



# LANGUAGE



e-Europe

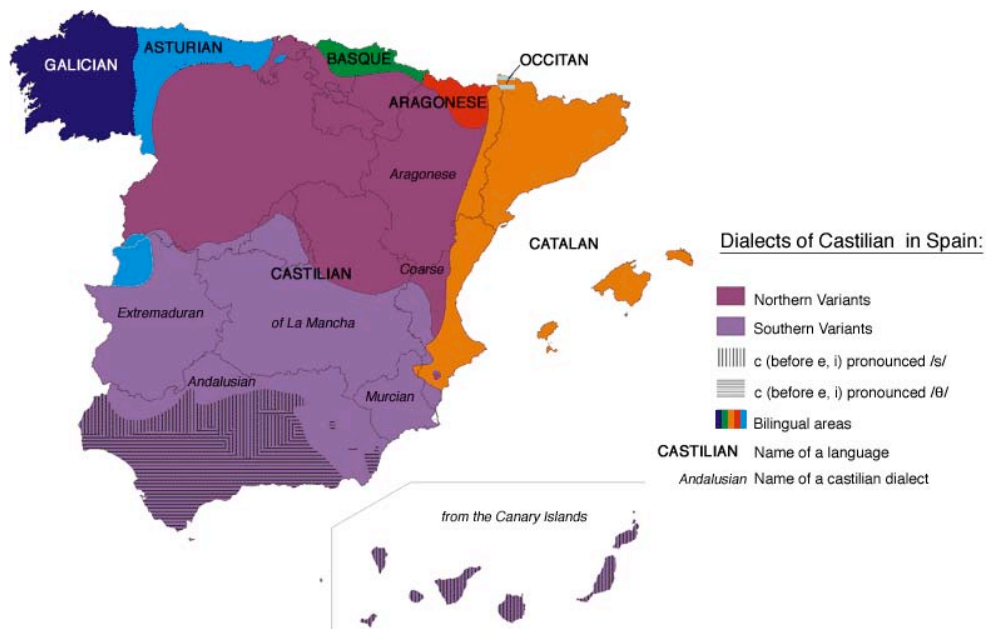
## History of the Spanish language

Spanish evolved from Vulgar Latin, with major influences from Arabic in vocabulary during the Andalusian period and minor surviving influences from Basque and Celtiberian, as well as Germanic languages via the Visigoths. Spanish developed along the remote cross road strips among the Alava, Cantabria, Burgos, Soria and La Rioja provinces of Northern Spain as a strongly innovative and differing variant from its nearest cousin, Leonese, with a higher degree of Basque influence in these regions. Typical features of Spanish diachronical phonology include lenition (Latin *vita*, Spanish *vida*), palatalization (Latin *annum*, Spanish *año*, and Latin *anellum*, Spanish *anillo*) and diphthongation (stem-changing) of short *e* and *o* from Vulgar Latin (Latin *terra*, Spanish *tierra*; Latin *novus*, Spanish *nuevo*). Similar phenomena can be found in other Romance languages as well.. During the Reconquista, this northern dialect from Cantabria was carried south, and remains a minority language in the northern coastal Morocco. The first Latin-to-Spanish grammar (*Gramática de la Lengua Castellana*) was written in Salamanca, Spain, by Elio Antonio de Nebrija. When it was presented to Isabel de Castilla, she asked, "What do I want a work like this for, if I already know the language?", to which he replied, "Your highness, the language is the instrument of the Empire."From sixteenth century onwards, the language was taken to the Americas and the Spanish East Indies via Spanish colonization.

In the twentieth century, Spanish was introduced to Equatorial Guinea and the Western Sahara, and in areas of the United States that had not been part of the Spanish Empire, such as in Spanish Harlem, in New York City. For details on borrowed words and other external influences upon Spanish, see Influences on the Spanish language.

