

# Calico

Spanish<sup>®</sup>

## Introduction



## Welcome

Thank you for choosing Calico Spanish, where learning Spanish through stories and games is fun and effective. We are glad to be part of your language learning adventure.



The Calico Spanish curriculum is distinguished by its learner-centric design and immersive methodology, wherein learners' understanding and proficiency are expanded gradually and steadily. Through vibrant visuals, catchy music, and Total Physical Response activities, Calico Spanish fosters active participation, creating purposeful and personal learning experiences. As interesting characters lead learners through engaging video stories, Calico Spanish ensures that Spanish words and phrases are repeated and their meanings

reinforced, facilitating the incorporation of vocabulary into long-term memory. The inclusion of inquiry-based culture capsules further enriches learners' understanding of Spanish-speaking cultures. Calico Spanish's interactive lessons and fun activities both promote community and contribute to learners' development of communicative competence.

## About Calico Spanish

Calico Spanish is based on the Natural Approach as described by Tracy Terrell and Stephen Krashen (1983) in their research on language acquisition. The key concept in the Natural Approach is that students learn language only when they are exposed to comprehensible input (i.e., messages in a target language that they can decipher and understand). Calico Spanish is designed to use visual aids, videos, activities, songs, and mini-dramatizations to communicate effectively and comprehensibly in Spanish.

Characters in the videos will regularly use Spanish words that learners haven't heard before, but all new vocabulary is accompanied by visual and situational cues. Learners will instinctively begin to grasp the basic meaning of new words and phrases as they notice context clues and hear vocabulary repeated throughout various contexts. The Calico Comics integrated into every unit offer fun, engaging opportunities for learners to interact with new vocabulary and practice existing language skills.

The primary goal of Calico Spanish is to develop learners' receptive language skills. As learners begin to understand messages spoken to them in Spanish and build a basic framework for understanding pieces of language, they can begin crafting original messages in Spanish. Krashen and Terrell (1983) advocate building this type of language comprehension prior to engaging in rigorous grammar studies. Calico Spanish's approach follows this recommendation, so you will not find formal grammar studies in this program.

## Expectations

Calico Spanish focuses on language comprehension. The videos in this curriculum only present the Spanish language, and, if you are a confident Spanish speaker, it will benefit your learners to use Spanish as much as possible during the lessons. However, do not be surprised when learners continue to ask questions and provide answers in English. Whenever you can, encourage learners to use the words they know in Spanish, but do not frustrate them by immediately expecting them to be able to use the new vocabulary as fluently as you might be doing with the guidance of the unit guides or your own prior knowledge of Spanish.



Language ability builds gradually, and the initial focus of the lessons is helping learners to become comfortable and understand the Spanish language. However, you will notice that your learners will be capable of producing real Spanish almost from the beginning, especially as they practice pronouncing words through songs and recitation. This curriculum is designed in light of the standards set by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). This organization defines language ability according to proficiency levels. The first level, Novice, is divided into three sub-levels: Low, Mid, and High. This level is characterized by speakers who can talk about and answer basic questions about topics that are very familiar to them using memorized words, phrases, and sentences. The entire Calico Spanish curriculum will guide learners through the language goals necessary to become Novice High speakers of Spanish. That is, the dialogues and activities designed by Calico Spanish give learners opportunities to answer simple questions with simple responses in Spanish. You can learn more about the proficiency goals for Novice speakers at ACTFL's website ([actfl.org](http://actfl.org)).

## Using Calico Spanish

A recommended schedule is provided to guide you in your daily lessons. Each lesson in Level A is designed to take 20-30 minutes to complete. To help learners learn Spanish, you must move through the curriculum steadily and focus on including plenty of repetition. Work with the Calico Spanish lesson plans to ensure that the necessary repetition is fun and engaging. Lessons include ample variety, with interesting characters, colorful Calico Comics, and creative activities that expose learners to the same words and phrases in fresh, exciting ways. Extend the repetition of new words and phrases over several learning sessions in order to help learners add the new vocabulary to their long-term memories.

