

Sample Course Syllabus

(Provided by Brett Chonko and adapted by Tina Hargaden)

Teacher: X

Materials: Writing utensil, 3 ring binder with paper

Course Description

In this world language class, we continue the work of building your language proficiency that we began in Years X and X. The way students learn in this class is exactly the same way everyone learns their first language as children and students in “regular” classes in school, like history and science. We listen to lots of language, and with enough experience, we begin to produce language ourselves. As we read and listen to our teachers and videos and guest speakers, we begin to learn new, more advanced vocabulary that is only used when talking about academic topics. For example, in science, we learn terms like “cell” and “nucleus” and “atom”. These academic words are not used often when just talking to our families and friends about ourselves and our lives, but they are crucial for our success in school. We also learn how to organize our writing and speech to fit into academic expectations. For example, we learn how to write paragraphs with topic sentences, essays with introductions and conclusions, and how to quote authors.

This class will teach Spanish exactly the same way everyone learned their first language, through providing students to copious amounts of Comprehensible Input -- messages that the students understand -- in a communicative language environment. Class will be 90% or more in easy-to-understand, scaffolded Spanish from the first class. It is my job to make all that Spanish completely comprehensible to the student through context, body language, acting, pointing, drawing, even just translating the word to English from time to time.

Your student’s experience in class will largely consist of listening to and reading messages in Spanish, and working to develop proficiency in speaking and writing in Spanish. By the end of the year, students will be able to write pages of Spanish, literally hundreds of words, without hesitation. They will also be able to write organized essays on academic topics, using new vocabulary that they will acquire from our class activities and discussions.

Schedule of Units

1. Narration and Description: Describing ourselves, our preferences, and narrating the stories of places and experiences that matter to us
2. Going Deeper with Narration and Historical Biography: Describing and narrating the contributions of three significant cultural and/or historical figures from Spanish-speaking cultures
3. Information: Learning, and writing and speaking so that we can teach others, about historical or cultural topics
4. Opinion: Expressing our opinions and giving reasons why, about historical or current controversies and debates
5. Going Deeper with Informing: Learning, and writing and speaking so that we can teach others, about historical or cultural topics, learning traits of strong informational writing and speaking and applying them in our written and spoken output.
6. Creative Writing: Creating a picture book that will be part of the classroom library for future first-year students, to entertain, inform, or persuade them, in Spanish

Class Rules

In addition to the school rules, students are expected to follow these language-specific classroom rules to help facilitate language development:

Listen with the intent to understand—students are expected to do more than just let conversation wash over them. They have to bite into every sentence and process it.

One person speaks, others look and listen—Students are expected to focus their eyes on the one speaker and respect when others are talking by not having side conversations.

Support the flow of language—In order for class to be interesting enough to listen and read for hours and hours, students must provide interesting topics of conversation for the teacher to discuss in Spanish. The teacher will create opportunities, and students are expected to suggest fun, interesting, personal conversation ideas.

Avoid English—Students are expected to speak Spanish as much as possible. When suggesting conversation topics they are allowed one or two English words at the most. With this main idea clue, the teacher will take over and literally give voice to the students' ideas in Spanish.

Grading

Assessment in this class honors the natural progression of language learning from reading, to listening, to writing, and eventually speaking. In a level 1 course, student assessment consists almost entirely of the first two—reading and listening. At the appropriate time in the year, student writing and speaking will eventually be assessed.

Grading is based on:

65% Interpersonal Communication in Spanish

25% Daily Formative Assessments (Quizzes, Reading/Writing/Listening/Speaking Assessments)

10% Final Summative Portfolio Assessments (Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking)

Absence Make-Up Work

In this class, the work is engaging in the communication in class. When students miss class, they are required to replicate that language experience by (1) translating any reading material from that date to English by hand from the class document on Google Classroom, and (2) reading two chapters of their chosen Spanish novel and writing a four sentence summary in English.