

Calico

Spanish[®]

Culture Capsule: Describing Myself



The importance of learning about culture with Calico Spanish Culture Capsules

A vital part of learning a language is exploring the cultures of the people who speak it. The content in these sections is intended to get your learners thinking about and investigating big questions about culture.

You probably have noticed that even within your own city, many cultural differences exist. It's impossible to say, "The people who are from [this place] who speak [this language] are [this way]." As you investigate the cultures of the various Spanish-speaking peoples, do your own research on topics that interest your students, and encourage children to make comparisons:

- If you went to visit a Spanish-speaking country that interests you, what might be there?
- What would surprise you?
- Might they speak another language besides Spanish?
- What would the family do for fun?
- How is this similar to your family?
- How is it different?



To help children start to learn more about the various peoples who speak Spanish, we use an innovative approach we call Culture Capsules. Each uses an inquiry method to explore deep questions of culture and ends in a target-language performance goal based on national standards of intercultural competence.

If you know anyone who speaks Spanish and/or is from a Spanish-speaking country, invite that person to help your class learn more about their language and culture, especially on the topics related to these Culture Capsules.

These Culture Capsules were developed to specifically support the Calico Spanish Stories Online program, a unique Video Story-based Spanish program for elementary learners that is able to be implemented regardless of the teacher's Spanish ability.

For more information, visit calicospanish.com/discover-stories

Describing Myself

In this level, students are learning to describe themselves using a few memorized adjectives. How would a child in the target culture describe himself or herself?

For a variety of reasons, your students may have a particular picture in mind when they think of what a Spanish-speaking person looks like. Is this picture based in fact? What do the Spanish-speaking peoples look like?

Discussion

*Introduce students to the cultural concept with the following discussion. For a story that will help your students learn about a Chinese family living in Guatemala and providing goods for the indigenous people there, you could find and read to your class the book *Mama and Papa Have a Store*. (Book is not provided.)*

Think for a moment: what picture comes to mind when you think of what the peoples of Latin America and Spain look like?

When Spain conquered most of Central and South America, mostly white Europeans began to come to the New World and settle. In some countries, they soon mingled with the native people there. [Many Spanish speakers prefer the term *indígena* (indigenous) for native people instead of “Indian.”] In countries where there were many families of mixed races, much more of the population tends to have darker skin, hair, and eyes.

In other areas, the Europeans did not have families with the indigenous people as much, and so there are a great many people who

have lighter skin, hair, and eyes, or a great many indigenous people, or both, still living in the same area.

Just as the United States participated in the terrible slave trade in the 18th and 19th centuries, many Latin American countries imported slaves from Africa as well, primarily to work on large plantations harvesting the area’s important crops like sugar and bananas. In these areas today, you will still meet many people of African descent and see evidence of rich African cultural heritage there.

In the last two centuries, many people from around the world have continued to immigrate to Latin America. For example, many cities across Latin America have large Asian communities, just like the United States.

Did you know that there is a Spanish-speaking country in Africa? Spain governed the country of Equatorial Guinea for many years, and Spanish is still an official language there. What do you think the people of Equatorial Guinea look like?

Student activities

Guide students as they answer the questions and complete the activities for this Culture Capsule in the student portion of this Capsule. You will find helpful resources at CalicoSpanish.com/Stories/CultureA.

Answers for student notes

1. Students may list (white) Europeans, Indigenous peoples, Africans, and Asians.
2. *indígena*
3. Answers will vary. Encourage students to emphasize the diversity they have learned about.

Assessment

ACTFL Cultural Awareness Performance Descriptors, Novice Range

Presentational: May use some basic writing conventions.

- Show students a picture of children from a Spanish-speaking country (find examples on CalicoSpanish.com/Stories/CultureA). Ask students to write a description of one or more children in the picture using *es* and the nationality adjective: *Es dominicana*. *Es mexicano*. They should write the adjective with a lowercase letter.

Interpersonal: May show awareness of the most obvious cultural differences or prohibitions.

- Show students a picture of two or three children, one of which is ethnically indigenous. Ask students to identify which one has *indígena* heritage.



Describing Myself

Discussion

As your teacher helps you consider what Spanish-speaking peoples might look like, write down some notes to help you remember what you learn.

1 What are the main people groups who have contributed to the great variety we see among the Spanish-speaking peoples today?

.....

.....

.....

.....

2 What is the Spanish word that many Spanish speakers prefer we use to describe themselves, instead of using the word for "Indian"?

.....

.....

3 After discussing this topic with your teacher, now what do you think a Spanish-speaking person might look like?

.....

.....

.....

Thinking it through

The facts about the people who live in an area, such as their races, are part of what is called "demographics." In what ways do a country's current demographics reflect its history? How does the history of your country and/or state show in the way the people there look and behave? This is an important part of understanding a people's overall culture.

.....

.....

.....

.....

Making it personal

Are there any physical traits common in your family, and do you know why your family shows those characteristics? What about personality? What traits make each person in your family *especial*?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



Cultural inquiry

Investigate the demographics (the facts about the people who live in an area) of some Spanish-speaking countries. Choose two countries and find out the following information.

In the first column, be sure to use the Spanish name for the country (sometimes it is different than the English name).

For the second column, you'll need to find what adjective people in that country use to describe themselves. For example, people in the United States often say that they are American. Note that these adjectives start with lowercase letters in Spanish.

Next, identify the largest and smallest ethnic

groups in each country. Write the percentage they make up of that country's population. Be sure to use the Spanish word for the ethnic groups.

Then, look for pictures of three or four different people from each country. How do they compare with each other? With the people in your family? What words have you learned that describe them in Spanish? What makes each person *especial*?

Do you know of any famous people from that country? What do they look like?

To help you understand how richly varied the peoples and cultures of the Spanish-speaking world are, try investigating *la República Dominicana, España, Bolivia, Colombia, and/or Argentina*.

country	adjective	largest ethnic group (with %)	smallest ethnic group (with %)	comparison of pictures

What can you do?

Based on a picture your teacher shows you of children from a Spanish-speaking country, write a description of one or more children in the picture using *es* and the nationality adjective: *Es dominicana. Es mexicano*. Your teacher will show you a picture of two

or three children. Can you use what you have learned to identify and say which child probably has an *indígena* heritage?

Do you want to continue learning about Spanish culture?

Calico Spanish Stories Online offers a fun-filled journey filled with the ways children learn: stories, songs, and play. Continue your journey and learn about Spanish culture as you learn the language!

Our Stories online program allows you to learn 24/7 together where you can view, save, download and print the content needed for each lesson, or buy professionally printed copies of the materials to teach in a more formal setting.

- **Spanish speaker?** Add your personal touch and creativity while you teach.
- **Just beginning?** Enjoy the full support you need to learn together.
- **Stories, songs, and games** help children confidently use real language.
- Formative **activities** and step-by-step daily lesson plans provide guidance and feedback along the way.



Visit www.CalicoSpanish.com to start your FREE trial!

Calico Spanish uses fun characters, engaging visuals, and focused, comprehensible language to help children begin communicating in Spanish. Through the Calico Spanish Stories program children will learn to use greetings, answer basic questions, and talk about themselves while learning colors, numbers, animals, and action words.

For more information on the resources available from Calico Spanish, visit CalicoSpanish.com.

