



# How To Learn Spanish

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## Welcome

Bienvenidos! Welcome to the wonderful world of speaking Spanish. This beautiful, romantic language was a part of civilization long before Columbus ever discovered the new world. The long and varied history of the Spanish language makes it a fascinating challenge to even the most intrepid of scholars. Are you prepared to step into history and take the plunge in the unfamiliar waters of Latin society?

## The History of the Spanish Language

The Spanish language is considered by linguists to be one of the world's "romantic" languages. The romantic languages were European languages derived from what was known as vulgar Latin, or the Latin spoken by the soldiers and shopkeepers of ancient Rome. One has to wonder how a language known as vulgar Latin came to spawn the most romantic languages in the world (then again, maybe not). This language was carried by the expansion of the Roman empire in the three centuries following the year 200 BC, evolving into the various languages we are familiar with today after the fall of the central government and the rise of independent nations. Also counted among the romantic languages are:

- French
- Italian
- Romanian
- Portugese



Spanish is no longer restricted to the continent of Europe. As a matter of fact, due to the inherently curious nature of the Spanish explorers Spanish is the primary language spoken by the people of various islands and countries around the world. Anyone who took the time to master the language with the whim to travel and an inquisitive nature would find right at home in Mexico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Spain, Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Argentina,

Bolivia, Chile, Columbia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela, to name but a few.

## **Why Learn Spanish?**

### ***Objections***

There is a great deal of controversy today on the practice of learning to speak Spanish, particularly in light of the fact that the number of illegal immigrants travelling from Central America to North America (that we know of) has increased dramatically in recent years. Many claim that if Americans were to learn to speak Spanish it would simply further the problem of illegal immigration by making it easier for them to function in society. The common belief is that if they were forced to learn to speak English to survive in society the immigration issue would rapidly evaporate on its own.

The simple fact of the matter is that Americans are extremely arrogant when it comes to their language. The fact that English is a fairly universal language has led them on a slow slide into complacency. Almost every other country around the world requires that its school children learn to speak (at the very least) English and the native language of the country; as a matter of fact, if you were to visit a school in Europe you would find that their children devote a great deal of time to learning to speak not only their own language, but that of each of their neighboring countries as well. That means that anyone studying in France would learn to speak both French and English, as well as at least the fundamentals of Italian, German and Spanish in order to assure that when the time comes for them to take their place in the workforce they will be able to interact with their neighbors, both at home and abroad.

Americans have never been required to do so, for the simple fact that English *is* taught in most foreign countries. Upon travelling to a foreign country they are almost guaranteed to be

able to find at least one individual who speaks English in any establishment that they go to. This means that the practice of learning the language of your neighbors has been cast aside. By rights Americans should learn to speak both French and Spanish, in order to give them a leg up on doing business with their closest neighbors, Mexico and Canada; however, this has been spurned in the arrogant belief that anyone wishing to have any interaction, whether it be for financial or personal gain, in the United States must learn to speak English in order to do so, as English is the language of America.

Never mind, of course, that until recent years the United States didn't even HAVE an "official" language in the eyes of its citizens. The United States is a melting pot, and its original settlers came to her golden shores speaking every language under the sun. In fact, in some parts of the United States this is still apparent. French is spoken extensively in Louisiana, and throughout California, New Mexico, Texas, Arizona and Florida Spanish is considered to be the "official" second language of the region. Throughout parts of the mid-west textbooks were printed in German until World War II, when the national distaste of all things German following Hitler's reign of terror led to said textbooks being reprinted in English and the German language slowly but surely being nudged into obscurity. In light of the extremely diverse linguistic history that the people of the United States enjoy, it is difficult to understand precisely where their objection to the presence of the Spanish language "from sea to shining sea" evolves from.

## **The Real Reason That Many People Choose Not to Learn Spanish**

Of course, these are the reasons that many give based on the political conflicts in the United States. The question is, are these the real reasons? Are we seeing the whole story? Or is there another underlying cause to their complaints that has nothing to do with patriotism or the continuation of a way of life?

There are a number of reasons why a person may choose not to learn the Spanish language, almost all of them completely unrelated to the political climate of the country they choose to inhabit. For most of those individuals who firmly refuse to learn to speak in a foreign tongue (this applies to all languages, not just Spanish) the fear of failure is their driving motivation. It is far simpler for them to convince themselves that they do not want to learn than to face the possibility that they may at some point in the future make a mistake when they are speaking and appear to be a fool in front of their friends and colleagues. What does this mean? It means that the biggest challenge that you are going to face when it comes to learning to speak Spanish is not from the outside world, but from within yourself!

