

11	South Africa	594	79	Mozambique	469	112	Libya	405
19	Kenya	581	82	Egypt	465	113	Rwanda	401
30	Nigeria	557	85	Madagascar	463	114	Somalia	399
41	Ghana	534	89	Cape Verde	456	114	Côte d'Ivoire	399
54	Uganda	518	95	Malawi	447			
63	Ethiopia	498	97	Cameroon	445			
66	Tunisia	496	99	Sudan	432			
72	Tanzania	487	102	Senegal	429			
76	Morocco	479	108	Benin	413			
78	Algeria	471	110	Angola	409			

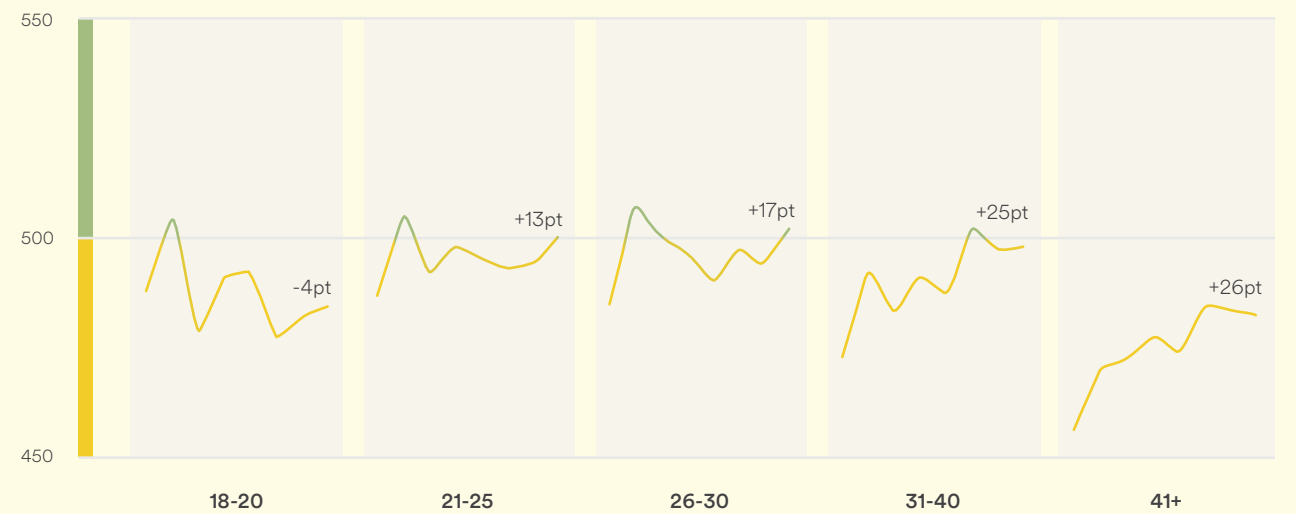
Proficiency Bands: ● Very High ● High ● Moderate ● Low ● Very Low

Proficiency distribution (2012 - 2024)

