

SPANISH INSTRUCTION IN THE MILTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Grade 4



OVERVIEW

The Spanish Elementary Program started in Milton more than 20 years ago as an increasing body of research was documenting the undeniable advantage of learning a second language at an early age. The American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Languagesⁱ offers a clear summary of the latest research on foreign language acquisition. Such an education:

1. Has a powerful effect on children's mental development and cognitive skills
2. Supports academic achievement in other disciplinesⁱⁱ
3. Develops near native pronunciation and intonation as well as communicative skills
4. Improves students' understanding of their own native language
5. Gives students an advantage in language requirements for college
6. Positively affects students' attitudes and beliefs about other cultures and other people
7. Increases job opportunities in numerous careers and fields

Why Spanish?

- Spanish is the third most spoken language in the world, after Mandarin Chinese and English
- There is a large population of native Spanish-speakers in the USA
- Spanish is an official language of the United Nations, the European Union and other international organizations
- Because of its Latin roots, Spanish is one of the easiest languages for English speakers to learnⁱⁱⁱ

Spanish Instruction at the Middle School: beginning with a head start!

Students who have completed all five years at the elementary level are placed in Spanish 1-B in Middle School. Thanks to the Elementary Spanish Program, students are able to complete the equivalent of two years of High School Spanish at the Middle School.

Spanish students entering Middle School may also choose Latin as their language. The language that is chosen in grade six will remain the same through eighth grade.

Spanish at the High School

Students who complete three years of Spanish in Middle School will have completed the equivalent of two years of High School Spanish and will generally enter Spanish 3. All students may also elect to take a second foreign language during all four years at the High School. Students who began studying Spanish in the elementary schools may also be placed in year two of a second foreign language. Students who are motivated and who have studied one foreign language for a number of years are generally able to successfully transfer their linguistic skills to the study of another language^{iv}

*Take the Parent Foreign Language True or False Test!**

1. **Developmentally, twelve and thirteen-year-olds are capable of learning a foreign language faster and more thoroughly than five and six year olds.**

Answer: **False.** While older children learn vocabulary and conjugation faster, this does not mean they make the leap to fluency. Students who begin foreign language study in elementary or pre-school eventually achieve a higher level of fluency.

2. **Children in foreign language classes in grades 1-3 don't learn grammar.**

Answer: **False.** When children learn songs chants and puppet dialogues they are internalizing grammar rules, the same way infants do when learning songs and phrases in their first language.

3. **My daughter can't say much in the foreign language she is studying so she probably hasn't learned much.**

Answer: **False.** As with infants learning their first language, children learning a second language often comprehend much more than they can actually say.

4. **The first time a child might be introduced to conversion of grams to ounces or Fahrenheit to centigrade measurements is in a third or fourth grade math lesson.**

Answer: **False.** Sometimes the foreign language teacher gets there first!

5. **Achieving proficiency in a foreign language costs more per pupil if you begin instruction in the elementary, instead of beginning in middle or high school.**

Answer: **False.** Elementary foreign language study prepares students to achieve fluency, and they often become fluent with further study or travel abroad. Students who begin a foreign language in high school have more difficulty becoming fluent and require a bigger investment in the long run to achieve the same level.

6. **Studies have shown that there is a positive connection between bilingualism and cognitive functions in aging.**

Answer: **True.** See American Psychological Association article at http://www.apa.org/releases/bilingual_aging.html.

7. **Children who are learning to read in English will be confused if they are also being taught to read in another language.**

Answer: **False.** See articles from Center of Applied Linguistics <http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/raisebilingchild.html>
See also from The Cornell Language Acquisition Lab: <http://www.news.cornell.edu/stories/may09/bilingual.kids.sl.html>
and from The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages: <http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3651>
and <http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3653>



*From the Viva El Espanol website: <http://www.vivaelespanol.org/truefalse.php>

Spanish Grade Four Curriculum



The curriculum for the Elementary Spanish Program is based on the guidelines of the Milton Public School Curriculum, the Curriculum Frameworks of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the National Standards for Foreign Languages. In Grade Four, Spanish instruction continues to develop students' linguistic proficiency and knowledge of Hispanic cultures. The teaching of Spanish at the elementary level is content-based and interdisciplinary. Fourth Grade students will continue to learn and use increasingly complex Spanish vocabulary and grammar structures while developing communicative skills and acquiring knowledge in Math, Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Art, and Music.

The class meets on a weekly basis for 90 minutes. Typical activities include practice of oral and written Spanish through content-based activities, contextualized grammar lessons, communicative activities with class partners, role plays, skits, listening comprehension with audio CDs, Smart-Notebook lessons, cooperative games, songs and poetry, choral reading, content-based exercises and applications, fiction and non-fiction selections, activities and events related to Hispanic cultures and traditions, data analysis, and linguistic and cultural comparisons. Each term, your child will earn an "S" for satisfactory, or an "N" for needs improvement. Grades are based upon class participation and benchmark assessments.

Expectations

In Fourth Grade, communicative competency in speaking, listening, reading, writing, and culture is developed in more systematic ways through a wide range of learning activities and advanced vocabulary units.

