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052153075X - Camino al Español: A Comprehensive Course in Spanish - Consuelo de Andres Martinez, Eugenia Ariza Bruce, Christine Cook, Isabel Diez-Bonet and Anthony Trippett

Excerpt

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## INTRODUCTION

*Tell me and I'll forget.*

*Show me and I might remember.*

*Involve me and I'll understand.*

(Chinese proverb)

Thank you for choosing *Camino al español*. This book is a comprehensive course, aimed at students with no previous knowledge of Spanish, that will take them to approximately the level required for university entrance. It is also suitable for 'fast track' learning such as for university students or their equivalents who need to establish the linguistic basis for advanced study of the language. The book is planned with the classroom in mind and its design reflects the need to make the learning process as active and stimulating as possible. It could also be a useful teach yourself course for highly motivated students who are unable to join a class.

As a team of university teachers who have been working together for some time, we draw on practices associated with communicative approaches to language learning. Students are encouraged to use the language and participate actively in class from the outset. At the same time, due attention is given to academic rigour to enable students to read and write with high levels of competency and accuracy. In short, balanced attention is paid to all four language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) because we see them as supportive of each other.

Our team comprises two native English speakers, two native Peninsular Spanish speakers and a native speaker of Latin American Spanish (from Colombia), and we hope that the authentic materials we offer give some acknowledgement of the diversity of the Spanish language of which some four-fifths of the speakers live outside Spain. We give specific guidance on the main differences in pronunciation and usage between Peninsular and Latin American Spanish.

## INTRODUCTION

**The structure of the course**

The course is divided into twenty units and a standard presentation has been used throughout the book. Each unit is centred on one or more topics or functions, indicated in the unit's title and the specified learning aims. The learning tools provided have been devised to serve and support those topics and functions; thus there is a grammar section at the end of each unit, containing relevant grammar explanations with cross-references within and between units. Other features intended to make the book student-friendly include a student guide to grammar terms, vocabulary lists and the use of icons at the beginning of each exercise. The instructions are in both English and Spanish for the first five units – thereafter in Spanish only, to promote the study of the language in context.

Each unit is divided into four sections:

*Presentación y prácticas*

*Comprensión auditiva*

*Consolidación*

*Gramática*

The book may be used in a number of ways, and some teachers may prefer to begin each unit by working through the *Presentación y prácticas*, which introduces new structures and vocabulary in context, whilst others may prefer to start with the *Gramática*, which contains relevant grammar explanations for the functions presented in that unit. This flexibility allows the teachers to adapt to the particular requirements of their group of students. A sample exploitation of Unit 4 in Part II shows how this can be achieved.

***Presentación y prácticas***

This section focuses on the functions outlined in the learning aims for that unit. It also serves to introduce new structures and vocabulary. The language elements have been carefully selected to be representative of the language used by native

speakers in everyday situations. The careful grading and sequencing of the activities mean that students can use the target language from the outset. The use of inductive techniques involves the learner in the discovery of the way in which the language works from the very beginning. Many exercises are supported by listening material, and the emphasis is on communication.

***Comprensión auditiva***

This section provides more sustained listening exercises that build on the new structures and vocabulary already learned. It should be used when students have sufficient confidence to tackle it, ideally in a language laboratory, where there are more opportunities for students to work individually and at their own pace. However, the audio materials provided can be used in the classroom, and the tape scripts provided at the end of each unit can also be used to practise pronunciation and intonation. The listening texts have been selected to represent the wider Spanish-speaking world in order to expose the students to a variety of accents and additional vocabulary.

***Consolidación***

This section contains mainly written revision exercises to help the students to reinforce structures and vocabulary encountered in the *Presentación y prácticas* section and to provide an opportunity to reflect on the progress made. The keys to many of the exercises are to be found at the end of the book. There are also reading passages and activities to develop writing skills.

***Gramática***

Grammatical explanations of all new grammar points in each unit are provided in English.

### Cultural awareness

The course aims to develop in the students a broad awareness of the cultural contexts in which Spanish is spoken and written, both in Spain and in the Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America. Hence the numerous references to websites and the use of authentic reading and listening materials. It is hoped that in this way students will begin to appreciate the differences and similarities between their own culture and those found in the different countries of the Spanish-speaking world. In addition, students are urged to consult as much original Spanish material as possible from the outset – in newspapers, magazines, etc. Similarly we recommend that students take advantage, wherever possible, of Spanish language films, videos, DVDs, television and radio programmes to supplement their listening skills. News bulletins are a good starting point, particularly when supported by authentic newspaper material.