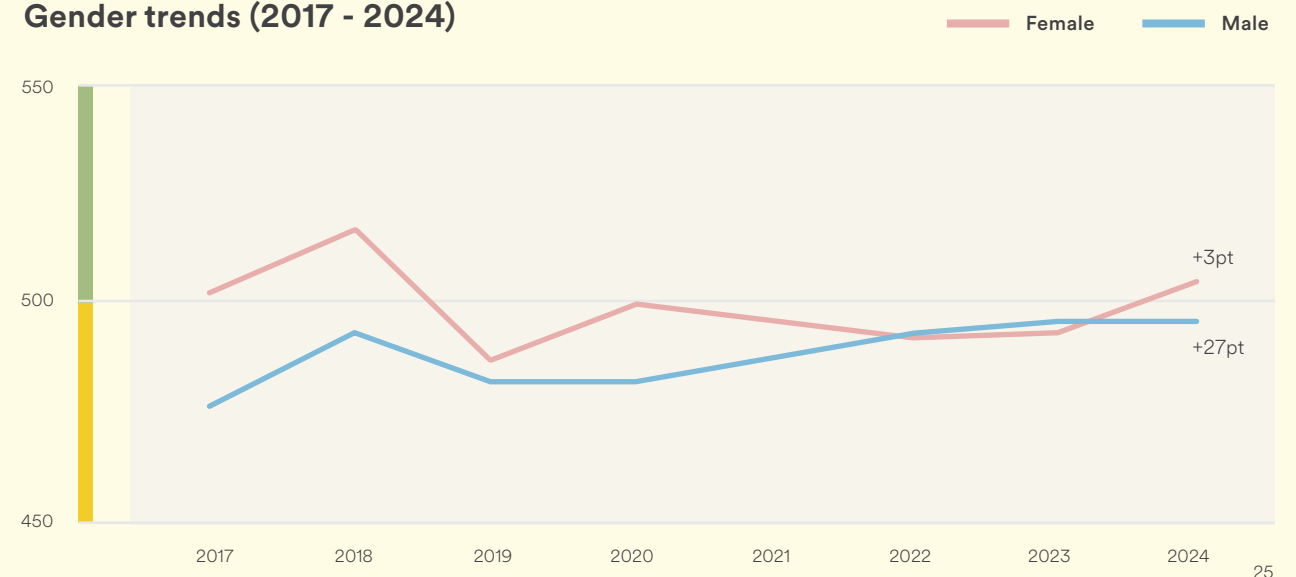


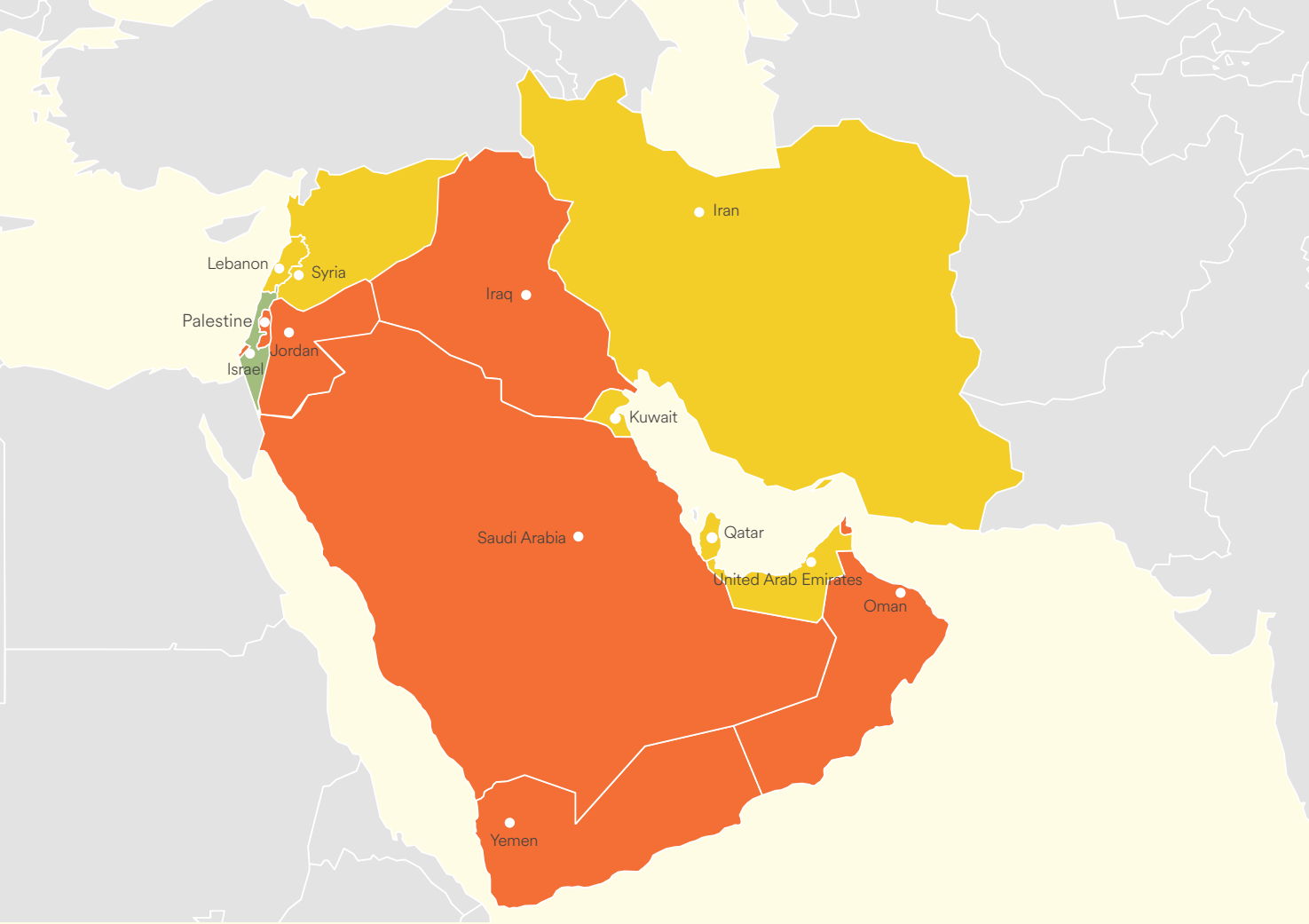
Percentage of African countries in each proficiency band over time

Age trends (2017 - 2024)



Gender trends (2017 - 2024)





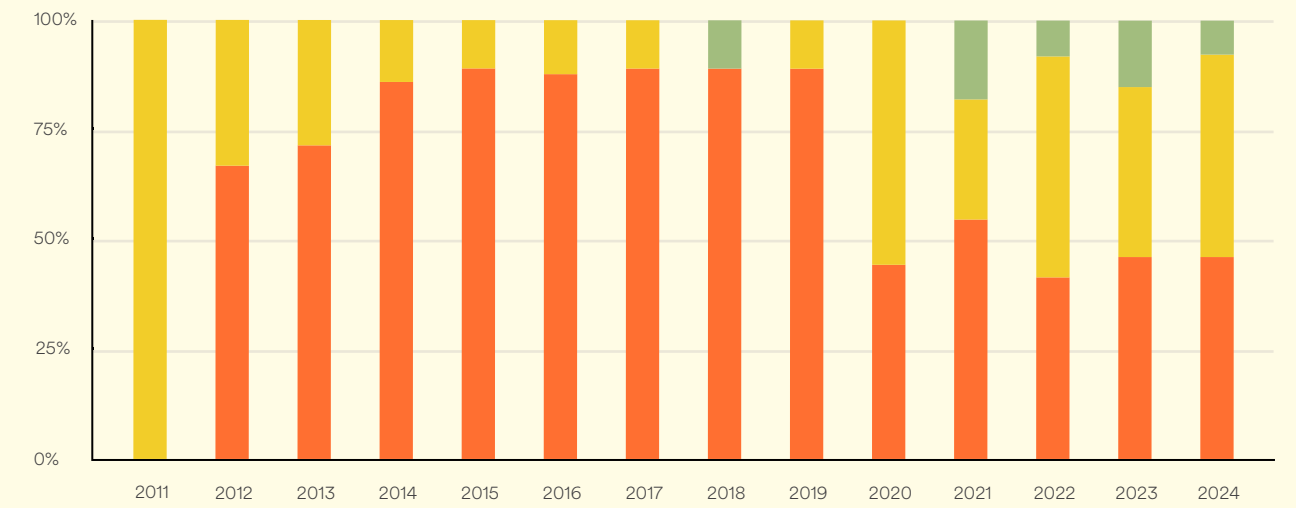
MIDDLE EAST

EF EPI Rankings

51	Israel	522	94	Palestine	448
62	Iran	499	101	Jordan	431
68	Lebanon	492	104	Oman	421
70	United Arab Emirates	489	105	Saudi Arabia	417
75	Qatar	480	107	Iraq	414
77	Syria	473	116	Yemen	394
89	Kuwait	456			

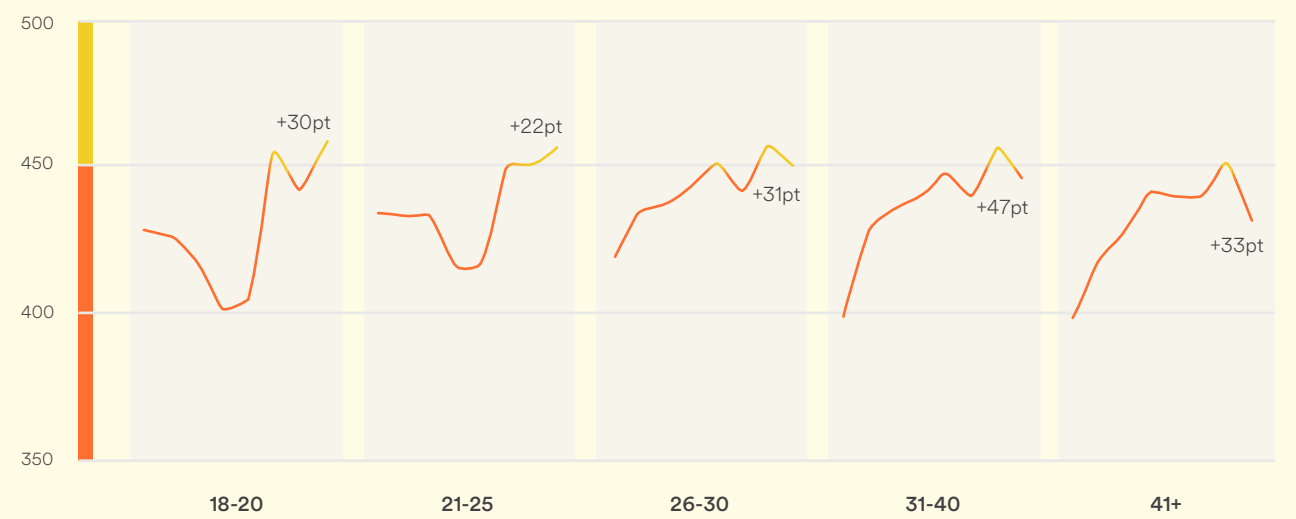
Proficiency Bands: ● Very High ● High ● Moderate ● Low ● Very Low

