

**España
a tu alcance**

**Spanish
skills for
intermediate
students**

USER GUIDE



Michael Truman,
Concha Pérez Valle
and Peter Furnborough

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User Guide

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ESPAÑA A TU ALCANCE

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**Spanish skills for intermediate
students**

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7 *Éste es mi negocio: Pequeñas empresas*

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INTRODUCTION

Summary

España a tu alcance is designed for *students* in *Higher Education* at an *intermediate* level of Spanish as well as those in *Further Education* or *Sixth Forms* and others likely to be spending some time *in Spain* either for study purposes or on a work placement.

Based on a series of authentic interviews with Spanish people from different walks of life and geographical areas, the activities in this book are suitable for students with a variety of personal, professional and educational interests, including learners whose work or other interests bring them into contact with Spain.

The units integrate *listening* to extended authentic material with development of *speaking, reading* and *writing* skills at a similar level. They also offer *cultural* as well as *linguistic* preparation for spending a short or extended period in Spain.

The units offer a new approach enabling learners and their tutors to *choose* how much of the *material they wish to use* and *in what order*, depending on their particular needs and inclinations. They offer users (both learners and tutors) maximum flexibility and are therefore suitable in many *different learning situations* (e.g. extended taught courses, short intensive courses or for (semi-) independent learning).

The emphasis throughout is on helping learners to develop effective *learning strategies* by offering a *structured approach* to the extension of existing skills and the acquisition of new ones.

The materials in the Study Book enable students to demonstrate competences for assessment and accreditation in the full range specified in the *National Language Standards* of the Languages Lead Body at *Level 2* and some at *Level 3*. (A further book in the same series—*Así somos los españoles*—enables them to demonstrate the equivalent competences at *Levels 3* and *4*.)

España a tu alcance comprises a *Study Book*, this *User Guide* and the accompanying *cassette*. The activities offer students already at an *intermediate* level in Spanish material for approximately 40 hours' learning. They also offer abundant scope for independent study or open access learning. The structure of this book provides a framework for a coherent programme of study into which tutors can incorporate their own supplementary material, or it can be used as a *complementary resource* to existing course books, as desired.

This *User Guide* is intended for *tutors*, staff in *open learning* or *open access centres*, and for *independent learners*.

Rationale and aims

An essential aspect of studying or working in Spain is the acquisition and development of aural comprehension skills for listening to and taking part in lectures and discussions. Since most users of *España a tu alcance* will probably be unfamiliar with listening to extended conversations in the language, the source materials on which the **prácticas** are based are authentic unscripted conversations in Spanish.

The **prácticas** are designed to give students the skills and confidence they will need in order to meet the challenge of listening to and understanding this type of language. The topics of the conversations were identified through needs analysis as those most relevant to students considering spending some time in Spain in the future.

The **prácticas** also contain material for extending these skills through the use of thematically related authentic written and visual material.

The broad aims of the activities are therefore to enable students to:

- (i) listen for information, ideas and opinions
- (ii) transfer these skills to the productive areas of speaking and writing
- (iii) gain access to written and visual information
- (iv) increase their range of language learning strategies or help them to develop more effective ones
- (v) enhance their cultural awareness and mobility by giving them the opportunity to explore issues which will increase their understanding of present-day Spain.

Increasing cultural awareness

The interviews serve not only to develop language skills but also to increase students' cultural awareness and sensitivity in a variety of ways:

- they help students to come to terms with a variety of registers, accents, modes of speech and styles of presenting arguments, particularly those features

which are likely to be unfamiliar to students with only limited prior contact with the Hispanic world;

- they present a picture of everyday life, work and institutions in Spain, as perceived by Spanish people themselves and presented both formally and informally;
- they provide students with increased awareness of cultural issues which they may need to come to terms with when studying or working in Spain, and stimulate interest in the Spanish-speaking world in all its richness and complexity.

We have sought a balance in the selection of interviewees between people who are fully conversant with both cultures and therefore au fait with the issues likely to face non-native students preparing to study or work in Spain, and others who reflect a purely Hispanic perspective which students need equally to recognize and come to terms with.

Approaches to learning

A similar approach is used in all units. Students work on a series of **prácticas**, which are designed to take them through a sequence of carefully structured activities which will build their confidence and help them to develop effective learning strategies.

The early **prácticas** encourage them to predict what they are about to hear, the likely structure of the interview, and the sequence of ideas. Later ones help them to recognize and understand common elements (e.g. markers, examples, or explanations). Where appropriate there are activities intended to clarify the meaning of specialized terminology, of words used in a specific context, or of 'false friends'.

The later **prácticas** concentrate on the development and transfer of active skills, providing practice in form filling, role playing, summarizing and letter writing. They also offer practice in reading different types of thematically related text. At all stages emphasis is placed on developing complementary study skills, such as the effective use of dictionaries.

Assessment and accreditation of language competences

Each unit contains some **prácticas** designed to enable learners to assess for themselves (and by negotiation with their tutor) language competences which they have developed in the course of that unit.

These assignments have been designed using the *National Language Standards* of the Languages Lead Body as a framework, and enable students to demonstrate their competence and achieve accreditation in the full range of language skills at Level 2.

