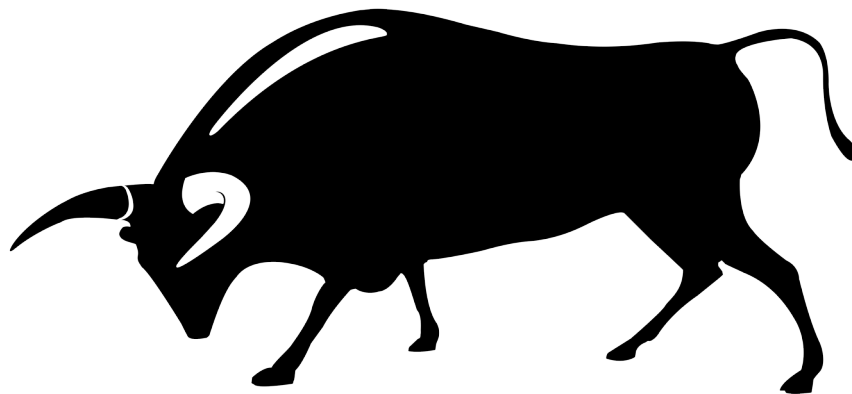


# ***20 Strategies To Get You Speaking Spanish Fast***

By  
***eSpanishTeacher***

**[www.eSpanishTeacher.com](http://www.eSpanishTeacher.com)**



## About the Author

Thanks for allowing me to help you learn Spanish. My name is Scott Hazen, the creator of this eBook as well as eSpanishTeacher's Interactive Beginner Spanish course, which you can find on my website or at Amazon.

I'm not here to sell products. It is, however, my top priority to help people just like yourself learn Spanish quickly and effectively. I've been speaking Spanish for over 20 years and teaching it for most of that time as well. Spanish did not come easily for me. I had to grind through and force myself to learn the concepts in detail, which is one of the reasons my curriculum is so effective.

My philosophy around learning Spanish is that you shouldn't have to throw good money away by purchasing expensive language software that won't teach you to speak Spanish. Many of these courses contain poorly designed Spanish vocabulary drills with the hope that you'll be happy memorizing long lists of words. Instead, you need a mentor to teach and help you overcome the most challenging concepts using methods that are clear and simple to understand. So let's get started!

1

## Get very familiar with verbs

For every verb you know, you can essentially multiply the phrases you know by 224!

Verbs are perhaps the most important part of the Spanish language, and certainly one of the more complex elements of the language. Not complex in the sense that you need to be a rocket scientist to understand, but complex in conjugating them. English verbs require a slightly simpler type of conjugation, so transferring that ability to Spanish can take a little time.

The great thing is that new students can really ease into verbs and start slowly. And in your studies, once you understand how verbs

work, you'll begin to see a new world open up. That's because each verb has at least 14 different tense (past, present, future, conditional, etc) and within each tense there are 6-10 different verb / subject combinations to chose from. We're getting way ahead of ourselves right here, but the important thing is that for every verb you become familiar with, there are at least 224 new thoughts that you instantly can communicate.

Don't feel overwhelmed with all this talk about verbs, conjugation, and tenses. It's really quite a pleasant part of the language. More importantly, learning the Spanish verbs empowers you to go out there and start speaking with anyone really. Mastering verbs is the catalyst that can take you from a beginner Spanish speaker to a proficient one.

## 2

### Learn the clause formula

Much of beginner Spanish involves combining words in ways that are systematic, structured, and predictable. Some might even say that beginner students speak in a formulaic way, which means that much of what you learn and practice fits into some very organized models or formulas.

We've already talked about verbs, which are one of the most basic building blocks of Spanish. The second most basic component of Spanish is subject pronouns, or "subjects" as I call them. Don't be intimidated by this word. Subjects are simply the actor who is paired with the verb. For example, "I eat..." or "She plays...". These are examples of simple subject + verb combinations, otherwise known as the clause formula.

Learning the clause formula doesn't require deep memorization of long lists of words. Rather, all you need to do is etch the formula into your mind's eye and never forget it:

**Subject + Verb = Clause**

And don't worry about what a clause is per se. Instead, just know that a clause is the equivalent of a coherent voice, a simple-but-complete thought, or comprehensible communication. It's the basic building block of Spanish, what a native speaker can understand and will likely use something similar to communicate back to you.