Proficiency distribution (2011 - 2024)

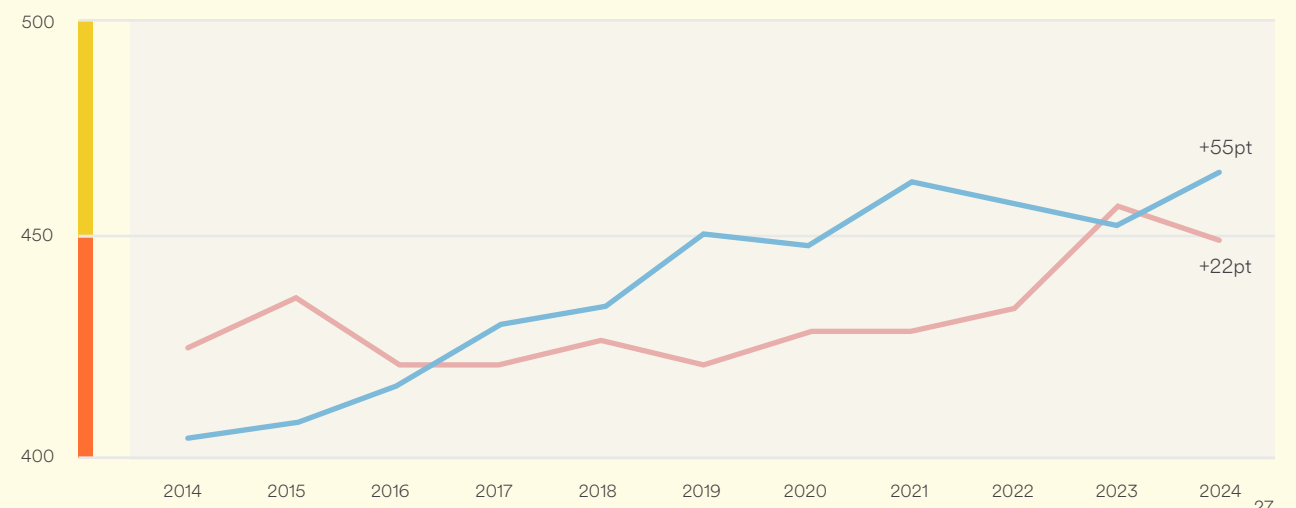


Percentage of Middle Eastern countries in each proficiency band over time

Age trends (2017 - 2024)

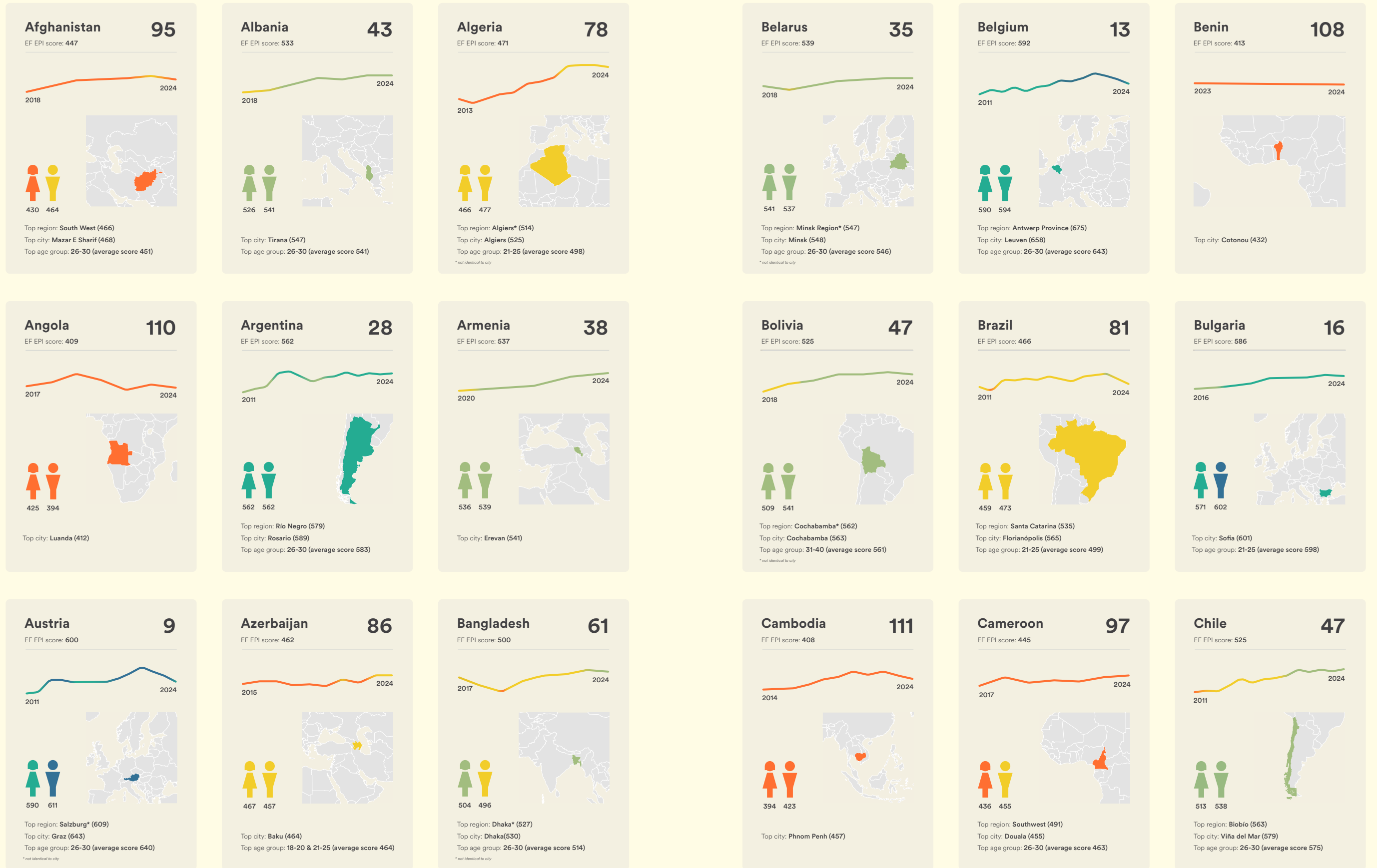


Gender trends (2014 - 2024)



