

Calico

Spanish[®]

Culture Capsule: Home Is Where the Heart Is



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

Home Is Where the Heart Is

Your students are learning to talk about their house in Spanish. Do people in Spanish-speaking countries live in houses similar to theirs? What is the same and what is different about homes in different cultures?

Discussion

Introduce students to the cultural concept with this discussion.

How many kinds of homes have you visited? Think about different homes you have been in. What has been different about them? What has been the same? Homes can be very different, with different numbers of bathrooms and bedrooms. Some families have a dining room, and some do not. The ways families use their homes can be different, too: some eat in the kitchen and some eat in the living room. In other parts of the world, homes and the ways they are used can also be very different.

Let's start by talking about large cities. In large cities, more people have to pack into a smaller space. Since you can put a lot of apartments in one building and fit lots of families there that way, many more people in large cities live in apartments than live in houses. We say these cities have a "dense population," which is a fancy way of saying that they have lots of people in a small space.

In fact, living in a house with a yard in places with dense populations like New York City is so expensive that most people cannot afford it. In cities in Latin America, too, more people live in apartments than live in houses. Also,

these homes are generally smaller than what you might imagine. Even in Spain, one of the Spanish-speaking countries that would look the most modern and familiar to you, the average house is about half the size of the average house in the United States.

In many countries in Latin America, many people have left the areas outside the cities (called **rural** areas) to go to the cities to find jobs. Because of this movement, Latin America has many cities with very dense populations. Also, because so many people moved to cities so quickly, it was hard for houses and apartment buildings to be built fast enough and well enough. So, many cities have large neighborhoods where the families live in shelters made of everything from cardboard boxes to cement blocks. In Spain, these dwellings are called *chabolas*. In Mexico City, Guatemala City, and other very large cities, entire communities and even schools exist within the city dump. In these places and in many rural areas, families often live without luxuries that you might be used to, like a refrigerator or an indoor bathroom, but they are still often proud of their homes and like to keep them clean and decorated like you do.

If a house in another country does have a bathroom, you should not expect it to be

just like yours. Bathrooms are certainly a room that is very different in other parts of the world! In the United States, only a tiny percentage of families live without an indoor bathroom. In some countries in Latin America, as many as half the families do not have a bathroom inside their houses. Also, if there is a shower in the bathroom, you may see an electric cord attached to the showerhead that will heat the water when it is switched on. Or, you may need to dip a cup into a barrel of rainwater to bathe yourself, especially if the town turns the water off at certain times of the day! Cities may also turn off the electricity to homes at different times to conserve electricity. What would your family do differently if you regularly lost power at your house?

What about the bedroom, the *cuarto* (also often called *dormitorio* or *habitación*)? Do you have a bedroom to yourself, or do you share? In family homes in Latin America, children (and sometimes whole families) often share a bedroom. Also, in the tropical areas, it is not unusual for people to use hammocks instead of beds, and mosquito nets are a necessity. People there sleep under them each night to try to avoid getting one of the common sicknesses carried by mosquitos.

Do you have a big yard at your house? In cities and towns in Latin America, it is uncommon to have a yard, but many homes are built around a courtyard and/or have a small garden area in front. Spending time in a courtyard is much more pleasant in places where the temperature is almost always above 50 degrees (Fahrenheit)! It is also common to have a high fence or wall around the property with sharp glass cemented into the top to keep burglars out.

Did you know that even the way your address is written changes depending on the culture you live in? In large towns and

cities in Spanish-speaking countries, most of the streets and highways are named for one of two things: famous people and very important dates. If that was the way we named streets in the United States, you might live on “Fourth of July Avenue” or “George Washington Street.” For example, most cities in Mexico will have a street named *Benito Juárez*, the name of an important president who was also a hero in the Mexican Revolution, and a street named *16 de septiembre*, which is the date Mexico celebrates its independence from Spain. If you live on one of those streets, your address may also contain the number of your apartment building and which apartment you live in, as well as the name of your neighborhood, called a *colonia* or *barrio*. For example, the address of a Hilton hotel in Mexico City is “*Av. Juárez #70. Colonia Centro, México, Distrito Federal, 06010, México*”. (Av. is an abbreviation for *Avenida* [avenue].)

But what about people who live in small, rural towns, or in the neighborhoods on dirt roads with small houses built from whatever the families could find? They have an address, too, but the way their address is written is very different from how you write yours! Their address tells the mail delivery worker where they live in relation to a landmark in the town, often the Catholic cathedral. So, such a family’s address might be “From the northeast corner of the cathedral, three blocks north and ½ block west.” This also can happen with addresses in large cities. In San José, the capital of Costa Rica, one address reads “*50 m al norte de la iglesia católica, contigua a Nexos, San José, Costa Rica*” (50 meters to the north of the Catholic church, next to Nexos, San José, Costa Rica).

*You might consider referring to Spain as one of the “most developed” Spanish-speaking countries and exploring what it means for a

country to be “developed.” You could talk about infrastructure like roads, sewers, and housing, and how the citizens usually have access to technology and twelve or thirteen years of free education.

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 can find links for Spanish-language classified housing advertisements and photos of homes in Spanish-speaking countries at CalicoSpanish.com/Stories/CultureC.