### 3

## Find a partner

This one is fairly self-explanatory. Having a language partner such as a fellow student, friend, or colleague who is also learning Spanish can be very helpful for a few reasons.

First, the two of you can lean on each other for moral support, encouraging each other when the going gets tough, and not letting either one get too discouraged.

Second, a healthy dose of competition can actually help both of you progress faster. If you know your partner is spending 15 minutes extra each day studying, you might just spend a little extra time yourself so that he or she doesn't get too far along without you.

Third, having a Spanish partner that you can practice with allows the two of you to make mistakes together, identify missteps, and course correct quickly.

Finally, you'll have a partner who can help connect the dots when one of the concepts isn't quite clicking. Likewise, you can do the same when your partner isn't quite getting it. This is similar to what I've seen in some charter schools where young students will receive instruction from the teacher, then turn to their neighbor and explain the concept, providing some example where the concept can be applied. This is where some of the best learning takes place because if you can explain a new concept to your partner, you'll be much better at applying that same concept while speaking Spanish.

Imagine a classroom of students learning any new topic. Now split the students into two groups. The first group of students remains separate and single, forced to learn the material on their own, with no other help or interaction. The second group of students is put into partnerships and encouraged to collaborate, discuss, and practice. You know where I'm going with this. The second group in nearly all cases is going to learn the material faster, perform better when called upon, and retain the learning at a higher level than the first group.

And one final note. While I never advocate comparing yourself and



performance to others, when learning a language a partner can give you a somewhat accurate idea how quickly you are picking up on concepts and give you a feel for how you are doing related to another student. In a sense, a partner can be a measuring stick that indicates if you are progressing according to YOUR goals and wishes.

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## Read you favorite book in Spanish out loud

I love this strategy more than words can explain! It's definitely in my top 5 of all strategies because you notice the results fast...like less than a week. In fact, reading a book out loud in Spanish helped me become one of the top students in my first Spanish class within just a few days. There's likely nothing else that will help you start pronouncing words more accurately and speaking more confidently than reading a book out loud in Spanish.

Find a book, your favorite book, any book where you are somewhat familiar with the story and don't need to catch all the details as you read and can still remain engaged in the story. Find that book in Spanish, then find a nice quiet space where you can speak out loud

and not disrupt anyone. Start reading out loud in Spanish.

At first it will be a bit uncomfortable to be talking to yourself and you'll constantly second guess if you're saying things correctly. As you do this consistently, however, day after day you'll start to notice fewer words giving you trouble, fewer instances of second guessing the pronunciation of certain words, and overall more confidence in your ability to pronounce like a native.

If you are someone who someday will have to speak in front of large groups in Spanish, this exercise will be one of the most valuable practices you can do. If not, this is still one of the best ways to start speaking confidently and mastering Spanish pronunciation.

## 5

### Watch TV & movies in Spanish

It may sound like a lazy approach, but watching TV in Spanish can be one of the best ways to learn Spanish because you are hearing people speak it nearly perfectly. I don't mean that they follow every grammar rule in the book. What I mean is that the actors usually speak in a way that is real, without making a lot of mistakes that could teach you incorrect things. Sure, they may use slang and insert the Spanish "uh.." or "um" here and there, but for the most part the things you hear on TV are said in a way that is understandable to the viewing public.

Sitcoms, dramas, new broadcasts, and sporting events are all great for new Spanish speakers because they force you away from the

textbook and classroom and put you in a real situation where the characters use modern and common language to communicate. Many native Spanish speakers who come to English speaking countries learn English through TV, so this is one of the best things you can do to improve your Spanish quickly.

Worried you don't have Spanish television? Most cable packages include a large number of channels that broadcast in Spanish, some that you'd be very familiar with (popular news, sports, and network channels). Additionally, much of the free broadcast television that you can get over the airwaves includes many channels that broadcast in Spanish for free.

