

BaseLang's Ultimate Guide to Spanish

If you've ever wanted to learn Spanish fast, you're in the right place. This guide covers everything from improving your confidence, to learning conjugations, to how to understand people when they speak fast. We've held nothing back.



In this guide, you'll learn...

- How to understand people when they talk fast
- The number one mistake most people make that cripples their progress

- How to “unlock” all the Spanish you already know so that you can use it in conversations
- Why learning from software is bullshit and whether a teacher is actually worth it
- How to learn grammar, memorize vocabulary, and attain a near-native accent
- ...and a LOT more

This guide is a true one-stop shop, including everything you need to know about how to learn Spanish faster. No more searching for another blog post, app, or asking friends for advice. You’ve found your golden ticket.

Who is this for?

- If you’ve been struggling to learn Spanish, or simply want to accelerate your results...
- If you only need help with one aspect of your Spanish, like listening or grammar...
- If you’re learning for professional reasons, for romance, because you’re traveling to a Spanish-speaking country, or simply because you want to...

...then this guide can help you.

Who Am I?

Hey, Connor here.

I’m the guy who wrote this massive guide.

Not long ago, I was where you are now. I didn't speak any Spanish, and desperately needed to figure out the fastest way to learn. I had challenged myself to learn Spanish in a month, something most people consider impossible.

I had to figure it all out myself. Sure, I had some disparate sources to get ideas from, but there was nothing out there like this guide to help me. But, through the ups and downs, I did it.

My film, "[Spanish in a Month: A Language Learning Documentary](#)", has since inspired over 750,000 people in every country in the world.

The avalanche of questions I got after the documentary took off are the reason this guide exists.

What you find here is everything I know about how to learn Spanish fast. I've held nothing back.

There are five parts to this guide:

Part 1: Introduction

You're about to finish this part.

Part 2: Principles

Here I'll cover the fundamental principles of learning Spanish that are necessary for the rest of the guide to make sense.

Part 3: Stages of Learning

Here we'll dig into the different stages you'll go through when learning Spanish and what to focus on at each point.

Part 4: Strategies

This is where we'll dig into the nitty-gritty tactics and strategies I use, from pronunciation to conjugations to vocab.

Part 5: Putting it into Practice

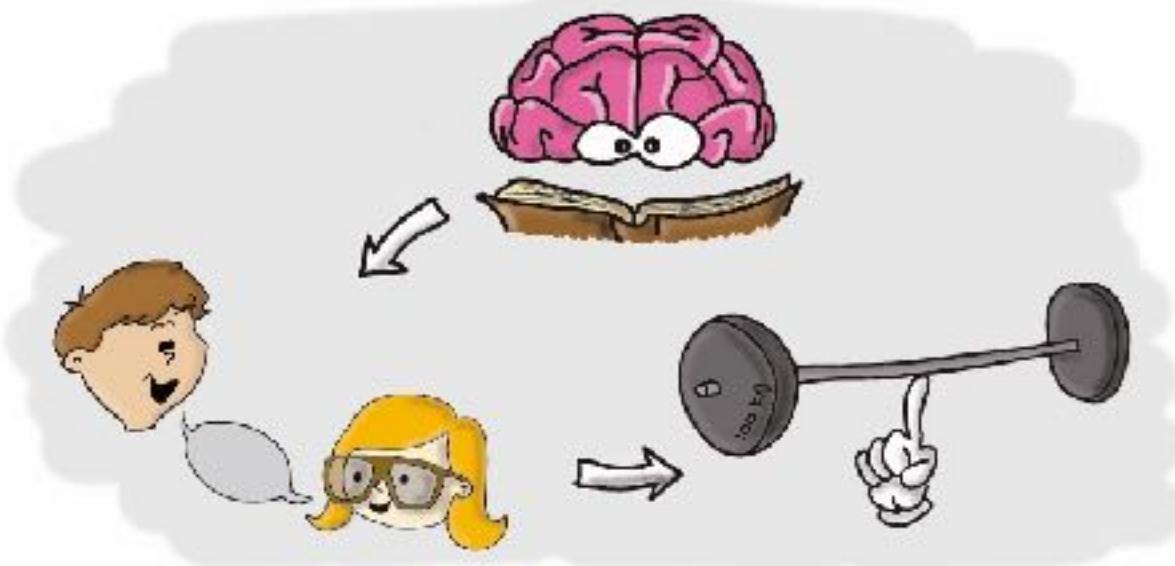
This is where you'll learn how to take this massive guide and actually use it, and how to make implementing it way easier.

Let's get started.

PART 2

Principles

This is your foundation. Here you'll learn which mistakes to avoid, the fundamentals that you'll use over and over again, and the overall strategy that you should take.



PRINCIPLE #1

Communication Before Perfection

Without a doubt, this is the most fundamental principle.

It's pretty simple:

Get to communication first, then focus on perfection.

Too many people worry about making mistakes. Maybe you worry that if you make mistakes now, you won't be able to "un-learn" them later. This makes you petrified of making mistakes, so you never open your mouth and actually speak.

This preoccupation with being perfect is what holds back the vast majority of language learners. If you can let go and stop worrying about being perfect, and just focus on getting your point across - on communicating with another human being - your progress will be so much faster.

You will often surprise yourself when you just spit out a sentence without thinking about it... and it actually ends up 100% correct.

And no, you won't have any issues "un-learning bad habits". Trust me, I made a LOT of mistakes early on, and I didn't spend any time unlearning.

You also won't be embarrassed if you don't speak perfectly. In fact, people from Latin America (Spain too) are some of the most friendly and warm in the world (isn't that part of the appeal?).

I'll say it again:

Get to communication first, *then* focus on perfection.

Let that sink in. It's the most important concept in this guide and the one that will save you so much heartache.

PRINCIPLE #2

Hours vs. Months

When I tell people I learned Spanish in a month, the typical response goes something like, “really? how? that’s really impressive.”

But I don’t necessarily think a month is impressive.

For example, what if I told you I learned Spanish in five months?

Suddenly not as impressive.

But if I studied an hour a day for five months, or five hours a day for one month, that’s 150 hours either way.

Which brings us to what is less of a principle, and more of a reality-check: **it's not about how many weeks, months, or years you have spent learning a language, but how many hours.**

Because maybe you studied for five minutes a day for a year. That’s only thirty hours - which I spent in six days.

There is only one caveat here, as each speed (as measured in months) has a downside:

- if you learn Spanish in a very short period of time, like I did, you are also more likely to forget it quickly. You need to “maintain” it



(which is very easy and basically involves talking to people) once it's there, or you may forget it.

- if you learn Spanish over a long period of time, like a year, you'll inevitably forget things along the way and will likely end up needing to re-learn things (which will take less time the second time, of course).

How many months you decide to fit the hours into is up to you and your personal preference.

Personally, it was easier to learn it in a month than over a longer period of time. This is because I'm very good at extreme deep focus for a short period of time, but quite terrible at maintaining little 30-60 minute a day habits.

Maybe you are better at habits, or your schedule simply doesn't allow more time per day. If that's the case, you'll need to do less time a day over a longer period of time.

Either way, measure your hours, not your months.

PRINCIPLE #3

Intellectual to Second Nature

In the next principle, you'll find out why **speaking is everything**.

But one of the main reasons why speaking is so important is *so fundamental* to this approach that we need to look at it separately. It has implications on how we approach almost everything - from vocab to grammar to pronunciation.

Let's pretend you're learning a single vocab word, "azucar" (sugar).

When you first learn the word, *you know it intellectually*. It's in your brain, and you can recognize it. Depending on how well you know it, you can say the Spanish word when presented the English word after a split second to a few seconds.

But when it comes to using the word in real speech in a real conversation with someone, the part of your brain that takes that *intellectual knowledge* of the word "azucar" and uses it in a sentence hasn't been used yet.

So, as a preview to how I approach vocab, the process is roughly this:

1. Be exposed to a word through your curriculum, teacher, conversation, or other input
2. Learn and reinforce the word with flashcards until you can almost always recall it when presented the English
3. Use the word a LOT in real conversations to solidify it

The role of speech here is to move the word from “Intellectual” to “Second Nature” (from step two to three).

If you know the word intellectually, you can recall it.

But if you want the word to flow naturally out of your mouth as if it was English, you have to use it in conversations a lot.

This phenomenon is the same with grammar. It’s very similar with pronunciation (where it’s more about muscle memory than your brain). It’s one of the two big reasons you struggle to understand people when they talk fast.

I’ll get to how it applies for each part later on, but the core of it is so simple and so important that I’ll say it again:

Learn something intellectually and then use speech to make it second nature.

PRINCIPLE #4

Speaking is Everything

After “communication before perfection”, this is the most important principle for learning Spanish fast. In fact, it’s the one that makes that one possible.

Speaking. Is. Everything.

Speaking is either the foundation or the most important ingredient in every area of language.

- Want to improve your vocab? Speak more.
- Want to improve your grammar? Speak more.
- Want to improve your confidence? Speak more.
- Want to improve your listening skills? Speak more.
- Want to improve your pronunciation? Speak more.
- Want to improve your writing? Speak more.

Speaking. Is. Everything.

OK, OK. Let me explain.

First, by speak, I generally mean “have conversations”, not just production (although speaking by itself is helpful for some applications).

Let’s go skill by skill, explaining just how important speaking is to each one. These will be greatly elaborated on in each individual skill’s “how-to” chapter, so I’ve used the shortest possible explanation to illustrate speaking’s importance for each one.

Speaking

To improve your ability to speak well, you need to practice actually speaking.

You'd think this one would be obvious, but so many people end up using apps or textbooks and are surprised when they can't actually open their mouths and speak Spanish.

The reality is, language is like any other skill: it's built on repetition. If you don't speak, you won't have experience speaking, so while you may understand things just fine, when it comes for your turn to form sentences on the fly, you'll shut down.

Vocab

You saw how important speaking is for vocab in the last principle, Intellectual to Second Nature.

Essentially, speaking is what takes a word from needing a split second to be said (while you "find it" in your head) to flowing naturally like English.

Confidence

Confidence, evolutionarily, stems from *competence*.

And if you haven't had a lot of practice speaking Spanish, you won't have competence, and thus no confidence.

The only way to improve your confidence when speaking Spanish is to speak Spanish. There's more to it than this, but we'll cover that later.

Grammar

The same “intellectual to second nature” concept that applies for vocab, applies for grammar.

Whether you learn from a textbook, website, app, or teacher (which I recommend), you’ll only know the grammar concept intellectually until you actually start using it, over and over, in sentences with real people in real conversations. That’s how you “unlock” it, letting it flow naturally like your native language does.