### The role of the teacher

The course has been designed for classroom use, promoting interaction between teacher and learner, with the teacher acting as facilitator and guide. The **Sample unit** makes suggestions for the exploitation of the teaching materials, although the

book has been structured to give tutors the flexibility to adapt the different sections to their own teaching styles and to the needs of their students. The units have been arranged sequentially, with each new unit introducing a new topic and building on the structures, tenses and vocabulary already learned. Any re-ordering of the units needs to bear this in mind.

The acquisition of a language is a cumulative process and it is the role of the teacher to ensure that new material is only introduced when students are confident with what they have already learned. It is, therefore, important that teachers carefully monitor the progress of the learners and give frequent feedback on their performance. Although *Camino al español* is ideal for fast-paced courses of about 100–120 hours, the individual teacher can adapt the time spent on different units and sections to suit the particular requirements of the course and the students.

Because of the limitations and constrictions of the language classroom, an important role for the teacher is to provide a learning environment that encourages students to take an active part and be independent. *Camino al español* has been devised with this in mind and as well as the guidance for the tutor provided in the **Sample unit**, the **Learner guide** offers students advice on how to develop language-learning skills.

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PART I

# Camino al español

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## LEARNER GUIDE

Welcome to *Camino al español*. You have chosen to learn a language spoken by an estimated 400 million people who live in Spain, Latin America and countries as far apart and diverse as the Philippines, Morocco and the United States of America. The diversity of the native speakers of Spanish means that there is not one ‘Spanish’ but many varieties. The unifying factors of the language, however, make it possible for Spanish speakers from all over the world to understand each other without difficulty. Spanish is the vehicle that connects them all. In *Camino al español* we present a variety of Spanish that is widely understood, while drawing attention to the principal differences between the main forms of Spain and Latin America (broadly termed as Castilian and non-Castilian Spanish).

Spanish belongs to the Latin family of languages, meaning it derives from Latin and shares similarities with related languages like French, Italian and Portuguese. Other languages that had an important influence on the development of Spanish were Greek and Arabic (a third of its vocabulary comes from Arabic).

The socio-political importance of the Spanish language in today’s world is marked by factors such as the fast-growing Spanish-speaking population in the USA (some 30 million); Spain’s democratic restoration as a model for countries surfacing from despotic regimes; and economic partnerships such as ALCA and Mercosur, which are vast free-trading areas in Central and South America, similar to the common market in the EU.

*Camino al español* aims to provide beginners with a sound knowledge of the Spanish language and to lead them to more advanced levels of study if so wished. It has been devised to enable students to communicate effectively with native speakers and interact confidently in real-life situations.

### The book as a tool

If you have not done so already, please glance through the general introduction which will help

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Unit's section	Purpose of section	Type of activities
<i>Presentación y Practicas</i>	Introduction of vocabulary and structures.	Pair work, listening and reading comprehension.
<i>Comprensión auditiva</i>	Exposure to more challenging listening material with a variety of accents.	Listening comprehension. Transcripts available.
<i>Consolidación</i>	Revision and consolidation.	Writing, translating and grammar exercises. Self-study exercises.
<i>Gramática</i>	Clear explanations of language structures.	Reflection and study.
<i>Cultural notes</i>	Awareness of Spanish culture all over the world.	Reading material. Reference to websites.

familiarize you with the format of each of the twenty units which make up the book. The table above gives you a brief summary of the different sections.

Other special features which you may find helpful are the student guide to grammar terms which gives clear definitions of, for example, what a ‘noun’ or a ‘preposition’ is, vocabulary lists that will assist you in your listening tasks, verb tables in the grammar section, transcripts of recordings, and a key to exercises.

How to become an active learner

In this guide you will find practical tips and strategies to help maximize your learning experience. As learners, we all absorb knowledge in different ways and at different paces, so pick and choose whichever tips you find useful to suit your own needs or preferences. Whilst it is relatively easy to take full advantage of your strengths when learning a new language (for example, you may find it easier to remember things you have heard rather than things you have seen written down), it is important to build and reinforce the skills and practices which you find more challenging. *Camino al español* gives you the opportunity to practise all four language-learning skills, besides offering suggestions for additional materials to help you

achieve a balanced competence in Spanish. The skills and knowledge underlying a good command of any language take time to acquire (an infant will need between two and three years to speak his or her native language), so be aware that progress will be gradual.

The more actively involved we become in learning the more we get out of it. In the following sections you will find a series of suggestions to help you become an active and more proficient learner.