A related way to learn Spanish fast is to watch kids cartoons and movies in Spanish. Movies might be a bit better especially if you are familiar with the movie because you can connect the story and fill in the details that don't quite make sense to you in Spanish. Doing this will help you learn the meaning of certain words. For example, if a cartoon genie says "Te doy tres deseos..." to Aladin it's possible and probable that you could discern the English meaning: "I grant you three wishes..."

Cartoon characters also tend to speak more slowly than non-cartoon characters and they use simpler words. Every once in a while they'll

throw in a silly word that you've never heard before like "bombolino" and even though the dictionary might not have the translation at least you know a word that can help you connect with kids who speak Spanish. Imagine all the funny conversations you could have with young people if you knew the current popular television characters.

If you've ever observed children, you've probably noticed that they have a language of their own. Watching cartoons can help you pick up on this language and understand the youthful slang. Not that you will use it in the office, but certainly it could help along the way.

And don't worry about needing to go out and purchase cartoons in Spanish. Just find the DVDs you have at home and go to the language setting. Many of the DVDs today will include the Spanish versions and you can access them through the language settings within the DVD menu.

## 6

### Find a teacher

I didn't start speaking Spanish well until I had someone who I could listen to frequently. This same someone also listened to me and corrected me in the right ways.

At one time in my life I worked with high school students, tutoring those that were struggling most. This is where my love for teaching Spanish blossomed. A little known fact is that when I first started learning Spanish, it was not easy by any means. I spent a lot of frustrating hours and days wishing to understand some of the more complex elements of the language. I really had to push through a lot of it. Without a good mentor or two, I never would have been able to get to my skill level today.

A mentor or Spanish tutor can be expensive and impractical for a number of reasons, however, having a good mentor can be invaluable as you learn to speak Spanish.

There's only so much that technology can do to replace a live human being standing at your side listening to all you say. If you don't know already, my mission is to be that mentor or teacher to people who want to learn Spanish quickly and efficiently. I'm not going to sell you on anything, but if you want to find out more on how I can be your mentor, visit [www.eSpanishTeacher.com](http://www.eSpanishTeacher.com).



## 7

### Listen to the Spanish radio station

Similar to TV, movies, and cartoons, Spanish radio stations. Find a great Spanish talk radio station or a station that plays music that you like. Listen to the singers and hosts with a careful ear because these people usually speak quickly or slur their words, easily the most difficult to understand. The great thing about radio is the hosts have to speak with extra energy to capture the attention of all those listeners so they usually speak with bravado and energy. So if you can mimic a little of that then you won't bore the people you speak with even using simple Spanish.

## 8

### Turn on the Spanish subtitles

Another great strategy to speed up your Spanish learning is to turn on the Spanish subtitles when watching movies. Most DVDs have the subtitle option in the menu, so take a minute and enable them before you start watching. This can also help you make connections to the language as it relates to understanding slang, how to say difficult things using only a few words, how people communicate with each other in real life situations, how to command, ask questions, etc, etc.

You can also take this one step further by watching the movie in Spanish with Spanish subtitles enabled too. One of the biggest challenges for new students when listening to native Spanish speakers is being able to discern where one word ends and another

begins in a sentence. For new students, much of what native speakers say sounds like one long run-on sentence, like a string of vowels with a few consonants mixed in. you probably know what I mean. But reading subtitles in Spanish while hearing the actors speak Spanish will help you discern and break up Spanish sentences. You'll be better at identifying vocabulary words and understanding what the dialogue.

## 9

### Learn how to finish a sentence

A firm understanding of Spanish verbs and subjects represents your foundation in Spanish. The clause formula really makes up the building blocks of everything you say in Spanish. It's similar to the foundation and framework of a new home. So much of everything you say rests upon the foundation and framework.

Finishing a sentence, on the other hand, is the carpet, paint, tile, and countertops in a new home. They're the pieces you add on at the end that really complete what you are trying to say. Because if you stop at "I play...", you really aren't saying much of anything at all, certainly not anything interesting. But if you can say "I play the piano at nights in a bar and make big money", now that is something very interesting indeed.