## Benefits

Once you have acknowledged and discarded the obstacles which are going to stand in your way on your quest for knowledge you can now begin to think about the benefits of learning to speak another language. If you have chosen to read this report you probably already have your own reasons for learning to speak Spanish, whatever they may be; however, if you are still uncertain as to whether the time and effort that this endeavor is going to require is worth it, keep reading. Let us illustrate to you the many doors that the Spanish language will open up in your future.

- 1) Learning to speak Spanish is becoming an important factor when you step into the workforce. Due to the advances in technology that our civilization has made there is no part of our economy that is solely our own. We are very much a global civilization, and our business dealings are going to occur all over the globe. You will become a priceless commodity to your company if you have the ability to converse fluently with any of the twenty-plus countries that claim Spanish as its native tongue (although if you are smart you will take the opportunity to ensure that that price is very high indeed) as well as earning a great deal of respect from your international clients.
- 2) You can remove the chances of someone playing you for a fool. Face it, it is very tempting to talk over someone's head when you know full well that they cannot understand you. We do it to our children all the time. What is to stop any of the millions of Spanish speaking citizens of the world from doing the same to you, knowing that you do not understand what is going on? Are you willing to place your fate entirely in the hands of an interpreter, who could have their own agenda just as easily as the person with whom you are interacting, or do you want to take your fate into your own hands? The choice is yours.
- 3) You are going to have a greater opportunity to travel. Even though English is a fairly international language it is not by any means spoken everywhere. Even in areas where it is taught as a matter of course it is truly mastered by very few (how much do you remember from your high school language

classes?) Unless you are willing to engage the aid of an interpreter (and we've already discussed the wisdom of that) you are at some point or another going to find yourself forced into interacting with one of the natives of the country. You are going to need to understand at least the fundamentals of their language in order for your stay in their country to be a pleasant one.

- 4) You are going to have the opportunity to meet new people. Even though there are millions of English speaking people in the world there are even more that do not speak English well enough to carry on a conversation. Have you ever taken the moment to consider that we are a huge country surrounded by two other very large countries and situated just north of another very large continent, yet we very rarely get to know our neighbors because we of the United States do not learn to speak Spanish or French with any type of fluency unless we have independently made the effort to do so and therefore are eternally separated by a language barrier? Think of the hundreds of thousands of people living in those countries that could share stories and experiences with you, people that could potentially become friends and/or business associates, that you will never get to know because you declared them lacking the importance to justify the efforts spent to learn their language. It seems very unfair to deny them and yourself the opportunity.
  
- 5) Speaking of the hundreds of people that are out there in the world, imagine what being able to speak other languages will do for your dating life! Have you ever felt as though there is no one in the world who was created just for you? (If you are already married or involved in a serious relationship please skip over this question-there is no way you are going to get away with the excuse, "the report on the internet told me to." If you are not, keep reading.) Have you ever taken the time to consider the possibility that there is someone on this planet for you, they just don't happen to share the same nationality? Imagine how vast your dating pool is going to become when you learn to speak another language, and will therefore be

able to interact with a whole other country (or two, or three, or twenty...)

- 6) You will have the opportunity to learn all about a new culture. Have you ever felt as though you are tired of being stuck in a rut? Have you ever yearned to break free of your daily routine and experience all that life has to offer you? Have you ever considered doing so by learning to see life through another person's eyes? There is no way to learn a new language without learning the ins and outs of its culture; its religion, its manner of dress, its holidays and methods of celebration, its foods and its people. The opportunity to see a whole other culture and incorporate the best of it into your own to broaden your horizons is one that you should never pass up.
  
- 7) You will be able to gain a greater appreciation for history and the way that our government and manner of living developed. There is no better way to learn history than to see it through another's eyes, and when you are learning to speak a new language you are doing precisely that. You will learn how their ancestors came to be, and how their language developed from its roots to the full fledged manner of speaking that it is today.
  
- 8) You will be able to read many historical documents and texts in their original form. If you are a history buff you will truly appreciate the benefits of this. Due to the fact that Spanish is so widely spread across the globe many of the greatest documents in history were written in Spanish, and regardless of how fluent an interpreter may be in the individual dialect a document always loses some of its power and appeal in the translation. By learning to read the language in its true form (something that is going to come very easily to you once you know how to speak it by the simple virtue of the fact that the written form of the Spanish language is as close as possible to the way that it is spoken) you will be able to read many of these historical documents and gain an impression of the

feelings, emotions and hidden agendas that drove their creation, a task that is all but impossible when a document has had to be translated into English.