Setting objectives

The following list of suggestions will help you become an active learner.

Enliven your motivation

- Think of the benefits that learning Spanish would bring you in the long term.
- Write them down. Be specific (i.e., I would be able to find my way around in a Spanish-speaking country; I could answer the phone calls from Spanish clients, etc.).
- Refer to the list for encouragement. You can add to it or alter it as appropriate.
- Keep handy an image of something or someone Spanish that you find inspiring.

**Managing your time**

- Locate a time in the week you can dedicate to revising your progress.
- Plan your routine, make it pleasant (i.e., play music, get a hot drink or snack, etc.).
- Record your progress in a log or diary, and reflect every four or five weeks on how much you have learned.

**Build on your confidence**

- Find someone to practise/revise with. Another student would be ideal.
- Establish a language exchange with a native speaker who wants to learn your language, or perhaps a pen-friend over the Internet. Ask your tutor for help.
- Listen to Spanish music (you can try to learn the lyrics and sing along!).
- Make use of the resources available to you through your place of study and your library.
- Get subtitled films and programmes; after a few viewings cover the subtitles to see how much you understand.
- Read Spanish newspaper headlines—you will be able to recognize some of the international news. Web access to Spanish newspapers has been restricted and you may have to pay to subscribe, but your local or college library may be able to help.
- There are plenty of additional reading materials on websites. Visit the ones we suggest in the cultural notes of most units.
- You may be able to access a Spanish-speaking radio station (sometimes through the Web). Again ask your tutor/librarian to see if they can help you to locate a suitable one.
- Read aloud. Anything would do: packaging, operating instructions, lists of ingredients, etc.
- Record yourself speaking or reading Spanish. You can record vocabulary lists, recite verb

tables, etc. This is very good to revise on the move.

- Practise whenever you have an opportunity. Do not shy away because you are asked to repeat something.
- Be aware that you need to take risks; we all learn by trial and error.

**Gaining linguistic awareness**

Understanding grammar and language patterns will become easier as your awareness of the language grows. The tips below illustrate some of the ways in which you can look for language patterns in Spanish.

- Thinking about the patterns in your own language will provide you with enough insight to adapt part of that knowledge to the language you are learning. Being familiar with grammatical terms in your own language is very useful when you learn a second language. If grammar is not your strong point you may benefit from the clear and simple guide to grammar terms that we provide. Keep referring to it as much as you need.
- Apart from certain aspects that all languages share, there are also marked differences that set one language apart from another. You may find that Spanish does not use the subject pronouns as much as English ('I', 'he', etc.), or that most words have gender which very few English words do.

**Spelling and word recognition for cognate words**

Your familiarity with your own and other languages, particularly languages which come from Latin, means that some Spanish words can be immediately recognizable. This is true of many words which derive from the same source, also called 'cognate words'.

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## 1. English vowels and consonants

- Sometimes English vowels correspond to vowels in Spanish: admire/**admirar**; enormous/**enorme**; television/**televisión**.
- Often the English 'e' and 'o' correspond to the Spanish 'ie' and 'ue'. You may be able to construct the corresponding English word from the Spanish: *cimiento*/cement; *muela*/molar.
- Occasionally, English 'e' and 'o' correspond to Spanish 'i' or 'u': December/*diciembre*; October/*octubre*.
- English initial group consonants 'sc-', 'sp-' or 'st-' add an initial 'e' in Spanish: scandal/*escándalo*; Spain/*España*; stomach/*estómago*.
- Spanish has fewer double consonants than English. The group 'ph-' in English is 'f' in Spanish: philosophy/*filosofía*.
- English often uses a 'y' where Spanish will use an 'i' – symptom/*síntoma*.
- Unlike in English, the presence of double consonants in Spanish is reflected in the pronunciation – 'cc-', 'rr-', 'll-': *accidente*, *correr*, *calle*.
- The group '-ct-' in English often corresponds to '-cc-' in Spanish: action/*acción* (but actor/*actor*).
- The consonants 'k', 'x' and 'w' are rare in Spanish. The consonant 'x' in English sometimes corresponds to 'j' in Spanish: exercise/*ejercicio*.
- The consonant 'h' has no sound in Spanish, unlike in English: homage/*homenaje*.
- Word stress may differ: *Canada*/*Canadá*, *Florida*/*Florida*.