So knowing how to finish a thought or sentence is extremely important. You don't have to be articulate or eloquent at first. Instead, try memorizing a few things you can say that are interesting and expanding from there. Here are some examples:

*...en la mañana = ...in the morning*

*...con mis amigos = ...with my friends*

*...todos los días = ...every day*

Statements such as these can be added to the end of sentences to give color or deeper meaning to what you are saying. Obviously these examples are very simple, but when you are first making conversation in Spanish it's important to start simple and then expand into more complex communication.

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## Mimic Spanish speakers

As you are listening to Spanish radio, watching Spanish TV, movies, the classroom, or cartoons, try to mimic the actors and characters. Just like a child would repeat her favorite cartoon character's slogan, you should try to pick up a few one-liners, jokes, slang, or common statements and use them often. These can become valuable tools in your inventory to use and will undoubtedly come in handy in crucial moments.

For example, I know a native Spanish speaker who loves the English word "seemingly" and he uses it a lot, almost too much. But it's a sign that he's eager to improve his English. Since I can see that he wants to improve, I've offered him some substitute words that he can use

instead of "seemingly", such as "it Seems...", "I've noticed...", "People say that...", or "I've heard that...".

You can do the same thing in Spanish. When I lived in Spain, I always want to say "How strange..." and "That's interesting". So I'd literally say the same thing for those two statements. It wasn't until I heard a good friend use a couple other variations that I was able to expand my vocabulary. He used phrases like "Que cosa..." and "Que curiosidad...", which mean about the same thing.

11

## Phrase book

A good phrasebook can be a new student's best friend. Phrase books are great because you don't have to sit down on and start on page one, spend 20 hours reading, and try to remember everything you read during those 20 hours. No, instead you should use it as a reference.

Spend a few minutes each day in the book, start memorizing a few phrases or common sayings even if you don't understand the translation. Try to learn a few new common phrases each day, such as:

*I'm going to the store. I'll be back soon* = *Me voy a la tienda.*



*Regreso pronto.*

*I'll be right back = Vuelvo en seguida*

*Don't do that = Que no hagas eso*

You don't need to understand the grammar behind these statements. Just learn the statements themselves and over time you'll understand the grammar behind each.

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## Learn to tell time

Learning to tell time is easy and you can master it in 30 minutes. Start with these and build from there:

*Son las dos = It's two o'clock*

*Son las cinco y media = It's five thirty*

But if it's one o'clock, remember the number 1 is singular, not plural like all the other numbers, so:

*Es la una = It's one o'clock*

*Es la una y quince = It's one fifteen*

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## Topic vocabulary

Learning the vocabulary for a topic that interests you will keep you moving forward and shouldn't be a tedious task. Find a topic that you are passionate about, then get a Spanish-to-English dictionary, and start looking up words related to the topic. Doing an internet search for the words could be faster than using a dictionary.

One example might be auto mechanics or kitchen utensils. Make a brainstorm list on paper of all the words related to your topic and then use a Spanish-to-English dictionary and write down the Spanish translation next to each word. Once the words are on paper with their Spanish equivalents you can start memorizing them, either with flashcards or by covering half of the list.

This exercise not only increases your vocabulary, but it enables you to be skilled enough to have meaningful and deeper conversations with native Spanish speakers about a few topics that interest you. So while you may not be able to talk politics yet, you might be well versed in professional soccer (fútbol) and able to carry on a decent conversation about it in Spanish.

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## Tell your friends

If you tell people you know that you are trying to learn Spanish, suddenly they'll become resources to help you learn. Maybe some family member has an old Spanish course on CD that you can listen to. Or maybe one of your friends already knows a little Spanish and is willing to help you with some of the more challenging concepts. Someone who already speaks Spanish could even become your conversation partner, speaking to you in Spanish whenever you see each other.

Another benefit of telling people is that you are subconsciously committing to learn Spanish and accountable to someone. If you tell someone that you want to do something and that you have every

intention to work hard and accomplish that thing, in a way you are signing up to be held accountable for meeting that goal. And if you don't meet the goal, well then someday you'll run into that person and you'll have a day of reckoning so to speak and this person will likely ask for an update.

Telling someone your goal might seem risky because someday you'll have to answer to him or her, whereas if you hadn't told anyone you could just hide the fact that you didn't ever achieve the goal. But committing to learning Spanish is a risk worth taking. Because if you do learn it, you have a great new skill and will be able to interact with a whole new group of people. If you don't learn it, however, it's not like you will lose something of significant value.