You may also find the link for the actual advertisement of the house in Ecuador featured in the Assessment, with photos. In this activity, students may also investigate the currency in Ecuador to discover they now also use the American dollar.

Answers for student notes

- 1. In large cities, do more people live in apartments or in houses? Why?**
Most people in large cities live in apartments because there are a lot of people trying to fit in a small space.
- 2. What happens when many people move to a city looking for jobs in a short period of time?**
The city cannot build buildings like houses and schools fast enough or well.
- 3. Write something you learned about each category related to houses in Spanish-speaking cultures.**
Homes: they are smaller than what is common in the USA.
Bathrooms: they may have an electric wire to heat the shower water.
Bedrooms: sometimes the whole family shares a bedroom.
Yards: they might have a small courtyard instead of a yard.

- 4. What two things are most streets named after in cities and towns in Spanish-speaking cultures?**

- a) famous people
- b) dates

Assessment

ACTFL Cultural Awareness Performance Descriptors, Novice Range

Interpretive: uses own culture to derive meaning from texts that are heard, read, or viewed.

- Ask students to look at a Spanish-language advertisement for a house or apartment and identify adjectives describing the place. Ask if these adjectives also describe the students' own home.
- Ask students to look at photos online of houses in a particular place in Latin America or Spain. They should identify similarities and differences to their own home using Spanish words and phrases like *cocina grande* or *casa pequeña*.

Presentational: may use some memorized culturally appropriate formulaic expressions and basic writing conventions.

- Ask students to look at a map of Asunción, Paraguay, invent an address written in the same format as the ones they saw in this Capsule, and write it on the airmail envelope on their Activity Sheet. After they invent an address, you can tell them that the actual address of a clinic on the corner of Juan Leopardi and Ita Ybate is given on their website as “*Juan Leopardi y 2o (segundo)* [second] - Km 9 - San Lorenzo,” giving a kilometer marker reference and the name of the neighborhood.



Home Is Where the Heart Is

Discussion

As your teacher helps you learn more about homes in the Spanish-speaking cultures, write down some notes to help you remember what you learn.

1. In large cities, do more people live in apartments or in houses? Why?

.....
.....

2. What happens when many people move to a city looking for jobs in a short period of time?

.....
.....
.....

3. Write something you learned about each category related to houses in Spanish-speaking cultures:

Homes:

Bathrooms:

Bedrooms:

Yards:

4. What two things are most streets named after in cities and towns in Spanish-speaking cultures?

a)

b)

Thinking it through

What makes a “good home?” The answer to that question depends a lot on what culture you live in. Sometimes the answer can simply be that a home is “good” because it is what you are used to. Why would different cultures answer this question differently?

If you lived on a street with no numbers, what landmark would you use to give your address? Can you use this formula to write your address without using a number or street name?

From (landmark),..... (blocks/miles/feet) to the (north/south/east/west), the..... house [on the (left/right)] [next to / across from].

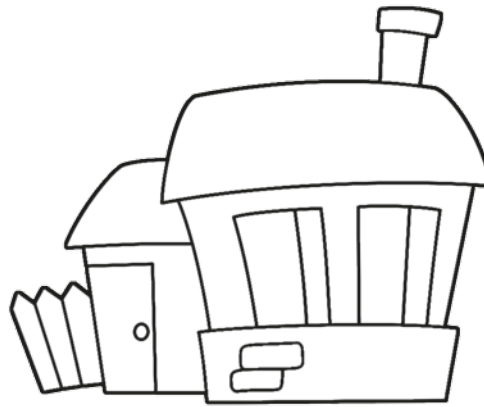
Making it personal

What do you like and dislike about the place where you live? How does your home show your family’s pride and personality?

Cultural inquiry

How much does a house or apartment like yours cost in another country? Choose a country and have someone help you find a newspaper online. Look in the advertisements and find a house or apartment that has about the same number of bedrooms and bathrooms as your home.

You can use Google to change the currency and compare the cost of the place. (Simply type, “4,000,000 Chilean pesos to dollars.”)



City/Country	Bedrooms	Bathrooms	Price in local currency	Price in my currency

What can you do?



Look at this real advertisement for a house in Cuenca, Ecuador. Identify some of the describing words used in the advertisement. What else do you understand? Use the poster *La casa* to help you understand what features the house has. Underline what you understand; then, draw what you think the house looks like. Which of these adjectives also describe your house?

VENDO CASA NUEVA EN CUENCA, DE LUJO, BONITA, MODERNA, CASA ECONÓMICA \$114.500

Descripción: Amplia villa moderna en Cuenca, son 4 dormitorios, tres baños completos, amplio patio, garaje para dos vehículos, portero eléctrico, cerca eléctrica, alarma, bonita cocina moderna con amplios muebles, funcionales y de buen gusto, dormitorio máster con vestidor y baño completo, construcción de primera calidad.

La casa:

Describing words I recognize:

2 Look at photos of houses in an online magazine from Latin America. What do you see that is similar to or different from your house?

Country:	
<i>Semejanzas</i>	<i>Diferencias</i>

3 Based on the addresses you saw in this lesson, invent an address that looks like it might belong to someone in this simple map of real streets in the capital of Paraguay, Asunción. Write it on this air mail envelope.

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.
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- Formative **activities** and step-by-step daily lesson plans provide guidance and feedback along the way.



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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.

