

Summer activities

Well done for choosing to study Spanish at A Level! This booklet is designed to help you to prepare for the course. All activities are optional, so don't feel under pressure to complete everything.

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Introduction to A Level study skills

This section will introduce you to some of the study skills you will need in order to be a successful Spanish learner at A Level.

A Levels are different to GCSEs in a number of ways. At GCSE, most of your learning takes place in the classroom; at A Level, lessons only make up around 50% of your study time. The rest of the time is dedicated to independent study. Although this will include some homework, you will also need to take the initiative in developing your knowledge and skills in other ways.

One of the main characteristics of successful A Level students is that they use their independent study time effectively.

In practice, this means at least three things:

- Successful students dedicate an appropriate amount of quality time to their Spanish learning each week. They don't let everything else in their life squeeze out Spanish study.
- They invest their study time wisely in activities that will give a high return (in knowledge and skills) on their investment.
- They are proactive. They identify areas where they can improve and then find ways to do so.

We understand that this is a step up from GCSE, where the teacher takes the lead. At A Level, you will need to take ownership of your own progress. The resources identified in this section will help you to do that. Your teachers will also be on hand to answer questions and offer you support.

Remember: successful A Level students are proactive. If you do need help, don't just wait for one of your teachers to do something: take the initiative and speak to them.

In the following activities, you will practise some of the study skills needed at A Level and discover some of the many resources that you can use to develop your knowledge.

Before you continue, you need to download, save and/or print a copy of the document titled '**Top tips for Spanish study**'. You can find this on the website or on Moodle. This document contains useful tips on where you can go to develop different areas of skill or knowledge. It should live at the front of your Spanish folder. The following sets of activities relate to different sections of this sheet.

Tasks:

1) Grammar. To practise independent grammar study, revise the uses of the **preterite** and **imperfect** tenses by following the instructions below. Both are past tenses but they are used in different situations. To be able to use them effectively, you will need to know:

- How to form the preterite tense (*pretérito indefinido*) – all the regular conjugations.
- How to conjugate irregular verbs.
- How to form the imperfect tense (*pretérito imperfecto*) – all the regular conjugations.
- How to conjugate irregular verbs.
- How to use both tenses – when do you use preterite and when do you use imperfect?

To do this, look at section 1 (grammar) of the **Top tips for Spanish study** sheet. Then do the following activities in order:

- a) Go to *SpanishDict* or *Study Spanish* and revise the two individual tenses. Read the lessons and do the practice quizzes.
- b) Practise verb conjugations for each tense on *Conjuguemos*. Try with regular verbs first, then try adding in the irregular verbs.
- c) When you are more confident on the verb conjugations, go back to *SpanishDict* or *Study Spanish* and do the preterite vs. imperfect lesson.
- d) Go to the grammar quizzes section on *Conjuguemos* and do the preterite vs. imperfect gap fill activities.

2) Vocabulary. To practise vocabulary learning, go to section 2 (vocabulary) of the top tips sheet. Choose two things to try from the list and then spend at least half an hour on each of them over a week.

When you have done that, try learning the list of 100 most popular verbs in Spanish. You can either use the list on the website or do the '100 most popular Spanish verbs' course on Memrise: <https://decks.memrise.com/course/42952/100-most-popular-spanish-verbs/>

Vocabulary learning is most effective in small, frequent chunks, so try to spend 10-15 minutes on each activity 2-3 times over the course of a week.

- 3) Listening comprehension.** Read the tips in section 3 (listening comprehension) and do the following activities:
- Try two of the podcasts. *Notes in Spanish* is a good one to start with. For each podcast, note down the name and the episode title, and write some notes on what you learn.
 - Choose one of the other activities to do and spend at least 30 minutes on it. Keep a record of what you've done and take notes.
- 4) Reading comprehension.** Read the tips in section 4 (reading comprehension) and do the following activities:
- Go to one of the news websites and find an article. Read it and make a note of the title, the date of the article and the newspaper. Translate the title into English and write a summary of the article in English. *20 Minutos* is a good place to start.
 - Choose another newspaper and do the same activity.
 - Try to find an online magazine about an area that interests you. Try doing a search for '*revista de...*'. For example, if you like computer games, search '*revista de videojuegos*'. Read an article and do the same as you did for the two newspaper articles.
- 5) Speaking.** Read the tips in section 5 (speaking). If you are able to, contact a classmate, friend or family member and do some speaking practice. If this is not possible, don't worry. You could also try doing some *Duolingo* (see the vocabulary tips) as this includes speaking tasks.
- 6) Writing.** Read the tips in section 6 (writing). Do a short piece of writing (around 150 words) in Spanish. This can be an article about something that interests you, a piece of writing about yourself, or a short story. Make sure you don't use a translator. If you want to look up words, you can use www.wordreference.com, an excellent dictionary website.
- 7) Translation.** Read the tips in section 7 (translation). Go to *Dual Texts* and choose an article to translate from Spanish to English. You will need to cover up the English version (or just resist the temptation to look at it). If you get stuck on a word, use Word Reference (see above). When you have finished, you can compare your translation to the one on the website.
- 8) Summarising.** Read the tips in section 8 (summarising). This is an important A Level skill that you haven't used much at GCSE. When you have read the tips, go back to the news websites (see section 4) and find an article to summarise. Your summary should be approximately 70-80 words in Spanish. You can copy and adapt the language from the article but you need to make sure that your summary is in the 3rd person throughout.