- 9) If you are thinking of going into the military, or performing any sort of government service, you are going to need to learn Spanish, along with many other languages. Members of the military are given the opportunity (not always by choice) to learn Afrikaans, Arabic, Chinese, Dari, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Kurmanji, Pashto, Persian, Portugese, Russian, Sorani, Serbo, Spanish, Tagalog, Thai, Turkish, Urdu and Uzbek.

As you can see, being a part of the military, especially a member of a military field unit, is going to require that you stretch your language abilities far beyond their commonly perceived barriers. It is essential that, should you find yourself in a foreign country and separated from your unit and/or interpreter, you be able to conduct yourself appropriately, blend in with the neighbors and ensure that the natives (particularly those involved with the conflict that you were sent there to resolve) do not choose to take advantage of your ignorance.

- 10) In addition to the doors that learning to speak Spanish can open to you in society, did you know that learning another language can actually make you smarter? That's right. The brain is a muscle, and like any muscle when it suffers from disuse. When we are children our brains are forced to take in a tremendous amount of information. We must learn to walk, talk, dress ourselves and identify basic objects. A majority of the knowledge that we must have in order to function in society we learn before we ever set foot in a classroom. The vast variety of information that our brains must take in forces us to use our brains to the maximum of their ability, and it is as we are children that we are the "smartest".

When we become adults we cease to use our brains as strenuously. Upon entering the workforce we find ourselves falling into a daily routine, and the knowledge that we use on a daily basis becomes commonplace. We no longer force our brains to work to take in new information, and because of this our mind begins to become sloppy.

Due to the differences in grammatical structure between English and Spanish the brain is forced to work in different ways, stretching beyond what it previously viewed as boundaries. This allows the brain to connect different electrical synapses, and as the brain is exercised it grows stronger. Your intelligence will rise exponentially! Just as your brain will become accustomed to stretching around the shape and size of its new language so too will it become accustomed to approaching other factors of life from a new viewpoint, exploring all of the angles. This will allow you a greater understanding into the workings of the world that were previously closed to you, and it is understanding, not the ability to recite fact verbatim, that equals true intelligence.

11) You will gain a new respect for those that do not speak your language. It is very easy to look at someone and wonder why they don't just learn to speak English. It is often very humbling to discover precisely how difficult it truly is to gain any type of fluency in a language that is not your own, particularly if you do not hear it on a regular basis. The differences in grammar alone between English and many of earth's other languages will be enough to throw you into a tailspin, regardless of your intelligence, and you will begin to understand why it is unwise to judge too harshly those that live in your country but do not speak the language. Add on to this the fact that within any language is a number of dialects and phrases particular to a region and not understood anywhere else and you will begin to understand the true difficulty and bravery that those people who have taken that step to start a new life in a new country with a new language have truly shown.

12) Learning to speak Spanish is fun! Aside from the practical matters addressed earlier it can be a great adventure to learn a new language, and Spanish is close enough to English that you are going to find yourself learning far more quickly than you might think. In a matter of months you are going to find yourself able to carry on simple conversations, and the very fact that you are stepping beyond the boundaries of what you originally believed to be possible for yourself and instead are going on an adventure to learn even more is going to be more thrilling than you may have originally believed to be possible. Remember to take the time to enjoy that, and when you find yourself moaning and groaning underneath the weight of hundreds of vocabulary lists take the time to remember that you are doing what many of your counterparts do not have the courage to do, and enjoy the experience.

## **How to Learn Spanish**

Okay, now that you have decided that you are definitely ready to step out of your safety zone and begin to explore the wonders of the Spanish language you are probably wondering where you should start.

### ***What to Buy***

There are a couple of things that you are going to want to purchase before you launch any type of Spanish language program. The first thing that you are going to need is a Spanish/English dictionary. There are a number of them on the market, and none is really better than the other; however, if you want to be able to get maximum effect for your dollar you are going to want to choose one that:

- a) has a pronunciation guide at the beginning to help you with letter and vowel sounds
- b) has a section showing you the conjugation of regular verbs and the most commonly used abnormal verbs (regular and irregular verbs will be discussed a little bit in the basic vocabulary appendix section of this manuscript)
- c) has a Spanish to English and an English to Spanish section to allow you to look up words in either language
- d) has a section showing the past, present and future tenses of verbs
- e) explains the concepts of masculine and feminine nouns. Even though your dictionary is going to be able to let you

know if a noun is masculine or feminine you are not always going to have it at hand, and if you know the tricks for quickly identifying whether a noun is masculine or feminine you will have an advantage right from the very beginning when it comes time to put words into action.

Random House released a good Spanish/English:English/Spanish dictionary some years ago. If you are unsure as to what dictionary you should purchase take a trip to the bookstore of your local university. The dictionaries used by the classes taught there are almost always of the highest quality (although if they do not match the criteria shown above it may be best to leave them on the shelf and continue your search).

