

Fostering Wonder

Foreign Language Spanish 1 — Sample

Information Sections · Lessons 1–2 · Charlotte Mason Method

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Sample contents: This printable sample includes the curriculum information sections and the first two lessons only. Word cards for Lessons 1–2 are provided in the companion sample word-card printable.

Foreign Language Spanish 1

Charlotte Mason Method

Using Traditional Spanish Nursery Rhymes and Folk Songs

Based on Volume 1, Part V, Sections IV–VI

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The CM Reading Philosophy

Charlotte Mason was clear: children should learn to read from real, beautiful language — not from made-up phonics sentences. Traditional nursery rhymes and folk songs are exactly the

kind of living language she had in mind. Children often already know these rhymes by ear before they learn to read them, which makes whole-word recognition natural and joyful.

Her two goals for early reading: 1. The child will know approximately **1,000 words by sight** 2.

The child will be able to **build new words from known sounds**

Lessons are **10–15 minutes maximum**, 3–4 days per week. Always end on success and delight — never push past the child's attention.

This curriculum is intentionally flexible so it can be adapted to meet the specific needs of each family. Some families may want foreign language acquisition instruction four times per week, while others may choose to work through it once per week. For this reason, Spanish 1 is not tied to a specific grade or age. It may be completed in one school year or stretched gently over two, depending on the child's readiness, the family's schedule, and the pace that keeps the lessons joyful.

One particular gift of Spanish for young readers is that its spelling is **highly regular** compared with English. The five vowel letters — **a, e, i, o, u** — usually represent stable sounds when they are pronounced. There are predictable exceptions: the **u** is silent in **qu** before **e** or **i**, as in *queso*, *quiero*, *aquí*, and *bosque*, and in **gu** before **e** or **i** when no diaeresis is written. A diaeresis (ü) marks that the **u** is pronounced, as in *pingüino*. Spanish spelling-to-sound patterns are not exceptionless, but they are consistent enough to make the word-building section of each lesson especially satisfying for young readers.

A Note on Pacing

These lessons are broken into weeks and terms to give a clear structure, but the schedule is a guide — not a rule. Every child moves differently, and the teacher knows her student best.

Feel free to speed up or slow down based on your child's pace. If a week's material takes two sessions, that is perfectly fine. If your child is ready to move faster, move faster.

One practical approach: set a timer for 10–15 minutes at the start of each lesson. When the timer goes off, end the lesson — even if you are in the middle of something. Simply tell your child, "*We'll pick up right here next time.*" This keeps lessons short, positive, and consistent, and it trains the child to look forward to the next session rather than dreading a long one.

How I Like to Use It

If my student is ready for it, I like to give them a word book — a blank book where they can begin writing down the words they are learning during our lessons. This makes the words more personal to them and gives them a little place to collect the words that are becoming familiar.

If the student still needs this support but would like more of a challenge, I also like to have them use the word cards they have already learned to create sentences. If there is a word they want to use in their sentence but it has not been studied yet, I use a blank word card to fill that space. This creates interest and excitement because the child naturally wants to find out what that new word looks like so they can add it to their word cards.

A simple way to store one set of the target-word cards your child is learning is to place them in a ziplock bag or another small container. This makes it easy to access all the words your child has learned when you reach the review activities.

Note on Narration

Foreign Language Spanish 1 does not require formal narration. Children may naturally talk about what they hear, but narration is not prompted, required, or assessed in this level.

About the Rhymes

Spanish nursery rhymes and children's songs often exist in different forms across Mexico, Spain, Central America, South America, and individual families. The lessons and printable word cards use the versions printed in this curriculum. Teachers are warmly invited to use whichever version their own family knows, while keeping in mind that different wording may require corresponding changes to the target words and word cards.

Foreign Language Spanish 1 Video Resource

This YouTube playlist is a helpful resource for families using this curriculum, especially for parents who are not native Spanish speakers. In these videos, I read or sing the rhymes aloud so you and your child can hear natural Spanish pronunciation.

You are welcome to use these videos alongside the lessons whenever they are helpful. They are meant to support your work at home, not replace the lesson itself.

Foreign Language Spanish 1 playlist: [Watch the video resource on YouTube](#)

How Each Lesson Works

Every lesson follows Charlotte Mason's exact method from Volume 1, Part V:

Step 1 — Introduce the word Write the target word on a whiteboard. Say it clearly in Spanish. Ask the child to look at it carefully — every letter, every shape, every accent mark — until they can close their eyes and "see" it in their mind's eye. This is the "mind's eye" technique Charlotte Mason described. Once the word is in the student's mind's eye, ask the student to close their eyes and try to finger spell the word by using their pointer finger in the air, making big "imaginary" strokes for each letter until they spell the whole word. Once the student can do this successfully, they are ready for Step 2.

Step 2 — Find it in the card pile Lay all word cards face up (target words + distractor words mixed). Child finds the target word. Distractor cards are used only for this finding activity. Do not include distractor cards in known-word reviews or learned-vocabulary totals; those groups should contain target-word cards only.