Vocabulary Objectives and Concepts

Objective	Cross Curriculum Connection	National Foreign Language Standards
Unidad 1: Body Parts Numbers 1-1000 September-October	Language Arts: Participate in discussions Math: measure body parts, line of symmetry with faces Social Studies: flamenco, tango and cumbia popular dances from Spanish speaking countries	Communication: 1.1-1.3 Culture: 2.1-2.2 Connections: 3.1 Comparisons: 4.1-4.2 Communities: 5.1
Unidad 2: Clothing Adjectives Possessive "De quién es...?" November-December	Language Arts: State personal opinions about types of clothing and use adjectives to describe clothing. Non-fiction reading passage "Mexico, Texas and the Alamo". Math: back to school shopping-adding and subtracting with money Social Studies: Traditional Peruvian and Guatemalan clothing Art: view traditional hand woven blouses "huipiles" from Guatemala. Draw and color. Science: Review weather patterns in different regions in Fahrenheit and Celsius. What do people wear based on weather?	Communication: 1.1-1.3 Culture: 2.1-2.2 Connections: 3.1 Comparisons: 4.1-4.2 Communities: 5.1
Unidad 3: Physical characteristics Family January- February	Language Arts: Learn adjectives in Spanish to compare and contrast syntax- in Spanish the adjective comes after the noun- and to emphasize cognates. Practice paragraph structure to describe self and family members.	Communication: 1.1-1.3 Culture: 2.1-2.2 Connections: 3.1 Comparisons: 4.1-4.2 Communities: 5.1

	<p>Math: Complete a chart to determine hair and eye color of children in class. Write answers as simple fractions. Make a bar graph to show findings.</p> <p>Science: Compare and contrast the physical characteristics of animals native to South America such as the jaguar, toucan and ñandú.</p>	
<p>Unidad 4: House Parts Rooms in the House Houses in different places March- April</p>	<p>Math: Find the perimeter of rooms in a model house.</p> <p>Language Arts: Use prepositions and the verb <i>estar</i> to talk about where people and things are in relation to the house.</p> <p>Social Studies: Discuss basic parts of Spanish missions and provide historical context. Compare and contrast homes in Spanish speaking countries to homes in the U.S.</p> <p>Health Science: Fire safety plan. Draw a plan of your house and label all possible exits or <i>salidas</i>.</p>	<p>Communication: 1.1-1.3 Culture: 2.1-2.2 Connections: 3.1 Comparisons: 4.1-4.2 Communities: 5.1</p>
<p>Unidad 5: Map skills Mexico May-June</p>	<p>Social Studies: Apply knowledge of cardinal directions in Spanish to identify locations of major cities in Mexico. Identify major regions and landforms in Mexico.</p> <p>Science: Identify weather patterns and major natural resources in Mexico.</p> <p>Language Arts: Read and discuss. folktales from Mexico</p>	<p>Communication: 1.1-1.3 Culture: 2.1-2.2 Connections: 3.1 Comparisons: 4.1-4.2 Communities: 5.1</p>

Materials

- ***¡Qué Tal!***

This textbook (from the McGraw Hill *¡Viva el Español!* series) advances proficiency and develops communication skills through a lively and positive approach. The components accompanying the textbooks (activity workbook and CDs) promote active student participation in Spanish.

- **Teacher created materials**

The Spanish teachers have developed a curriculum that targets specific vocabulary units, and builds listening comprehension, speaking, literacy, and numeracy skills. Most units include engaging and interactive Smart-Notebook lessons (Smartboard technology).



Frequently Asked Questions



How can I help my child at home?

- Talk about what your child is learning in Spanish class in order to review the vocabulary at home
- Look over work that your child has brought home
- Have your child teach the family what he or she has learned each week
- Read a book together written by a Latino author
- Start your dinner table conversation with *¿Cómo estás?*
- Check out the Spanish section of your local library or bookstore
- See if an older sibling, neighbor, or babysitter has studied Spanish and wants to practice with your child
- Watch your child's favorite DVD and select the Spanish language track
- Listen to a Spanish radio station in the car and see if either of you can identify phrases or words that you recognize
- Make computer time about learning with links to learning activities (see list of sites below)



How much Spanish is spoken during class?

From first grade, classroom instruction is in Spanish unless safety concerns require the teacher to speak English. Students have several opportunities during each class to participate in Spanish, demonstrate understanding and develop communicative skills in a low stress and lively environment.

Useful Websites

<http://www.vivaelespanol.org/why-spanish.php> (Language method currently used in class)

<http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3651> (Benefits of language learning)

http://www.123teachme.com/learn_spanish/spanish_for_children

<http://www.quia.com/shared/spanish> (a compilation of games and activities posted by language teachers ; encourage your child to click on links that lead to content learned in Elementary Spanish to provide review and practice)

<http://www.uni.edu/becker/Spanish3.html> (provides multiple links to varied Spanish practice websites)

<http://www.ielanguages.com/spanish1.html> (provides pronunciation and listening practice)

ⁱ ACTFL : <http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3653#FLES>. See also: CAL Center for Applied Linguistic at <http://www.cal.org/topics/fl/>, Nanduti at http://www.cal.org/earlylang/benefits/benefits_of_being_bilingual.html and Viva El Espanol at <http://www.vivaelespanol.org/why-spanish.php> (Viva EL Espanol books are currently used in Grades 1-4).

ⁱⁱ There is documented positive correlation between Math and Verbal SAT scores and the study of foreign languages.

ⁱⁱⁱ See more details at <http://www.vivaelespanol.org/why-spanish.php> (Viva El Espanol books are currently used in the Milton Spanish Program).

^{iv} For specific questions or concerns, see Dr. Fisher, Director of World Languages at mfisher@miltonps.org – tel: 617 696-4070, ext. 5532.