Another item that you are going to find extremely useful in your quest is a three ring binder, accompanied by looseleaf paper and a folder to keep your notes handy. Even though you are not actually taking a Spanish class it is going to feel like it at times, and you are going to want to have a place to write down any notes and such regarding issues you have with the material, as well as a place to keep any printouts, pictures, etc. you stumble across. Keeping these items handy is going to go a long way towards helping you learn, as you can read over them when you have free time.

*Tip #1: You are going to find yourself quickly forgetting what you have learned until it becomes a part of your daily life, so make an attempt to sit down for a half an hour every night and review your notes.*

## **Getting Started**

Many people make the mistake of thinking that since they are attempting to learn to speak a foreign language they must enroll in some form of formal learning program. This is not necessarily true. If you are the type of person who learns best through formal instruction than by all means take advantage of the myriad opportunities available through your local colleges and universities; almost any secondary learning establishment will have a foreign language program in which you can enroll.

There are, however, many drawbacks to attempting to learn to speak Spanish through formal classroom methods. The simple fact of the matter is that college Spanish classes divide their curriculum carefully so as not to overwhelm the average college student, who is attempting to take Spanish on top of a host of other classes. This means that your learning is going to be limited to what it is that they want to teach you, and you are probably going to be in the program for years before you can develop true fluency.

This has two major drawbacks. First and foremost, there is time. You probably want to learn to speak Spanish far sooner than four or five years from now. Entering into a progressive Spanish program is going to require at least that amount of time.

Secondly, there is cost. College courses are not an inexpensive proposition. Even in a community college it is going to cost you several hundred dollars to enroll in a single Spanish class. Multiply that sum by several years and you are probably going to start to feel your enthusiasm for this endeavor begin to wane; after all, who wants to take on a challenge that is going to result in their handing over a large portion of their financial resources to a dispassionate academic institution?

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, is the fact that most academic establishments go about the process of teaching a student to speak a foreign language in the most difficult manner possible. Remember when you were first learning to speak English? How did you learn? Did your mother sit you down with a vocabulary list and insist that you learn to associate different words with various objects, with a quiz to be given at the end of the week?

Certainly not! You learned to speak English by hearing it and associating it with various objects in your environment. As you grew, your environment and vocabulary grew with you until you had a firm grasp on the English language and could communicate easily with those around you. Only then did you attempt to learn to read and write. Understanding the language made learning to apply it to paper much simpler. Classroom environments insist on teaching a student to read and write the language directly alongside learning to speak it, leaving very little room for errors in grammar or translation. Consequently, most students do not truly grasp the language, and within months of leaving the classroom will have forgotten everything that they have learned.

For the average citizen attempting to take a language class is not the best choice (although if you have already gained some mastery of the Spanish language this will present you with an excellent opportunity to broaden your horizons). It is much simpler (and therefore much more effective) to learn the Spanish language in the same manner as you did English. You will learn it from your environment.

Of course, chances are that you don't have several years to learn a language in the same manner as you did when you were a child, and if you are living in a primarily English speaking country you are going to find it very difficult to learn to speak Spanish from your environment. Nevertheless, it has been proven to be much more successful to learn a language in this manner than through formal teaching, and therefore the responsibility is going to fall solely on your shoulders. Your success and the amount of fluency you will gain in the Spanish language is going to depend entirely on the amount of time and effort that you are willing to put into it.

Several years ago it was discovered that people could best learn a language through the process of immersion (yes, it is rather frightening that it took them that long to realize that people living and working in a foreign country picked up the native language much more quickly than those who studied it in a more formal manner in their own residence). The process of immersion means that the individual who is attempting to learn is surrounded by the language, so much so that it plays a role in everything that they see or do throughout the course of their daily life. If you will recall, you heard the English language and saw writings in English everywhere around you when you were a child. If you were to be picked up and placed into a Spanish speaking country you would learn the language very quickly as a matter of necessity.

Since it is a fairly safe bet that if you are reading this you do not live in a Spanish speaking environment, there are a couple of tricks to help you to implement the immersion method in your own home. You are going to have to remember, however, that there is no instant fix or five minute method to learning to speak a language. This is the trap that many individuals fall into when they are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars in language learning materials. It is going to take time, patience and perseverance if you are to succeed.

First, remember that the goal of the immersion method is to teach you to first speak the language, then to read it. Since as we mentioned before the Spanish language is written in precisely the same manner in which it is spoken (we'll get into that in greater detail later) making the transition from one to another is going to be very simple once you have mastered Spanish vocabulary. To that end, you want to surround yourself with the Spanish language as much as possible.