Writing

When it comes to writing, it’s pretty simple: if you can say it, you can write it.

If you can, in the middle of a conversation, dynamically create the sentence and speak it, do you really think you’ll have trouble writing the same thing? No.

But, if you can write something, you can’t necessarily speak it. This is the problem that those in the university system face, for example: they can write essays in Spanish, but lock up when someone actually speaks to them.

This is partly because they don’t have practice on that end of the spectrum, and partly because while writing lets you sit and think and fix things, speaking happens on the fly and doesn’t give you the luxury of time to think.

Thus, if you spend more time speaking, you will improve both your speaking *and* your writing.

Messaging a little with friends is more than enough writing practice (and you don't necessarily even need that). Of course, if you want to become a very good writer in Spanish, you need to write a lot - but that's true even of your native language.

Listening

Many people struggle to understand people when they talk fast.

Depending on the country, the speed of speech can seem to range from fast to lightspeed. How are we non-natives supposed to keep up?

Well - we can - but there are a lot of things we need to do to train our ears to keep up.

But guess what is an important part of training listening skills? You guessed it. Having conversations.

Pronunciation

The first step in good pronunciation is learning how to properly make the sounds. I'll cover how to do that later on, but let's assume for now that you can make the sounds correctly.

Once you can physically make the sounds, you need to use repetition as it's like any other skill in that you have to practice it for it to become second nature. So, you need to get in the reps saying each sound over and over in real words to train your mouth to make the sounds naturally (I'll explain this in more depth later).

And, of course, speaking (by itself) is the only way to get in these reps, and conversations (including another person) are a more fun way to do it.

Why Other Strategies Fail

This is one of the reasons why you didn't learn much in high school or university. Aside from the un-optimal curriculum and focus on perfection, you get almost no speaking practice at all (if any).

It's why tapes, by themselves, don't work - you need conversations or you just have input and no output. There's also obviously nobody there to explain things to you when you get confused, which happens *a lot*.

It's why apps like Duolingo or software like Rosetta Stone don't work. Among other issues, they all ignore speaking.

PRINCIPLE #5

How to Talk About Anything

"But you don't understand, I need to learn *medical* Spanish. I don't need the normal stuff."

I was in the middle of a conversation with someone who emailed me for advice after watching the documentary. They wanted to work in urgent aid in Latin America.

What I explained to them next is the “secret” to how to talk about any subject (if you even want to call it a “secret”).

All you need to do to learn how to talk about any topic in Spanish is to learn the vocabulary for that topic.

There's nothing different about “medical Spanish” from “normal Spanish”. It's just extra vocabulary.

No matter what you want to talk about, you need the same fundamentals. You need the core vocabulary that everyone uses all of the time.

Then, if you want to talk about a specific topic or field, like medicine, all you do is learn the words for that topic.

Verbs like “to bleed” and “to sew” and “to break”. Nouns like “surgery”, “kidney”, and “vaccine”.

New subjects are just vocab hung on the framework of “core Spanish” you have to learn first.

Opening up entire new worlds in Spanish is as simple as learning some new words.

PRINCIPLE #6

80/20 Everything

If you're already familiar with the 80/20 Rule (also called the Pareto Principle), you can probably skip this. Just know that it applies BIG TIME with Spanish.

The 80/20 Rule basically states that 80% of the results come from 20% of the inputs.

80% of the pea pods are produced by 20% of the plants.

80% of the revenue is created by 20% of the customers.

80% of the headache in support is created by 20% of the customers.

And 80% of spoken Spanish uses 20% of the language.

Well, actually, that last one isn't true.

You need to know much less than 20% of the language to understand 80% of social conversations.

The most commonly used grammar and vocab (which is a rather small percentage of the total words, conjugations, and complex grammar in Spanish) allows you to understand often over 80% of what you'll hear in Spanish.

What you learn (being effective) is more important than how you learn (being efficient). So, you can cut months off your learning curve by cutting a lot of material out of your curriculum.

What This Looks Like In Practice

When you dig into the “Stages of Learning” section, and then later the Perfect Spanish Curriculum Blueprint bonus, you’ll see exactly how this plays out.

But, for example, it means that:

- Until the advanced stages, you don’t learn the majority of the different conjugations (of which there are a LOT, but most of which are almost never used). You just learn the most commonly used ones.
- You learn the most commonly used vocab first (based on frequency lists), and the “niche” vocab that you personally will use a lot (things you are interested in and thus talk about).
- You stack the most important/most commonly used stuff first, as it will give you the most bang for your buck.

The curriculum and stages of learning I present here have 80/20’d everything to the Nth degree, so luckily you don’t have to do the work of figuring out what stuff is the most important.

PRINCIPLE #7

Learning From Software is Bullshit

How many people do you know that have successfully learned a language to fluency using apps? Using just a computer?

Introducing the most advanced technology the world has ever seen. Features include:

- impeccably accurate voice-recognition, with no annoying errors
- state-of-the-art pronunciation feedback
- infinitely interesting and engaging, with hundreds of millions of different versions to try
- built-in accountability
- scientifically proven

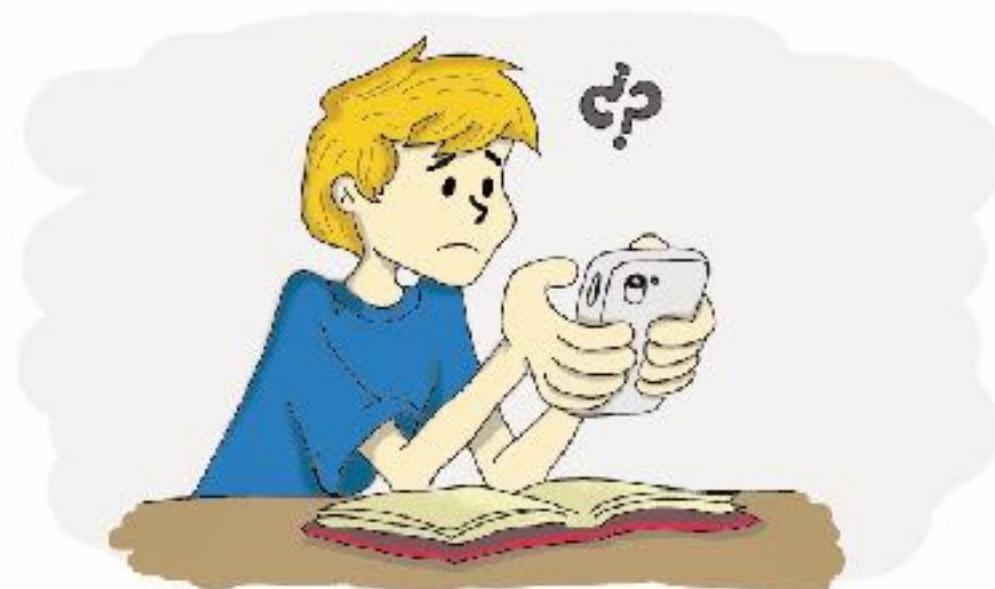
Introducing... humans.

Language is about communicating.

Language is about having real conversations.

Language is about connecting with a culture.

Language is about people.



But even if those weren't true, the fastest way to learn a language to actual fluency would still be spending as much time as possible speaking and having conversations with real people.

All the little fill in the blank, click the picture, multiple choice bullshit you're doing in that app is training you to be good at THAT. But it's not going to help you much when you need to actually turn around and open your mouth to have a real conversation with a real person in Spanish.

Introducing George

I have a good friend. We'll call him George.

George had been using Duolingo for two years, diligently doing a little bit every single day. He'd long finished the entire curriculum. George then moved to Medellín, Colombia for a few months.

When George arrived, on paper, he knew almost as much, if not more Spanish than I did. He certainly knew more grammar, and could probably crush me in a written test.

But guess what? He spent his entire time using software, and almost no time talking to real people. And when he arrived in Colombia, in a real, Spanish-speaking country, he couldn't actually have conversations.

He could handle the basics, and that's about it - because he had never practiced actually speaking and understanding a native speaker in the real world.

So, when he arrived, he took my advice, and started speaking a lot. And within two months, he had a local girlfriend and a circle of Colombian friends, most of which spoke little or no English at all. People he never would have connected with if he didn't actually speak Spanish - if he had only ever used software.

The only caveat to this is that computerized flashcards are good for vocab (and vocab only), when paired with speaking and other things. We'll cover that later.

Don't try to learn a new language from software. Speaking is everything.

PRINCIPLE #8

Do You Need a Spanish Teacher?

I get asked a lot, “do I really *need* a teacher to learn Spanish? What if I just do it on my own?”

Well, no. It's not absolutely required to learn the language. People have learned it before with no human assistance and will continue to do so. But...

1. Why? You are learning Spanish to communicate with Spanish-speakers, which are people. If the whole point is to speak with people, why would you cut that out, even if it didn't help?
2. It's slower. For reasons I'll cover in a second, having a teacher speeds things up enormously.

3. It's not as good. You won't learn slang or how people speak in the street (why this is important is covered in the next chapter).
4. It's not as expensive as you think. More on my favorite tools for learning Spanish later on. But if you're already itching to start some classes, **take a look** at BaseLang (we wrote this guide!), where you can get unlimited one-on-one Spanish classes with professional teachers for just \$149 a month. Your first week is just \$1 so you can **try it out**.

So if you absolutely want to learn Spanish without human assistance, go for it. But, I don't advise it, and 95% of this guide will be of little use to you as the bedrock of my approach is built on conversations with real people.

Teachers vs. a Language Exchange

By this point, you should be convinced that you need to speak, that conversations with native speakers are very important.

One of the most common questions I get is, “why should I pay for a teacher when I can do an exchange for free? Is it really worth it?”

Yes.

First, let's look at the pros and cons of an exchange.

Pros

- Free

- Large selection of people
- People are from many different Spanish-speaking countries

Cons

- English skills aren't usually very good when you need an explanation
- You need to tell them what to teach you next, which requires you to know what you even need to learn in the first place (which you don't - even I didn't past a certain point during the documentary)
- You have to spend half your time speaking in English (it's an exchange after all), which is very time-inefficient
- The person probably isn't that great at explaining things. In fact, you probably can't explain English well either, because as a native speaker, things just make sense.

For instance, what's the difference between "may" and "might"? Or why we say "big, red house", not "red, big house"? It's the same for a native Spanish speaker that hasn't been trained to teach - they don't know why things are the way they are, and can't explain things better than, "I don't know, that's just how it's said".

In contrast, a professional teacher...

Pros

- Since they are professionals, they can actually explain different concepts as they have a deep understanding of both Spanish and English - and thus can explain the differences between them and relate Spanish grammar concepts to how things work in English.