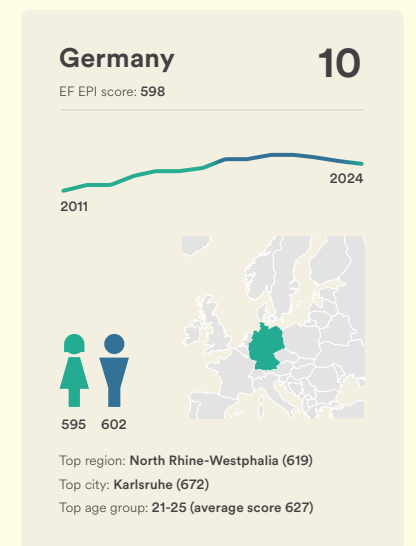
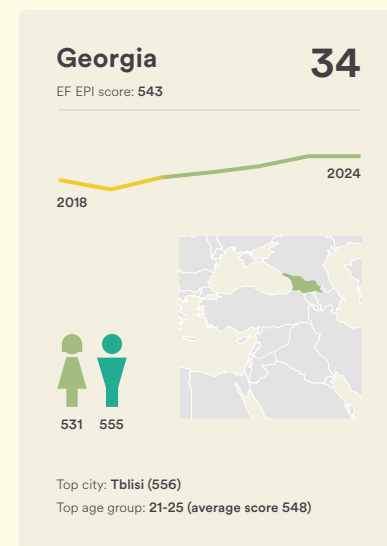
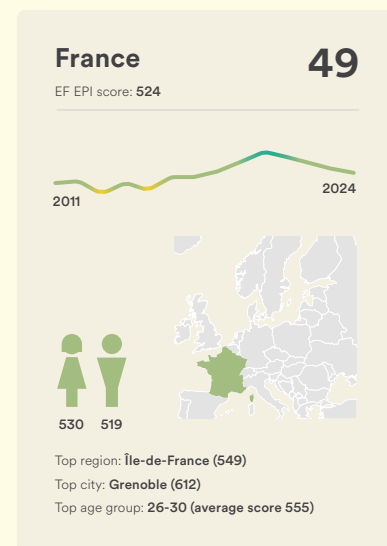
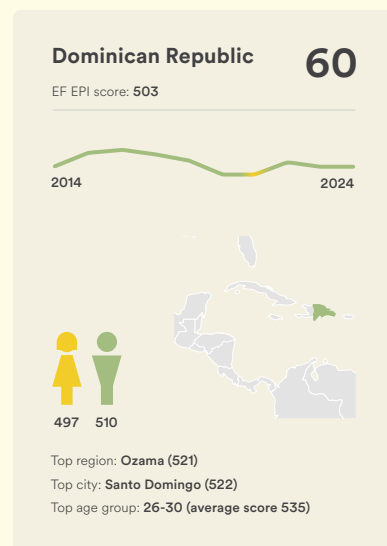
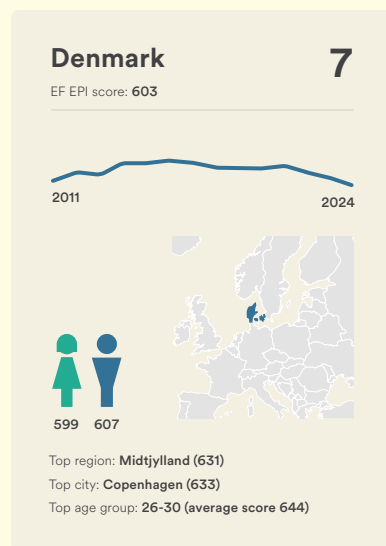
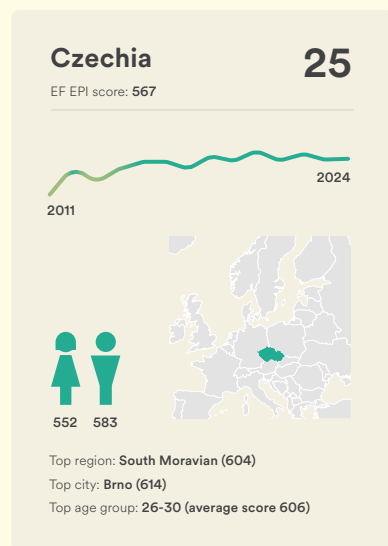
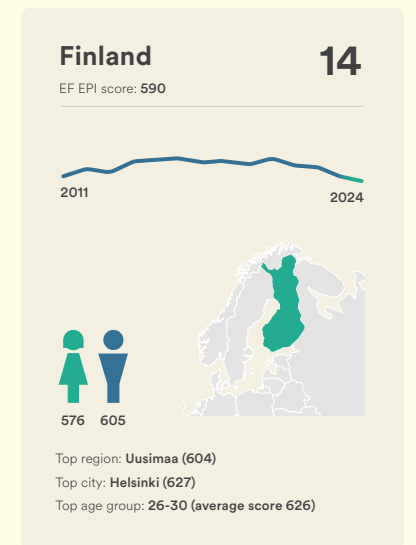
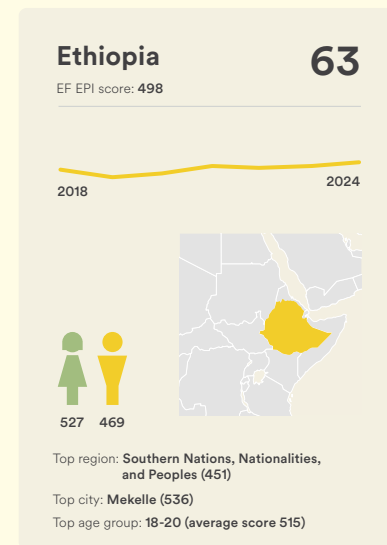
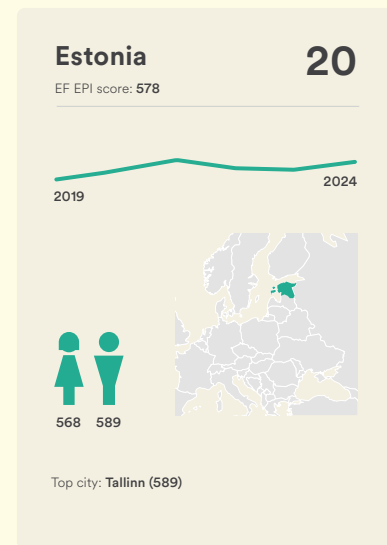
