

SPANISH *at a Glance*

A Comparative Linguistic Analysis for Classroom Teachers

HELPFUL INFORMATION

- ▶ **437 million** people worldwide speak Spanish.
- ▶ Spanish is a **Romance Language** with **Latin origins**.
- ▶ Spanish has many **regional dialects** with distinct accents, unique vocabulary elements, and colloquialisms.

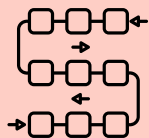


COMPARISONS AND COMMON DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN SPANISH AND ENGLISH



PRONUNCIATION

Spanish is a phonetic language, meaning letters are pronounced consistently and each letter represents a certain sound. Spanish only has 5 vowel sounds, while English has 14! Because Spanish spelling and pronunciation are consistent and far easier than English, it is often easier for a child to learn to read in Spanish.



SENTENCE ORDER

The basic structure of the sentence is the same in English and Spanish: Subject + Verb + Object. However, in Spanish word order is looser. In addition, adjectives in Spanish are located after the noun they describe and match in gender and number.



PHRASAL VERBS

Prepositions play a much more complicated role in English than they do in Spanish. Spanish often uses altogether different words to describe verbs that, in English, are verbs in which the addition of a preposition changes the meaning.

NO

NEGATION

Spanish utilizes double negatives, so it is correct in Spanish to say "I don't never eat broccoli." In addition, Spanish does not have equivalents to "do not", "does not", and "did not."

Resources:

- [A Comparative Linguistic Analysis of English and Spanish Phonological System \(Valencia & Carlos, 2022\)](#)
- [ENL 2-Minute Tips: Building Linguistic Connections Between Spanish and English: Cognates](#)
- [ENL 2-Minute Tips: Understanding the Linguistic Bridges Spanish-Speaking Students Make When Learning](#)

EXAMPLES AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

| LINGUISTIC ELEMENT | EXAMPLES | TEACHING STRATEGIES |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| PRONUNCIATION | In Spanish, there is no contrast between short and long vowels. This is why a Spanish speaker will have difficulty distinguishing between 'set', 'seat', 'sit', and 'site' (not to mention 'sight!'). | Be sure to explicitly teach all 15 English vowel sounds . |
| SENTENCE ORDER | A Spanish speaker trying to say "My mom arrived very late this afternoon," might say "Arrived very late my mom this afternoon," " This afternoon arrived very late my mother, " or "My mother arrived this afternoon very late." In English, we might refer to the "the delicate flowers," but in Spanish we would refer to "the flowers delicates." | Use sentence frames to model appropriate sentence structure. |
| PHRASAL VERBS | In English 'to get' can mean 'to understand' (in Spanish, entender) or 'to grab' (obtener). But, add prepositional words and "to get" takes on additional meanings like "to get up" (levantarse), "to get out" (sacar), "to get over" (superar), to "get down" (bajar), "to get across" (hacer entender) or "to get behind" (respaldar). | When introducing vocabulary, be sure to teach multiple meanings of words. |
| NEGATION | No equivalents to "do not", "does not", and "did not" exist in Spanish. Instead, a "no" is put in front of verbs. So, a Spanish speaker learning English might say, "I no have my homework." | Explicitly teach students how to write negative sentence patterns in English. Provide sentence frames. |

PONDER AND DISCUSS

- ▶ What percentage of your students speak Spanish?
- ▶ How can you integrate Spanish into your classroom?
- ▶ What countries of origin are represented in your classroom?
- ▶ What do you know about these countries? How can you learn more about them as a class?
- ▶ What Hispanic traditions and holidays do your students celebrate? How can you integrate these celebrations?