

Grade 8 Spanish 2
2011-2012

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Course Description

This course is aligned with Upper School Spanish 2. It is open to 8th graders who have successfully completed Spanish 1-B or excelled in Spanish 1-A. Core vocabulary topics involve school life, daily routine, clothing, shopping, errands, places in the city, transportation, holiday celebrations, play, toys, natural disasters, accidents, parts of the body, television, movies and sporting events. Core grammatical structures are present tense irregular and stem-changing verbs, affirmative and negative words, the present and imperfect progressive tenses, regular and irregular preterite tense conjugations, comparative and superlative adjectives, direct and indirect object pronouns, reflexive verbs, the imperfect tense, and the impersonal se. Many additional concepts and expressions pop up in our daily Spanish conversations. Although they are never formally tested on these items, students are often able to reproduce them in speech and essay writing.

Facts regarding Hispanic traditions and customs, current events, history, art and geography are often integrated into lessons. Eight exchange students from Mexico attend Holland Hall (including Spanish classes) for two months in the fall semester. This first hand experience with the people, language and culture of Mexico greatly enhances the learning process both in and outside Spanish class.

Class Objectives

Spanish 2 is designed to make language-learning a fun and meaningful experience in students' lives. It is based on the belief that the purpose of learning Spanish is to communicate with people who speak it and learn about various cultures in the Spanish-speaking world. Students learn to communicate real ideas for a real purpose while learning new vocabulary and grammar in a practical context.

Spanish 2 students continue to develop strong language recognition skills with little reference to English translation. They actively listen to Spanish and discover new grammatical patterns and vocabulary expressions in the context of previous knowledge, visual clues and gestures. They read one-page articles, letters and stories focusing on familiar words to discover main ideas. At this level, students strengthen their language production skills and are able to express themselves more in Spanish. They react to statements and questions in complete sentences with near-native pronunciation. Students apply core grammar concepts accurately in controlled oral and written exercises. They write coherent paragraphs using Spanish 2 vocabulary and grammar with little English interference.

Preparation for Class/ Course Materials

The Realidades 2 textbook, Writing, Audio & Video Workbook, and the Practice Workbook are the students' books. The textbook is mainly used for classroom communicative activities and as a reference for assignments and study. Students get most writing practice outside the classroom with assignments in the Practice Workbook. The teacher uses a variety of support materials to enhance instruction including Vocabulary Art, Overhead Transparencies, CD's,

DVD's and the Internet. Many additional pictures and props are used to help make the learning process as authentic and engaging as possible in the classroom setting.

Methods of Instruction

At the start of each unit, the teacher focuses on language recognition. Students need to discover and assimilate new words in order to later produce them in speech or writing. The teacher introduces new words and grammar patterns using only Spanish in a logical context with gestures, pictures, role-play and props. Students discover the meanings of key new words and patterns by matching what they hear to what they see and experience. Research shows that students are more likely to retain and use the language when they are guided to make sense of what they hear and read as opposed to just memorizing lists and rules presented by a teacher. Students are not exposed to new language in written form until they have become comfortable with the spoken words (usually by the third day).

Each lesson is divided into various mini-lessons targeting different learning styles and the four language areas (listening, reading, speaking and writing). Students listen to native speakers on CD's or DVD's almost daily. They respond to teacher statements and questions in unison and individually, and they engage in small group communicative tasks to practice vocabulary and grammar patterns. Although listening and speaking are still highly emphasized at this level, many mini-lessons also involve reading and writing.

Assessment/Grading Procedures

Students are evaluated during class activities in various ways involving the four language-learning skills; speaking, reading, listening and writing. They also earn a weekly grade based on attentiveness and daily preparation (homework completion). They take two or three major tests each quarter.

Students do not earn points. They score percentages on all assessments. Their trimester grades are calculated by averaging four categories: listening and speaking scores (25%), reading, grammar and vocabulary quizzes (25%), weekly grades (25%), and unit tests (25%). The students take final trimester exams in November and May. Unit tests and final exams assess all four language areas, not just writing. Students take the National Spanish Exam in March.

Schedule

The class meets for 46 minutes three days a week and for 76 minutes once a week..