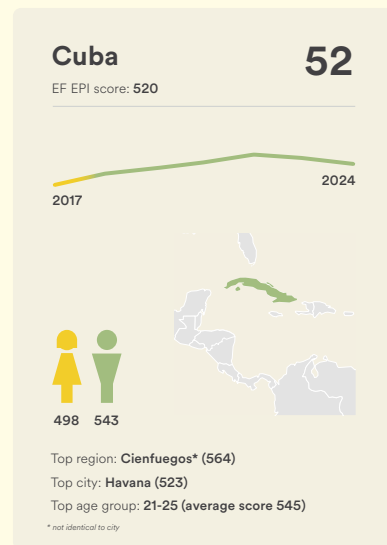
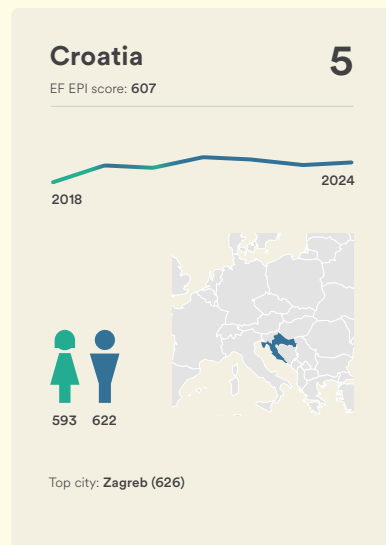
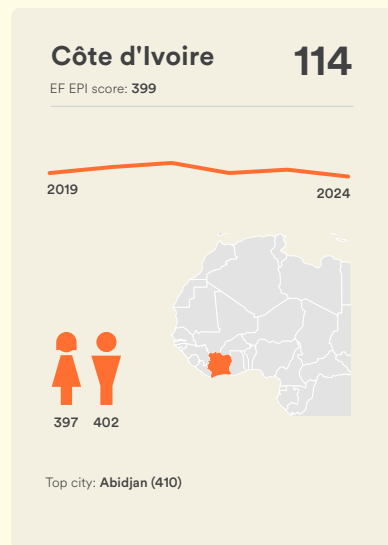
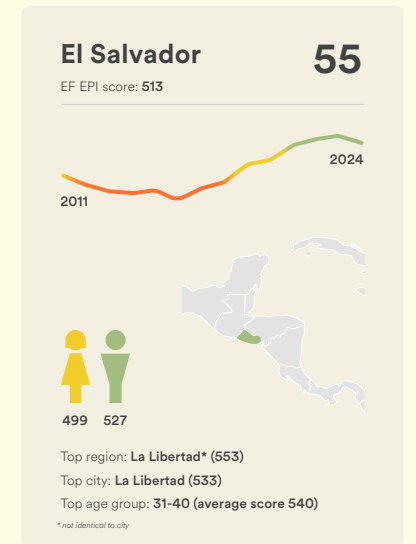
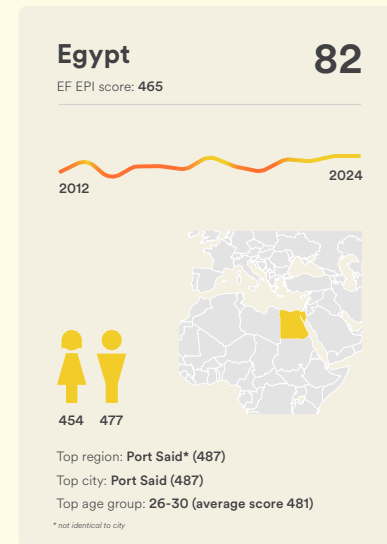
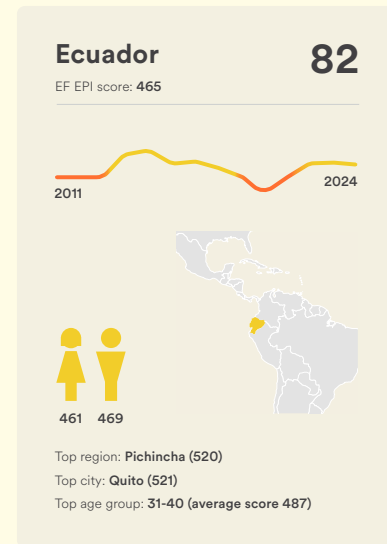
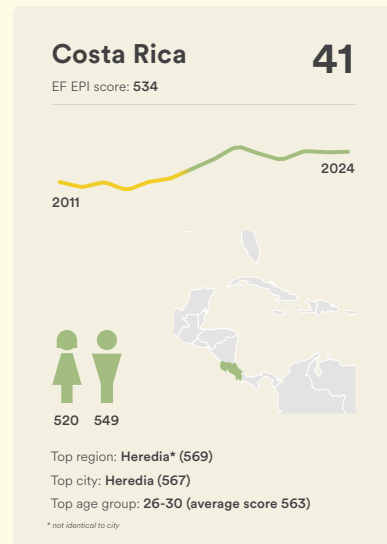
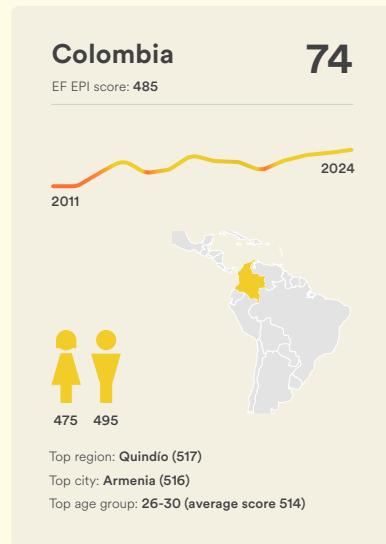
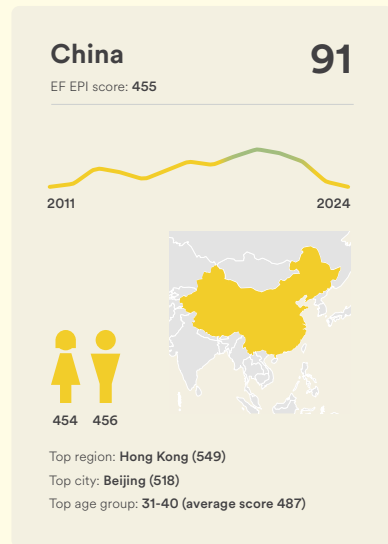
Proficiency Detail