When you have completed all of the activities above, you are ready to move on.

Revision of core GCSE grammar

For this section, you need to use your independent study skills to revise the following grammar points from GCSE:

- Nouns and articles
- Adjectives
- The present tense
- Reflexive verbs
- The conditional tense
- The near future tense
- The simple future tense
- The present continuous tense
- The perfect tense

You should already have revised the preterite and imperfect tenses in the previous section.

Use the grammar resources listed on the **Top tips for Spanish study** sheet to help you.

<https://www.spanishdict.com/guide> is a good place to start looking. You can also use your VIVA GCSE Spanish Grammar and Translation book.

For verb tenses, you need to know their uses, all regular forms and common irregular verbs.

<https://conjugemos.com/activities/spanish/verb/1> is the best place to practise verb conjugations.

You can choose the tense from the list.

Identifying and correcting misconceptions

This section aims to help you identify and correct some common misunderstandings. Students often start A Level with some of these misconceptions and it is good to resolve them as soon as possible.

You are going to work through the Spanish GCSE *diagnostic misconceptions* course on Seneca.

1. Join my classroom: <https://app.senecalearning.com/dashboard/join-class/h3j8mlh0ub>. Click on the link and then follow the instructions. If that doesn't work, you can go to <https://app.senecalearning.com/join-class> and then enter this code: h3j8mlh0ub.
2. Complete all the assignments from the *diagnostic misconceptions* course.

If you have trouble with this, email pszczerbicki@rmgs.org.uk.

3. When you have completed the Seneca course, click on the following link: <https://www.spanishdict.com/guide/false-cognates>.
4. Study the lesson on false cognates on *SpanishDict* and take the practice quiz.

Introduction to Hispanic culture

You will learn much more about the culture of Hispanic countries at A Level than you did at GCSE. In this section, you are going to research some different aspects of Hispanic culture and then prepare a presentation on one of them.

Research some or all of the following things and take notes. These notes should be neatly presented and ready to file in your Spanish folder.

- A Spanish-speaking celebrity who is **not** Shakira or Rafael Nadal.
 - Why they are famous and what their main achievements have been
 - Some basic personal details about them
 - Ways in which they have been a positive role model (e.g. supporting charities)
 - Ways in which they may not have been a good role model
- A Spanish-speaking country other than Spain.
 - Its location, population, capital city and current government
 - What it is known for (traditions, culture, famous people, etc.)
 - Reasons to visit
 - Some of the main problems the country faces at present
- A Spanish or Latin American festival.
 - Its name and when it takes place
 - The reason for the festival
 - How it is celebrated
 - Negative or controversial aspects of the festival

When you have finished your research, choose one and develop your notes into a short presentation. The presentation should last 1-2 minutes. Your teacher may ask you to give this presentation in class during the first term of the course or they may ask to see your work. If they do ask you to give a presentation, they will give you some advance notice.

Revision of GCSE advanced / A Level grammar

For this section, you need to study the following grammar points:

- Direct object pronouns
- The imperfect continuous tense
- The pluperfect tense
- The present subjunctive

These grammar points are more challenging and you may not be so familiar with them. Try to learn them well but don't be discouraged if there are things that you don't fully understand at this stage. You will have an opportunity to study them further and ask questions during the course.

Use the grammar resources listed on the **Top tips for Spanish study** sheet to help you.

<https://www.spanishdict.com/guide> is a good place to start looking. You can also look in your VIVA GCSE Spanish Grammar and Translation book.

For verb tenses, aim to know their uses, all regular forms and common irregular verbs.

<https://conjugemos.com/activities/spanish/verb/1> is the best place to practise verb conjugations. You can choose the tense from the list.

Practising A Level independent study skills

Now you have been introduced to some of the skills and resources that you will use in your independent study time, it's over to you. During the course, you need to spend some time each week working on the different areas covered in the **Top tips for Spanish study** sheet (excluding 9 and 10).

The best way to learn a language is little and often; if you can, do a little each day. This will be more effective and rewarding than putting it off and then doing a large chunk all at once.

Try to follow this rule:

Every day (for a few minutes):

- Listening – can include podcasts, TV, music, etc. A mixture is good.

Every 2-3 days:

- Reading
- Vocabulary learning
- Speaking (where possible)

Once a week:

- Grammar study
- Translation (vary between Spanish-English and English-Spanish)

Every two weeks:

- Summarising a text in Spanish
- Writing

Remember: little and often is best. Spending a few minutes listening to Spanish each day is better than occasionally watching a whole film (although they're not mutually exclusive).

Not all of your Spanish study has to be formal. Enjoyment is also important. Listening to music, watching TV programmes and reading short articles that interest you will all help you become more fluent. You don't need to look up every word and you don't always need to take notes. Find some fun ways to immerse yourself in the language!

Organisation and equipment

- 1) Buy a **lever arch file** with **dividers**.
- 2) Make sure that you have a **well-stocked pencil case**.
- 3) Buy some hole-punched A4 **paper** that you will be able to easily file in your folder.

If this is difficult for financial reasons, don't worry: just speak to a Spanish teacher about it and we will do our best to help.

¡Disfruta de las vacaciones! ¡Nos vemos en septiembre!