

SPANISH LANGUAGE HISTORY



Take Note:

With a highlighter (or coloured pencil) underline the information that pertains to :

Yellow: When did Spanish evolve? When was it spoken as a romantic language?

Pink: Who spoke Spanish? Who taught the formal languages? Who speaks Spanish presently?

Blue: Where was the language first spoken? Where is it spoken currently?

Green: How did it evolve? Why is it spoken?

The Spanish language -as well the dialects that are spoken in Spain- traces its origins back to the fundamental moment in which vulgar Latin started evolving linguistically. During the middle ages, **Castilian** and **Andalusian** dialects emerged and got established in the Iberian Peninsula (still known as Hispania, at the time); whereas the re-conquest of Moorish Spain, carried on by Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragón, marked the emergence of Spanish as a language of its own.

Spanish is currently employed by over 500 million people, among native speakers and second-language learners. It is spoken in 44 countries around the world, with an **official language** status in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Other regions where its presence has importance include Canada, Morocco, the Philippines, and the United States. Spanish is part of the Romance languages group contained inside the Italic subfamily, which is in turn a branch of the Indo-European language family. It is the subject of two major dialects within its mother territory (Andalusian and Castilian), as well as countless other variations originated mainly in North and South American territories.

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History of the Spanish Language & Latin

Spanish language was born in the Iberian Peninsula, a region located on the southwest side of Europe. Towards the last years of the 6th Century, such land was inhabited by the Iberians, individuals who, upon mingling with the Celts (another race, of nomadic customs and originally from the center of Europe), formed a new group of people, known as the "Celtiberians". These people had their own tongue, which was a variation of the Celtic language. In the year 19 BC, the region acquired the name of Hispania, after a roman rule was issued upon the matter. The inhabitants were then taught Latin by Roman traders, settlers, administrators and soldiers.

It was when these Romans' Latin got mixed up with the languages that had previously been spoken by the Celtiberians, the Carthaginians, and other inhabitants of the region that a new language, referred to as "Vulgar Latin", made its appearance. The aforementioned followed the basic models of Latin, while at the same time borrowing words from the other tongues and adding them to its own lexicon.

Latin stood as the official language of Hispania, in terms of government and culture, even despite the invasion of the Visigoths -Germanic tribes from Eastern Europe- toward the year 400 AD. This status, however, changed around 719 AD, when the Moors -a group of Islamic people come from Northern Africa- became conquerors of the region, establishing their own languages (Arabic and a variation of the latter known as Mozarabic) in the whole area, except for a few remote territories that were controlled by the Christian Church (namely the kingdom of Asturias). It was precisely these Christian kingdoms which ended up conquering Spain back, in time, and restituting its original politics, military and cultural assets. Vulgar Latin also regained dominion, particularly as a variation emerged from the Northern Central plains of the country: **Castilian**. The dialect got spread throughout the Southern and Eastern regions of Spain.

Castilian & Andalusian

As previously stated, Castilian was a hybrid in the way that it received lots of words from the Mozarabic dialect, to the extent that in present times a total approximate of 4,000 modern Spanish words have Arabic roots. The creation of a standardized Spanish language based on the aforementioned dialect took place from the year 1200 onwards;

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king Alfonso X, along with a group of **scholars set in the city of Toledo** -a cultural center located in the central highlands of the country- were responsible for the writing of original works and the translation of different stories and chronicles from many languages (mainly Greek, Latin and Arabic) to Castilian. These individuals also took care of scientific, legal and literary works.

Soon after, Castilian was adopted as the official dialect for all administrative matters. Further dissemination and acceptance took place during the administration of the Catholic monarchs (**Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragón**).

The latter accomplished the re-conquest of Spain in 1492, with a final move by which the Moors were removed from the southern territory of Granada, where they'd established their last stronghold. The king and queen chose Castilian as the kingdom's official dialect; a book named "Arte de la Lengua Castellana" (by author Antonio de Nebrija), aimed at analyzing and explaining the grammar rules of a European language for the first time in history, was released that same year; Castilian became the most widely spoken dialect in Spain, used as a standard for written and educational purposes, despite the remaining existence of other dialects (e.g. Andalusian, emerged from the southern city of Seville).

WHO:

WHERE:

WHEN:

WHY/HOW: