

Newstead Wood School
Sixth Form
September 2025



Spanish Handbook



El español es la segunda lengua materna del mundo por número de hablantes

«Cada vez que pienses que algún idioma es extraño, recuerda que el tuyo es igual de extraño, solo que estás acostumbrado a él»

Welcome to Spanish at AS and A Level

Our goal is to help students communicate with confidence, understand the language and culture, and enjoy their learning journey.

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Introduction

Congratulations on choosing to study Spanish at this advanced level. Spanish is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, and studying it will not only enhance your language skills but also give you valuable insight into the diverse cultures, histories, and societies of Spanish-speaking countries.

Throughout the course, you will develop your ability to understand, speak, read, and write in Spanish. In addition, you'll explore key cultural, social, and historical themes that shape Spain and the wider Spanish-speaking world.

Our department is excited to share our passion for the Spanish language and culture with you, and we look forward to supporting you on this rewarding journey.

This study guide is designed to help you achieve success in your A Level Spanish course. Please read it carefully, keep it safe, and refer to it regularly throughout the year. It is vital to start strong and manage your time effectively to reach your full potential.

One of the most important skills you will develop during this course is the ability to work independently and manage your time effectively. At AS and A Level, the vocabulary is considerably broader, more varied, and more complex than at GCSE, so regular, structured vocabulary learning is essential. You will also be expected to express your ideas clearly and accurately in both spoken and written Spanish, as well as interpret listening and reading materials drawn from a range of authentic, contemporary sources.

Beyond language acquisition, the course offers a deeper insight into the culture, society, and current affairs of Spain and the wider Spanish-speaking world. This cultural learning will take place through classroom activities and your own independent research. As part of the course, you will also study a film or literary text at AS Level, and a second at A2.

This guide outlines what is expected of you, the support available to you, and the key steps you can take to succeed. It also includes information about enrichment and leadership opportunities, as well as a general overview of the course structure.

How to succeed

Independent study

You should aim to dedicate approximately four to five hours per week to independent Spanish study. This time should include completing set homework, learning vocabulary and grammar, engaging in independent reading and listening, and preparing for your oral lessons. It is important to keep a record of your independent study each week so that you can update your teacher on your progress. Under the new specification, it is essential not only to develop your language skills but also to gain a deeper understanding of the culture of Spain and other Spanish-speaking countries. This includes learning about significant cultural elements such as UNESCO World Heritage Sites and the Spanish language itself.

Ideas for Independent Learning

1. Review and organise your notes

Keep your lesson materials well-structured by using a clear and consistent filing system—whether digital or physical. This will make revision more manageable and help you track your progress over time.

2. Practise listening and reading online

Engage with Spanish-language content through websites, online newspapers, and streaming platforms. Listening to Spanish radio or watching Spanish TV enhances comprehension, pronunciation, and accent. Many programs offer transcripts or subtitles to support your understanding.

3. Listen to Spanish music

Use platforms like YouTube or websites such as *música.com* to explore Spanish-language music. This is an enjoyable way to improve your listening skills and become familiar with informal or colloquial expressions.

4. Watch Spanish films and series

Take advantage of the department's film library or streaming services like Netflix and Prime Video. Watching authentic Spanish-language films and shows is a powerful tool for developing vocabulary, listening skills, and cultural awareness.

5. Keep a vocabulary notebook

Maintain a dedicated notebook or digital document for new vocabulary. Organise words thematically or by topic, and review them regularly. Short, frequent revision sessions are often more effective than occasional long ones.

6. Tackle grammar proactively

Identify grammar topics you find challenging and work on them regularly. Use your grammar book or reliable online resources for targeted practice. Don't hesitate to ask your teacher for clarification—strong grammar skills are essential for long-term success.

7. Read Spanish-language media

Stay updated with news and cultural topics by reading Spanish newspapers and magazines, such as *El Mundo*, *El País*, and *RTVE*. Many articles come with audio or simplified versions, making them more accessible. This is particularly useful for preparing to discuss current affairs and topical issues in class.

Useful websites:

Vocabulary & Grammar

[SpanishDict](#) - Great for translations, conjugations, and grammar explanations with practice exercises.

[Conjuguemos](#) - Interactive grammar and vocabulary exercises, especially good for verb conjugation practice.

[StudySpanish](#) - Detailed grammar tutorials, pronunciation help, and quizzes.

[WordReference](#) - Reliable dictionary and verb conjugator with forum discussions on word usage and idioms.

Listening Practice

[News in Slow Spanish](#) - Current events spoken slowly, with transcripts and explanations – ideal for A Level listening.