## 2. How words are constructed

In Spanish as in English, prefixes (additions to the beginning of a word) or suffixes (additions to the end of a word) may affect the meaning in different ways –

- to form a negative, such as 'in-' or 'im-': tolerant/**intolerant** – *tolerante/intolerante*  
possible/**impossible** – *posible/imposible*  
patient/**impatient** – *paciente/impaciente*
- to describe someone who performs a particular action, such as '-er', or '-or' to work/worker – *trabajar/trabajador*
- to form an adjective from a noun, such as '-ous', '-oso': nerves/nervous *nervios/nervioso*
- to turn an adjective into an adverb, such as '-ly', '-mente': quick/quickly – *rápido/rápidamente*

Noticing how words are constructed can help to predict or anticipate patterns. For instance, knowing that the English word 'maintain' translates as *mantener* in Spanish, it could be anticipated that 'contain' would translate as *contener*, 'retain', as *retener*, etc.

## 3. False friends

In addition to correspondences and patterns, you should be aware of differences and exceptions. Sometimes English and Spanish words which you might expect to mean the same, since they seem very similar, can in fact mean something completely different. These words are called 'false' friends because they do not mean what they appear to mean.

For example, *carpeta* which you might expect to mean 'carpet' in fact means 'folder' or 'binder'; *estar embarazada* means 'to be pregnant', not 'to be embarrassed'; *estar constipado/a* means 'to have a cold'.

## 4. Structures in Spanish

Knowledge about your own language is a great help when learning a foreign language. Although grammar categories usually do not vary, sentence structure may differ.

- Unlike in English, the Spanish use of subject pronouns (I, he, we, etc.) is quite restricted,



since the verb ending will point to the subject of the action (*viv-o* = I live; *viv-e* = He lives; *viv-imos* = We live; etc.). To understand a sentence in Spanish, you must start with the verb. By working out the person of the verb, the subject emerges.

- In a Spanish sentence the word order is much more flexible than in English.
- Spanish does not use auxiliary verbs in questions: ‘Do you study Spanish?’ ‘Does she speak English?’ would translate as ‘¿Estudias español?’ ‘¿Habla inglés?’

How to build up your language skills

Communication can take place without absolute accuracy, but it is undoubtedly true that accuracy makes communication easier and more fruitful. Memory plays an important role in the accurate retrieval of grammar rules, vocabulary, etc. Because different people learn in different ways and at different paces, their preferred strategies to memorize may vary. It is important to identify what works best for you. Here are a few strategies:

- Write things down.
- Write an article (*el, la, un, una*) next to a noun to help you remember its gender. (See the sample below.)
- Note the context in which a word is used by copying down an example.
- Say it out loud.
- Listen to something said as well as seeing it written.
- Study words in groups, e.g. words to do with the family, adverbs of place, nouns and verbs that go together – *trabajo/trabajar/trabajador*, etc.
- Devise your own mind-maps, linking ideas, words or structures to each other.
- Create your own word-association methods: for example, to trigger the memory of the correspondent Spanish expression for ‘on foot’, you may want to link it to an English food ‘pie’,

hence remembering that ‘on foot’ is a *pie* in Spanish, albeit with different pronunciation!

- Remember that making mistakes is proof of progress. Forgetting something does not matter, it is simply part of the process. People are usually at their best when relaxed.

Building up vocabulary

Memorizing vocabulary or expressions is very important but difficult. Here are some tips to maximize your effort:

- Use post-its or similar labels to identify different objects around you. Replace them regularly, but do not throw away the ones you have learned, it is easy to forget and you may want to refresh your memory from time to time.
- Learn an adjective with its opposite: *alto/bajo*.
- Remember that people can only learn a few words at a time.
- Prepare lists of verbs, vocabulary, or structures to read while you are waiting for the bus, the lift, etc. You can alternate covering the Spanish or the English column to see how much you do remember.

Vocab. list week 2

<i>la familia</i>	family
<i>el hermano</i>	brother
<i>la hermana</i>	sister
<i>el abuelo</i>	grandfather
<i>la abuela</i>	grandmother
<i>las gafas</i>	glasses
<i>la barba</i>	beard
<i>los ojos</i>	eyes
etc. . . .	etc. . . .



Some of these tips may not be of immediate use to you, but keep referring to this guide for ideas and strategies as you progress through the book. We hope *Camino al español* will help you to enjoy your

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learning and encourage you to further your studies  
in Spanish. Thanks for sharing your experience  
with us.

Key to symbols used in the course

- Listening 
- Speaking 
- Reading 
- Vocabulary 
- Writing 
- Grammar 
- Cultural 
- Solutions 