- You spend the entire time learning Spanish.
- The teacher gets invested in your success and can guide you through the process. They know you, your interests, your progress, and your weak points.
- They know what you need to learn next, so you don't have to tell them what to cover.
- They, quite frankly, make you feel awesome. They make you feel like you are getting it. Mistakes no longer feel embarrassing. They know not only how to teach you the language, but to coach your psyche to make sure you actually *feel like* you are progressing (because often, you won't).
- Per above, teachers make gaining confidence to actually speak so much easier because it's no longer scary.
- The best teachers are good at a level we don't even notice. In a seemingly casual conversation, they will ask questions that will force you to use the concept you just learned. They will pretend they've never seen a particular movie just you'll have to explain it to them for more practice.

They can somehow dumb down their own Spanish to almost only use the grammar and vocab that you either already know or are learning. You think (and feel like) it's just a casual conversation, but behind the scenes, there's a lot going on.

Cons

- They aren't free. But, they can be a lot more affordable than you think (I'll cover one good option in a minute)
- BUT, depending on what you make an hour, it is likely a smarter financial decision to pay for the tutor. This was my own logic, when I decided to spend \$1,350 in a month on my tutor for the

documentary (3 hours a day for 30 days straight):

Assuming that a teacher is no better/faster than an exchange (definitely not true), an exchange doubles the amount of time it would take for you to learn Spanish.

I estimate roughly 150 hours to a conversational level, using the methods in this course, starting from zero. Since an exchange, in this hypothetical situation, doubles that... how much money could you make in 150 hours, and couldn't that cover more than the cost of your teacher?

For most people in the western world, it makes more sense to work a little bit more and pay for a tutor. You'll still come out ahead on time.

But if you can't afford \$15/hr, don't worry. You can get *unlimited* classes for just \$149 a month with BaseLang. The teachers are all professionals that work for us, so you're getting all of the benefits of having a teacher for a lot less money. Your first week is just \$1, so you can see if you like it first. **[Click here to sign up.](#)**

If you don't want to use BaseLang, that's cool too. Whether you use us or not, I still suggest you use a teacher.

So yes, I definitely recommend a teacher.

Is it possible to learn Spanish without one? Absolutely. And an exchange is better than nothing. But since it takes so much more

time, you are more likely to give up - and that's assuming you're on a very relaxed schedule.

If you want to learn Spanish fast, getting a teacher is vital.

PRINCIPLE #9

Be Native

This is an issue that only plagues a small percentage of people, but enough that I need to cover it. Maybe you haven't been infected.

Some people think they don't need to try to sound as native as possible when speaking Spanish. Typically, they either...

- Think it's un-cool to actually say things correctly, instead of in a gringo accent. This is a big issue in traditional education when most of the people around you have terrible accents and will make fun of you if you actually sound latino.
- Or, they think that "they understand me, it doesn't matter". Yea, sure, maybe they do usually. But isn't the whole purpose of speaking Spanish to connect with Spanish-speakers? It's a fact (whether we like it or not), that people like people similar to them. When you speak in a gringo accent, you are instantly less familiar to them, which inevitably means they don't trust you as much and the connections don't get as deep, typically. This isn't their fault - this is just stuff happening subconsciously.

This of course assumes they do understand you and that your gringo accent has decent pronunciation. Often, you'll have to

repeat things an extra time. You could have said it perfectly, but having to repeat it will be terrible for your confidence as you will have to wonder if you screwed something up.

When you make an effort to sound local - **not just in your accent, but also in the words, phrases, and slang you use** - you unlock an extra dimension.

People are suddenly a bit warmer with you. They feel more comfortable right away (this is why I intentionally use very local Spanish where I live in Medellin, especially when first meeting someone).

And maybe, you'll reach the holy grail of Spanish: being mistaken for being part-latino (or latina).

The Arepa Joint in NYC

Earlier this year, I was in NYC for a week, visiting some friends.

One of my buddies, Pieter, recommended that we go to an Arepa joint near where he lived. If you don't know, an arepa is a flat, usually round, bread made of corn. There are many different types, but this particular restaurant served a type of Venezuelan arepas that are hollow in the middle. They are opened up then stuffed with different variations of meat, cheese, vegetables, sauces, and other (very) delicious things.

My entire week in NYC, I had been trying to talk to people in Spanish. My accent is very good (probably the strongest part of

my Spanish, as a whole), and I was saying things correctly, but people would just switch back to English.

But, at this little arepa shop, the guy (from Venezuela) actually spoke back to me in Spanish. I laughed with him and talked for a little bit. It wasn't a necessarily "hard" conversation in terms of the subject matter, but we were speaking pretty quickly.

At the end, I asked where he was from.

(Translated)

"where are you from?"

"Venezuela."

"Where in Venezuela? I have some friends there."

"Maracaibo."

"Oh, that's awesome!"

"Where are you from?"

"I live in Medellín - Colombia."

"Ah, that makes sense, I was trying to place your accent. You're from there?"

"No no, I'm from Florida, I just live there now."

"But you're part latin? One of your parents or something?"

"(laughing) No."

When I told Adrian this story, his immediate reaction was "whoooooaaaa", which he followed with a high-five.

Trust me - I don't look latin *at all*. That's a big compliment.

And it's not *that* unachievable.

But you need to try to sound local.

It makes a difference.

Bonus Reason to Become Native

Here's another reason to try to be as native as possible: **it's awesome.**

Seriously, learning the slang and little sayings and phrases of a specific city or region is probably the most fun thing you can do when it comes to Spanish. Since I live and learned everything in Medellín, where people are “paisas” (the word for people from the region), my slang, accent, and speech patterns are all very paisa. We laugh that I speak don't speak español, but “paisaño”.

You may think that you should just carry a neutral accent and not sound from any one place. And if you are doing business in many different Spanish speaking countries, perhaps that's true. But if not, picking a place to “be from” gives your Spanish some flavor and gives you a sense of identity.

This is of course somewhat dependent on you traveling or living in a Spanish-speaking country. But if you are in the US, look at the latinos in the nearby neighborhoods or your Spanish-speaking friends, and see where they are from. Learn the slang relevant to them (they will have a blast teaching it to you, trust me).

You'll learn some hilarious stuff. Here are two examples from Colombian Spanish to whet your appetite:

1. Quién pidió pollo?

“Who ordered chicken?” While this could literally mean “who ordered chicken”, it has another, very funny meaning.

This phrase is used in groups of Colombian women when a very attractive man walks into the room. The man is the “chicken”.

This makes absolutely no sense at all. The best explanation a friend of mine got was that chicken used to be rather rare in Colombia for some reason (I don’t know if this is even true), so it is used in this phrase to point out an attractive guy.

2. Arroz en bajo

Another one from the dating department, this means “rice on low (on the backburner)”.

It’s used primarily by women (though also by men) to describe men they aren’t even remotely serious about seeing, but are talking to a little bit, “just to keep them interested”. Arroz en bajo means keeping the man (or woman when this happens the other way around) “warm”, so that if she has a Friday with no plans for some reason, that she has someone to do something with.

There’s a LOT more, and it’s a ton of fun to learn, and even more fun to use, especially when people aren’t expecting you to know it.

Other than asking, and the rare good resource on regional slang, the main way to learn this (or pick up something odd so you can ask what it means) is through mimicry, which is covered later on.

Be native. It's worth it.

PRINCIPLE #10

Mindset Matters

A few months ago, a friend of mine and I had coffee in Medellín and we started talking about personal development - specifically one month challenges.

At one point, he asked me how I overcame the incessant inner doubt that “I can’t actually do this”, or “who am I to try to do this?”

My answer surprised him, and his question made me think about the mindset side of things that I took for granted.

I responded, “I don’t have those doubts. I go into one of these challenges and literally have zero doubt at all that I can pull it off. I’m not a fool - I have done my research and put everything in place to help me do it. But once I’ve started, I have no doubt to fight off.”

Now, this friend is no average guy. He’s had a lot of success with several businesses, relationships, languages, and personal development.

So it made me realize just how uncommon my irrational (potentially arrogant) confidence is when going into a new challenge to which I’ve fully committed.

And after some thought, I realized just how key your mindset really is, especially when it comes to learning Spanish.

Going in, the most productive mindset is...

- I'm good at Spanish
- Spanish is easy and this is fun
- I can't fail, why would I ever give up? Look at how awesome I am at this

These don't need to be rational or true. They may not be. But either way, they help you - so why not try to adopt them?

But, a lot of people have destructive mindsets going into the process of learning Spanish...

- Spanish is hard
- I'm bad at languages
- I'm too old and my memory is bad
- *He/she* might be able to, but *I* can't
- I have to be perfect
- I failed at all my other goals, why am I kidding myself that I can do this one?

These mindsets are toxic. *Even if they aren't true* (and they aren't), they will hinder your progress substantially.

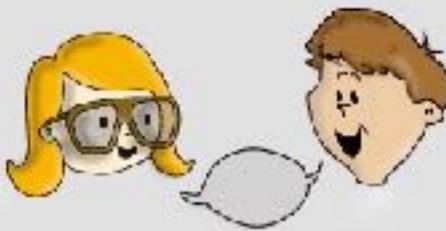
PART 3

Stages of Learning

Now that you have the principles down, let's look at what you should actually focus on at each stage of learning Spanish so that you make progress as fast as possible.



BÁSICO



INTERMEDIO



AVANZADO

QUICK PRIMER

How Babies Learn Languages

At different stages of your learning, you want to cover different things, have different levels of correction from your teacher, and focus on different aspects of the language. I'll break these stages into Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced for simplicity.

In the next chapters in this section, I'll dig into the ideas and strategies behind each stage.

You'll see how these play out in more detail in the **Perfect Spanish Curriculum Blueprint** bonus, which will be invaluable when it comes to actually implementing this on a lesson to lesson basis.

But first, I want to share something about how babies learn their native language.

Enter Adrian

In the process of writing this book, I sat down and had a long conversation with Adrian, my teacher from the Spanish in a Month documentary.

While I had already done lots of research on the developmental psychology of how children learn their native language, I wanted to see his perspective, from the point of view of a teacher (and a really good one at that).

Turns out, he had done his research too, and our general thoughts matched up. But he had some really insightful things to add.

This is what he had to say:

The problem with most approaches to learning is that they think that adults learn differently than babies. The reality is, we all acquire language in the same way (*note from Connor: the scientific literature supports this*). There are a few stages we go through with language...

1. First, we learn how to listen. Babies sit there, and they can't talk. But they listen, and absorb. They start to recognize all the different sounds and understand the meanings of different phrases.
2. Then, they eventually can start to repeat the phrases they have heard. You tell them "agua", and they can reply "agua". It's all built on sound.
3. Then, they can start to create sentences of their own using what they know.

