

Why choose Spanish as your new foreign Language?

Spanish is spoken by more than 500 million people worldwide, which is reason enough to learn the language. But it's even more compelling when you realize that about half of the population in the Western Hemisphere speaks Spanish, making it the primary language for as many people as English in this region of the world.

In addition to in the US, Spanish is also gaining importance in Europe, where it is quickly becoming the foreign language of choice after English. By learning Spanish fluently you can often understand enough Italian and French to get by in communicating with people who speak those languages. Spanish can open the door to many millions of other people who speak one of the other Romance languages. It can enable you to become fluent in those languages in much less time than it would take somebody who is learning their first Romance language, because of the similarities in grammar and vocabulary.

The World Speaking Spanish

- At the end of the 19th century, 60 million people were Spanish speakers. Today, nearly 500 million people across the world speak Spanish!
- Spanish is the mother tongue of approximately 350 million people in 21 countries (Mexico: 95 million, Spain: 40 million, Argentina: 38 million, Colombia: 35 million...).
- Spanish is the second most used language in international communication.
- Spanish is one of the six official languages of the United Nations.
- In 1999, Spanish had approximately the same number of native speakers as English (leading English slightly 332 million people to 322 million people).
- If you include the number of people who are fluent in Spanish as a second language, the total number of Spanish speakers in the world will soon reach 500 million people.
- The list of countries where Spanish is either the primary language or the largest secondary language covers 28 different places - Andorra, Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, France, Gibraltar, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Morocco, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, USA, Venezuela.
- Although most of the countries outside of Spain that speak Spanish are located in the Western Hemisphere, there are some notable exceptions. Spanish and French share the role as the official language of Equatorial Guinea (República de Guinea Ecuatoria), making it the only country on the continent of Africa with Spanish as a primary language. However, Morocco and Gibraltar also have many Spanish speakers. In Asia, the Phillipines are the lone representative as far as Spanish-speaking nations. In all, Spanish is the primary language in countries across four different continents.

Spanish Education

- Over the past decade, the demand for Spanish Language courses worldwide has almost doubled.
- In both the US and Canada, Spanish is the most popular foreign language to learn. In the US it is the most popular by a very wide margin. Students with 2 years of studying a foreign language generally score higher on their verbal scores on the ACT/SAT

Economic Indicators

- The Hispanic population in the United States has grown by 60% in just one decade. At present there are 35,5 million Hispanics, representing 12,5% of the total population. Hispanic are now the first minority.
- Due to this increase there is a growing demand for the media to be in Spanish: radio, television, newspaper, magazines,...
- The Latin American countries are experiencing strong economic growth and they are becoming important commercial partners.
- The creation of MERCOSUR and other free trade agreements between South American countries and North America (ALADI, the Andean Community, CACM, NAFTA, G3) which already exist in order to improve the economies of these countries, making them more efficient and competitive.
- Spanish is the second world language as a vehicle of international communication and the third as an international language of politics, economics and culture.
- Spain is 3rd most desirable country to live based on standard of living, health and economy.
- Spain has one of Europe's fastest growing property markets.
- Analyzing Inter-European trade British, French and German companies cited language and cultural barriers as the main barrier to trade, with companies in those countries ranking Spanish high as a necessary language and culture to learn. <http://www.interactint.com/elucidate/english.htm>

The U.S. and the Spanish Speaking Population

- According to the US Census, the number of Hispanics in the US grew by 57.9% between 1990 and 2000 - from a total of 22.4 million people to a total of 35.3 million people.
- This figure means the United States has the fifth largest hispanic population worldwide (trailing Mexico, Colombia, Spain and Argentina - just barely behind Spain itself and Argentina). Of this group of over 35 million people, 3 out of 4 say that Spanish is their primary language.
- Within the US, a total of over 28 million people speak Spanish at some degree of fluency.
- A few states have a large percentage of these Spanish speakers - California has 5.5 million, Texas has 3.4 million, New York has 1.8 million, and Florida has 1.5 million.
- In the US, the 28 million people who speak Spanish at home is well over half of the approximately 47 million people who speak a language other than English at home, meaning Spanish is spoken by more people than all other languages combined within the U.S.
- The 35 million hispanics in the US, as of 2003, was projected to be close to 40 million people.
- By 2050, the number of hispanics in the US is projected to grow exponentially to over 100 million people, which at that point will be about one quarter of the total U.S. population. That's over triple the 2000 figure in a 50-year span. As of now, in the United States 13% of the population speak Spanish as their first language.

Spanish in the Media

- In the New York City area, the newscast on the Spanish-language Noticias 41 and Noticiero Univision, often have higher ratings than news shows on CBS, NBC and ABC.
- Approximately 5.8% of Internet users speak Spanish, making it the 4th most common language among the Internet community, after English, Japanese, and German.
- A recent study of 25 metro markets in the U.S. found that Spanish-language programming was the sixth most popular format.