

New Spanish teacher? Every Spanish teacher, native or not, has walked in your shoes. I did back in the 90s. Here are some tips for first-year survival.

Here are some tips and resources to make your life easier as a new Spanish teacher. I want to share how to work in the 5Cs and not just survive, but thrive during your first year as a Spanish teacher.

A framework to keep in mind as you plan activities and set up your classroom:

Cultures. Products, practices and perspectives.

Communication. This standard is at the center of the ACTFL standards for a good reason. Everything we do goes back to being able to communicate with others.

Connections. [Spanish is super](#) easy to connect to other topics because students are going to be exploring any theme that you're studying.

Comparisons. Students will have many opportunities to explore language and culture. They will become more knowledgeable about English (or another language) from their time in your room.

Communities. Students are using language outside of school.

Classroom

Culture: My room is a mini Spanish-speaking country. This is my opportunity to transport them to new parts of the world and new ideas.

I realize that many of the items that I am sharing with you are not necessarily things you see every day, but traditional items. These items offer a taste of all of the rich cultural practices, products and perspectives that abound in the Spanish-speaking world. *Communities* is relevant here, as most of these products were gifts from people who had contact with my room and students to share these different Spanish-speaking cultures.

I wish I knew more about when I was a young teacher was about basic classroom organization. Having everything students could possibly need is something that comes with experience. Have markers, crayons, colored pencils, a stapler, pencil sharpeners and a shelf where to put all my extra copies for the entire grading period so students who are absent can easily find them. Have a basket where I

place any abandoned pencils or pens. This is the place for things like tissues and tape. I keep recycling paper and let students do exercises or take notes on this paper. Students can go there for anything they might need without needing to ask you.

Early in my teaching career, I had the benefit of spending a day with Harry Wong. As he will tell you, most of what he teaches is really simple common sense, but we get so overwhelmed with so many other duties and responsibilities as teachers sometimes I think we can forget some of the simple things. Don't teachers make more decisions than air traffic controllers?

Wong said a few things that truly resonated with me and have been hugely impactful to me. First and foremost, he says not to worry about any content instruction for the first two weeks. He's not saying that we should sit around and do nothing. However, we should think more about the routines and procedures in our classrooms, how things are done, making sure students know how to ask where things are, how to do things, where to turn things in, etc. and train them in the way that our specific classroom runs. This is brilliant for language [teachers](#) because we can spend the first couple of weeks working on these class routines WHILE teaching languages, using the target language for all of our classroom commands and teaching students our routines.

Some routines are going through the calendar every day, learning lots of commands, learning how to do everything in our classroom in the target [class language](#) (i.e. bathroom, drink, nurse). Write them specifically into lesson plans every day.

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/BEGINNING-SPANISH-CLASS-LESSONS-7396909>

Get online.

Language teachers are among the coolest people/teachers in the world, in my opinion. They are kind, creative, and love to share. As a first-year Spanish teacher, you are lucky. There are a lot of Spanish teachers! You have a whole bunch of mentors who are online in places like Instagram, Pinterest and Facebook. These people will share their ideas, knowledge, experience, classroom, mistakes, victories and struggles with you. Cut some time off of your learning curve and invest it in your life by searching for these people online.

Games.

Have at least 10 to 15 games or [activities that are super fun](#) and take very little prep that you can use at any time. I think this is really important because we need to maximize the time we have with our students. For many, it's the only time they're getting exposure to Spanish. What we also teach can be perceived as really hard by some people. Having fun ways to let students practice that content really takes the edge off.

Check out my 5 Weeks of Low and No Prep Fun here:
<https://real-life-language.kit.com/cb632cad94>

Fun, relevant professional development.

Early on in my career, my Spanish wasn't nearly as strong as it is now. I spent some summers in Spain to do an MA degree. I also returned for a few summers to Spain for further study. My goal at that time was near-native proficiency in Spanish, which got me further qualifications to [teach Spanish](#) language dual immersion at the elementary school level. After much work, I did achieve that level. It has made teaching with CI natural and easy at every level.

While not everyone has the goal of native-like proficiency, it is never a bad thing to feel extremely confident and at ease in another language in any context. We didn't have all the great resources where you could improve your skills from anywhere in the world available then. You can improve your Spanish from anywhere as long as you have a way to get online.

One of my very favorite language learning tools right now is [Netflix](#). They're producing content globally and their library of content in different languages is growing. There's even an extension called [Netflix For Language Learners](#). It's the ultimate tool to have fun and learn a language at the same time. There is also an abundance of resources for teaching languages there, too.

Organizations like [ACTFL](#), [AATSP](#) will serve as a great resource for Spanish teachers at any stage of their career. Their conferences will leave you inspired, invigorated and looking forward to planning and teaching your next lesson.

[italki](#). Speak with native speakers. You can even get guest speakers, too.

Want tips + resources sent weekly as well as a free ebook?

5 Weeks of No and Low Prep Fun

Need quick, engaging activities for your class? This free guide includes **25 no-prep and low-prep ideas** to save time while keeping students excited about learning. [Download your free copy now.](#)

I share ideas on [Pinterest](#) and [Instagram](#), too.

<https://reallifelanguage.com/imperfect-tense-in-spanish-my-favorite-activities/>