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## Surround yourself with Spanish speakers

They say that one becomes the average of the 5 people with whom they spend the most time. This is only magnified when it comes to learning a new language. When I first started to learn Spanish, making progress felt like an uphill battle. There were a lot of sleepless nights where I wanted to tear my pillow apart and then days where I was so frustrated that I couldn't even remember my own name and just wandered around town longing to speak Spanish. Ok, maybe that's an exaggeration, but there were some frustrating moments where I didn't think I could do it.

One of the things that helped the most was that I actually met a few people that had been learning and speaking Spanish seriously for

about 1 year longer than I had. These friends could help me work through some of those early challenges, partly because it wasn't long before that they were going through the same thing. Other friends were more advanced and they served as a kind of example that I wanted to emulate.

You want to know what happened? Each day as I listened to them speak I would absorb a bit of their wisdom and skill until after just a few weeks I went from a brand new beginner to someone who could really speak proficiently with any native Spanish speaker I met.



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## Force yourself

There are obvious benefits to doing something amazing like forcing yourself to speak Spanish for a week straight. You are basically forcing yourself to be ultra disciplined and only speak Spanish during that time. So anything you say you'll need to first consult a Spanish dictionary or the internet.

If you're like me you can't be quite so disciplined, so why not at least try 1-2 hrs per day where you will commit to speaking only Spanish? And if you mess up, there needs to be some type of way to make it up, like an additional 15 minutes of Spanish study.

Many people reading this are living in Spanish speaking countries.

One of the best ways to force yourself to be disciplined is to go make friends with native Spanish speakers and just hang around them and do your best at being part of the conversation. After a few weeks you'll be amazed as what you can do.

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## Journal entry, blog post, or pen pal

Writing in Spanish is great to help you learn to speak better. You can write anything: stories, thoughts, challenges, or observations. Pen pals were once popular and if you know someone who speaks Spanish as their main language, then writing letters or emails back and forth could really help. Lots of people are really into blogging or journaling, which are two more great ways to start writing Spanish. Really anything that will push your mind to think beyond the vocabulary and grammar that you already know.

Writing in Spanish will help you be a bit more sophisticated in what you say. You'll put more thought into what and how you say things and your language skills will become more eloquent. Why is it

important to speak eloquently? Because it's likely that some day you'll be speaking to a group of adults or friends and you won't want to sound like a 2nd grader in such a setting. You'll want a bit more respect and to be taken seriously. By writing your thoughts in Spanish, you'll get a chance to craft the language a bit more carefully instead of just spouting off the simplest way you know to say that thought.

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## Set a high standard

There is a principle that if you aim high, you are likely to hit just below your goal. In some cases, that's not a bad thing. I'd rather be the second best professional basketball player than the best garbage man.

Aiming high can really make you test yourself. So set some aggressive short and long-term objectives, such as speaking complete sentences in Spanish for 10 minutes per day, recording Spanish TV and playing a few lines back until you can parse the sentences completely, writing a short opinion about pop culture each day, etc.

Push yourself to learn something difficult or to consistently make a big effort to learn and suddenly the basic parts of Spanish will seem easier.

19

## Spend time on pronunciation

Anyone can get pronunciation right. This is the one area where you literally can be perfect. If you never pronounce a word or letter incorrectly, you can be perfect.

So find some quiet area where you can feel free to speak out loud and not disturb others. Find some vocabulary or any type of Spanish text, and just start reading out loud, focusing on each letter.

The point is not to read fast, rather your goal should be to pronounce each word perfectly. You won't be there at first, but after 1 or 2 weeks you should be a pronunciation master.

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## What would you have done differently?

I hope you don't mind but the last strategy that I want to leave you with is more of a piece of advice as opposed to a concrete strategy. This is a bit of wisdom that I picked up a few years ago from a trusted friend and it's what I wish someone would have told me when I first started venturing out on my own in life.

All of us make decisions that take us places. Some people make poor decisions that lead them down difficult roads. Others take a more pleasant route. For most, however, our lives are a string of decisions. Think how every day people all over the world are coming of age in the sense that they realize their decisions determine how far they go in life and then make a conscious decision to improve their lives.