- 1) Television. It is through the television that we obtain the greatest amount of information about our society and environment, and it is through this same television that we broaden our vocabulary. Most major television companies, such as HBO, offer television programs in Spanish to their Hispanic viewers. Subscribe to these channels, and enjoy watching your favorite movies and TV shows in a different language. The fact that you are already familiar with the action and the character development means that you will be able to pick up on what the characters are saying much more quickly.

Watch the nightly news in Spanish. The accompanying headlines and action in the background will help you to begin to place words to images, associating the two in your head until you are able to recognize them in any

environment. Do not worry if at first you do not understand a single word coming from the broadcaster's lips; you will in time.

In addition to the nightly news, try and make it a practice to watch daytime television in Spanish as well. Sitcoms and soap operas are particularly effective at expressing precisely what it is that they are attempting to convey with images rather than words, and consequently will also be a great help in aiding you with the association of words and images. These types of shows also use the day to day speech that you will engage in once you are confident enough to enter into conversations with Spanish speaking natives, and you will be surprised at how quickly sentences and phrases begin to fall into place in your head.

- 2) Radio. Keep your radio on to any Spanish broadcasting station you may have in your area. Not only will you be able to hear the Spanish language spoken, you will be able to hear music in Spanish as well. Spanish music comes in all shapes and forms, and you should be able to find a station that provides you with the genre of music which you prefer. Listen to the songs, and attempt to sing along as phrases become clear to you. Do not be afraid to look up the lyrics to see what they mean; you are being given an excellent opportunity to increase your vocabulary, master the pronunciation and accent of your words and learn a bit about Hispanic culture while enjoying yourself at the same time!

*Tip #2-Go out and buy a couple of CDs by an artist performing in Spanish in the genre of music that you like, and listen to them regularly. As you study the Spanish language you will begin to understand the words that they are saying, and will be able to appreciate an entirely unique portion of Spanish culture.*

- 3) Speak to people in Spanish as much as humanly possible. If you work in an area where you have a significantly Hispanic workforce attempt to talk to them in their language. They are going to be thrilled that you are making an attempt to learn to speak their native tongue, and although they may laugh at you when you make a mistake most of the time it will be in the spirit of good hearted fun, in the same way you would laugh at a friend who made a mistake without intending to be cruel. They are going to prove to be your most valuable allies in your quest to master the Spanish language, and will be able to not only tell you the proper names of the items around you but will be able to correct your mistakes as well.

Their assistance is especially valuable because, as we mentioned before, the easiest way to gain fluency quickly in a language is to master the vocabulary pertaining to the environment around you. If you are in an environment where you are constantly hearing Spanish, speaking of the objects that surround you on a day to day basis you are going to begin to master not only basic nouns, but basic phrases as well. For example, if you happen to work in a restaurant where the majority of the staff speaks Spanish you are going to quickly pick up on both food nouns and basic phrases, such as "I'm hungry", "I'm thirsty", and "Can I have...?" (Along with a host of less desirable phrases, but we won't go into that right now-you'll have plenty of opportunity to discover that on your own!)

The point of this was to illustrate the fact that when you hear Spanish every day you will grow more accustomed to it, and before long will find yourself answering your fellow employees in their native tongue and even tentatively beginning to have basic conversations with them. Again, understand that the language barrier is not going to simply vanish overnight-there are going to be many occasions where you are, quite simply, not going to have a clue what's going on and you are going to feel everyone talking around you. Do not allow this to frustrate you or make you feel discouraged. Remember that although the

people with whom you are speaking may speak Spanish fluently there is a very good chance that they are now attempting to learn to speak your language, and will therefore understand exactly how you feel.

*Tip #3-Until you have a firm grasp of the language do not attempt to carry on a casual conversation in Spanish over the telephone. The absence of visual aids is going to result in you and whoever else you are speaking with having to spend hours scrabbling through your dictionaries to find the proper word or phrase, and will only serve to frustrate you both more.*

- 4) Try to teach someone else to speak Spanish. There is no faster way to learn something than to try to teach it to someone else, as you are going to have to make sure that you are familiar with all of the miscellaneous grammatical rules and regulations, as well as necessary vocabulary. You are going to find yourself having to put in the extra effort, as you cannot teach someone else what you do not know.

Your children make excellent test subjects for this theory. Because they do not speak Spanish (or at least we are assuming that they do not) they will be beginners just as you are. That means that they will need to learn all of the verbs and basic vocabulary right along with you, and are not going to be offended when you have to take the time to look something up. Working with your children is also going to have another added benefit-they are bound to be more patient with the learning process than you are, as they are accustomed to having to work to learn things that they do not know (admit it, you have found a comfortable point in your life and are unaccustomed to a challenge of this magnitude. It happens to all of us!)

