

How to prepare for Spanish at A Level

You have a few weeks in which to really prepare for your A Level in Spanish. The leap from GCSE to A Level is significant. This booklet contains links to a huge range of media, most of which is available for free online as well as tasks to complete before the start of term. In order to keep pace, it is vital that you work through the tasks. Little and often...

Watch...

The news. Click on www.rtve.es/Noticias and then click on Telediario en 4 to watch four minute version of the news. Alternatively you can watch the entire news show which lasts 50 minutes.

MOVIES

Choose one of the following movies to watch over the summer:

- Volver (Pedro Almodóvar, 2006)
- Ocho Apellidos Vascos (Emilio Martínez-Lázaro, 2014)
- El Laberinto del Fauno (Guillermo del Toro, 2006)
- María llena eres de gracia (Joshua Marston, 2004)
- Abel (Diego Luna, 2010)
- Las 13 Rosas (Emilio Martínez-Lázaro, 2007)

Read...

Keep your own vocabulary book for new expressions you come across. You could order it alphabetically, by topic area based on what we are going to study or just use it as a diary and scribble away your Spanish development in it.

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

Read a foreign language newspaper – El País is available in larger paper shops. El País has its own website <http://www.elpais.com/> so that you can read the paper online. You do not have to read the paper cover to cover, just scan the headlines and pick out ONE article that grabs your attention.

Websites

Switch to Spanish browsers such as and <http://es.yahoo.com/> or www.yahoo.es as well as www.google.es. This way, you will read Spanish every time you log on and it will become part of your everyday activity.

Look at the www.bbc.com/mundo for BBC reporting in Spanish. Click on Videos for clips and reports in Spanish.

For Daily News:

News.yahoo.com/

www.abc.es

www.terra.es

Go to www.donbalon.com for football website and related articles.

Go to www.hola.com for a Spanish celebrity gossip magazine (note that some content requires subscription). This also has short clips in Spanish.

Websites for research

Once you actually start your A Level in September, you will realise that you are almost completing a Sociology A Level in Spanish. It is fascinating and you will learn all about the history and culture of Spanish speakers across the world, not just in Spain.

If you are searching for information, try switching to the Spanish www.es.wikipedia. Remember that anyone can write on Wikipedia so you must validate your research elsewhere and never quote from it! It is a good place to start though.

British Council support available from <http://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/>

On-line dictionary

A good on-line dictionary is: <http://www.spanishdict.com/>

TIP When you look up a verb, click the Conjugation tab to see how the verb is conjugated in EVERY tense.

TOP TIP: Don't look up every word you are not sure of when reading an article/ book

Yes... you read that right. When you are reading articles etc, try not to look up every word as it will take you forever. Skim and scan the text to get the gist. Remember to use the context or the article, cognates and common sense to figure out what the article is saying. Pick out a couple of words that you like the look of, that you feel may be real hurdles to getting the idea of the text, look them up carefully and add them to your vocab booklet. The aim at this stage is to get the gist of the article, not be able to translate it completely. Translation is a whole different ball game and you will learn it soon enough.

You will be surprised how much more enjoyable reading will be if you really pay attention to this tip.

What should I know by now?

This is a common question asked by students about to start their A level. You should be able to:

TOPIC	CONTENT
Recognise and use a range of tenses with regular verbs.	Regular –AR, -ER and -IR verbs: Tenses: Present Preterite Imperfect Near Future (form of ir + infinitive) Future (eg. Será) Conditional (eg. sería)
Recognise and use a range of tenses with irregular verbs.	Common irregular verbs: ser, estar, ir, tener, hacer Tenses: Present Preterite Imperfect Near Future (form of ir + infinitive) Future (eg. Será) Conditional (eg. sería)
Give opinions with reasons	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A range of opinion expressions• Positive and negative reasons for opinions• To be able to agree and disagree

Links to Grammar Practice Exercises •

- Languages on line: The Grammar Revision resources on www.languagesonline.org.uk are great as you can then select what tense you want to revise, read the explanations and complete the exercises. You can do these as often as you like and it gives you a percentage. Another useful tactic is to translate the examples and exercises into English to ensure you understand the meaning of each tense.
- Conjuguemos: a great website for practicing your verb conjugations. Find it here: <https://conjuguemos.com/>