[RTVE – Radio Televisión Española](#) - Spain's national broadcaster; watch live TV, listen to radio, and access news archives.

[LyricsTraining](#) - Improve listening through popular Spanish songs; fill in the blanks while listening to lyrics.

BBC Languages – Spanish - Archived but still useful for basic listening and grammar resources.

Reading & Current Affairs

[El País](#) - A major Spanish newspaper with articles on politics, society, culture, and more.

[El Mundo](#) - Another leading newspaper in Spain, useful for reading about current events and opinion pieces.

RTVE Noticias - National news site with articles and video clips. Often includes transcripts.

[BBC Mundo](#) - Spanish-language version of the BBC, great for Latin American perspectives and clear, accessible language.

Culture & Extra Practice-

This is Spain

The official Spanish tourism site – explore regions, festivals, food, and UNESCO sites.

[Duolingo](#) - Fun for vocabulary and sentence structure revision, especially useful for mobile practice.

[FluentU](#) (*Paid*) - Videos with interactive subtitles – good for learning real spoken Spanish in context.

[Cadena SER](#) - Usefulness for A Level: High

- **What it is:** Spain's most popular radio network, offering live radio, podcasts, and news reports.
- **Why it's useful:**
 - Provides **authentic Spanish audio** with native speakers.
 - Covers a wide range of topics: politics, society, entertainment, and sport—ideal for preparing for **speaking and writing about current affairs**.
 - Many programmes are also available as **downloadable podcasts** for flexible listening practice.

Tip: Start with short news summaries or human-interest stories, and use transcript tools or slow playback if needed.

✓ 2. [Onda Cero](#) - Usefulness for A Level: High

- **What it is:** Another major Spanish radio station, offering news, interviews, cultural shows, and opinion pieces.
- **Why it's useful:**
 - Offers **high-quality spoken Spanish**, helping improve listening skills and understanding of different accents.
 - Features a variety of **thematic content** (e.g. health, environment, politics) that aligns well with A Level topics.
 - Great for students who want to **push their listening skills further** with real-world media.

How to Use These Sites Effectively for A Level:

- Listen to a **5–10 minute news clip** and try to summarise the main points in Spanish or English.
- Note down **new vocabulary or expressions** in a vocab notebook.

- Re-listen to segments multiple times—especially useful for **intonation, stress, and complex syntax**.
- Use the content for **discussion prep or essay ideas** on current issues.

Practice & Revision Websites

OYE (Online Y12 Exercises) - Usefulness: High

- Tailored for A Level students (Year 12/13).
- Covers key topics and grammar points with interactive exercises.
- Great for quick revision and self-testing.

Languages Online - Usefulness: High

- Well-organised grammar and vocabulary activities.
- Good for both foundational and A Level topics.
- Interactive and easy to navigate; ideal for independent study.

StudySpanish - Usefulness: Medium–High

- Clear grammar explanations and quizzes.
- Particularly helpful for verb tenses, pronunciation, and listening.
- Best used for **grammar reinforcement**.

Colby College Grammar Tutorials - Usefulness: High

- University-level grammar practice site.
- Covers a wide range of grammar topics with clear examples and self-correcting exercises.
- Ideal for students needing **in-depth grammar support**.

SpanishRevision.co.uk - Usefulness: High

- Designed for GCSE and A Level students.
- Excellent for topic-based vocabulary, grammar revision, and exam-style tasks.
- Good layout and helpful for **exam preparation**.

WordReference Verb Conjugator - Usefulness: Essential

- Accurate and extensive verb conjugation tool.
- Crucial for revising all tenses and irregular verbs.

Verbs Online – Spanish Verbs - Usefulness: Medium

- Additional verb practice with quiz-style testing.
- Good supplement for verb revision but less interactive than WordReference.

Other Useful Websites (Culture, Listening & Enrichment)

◆ Instituto Cervantes - Usefulness: High

- Spain's official cultural institution.
- Offers articles, book recommendations, events, and language resources.
- Valuable for exploring **Spanish culture, literature, and language certification**.

◆ Notes in Spanish – Beginners & Intermediate - Usefulness: High

- Excellent podcast series from real Spanish speakers.
- Covers everyday topics and expressions in natural speech.
- Useful for **listening practice** and learning colloquial Spanish.

Audiria Usefulness: Medium–High

- Free audio resources with transcripts.
- Covers practical and cultural topics; some dated interface but still valuable.
- Great for **authentic listening practice**.

[Instituto Cervantes – London](#) Usefulness: High

- Lists cultural events, workshops, and DELE exam resources in the UK.
- Great for UK-based students preparing for **language certificates** or looking for cultural immersion.

