

Spanish Program FAQs

SPANISH IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Does my student have to start Spanish in the middle school?

No! While Spanish Explorers is a special that just about every student will have in 6th grade, electing to continue after that is up to the student. There is always a chance that a 7th grade student will be enrolled in Spanish 1A even if they did not request Spanish. This is due to scheduling requirements/restrictions.

If my student does not start Spanish in the middle school, will he/she be behind?

No! Not at all! In fact, there are just some kids who are not developmentally ready for Spanish at the middle school level. Even if your child starts Spanish 1 as a freshman in high school, he/she will be able to complete up through Spanish 4 Honors as a senior. By the standards of many colleges, this is double what is required for admission. However, it is encouraged that you and your student research the requirements of specific colleges of interest to your student to learn about individual school requirements.

What are some ways I can tell if my student is ready for middle school Spanish?

Spanish Explorers in 6th grade is a course that every 6th grader will be ready for. It is taught at a much slower pace and while there are academic expectations for memorization of vocabulary and basic grammar structures, it is broken down so that each student learns the most basic concepts. The course is designed to expose students on a daily basis and give them the opportunity to see if it is something they are interested in continuing during their time in middle school. The content taught will assist them in their transition to other courses they elect to take in the future.

Spanish 1A/1B and 2 are considered to be another core course. They meet daily for a full year and it is expected that the students will work outside of class on the language as well through homework and independent studying of the content being taught in class. The courses are graded like other core courses and include homework, projects, quizzes, and tests.

Will my student receive credit for taking Spanish classes at the middle school?

Students who complete either Spanish 1 or Spanish 2 at the middle school will not receive high school credit toward graduation. However, transcripts clearly state the level of Spanish completed at the high school. So, for example, if a student completes Spanish 1A and 1B at the middle school and Spanish 2 at the high school as a freshman, his/her high school transcript would reflect completion of Spanish 2 in high school.

It has been the experience of the Spanish department that no Danville graduate has ever been denied admission to a college or university for not meeting the required number of language courses in high school.

SPANISH CLASSES AT THE HIGH SCHOOL

What is the difference between a regular and an honors level class?

The difference between regular and honors is primarily the pacing. The expectation is that the content, vocabulary and grammar, will be learned at a much quicker pace. This means faster memorization and greater recall strength.

However, there is also an increased amount of vocabulary taught, as well as the inclusion of more irregular verbs and exceptions to grammatical structures. The courses are taught almost entirely in Spanish. This is done with far fewer memorization "games" in class. They are replaced with a heavy emphasis on communication (interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational) and authentic usage.

How can I discern whether or not my child should be in a regular or an honors level course?

Since Spanish is not required for graduation from Danville High School, the "regular" Spanish classes are designed as college-track courses. Therefore, they are appropriate for college-bound students. All students enrolled in these courses are assumed to be college-bound.

Due to the structure of an honors-level course, your child should be intrinsically motivated. This means that he/she has a strong and sincere interest in learning the language along with excellent organizational skills. Since the expectation of these courses is that a student will learn more information in a shorter amount of

time and that he/she will have to spend time learning that information outside of class, it is crucial that your student have exceptional study habits and be self-motivated to devote time to the content outside of class.

Keep in mind, enrolling a regular course versus an honors level does not indicate that your child is less intelligent or capable than another. Truly, honors level courses are designed for students with a strong interest in learning and using the language. If your child does not have a strong interest and/or does not have the time to devote the learning the content of the course, he/she would be better suited in a regular course.

If my student does not reach AP Spanish or an Independent Study as a junior/senior, does that mean he/she has been unsuccessful?

Definitely not! Every student learns language at his/her own pace. The only important thing is that your student is progressing in the language and showing growth.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE AT VO-TECH

Is foreign language available for my student if he/she chooses to attend Vo-Tech?

Yes. Spanish 1 and 2 are available for students who attend Vo-Tech.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE COLLEGE REQUIREMENTS

How much Spanish do colleges really look for?

Most colleges require at least 2 years of any foreign language at the high school level, but many are moving toward 3 years (2 years of the same language). If your child is looking to pursue a degree in foreign language, then more exposure in middle and high school is best. For more prestigious schools, a minimum of four years of the same language is the requirement and/or is strongly suggested.