Tasks

1. Create a Memrise account – your name or something that is very recognisable as you. You should aim to achieve 100,000 points by the first lesson. You could start by joining the A-level group. Log into Memrise using your new log in and then click on: <https://www.memrise.com/group/352141/> to join the group.
2. Summarise, in Spanish, 2 articles (that were in Spanish!) that you have read from one of the websites/ papers above and say why they interested you. If you cannot print the article, make a note of the website. Try and make these related to one of the topics we will study (listed below).
 - **Aspects of Hispanic Society:** Modern and traditional values (changes in family, marriage and divorce, influence of the Catholic Church); Cyberspace (influence of the internet, risks and benefits of the internet, smart technology in our society); Equal rights (women at work, Machismo and feminism, LGBT rights)
 - **Multiculturalism in Hispanic Society:** Immigration; Racism; Integration
 - **Artistic Culture in the Hispanic World:** Modern Day Idols; Spanish regional identity; Cultural Heritage
3. Choose a Hispanic country and prepare a short presentation on an aspect of culture – this should last no longer than 5 mins. You can create a PPT if you want, but try and use headings rather than too much prose on the slide. This will be good practice for your IRP (Independent Research Project).
4. Look out for any items in the English or Spanish media relating to topics we will study – as above so that you have points to make in a discussion and opinions to give.
5. Go onto www.languagesonline.org.uk . Complete 10 exercises. Each exercise takes less than 5 minutes. Note down the exercise you did and your score.

6. If you find any other websites/ links/ twitter feeds that you think are worth sharing, note them down too.

Appendix 1: Grammar self-assessment

	I DO NOT KNOW	NEED TO LEARN	QUITE CONFIDENT	FULLY CONFIDENT
Nouns: gender, singular and plural forms				
Articles: definite (el, la...), indefinite (un, una)				
Adjectives: agreements (fem, pl...)				
Position/word order				
comparative and superlative (más, menos, el más.)				
comparative and superlative irregular (mejor...)				
indefinite (<i>cada, algunos, algunas</i>)				
possessive (mi ti...)				
interrogative (<i>¿qué?, ¿cuál?, ¿cuáles?...</i>)				
Adverbs: comparative and superlative				
interrogative (<i>¿cómo? ¿cuándo?</i>)				
Quantifiers/intensifiers (<i>muy, bastante...</i>)				
Pronouns: Subject (<i>yo, tú...</i>)				
object: direct and indirect (<i>lo, las, les...</i>)				
position and order (<i>te veo</i>)				
reflexive (<i>me, te...</i>)				
relative (<i>que,</i>)				
relative: <i>lo que, la que</i> (R)				
object: direct and indirect				
indefinite (<i>alguien</i>)				
possessive (<i>el mío, la mía...</i>) (R)				
interrogative (<i>¿Quién? ¿quiénes?</i>)				
interrogative (<i>¿qué?</i>) (R)				
Verbs: modes of address (<i>tú, vosotros, usted</i>)				
verbs + infinitive				
verbs + infinitive + preposition				
Verbs + - me gusta/me interesa etc				
Verbs + de (<i>acabo de</i>)				
negatives (<i>no, nunca, jamás...</i>)				
Present (regular)				
Present (irregular)				
Perfect				
Perfect with reflexives				
Imperfect				
Near Future (<i>voy a + infinitive</i>)				
Future				
Conditional				
Future perfect (<i>habrá hecho...</i>) (R)				
Conditional perfect (<i>habría salido...</i>) (R)				

Pluperfect (había llegado..)				
Present participle (comiendo...)				
Subjunctive mood (how to form it)				
Subjunctive mood (which expressions trigger it?)				

	I DO NOT	NEED TO LEARN	QUITE CONFIDENT	FULLY CONFIDENT
Indirect speech				
Inversion after speech (R)				
Prepositions: a/al/ a la...				
with countries, towns, places				
with month, dates, time				
Desde hace, acabar de				
Number, quantity and time				
Conjunctions				

My notes/comments

REFERENCES:

Internet

- www.languagesonline.org.uk general site with an A Level section & GCSE revision (grammar very good)
- <http://www.languagesresources.co.uk/SpanishALGrammar.html> good grammar site