- 5) Expose yourself to the language as much as possible. When you are going out to eat try to go to authentic Spanish restaurants where the staff speaks Spanish and listen to what they are saying (try not to be too obvious

however; it doesn't matter whether you understand them or not, the people in question are probably going to be quite offended if they feel that you are listening to their conversations!) Try to attend church services and other community events that have a Spanish speaker or a translator, and encourage your spouse and your children to attend various bilingual storytimes and cultural classes along with you.

*Tip #4-Label all of the objects in your home with small signs showing their Spanish names. For example, on your couch you could place a small sign that says "Sofa". This will help you to expand your basic household vocabulary much more quickly.*

- 6) Date someone who doesn't speak English. Okay, this doesn't work so well if you already have a spouse or are in a relationship; don't try it! There is always the possibility, however, that you are attempting to learn to speak Spanish because there is already someone special who has caught your eye and you want to have a chance to make something with them. You cannot do that, however, if the two of you cannot understand each other. If the person in question seems to be equally attracted to you, ask them to help you. Invite them out to dinner or to the park, where the two of you can teach each other basic vocabulary and communicate with gestures as much as words.

The all important factor in dating someone who doesn't speak English is that you are going to want to spend a great deal of time together, and for this reason you are going to be forced to expand your vocabulary exponentially. You are going to learn words for food, for various activities (how else are you going to learn the Spanish word for ferris wheel, after all, if you don't take the object of your affection to the fair?) and basic phrases. You are also going to have the opportunity to learn Spanish much as you learned English as a child-by hearing it spoken and learning to associate it with various objects and phrases.

The other benefit to dating someone who doesn't speak English is that you are going to have the opportunity often to be thrust into situations where you are surrounded by Spanish speaking individuals. Most individuals from Latin countries choose to live with their extended family, and it is entirely conceivable that there would be four or more people living in a house. (As a matter of fact, many individuals who choose to live with their immediate family and do not open their doors to family located a little farther out on the family tree are perceived as snobs). These men and women are all going to speak Spanish, very likely the same dialect as your beloved, and therefore are going to go about their daily business in this language. You will have the opportunity to hear it spoken all around you, and will over time begin to understand a little bit more of what's going on.

Ask the person you are dating to help you. Go to the library and find children's picture books, teaching each other nouns, and find a Spanish audio or internet course (we'll go into those in greater detail in just a little bit) and ask them to help you practice. They will be able to help you to apply the endless vocabulary lists into day to day situations, as many of these courses are intended for travelers and it is more than likely that you and your other half are not going to spend a great deal of time asking each other when the last train to Madrid is going to be leaving the station (we recommend that the two of you wait to elope until communication comes a little more easily and the two of you really have a chance to get to know each other!)

- 7) Read a newspaper in Spanish. Yes, it will come more easily to you if you learn to speak the language first, but if you are attempting to learn quickly it will help you to increase your vocabulary if you learn to read in Spanish after you have obtained some mastery of the language. Spanish is written precisely as it sounds, so once you have learned the various sounds that each vowel and consonant make you will be able to read the words more or less as they

sound. There are a number of newspapers across the globe that are published on the internet, and you can use these to work on your reading skills without finding yourself spending a small fortune in subscription fees to have the newspaper itself delivered to your home. See the appendix at the end of this publication for a listing of newspapers from various Latin countries that will help you.

When you are first beginning to read a newspaper in Spanish try to make it easy on yourself. Newspapers are written for adults who are already fluent in the language. This means that much of the vocabulary is going to go right over your head, and the various tenses and conjugations of the verbs are going to confuse you to no end. Start by trying to read the headlines. Keep your dictionary handy. The advantage to attempting to learn Spanish is that many words are very similar when written in Spanish and English; as a matter of fact, you are going to be astonished to discover precisely how many words you are able to understand when you first pick up a Spanish newspaper. When you come across a word that you do not understand, *particularly* if you find it in a headline, look it up in your dictionary and write it in your notebook. It is a cinch that you are going to see it again, and this way you will have the translation handy. Eventually move on from headlines to short articles until you are able to read the majority of the paper. If you live in an area with a significant Hispanic population your local library and bookstore will probably carry a number of books for all ages in Spanish as well. You may feel a little ridiculous doing so, but when you are first starting to learn to read in Spanish it would be prudent of you to go ahead and start with the children's books. After all, when you were first starting to learn to read in English it is a pretty safe bet that you didn't begin with Dostoyevsky! Nickelodeon has a number of books for children in Spanish (after all, they are the creators of Dora the Explorer, the show that made Spanish a part of every child's life) and once you are done with them they make wonderful gifts for family and friends. As you gain proficiency there are a number of novels being published in the United States by Spanish authors, and several novels by authors such as Dan Brown have been released in their Spanish translation and are readily available.