And the fact that you are reading this manifests that you have also "come of age" and made a decision to learn Spanish and have some desire to use these language skills to help yourself or others. What a wonderful thing to do! Someday you want to be someone who can confidently stand up and speak Spanish, right? If that's true, then the best challenge I can issue is that you not be afraid of taking risks.

Successful people take risks, calculated ones. What are the risks that will help you be successful learning Spanish. I'm not just talking about raising your hand in class to answer in Spanish or volunteering to recite a line of text in Spanish. What I'm talking about is your willingness to be vulnerable and use persistence and a small dose of failure to help refine your language skills.

Don't be afraid to proactively strike up a conversation in Spanish with someone new you meet even if you've only been learning Spanish for a few days. Don't shy away from speaking up in a work meeting or trying to tell a joke in Spanish. And certainly don't be afraid to try speaking Spanish out of fear of saying something incorrectly. These things will be for your benefit and help you achieve your goal faster. If you are not afraid, the people you meet are mostly good people and will immediately notice that you are sincerely and genuinely trying to learn to speak their language and will be honored to share an

exchange with you...even if it is a bit messy and jumbled.

## Bonus

### Talk to yourself in Spanish

Are you someone who talks to yourself? If not, you may want to start. It's fun and entertaining to talk to yourself about things. You can practice your opinions and perspectives on certain popular issues so that when you are with your friends you sound more convincing and charismatic.

The effect is the same if you speak to yourself in Spanish. You can practice saying certain things like:

*Bueno, vamos amigos = Let's go*

*¿Dónde puse mis llaves? = Where did I put my keys?*

*¿Si te considerás lo que digo yo, entenderás que... = If you think about what I'm saying, then you'll start to see that....*

You can also repeat things you heard native speakers say or songs you heard. The sky is the limit when it comes to speaking to yourself and it can really help you craft effective communication before you are called on to perform.

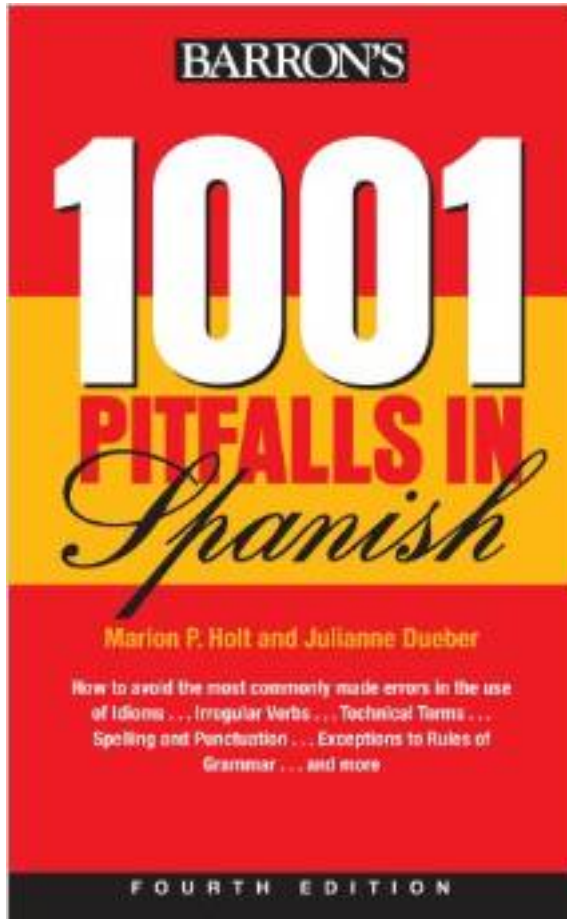
## Bonus

### Only three books

When people find out that I help people learn Spanish I always get the same series of questions. One of the most common questions people ask is what are the basic essentials or bare necessities to learn Spanish quickly. The most valuable resource when learning Spanish is to have a mentor or teacher help you through the difficult concepts. That's why I'm here today and you can learn more about my life's purpose and what I do by visiting [www.eSpanishTeacher.com](http://www.eSpanishTeacher.com).

