

Level B1.1
40 hours

Course programme



B1.1 ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

Course summary

With this course you enter level B1 and begin to manage on your own in the topics you know. By the end you will be able to explain how things used to be and evoke memories, talk about what is allowed and what is not and give your opinion on it, write a covering letter setting out your background, and put forward conditions and hypotheses about what may happen.

Before you start

Before you come into class we do two things with you. First, a level test at the school, which includes a conversation with us and determines which module you start in. Then, when you enrol, you tell us what interests you, why you are studying Spanish and what you want to achieve with it.

If, when you enrol, you mention any circumstance that could affect your learning, we open a form for you in the portal so that you can explain it to us properly, in your own time. With all of that your teacher knows from day one what pace to work at with you and which activities suit you best.

Course objectives

Over the 40 hours of the course you will learn to:

- talk about past habits, customs and circumstances using the imperfect, and evoke memories
- describe people and situations in the past
- express prohibition, obligation and impersonality, and give opinions and advice about rules and habits
- relate past experiences and talk about life changes, expressing how long actions last and when they began
- write a covering letter
- talk about future actions and situations
- express conditions and formulate hypotheses

By the end of this course you will not only know more Spanish: you will know how to use it in real situations, understand the culture it is spoken in, and decide for yourself how you carry on learning. These are the three things the Instituto Cervantes Plan curricular brings together in the profiles of the social agent, the intercultural speaker and the autonomous learner.

Main contents

Learning Spanish is not only learning words and rules. This course works on three things at once, because you need all three to communicate in Spanish outside the classroom.

What can you do in Spanish? Introduce yourself, ask for something, say what you did or defend your opinion, with the grammar and vocabulary each situation calls for. This is what is meant by being a social agent, the «agente social».

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What do you need to know to get on with other people who speak Spanish? How people greet each other, how you address someone you do not know, what is taken for granted here and what is not. A lot of misunderstandings come not from your level of Spanish but from the customs being different. This is the intercultural speaker, the «hablante intercultural».

What do you need in order to carry on learning on your own? Recognising which mistakes you repeat and knowing where to look for what you need. That is what the learning diary, the tutorial and the portal resources are for. This is the autonomous learner, the «aprendiente autónomo».

To reach these objectives you need certain content, and this is the main content. You will not study it separately: it always appears inside a communicative situation, because what matters is that you can use it.

- Communicative functions: giving and asking for information; expressing opinions, attitudes and knowledge; influencing the other person
- Grammar: the imperfect and its contrast with the other past tenses, «soler» with the infinitive, expressions of prohibition and obligation, impersonality, the simple future, and conditional sentences with «si»
- Vocabulary: social customs, rules and habits, life changes and personal resolutions, the world of work and job hunting, and the challenges of the future
- Pronunciation: diphthongs and hiatus, the correspondence between spelling and sound, the intonation of questions, and rhythm in narration
- Culture: social customs in Spain and in the Americas, cultural misunderstandings, the evolution of Spanish society, emigration, and the labour market

Course materials

The coursebook is Aula Plus 3 (Difusión) and the units covered are 1, 2, 3 and 7. Added to this are the school's own materials, videos, audio and real documents, that is, what you are going to come across outside the classroom. To resolve grammar questions on your own you have the Gramática básica del estudiante de español (Difusión).

Course organisation

You can take it in three modes. In all three you study the same content and reach the same objectives; the only thing that changes is how many weeks you take to complete it.

- Intensive: 20 hours a week
- Semi-intensive: 10 hours a week
- Part-time: 4 hours a week

Classes run Monday to Friday, from 9:30 to 11:25 and from 11:35 to 13:30, and Monday to Thursday, from 18:05 to 20:00. Each group has its timetable within those bands and its own fixed class days, which you will know when you enrol. Groups have a maximum of twelve students.

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Assessment and monitoring

At ILA assessment is continuous. Your teacher follows your work from the first class, so the test at the end of the course is only one part of your mark.

This monitoring is not only done by the teacher: you can also do it yourself through the learning diary. It is a tool on the portal where you can see how you are progressing and where your teacher replies to you.

Before the course ends there is a final assessment, made up of five parts, four written and one oral. Shortly before that date your teacher explains in class how each of those parts works, how long it lasts and the criteria used to mark it, so that you arrive knowing exactly what will be asked of you.

To pass the course you need 60 points out of 100. If you score between 50 and 59, the assessment of your work during the course is added, which can contribute up to 10 further points.

At the end of the course you receive your progress report, in which your teacher explains what you have achieved, what you would do well to reinforce and what is recommended for your next course. You will find it on the portal alongside your final assessment mark, broken down part by part. If you disagree with that mark, you can request a review tutorial.

How the 100 points of the final assessment are distributed

Grammar and vocabulary	15 points
Reading comprehension	18 points
Listening comprehension	18 points
Written expression	25 points
Oral expression and interaction	24 points
Total	100 points

Certification

At the end of the course you can obtain two different certificates. If you pass the final assessment and have attended at least 80 % of the hours, you receive the certificate of achievement without having to request it: the school gives it to you when you finish. And at any time you can download a certificate of attendance from the portal, stating the course you have taken, its dates and the hours you attended, whatever your attendance percentage.

Resources and support outside class

You can carry on practising Spanish outside class, and count on the school whenever you need it.

- Tutorials. You have one free fifteen-minute tutorial a month, which you book from the portal, to clear up questions, go over what was covered in a class you could not attend, raise a change of timetable or group, or talk about how the course is going. They are given by the academic coordination team, or by your teacher if you prefer.

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- Digital resources. On the portal you have a freely available catalogue with radio, television, press, podcasts, film and audiobooks, filterable by level and by type.
- Library. Graded readers, fiction and non-fiction, dictionaries and grammar books, arranged by level. You can consult it on site or borrow books.
- Cultural activities and language exchanges. The most natural way to practise Spanish outside class.
- El club de los viernes. A learning-support session outside class hours, which you leave with a personal study plan.

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