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Chapter 16

The 7 ugly Spanish learning myths

MYTH #1: YOU'RE TOO old to learn Spanish.

I've been teaching Spanish for over twenty years. I've had many students in their sixties and seventies who've learned without trouble. Their enthusiasm is awe-inspiring. Their memories might not be what they were thirty years ago, but their patience, determination and common sense more than make up for it.

Remember: age isn't a barrier to language learning. A negative attitude is.

Myth #2: you cannot learn Spanish on your own.

This is just another ugly myth. Fortunately it's just that, a myth.

I, myself, have learned on my own most of the English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Japanese that I know today. Many of my students have come to me for private lessons after reaching an intermediate or even advanced level by themselves.

With a good course, you can become fluent in Spanish on your own, without question.

Myth #3: you can learn Spanish with that old course you found in the attic.

Only if you want to get very bored, waste a lot of time, and make little progress.

Technology has revolutionised language learning. Today you can get Spanish courses you could hardly dream of even five years ago. Spanish courses now have many more and better quality recordings. They often have interactive speaking and listening drills, pronunciation tools, videos, progress monitoring, audio flashcards, and a whole set of other features that render old courses totally obsolete.

Many of those new courses cost around \$100 or less. If you want to learn Spanish super fast, they're a great investment.

Myth #4: you need to have a perfect Spanish accent to be understood.

No, you don't. Aim at clarity, rather than perfection, and everyone will understand you from the beginning. As long as your accent is clear and you avoid certain pronunciation mistakes, you'll have no trouble communicating in Spanish.

A good Spanish course will teach you which pronunciation mistakes to avoid. It'll show you the sounds you need to focus on, and it'll give you pronunciation drills. Developing a good Spanish accent is straightforward when you do your pronunciation drills.

Myth #5: you can skip the grammar, if you just want to learn to speak.

To be able to build even simple sentences, you need to know some grammar. If you skip the grammar, you'll soon get confused, and you'll never become fluent in Spanish.

Learning some grammar will allow you to make quick progress. You'll be able to understand people better, and you'll speak with more confidence. Mastering

some Spanish grammar is well within your reach, and it's absolutely worth the effort!

Myth #6: learning languages is boring.

Slow progress is what makes language learning a bore. Forgetting what you've learned, not knowing what to study next, and needing a dictionary, all make Spanish learning a drag.

Bad courses are boring, but learning Spanish can easily be fun. Throughout this short book I've shown you how to stay motivated, develop your speaking skills, learn words super fast, and a lot more. Follow those tips and you'll enjoy learning Spanish. Guaranteed!

Myth #7: you can only learn Spanish in a Spanish-speaking country.

Learning abroad works best when you've completed at least one Spanish course. If you're at an intermediate or advanced level, learning in a Spanish-speaking country can be one of the most memorable experiences in your life. But if you're a beginner, it can be truly daunting, and almost certainly a waste of time and money.

Learn all the Spanish you can before traveling abroad, and you'll get a lot more out of it.

“Language is the most human thing there is. It is a privilege of mankind... Each word carries within itself a life, a state, a feeling.” – Carmen Conde