

Latinos in the U.S.: Cognates

This lesson focuses on cognates Spanish derivatives which have been integrated into American English.

Prep: 10 minutes.

Materials: copies of the Student Resource Page. Optional: index cards with noun cognates on them for extension activity.

Target Vocabulary and Concepts:

- Review information about country names, terms for nationality, etc.
- Student focus is developing their ability to recognize cognates and understand patterns in Spanish vocabulary

Procedure:

- Have students work in partners or in groups of three to brainstorm a list of all the Spanish words they can think of that they know from their lives (People's names don't count).
- Give them only about 3-5 minutes to come up with the list and then have groups share their list to determine who had the most.
- You may want to give the winning group a sticker or some other recognition. You will likely get a lot of food words (taco, burrito, tortilla, etc.) and some common words (amigo, adiós, buenos días), but be sure to highlight geographical names (Nevada, Los Angeles, San Diego) and words of Spanish origin (rodeo, burro, adobe, armadillo, barbecue, canyon, chile, chocolate, etc.) on the **Student Resource Page**.
- Be sure to cover the reasons why so much Spanish is part of the English language—how much of the U.S. belonged to Spain and Mexico, as well as immigration to the U.S. and our shared border with Mexico.
- Make sure to fill in the blanks on the Student Resource Page, shown here:

What patterns do you see?

What ending in Spanish seems to be the same as *-tion/-sion* in English?

-sión/-ción

What seems to be the same as *-ty*?

-dad

- False cognates should also be covered—they do not need to know all the words, just demonstrate that we cannot always assume we know what a word means. (However, emphasize that there are many more cognates than there are false cognates).

Reinforcement Activities/Extensions:

Follow Up: Have students practice pronouncing the words using the rules of Spanish pronunciations. You may also just have fun with the list—divide the class in half and have one half do their most “Americanized” pronunciation of a given word while the other half does the best Spanish pronunciation they can muster. Likewise, you can pronounce the words in an Americanized way and challenge the kids to correct you. If they are right on the first try, they get a point. If not, the other team gets a point.

¡Sí, es español!: Student Resource Page

Nombre: _____

Some *español* shows up in the U.S. in place names. *Por ejemplo*:

- San and Santa are Spanish for "saint" and appear often: San Francisco, San Diego, Santa Ana, Santa Clara (all four in California), Santa Catalina mountains (AZ), San Juan (TX)
- El, La, Los and Las are Spanish articles: Los Angeles ("the angels"), Las Vegas ("the meadows"), El Paso ("the pass").
- Boca Ratón ("mouse's mouth," probably originally describing an inlet with jagged rocks), Colorado ("colored [red]"), Nevada ("snowy"), Río Grande ("big river"), Sierra Madre ("mother range"), Sierra Nevada ("snowy mountains"), Escondido ("hidden")

Some Hispanic foods (and their names) have become common in mainstream U.S. culture.

Por ejemplo:

- tortillas, jalapeños, queso, tacos, chiles, fajitas, salsa, guacamole, tamales
- chocolate (from Spanish "chocolate," from Nahuatl "xocolatl")

Did you know these words were also Spanish in origin?

albino	hammock: <i>hamaca</i>
alligator: from <i>el lagarto</i> —the lizard	iguana
alpaca	lasso: <i>lazo</i>
amigo	macho: <i>macho</i> —male
armadillo: little armed one	nada
barracuda	patio: <i>patio</i> —inner courtyard
burro	pronto: <i>pronto</i> —soon
cafeteria: <i>cafetería</i> —coffee shop	ranch: <i>rancho</i>
canyon: from <i>cañón</i>	rodeo
cargo	siesta
corral	sombrero
coyote: <i>coyote</i> , from Nahuatl <i>coyotl</i>	tobacco: <i>tabaco</i>
fiesta	tomato: <i>tomate</i> , from <i>xitomatl</i>
flamingo: <i>flamengo/flamenco</i>	tornado
guitar: <i>guitarra</i>	vamoose: <i>vamos</i> —let's go

¡Sí, es español!: Student Resource Page, ct'd

Many words in English and Spanish are *cognates*: they look very similar to each other. Often, when you see these words in Spanish you can guess their meaning in English.

This is true for adjectives and adverbs...

atlético	eterno	interesante
complicado	importante	fantástico
correcto	increíble	magnífico
elegante	inmediatamente	necesario
esencial	inteligente	rápido

...verbs...

abandonar	decidir
adorar	interesar
calcular	obedecer
complicar	observar
decorar	ocurrir

...and nouns...

accidente	exclamación	música
acento	gasolina	nación
banco	historia	nacionalidad
cable	hospital	piano
canario	identidad	profesor
conversación	información	realidad
diccionario	línea	sociedad
electricidad	lista	teléfono
enemigo	mapa	televisión
error	marca	variedad

What patterns do you see?

What ending in Spanish seems to be the same as *-tion/-sion* in English?

What seems to be the same as *-ty*?

¡OJO!: Sometimes there are false cognates! A Spanish word might look like something in English, but it can have a completely different meaning. Guess what the following words mean, then check your answers in the box below.

VERBS

1. asistir =
2. atender =
3. pretender =
4. recordar =

ADJECTIVES

5. despierto/a =
6. embarazada =
7. actual =

NOUNS

8. la librería =
9. el éxito =
10. la fábrica =
11. la carpeta =

It's a good idea to make an extra effort to remember which words are false cognates. Many well-intentioned travelers to Spanish-speaking countries have said "Estoy embarazada" when they just meant to say they were embarrassed. Imagine how much **more** embarrassed they were after that!

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|--------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|-------------|
| 1. to attend | 2. to take care of | 3. to try | 4. to remember/remind | 5. awake | 6. pregnant |
| 7. current | 8. the bookstore | 9. the success | 10. the factory | 11. the folder | |