For full details, please visit: www.ef.com/epi



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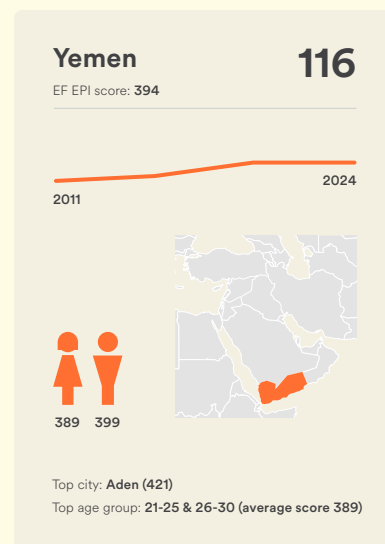
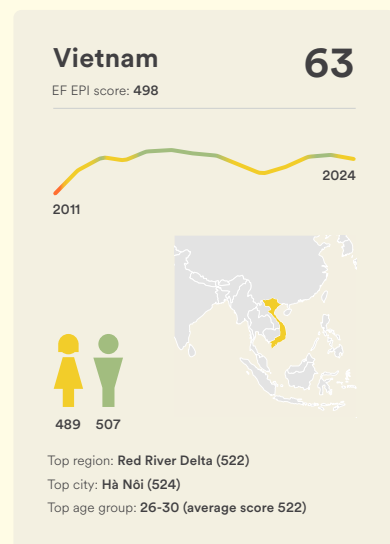
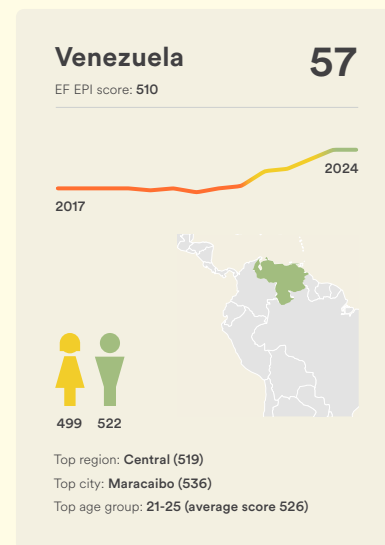
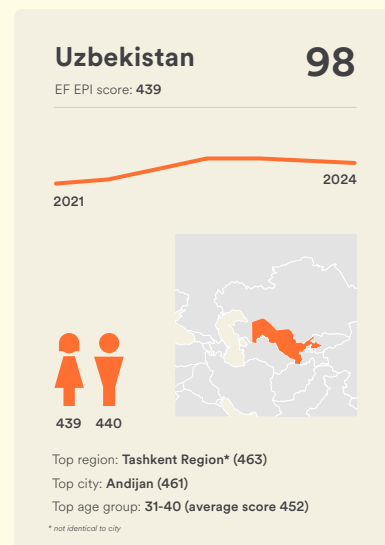
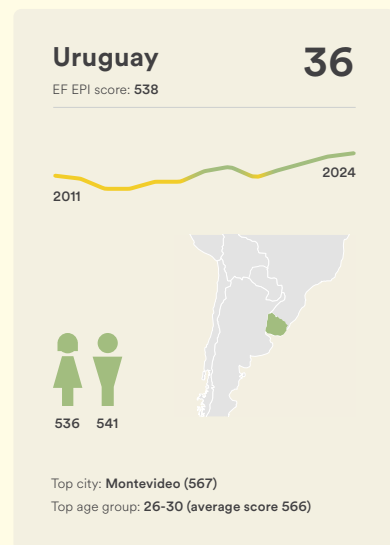
Proficiency Detail

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Conclusions

It would be easy to mistake the findings of this report as an indication that English is so omnipresent, so essential, that professional success and personal happiness depend upon mastery of the language. That is patently not the case. Most people do not work or study in English, and even fewer people use English regularly in their personal lives. While billions of people know some English and hundreds of millions speak it well enough to have a conversation, most people aren't using English most of the time nor do they have any reason to.

However, the worldwide demand for English language training has never been so ubiquitous. English allows people to apply their professional skills in a wider range of contexts. It gives them access to information from more diverse sources. And when they need to, English makes it possible for people to share their ideas with a larger audience. None of these is a failproof recipe for happiness or success, but in a globalized world, speaking English opens doors.

This report enables those making decisions about investing in English language training to measure the impact of their initiatives as well as highlighting where adjustments in those investments can improve outcomes.

Teaching English to adults

From 2015 to 2020, rising levels of English proficiency among working adults were a consistent finding of this report, demonstrating how adult learning and exposure to English in the workplace can make up for earlier learning shortfalls. But the Covid pandemic disrupted that trend. This is the first year since Covid where we can report hints of stabilization in working adult proficiency levels, although many countries are still in decline. Later editions will show if the prior upward trend restarts given the transformation of the workplace itself in recent years.

What remains clear is that working adults can improve their English and many of them want to. However, professionals have usually had some prior contact with English and may approach an English training program convinced they will be bad at it. Successful adult training schemes take advantage of the motivation and practice opportunities provided by the workplace while incrementally building confidence in their learners. Engagement with supportive teachers, coaching towards personal goals and frequent, constructive feedback all play a role in keeping adult learners engaged. While investing in foundational learning for younger learners is essential, it would be premature to abandon successful adult training initiatives, especially given that operational proficiency takes years to develop.

Evening up access

Every country is different, but in most of those surveyed, English proficiency is not evenly spread across the national territory. In addition to proficiency gaps between regions, our data indicates that the largest city in a region often has significantly higher English proficiency than the region as a whole, and in many countries, English skills are concentrated in the capital or a small handful of cities. This uneven distribution of skills is a concern given the role English plays in broadening people's professional opportunities, improving organizational competitiveness and speeding up innovation. These skill gaps may also play into a national picture of deepening urban/rural divide.

There are many reasons why English proficiency would be higher in cities. Cities tend to concentrate wealth, giving people and organizations more to spend on English training. Large companies, often headquartered in cities, are more likely than smaller businesses to invest in continuing education for their employees. Universities are usually in cities, and our data shows that for those who attend university, English proficiency develops throughout their studies and into professional life. Additionally, cities tend to have the most elite public and private schools with their bilingual programs and frequent exchange trips.

To address these geographical disparities, teacher training can help equalize educational outcomes. Professional development and mentoring programs

for English teachers can be restructured to accommodate those who live outside urban centers, considering travel times and other constraints. Digital tools can provide coaching and resources to rural teachers to build upon the training they've received. If necessary, incentives can help keep rural English teaching positions fully staffed.

In parallel, adult education provisioning can be improved in rural areas. When targeting learners spread across a large area, online English training is usually the most efficient solution, contingent on the availability of a reliable internet connection. Robust internet infrastructure can have a dual impact by supporting both online learning and remote work opportunities. Adults who are new to online learning or who have previously failed to complete an online course may find supervised certification schemes easier to adhere to than fully autonomous courses. Employer-led programs can be even more successful if they include built-in opportunities to apply new English skills and a community of colleagues learning together.

Making the most of AI

The past two years have seen the release of AI interfaces which can be transformative for English learners as well as English teachers, although for the time being applying general-purpose AI tools to language learning still requires some ingenuity. But dedicated AI-powered language learning tools are on the way, with the release of early versions of tailored models for specific needs like speaking assessment, and a range of applications using third party models to generate role-play activities and present feedback in user-friendly ways.

For now, large language models can provide English learners limitless practice, explanation and correction without the social discomfort of asking a human for help. Standard AI assistants, when prompted to coach their owners on how to improve their English skills, are relatively good at analyzing patterns, picking up on repeated mistakes and explaining areas of weakness, helping flag the specific skills people need to build upon to improve their own proficiency. As AI is embedded into more applications, it will help the attentive user improve their grammar and usage in the same way spell check has helped so many of us improve our spelling over the years. Although most interactions with AI are currently in writing, some platforms handle spoken English too. Feedback on speech features (as opposed to transcribed content) can be difficult to obtain, however, at least when using general-purpose tools.

For English teachers, current applications of AI primarily revolve around brainstorming and generating lesson plans or classroom content, but dedicated teaching assistants should soon be able to give students individual feedback on some types of work, while recommending customized practice to reinforce weaker skills. Online teachers may already have access to some sort of AI assistant, depending which platform they are using to deliver their lessons. Ideally, AI will lighten the administrative load for all teachers leaving them more time to support students, but those solutions will be platform-dependent and may not all be equally effective.