The **prácticas** in each unit which are particularly suitable for assessment and accreditation purposes are indicated in the *summary* of each unit in this User Guide.

Different ways of using *España a tu alcance*

The activities are designed to enable tutors to use approaches with which both they and their students feel most comfortable, and to offer tutors and learners maximum flexibility. The materials can be used by individuals and by small groups as well as whole classes.

The materials can be used in at least three very different ways:

- (i) with groups of students following a conventional classroom-based course of study.
- (ii) with students learning Spanish on a semi-independent basis, but with access to the resources specified in the book.

(They are therefore likely to be working under the supervision of a tutor, but largely responsible for organizing their own work schedules, consulting the tutor from time to time for guidance and an assessment of their progress.)

- (iii) with individuals or groups of students initially taught in a conventional way but who may eventually move towards a more independent learner model.

Once the students have become familiar with the materials and activities, the ways in which they are used will clearly vary according to whether the students are working primarily as independent learners with occasional help from a tutor or in small groups with some tutor support, or are participating in a standard taught course.

Independent learners

Some of the **prácticas** require students to work with someone else. Where students are working *independently* this will mean with the tutor or other available resources (for example a native speaker).

Tutors will need to ensure that this support is available at appropriate times. Many of the **prácticas** listed as requiring tutorial support can be dealt with in tutorials or by telephone. However, tutors may find that some (particularly those in which students are asked to record responses on a cassette) may be more effectively done in face-to-face sessions. This needs to be considered when helping students to plan their scheme of work.

Small groups

Where students are working on the materials in small groups they have the advantage of additional resources which they can call on. In the first instance this will take the form of help from other members of the group (for example in role-play activities).

Whilst the materials lend themselves to work with small groups, there is a need for careful planning on the part of the tutor (for example, in order to determine for which activities students need to be brought together, and which ones are best carried out independently).

Much of the material can be used successfully by students working independently or in small groups. This reduces the demands on tutors in group sessions, giving them more time to meet the needs of learners with specific difficulties. It may be worth planning sessions so that such learners can be given tutorial help while the rest of the group is undertaking activities requiring little or no tutor support.

Role of tutors in supporting learning

The *summary* of each unit in this User Guide lists those **prácticas** which require tutorial or native-speaker support. These are generally activities in which students are required to produce the language in written or spoken form, and are therefore likely to need help to check their work.

We would emphasize however that an important aspect of the course is to enable students to develop effective learning strategies for taking greater control over their own learning, and for this reason the **prácticas** can wherever feasible be checked by the students themselves, using the answers provided in the **Clave** section at the end of the Study Book.

In addition each unit contains a more substantial **práctica** which requires tutor support. These exercises will help tutors to check that students have achieved the objectives set for that unit.

Facilitating learner choice

Individuals within a group may well have a list of priorities in terms of themes which are of most interest to them personally. The initial session with a group can therefore be devoted to making a list of the themes of most interest to the group as a whole. It should then be possible to negotiate a common starting point while offering individuals within the group the opportunity to explore other themes of their personal choice at a later stage.

It is however advisable to start by identifying two or three units which are of interest to the majority of the group in order to familiarize students with the approach. Inevitably students will need a greater degree of tutor support at this stage.

A further tutor task is to decide on the order in which the units selected by students should be tackled; the difficulty ratings for each unit in the User Guide will assist in this.

Contents

The choice of topics included in *España a tu alcance* is based on extensive discussion with a wide range of students prior to and during study visits and work placements, and feedback from those placements.

In addition to a *summary of the units* in the Study Book the User Guide also includes *transcripts* of all the *interviews* and any additional material included on the cassette for use with specific **prácticas**.

Organisation of the student material

Each unit starts with a short *introduction* in English. Students are encouraged to read it before they start—it explains what the unit aims to do and what they will be able to do once they have finished it. This is followed by some background information on the unit (**Información**) in Spanish: this tells them what they have to do to get started.

They then work through a series of exercises (**Prácticas**). Once again, the instructions are always in Spanish, and they are told how they can check their answers. At the end of each unit they will find a short *summary* of what they have learned.

At the beginning of each **práctica** students will find one or more *symbols* which will tell them at a glance what equipment or resources they will need. At the end they will see another symbol which will tell them how to check their answers. The heading also indicates what skills they are practising in that exercise, and (through other symbols) the broader learning focus of some of the **prácticas**.

Equipment or resources needed



cassette recorder



dictionary



partner to work with

Methods of checking answers



answers can be checked in the **Clave** at the end of the Study Book



answers should be checked with the tutor (or a native speaker)



answers should be compared with another student

-  **prácticas** which develop additional learning strategies, namely effective use of dictionaries, anticipating skills, etc.
-  **prácticas** which increase awareness of the cultural context, namely the understanding of procedures which are particularly Spanish (e.g. for obtaining medical treatment) and of issues of social interaction (e.g. recognizing the importance of café life in getting to know people)
-  **prácticas** suitable for (self)-assessment of skills developed (which can also be linked to National Language Standard competences)

Other symbols used

-  **¡Ojo!** extra care needed
-  Well done! You have now completed the main part of the unit and can check what you have learned.

