

Spanish

(2026-2027)

Nitza Birk

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Hello, my name is Nitza Birk and I am the 4th-8th Spanish Teacher at TCS. I hold a Bachelor's degree from The University of Puerto Rico. My three adult children are Trinity alumni and I have been teaching at Trinity for the last seventeen years.

The Trinity Catholic Elementary and Middle School Spanish Programs are focused on Spanish language proficiency and cultural knowledge and understanding.

Through the study of a world language, students will develop a sensitivity to the cultural and linguistic heritages of other groups and will be prepared to participate in a society characterized by linguistic and cultural diversity. In our global society, as the world becomes more interdependent, students' knowledge of world language is crucial for expanded career opportunities. It will also aid in developing responsible citizens of the world community and bring us closer to realizing the Kingdom of God on earth.

When children study world language, they develop higher cognitive thinking skills. Foreign language study helps students gain a better understanding of the grammar/structure of their native language. As a result they usually perform better on standardized tests (Terra Nova, SAT, ACT).

Our Spanish curriculum is an introduction to the Spanish language and to the cultures of the Spanish speaking world. Linguistically, this course focuses on developing the four abilities necessary to learn a foreign language: listening, speaking, reading and writing. We understand that the cultural component is just as important as the linguistic one for learning to communicate effectively; therefore, students will also be introduced to the diverse cultures of the Hispanic world. Spanish will be used in class for practical purposes; however, English will also be employed to explain complex concepts.

Students who meet the standards of the Spanish curriculum should be well equipped to confidently enter their respective Spanish programs as incoming freshmen at their high school.

Expectations

- The student should be on time for class.
- The student should have all materials needed for the class: notebook, book, binder
- The student should pay attention and participate in the lesson.
- The student should be respectful to the teacher and classmates.

Objectives

- Vocabulary acquisition (learn new words, learn to pronounce them correctly and learn what the word means)
- Learn the Spanish grammar and sentence syntax
- Communicate in basic situations
- Learn about Spanish speaking countries culture and customs
- Students should expect to be actively engaged in their own language learning,
- Become familiar with common vocabulary terms and phrases
- Comprehend a wide range of grammar patterns
- Participate in simple conversations and respond appropriately to basic conversational prompts
- Analyze and compare cultural practices, products, and perspectives of various Spanish-speaking countries

Curriculum

6th Grade

Workbook: *Let's Learn Spanish*, 2003, Hayes (ISBN: 1-55767-535-X)

This class is the first in the middle school sequence of Spanish courses. The class meets three days a week. Active participation in this course better prepares students for the high school sequence of world languages courses, as well as allowing them more opportunities to gain language proficiency. There is an emphasis in using/practicing the five languages of communication of any language: listening, speaking, reading, writing and cultural understanding. The students will have an introduction to the grammar of the language.

7th Grade

Textbook: *Senderos 1A*, 2023, Vista Higher Learning, Inc.(ISBN: 978-1-54335-793-6)

This class is the second course in the middle school sequence of Spanish courses. It is a gentle introduction to the Spanish I curriculum, and will help students develop the necessary skills to successfully complete Spanish 1 at a high school level in eighth grade. Emphasis will be given to conversation and grammar. We meet three times every week.

8th Grade - Spanish I

Textbook: ¡Qué Chévere!, Third Edition by Carnegie Learning 2025
(ISBN: 978-1-63862-980-1)

This Spanish 1 course is a high school course for high school credit. This course requires a high level of work and effort. The purpose of this course is to enable students to begin to acquire proficiency in Spanish through a linguistic, communicative, and cultural approach to language learning. Emphasis is placed on the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills and on acquisition of the fundamentals of applied grammar. Cross-cultural understanding is fostered, and real-life applications are emphasized throughout the course. **In order to receive high school credit, your student must earn a B or higher as their final (report card) grade in the course.**

Conduct Grading Scale

Tests -40 to 100 points per test.

Quizzes 15 to 30 points per quiz.

Homework 5 to 30 points.

Participation:5 weekly

Homework is meant to reinforce the skills taught in class. Students will have homework on each new vocabulary (they will write the vocabulary word with the English translation twice) and it is due the day of the quiz. The homework format is: on the first line name on the left, date on the right. On the second line: Subject and grade on the left and assignment title on the right. The vocabulary will follow one per line. There is also homework on grammar practice (IXL). The IXL practice is assigned weekly and is due by Friday morning, 8:00 A.M. IXLs can not be turned in later than the due date.

If the student is absent for a test it is the **student's** responsibility to contact the teacher to schedule the make-up time.