Step 3 — Build it with letter tiles Child spells the word using magnetic letters, wooden tiles, or foam letters. If they struggle, uncover the board — never allow a misspelling to sit. Miss Mason stressed the importance of not allowing the child to place a misspelled word in their mind's eye. For that reason, correct misspelled words quickly and do not let an incorrect spelling remain in front of the student's view for too long.

Step 4 — Add to and rearrange the word column Arrange all target words in a column. Read together. Rearrange. Read again. Once this is done, invite the student to make their own column in a different order from the one you made. Then have the student read their new column of words.

Step 5 — Read the rhyme Find the learned words in the printed rhyme. Then read the full rhyme together — teacher first, then together, then child alone as able.

Step 6 — Word building (2–3 min) In word building, words are changed to make new words with the same ending sound. Spanish shines here because many spelling-to-sound patterns are consistent and word families are often predictable. Keep it playful, not a drill.

A Note on Spanish Phonics

Spanish is largely phonetically regular, which makes it an excellent language for the Charlotte Mason whole-word-to-phonics approach. A few key features to keep in mind as you teach:

- **Vowel sounds are generally stable:** a = /ah/, e = /eh/, i = /ee/, o = /oh/, u = /oo/. When these letters represent pronounced vowels, their basic sounds are consistent. The **u** is silent in **qu** before **e** or **i** (*queso, aquí*) and in **gu** before **e** or **i** (*guerra, guitarra*). A diaeresis marks the **u** as pronounced in **güe/güi** (*pingüino*).
 - **The H is always silent:** *hambre, había, hacer* — the H is there on the page but you never hear it.
 - **Accent marks can show stress or distinguish words:** In words such as *mamá, canción*, and *está*, the accent mark shows which syllable to stress. Spanish also uses a **diacritical accent mark** to distinguish words that are spelled alike but have different meanings. For example, **tú** means "you," while **tu** means "your." Because **tú** has only one syllable, its accent mark does not identify a stressed syllable; it tells the reader which word is meant. Question words such as *¿dónde?*, *¿quién?*, and *¿qué?* also carry an accent mark when they are used interrogatively.
 - **The -ito/-ita suffix** means "little" or adds affection: *gato* → *gatito*, *sol* → *solcito*, *mano* → *manita*. This suffix appears constantly in children's songs. It is one of the most joyful patterns in Spanish.
 - **LL and RR are digraphs, not separate letters:** each is written with two letters but can represent a single sound. In much of Latin America, *ll* is commonly pronounced like /y/ (regional pronunciations vary); *rr* represents a strong trill.
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Required Materials

- Whiteboard and marker (or large paper)

- Letter tiles (magnetic, wooden, or foam) — ensure your set includes Spanish letters: **ñ, ü, accent-marked vowels (á, é, í, ó, ú)**. If you are using a standard American letter tile set, you may also write the accent marks or special character symbols on small sticky notes so the student can place the sticky note on the specific letter that requires it.
 - Printed word cards (each lesson provides ready-to-print cards)
 - A printed or illustrated copy of the nursery rhymes (any traditional Spanish collection, or print from the rhymes provided in this curriculum). The printable word cards are specifically made to match the rhyme or song version provided in this curriculum.
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Educationally Appropriate Content

Academic skills addressed: - Phonological awareness and phonics - Sight word recognition (whole-word reading) - Reading fluency — oral reading of connected text - Reading comprehension - Oral language development — Spanish vocabulary acquisition - Poetry appreciation and memorization - Foreign language / heritage language literacy development

These rhyme-based lessons use repeated reading and recitation to practice early Spanish literacy, phonological awareness, oral language development, and memorization.

LESSON 1

Rhyme: "Estrellita, ¿dónde estás?" (Part 1)

Estrellita, ¿dónde estás? Me pregunto qué serás. En el cielo o en el mar, un diamante de verdad. Estrellita, ¿dónde estás? Me pregunto qué serás.

Note for teachers: This is the Spanish version of "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star." Most children know the tune already, which makes it an ideal first rhyme — the words feel like old friends.

Target words: estrella · dónde · estás · me · pregunto **Distractor words:** luna · sol · aquí · grande · bonita

Lesson Steps

Step 1 — ESTRELLA Write **estrella** on the board. "The rhyme says ESTRELLITA, which means little star, but in this lesson we will use its root word ESTRELLA as the target word. ESTRELLA means star. Es-TRE-lla. ESTRELLITA is formed by adding the affectionate -ita ending to ESTRELLA. Notice the LL digraph in the middle; in much of Latin America, it commonly sounds like a 'y': es-TRE-ya. Close your eyes — can you still see it?" Ask the child to close their eyes and finger spell **estrella** in the air with big imaginary strokes: e · s · t · r · e · l · l · a. Find it. Build it.