A communicative approach to language learning is implicit in the exploitation of the materials in the **prácticas**, but given the range and nature of the recordings there is no reason why tutors should not complement this with other approaches. The User Guide will be of assistance to tutors in course planning, using the materials effectively and adapting them to their specific requirements. (It will also help independent learners to consider the issues which they might wish to discuss with tutors as they plan their scheme of work.)

Use of Spanish for prácticas

Apart from the introduction to each unit the whole of the Study Book is in Spanish. This reflects the fact that it is designed for students who have already acquired a working knowledge of the language; it also avoids the distraction that can occur when students encounter exercises written in English, even though their tutor regularly uses Spanish with them in class.

Language of the interviews

One of the features of the approach adopted in *España a tu alcance* is that it is centred round authentic unscripted interviews with a wide variety of Spanish speakers. Part and parcel of this is an element of grammatical ambiguity associated with spontaneous spoken language, and also (in the case of speakers who are bilingual and living in both cultures) the occasional use of anglicisms. Whilst we are aware of these (and indicate them in footnotes where appropriate) we consider that the spontaneity of the interviews outweighs occasional blemishes in terms of the ‘purity’ of language presented. The interviews and **prácticas** are therefore designed to increase students’ cultural awareness and sensitivity as well as developing new language skills.

Summary of each unit

The User Guide contains a brief summary of each unit in the Study Book. This summary includes:

Skills practised

The table of *skills practised* enables tutors (and independent learners) to identify at a glance the units which are most relevant to any given skills which learners need to develop. It also identifies other learning aspects contained in that unit, using a set of *symbols* as used in the Study Book itself:



- increasing awareness of cultural context
- developing broader learner skills (for language development)
- containing tasks designed for students to check their own learning

It is also advisable for tutors to follow up at least some of the sections marked  in the Study Book in order to ensure full student appreciation of the issues involved.

Grammatical points

The summary also contains lists of ‘*grammatical points*’ occurring most frequently in each unit. Tutors will be able to use it to identify the units which provide multiple examples of any particular grammatical point appropriate as illustration for students. It should also ease lesson planning by indicating the grammatical topics which tutors may wish to cover as part of preparatory or follow-up work with students.

Level of difficulty

This is followed by a chart indicating the *level of difficulty* of the unit, using a numerical scale to assess the various linguistic features of the interview. (This scale is designed to meet practical needs, and does not make any claims to scientific accuracy!)

Tutor or native-speaker support

The summary also includes a list of those **prácticas** in the Study Book requiring either *tutor* or *native-speaker support*. This will assist at a glance in planning of work on each unit.

Accreditation of language competences

There is a list of the language competences at *Level 2 (Dealing with routine daily activities)* of the *National Language Standards* as defined by the Languages Lead Body which can be demonstrated through successful completion of tasks in the unit.

The final section of the User Guide consists of a full *transcript* of each *interview* and any supplementary material on the cassette. This part of the User Guide is *copyright-free* and can be made available to learners if and when you consider this appropriate.

UNIT SUMMARIES

VIVIR EN ESPAÑA

Unidad 1 ¿DÓNDE VIVIR? Alojamiento

Skills practised	Prácticas	Other aspects
Orientación		
Comprobar lo que ya sabes del tema	1	R
Comprensión		
Entender el contenido	2A	
Explicar términos	2B	☯
Utilizar información	2C	
Expresar obligaciones y condiciones	2D	
Entender el vocabulario	3A	
Comprobar el sentido de una palabra	3B	R
Identificar los temas de la conversación	4A	☯ ✓
Entender expresiones y siglas	4B	
Identificar datos concretos	4C	✓
Lectura		
Entender la terminología	5A	☯
Definiciones	5B	
Entender las ideas clave	10A	☯
Entender el contenido	10B	✓
Uso del lenguaje		
Entender consejos	7	

Skills practised	Prácticas	Other aspects
Expresión oral		
Utilizar anuncios clasificados	6	✓
Hacer una llamada telefónica	8A	☯
Dar y entender información	8B	✓
Expresión escrita		
Escribir un anuncio	9	✓
Grammatical points (for preparatory or follow-up work)		
•	2nd person plural form of the verb	
•	reflexive / pronominal verbs	
•	uses of ser and estar	
•	haber (hay , hay que , etc.)	
•	sí que (emphatic)	
Level of difficulty of interview		
	Feature	Rating: 1–5 (5=most difficult)
Speed	1/2	
Accent	2/3	
Degree of abstraction	1	
Complexity of grammar	3	
Specificity of vocabulary	1	
Range of expression	1	
Personal style	2	
Prácticas in the Study Book requiring tutor or native-speaker support		
4C	Checking oral responses recorded on cassette	
5	Clarifying the meaning of technical terms (if necessary)	
6	Discussion: matching classified ads to accommodation needs	
8	Supporting and reviewing student role-play	
9	Checking written advert	
Accreditation of language competences		
Listening:	Obtain information about routine and daily activities by listening	
2L1:1	Extract specific details from familiar and	