

**Walker Middle School
Dual Language Spanish
Course Syllabus**

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Course Description:

At Walker Middle School, our 6th, 7th and 8th grader Dual Language Spanish classes aim at reinforcing previously acquired linguistic skills as well as expanding upon new challenges involving extensive exposure to original materials in the target language in order to develop adequate levels of proficiency in reading, writing, listening and speaking in alignment with district, state and national standards. These materials will enable our students to develop mastery in language skills and intercultural understanding while fostering responsibility, work ethics and integrity.

Instructional Philosophy:

Our goals with this course in the different grade years are to increase language proficiency, cultural curiosity and eagerness in learning a second language beyond the school in order to acquire the tools to be ready to enter an increasingly diverse, global society.

In short, the principles that guide my teaching philosophy are:

- Constantly searching for new and effective practices to guarantee learning and success among students;
- Promoting collaborative learning in the classroom in a student-centered atmosphere;
- Finding a balance between challenge and enjoyment where rigor and the pursuit of perfection become essential; and,
- Establishing cooperative relationships with my students by using humor as an essential tool for developing rapport and intercultural understanding.

Goals and Content Standards:

Goal One, Communication: Communicate in Languages Other than English

- Standard 1.1 Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.
- Standard 1.2 Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics.
- Standard 1.3 Students convey information, concepts, and ideas to listeners and readers for a variety of purposes.

Goal Two, Cultures: Gain Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures

- Standard 2.1 Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the perspectives and practices of cultures studied and use this knowledge to interact effectively in cultural contexts.
- Standard 2.2 Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the perspectives and products/contributions of the cultures studied.

Goal Three, Connections: Connect with Other Disciplines and Acquire Information

- Standard 3.1 Students reinforce and further knowledge of other disciplines through foreign languages.
- Standard 3.2 Students acquire information and perspectives through authentic materials in the foreign languages and within the cultures.

Goal Four, Comparisons: Develop Insight into the Nature of Language and Culture

- Standard 4.1 Students recognize that different languages use different patterns to communicate and can apply this knowledge to their own language.
- Standard 4.2 Students recognize that cultures use different patterns of interaction and can apply this knowledge to their own culture.

Goal Five, Communities: Participate in Multilingual Communities at Home and Around the World

- Standard 5.1 Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting for a variety of purposes.

Program objectives:

Instruction will be consistently given in Spanish. Throughout the 3-year Middle School Dual Language program, Spanish grammar and vocabulary will be taught explicitly to promote language acquisition as well as implicitly through exposure to a variety of original texts. Reading comprehension and text handling skills will be a focus of our instruction throughout the 3 years of the program.

Language acquisition will be achieved through the development of receptive, productive and interactive skills which will allow the students to:

1. Understand straightforward recorded or spoken information on the topics studied.
2. Understand authentic written texts related to the topics studied and that use every day and technical language.
3. Communicate orally in order to explain a point of view on a designated topic.
4. Describe with detail and accuracy experiences, events and concepts.
5. Produce texts where the use of register, style, rhetorical devices and structural elements are generally appropriate to the audience and purpose.
6. Demonstrate interaction that usually flows coherently, but with occasional limitations.
7. Engage in conversations on the topics studied, as well as related ideas.
8. Demonstrate intercultural engagement with the target language and culture(s).

Classroom rules and behavior expectations:

1. As a general rule, as a student you are expected to be **seated and ready to work** at all times once class starts. *If I see you out of your seat, I will understand that you want to volunteer to answer all my hard questions. You are not allowed to leave your seat during class unless you have asked for permission first.*
2. It's a school rule to keep your **phone off and out of sight** while school is in session. *You don't need to know anything from the outside world as the good stuff happens here!!!*
3. **Respect** is earned by example. Appreciate the work I do every day and always talk to your teachers and peers politely.
4. **Raise your hand** if you need to talk with me, to another peer or in front of the class and always have a positive attitude towards your teacher, your peers, the subject and the school community. Be an example!!!
5. **Food and drinks** are not a part of the school's learning environment and you must not bring them to class. They mess up and stink everything and invite bugs!!!
6. **Leaving class.** You can leave the room as needed under the following conditions always: you have not been late to class, only after the first 30 minutes of class, one student at a time after signing your name in the sign-out sheet. In any case, I, as your teacher, can ask you to remain in class if you will miss important notes or as a consequence for poor behavior (tardiness).
7. **Enjoy** your Spanish class, **be inspired**, always **try your hardest** and **don't despair!!!**

Differentiation:

Differentiation of standards-based instruction is expected to occur for all students. Differentiation is a targeted process that involves forward planning, programming and instruction. It involves the use of teaching, learning and assessment strategies that are fair and flexible, provide an appropriate level of challenge, and engage students in learning in meaningful ways.

Textbooks and materials:

Due to the developing nature of the process of mastering a foreign language, a wide array of original materials and texts will be incorporated in the class whenever the topics permit. Therefore, it is a priority to train and develop the following skills:

1. Taking complete and accurate notes.
 2. Participating consciously during in-class assignments.
 3. Listening and asking responsibly before, during and after class.
 4. Studying and reviewing the materials regularly.
- **Needless to say, an independent notebook**, ring binder, pen/pencil/marker/highlighter are expected every day.

Grading:

- Course grades will be determined by planned assessments such as in class assignments, projects, quizzes and tests after covering any and every meaningful piece of unit and/or course objective outlined above.
- All coursework and assessments are graded based on the level of understanding demonstrated by the student against the objectives. In the same way, students who request it will be provided multiple opportunities to achieve at the “proficient” to “advanced” levels. **Rubrics will be used, will be available and will be communicated to students as needed.**
- The role of independent practice and homework is to develop knowledge and skills effectively and efficiently during the unit of study. Independent practice helps guide the learning process by providing accurate, timely and helpful feedback to students without penalty.
- At the end of a grading period, students’ scores will be averaged using assigned weights. The following weights and categories will be used:
 1. Assignments: 25%
 2. Projects: 25%
 3. Quizzes: 20%
 4. Tests: 30%
- **“Retakes” and “Make-up” explained:** Mastering a foreign language is like climbing a summit-less mountain where your teacher is your Sherpa. As a general rule, student are allowed to redo every assignment, quiz or project to earn a higher grade, except any assessment added to the students’ gradebook under the category of TESTS (30%), these are summative checkpoints at the end of the Units. There will be a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 5 TESTS per semester. But because we are always climbing our personal mountains, each subsequent Unit TEST is more important than the one before considering the *developing nature* of the subject. So, the one way to improve a low grade in a Unit test is to consciously prepare even better for the next one. A higher grade in the latest Unit test in the semester will reflect more prominently in the students’ final grade, because it shall demonstrate a growing trend in the students’ skill level.
- **Note on a grade of 0 (zero) in your grades.** Only missing assignments will result in a grade of 0 for the student who will have the responsibility and opportunity to make them up as needed in a timely manner. Also, as explained above, low grade tests, quizzes, projects and assignments can be redone after approval in order to earn a higher grade.
- **A 24 hour notice to visit before or after school is required.**

Grading Scale:

Score points	Letter grade	Percentage	Proficiency Scale
4 3.5	A	83 to 100%	Advanced
3	B	66 to 82%	Proficient
2.5 2	C	50 to 65%	Basic
1	D	25 to 49%	Below basic
0	F	0 to 24%	Failing

**Keep calm,
y, ¡habla español!**