Extra Help

All students are encouraged to pay attention in class and keep up with their assignments so as to not fall behind. If the student needs more help, students are encouraged to communicate with the teacher. Arrangements to meet individually or in small groups will be made. **I am available every Monday through Thursday during their lunch period and every morning from 7:30-8:00 A.M.**

Conduct

Trinity Catholic School is committed to providing a high-quality Catholic education for all students in an atmosphere conducive to learning and teaching. Grounded in the teachings of the Gospels, we demonstrate our faith through our behavior and we take responsibility for our actions and their consequences. We maintain high expectations with respect to student effort, positive growth, personal responsibility, and respect.

Conduct grades are a separate evaluation from academic performance. They reflect a student's overall behavior and development as a citizen within the classroom environment. Consistent positive behavior contributes significantly to a strong learning environment for everyone. By striving to meet the character traits of "KNIGHTS," students can earn high conduct grades in each subject, while fostering a positive and respectful classroom community.

I show... **Kindness**

I am... **Nurturing**

I act with... **Integrity**

I show... **Grit**

I have... **Hope**

I show... **Tolerance**

I show... **Self-Discipline**

Teachers base conduct grades on a student's consistent behavior throughout the quarter, not just isolated incidents. They look for the following:

Conduct Grade-Citizenship in the Classroom	
Above Average Knight Behavior	● Is a positive role model, who leads quietly or outwardly ● Shows kindness and care for others ● Is always respectful of teachers and fellow students ● Works to improve the classroom atmosphere

1	● Takes an active part in class discussions, groups, etc. ● Is a self-starter and seeks to help others ● Completes all work to the best of their ability ● Demonstrates personal and academic integrity ● Respect classroom resources/tools ● Arrives on time and prepared to learn
Satisfactory Knight Behavior 2	● Contributes positively to class ● Shows respect for others ● Comes to class prepared and on time ● Demonstrates personal and academic integrity ● Listens and talks when appropriate ● Does what is expected ● Willing to help others ● Respect classroom resources/tools
Needs Improvement Knight Behavior 3	● Needs frequent reminders by the teacher to stay on task and/or behave appropriately ● Needs improvement in showing respect and kindness to classmates/teacher ● Sometimes comes to class unprepared and/or does not complete work ● Distracts other students' learning ● Occasionally displays a negative or uncooperative attitude ● Irresponsible with classroom resources/tools
Unsatisfactory Knight Behavior 4	● Is a disruptive influence on the class, negatively impacting the learning environment ● Shows a lack of respect for teacher/fellow students ● Is disrespectful or unkind to others, in actions or words ● Regularly comes to class unprepared and puts forth little effort ● Demonstrates a lack of personal and academic integrity ● Harms classroom resources/tools

In the event a student receives a 3 or 4 in Conduct and the behavior does not improve, a Parent/Teacher Conference may be scheduled, a Behavior Plan will be put in place, and the student may lose privileges. In the event that the behaviors don't improve over time, it may be decided that Trinity is not the best fit for that student.

Supplies

Students must bring the following to class: their planners, Spanish textbook, workbook, folder(blue), composition notebook, headphones and supplies (pencils, pens, color pencils).

Communication

Google Classroom

Google Classroom is a collaboration tool for teachers and students. Teachers create an online classroom, invite students to the class then create and distribute assignments. Within the Google Classroom students and teachers can have conversations about the assignments and teachers can track the student's progress. This is an organizational tool for the students to see all assignments and to-do lists in one place. Parents are able to receive communication as well to see what the students are working on.

E-mail

The most effective method of communication between teacher and parents is e-mail. Parents should expect to receive a reply from the teacher within 24 hours. Students may confer directly with the teacher to resolve any questions or concerns. Students may use their school-issued email account to communicate, if there is not an opportunity in class. My email is birkn@trinityknights.org

PowerSchool

Parents and students are responsible for checking PowerSchool on a regular basis to monitor progress. Please bring concerns to the teacher's attention as soon as they appear. Parents and teachers will work together to promote student progress. Questions regarding access to PowerSchool should be directed to the front office.

Translation Clause

The use of any translation device on the Internet, computer software, app or device is considered cheating. It is a form of plagiarism. If your work is a product of a translation device, you will receive a zero on the assignment or a consequence, and I will arrange a conference with your parent or guardian.

Classroom AI Policy

Each classroom teacher will establish and clearly communicate an AI policy that outlines permissible and impermissible student use. These policies, tailored to the subject's needs and students' developmental readiness and instructional goals, will be published in each grade/subject syllabus. Students are expected to adhere to their classroom's specific AI guidelines at all times. The Classroom AI Policy is attached to this syllabus.

AI Policy for Spanish Class.

Artificial intelligence can be used to learn Spanish but it is not necessary. AI will be used only in class for:

- Idea generator for projects
- Language tutor
- Quiz me (I rather we keep the quizlets we are using in class)

Misuse of AI will be considered cheating. You should never ask AI to write an assignment/project and turn it in as your work.

Please refer to the IB Academic Honesty policy for consequences.