

Tips for Studying Spanish

1. Do the homework as if it were a quiz. Then use your book and notes to correct it and fill in the gaps. Be sure to make corrections to the homework when you go over it in class, so you learn from your mistakes. If you use a colored pen to make corrections it will stick out in your mind more. ASK any time you get something wrong and don't know why.
2. Do your homework the day it's assigned so the information is fresh in your mind. This helps you to process what was presented and helps commit it to memory. It also so it gives you that extra day to see your teacher with questions or for help. Then on the day/night before the next class you can practice what you have done with flashcards, verb boxes/conjugations, original sentences, etc. Staring at/reading the pages of the book will do little to help you learn a language.
3. If you get anything wrong on a quiz, make sure you understand why so you don't make the same mistakes on a test. Be sure to practice writing what you missed so you get the correct pattern committed to memory.
4. Practice everything you learn out loud, with a pet, stuffed animal, the mirror, a pillow, etc! Then practice writing what you have learned. Learning a language is all about patterning.
5. NEVER ignore the fact you don't understand something. Everything builds on itself in Spanish. It's like math that way. Things don't just go away. Get help ASAP.
6. Talk to your individual teachers to see what additional suggestions they have (knowing your learning style and how you learn best).
7. Practice writing things (vocabulary and verb conjugations) until you can write them blindfolded. Say what you write as you write it.
8. Don't memorize how to spell things in English. For example, if you have to spell "te despertaste" instead of saying it with English letters (tee- ee- dee-ee-es-pee-ee-are-es-tee-ee) use the phonetic system in Spanish to write it as you say it slowly. It works 95% of the time. Say "te-des-per-tas-te" breaking it down and write it as you say it. Otherwise you are switching back and forth from the English alphabet to the Spanish phonetic system and it taxes your brain and makes it harder, because you have to memorize it instead of just sounding it out and writing it as you say it.
9. Practice something in Spanish EVERY DAY. All major universities still hold language classes 5 days a week, unlike classes in other subjects. They know how important daily exposure and practice with the language is. Our block schedule is good for some things, but you must take it upon yourself to practice Spanish EVERY DAY even if it's just for 15 minutes.