We know that not every schedule allows for multiple lessons of Spanish per week, and it can be difficult to maintain a learner's attention over the same topics and phrases for multiple weeks at a time. In these cases, we recommend that you review each unit's core language components and communicative goals and decide what activities are most important for your learners to do in each unit in Level A.

You will notice that many concepts of the lesson plans are repeated in later units. This is a technique known as recycling. Recycling language is critical to building lasting memories of the vocabulary and its proper usage.

## Vocabulary

The vocabulary section of each video story contains the key words and phrases for each unit. The video stories contain much more vocabulary than you will see listed in the official vocabulary lists, but learners are not expected to understand every individual word. The comprehension and use of the vocabulary in context is what will help learners be successful in their language learning journeys. In the later lessons of each unit in Level A, you will be introduced to a new Calico Comic. Calico Comics use the video story vocabulary and a few new words in Spanish that relate to the setting or plot. Learners are not expected to understand the entire comic, but they should start to understand the Spanish words that have been repeated in multiple ways throughout each unit.



Many language curricula attempt to teach large amounts of vocabulary at one time. Learners are expected to learn and use many words corresponding to numbers, animals, or colors within a few lessons. This expectation is neither realistic, nor does it match what we know about how the brain learns language. An outstanding feature of Calico Spanish is that animals, colors, numbers, and action words are introduced and emphasized a few at a time to foster real, long-term memory.

Do not be frustrated that learners do not learn all the colors of the rainbow in a single level; rather, know that the few colors featured and repeated in each level will be much more memorable for your learners. Each level in this program will include such resources as number and color charts for reference, and all of these elements will be addressed appropriately as learners move through the levels.

## Video Stories

The video stories form the foundation of every Calico Spanish lesson. You and your learners will focus on acquiring the Spanish presented in the dialogue portions of the video stories. However, to add interest and expose learners to even more Spanish, we present additional background settings and situations for the characters. Video stories make learning fun, and, over time, you and your learners will recognize many of the extra words and phrases used to set the scene. Within a given lesson, your focus while watching the video story will be on the specific language goals listed in the daily Can-Do Statements.



## Dialogues

Calico Spanish's dialogues provide learners with opportunities to use new vocabulary to have short conversations in Spanish. Initially, you are likely to read the dialogues word for word, but, over time, feel free to add your own creative style to the dialogues to add interest and surprise your learners. Simple changes, such as using stuffed animals to act out the dialogue, or calling yourself by the name of a favorite cartoon character, quickly add fun and laughter to every lesson.



Each dialogue presents the Spanish text on the left side of the page and the English translation on the right. Usually, the English translation is a direct translation to help you better understand and locate key Spanish terms. The intent of this program is that you use the Spanish script exclusively. In other words, there is no need to read the English translations to learners. The English translations are provided for you, the guide, so that you may be certain of what you are saying.

## Music Videos

Each unit incorporates music videos. For all music videos introduced in this level, the full Spanish lyrics and English translations can be found in the teacher's materials in the online resource library. You may consider discussing the meaning of the lyrics with learners, though most lyrics will be easily understood due to the visual clues seen in the videos.

## Storybooks

The illustrated storybooks that accompany the Calico Spanish curriculum are another way your learners will be exposed to comprehensible Spanish. You will see suggestions on how to use the storybooks in the lesson plans, but you may decide how best to incorporate these supplements in the context of your environment. Students with established literacy skills in English should be able to see the text as they hear the audio story narration, so they may begin to develop their Spanish literacy skills.

## Calico Comics

Calico Comics were added to Level A in August of 2023! Calico Comics use the same vocabulary that is introduced by the video stories, but in different contexts. The comics offer refreshing, detailed visuals and brand new stories that see familiar characters take learners on adventures through Spanish-speaking countries around the world. Through Calico Comics, learners experience abundant opportunities to read in Spanish and engage with new language skills.



