

◆ How to Study Spanish ◆

A GUIDE TO SUCCESS IN SPANISH 3

Published by the MVHS World Languages Department

DON'T FORGET TO FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS! YOU WILL LOSE POINTS IF YOU DO NOT. ALWAYS DOUBLE-CHECK THE INSTRUCTIONS ON A PROJECT OR ASSIGNMENT TO MAKE SURE YOU HAVE FOLLOWED THEM.

A NOTE ABOUT TUTORS: TUTORS CAN BE HELPFUL TO SUPPLEMENT YOUR LEARNING, WHEN YOU NEED EXTRA HELP, BUT SHOULD NOT BE USED AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR FULL PARTICIPATION AND ATTENTION IN CLASS.

THE WORLD LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT DOES NOT RECOMMEND THAT STUDENTS MOVE ON TO THE NEXT LEVEL UNLESS THEY HAVE A B OR BETTER IN THE PREVIOUS CLASS.

Daily Practice Key to Success Cramming Doesn't Work

Spanish is a cumulative subject, similar to math. You do not get the opportunity to start over every year. Your grade this semester will depend on what you did last semester and last year, so you must approach the study of Spanish differently than other subjects.

You should also realize that you are learning a **skill**. Just as with learning to play the piano or learning to play tennis, cramming does not work! You must study in a way that promotes long-term retention of hundreds of tiny details, and that requires daily practice.

Obviously, communicating, not conjugating verbs, is the main goal in our classes. But when you are speaking Spanish you must make split-second decisions about things like which verb

forms to use. If you don't have those details at your fingertips, you won't be understood. Writing vocabulary lists, doing verb conjugations and drilling grammar points over and over are pieces of work that must be done. You will do some practice in class, but you are also responsible for practicing at home. There is no way to shortcut this process.



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If you are going to be successful over the long haul, you need to do your daily practice on a regular basis and you need to start now.

Note: if you have relied on cramming as a study technique in previous years, you may not have the necessary foundation skills to be as successful as you would like in Spanish 3. If you find yourself struggling with the review material covered in the first few weeks, it is very likely that your fundamental skills are not as strong as they need to be.

Communicate

Spanish 3 at Monte Vista is a college-prep, UC certified course at an intermediate level. You have previously learned and been tested on skills in isolation. While we will still practice these skills, your grade in this class will primarily depend on your ability to use those skills to understand and generate meaningful language.

You are responsible not only for learning the vocabulary and grammar points, but also for the content covered in each chapter.

Reading Comprehension

In Spanish 3 reading comprehension becomes critical on tests. The only way to improve your reading comprehension is with daily practice. This means reviewing the vocabulary in context in your textbook, and re-reading your workbook pages for complete comprehension. If you become proficient in this skill, it will help your grade; if you neglect it, your grade will suffer; it's as simple as that.

Questions? Contact me at lfernandez@mvhigh.net

Do Your Homework Right

You can be successful in Spanish if you study in an efficient, productive way. We emphasize this study plan in the classroom, but to be successful it takes sustained effort at home. It may seem like a lot to do, however *if done consistently*, it will take about 10 extra minutes a day. This plan has been shown time and again to increase student confidence and improve test scores for an overwhelming majority of students.

You have two types of homework every day:

1. The homework assignment
2. Your daily practice.

You must do your homework assignment every day with your full attention and with your book closed. If you just fill in answers that you look up in the book you are wasting precious time and not learning very much in the process.

A word about multi-tasking:

If you are multi-tasking, you are not giving a task your full attention. "Multi-tasking adversely affects how you learn," said Russell Poldrack, UCLA associate professor of psychology. "...[We] are not saying never to multi-task, just don't multi-task while you are trying to learn something new that you hope to remember."*

Come to Class

You are accountable for your attendance, punctuality and participation. Remember that when you are absent, even for the most legitimate of reasons, you will miss critical information and practice that can never be fully recovered, a situation that will inevitably be reflected in your grade. That's why it is important to make every effort to be in class every day.

* For more info see http://www.eurekaalert.org/pub_releases/2006-07/uoc--maa072506.php

"We are not saying never to multi-task, just don't multi-task while you are trying to learn something new that you hope to remember."

Study Skills Checklist

Homework

- Do your workbook pages only after you have studied the vocabulary or grammar enough so you can do the pages with your book closed, checking with the book after you finish. Many students are under the mistaken impression that doing their homework at the same time as other class activities is an efficient use of time. It isn't, because a) you are not giving either the activity or your homework your complete attention, and b) you will waste time practicing material that you may not understand because it has not been presented yet.
- Correct homework in class each day. That night redo mistakes and be sure you understand them.
- After you have studied the new vocabulary, go back and review the pages in the textbook that present vocabulary in context.

Daily Practice

Vocabulary

- Practice your vocabulary list aloud every day.
- Practice writing your vocab words 3-5 times every day until you can do them with no mistakes. Don't forget articles and plural forms.
- Practice the oral exercises in the book out loud.

Grammar

- Complete your verb grids for all new verbs and verb tenses. Don't just copy verb forms from your book to your verb grid—you will just be spending lots of time not learning anything.
- Practice new verbs and tenses aloud every night until you can do them with no mistakes.
- Practice writing the new verbs and tenses every night until you can do them with no mistakes.
- Always review and practice any verbs you have missed on a test.

Reading Comprehension

- Every time you do a workbook page, read through it and make sure you understand everything. Look up words if you need to (but do not write the English translation on your workbook page).
- Every night, go back and re-read previous pages to be sure you still remember what everything means. Go back to each page as often as you need to until you can do it with no mistakes.

Parent signature _____ Date _____