# Spanish dialects and varieties

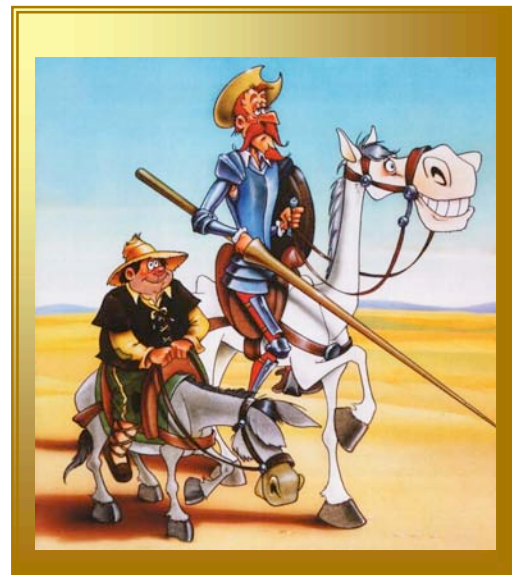
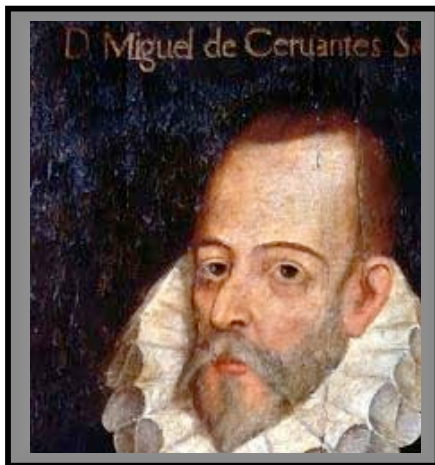
Spanish dialects and varieties are the regional variants of the [Spanish language](#), some of which are quite divergent from each other, especially in pronunciation and vocabulary, less so in grammar. While all Spanish dialects use the same written standard, all spoken varieties differ from the written variety, in different degrees. There is a gap between European Spanish (also called [Peninsular Spanish](#)) and the Spanish of the [Americas](#) ([Latin American Spanish](#)), as well as many different dialect areas both within [Spain](#) and within [Latin America](#). The term "dialect" does not apply to other regional languages in Spain such as [Catalan](#), [Galician](#), and [Basque](#).



# SPANISH WRITERS

- MIGUEL DE CERVANTES. DON QUIXOTE
- THE CANTAR DE MIO CID

Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra was a Spanish novelist, poet, and playwright. His magnum opus, Don Quixote, considered the first modern novel by some, is considered a classic of Western literature and is regularly regarded among the best novels ever written. His work is considered among the most important in all of literature. His influence on the Spanish language has been so great, that Spanish is often called *la lengua de Cervantes* (The language of Cervantes). He has been dubbed *el Príncipe de los Ingenios* - the Prince of Wits.



## Cantar de Mio Cid

The Cantar de Mio Cid was written about a real man--his battles, conquests, and daily life. The poet, name unknown, wrote the epic in about 1140 and Cid supposedly died forty years before in 1099 This epic represents realism, because nothing was exaggerated and the details are very real, even the geography correctly portrays the areas in which Cid traveled and lived. Unlike other European epics, the poem is not idealized and there is no presence of supernatural beings. It has assonance instead of rhyme and its lines vary in length, the most common length being fourteen syllables. This type of verse is known as *mester de juglaria* (verse form of the minstrels). The epic is divided into three parts, also known as cantos.



## Spanish proverbs

- [Caballo regalado no se le mira el diente/colmillo/dentado.](#)

Translation: Do not check the teeth of a horse given as a present

Interpretation: Do not search for faults in a gift

Equivalent English proverb: "Don't look a gift horse in the mouth."

- [Al mal tiempo, buena cara](#)

Translation: Put a nice face to the bad times.

Interpretation: Be positive even in bad situations.

- [A rey muerto, rey puesto](#)  
Translation: 'To a dead king, a king crowned.'  
Equivalent English saying: "The King is dead. Long live the King."

- [A lo hecho, pecho.](#)

Translation: *Of that which is/you have done, (take it on the) chest.*

Interpretations:

Accept the consequences of what you do (to the chest; like a man).

Deeds are honor; claim your victories.

Equivalent English proverbs:

"Face the music."

## Spanish Sayings

**Más vale pájaro en mano que cien volando.** A bird in the hand is worth more than 100 flying.

**Ojos que no ven, corazón que no siente.** Eyes that do not see, heart that does not feel.

**El amor es ciego.** Love is blind.

## Phrases

- Al que madruga Dios le ayuda  
The early bird catches the worm
- Andarse por las ramas  
To beat around the bush
- Arriba, abajo, al centro y para adentro  
Bottoms up!
- Cada oveja con su pareja  
To each his own
- Cuando el río suena, agua lleva  
Where theres smoke, theres a FIRE
- En menos que canta un gallo  
As quick as a wink
- Ojos que no ven, corazón que no siente  
Out of the sight, out of the mind
- Tomarle le pelo a uno  
To pull someones leg
- Mas vale prevenir que curar  
Better to be safe than sorry
- De tal palo tal astilla  
Like father, like son
- Hoy por ti, mañana por mi  
You scratch my back and I'll scratch (rascar) yours