In addition to a mentor, there are three resources that everyone needs to supplement his or her Spanish language study. It's important for you to know that I do not get paid for these

endorsements and feel strongly that I could never accomplish my life's mission that way. These are genuine and sincere recommendations of the four best Spanish language books that I've ever read.



The first book is called "1001 Spanish Pitfalls". Perhaps the most practical of all Spanish language resources, this book will help you avoid some of the most common Spanish mistakes that new students make.

I may have mentioned before that it's important to build a foundation in Spanish by mastering verb conjugation and creating simple phrases. Not only will this book reinforce your foundation, it will give you a better understanding of the more advanced language structure (the framework that sits upon your foundation). Additionally, it will help you avoid making embarrassing mistakes.

Another essential resource for every Spanish speaker is a trusty English-to-Spanish dictionary. These can be found in nearly every bookstore and all over the internet for just a few dollars, so don't spend a lot on it.

Which one should you get? Well, if you'll be traveling, a small, abbreviated dictionary would make for easier packing and will have 97% of the words you'll need during your voyage. If you're a student, then you might consider something a bit more comprehensive to help you write papers and give presentations in Spanish.

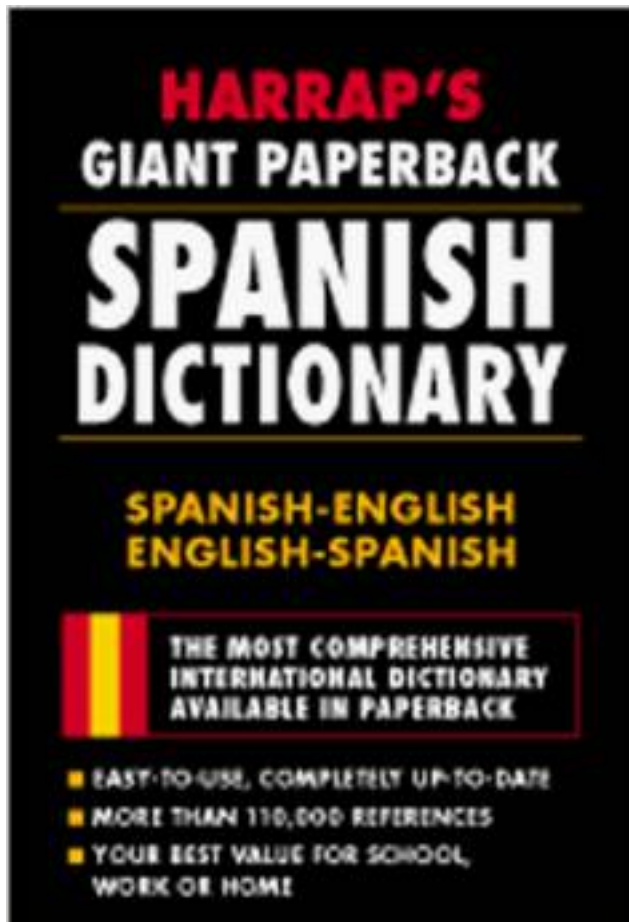
If you'll be doing most of your learning from home, however, then may I recommend the #1 Spanish dictionary ever created: Harrap's Giant Paperback Spanish Dictionary.

This dictionary was incredibly helpful to me when I went to live in Spain and struggled to pick up the language. It's out of print now so you'll likely have to buy it used on eBay or Amazon.

My guess is the publishers printed this thing and--when they saw how big it was--realized they accidentally put a \$60 dictionary into a \$6.00 paperback version and decided it was too much value for such a low price.

Anyway, a used version of this book should not cost you more than a few dollars and will pay for itself many times over by the time you are done with it.





I recommend all Spanish speakers get is titled "501 Spanish Verbs". This book was written years ago and will be one of your staples, especially as you become more familiar with verbs and verb conjugation. This is by far the best book for beginner Spanish speakers who want to advance their skills.

One of the greatest things about this book is that it's meant for your

reference so you don't even have to read it! Just keep it on hand for those times when you need to look up a verb or its conjugation. Click to purchase "501 Spanish Verbs" on Amazon, search the internet to find it, or look for it at your favorite bookstore.