## Grammar Notes

Grammar notes are occasionally provided to give a brief insight of key concepts, though you should not expect learners to be able to manipulate grammatical functions accurately in lower levels of this program. To gain real knowledge of grammar and advance your own Spanish language skills, consider purchasing a college-level Spanish textbook. A copy of any edition of *Dos Mundos* by Tracy Terrell is recommended. First published in 1986, *Dos Mundos* is a college-level introductory Spanish textbook that uses the communicative approach to language pedagogy.

### The use of “you”

In Spanish, there is both a formal way and an informal way to say the second-person singular pronoun, “you.” The lower levels of this curriculum are not intended to help learners be very accurate in using the various forms of “you.” For the duration of the curriculum, you will primarily use the familiar form, *tú*, when addressing individual learners. However, you will also have opportunities to expose learners to the formal form, *usted*.

For the second-person plural pronoun, “you all,” this program exclusively uses the formal form, *ustedes*, as is commonly done in Latin America. In Spain, the familiar form of the second-person plural pronoun, *vosotros*, is commonly used, and you may see it in some Spanish books. Calico Spanish does not use *vosotros* in resources or materials. If you wish to introduce learners to this form, feel free to modify the scripts as you please. Learners who learn the forms consistent with Latin American Spanish will easily pick up the proper usage of *vosotros* if they are exposed to it through a trip to Spain (should they be so lucky!)

Learners will have more opportunities to investigate the ways to say “you” in Spanish with a culture capsule.

### Capitalization

You may notice that capitalization rules are different in Spanish than in English. In Spanish, titles observe the same capitalization rules as regular sentences. That is, only the first word of a title is capitalized. Note also that many nouns (such as the days of the week) and all proper adjectives are not capitalized in Spanish.

### Accents

The mark on many vowels in Spanish words is commonly called an “accent.” Accents in Spanish are used for three reasons:

1. Unlike English (where, for example, the noun “conduct” and the verb “conduct” are emphasized on different syllables), Spanish follows predictable rules to determine which syllable in a word will be emphasized. When a word ends in a vowel or the consonants *n* or *s*, the word will be emphasized on the next-to-last syllable—illustrated in the following examples by underlining the emphasized syllables: *uno*, *tacos*, *sal<sup>ˈ</sup>tan*. If a word must break this rule, the vowel in the emphasized syllable must be indicated by an accent: *estás*, *sábado*. Words that end in any other consonant are emphasized on the last syllable: *azul*, *verdad*, *cantar*. If a word must break this rule, it needs an accent over the vowel in the emphasized syllable: *lápiz*.

2. Many words that contain only one syllable have more than one meaning. For these words, an accent above the vowel distinguishes the various meanings. For example: *tú* : you; *tu* : your; *sí* : yes; *si* : if; *sé* : I know; *se* : a pronoun used for many reasons (including making a verb reflexive, making a verb passive, or emphasizing the accidental nature of an action).
3. Question words (i.e., interrogative pronouns), when they are used as a question (as opposed to when they are used as relative pronouns), always carry an accent: *¿quién?*, *¿cómo?*, *¿qué?*. Their counterparts, relative pronouns, do not carry accents, although they are pronounced exactly the same: *¿quien?*, *¿como?*, *¿que?*. You do not need to focus on these accent marks as part of this program because they do not usually prevent one from being understood. However, it is worthwhile to notice when they are used in writing and to use them when appropriate. Simply focusing on the audio in the video stories will help learners naturally learn the correct emphasis on syllables in new vocabulary.