## In the Meantime...

Of course, as a busy working adult you are not going to have all of the time that you could really use in order to ensure that you are properly immersed in the Spanish language. You have a life, and are going to need to live a great deal of that life in English (unless you should happen to decide to ditch your current life and spend the next three or four years soaking up the sun on the beaches of Mexico). There are a number of tools that can help you in your quest to learn Spanish a little bit faster. Remember, these are tools, and like any tool they are only intended to assist you. There is no substitute for the practical application of the language.

<b>Alphabet</b>		<b>Days of the Week</b>	
a	a	Monday	lunes
b	be	Tuesday	martes
c	ce	Wednesday	miércoles
ch	che	Thursday	jueves
d	de	Friday	viernes
e	e	Saturday	sábado
f	efe	Sunday	domingo
g	ge	<b>Months</b>	
h	hache	January	enero
i	i	February	febrero
j	jota	March	marzo
k	ka	April	abril
l	le	May	mayo
ll	elle	June	junio
m	eme	July	julio
n	ene	August	agosto
ñ	eñe	September	septiembre
o	o	October	octubre
p	pe	November	noviembre
q	cu	December	diciembre
r	ere		
s	ese		
t	te		
u	u		
v	ve		
w	doble u/doble ve		
x	equis		
y	i griega		
z	zeta		

<b>Numbers</b>		
0	zero	cero
1	one	uno ( <i>m</i> ), una ( <i>f</i> )
2	two	dos
3	three	tres
4	four	cuatro
5	five	cinco
6	six	seis
7	seven	siete
8	eight	ocho
9	nine	nueve
10	ten	diez
11	eleven	once
12	twelve	doce
13	thirteen	trece
14	fourteen	catorce
15	fifteen	quince
16	sixteen	dieciséis
17	seventeen	diecisiete
18	eighteen	dieciocho
19	nineteen	diecinueve
20	twenty	veinte
21	twenty-one	veintiuno
22	twenty-two	veintidós
30	thirty	treinta
31	thirty-one	treinta y uno
40	forty	cuarenta
50	fifty	cincuenta
60	sixty	sesenta
70	seventy	setenta
80	eighty	ochenta
90	ninety	noventa
100	one hundred	cien
101	one hundred and one	ciento uno
200	two hundred	doscientos
300	three hundred	trescientos

<b>Basics</b>	
hello	Hola
good-bye	Adiós
yes	Sí
no	No
friend	Amigo ( <i>m</i> ), Amiga ( <i>f</i> )
thank you	Gracias
where is the bathroom?	¿Dónde está el baño?

<b>Family</b>	
husband	esposo, marido
wife	esposa
children	niños
son	hijo
daughter	hija
father	padre, papá ( <i>informal</i> )
mother	madre, mamá ( <i>informal</i> )
brother	hermano
sister	hermana
grandfather	abuelo
grandmother	abuela
uncle	tío
aunt	tía
nephew	sobrino
niece	sobrina
cousin	primo ( <i>m</i> ), prima ( <i>f</i> )
brother-in-law	cuñado
sister-in-law	cuñada
father-in-law	suegro
mother-in-law	suegra
son-in-law	yerno
daughter-in-law	nuera

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**Colors**

<b>Directions</b>	
left	Izquierda
right	Derecha
far	Lejos
near	Cerca
street	Calle
avenue	Avenida
north	Norte
south	Sur
east	Este
west	Oeste

### ***Online Resources***

You can do anything with the help of the internet, and learning to speak Spanish is no exception. There are a number of programs currently in existence on the internet that are intended to assist those individuals whose lives are simply too busy to take a Spanish class in the mastery of this unique language.

These online resources can work for you as well, but there are a number of things you should look for before settling on a Spanish program. First and foremost, it must have some type of audio interface. You cannot learn to speak Spanish from a book. The accents and flow of the language are so different that even if you were to perfectly master the pronunciation of every vowel, syllable and letter combination in the Spanish language you still would not be able to speak with any type of fluency.

Take a moment to think back on the last time that you spoke with someone with a lisp or a very heavy accent. Even though they were speaking in English you probably had a very difficult time understanding them. The reason for this is that your ears are not used to relaying that type of information to the brain. Your ears are accustomed to hearing the language spoken in a particular manner with a particular accent, and in the absence of that particular way of speaking your brain cannot make any sense of what your ears are sending it.