[Canning House](#) - Usefulness: Medium

- UK organisation focusing on Latin America, Spain & Portugal.
- Provides resources, news, and reports—useful for **cultural and political context** in essays.

[Aprender Español](#) - Usefulness: Very High

- Excellent all-round site with grammar, vocabulary, readings, and activities.
- Suitable for all levels, including advanced learners.
- Especially useful for **self-paced independent study**.

Visits abroad

You are strongly encouraged to visit a Spanish-speaking country at least once during the course. Immersing yourself in the language and culture is one of the most effective ways to deepen your understanding and improve your fluency.

The Spanish department is currently organising a one-week visit to Málaga in December. This trip will offer a valuable opportunity to experience Spanish culture first-hand and to visit UNESCO World Heritage Sites, which directly support and enrich key areas of your course content.

Classes with the Language Assistant

The oral exam accounts for 30% of your final AS/A Level grade, so regular speaking practice is essential. You will be assigned a weekly session with the Spanish language assistant, scheduled during a free period or lunchtime.

Attendance at these sessions is compulsory. If you know you will be absent, you must inform the assistant in advance so your session can be rescheduled where possible.

To make the most of these sessions, it is vital that you come prepared—not only linguistically, but also by reflecting on the issues to be discussed and developing your personal opinions. Part of your homework will involve preparing thoroughly for these conversations.

Leadership opportunities

Leadership Opportunities in the Languages Department

The Languages Department offers a range of leadership opportunities designed to support both your linguistic and personal development. These roles allow you to contribute meaningfully to the school community while enhancing your CV and strengthening future university or job applications.

Spanish Subject Leaders

Towards the end of Year 12, we will invite applications for the role of Spanish Subject Leader. In this position, you will help support younger students, promote language learning within the school, and contribute to departmental events and initiatives. It's an excellent opportunity to develop leadership skills and demonstrate initiative.

Mentoring Year 10 and 11 Students

You'll also have the opportunity to mentor GCSE students who may need extra support. You'll be paired with a Year 10 or 11 student and meet weekly to help them improve their language skills. This is a rewarding role, as you'll see the impact of your support over time—and you'll strengthen your own understanding of grammar and vocabulary in the process.

Homework Club for Year 7 Students

We are also looking to run a homework club specifically for Year 7 students, where you can help younger learners with their language tasks. This provides a chance to reinforce your own knowledge of grammar and core vocabulary while supporting the next generation of language learners.

Learning Environment

You are expected to come to each lesson fully prepared. Lessons often involve discussion based on prior reading or classwork, so thoughtful engagement and preparation are essential for meaningful participation.

Study Periods and Independent Study

Your study periods should be used to:

- Consolidate and organise your class notes
- Create revision materials
- Engage in wider reading, listening, and cultural exploration, as outlined elsewhere in this guide

Preparation for September

To make a strong and confident start in September, it is essential that your understanding of key GCSE tenses and grammar points is secure. If you haven't had much formal grammar instruction, this may require significant revision—but it is absolutely necessary for success at A Level.

Before beginning the course, you should revise or learn the following grammar topics:

- Regular and irregular verbs in the **present, perfect, imperfect, preterite, future, and conditional** tenses
- **Adjectival endings**
- **Direct object pronouns** (e.g. *lo, la, los, las*)

We will ask you for evidence of the work you have done at the start of term. You also need to complete the **Bridging Unit** for Spanish.

There is a wealth of material on the internet to help you revise and practise. For example, Languages Online and Study Spanish have explanations as well as exercises. There are also resources to support you in school. Please ask your teacher if you are unsure. Continue to review your Spanish vocabulary - we recommend using wordreference.com (which also has a useful verb conjugator) as an online dictionary. Note down interesting and useful new vocabulary and try to use it in your oral and written work.

Oral Work: You will start oral classes with our Language Assistant from the beginning of term and details of the oral presentations we would like you to prepare are in the bridging unit. This will allow you to make the most of your oral lessons right from the start and us to tailor these lessons to your own personal requirements.

Resources and Equipment you need before you start in September

AQA Spanish Textbook

Be sure to get the version for the new specification (published 2016):

Student's book ISBN: 9780198366904

(NB: you will have access to an online textbook at home. However, we strongly recommend that you purchase the textbook, and you will need to bring it to each lesson)

Palabra por Palabra: (a really good vocabulary guide for AS & A2) ISBN-10: 1444110012 , ISBN-13: 978-1444110012

Headphones: You will need to have your own set for individual listening activities. Make sure that the lead is long enough for use with school computers.

Files, file-dividers and file paper: You will be given many different resources and be doing a range of work. Make sure you keep this organised from the beginning – it is much easier!