## Culture Capsules

A vital part of learning a language is exploring the cultures of the people who speak it. The content in culture capsules is intended to get your learners thinking about and investigating big questions about culture. You have probably noticed that, even among society within your own area, many cultural differences exist. It is impossible to make a statement like, “The people who are from [this place] who speak [this language] are [this way].” As you



investigate together the cultures of various Spanish-speaking peoples, research with your class the topics that interest them, and encourage learners to make comparisons. If they went to visit a family in a Spanish-speaking country of interest, what might they experience? What would surprise them? Might they speak another language besides Spanish? What would the family do for fun? How is this similar to learners’ own families? How is it different? The information and resources in this section will help learners start to learn more about the various peoples who speak Spanish around the globe. In Level A, learners will begin to introduce themselves, find out how someone is doing, describe themselves in simple ways, and say something they like to do. What might those activities look like in various Spanish-speaking cultures? Find out by completing the culture capsule activities!

Culture capsule activities are described in more detail in the Student Activities book. They are scheduled in the lesson plans at the end of Units 3 and 6.

## In Your Community

Do you and your learners have access to people in your community who speak Spanish and would be willing to help children develop communicative skills? In order to foster real communication skills among your learners, consider connecting with the Spanish-speaking community in your area. Is there a relative or friend who would be willing to talk to your learners?

With these special guests, ask learners to practice what they have learned to talk about in Level A. Can they introduce themselves, give simple descriptions, and tell what they like to do? Can they ask simple questions of a native Spanish speaker? What can they find out about a guest's culture related to what they are learning?

## Heritage Learners

Do you have a community of Spanish speakers in your classroom? Chances are, you will encounter groups of learners in your class who speak Spanish at home as their first language. These learners are known as “heritage learners”. If you feel as though you have nothing to teach them, think again! Heritage learners may still benefit from reading and writing instruction in Spanish. These students can also offer special cultural insights to your class. Invite them to share words and phrases that they use often at home. If they are willing, ask them to help you model conversations. These learners are going to feel so excited that their classmates are learning how to communicate in Spanish like they communicate with their families at home!

## Preparing to Teach the Lessons

The core of each unit is the video story. If you are not a proficient Spanish speaker, review the English version of each story before teaching to be sure you understand what will be presented in the unit. You do not need to share the English text with your learners. The videos are designed to be comprehensible even if learners are not fully confident of the exact meaning of all the words presented. Many lesson plans suggest that you have learners choose one or two words to listen for as they watch each video. This strategy helps learners feel a measure of success and confidence by focusing on what is known. Meanwhile, they are being exposed to unfamiliar words and phrases that will eventually become familiar as they continue to watch the stories and participate in the activities. Developing the ability to be calm—and even comfortable—when you do not fully understand is an important part of language learning.



When preparing the materials for your lessons, be sure that you have access to the curriculum's flashcards. The flashcards are provided in a digital format, and we also offer printable versions. If you have purchased a visual bundle, the flashcards are included.

It is also recommended to have the Level A posters ready to go before you start teaching. These posters can be displayed digitally or printed out, and they are included in the visual bundles.



## Recommended Resources

There are a number of excellent online language-learning resources available. Below is a list of sites you might find useful on your language teaching journey.

### **[wordreference.com](http://wordreference.com)**

WordReference offers a free online dictionary that helps you find translations, choose the correct option among several possible translations, and hear pronunciations. The site also provides conjugation charts that demonstrate how verbs change to take different subjects. The website's forums allow you to ask new questions or read how others have answered questions about language use and word choice.

### **[translate.google.com](http://translate.google.com)**

Google Translate is powered by computers, which are never as smart as the human brain. As such, it often gives imperfect translations, especially if you enter in longer phrases or sentences or use idiomatic expressions. However, the tool is continually improving, and the speaker icon conveniently allows you to hear the pronunciation of a word or phrase. When using this resource, keep in mind that because you do not know the process the computer used to translate the phrase, you cannot use this tool to learn much about how to communicate in Spanish on your own.

### **[forvo.com](http://forvo.com)**

Forvo offers pronunciations of almost any word in Spanish. There are also options to hear how words might be pronounced differently throughout the Spanish-speaking world.