The same process is what happens with reading and writing, with understanding (reading) coming first, and then writing (production) coming afterwards. For babies, this happens after sound. For adults, we can do it at the same time (*note from Connor: this goes back to the whole, "if you can speak, you can write" concept*), though the

reading and writing aspect obviously assumes you've learned how those systems work in Spanish already.

This is a work in progress, where you understand more and more and then can produce and use it, while you begin to understand new material (*note from Connor: this is a concept I refer to as the Onion, which I'll be talking a lot about later*).

This is why you can typically understand more than you can say.

It's also part of why I don't like tests like DELE - they focus on all four (listening, speaking, reading, writing) from the start, which goes completely against how humans acquire language.

This is baked into how a good teacher should teach on a lesson-to-lesson level, but also how the optimal curriculum is formed.

Now that we understand the baby-psychology of *how* a good teacher goes about teaching a specific topic, let's dig into *when* they should teach which material - and why.

STAGE ONE

Basic

Before the Basic stage is “Survival” Spanish. This is nothing more than the handful of phrases found in any guidebook, like “where is the bathroom” or “chicken, please”.

Getting survival Spanish down just takes an afternoon (at most) of memorizing these phrases - there’s nothing really to it. So I’ll start by assuming you’re at least at a survival level.

At the end of this stage, you will be at a “hacked-conversational” level. Remember, we’re focusing on communication first, perfection later - so your teacher should correct a small percentage of your mistakes. A good teacher knows how to balance this, but for example, using the wrong gender should always be let slide at this point.

At a Basic stage, your main focus is on...

1. **Pronunciation.** Get this down early, please. It’s one thing that is not easy to unlearn later. You don’t need a near-native accent yet (we’ll get there later), but you should be able to say every word perfectly (or very close to it). You don’t need words or to even know what anything means to learn this.
2. **Building the foundation of grammar.** Without basic grammar, you have no way to communicate simple ideas. This includes the super basics like “I”, “you”, “the”, “it is a cat”, “dog > dogs”, “it is my dog”, but also certain conjugations/grammar concepts we’ll see in a second (like “voy a” and “tengo que”)

3. **Enough vocab** to give you words to learn the foundation of grammar with. Not a ton of focus on vocab here (meaning nouns, non-essential verbs, adjectives).
4. **Learn the “window words”.** These are the words I put on my window in the documentary - core words like before, after, under, and, but, if, so, that’s why, how do you say, and of course. These are “connectors” and prepositions, among other things.
5. **You aren’t having many full “conversations”** at this point beyond speaking Spanish with your teacher (the examples and practice they present for learning). This is because without grammar building blocks, you can’t have real conversations - because you can’t form sentences. Thus, trying to have a full conversation is bad for your confidence at this point.
6. **Learn the most common 30 or so verbs** and how to conjugate them in the five most used forms.

What are the five most used forms?

At this stage, I recommend only learning a few conjugations. In order of importance:

1. **Infinitive.** This is what the verb looks like unconjugated. E.g. comer (to eat).
2. **Simple Present.** This is not what you are doing now, but rather something you (or I, he, she, etc) does in general. E.g. comes (you eat).
3. **Progressive.** This is the “-ing” conjugation. E.g. estoy comiendo (I’m eating). This is super easy.

4. **Simple Past.** There are multiple past tenses with slightly different meanings, but you don't need to worry about those yet as you'll get your point across with any of them. This is the easiest and most used. E.g. comiste (you ate).
5. **Conditional.** This is the "I would (verb)" conjugation. E.g. comería (she would eat).

Then, there are two very important grammar "hacks" that you will use a lot:

1. **Voy a.** This lets you *skip learning the future tense completely* until the advanced stages, as it means "I'm going to...". All you do is conjugate the verb "ir" (to go), add an "a", then the infinitive of any verb. For instance, "I'm going to eat" is "voy a comer". "You're going to eat"? "Vas a comer".

"I'm going to eat" is so close to "I will eat" that you can avoid all the extra work of learning another conjugation until much later.

Just like that, you can skip hours of work memorizing another conjugation, while still being able to talk about the future.

2. **Tengo que.** This is the same structure as "voy a" in that you have the conjugation for "tener" (to have), then "que", then the infinitive of any verb. It means "I have to...". So, "I have to eat" is "tengo que comer".

Like I said, I'm not going to teach you the actual grammar here (that would take awhile), as that's the job of your teacher. But as far as what to focus on - studying these conjugations and focusing

on these aspects is going to give you the most bang for your buck.

Add the relevant vocabulary for the topic, and you should be able to have a (not-so-pretty) conversation about almost anything with just what you learn in this stage.

In fact, in the next stage, Intermediate, we do exactly that: start to pile on the vocabulary. We also begin to clean up some of your mistakes, introduce the rest of the *most used* grammar, hone your accent, and start having lots of full conversations.

Let's take a look.

STAGE TWO

Intermediate

Congratulations!

At this point, you have crossed the golden threshold from being rather hopeless, to actually being able to hack together conversations. You can now *communicate!*

At this point, you're no longer worried that, "maybe I can't actually learn Spanish". You start to feel like you're "getting it".

And you are.

The intermediate stage is much longer than the basic stage. Through this stage, you'll progress to being conversational (where I was at the end of the documentary) roughly halfway through. And when you cross over into the Advanced stage at the end, you'll be conversationally-fluent (of course, per the 80/20 rule, this second half of the intermediate stage takes longer than the first half).

At this stage, your teacher will start correcting your basic mistakes, and generally “cleaning up” your Spanish. The better you get, the more they will correct your mistakes.

From the beginning of this stage to the end, you'll progress from sounding like Tarzan (remember, reaching that point is a **golden moment**) to a fully functioning adult that stumbles over difficult sentences.

What are you focusing on here?

1. **A lot more vocab.** Now that you have the grammatical structure to use it with, it's time to start adding a lot more vocab. This will expand your ability to use Spanish in many different situations faster than anything else now that you have the grammatical foundation.
2. **Honing your accent.** At the start of this stage, you should be able to pronounce every word perfectly. Now, it's time to start trying to sound more local. This comes mostly through a process of mimicry that I'll discuss later, but also from starting to speak *faster* and fluidly.
3. **The remaining “core” grammar.** You'll want to cover things like the present perfect “I have eaten” (he comido) and the

most common imperatives “take it please” (tomalo por favor). You’ll begin to use the subjunctive in specific situations (based on mimicking when your teacher uses it), but you won’t actually understand the full rules behind it yet. For the specifics of what you’ll want to cover at this stage, see the perfect curriculum bonus.

4. **Lots of conversations.** Now that you can actually communicate, one-on-one conversations with people will become one of the most important parts of the entire process. In fact, more than 60-70% of your time will be spent just having conversations. This is primarily here to move all the grammar and vocab you are learning from “intellectual” to “second nature”.

Remember, **speaking is everything.**

In addition to the things you *need* to learn, you’ll also start to care about slang and saying things like the locals do. This goes a long way in having people feel comfortable with you and forming deeper bonds. Your teacher should already be doing this on a somewhat region-neutral basis, as “textbook” Spanish is rarely how people actually speak to each other.

If you’re already living in a Spanish-speaking country, or know where you will be traveling/doing business in/etc, starting the process of learning the slang of that area will be one of the most fun parts of learning Spanish.

For instance, in Medellín, it’s very common to add “pues” (which technically means “well”, but is usually closer to “uhm” or

completely meaningless in Medellín) to sentences, even though it's not "correct".

Slang and street-Spanish changes from country to country, and often city to city, which is awesome. This isn't *necessary*, but I definitely recommend giving it some time.

Once you've progressed through this stage (which will take a lot longer than the basic stage), you'll move on to the Advanced stage.

STAGE THREE

Advanced

This stage is very simple.

You are already conversationally-fluent. You handle two hour conversations about the differences between German and Mexican culture, what you wish was different about your education, and laugh about something stupid that happened to a friend a few days ago, all without much difficulty.

You may still make some mistakes and run into difficult sentences that you butcher, but the conversation flows naturally. For the most part, you feel like you *really speak Spanish* now.

For most people, progression from this stage is erratic and slow, as they have already reached their goal.

Indeed, for most people, there is little reason to put in the amount of work that is necessary to progress from being conversationally-fluent, to actually speaking “perfect” Spanish, often about technical subjects.

But, if you are one of the ambitious individuals who wants to push forward, here’s what’s next.

1. **The rest of the grammar.** At this point, you have all of the most useful grammar, and are simply left with a lot of less used conjugations (some of which are almost never used), complex sentence structures, the subjunctive mood (which, at this point, you only know to a limited extent), and more. Basically, you need to learn whatever is left now that you already know the most used stuff.

A good teacher and curriculum will help you select the most-used of the least-used, but even then you’re making incremental gains.

2. **A shitload of vocab.** Basically, you need the most used words for almost every subject, from car engines to kitchen utensils to types of fish. And of course, this is when you start to go *really* deep into the vocab for the subjects that you care about (you should already have a strong vocabulary in these subjects - this is when you fill it out).
3. **The vast majority of your time will be spent in conversations.** Luckily, this will point out to you the things you struggle with most and where you are lacking vocabulary. Also, since you already have a strong level, conversations will suddenly be just as fun as they would be in your native language.

4. **At this point, your teacher should point out every last little stupid mistake you make.** You'll also want to request this of the people you speak with often. You're after perfection at this point, after all.

Progress at this point is rather personal. Some people will start reading lots of books in Spanish and picking up vocab that way. Some will prefer TV shows or movies. Some people will listen to music or radio. Some will just have a lot of conversations and note down the words and grammar they don't know as they go to cover later.

Once you are at this point, your teacher takes more of a support role than a central pillar role. You still will need them to explain the complicated grammar concepts you have coming up, some of which will be so ambiguous and confusing that sometimes even *they*, as a professional, have a hard time explaining. They will also push your limits much harder than your friends and other people you have conversations with, which is essential for faster growth.

The concepts in the next section, Strategies, will help you both at this stage and at the Basic and Intermediate levels. Now you understand the principles. You understand the progression. Now, let's covered the "how-to" questions that you probably came to this guide with.

PART 4

Strategies

You have the principles. You understand what to focus on, and when. Now, it's time to dig into the nitty-gritty strategies and tactics on how to approach each aspect of learning Spanish.



STRATEGY #1

How to Learn Spanish Vocabulary

With the right methods, learning vocab is, minute for minute, one of the most valuable uses of your study time.

Once you have a base of grammar to use it with, the fastest way to unlock new topics and widen the breadth of things you can talk about is by learning new vocab.

