

Spanish for Nurses: Welcome and Course Tips

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will receive an introduction to the Spanish for Nurses program, and learn some important tips for approaching the Spanish language. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Course Welcome
2. Tips for Retention
3. Cultural Notes

1. Course Welcome

¡Bienvenidos! Welcome to Spanish for Nurses. Congratulations on your decision to learn Spanish! In taking this course, you are ensuring optimal service to your patients as well as expanding your personal development.

This program has been customized to teach you only the Spanish you need for your profession. In this first module, you'll learn vital pronunciation skills since you will be speaking the language much more frequently than you will be writing it.

In the second and third modules, you'll learn grammatical formulas that will enable you to put together any necessary phrase or sentence for a variety of situations. You will only learn the grammar you need.

The fourth modules in the program provides some basic terminology, which is good for any situation. This includes greetings, numbers, days, and times. This section will prime you for what's to come, and will also enable you to engage in small talk with any Spanish speaker.

The last three modules in the program are vital, as they contain all of the specific nursing terminology that you will need. They cover body parts, symptoms, conditions, drugs, pain radiation, physical assessments, insurance information, and patient information, among other topics. These lessons contain expressions that are already put together for your use, as well as easy formulas for you to create your own phrases.



HINT

To get the full benefit of each lesson, choose a quiet place where you can practice without interruption and

choose a time when your mind is fresh. The length of each lesson is roughly one hour, though each can take longer depending upon how much practice you need.

2. Tips for Retention

This is a long program with a lot of material. In order to increase your retention and learn the content as effectively as possible, we recommend that you follow the tips below:

- Minimize distractions.
 - Choose a time when you are alert.
 - Study frequently in small increments.
 - Repeat each phrase out loud as you go through the audio and video components.
 - Identify the phrases you will use the most.
 - Practice frequently.
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3. Cultural Notes

As you begin to learn the Spanish language, it's important to understand some relevant cultural definitions and traits of native Spanish speakers.

First, here are two important definitions that are often confused:

1. **Hispanic** is used to refer to a group of Spanish speakers regardless of country of origin. Spanish speakers do not usually use that term to refer to themselves. A Spaniard, Puerto Rican, Mexican, Venezuelan, and Panamanian would all be Hispanic, as would a Spanish speaker living in the U.S. A Brazilian would not be (as Portuguese is spoken in Brazil). "Hispanic" is a linguistic term, not a geographical one.
2. **Latino** is a term used to refer to people who live in Latin America (the parts of North and South America south of the U.S.) and does not refer exclusively to Spanish speakers. It does not refer to Spaniards.

Now, consider the following list of cultural aspects. This list is only meant to give an overview of the general differences between Spanish speakers of certain cultures and the general traits of English speakers in the U.S. These traits do not apply to all Spanish speakers. Simply use them as background knowledge to help in situations where culture may be the reason that there is a lack of understanding:

- **Not all Spanish speakers are Mexican; however, many that you will see at your work will be because of the high percentage of Mexican Americans in the U.S.** (New York has a high concentration of Puerto Ricans and Florida has a high percentage of Cuban Americans). Overall, about 60% of the Spanish speakers in the U.S. are of Mexican descent. Never assume the country of origin of a Spanish speaker.
- **There are reasons why your Spanish-speaking patients may not speak as much English as you'd like for them to speak.** A lower socio-economic bracket makes up a higher percentage of those who are in the U.S. to work. This translates to a higher illiteracy rate and less emphasis on education. They may be here temporarily. This is one reason that many are not as inclined to learn English and/or may not be literate in Spanish. Also, English is a much more difficult language to learn. Children learn faster and easier than adults.

- **Family values are very important to Spanish speakers.** It is not uncommon for more than one generation to live together. Also, child-rearing is the responsibility of the whole (extended) family. Traditional values are very important, and women are not quite as liberated in some communities. In fact, when more than one Spanish speaker comes to you, you should address the person who speaks to you. If no one says anything, you should speak to the oldest male.
- **You may notice that more than one person comes to an appointment because they support one another.** They will often interpret for one another (children are used, as well, to interpret). You shouldn't rely solely on a child's interpretation, as a child may not understand the healthcare issues or medical terminology.
- **Trust, honor, respect, and loyalty are very important to Spanish speakers.** They will typically show you respect for your position of authority, will take you seriously, do as you say, and return if you are helpful to them (even if you speak a little Spanish to them). They will also tell their friends! They are terrific repeat customers and sources for referral customers.
- **Spanish speakers typically stand closer together when they are speaking.** This "interpersonal" distance is sometimes uncomfortable for English speakers. However, if you back up, they will just step forward! Note that while this is certainly the case under normal circumstances, social distancing guidelines currently in place due to COVID-19 should be followed.

Watch the video below to assess your current knowledge of some of the major cultural differences between Latinos and European Americans.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you received a **welcome to the Spanish for Nurses course**. This first module will focus on essential pronunciation skills. You also received an overview of the program objectives and some **tips for retention** that will help you when learning a new language. Finally, you learned some **cultural notes** about Spanish-speakers to keep in mind as you go through the program.

¡Buena suerte!

Support

If you are struggling with a concept or terminology in the course, you may contact **SpanishforNursesSupport@capella.edu** for assistance.

If you are having technical issues, please contact **learningcoach@sophia.org**.

Source: This content has been adapted from "Spanish for Nurses" by Stephanie Langston.