Regardless of how much assistive technology develops around English learning, we believe that human teachers should remain at the heart of language education. For children, privacy concerns and the predominance of in-person instruction may slow adoption of AI in the classroom. For adult learners who are often studying online already, the temptation to replace human teachers with AI coaches will be strong, especially given how scalable and inexpensive that solution would be. However, the same privacy concerns apply to adults, and a lack of human interaction, uneven quality, and a sense that no one is invested in your progress could strongly dampen motivation, one of the defining characteristics of the successful language learner.

English language education is in an interesting place, with strong network effects reinforcing demand for English proficiency across every industry while skill levels decline, and a new range of technologies emerges from the profusion of the English language internet. Will AI make it easier to learn English? Will it make learning all languages obsolete? Only time will tell, but ultimately, investing in a fairer distribution of language learning opportunities is not just about improving proficiency; it is about empowering individuals, fostering inclusivity and strengthening understanding in an interconnected world.

Recommendations

Most organizations and individuals are convinced of the advantages of English proficiency. However, not everyone knows how to get there. Here are our recommendations:

For companies

- Set realistic goals that take into account the hours needed to close the gap between current and target proficiency levels for each individual.
- Build a culture of internationalism and mobility, including in branch offices.
- Use platforms that facilitate frequent contact between teams in different countries.
- Build diverse, multinational teams in all functions, including the back office.
- Test the entire workforce to identify strategic weaknesses in English.
- Train employees using a role-specific English curriculum.
- Leverage technology to bring flexible learning at scale.
- Set minimum standards of English proficiency for different roles, and test that those standards are being met.
- Reward employees who invest time in improving their English.
- Encourage executives and managers to lead by example and share their experiences as English learners.
- Prioritize access to English learning for all employees.
- Embrace a culture of curiosity and learning across all teams.

For governments and education authorities

- Consider the hours available in the curriculum and the proficiency level achievable for each major educational milestone.
- Use large-scale assessment of both teachers and students to set benchmarks then track progress over time.
- Adjust entrance and exit exams so that they evaluate communicative English skills.
- Include English in the training regimens for all new teachers.
- Re-train English teachers in communicative teaching methods if they were initially trained using other methods.
- Ensure that English is taught only by people who speak the language well enough to instruct in it.
- Set a minimum level required to teach English, test instructors regularly, and train those who miss the mark.
- Teach children to read and write in their own native language.

- Assess the English skills of all public servants and provide training as necessary, not only for their current jobs, but also for their careers.
- Provide English language instruction in job centers and unemployment reduction programs.
- Give adults access to lifelong learning programs and include English training in the provision.
- Ensure that government-funded adult language courses are long enough and intensive enough for learners to meet their goals.
- Develop standardized micro-credentials that certify course quality and improve skill portability.
- Allow TV shows and movies to be shown in their original language, with subtitles rather than dubbing.
- Ensure national and English language training programs are available for migrants and refugees who need them.

For teachers, schools, and universities

- Teach English using a communication-based methodology.
- Reward successful acts of communication rather than focusing on mistakes.
- Engage students outside the classroom with English-language media and encourage them to share their favorites.
- Give students frequent opportunities to speak English through activities like English clubs, theme days, classroom twinning, school trips, and guest speakers.
- Provide a forum for teachers to share best practices and get advice about teaching English effectively.
- Give teachers of all subjects a straightforward path to improve their English and time in their schedule to do so.
- Include English language requirements for all university majors.
- Allow subject classes to be taught in English if both the students and the professor meet the requisite English level.
- Create a remedial English program to help those who have fallen behind.

For individuals

- Play the long game: plan for the hundreds of hours it takes to move from one proficiency level to the next.
- Be aware of growing competence at different stages and celebrate your successes.
- Study English every day, even if only for a few minutes.
- Study in sessions of maximum 1 hour and take a break when you feel your attention waning.
- Set specific, achievable goals and write them down.
- Memorize vocabulary relevant to your job or field of study and begin using it immediately.
- Practice speaking, even if it's just reading a book aloud.
- Engage with content you enjoy in English when you need a break
- Watch TV, read, or listen to the radio in English.
- When traveling to an English speaking country, read the signs, labels and advertisements. Speak as much as possible, even if only to shopkeepers, hotel receptionists and people on the street.
- Use social media in English and set computers, apps and your favorite AI to English to get more built-in exposure to the language.
- Consider online options for regular conversation practice and access to a teacher.
- Periodically return to work you have completed to try and improve on it.

About the Index

Methodology

This edition of the EF EPI is based on test data from more than 2,100,000 test takers around the world who took the EF Standard English Test (EF SET) in 2023.

The EF Standard English Test (EF SET)

The EF SET is an online, adaptive English test of reading and listening skills. It is a standardized, objectively scored test designed to classify test takers' language abilities into one of the six levels established by the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The EF SET is available to any Internet user for free. For more information about the research and development of the EF SET, visit www.efset.org/about/.

EF EPI 2024 scores have been found to correlate strongly with TOEFL iBT 2022 scores ($r=0.76$) and IELTS Academic Test 2022 scores ($r=0.58$). These correlations show that, while these tests have different designs and test taker profiles, they reveal similar trends in national English proficiency.

Test Takers

Although the sample of test takers for the EF EPI is biased toward respondents who are interested in pursuing language study and younger adults, the sample is roughly balanced between male and female respondents and represents adult language learners from a broad range of ages.

- Female respondents comprised 43% of the overall sample, male respondents 36% and respondents who did not provide gender information 21%.
- The median age of respondents who provided age information was 26, with 85% of those respondents under the age of 35, and 99.7% under the age of 60. 19% of respondents did not provide their birth year.
- The median age of male respondents was 27, slightly higher than the median age of female respondents, which was 26.

Only cities and regions with a minimum of 100 test takers were included in the Index, and only countries with a minimum of 400 test takers, but in most cases the number of test takers was far greater.

Sampling Biases

The test-taking population represented in this Index is self-selected and not guaranteed to be representative. Only those who want to learn English or are 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.

The EF SET is 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 would be automatically excluded. The EF SET site is fully adaptive and 38% of test takers in 2023 completed the exam from a mobile device. In parts of the world where Internet usage is low, we would expect the impact of an online format to be strong. This sampling bias would tend to pull scores upward by excluding poorer and less educated people, and those living in areas with little or no Internet connectivity. Nevertheless, open access online tests have proven effective in gathering very large amounts of data about a range of indicators, and we believe they provide valuable information about global English proficiency levels.

Score Calculation

National EF EPI scores are calculated using a three year rolling average. First, we calculate the average EF SET score achieved by all test takers residing in a country during the previous calendar year. Then, we average that score with the published EF EPI score for Y-1 and Y-2. This stabilizes the index and reduces turbulence from sampling variation year over year. We calculate scores for industries, job functions and seniority levels in the same way.

Once national EF EPI scores are calculated, we use them to calculate rollup scores for world regions (Europe, Asia, etc.) as well as global scores. These scores are population weighted by country, so for example, India's score carries a much heavier weight than Thailand's in the calculation of Asia's score. This applies to all scores calculated at the supranational level (world and region scores along with their gender and age group breakdowns).