In the intermediate stage, learning a lot of vocab is a big part of what will get you from hacked-conversational to conversationally-fluent. And at the advanced stage, you'll be learning vocab like it's your job.

So it's with good reason that people give such weight to learning new words, and ask so many questions about how best to go about it. And being the language learning industry's favorite topic, there are some really good tools out there to help you here.

My strategy for vocab is simple:

1. Learn the words *intellectually* using an **SRS**
2. Make using the words *second nature* by using them in **real conversations**

A word of warning before we dig into the strategy here: do NOT learn vocab until you have very good pronunciation. Your accent doesn't need to be great, but you should be able to pronounce each word individually almost perfectly. Otherwise, you'll end up learning a word like "disculpe" (excuse me) thinking that it sounds like "dih-scuhl-p" (wrong) instead of "dee-scool-peh" (correct).

If you end up memorizing the word with bad pronunciation, you won't recognize it when other people use it in real speech, and

the whole point of learning the word is ruined. Don't skip this step (see the strategy on pronunciation later on for the how-to of this).

With that warning out of the way, back to our regular programming: learning vocab quickly and effortlessly.

The Magic of the SRS

"SRS" is short for "spaced repetition system".

Basically, this is a fancy way of saying **smart flashcards**.

The first time you see a card, if you get it right, you'll see it again in ten minutes. Then, if you get it right in ten minutes, you won't see it again for a day. Then four days. Then two weeks. Then a month. Then three months. Then a year.

BUT, if you get it wrong, it goes right back to the beginning, and you see it often again until you can correctly recall it.

Different apps have slightly different intervals, but the psychology is the same:

1. By forcing you to recall the word *just before you were about to forget it*, the memory formed is much stronger
2. By reviewing things on extended intervals, you can learn 20-30 new words and manage your vocabulary of thousands of old words with only 20 minutes of work a day (or less)

Because these intervals are based on science and studies (which I won't bore you with here, as I think this is fairly intuitive), not only are you spending less time on vocab, you're retaining it better.

Another nice part of training with an SRS is you can do it in tiny chunks of time *anywhere*. Waiting in line? Get in some vocab. On public transport? Get in some vocab. On the toilet? Get in some vocab. These twenty minutes almost never add any "study time" to your day, they just make your idle time productive.

I'll cover the how-to, including which apps I use and recommend, for this in a minute. But first let's look at the often overlooked second half of learning vocabulary.

Actually Use the Words in Real Life

Let's say you have learned a new verb with your SRS: *desarrollar* (to develop). You've studied it a few times and can always recall it. Thus, you won't see it again for a month.

Most people stop here. But the reality is, when the flashcard comes up and you see "to develop" on the front, it still takes you a half-second to a second to remember it and say "desarrollar".

While that sounds fairly quick, when it comes to using it in a conversation, you'll end up with a pause before the word comes out. Your speech is going to end up all choppy and full of pauses, while you search your brain for the word.

What we want is for the word to flow out naturally, like English does, without thinking about it.



The only way to do this is to *actually use it in conversations*.

It depends word to word. Some, where you have a strong memory tied to the word, take less time to make second nature. Others will take a little more brute force. But every word requires repetition and use in real conversations to become fully second nature.

This second half of the process is fairly straightforward. Just talk. A good teacher will force you to use the words if you don't naturally yourself.

But for the first half, how should you go about structuring your learning with the SRS, and what app should you use?

How to Structure Your Cards and Learning

Before we dig into the technology we'll use here, let's discuss how to structure your cards.

The front should either have a photo of the object (for nouns that are easy to illustrate, like “tree”) or just the English. Personally, I just put English for everything as I didn’t have enough time to dig around for photos.

We’ll cover why you don’t need to worry about “translation” in the grammar chapter, but you’ll just need to trust me for a bit that putting English on the card is totally fine.

You should **NOT** put the Spanish on the front and the English on the back, ever.

This is a huge mistake, as it’s training you to *recognize* the Spanish and understand it. If you put Spanish on the front, you’ll find yourself understanding people when they speak but being stuck when it comes time to open your own mouth.

The point of these cards is to train you to be able to *produce* Spanish, given only English and no hints, as this is how it works when you’re actually talking to someone. If you can produce the Spanish, you can recognize it, but not the other way around.

As for how much to study, that depends on how fast you are trying to progress. For most people, 15-20 new words a day is plenty. Remember, you’ll need to keep up with maintaining your old cards as they come back to you days, weeks, or months later, and that will take at least half of your time. This will keep your daily studying down to 15-20 minutes a day.

If you have more time and are more ambitious (make sure you want to keep up with it in the long term), increase from there.

Recommended Resources

There are two apps I recommend as your SRS. I'd pick one and just stick to it.

Anki

Available on iOS, Android, and Desktop.

AnkiSRS.net

This is what I personally prefer, as it's simpler. You are shown the front of the card. You tap the screen (or click on your computer), and it shows the back underneath the front side. Then, you tap on the right if you got it right, or on the left if you got it wrong. Self graded and dead-simple.

It's also very customizable in case you want to get fancy.

Personally, I just use the standard, simple front/back setup and it works perfectly.

However, it's not very pretty (rather, it's very ugly), and there's a bit of a steep learning curve to figure out how to use it. It's not intuitive and you'll likely need some tutorials and poking around to get setup.

The iOS app is \$19.99 (Android and Desktop versions are free), which pays for their server costs.

It's also not very good at gamifying the experience, which means that unlike some apps (like the one coming up), Anki isn't playing with your psychology to get you hooked on training your vocabulary. If you feel like you may need some extra motivation to keep up with doing this daily, you'll want to use the next option, Memrise.

Memrise

Available on iOS, Android, and their website (which works on any mobile device, too).

Memrise.com

To start, Memrise is free for all platforms. They do have a premium version, but we don't really need it.

Memrise is very easy to use, it looks good, and it's intuitive. If you aren't that good with technology in general, this is your pick.

Memrise does things a bit differently than Anki, but it's based on the same principles. Early on with a word, they will show you multiple choice, as it's easier. As you progress, they will make you type out the word fully, as well as one or two other variations.

Some people will like this variation, and some will prefer a self-graded simple flashcard setup like Anki.

But what Memrise does way better than Anki (other than being easy to use and looking good) is that they have gamified things a bit. It's not overdone, but you may find that their little concept of building words from seeds to saplings to full plants, then having to "water" your plants to keep them alive, as well as their progress

bars, goals, and other simple built-in mechanisms will keep you a little more motivated to come back and study.

Memrise also makes adopting pre-made flashcard decks that other people have made very easy, and can save you a lot of time. Just, the first time you see the word, you'll want to stop and make a few mental associations with it:

1. **What it sounds like** (say it a few times and check that you match the recording that the deck creator hopefully included)
2. **How its spelled** (this is pretty simple and I wouldn't spend more than a few seconds on this)
3. **Lastly, try to attach some personal meaning to the word** (which is best), or a create mnemonic.

A Mnemonic is a simple memory device that ties a short but memorable sentence to the word. For instance, for "gato", your mnemonic could be "the cats ga-toes" (the cat's got toes). Stupid, but it will help you remember the word. Make these yourself as borrowing other people's mnemonics don't work as well.

The only point of this is to get you to the point of getting the word right every time, at which point you won't need it anymore and you'll start using speech to make the word second nature.

This step is also optional - you don't *have to* do this. But for many people, it helps - and if you get stuck with a word you can never seem to recall, this will help.

If you want to steal our flashcards, which go from complete beginner to advanced student, focusing on the most used and important words first, then just [download the Perfect Spanish Curriculum Blueprint](#), which includes a link to our private Memrise group. It even has clear native speaker audio recordings for every word!

STRATEGY #2

How to Improve Confidence

At the end of last year, I ran a poll to 672 people asking what their number one struggle with Spanish was.

What did 41% say? Confidence.

The other big one, 46%, was understanding people when they speak fast, which is closely tied to confidence.

It ranges from people born into latin families who feel embarrassed that they can't speak the language (and thus can't talk to their grandparents), to people who have taken the language for 6+ years in the traditional school system but lock up when people talk to them.

The answer, once again, is speaking.

To understand why that is, let's look at my favorite definition of confidence (which people define wrong all of the time), from PhD, Geoffrey Miller:

"Confidence is the realistic expectation you have of being successful at something, given (a) your competence at it and (b) the risk involved with doing it."

A great example he uses is that of driving a car. When you first start learning to drive, you have (a) no competence at it, and (b) high risk, as driving a several ton machine at high speeds, while navigating roads and other cars, is dangerous.

Your feeling of low confidence is an evolutionary mechanism to keep you alive. If you felt high confidence and didn't know what you were doing, you could very quickly kill yourself.

But after years of driving, you've done it so much that you have high competency, and the risk involved is decreased because you've had so much experience in all types of situations.

It's the same with Spanish.

Let's assume you have low confidence with Spanish.

When you are faced with speaking to someone, (a) you have low competence as you don't have much practice actually speaking and having conversations with people, and (b) your reptilian brain finds it high risk, as it's a social interaction where you don't want to make the other person angry (evolutionarily, they may attack

you) or get embarrassed by your bad Spanish (evolutionarily, this was bad for mating odds).

Thus your confidence is low and you shy away from the situation.

The only answer here is to improve your competence speaking with someone in a real conversation. Once you have a high competence speaking with someone, the risk will fade away and you'll be confident. If you still aren't confident once you have competence with speaking, then you have a low-confidence issue with social interactions as a whole, which is well beyond the scope of this course.

The Confidence Onion

Confidence is not an on/off switch - it's not something you have or don't have.

No, confidence is like an onion.



When you first start learning, you have no confidence in anything. But after a short period of time, you're pretty confident at greetings - because you've done them a lot, and you're not worried at that point that you won't be able to say "hola, como estas?". That gives you the most inner layer of the onion.

As you learn more, and then practice those concepts, eventually you are confident at those things, and your onion of confidence adds layers. Pretty soon you're confident ordering food at a restaurant and giving directions to a taxi driver. Then you're confident at basic conversations.

As you learn, the sphere of things you are confident speaking about increases, adding layers to the onion. Pretty soon, you are confident having normal conversations, just like you'd have in English. But even at that point, you aren't confident speaking about philosophy or science - because you don't have much competence there.

In this way, just as you build from communication to perfection, you build from confidence in greetings to confidence in conversations to confidence speaking about advanced topics or using advanced grammar. It's not black and white.

The nice thing is, as your “onion” grows, your confidence that you will be able to add more layers to the onion goes up too. Once you can have conversations confidently, you'll carry more confidence into learning new things or handling unfamiliar situations, as you have a history of (more accurately, a demonstrated competence in) learning new things and handling

somewhat unfamiliar situations before. Your confidence snowballs.

