

SPANISH INSTRUCTION IN THE MILTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Grade 1



OVERVIEW

The Elementary Spanish Programⁱ 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 Languagesⁱⁱ 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 disciplinesⁱⁱⁱ
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 learn^{iv}

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^v

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 One 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 One, Spanish instruction is designed to generate interest and enthusiasm for the target language through a wide range of communicative and hands-on activities. The teaching of Spanish at the elementary level is content-based and interdisciplinary. First Grade students will learn and use Spanish vocabulary and simple 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 30 minutes. Typical activities include vocabulary routines (greetings, date, weather, etc), songs and poetry, *Total Physical Response* activities (TPR engage children in active, physical activities and interactions in the target language, such as in *Simon Says*), role playing, games, content-based exercises and applications, fiction and non-fiction read aloud, and introduction to Hispanic cultures and traditions. 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

Exposing your young child to a second language optimizes his or her learning potential, and capitalizes on the brain’s capacity for language acquisition in the early years. First and Second grades are crucial years for the acquisition of vocabulary and the development of life-long foreign language proficiency, communicative skills and cultural awareness.

Vocabulary Objectives and Concepts

Objective	Cross Curriculum Connection
Greetings	Participate in discussions
Numbers 1-20 All year	Math: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add and subtract cardinal numbers• Skip count by 2s• Represent and interpret data
Colors and Shapes September October Revisit all year	Math: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize patterns• Recognize, name and describe characteristics of polygons Represent and interpret data
Alphabet November December Revisit all year	Literacy: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize and name letters in one’s own name• Practice letter sounds and identify letters

Calendar All year	Math: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand place value • Extend the counting sequence • Work with money • Work with addition and subtraction equations • Represent and interpret data
Family December January	Social Studies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families from Latino Countries • Talking about our families
Body/Face Parts February March	Science: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name the 5 senses
Weather April May	Science: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize patterns of weather • Represent and interpret data

June: Revisit and Assessments

McGraw Hill Viva el Español Kit A

A comprehensive kit that includes vocabulary units, picture cards, CD listening activities, and puppets (selected lessons)

- **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
- Have your child count or tell you the color of things around the house in Spanish
- Start your dinner table conversation with *¿Cómo estás?*
- 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
- 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 numerous 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 (Basic Vocabulary)

<http://cvc.cervantes.es/ensenanza/mimundo/default.htm> (Mi Mundo en Palabras, interactive Spanish Language Learning)

ⁱ FLES Spanish: Foreign Languages in the Elementary Schools

ⁱⁱ 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).

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

^{iv} See more details at <http://www.vivaelespanol.org/why-spanish.php> (Viva El Espanol books are currently used in the Milton FLES program).

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