Spanish A level Bridging Unit

Oral Work:

We would like you to prepare three **oral presentations** on the following topics:

1) Your family and home (150 words)

- a description of your family and how you get on with them
- where you/your parents are from, including a paragraph about your grandparents, where they used to live, what they used to do when they were younger (in the imperfect tense) – you may invent details.
- the type of family life you would like in the future – where you would live, with whom etc

2) A Spanish speaking celebrity – please research “un ídolo hispanohablante” and write about why you like them and why they are popular amongst young people. You must include something about what they do apart from their music/sport/film work eg raising money or doing voluntary work for charity eg Me impresiona Shakira porque no solamente escribe y canta canciones sino también hace mucho trabajo solidario. (150 words)

3) You should research a Spanish speaking Latin American country of your choice and write about its most famous tourist attractions (monuments, fiestas etc), food and traditions. It is more important to use your own words to demonstrate what you have learnt than to use complicated language – don’t just copy and paste from Wikipedia! (150 words)

Please make sure you use a variety of vocabulary and verb tenses, especially in the family/home task. We expect you to submit the written version of these presentations by the end of the first week of term – you should also keep a copy for yourself, as you will go through them in your first conversation lesson with the Spanish assistant.

Grammar revision : los tiempos verbales

Presente	I do	hago
Presente continuo	I am doing	Estoy haciendo
Futuro simple	I will do	Haré
Futuro inmediato	I am going to do	Voy a hacer
Pretérito	I did	Hice
Imperfecto	I was doing/ I used to do	hacía
Pretérito perfecto	I have done	He hecho
Condicional	I would do	Haré

Infinitivo	To do	Hacer
Gerundio	Doing	Haciendo
Participio	Finished Lived	Terminado Vivido

Ser :

I am the youngest in the family

.....

The party will be in Pedro's house

.....

John was the youngest boy in the class

.....

When Jo was little, she was late (llegar tarde) every day

.....

ESTAR

I am tired but not bored.

.....

We were ill yesterday.

.....

My ideal house would be in Mallorca

.....

TENER:

We have some yellow roses in our garden.

.....

Marta will have a baby next month.

.....

I had many problems at school.

.....

When I was young, we had a cat

.....

If my family had more money, I would have a Ferrari.

.....

IR:

My parents are going to Spain to see their friends.

.....

The girls will go to the shopping centre.

.....

We went to Peru to spend some time with our family.

.....

The children used to go to church every Sunday.

.....

HACER:

I am making a birthday cake for you.

.....

You will make some pancakes for your grandmother.

.....

The children made a sand castle on the beach.

.....

We used to do our homework every day after school.

.....

TERMINAR :

I am finishing my breakfast very quickly.

.....

She will finish school in two months.

.....

We finished our homework and went to the tennis club.

.....

The boys were finishing their test when the teacher came in.

.....

In an ideal world, you would finish your work and your mum would be happy.

.....

PODER :

I can come to your house in half an hour.

.....

María will not be able to continue her studies.

.....

You were able to go on holiday in March.

.....

We used to be able to play with our friends every day.

.....

In an ideal world, she would be able to read many books.

.....

VER :

John sees his children every month.

.....

I will see my friends next year.

.....

Last weekend we saw a Spanish film.

.....

We used to see our grandparents at the weekend.

.....

Verbos reflexivos

Levantarse

Me levanto

Te levantas

Se levanta

Nos levantamos

Os levantáis

Se levantan

Llamarse

Me llamo

Te llamas

Se llama

Nos llamamos

Os llamáis

Se llaman

The children get up at seven o'clock.

.....

My sister is relaxing at home.

.....

The boys stay in a hotel on holiday.

.....

I wash my hair three times a week.

.....

We can't remember where he lives. (acordarse)

.....

Por y Para – Feel free to revise on the links below before completing the exercises

Traduce en Español

The train leaves for Madrid in fifteen minutes

I made this necklace for Marta because it is her birthday

Pedro paid sixty euros for your engagement ring

They go to the gym three times a week to keep fit

I am not going out now as it is about to rain

Completa los huecos con la forma de saber y conocer adecuada

¿(tú) la dirección de la embajada?

¿..... (vosotros) a mi amigo José?

No..... (yo) la solución a este problema.

..... (nosotros) cocinar muy bien. Nuestra madre nos enseñó desde pequeños

¿(ellos) el camino más corto para ir a la playa?

¿ (usted) bien Barcelona?

¿ (vosotros) si vuestro padre ha llegado?

¿ (ustedes) hablar español?

-Mi hermana no te..... Te la voy a presentar.