Very soon, confidence won't be a worry anymore.

STRATEGY #3

How to Learn Spanish Grammar

Grammar is likely either your favorite subject when it comes to learning Spanish, or, like most people, it's... scary.

Let's make one thing clear: it's only scary because it's easy to get confused and flustered. And it's only easy to get confused and flustered if you are trying to learn grammar *on your own* (likely with a textbook or app).

How to approach “grammar”

The core of the how-to aspect of learning grammar, then, is very simple. **Have your teacher teach it to you.**

The reality is textbooks (or even “explained like you are five” resources) can't answer your questions. They can't clarify things. They present you a lot of information and aren't much help in integrating that information into what you already know, or filtering the information by what you should bother learning now and what can wait until later.

Grammar should be explained to you by a teacher, who will be able to compare it to things you've already covered, know how

much to teach you, and **most importantly, clarify and answer questions for you until you “get it”.**

Not exactly revolutionary, I know - but you don't really care about that. You just care that it *works*.

Using an SRS for Grammar

During the **Spanish in a Month documentary**, I used flashcards for grammar as well as vocabulary. As recommended in another book, I put full sentences, fill in the blanks, etc. These, while not entirely *ineffective*, weren't a great use of time.

But, I also did some simple cards **just for conjugations.**

For instance, instead of putting a full sentence like “I have carrots, because you gave them to me”, I just put “I have”.

For instance, for the present tense of the verb Tener (to have), I simply had these cards:

- I have / tengo
- you have / tienes
- he has / tiene
- she has / tiene
- (misc object) has / tiene
- you (formal) have / tiene
- they have / tienen
- you (plural) have / tienen
- we have / tenemos

That's it.

I did this with past tenses, with irregulars, and basically any verb where I wanted to have the conjugation down cold.

This was gold.

Unlike doing full sentences, where you are exercising your translation muscles, doing it this way gives you the little building block that you can rearrange and put in any sentence. **Always favor building blocks over phrases.**

When it comes to conjugations, once you've learned a tense and a verb from your teacher (and later on, you can add regular verbs to this without their help), using an SRS like this is the fastest way to get conjugations into your head.

You still need to learn how the conjugation works from your teacher, but once you understand the mechanics, when it comes to memorizing the conjugation for each verb, this is the fastest way to do it.

In fact, **each conjugated form of the verb suddenly just becomes a vocab word** (and an easy one, as most verbs follow the same rules, and you'll have several other cards for the same verb). It's extremely efficient.

Remember that we need to use the 80/20 rule when deciding which verbs and which conjugations to memorize, but as far as doing the memorization itself, this is the fastest way.

Grammar is Also Like An Onion

Like confidence, grammar is also like an onion.

You learn one topic, practice it through speaking to “solidify” it, and then learn another topic.

Each new conjugation, sentence form, or grammatical concept is a new layer of your onion.

So, like with confidence, as you learn, the sphere of grammar you are comfortable using increases, adding layers to the onion. First you can say “I eat apples”, then “I’m eating an apple”, then “I was eating an apple”, then “I would have eaten an apple”.

As you build from foundational grammar (see the Perfect Spanish Curriculum Blueprint bonus for what to learn when - [download that here](#)) to advanced grammar, you are expanding your onion.

What you’ll be roughly doing is...

1. Learning a new concept (adding a layer)
2. Practicing it in conversations to make it second nature (solidifying the layer)
3. Then, once it’s second nature, adding another concept.

In the very beginning, it will be impossible to completely do step two, as you aren’t to a level of having conversations yet. Instead, this part will involve practice sentences and short exchanges with your teacher.

But as you get more and more advanced, step two will become more and more important as trying to keep adding layer after layer on a non-solid foundation is a recipe for disaster.

It's why I only add one concept at a time, really - because I need to make sure that each new thing is solidified and second nature before moving on. Otherwise, I'll have a hard time integrating the next new concept into what I already know, as I won't "know" it that well. In conversations where both concepts are used at the same time, suddenly I'm having to try to learn two concepts at the same time. It's inefficient.

Especially once you've achieved a conversational level, focus on one concept at a time. Solidify it through speaking and THEN work on the next concept.

As you build this onion (through your teacher), you now have a framework from which to make meaning from other people speaking, and thus you can start the process of mimicking.

What is mimicking, and why should you do it?

That's what the next strategy is about.

STRATEGY #4

Listen and Mimic

In the last chapter, we talked about grammar, in the sense of things that actually have rules. Things you can be taught.

But when it comes to speaking like a native, there are a lot of things that you can't really be *taught*. You have to learn them like a baby, by listening to other people and then **mimicking** them.

This is how you learn all of the things that don't have direct translations, and the things that have so many different shades of meaning that it would be impossible to explain in a concrete manner.

Sidenote: I wouldn't worry too much about this strategy until you have at least a hacked-conversational level, as you need some framework of understanding for these fuzzy concepts to rest on.

How Mimicry Works

Let's take the word "ya".

The way it's typically taught, "ya" is just listed as meaning "already", and that's the end of the story.

But *ya* is SO much more. In fact, it's one of my favorite words in Spanish and I wish we had something like it in English.

In English, "already" generally carries the implication that it happened a while ago. If you *just* did something, you're not going to say that you already did it.

But "ya" doesn't have that. *Ya* could be any time in the past, even if that's fifteen seconds ago.

You see, a teacher can explain that shade of meaning for you, just like I just did.

But “ya” has so many other uses that are impossible to explain. You only begin to understand all of the different shades of meaning the word carries after hearing people use it.

For instance, you’ll pick up that if you’re sitting in the living room and are waiting on someone to get their shoes on so you can all go out for lunch, and they walk back into the room with their shoes on, you could simply ask, “ya?”. In this case, “ya” is more like “ready?” than “already”.

You can also say “y ya”, which is very common and basically means “and that’s it.”

Noticing in what contexts people do and don’t use words and then mimicking them is central to how you learned as a little kid.

It’s how you if you hear someone speaking English when it’s not their native language and hear them say a word that just seems “off”, that you know that the word is “off”.

There aren’t hard cut rules, just an understanding of how the word is used based on hearing it hundreds or thousands of times in different contexts and your brain crunching some meaning out of those experiences to create some fuzzy, subconscious guidelines in your head.

Why is the fox quick?

Here's a mind-trip example for you to help you understand where this fuzzy-understanding comes in: why is a fox *quick*, but you say that a dog is *fast*? If you are native, would you ever say that a fox is fast? No... for some reason it just doesn't fit, a fox is quick, not fast.

And there are no rules of why this is true, which means you can only learn by hearing people always use quick with fox instead of fast.

Now, this is an extreme example to illustrate the point, and being so native that you care about quick vs. fast shouldn't and won't be your worry until you're already fluent, but the same form of learning is used when learning the shades of a much more basic word like "ya".

That's How You Learn “Fuzzy” Concepts

So the way to learn the fuzzy concepts - things that don't really "make sense" when translated into English - is to **listen and mimic**.

I learned this method from **Idahosa Ness**, who we'll see again in the next chapter on pronunciation. Idahosa was the expert I consulted with on accent training for my documentary.

All you do is listen to people speak. See how they use words. And then copy them. Just try to test using the words out like they do.

Repeat things. It's a very fuzzy process that is by necessity a bit self-taught, but is the key to speaking like a native.

STRATEGY #5

How to Get Perfect Pronunciation

Remember the poll I ran asking people what their #1 struggle with Spanish was?

A measly 4% said that pronunciation was their problem. Meanwhile, 46% said understanding people when they talk fast.

For reasons I'll dig into more in the next strategy (How to Understand People When They Talk Fast), these are two sides of the same coin.

Why? Because language is sound.

That's ultimately what it is - a shared way of getting meaning out of certain sounds (sounds that form words and sentences).

And yet, there's *such a small focus on sound*. Most people don't even think much about it. You may be one of the many people who think that your pronunciation is "fine". Maybe it is, but I bet for the vast majority of people reading this right now, your pronunciation isn't "perfect".

Think back to the Stages of Learning section and my warning about pronunciation in the beginning of the vocab chapter.

Pronunciation is one of the very first things you should learn, if not *the* first.

When you have perfect pronunciation one of the obvious benefits is that you speak correctly. But there are a few hidden benefits that I didn't realize until after a few weeks:

- **Your confidence is higher** because you never have to repeat things to people. You could say something perfectly on paper, but if the pronunciation is wrong, you'll likely have to repeat it - introducing doubt into your mind and hindering your confidence.

It's also higher because when you *know* your pronunciation and accent are good, you suddenly are more apt to speak and have one less thing to worry about.

- **You learn vocab faster.** Good pronunciation means that you remember vocab words correctly, meaning you start recognizing and using the word in real life faster, which accelerates the process of learning a specific word.
- **Listening comprehension goes up.** When you have perfect pronunciation (the sound aspect), there are only two things that hold you back from understanding people when they talk fast: slurring (covered in the next chapter) and the words/grammar not being second nature (covered before).

Pronunciation is more than fifty percent of this equation. If you want to improve your listening comprehension getting perfect pronunciation is the biggest win and a pre-requisite for the other two factors to help.

- **Less mental headache.** Early on, speaking Spanish is a lot of mental work. If you train your mouth to handle the pronunciation part on autopilot, there's a huge drop in mental work.
- **People will switch back to English with you less** (this is nearly impossible to avoid completely if you are in the US if you don't look latino). The main reason people do this is because when you have a terrible accent, it's sort of painful to listen to you, so they will switch to English if they speak it. It also makes people think your Spanish is bad - *even if it isn't*.



Before we get into how to train your pronunciation, what is the difference between pronunciation and *accent*?

Let's take an Australian and an American. They both have different *accents* in English, but neither have incorrect pronunciation.

An accent is just different *pacing* and sometimes different *pronunciation* of the same word or sentence.

So for instance, in Spanish, “y” and “ll” are pronounced in three main ways:

- like a “y” in English: llamas = “ya-mas” (Spain, parts of Latin America)
- like a “j” in English: llamas = “ja-mas” (most of Latin America)
- like a mix between “sh” and “j” in English: llamas = “sha-mas”(Argentina)

All of these are different accents, but correct pronunciation. This is an extreme example - other than this, the core sounds are all almost identical. So you can learn correct pronunciation and then pick an accent to tune how you pronounce certain things.

When in doubt, a neutral accent like in Colombia (inland, not by the coast) or Ecuador is your best bet.

Sidenote: Using computer generated speech to learn, or trusting computer speech recognition to be correct, is a big no-no. They are almost never right, and never natural. Avoid them and get a real human to help, or at least a recording.