How do I know how much Spanish my child needs for a specific college?

It is safe to assume your child will need at least 2 years of any foreign language. To know specific requirements, you or your child would need to look at the admissions requirements of any college or university where he/she plans to apply. This information can be found on any college/university website. It is a

good idea to look early on so that your child has time to meet requirements, should they differ from the average.

THE NATIONAL SPANISH EXAM

What is the National Spanish Exam?

The National Spanish Exam is a national standardized assessment given annually by teachers across the United States. The Danville Area School District Spanish program (grades 6-12) administer this test to students each year.

Do all students take the National Spanish Exam?

No. This test is administered to students on a voluntary basis. All students enrolled in Spanish class are eligible to take the exam.

Does the National Spanish Exam impact my child's class grade?

No. This exam does not impact a student's grade in the class. This exam is administered simply to show growth from year to year (should a student take it multiple consecutive years). Student scores are compared to other students across the nation taking the same test at the same level.

What are the benefits of my child taking the National Spanish Exam?

At the middle school level, the main incentive for students is that should they receive national recognition (typically a 75% or above) they are exempt from the cumulative written final at the end of the year.

Additionally, students who plan to take the exam as they continue through the program will be able to see their growth in the language. The test is also nationally recognized and respected, so scores on the exam can be used on college applications as an indicator of your student's proficiency in Spanish.

Does my student receive any award for taking the exam?

Students who score in the top 50th percentile nationally earn recognition. The awards are Honorable Mention as well as Bronze, Silver, and Gold medals, depending on how high their score is.

Students who receive one of the top three scores in the region earn a monetary prize.

How can I help my child to prepare for the National Spanish Exam?

Much of what students will be tested on will be taught during Spanish classes. However, students who take the exam may need to learn extra vocabulary and/or grammar concepts that will not be covered directly in class. Students who plan to take the exam should start independently reviewing/learning material as early in the year as possible. This can be done on the National Spanish Exam website (www.nationalspanishexam.org).

A few weeks before the exam, both Señora Bond and Señora Roman hold study sessions outside of class for each level of the exams.

HELPING YOUR STUDENT SUCCEED IN SPANISH

What are some ways I can support my student in Spanish even though I do not speak Spanish myself?

A great way to support your student is to ensure that they are spending time learning the content and are understanding what they are learning in class. All of the resources used by the middle school are available to students at home. Encourage them to spend a certain amount of time studying or reviewing to reinforce the content they are learning in class. If they communicate that they do not understand something, encourage them to ask for help or reach out for help yourself.

What are some resources I can use at home to encourage my student to strengthen his/her Spanish skills at home?

Some of the programs that are frequently used in class are DuoLingo, Quizlet, Conjuguemos, Gimkit, and Kahoot. Other print and technology resources may also be used from time to time. However, the listed programs are available to your child at any time and cost nothing. Choosing one of those activities each night and using it actively for at least 10 minutes will make a world of difference.

Specific recommendations for your child can be given by his/her teacher.

How much daily practice is recommended outside of class in order for my student to be as successful as possible?

It is recommended that all students enrolled in Spanish 1A, 1B, or 2 spend 10-15 minutes each night either working on new content or reviewing. Note that this is not a requirement. While students will have homework to complete occasionally, time specifically devoted to looking over content independently almost always leads to a higher level of confidence, which then leads to higher participation and understanding in class, higher academic performance, and lower levels of frustration. All from 10-15 minutes per night!

Is there a time that my child can get help with Spanish if needed?

Homework Club is available every morning from 7:05-7:35 in the LGI. However, neither Spanish teacher attends. Other students can be of assistance at this time.

Señora Bond holds Spanish Club for Spanish Explorers and Spanish 1A on Tuesday mornings from 7:05-7:35 and for Spanish 1B and 2 on Thursday mornings at the same time. She is available at this time to ask for help.

Both Señora Bond and Señora Roman are available, upon request, during lunch or 9th period. They may have other students at this time, but can at the very least prepare extra practice and/or additional study plans/resources to help with a concept that is not understood.

Who can I reach out to for help if I need it?

Both middle school Spanish teachers are available by email, as well as by phone (during school hours only).

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