The same can be said of learning to speak Spanish. The entire point of learning to speak a new language is to communicate with those people for whom this foreign language is a native tongue. That means that you must be able to understand them and,

equally importantly, they must be able to understand you. If you do not speak with the proper accent and pronunciation you will not be understood, and therefore will have wasted the time you spent learning to speak the language.

The other item that is of particular importance when working with an online Spanish program is the quality of its visual aids. Yes, you are going to need pictures as well as words and sounds to learn. Why? Take a moment to consider how you learned English as a child. You learned the language from listening to the people around you, then applying the words to items around you. This means that you learned by a process known as "visual association". Your mind learned to associate certain words with objects you saw around you. Without that association you are going to find yourself having to memorize countless vocabulary words without any foundation in which to base it.

If that doesn't make sense, take a moment to think back to when you were first learning how to spell in grade school. You probably spent countless hours reviewing your word lists to learn how to spell the words the teacher required; however, you probably didn't gain true mastery of these words until you became an adult and began seeing them in your reading material. The same is true of your vocabulary. Until you begin applying it to objects in your environment, words are just words and are not going to stick in your mind.

There are a number of programs that are available through the internet that will help you to learn to speak Spanish. Take a few moments to check these sites out and see what they have to offer.

### [Rocket Spanish](#)

Rocket Spanish is extremely comprehensive and I highly recommend it.

### [Synergy Spanish](#)

If you are not looking to be fluent in Spanish but just want to get by, then this may be for you. It is cheaper than Rocket Spanish but not as comprehensive. It promises to teach you "How To Get By In Spanish With Just 138 Words."

### [The Spanish Language Speed Learning Course](#)

OK, I am a very skeptical of the claim "Understand Spanish Using Outrageously Easy and Creative Techniques ... in Just 12 Days or Less?" But it is one of the least expensive Spanish programs out there.

## **Audio Courses**

There are a number of programs that offer Spanish programs on CD for people to learn. This is a wonderful opportunity for you to learn to speak and understand Spanish as it is spoken in its natural form. You will be able to hear how each individual word is spoken, and the inflection of each phrase. As we spoke about earlier, the greatest difficulty facing individuals who are learning to speak another language is the ability to understand, and a large part of the reason for that is that you are not used to the words being spoken in such a manner.

When you are choosing an audio course to work with, be sure that you choose one that is going to teach both vocabulary and one that is going to teach you to speak in phrases. The catch with speaking any language is that there are very few moments in which a series of words can be placed together and make sense, and when you are considering the fact that you are working with another language you have to understand that the Spanish grammatical structure is very different from that which is employed in English. This means that you cannot simply learn all of the vocabulary words and place them together in a sentence as you would in English. It will make absolutely no sense to a native speaker.

To take a very common example, let us look at the manner in which a native Spanish speaker will introduce themselves. You would say, "Hello, my name is..." In Spanish, you would say "Hola, me llamo..." Quite literally, this means, "Hello, I call myself..." If someone came up to you on the street and said, "Hello, I call myself Benjamin" you would probably understand what he was trying to say, but you would more than likely look at him a little oddly. This is precisely what will happen if you fail to learn the proper phrasing in Spanish.

So, to get back to the topic at hand, when you are selecting an audio course to work with you should be sure to find one that works with you in both full sentences and phrases and individual words. You also want to find one that is going to cover a variety of situations. As we discussed earlier, while you are going to need to learn about transportation and such when you are on vacation in a Latin country this knowledge is not going to do you much good when you are attempting to carry on a normal conversation while at work. You are going to need to know words to apply to any number of situations, and a program that fails to acknowledge this is not going to serve you very well.

## **Television Courses**

There are a number of video courses in existence for teaching you how to speak Spanish, and these will probably serve you very well, as you will be given the opportunity to see the Spanish language in play and watch people very much like you do so. The

nice thing is that many of these programs have an element of lightheartedness to them, making them more personal and enjoyable than an ordinary text program-and as you know, what you enjoy you remember.

If you have very little experience with Spanish you may want to start with the Standard Deviants. They happily break lessons down into small portions and allow people to learn to speak Spanish in bite size portions. They are also extraordinarily humorous, giving you the opportunity to see Spanish used in a fabulous new way. The Standard Deviants programs will teach everything from beginning to advanced Spanish, giving you the opportunity to stay with their teaching methods all the way through if you happen to find that you are learning from them.

## **In Conclusion**

Thanks for your attention. You now have all of the fundamentals that you are going to need to master the romance and mystery of the Spanish language. Take the time now to look over your choices and begin to integrate the language into your individual lifestyle, choosing the individual methods and accessory tools that are best suited to your needs. You'll be speaking like a native in no time!

Bueno suerte!