How to Train Spanish Pronunciation

The first step here is something that seems innocuous: learning the Spanish alphabet.

In fact, though simple, most of the people I've worked with on pronunciation find learning the alphabet, and then being able to replicate the sounds perfectly, is one of the biggest and easiest wins.

Once you've nailed each individual syllable, you'll start making full words.

After that, it's off the the races with full sentences and music.

At each step, you'll be doing a LOT of repetitions of each sound, word, or sentence. This is because your mouth is a muscle, and **you need to build muscle memory** so that perfect Spanish pronunciation comes out *automatically*. Muscle memory takes many repetitions to develop, but once it's there, you'll never have to worry about your pronunciation again.

Now, this section is a bit difficult to teach without sound (seeing as it's about sound), so I created a massive free resource for you that has everything you need called "Sounds of Spanish". I'll refer to it a lot this chapter as you'll need it to do the exercises I recommend. [Click here to get access to that bonus.](#)

You can read through this now without doing the exercises, but when you are ready to actually work on your pronunciation, make sure to click that and get the free resource, as you'll need it.

Step 1: Learning the Alphabet

The first thing you'll want to do is learn the Spanish alphabet. This covers almost every syllable you'll use in Spanish.

Here's what to do to learn this. It may seem like overkill, but it will actually save you a TON of time in the long run of constantly having to fix little issues.

For each syllable:

1. Listen to the sound recording or watch the video (included for more difficult and important sounds)
2. Practice making the sound until you think you have it perfect
3. Record yourself saying it
4. Compare your recording to one of a native. If it sounds the same to you, then...
5. Have your teacher listen
6. If they say it's perfect (don't take "close enough"), then practice the hell out of it. Sound is a muscle movement, and the more you practice it, the easier it will become to make that sound, which means you won't slur, stumble, or stutter in the middle of a conversation. I recommend at least a hundred times for each vowel and two hundred for the two r's. The rest of the sounds are used in English and you can get by with thirty or so at this stage.

A quick warning: if you skip the part where a native says you got it perfect, don't do the repetitions. You will do nothing but be creating a muscle memory for the wrong sounds, which is counterproductive.

Step 2: Practicing Full Words

OK, now we're going to do the above process all over again with full words. I've hand-picked the words used in the resource to cover the most important sounds and progressively get harder.

For each word:

1. Starting from the first word, listen to the sound recording
2. Practice saying the word until you think you have it perfect
3. Record yourself saying it
4. Compare your recording to one of a native. If it sounds the same to you, then...
5. Have your teacher listen
6. If they say it's perfect (don't take "close enough"), then practice the hell out of it. Again - **sound is a muscle movement**, and the more you practice it, the easier it will become to make that sound, which means you won't slur, stumble, or stutter in the middle of a conversation.

Once that's done, it's time for full sentences.

Step 3: Full Sentences

Here we go again, with the same process. This time, it's going to get a lot harder. I'm going to start with easier sentences, and then it will get faster and harder. This step will help you a lot with understanding people when they talk fast (which I cover in more depth in the next chapter).

It's going to be even more work, but by the end, you'll have rock-solid pronunciation and will reap the benefits of it for the rest of your life.

For each sentence:

1. Listen to the sentence a few times, and see if you can mimic it on your first try
2. Practice saying the sentence until you think you have it perfect
3. Record yourself saying it
4. Compare your recording to one of a native. If it sounds the same to you, then...
5. Have your teacher listen
6. If they say it's perfect (don't take "close enough"), then practice the hell out of it. This is the most important step.

If you have just been reading along without doing the exercises, make sure to click here to **get the Sounds of Spanish bonus** and actually do all of this.

This entire process - from syllables to words to sentences - will take some time. You can't do it all in one day, and a week may even be a bit ambitious. There's a reason I dedicated two hours a day to this for the first ten days or so of my own Spanish learning process.

But it's worth the effort, or I wouldn't be recommending you do it.

Along the way, you can use the third-best tool for learning pronunciation (after these exercises and doing it live with your teacher): **music**.

The Magic of Music

I'll admit it.

I learned how the word “recuerdo” (I remember) is pronounced from J Balvin’s runaway reggaeton hit, “**6 AM**”.

In fact, I learned a LOT about pronunciation and the rhythm of the Spanish language from music. I happened to use primarily reggaeton (which is basically latin rap music), but you could use any music in Spanish, whether that's salsa, bachata (which I also used), or something else.



There's really no system here. Find a genre of music in Spanish that you like, download a bunch of your favorite songs (or an hour long mix from YouTube, like I did), and then listen to them over and over again, **while singing along**.

You will still get some benefit (other than the enjoyment of the music) from just listening, but for this to help your pronunciation, you need to sing along. If you don't usually do that, go somewhere where you are alone, put in headphones so you don't even hear yourself, and loosen up a little.

It's a lot of fun, and it will help add some spice to the structured exercises.

Now, once you've sung along to some songs, and you've finished every syllable, word, and now sentence, all with your teacher's stamp of "perfect" approval - you have perfect Spanish pronunciation.

Congrats! That will come in handy when it comes to understanding people when they talk fast, which is up next.

STRATEGY #6

How to Understand People When They Talk Fast

If there was a bane of every Spanish-learner's existence, it would be this or conjugations.

Understanding people when they speak fast is not only an important skill, but the one area where it seems everyone has no idea what they are doing as far as fixing the problem.

The typical diagnostic for this is just to do more listening practice. And of course, if you aren't having regular conversations, that's part of it. But if you are having conversations, more listening isn't going to help you. It's treating the symptom, not the disease.

And the disease is threefold.

Tuning Your Ear

It's interesting that many people think their pronunciation is fine but then complain that they can't understand people.

I was one of them, and was skeptical that what I'm about to tell you was true until I experienced it for myself.

Perfect pronunciation gets you more than halfway there when it comes to listening comprehension.

It doesn't really make intuitive sense that your ability to say something correctly impacts your ability *understand* something.

But what was going on in the last strategy, as you went through each exercise - every time you recorded your voice, compared it to a native's, and saw no difference, and then had your teacher point out how your pronunciation was actually slightly off, you were tuning your ear to Spanish.

Every little mistake and adjustment that you go through when training yourself to perfect pronunciation tunes your ear to the sounds of Spanish.

The process of learning pronunciation gives you the deep understanding of the sounds of Spanish, meaning that you suddenly can understand people *so much easier*.

If you can't understand people speaking at a normal pace (not fast), than you definitely need to work here first, as the next two elements won't help you until you can do that.

Intellectual to Second Nature

Ah, the backbone of this guide coming up again.

Assuming you've got the sound aspect down, your issue is speed of processing *the words*, not the speed of processing *the sounds*.

For instance, would you have any issues understanding “como estas?”, even if it was said really fast? Of course not. You don't even have to blink, you just answer.

That's because “como estas” is already second nature for you. You've used and heard it enough that there's no longer any translation going on behind the scenes.

Your problem is that as someone says a sentence, you have to mentally pause to “translate” each word, and your brain can't do that fast enough to keep up with someone speaking quickly.

Even if each “translation” only takes a split second, you won’t be able to keep up.

When someone is speaking *fast* (and of course this isn’t an issue at lower speeds), the only way to understand everything as they go is for the words and sentence structures they use to be second nature for you.

Let’s take the sentence “la verdad no puedo, tengo que irme al parque ahorita” (The truth is, I can’t, I have to go to the park in a minute). Someone says this to you while in a rush and it comes out really fast.

Let’s then assume two different situations:

1. The words “puedo”, “irme”, and “ahorita” aren’t second nature
2. Only “irme” isn’t second nature

In the first situation, you’re screwed. Even though you know much of the sentence, there is too much that isn’t second nature (meaning you’ll have to take a split second to think about it and understand it), and you’ll probably end up missing the meaning of the entire sentence.

In the second situation, you are only missing one part, and you will be fine. You’ll be able to translate that part in your head and still be able to understand everything else.

The point of these two situations is to show that you don’t necessarily need to know *every* word by second nature to



understand people speaking fast, but if you end up with more than one, maybe two a sentence, you'll be left behind.

Luckily, the vast majority of speech uses the same things over and over again, so you don't necessarily need to know every grammar concept and every word to keep up with the vast majority of rapid speech.

At the end of the day, understanding people when they speak fast is just another huge benefit of using speaking to move concepts from knowing them intellectually, to them being second nature.

Slurring

In English, we don't talk like we type. Or rather, when saying a full sentence, we usually don't say each word *in the sentence* the same way as we would have *alone*.

For instance, “what are you doing tonight?” is rarely said with each word individually.

No, we slur things together, and you end up with “whadda ya doin’ tonight?”

Those aren’t even the same syllables!

When it comes to understanding super-rapid speech, this is the issue. We know how Spanish sounds and can follow a normal or even moderately fast paced speaker. All of the words the person is saying, we know by second nature. But we still don’t understand them.

Our brains are looking for one thing (syllables in a certain order), and not finding it - because it’s not there.

When people speak really fast, they by necessity end up combining words and dropping syllables, just like we do in English. I’ll refer to these as “slurs” going forward.

I’ll give you an easy example: “de hecho” (in fact) is rarely said with much pause at all in between the words. At a fast pace, “de hecho” suddenly becomes “decho” (remember, the “h” is silent anyways), with a minuscule hiccup in the middle of the “e” sound - if even that.

There are three main ways to solve this issue, and you’ll end up using a combination.

Reggaeton.

Like I said in the last chapter, reggaeton is basically latin rap music. Like rappers in English, they drop a lot of syllables to get the words out so quickly, which makes them an ideal spot to find common ways to slur words together (people will slur things in the same way, just like in English).

People or teachers just telling you.

I just taught you what to expect with “de hecho”, for instance. This is helpful but the issue is there are hundreds of these different slurs, just like in English, so it can only go so far.

Doing it yourself.

And lastly, an unexpected resource: speaking quickly yourself.

If you’ve already nailed your pronunciation and can consistently speak correctly (as far as sounds) at a normal speed, start speaking faster.

Little by little, speak faster with your teacher and Spanish-speaking friends. They will understand you just fine - they are natives.

But this exercise of pushing yourself to speak faster will not only improve your accent (it will), but *you* will end up needing to slur some things together yourself. And if you have your accent down already, the slurs that you will naturally make yourself are almost always the exact same ones a native would use.

If you do this for long enough, you’ll end up self-discovering and learning a ton of these slurs. This has been by far the most helpful

thing personally when it comes to understanding people when they speak fast. I've gradually raised my own speaking speed to the point where, now, if I speak Spanish with some of my non-native friends, *they* have to ask *me* to slow down.