Scores for subgroups within a country are not population weighted. We calculate these as a three year rolling average calibrated against the national score for coherence.

Based on score thresholds, we assign countries, regions, and cities to proficiency bands. This allows recognition of clusters with similar English skill levels and comparisons within and between regions.

CEFR	EF EPI Score	EF EPI Band
C2	700-800	Very high
C1	600-699	Very high
B2	550-599	High
B1	500-549	Moderate
	450-499	Low
A2	400-449	Very low
	300-399	Very low
A1	200-299	Very low
Pre-A1	1-199	Very low

Other Data Sources

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, region, 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, along with many policymakers, scholars, and analysts, believe it to be a valuable reference point in the global conversation about English language education.

The EF EPI is created through a 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 other factors. Their survey panels tend to be small, with at most a few thousand participants. Because they have been composed using complex sampling methods, they are considered representative of the entire population.

PISA will include an English as a foreign language assessment for the first time in 2025 which will provide an interesting comparison data set for the EF EPI as it benchmarks skill levels among 15-year-olds.

Another source of data about English proficiency comes from national education systems. Many schools test the English skills of every high school student or university applicant using a standardized national assessment. The results 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 while they give a good indication of English proficiency among high school students in one part of the world, they cannot be used for international comparison, nor can they tell us much about adult English proficiency levels.

EF Education First

EF Education First (www.ef.com) is an international education company that focuses on language, academics, cultural exchange, and educational travel. Founded in 1965, EF's mission is "opening the world through education." Millions of students, companies and organizations have participated in an EF program. The EF English Proficiency Index is published by Signum International AG.

EF EPI Proficiency Bands

About EF EPI Proficiency Bands

The EF English Proficiency Index places the surveyed countries and territories into five proficiency bands, from Very High to Very Low. The bands make it easier to identify countries and regions with similar skill levels and to draw comparisons between and within regions.

In the chart on the right, we give examples of tasks that an individual could accomplish at each proficiency band. The selection of tasks is not meant to be exhaustive, but it is a useful reference for understanding how skills advance across the bands.

It is important to keep in mind that a proficiency band merely indicates the skills of an average test taker. The EF EPI seeks to compare countries and territories, which necessitates overlooking individual strengths and weaknesses.

Proficiency	Sample Tasks
Very High Netherlands Denmark Singapore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use nuanced and appropriate language in social situations ✓ Read advanced texts with ease ✓ Negotiate a contract with a fluent English speaker
High Suriname Cyprus Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Make a presentation at work ✓ Understand TV shows ✓ Read a newspaper
Moderate Spain Uruguay South Korea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Participate in meetings in one's area of expertise ✓ Understand song lyrics ✓ Write professional emails on familiar subjects
Low Japan Brazil Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Navigate an English-speaking country as a tourist ✓ Engage in small talk with colleagues ✓ Understand simple emails from colleagues
Very Low Libya Sudan Myanmar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Introduce oneself simply (name, age, country of origin) ✓ Understand simple signs ✓ Give basic directions

CEFR Levels and Can-Do Statements

Proficient User

C2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 other 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 that 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 and regions in the EF EPI fall into bands corresponding to levels A2-C1.

EF EPI Country and Region Rankings

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

	EF EPI 2024 Edition	EF EPI 2023 Edition	Score Change
Netherlands	636	647	-11
Norway	610	614	-4
Singapore	609	631	-22
Sweden	608	609	-1
Croatia	607	603	4
Portugal	605	607	-2
Denmark	603	615	-12
Greece	602	602	0
Austria	600	616	-16
Germany	598	604	-6
South Africa	594	605	-11
Romania	593	596	-3
Belgium	592	608	-16
Finland	590	597	-7
Poland	588	598	-10
Bulgaria	586	589	-3
Hungary	585	588	-3
Slovakia	584	587	-3
Kenya	581	584	-3
Estonia	578	570	8
Luxembourg	576	575	1
Philippines	570	578	-8
Lithuania	569	576	-7
Serbia	568	569	-1
Czechia	567	565	2
Malaysia	566	568	-2
Suriname	563	—	NEW
Argentina	562	560	2
Cyprus	558	—	NEW
Nigeria	557	562	-5
Switzerland	550	553	-3
Hong Kong (China)	549	558	-9
Honduras	545	544	1
Georgia	543	541	2
Belarus	539	539	0
Spain	538	535	3
Uruguay	538	533	5
Armenia	537	528	9
Moldova	536	535	1
Ukraine	535	530	5
Costa Rica	534	534	0
Ghana	534	537	-3
Albania	533	533	0
Russia	532	532	0
Paraguay	531	530	1
Italy	528	535	-7
Bolivia	525	532	-7
Chile	525	518	7
France	524	531	-7
South Korea	523	525	-2
Israel	522	514	8
Cuba	520	531	-11
Peru	519	521	-2
Uganda	518	529	-11
El Salvador	513	524	-11
Nepal	512	507	5
Venezuela	510	508	2
Guatemala	507	515	-8

	EF EPI 2024 Edition	EF EPI 2023 Edition	Score Change
Nicaragua	505	503	2
Dominican Republic	503	512	-9
Bangladesh	500	504	-4
Iran	499	505	-6
Ethiopia	498	490	8
Vietnam	498	505	-7
Turkey	497	493	4
Tunisia	496	502	-6
Pakistan	493	497	-4
Lebanon	492	496	-4
India	490	504	-14
United Arab Emirates	489	486	3
Panama	488	486	2
Tanzania	487	491	-4
Sri Lanka	486	491	-5
Colombia	485	480	5
Qatar	480	482	-2
Morocco	479	478	1
Syria	473	467	6
Algeria	471	475	-4
Mozambique	469	—	RE-ENTRY
Indonesia	468	473	-5
Brazil	466	487	-21
Ecuador	465	467	-2
Egypt	465	463	2
Mongolia	464	482	-18
Madagascar	463	474	-11
Azerbaijan	462	463	-1
Mexico	459	451	8
Kyrgyzstan	457	450	7
Cape Verde	456	—	NEW
Kuwait	456	461	-5
China	455	464	-9
Japan	454	457	-3
Myanmar	449	450	-1
Palestine	448	445	3
Afghanistan	447	456	-9
Malawi	447	460	-13
Cameroon	445	438	7
Uzbekistan	439	442	-3
Haiti	432	421	11
Sudan	432	430	2
Jordan	431	431	0
Senegal	429	438	-9
Kazakhstan	427	415	12
Oman	421	418	3
Saudi Arabia	417	408	9
Thailand	415	416	-1
Iraq	414	410	4
Benin	413	416	-3
Tajikistan	412	388	24
Angola	409	416	-7
Cambodia	408	421	-13
Libya	405	392	13
Rwanda	401	405	-4
Côte d'Ivoire	399	409	-10
Somalia	399	411	-12
Yemen	394	392	2

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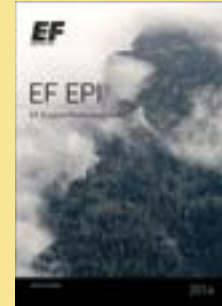
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