



Spanish 4 with a Difference: Scope of Learning

Using a Comprehensible Input (CI) Approach



What Is Comprehensible Input?

In Spanish 4, students learn the language the same way people naturally acquire their first language: by hearing and reading messages they understand. This approach is based on decades of research in language acquisition, including work by Stephen Krashen.

Instead of memorizing long lists of grammar rules, students develop fluency by engaging with meaningful Spanish through stories, discussions, videos, and readings that are understandable and interesting.

Each student acquires language at his or her own rate – some slower and some faster. Wherever your student begins the year, the goal is advancing toward acquisition of the language and ending the year more proficient than he or she began.

What Students Learn in Spanish 4

Communication Skills (Listening, Reading, Speaking, Writing)

Students will:

- Understand spoken Spanish in conversations, videos, and stories
- Read authentic and adapted texts (short stories, articles, song lyrics)
- Express ideas in complete thoughts and opinions
- Write short paragraphs and longer compositions with increasing accuracy

The focus is on real communication, not just “getting the right answer.”

Advanced Language Functions

Students learn to:

- Describe events in different time frames (past, present, future)
- Share opinions and justify them
- Compare people, places, and ideas
- Narrate stories and real-life experiences
- React to news, cultural topics, and current events

Vocabulary & Grammar in Context

Grammar is taught in a natural way:

- Students see grammar patterns repeatedly in context
- The teacher gives short, clear explanations when helpful
- Students develop an intuitive understanding of how Spanish works

Rather than memorizing rules first, students acquire grammar through meaningful exposure and use.

Cultural Understanding

Students explore the cultures of the Spanish-speaking world, including:

- Traditions, celebrations, and daily life
 - Youth culture, music, and media
 - Social issues and perspectives from different countries
 - Geography of Spain, Latin America, and Spanish-speaking communities in the United States
- Religious beliefs and practices, respectful understanding and dialogue, missional intent

Students may engage with authentic materials such as:

- Songs from Christian and secular artists
 - Short films and clips from Spanish-language media
 - News articles and stories from Spanish-speaking countries
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How Class Time Is Used

Students regularly participate in:

- Teacher-led and student-centered conversations
- Storytelling and story-asking
- Reading short novels and articles
- Listening to Spanish through videos and audio
- Listening to music in Spanish to build listening comprehension, pronunciation, rhythm, speed, and the natural dynamics of the language
- Low-stress speaking activities
- Games and interactive activities for vocabulary and comprehension

The classroom environment is supportive, low-anxiety, and focused on progress rather than perfection.

How Students Are Assessed

Students are assessed on:

- Listening comprehension
- Reading comprehension
- Speaking (informal and formal)
- Writing
- Engagement and effort

Grades reflect growth over time, communication skills, and understanding of messages.

Why This Approach Works

Research shows students acquire language best when they understand what they hear and read, feel safe to take risks, and are exposed to Spanish frequently and meaningfully.

This approach helps students:

- Build long-term fluency
- Develop confidence using Spanish
- Retain language skills beyond the classroom

What Parents Can Expect

By the end of Spanish 4, students should be able to:

- Follow conversations in Spanish on familiar topics
- Read and understand longer texts
- Express opinions and tell stories
- Use Spanish more naturally and with increasing confidence

Fluency develops gradually. Students will not be perfect, but they will be communicative, confident, and continuing to grow.

How Parents Can Support Learning at Home

Parents can support their student by:

- Encouraging consistent attendance and participation
- Asking about what topics are being discussed in class
- Supporting reading and listening outside of class when possible
- Celebrating effort and progress rather than perfection