How cool would ***that*** be?

STRATEGY #7

How to Use Non-Speaking Inputs

At later stages, it may be helpful to do things other than have conversations, lessons with your teacher, and flashcards.

These include:

- Reading
- Movies / TV Shows
- Radio

These resources are **not necessary at all** for learning to a *conversationally-fluent* level. I don't personally use them. They may not even be necessary to get to a native-level fluency, but since I'm not there yet I can't say.

But since many people ask about them (effective or not, they are popular), I thought I'd share how I'd use each one, if I did.

Each of the methods - reading, radio, and TV/movies - is most useful at an advanced stage. These are great for volume of Spanish input, but without *at least* a conversational level (I'd wait

until conversationally-fluent), you will get more bang for your buck each hour from speaking, flashcards, and the other things I've recommended in the guide.

Reading Spanish

Reading is the one thing I will begin doing once I'm ready to really start expanding my vocabulary more aggressively.



In our native languages, one of the main ways we learn vocabulary is through reading.

However, reading isn't necessarily a good way to remember words. In our native language, we understand the context of everything else happening, so the new word is the only unknown. This makes figuring out its meaning after seeing it a few times relatively easy. But in Spanish, you don't have that luxury.

So, what you do is use reading to *encounter new words*, and then you look them up and move them to your SRS to start the process of memorizing it (and then use speaking to make it second nature). A bonus of this method is that the word's association with where it was in the story you were reading in Spanish will help with initial recall.

Like I mentioned before, this isn't ideal at an early stage with a second language like Spanish, as you don't have the groundwork to understand most things. And if you start with a focus on reading, you will end up able to read and write but not speak.

But once you are conversationally-fluent, reading can be a great source of new vocabulary words and questions to bring your teacher.

Spanish Radio

Talk-show radio (the type we are talking about here, not music) has one main use: *lots of input*.

Basically, the only reason you'd turn on spoken text radio in Spanish is to just spend a lot of time listening to Spanish. It's very good at just giving you a massive input of spoken Spanish to try to follow along with.

Unlike an audiobook, which could also work, you generally don't care enough about what they are talking about to worry about missing some of the words (which is a good thing).

The role of massive input is just to give your brain more practice crunching spoken Spanish. It's sort of "dumb practice".

Spanish Movies and TV

Like talk-show radio, but way more interesting, are the rather popular learning resources of movies and TV shows.

Like radio, the main role of movies and TV is massive input. The nice part is that here, you get some visuals to go along with things, which can help dramatically when it comes to following along.

I would start here with English movies you already know well, dubbed in Spanish (dubbed is when the English audio is taken out and voice actors say the lines in Spanish instead of English). Because you already know the plot and what they are roughly saying in English, it becomes much easier to follow.

After that, move to TV. Because it's significantly longer, the plot is more consistent, and you will be able to follow along with the Spanish side of things without worrying about who the characters are.

Only use English subtitles if you absolutely have to. In fact, if you need them, I would focus on speaking and your SRS and then come back later.

But what if...?

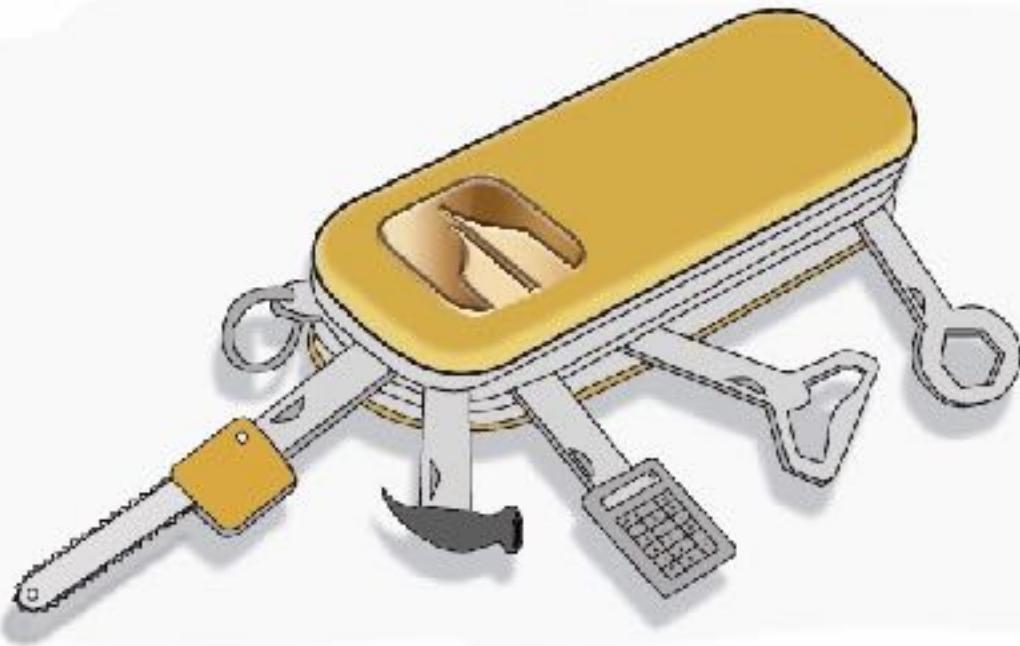
I'd wait until you're at least conversationally-fluent, as these won't help you as much as flashcards, classes, sound training, and conversations until advanced stages.

If you really want to use these, then do it. It may keep you studying when you otherwise would have quit the language altogether.

PART 5

Putting it into Practice

You're almost done. You understand the principles, the stages of learning, and now the exact how-to strategies. But that's a lot of information to process. This section will help you put it all into practice in the easiest, cheapest way possible.



THE EASY WAY TO GET STARTED

The Golden Tool: How to Make All of This Automatic

You've learned that you need to focus on communication before perfection.

You've learned that in order to speak Spanish as effortlessly as English, you need to use real conversations to move your "intellectual knowledge" to "second nature".

You've learned that once things are second nature, your confidence issues fade away, all translating in your head goes away, and you can suddenly understand people when they speak fast.

Then, once you realized how expensive one on one classes are and how time consuming and inefficient exchanges are, you wondered how you're ever going to get in any speaking practice. Maybe you even figured you'd have to go back to doing things like you were before (and continuing to not see the results you want).

But there's another way.

A few weeks after I finished my challenge to learn Spanish in a month, Adrian (my teacher) approached me with an idea.

We started working on it that day, and has pretty much consumed our entire lives since then.

That idea was **BaseLang**.

At BaseLang, we offer unlimited one-on-one classes with professional native teachers for \$149 a month.

It's truly unlimited - if you wanted to take 8+ hours a day, you could.

If you are looking for a one-stop shop for learning Spanish fast, BaseLang is your best bet. It's a complete system, including...

- A curriculum optimized for *communication first, perfection later* (which makes progress WAY faster and prevents quitting)
- Detailed pronunciation training that gets you sounding like a local
- Tons of conversation time to move concepts and words from intellectual to second nature
- Cool, fun to talk to teachers **that make learning FUN**, like talking to a friend
- Flashcards for vocabulary that go along with the lessons
- High personalization, meaning we are *constantly adapting to YOU*

It's EXACTLY what I wish existed when I was learning Spanish.

Your first week is just \$1 so that you can try it out.

If at any time in the first 35 days you don't absolutely LOVE it, just let us know and not only will we give you a full refund, but we'll send you an extra \$20 for wasting your time. You literally have negative risk.

If that sounds great to you, **just click here** and follow the instructions to start your one week trial for \$1.

If you want to really accelerate your results with Spanish and be able to have the conversations you need to make “intellectual to second nature” - and all the benefits that entails - BaseLang is your best bet.

We also **invest one percent of our revenue into poor communities in Latin America**, so you’re not just learning Spanish, but also giving back.

Click here to signup and see if it’s for you.

A Quick Sidenote

I’m going to be completely honest here. I don’t really care if you signup for BaseLang.

I just care that you speak. You need to be having conversations with natives as much as possible if you want fast results. If that’s with BaseLang (and that’s really the most affordable and best way to do it), great. If you get in your speaking another way, I’m cool with that, and I’ll keep helping you out in other ways.

[Signup now for \\$1](#)

GOT QUESTIONS?

FAQ

I'm sure you have a bunch of questions, so I'll do my best to cover the most common ones here.

How does this work, roughly?

When you signup for BaseLang, you get access to our online platform where you can book classes with any of our teachers. Everything is displayed in your timezone. You just select a teacher, pick which time slots you want, and confirm. Then, you meet with your teacher on Skype at the time you picked. Teachers are available from 6am until midnight Eastern US time.

The teachers handle the curriculum and personalization all in the background, so you just show up for class and let them work their magic.

Since the classes happen over Skype (which is free), you can take them on your phone, tablet, computer, or anywhere Skype works.

If I just want conversation practice or to follow my own curriculum, can I do that?

Of course. If you just want to use our teachers in “sandbox mode”, go ahead. You’ll just need to tell them exactly what you want.

Is it really unlimited?

Yep :)

No caveats. Your brain will melt before we kick you out (which is never). You won’t get an email asking you to calm down if you start “abusing the system”. We want you to take as many classes as you want and as you can.

We have extra teachers available during the most popular hours, so don’t worry about “having unlimited classes” but not actually being able to book any due to availability. We make sure there are always enough teachers available.

How is this different from just another teacher?

Beside the fact that professional teachers *start* at \$15-20 an hour (meaning you'd only get 5 hours of class for the same price as a month of unlimited classes with us), there are a number of reasons to use BaseLang...

- We focus on communication first, perfection later, making you see results faster
- The entire program is extremely personalized
- Many teachers means you can find a teacher you connect with, and take classes whenever you want, not just when a particular teacher is available
- We handle everything for you, including flashcards for vocab that go along with the lessons
- If you are looking for a turnkey way to implement all the strategies in this guide, BaseLang is the only solution

Clarify the pricing, is there a contract?

BaseLang is month to month, no contracts.

- Your first week is \$1 (this starts when you signup, not when you take your first class)
- After that, you are automatically charged \$149 every month. Cancel at any time with 2 clicks.
- If you aren't happy in the first 35 days, get a full refund plus an additional \$20 for wasting your time
- No surprises, fast support

[Signup now for \\$1](#)

THE END

Thank you!

That's it, you finished the guide! Time and attention is the world's most valuable resource, and I'm flattered that you've spent so much of it with me here.

If you loved it and think your friends who are learning Spanish would find it useful, I'd appreciate if you shared it with them on Facebook, Twitter, or via email.

And if you have any questions, you can email me personally at connor@baselang.com. I read and reply to everything.

Thank you!

