

Swedes place 4th in English skills ranking

Written by Johan Nylander

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Swedes have excellent English skills, according to a unique study by educational company EF. But Norwegians and Danes have even better.

The EF English Proficiency Index -- the first of its kind to rank English language proficiency -- pulled its results from more than two million people in 44 different countries who took a free online English test between 2007 and 2009.

Norwegians were ranked as having the world's best English skills as a second language, followed by the Dutch and Danes. Swedes came in at number four, ahead of the Finns, according to the EF EPI.

"People from small Nordic countries are motivated to learn English at a high level because they know that English language proficiency is essential for their professional careers. That may be the only way to survive in the global economy and find economic success outside of their borders", Eva Kockum, President of EF International Language Centers, told Radio Netherlands Worldwide.

Founded in 1965, Stockholm-based EF is the world's largest private educational company.

FULL LIST: COUNTRY-BY-COUNTRY

Rank, Country, Score Level

Very High Proficiency

- 1 Norway 69.09
- 2 Netherlands 67.93
- 3 Denmark 66.58
- 4 Sweden 66.26
- 5 Finland 61.25

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High Proficiency

- 6 Austria 58.58
- 7 Belgium 57.23
- 8 Germany 56.64
- 9 Malaysia 55.54

Moderate Proficiency

- 10 Poland 54.62
- 11 Switzerland 54.60
- 12 Hong Kong 54.44
- 13 South Korea 54.19
- 14 Japan 54.17
- 15 Portugal 53.62
- 16 Argentina 53.49
- 17 France 53.16
- 18 Mexico 51.48
- 19 Czech Republic 51.31
- 20 Hungary 50.80
- 21 Slovakia 50.64

Low Proficiency

- 22 Costa Rica 49.15
- 23 Italy 49.05
- 24 Spain 49.01
- 25 Taiwan 48.93
- 26 Saudi Arabia 48.05
- 27 Guatemala 47.80
- 28 El Salvador 47.65
- 29 China 47.62
- 30 India 47.35
- 31 Brazil 47.27
- 32 Russia 45.79

Very Low Proficiency

- 33 Dominican Republic 44.91
- 34 Indonesia 44.78
- 35 Peru 44.71
- 36 Chile 44.63
- 37 Ecuador 44.54
- 38 Venezuela 44.43

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39 Vietnam 44.32

40 Panama 43.62

41 Colombia 42.77

42 Thailand 39.41

43 Turkey 37.66

44 Kazakhstan 31.74

Source: EF English Proficiency Index