Step 2 — DÓNDE Write **dónde**. "DÓNDE means 'where.' See the accent mark over the ó? That little mark tells us to stress that syllable: DÓN-de. In Spanish, when we ask a question, question words like dónde always wear an accent mark. Look carefully at it." Ask the child to close their eyes and finger spell **dónde** in the air with big imaginary strokes: d · ó · n · d · e. Find it. Build it.

Step 3 — ESTÁS *"ESTÁS means 'you are' — where ARE you? See the accent on the final á? That tells us the stress falls at the END: es-TÁS. You'll see this accent pattern on many Spanish verb forms."* Ask the child to close their eyes and finger spell **estás** in the air with big imaginary strokes: e · s · t · á · s. Find it. Build it.

Step 4 — ME *"ME — just two letters! M-E. It means 'me' — same as English! 'Me pregunto' — I ask myself, I wonder."* Ask the child to close their eyes and finger spell **me** in the air with big imaginary strokes: m · e. Find it. Build it.

Step 5 — PREGUNTO *"PREGUNTO — I ask, I wonder. It's a longer word: pre-GUN-to. In this word, every vowel is pronounced clearly: p-r-e-g-u-n-t-o. Count the vowels: e, u, o — three of them!"* Ask the child to close their eyes and finger spell **pregunto** in the air with big imaginary strokes: p · r · e · g · u · n · t · o. Find it. Build it.

Step 6 — Column reading Arrange all target words in a column. Read together. Rearrange. Read again. Once this is done, invite the student to make their own column in a different order from the one you made. Then have the student read their new column of words.

Step 7 — Read the rhyme Read "Estrellita" aloud together. If you know the tune, sing it! Child finds each target word in the rhyme first. For **estrella**, have the child find the root word inside **Estrellita**. Then read or sing the full rhyme.

Step 8 — Word building From **estrella**: add **-ita** → **estrellita** (little star) *"ESTRELLITA means little star. The affectionate -ita ending makes ESTRELLA into ESTRELLITA — star into little star. You will see this -ito/-ita pattern throughout Spanish."*

Memorization: Begin learning "Estrellita" — say it (or sing it) together twice at the end of the lesson.

LESSON 2

Rhyme: "Estrellita, ¿dónde estás?" (continued — review and deepen)

Estrellita, ¿dónde estás? Me pregunto qué serás. En el cielo o en el mar, un diamante de verdad. Estrellita, ¿dónde estás? Me pregunto qué serás.

Target words: cielo · mar · diamante · verdad · serás **Distractor words:** estrella · dónde · me · luna · sol

Lesson Steps

Step 1 — Review Lesson 1 words Quick read through: **estrella · dónde · estás · me · pregunto** — fast and confident. Celebrate every word the child knows already.

Step 2 — Introduce CIELO "CIELO — it means sky, or heaven. CIE-LO. Notice the I and E together in the first syllable: they form the vowel sequence IE. Say it smoothly: CIE-lo." Ask the child to close their eyes and finger spell **cielo** in the air with big imaginary strokes: c · i · e · l · o. Find it. Build it.

Step 3 — Introduce MAR "MAR means sea — the ocean. It's short and strong: M-A-R. Three letters, three sounds." Ask the child to close their eyes and finger spell **mar** in the air with big imaginary strokes: m · a · r. Find it. Build it.

Step 4 — Introduce DIAMANTE "DIAMANTE — a diamond! You might recognize this word — it's very close to the English 'diamond.' Words that look and sound similar in Spanish and English are called cognates. Dia-MAN-te. Look carefully at its four vowel letters: i · a · a · e." Ask the child to close their eyes and finger spell **diamante** in the air with big imaginary strokes: d · i · a · m · a · n · t · e. Find it. Build it.

Step 5 — Introduce VERDAD *"VERDAD means truth — or truly, really."* Ask the child to close their eyes and finger spell **verdad** in the air with big imaginary strokes: v · e · r · d · a · d. Find it. Build it.

Step 6 — Introduce SERÁS *"SERÁS means 'you will be.' Me pregunto qué SERÁS — I wonder what you will be! The -rás ending is the future tense in Spanish. You will see it on many future-tense words as we go. Accent on the final á: se-RÁS."* Ask the child to close their eyes and finger spell **serás** in the air with big imaginary strokes: s · e · r · á · s. Find it. Build it.

Step 7 — Full column — all known words from Lessons 1 and 2 Arrange all target words in a column. Read together. Rearrange. Read again. Once this is done, invite the student to make their own column in a different order from the one you made. Then have the student read their new column of words.

Step 8 — Read the rhyme Child now knows most of the key words. Read "Estrellita" together — child reads known words, teacher helps with unknown ones.

Step 9 — Word building From **mar**: change M to B → **bar** (bar) / change M to P → **par** (pair) / change M to D → **dar** (to give!) *"The -ar ending is important in Spanish — it's how many verbs end in their dictionary form. Mar, bar, par, dar — they share the same -ar ending sound."*

Recitation: Child recites or sings "Estrellita" from memory — as much as they know.