

Estonian

Eesti

Spoken in: Estonia

Region: Northern Europe

Total speakers: 1.1 million

Genetic Classification: Uralic languages Finno-Ugric languages Finno-Lappic Baltic Finnic Estonian

Official language of: Estonia

Estonian belongs to the Finnic branch of the Finno-Ugric languages. Estonian is not related to its southern neighbor Latvian, which is a Baltic language related to Lithuanian. Estonian is related to Finnish.

The main difference between Estonian and Finnish is that Finnish has a lot of loan words from Swedish, while Estonian contains many words of German origin, plus some words from Russian, Latin, Greek and English. There is considerable mutual intelligibility between Estonian and Finnish.

The oldest examples of written Estonian are names, words, and phrases found in early 13th century chronicles. The earliest surviving longer text dates from the 16th century.

Currently SSWAHS Health Care Interpreter Service employs 1 Estonian sessional interpreter.

Estonian alphabet

A a	B b	C c	D d	E e	F f	G g	H h	I i	J j	K k
aa	bee	cee	dee	ee	eff	gee	haa	ii	jott	kaa
[a]	[p]	[t͡s]	[t]	[e]	[f]	[k]	[h]	[i]	[j]	[kk]
L l	M m	N n	O o	P p	Q q	R r	S s	Š š	Z z	Ž ž
ell	emm	enn	oo	pee	kuu	ærr	ess	šee	zee	žee
[l]	[m]	[n]	[o]	[pp]	[kv]	[r]	[ss]	[ʃ]	[s]	[ʒ]
T t	U u	V v	W w	Õ õ	Ä ä	Ö ö	Ü ü	X x	Y y	
tee	uu	vee	kaksivee	õõ	ää	öö	üü	ikks	ypsilon	
[tt]	[u]	[v]	[v]	[õ]	[æ]	[ø]	[y]	[ks]	[j, y]	

The letters f, š, z and ž are only used in words of foreign origin, while the letters c, q, w, x and y are used mainly in personal names, placenames and foreign words.