

¡Sí se puede!

Un curso transicional para
hispanohablantes

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To the Student

What does it mean to be “bilingual”? Too often, we assume that it involves speaking and writing flawlessly in two languages. People tend to forget that, in the real world, being flawless is hardly ever possible.

If you grew up around Spanish—that is, if someone in your family (your grandparents, your mother or father, etc.) spoke Spanish to or with you at home—even if you’ve never taken a Spanish class, it’s very likely that you are a lot more bilingual than you think!

With its wide variety of readings and communicative activities, *¡Sí se puede!* will help you determine how much Spanish you already know, and provide you with tools and strategies that will allow you to fine-tune your current speaking, reading, and writing skills while developing new ones. You’ll have the opportunity to read poetry, interviews, articles, and short stories, surf the Internet, engage in community outreach, interview family members, and create your own autobiography. You’ll learn about spelling, parts of speech, and those troublesome written accents. You’ll increase your Spanish vocabulary and gain insights into how to speak and write appropriately in different settings, from the living room to the boardroom. You’ll learn to apply many of the strategies you already employ in English when you’re reading and writing in Spanish. What’s more, this textbook will introduce you to students, scientists, poets, activists, business people, artists, politicians—people from diverse communities from all over the United States, Latin America, and Spain—who through their numerous contributions to thought, society, and culture define terms like “bilingual” and “multicultural” in a variety of ways.

Are you a perfect bilingual? Is anybody? Perhaps a better question is, can you communicate effectively *y con esmero* in the language of your heritage? With the right tools and a little practice, this text will teach you that *¡sí se puede!*

¡Sí se puede! por José Luis Orozco

En este mundo
tan lindo y tan grande
yo soy único,
yo soy especial,
lleno de amor
y de inteligencia.

Yo puedo realizar
mis sueños
siendo un buen estudiante
y haciendo siempre mi trabajo
con amor,
y con gusto,
porque sé que
así se puede!

To the Instructor

The principal communicative objective undergirding *¡Sí se puede!* is to expose college-age heritage speakers who have had little or no formal instruction in Spanish to the functional structures of this language and the wide varieties of **linguistic register** in which they can appropriately be used. *¡Sí se puede!* aims to teach heritage speakers at this level to communicate effectively in their home language in a variety of communicative contexts, ranging from casual to highly stylized. Moreover, rather than eliminating dialect variation through the more traditional method of error correction, this text seeks to expand students' language capabilities in a **content-based framework** through functional reading and writing activities designed to improve students' ability to effectively communicate ideas across the spectrum of casual to academic Spanish.

The *¡Sí se puede!* program takes into account the lack of formal training most of these students have had in reading and writing Spanish. Emphasis, therefore, is placed on orthography and the rules of Spanish accentuation as well as the fundamentals of Spanish grammar, morphology, and syntax. However, this program also takes into account the fact that college-level heritage speakers in the United States have often acquired critical thinking, reading, and writing skills in English that can transfer effectively to Spanish and provides strategies for and practice in doing just that. Finally, *¡Sí se puede!* celebrates the diverse cultural heritage manifest in the often already rich variety present in students' language inventories.

¡Sí se puede! provides students with the opportunity to read, write, peer edit, discuss, and give oral presentations extensively in various registers of Spanish. This textbook offers a variety of cultural readings not only on the world's many Spanish-speaking countries but also on the diverse groups of Latinos in the United States and their many contributions to life in this country. Indeed, in addition to its demographic focus, what makes this text unique is its treatment of culture from the standpoint of *convergence*. Rather than simply presenting the standard readings per chapter on the countries of the Spanish-speaking world, the first readings in each chapter describe myriad aspects of US-based Latino cultures. In so doing, *¡Sí se puede!* establishes the overarching theme that US Latinos represent a vibrant confluence of cultures that ties together the diverse traditions of the English- and Spanish-speaking worlds. This **cross-cultural approach** is designed to foster increased pride in students' cultural diversity.

Cultural Focus

One of the most exciting and distinctive features of *¡Sí se puede!* is its exploration of cultural identities first and foremost from the perspective of diverse Hispanic communities *within* the United States. In many Spanish textbooks today,

“Hispanic culture” is presented as if it were a monolithic “foreign” entity. That is, textbook chapters typically feature cultural segments and corresponding activities on Spanish-speaking countries *outside* of the United States. In contrast, *¡Si se puede!* offers a view of the United States as a country where many different communities of Spanish speakers play a vital role in forging our national identity. Each chapter begins with a reading and corresponding pre- and post-reading activities that explore the multifaceted contributions of specific US-based cultural communities (e.g., Mexican, Puerto Rican, Dominican, Salvadoran, Cuban, Nicaraguan, Colombian, indigenous American) not only to that community’s continued development and growth but also to that of the greater United States. In the second half of each unit, we present parallel readings and corresponding activities related to the country of origin of each community.

The primary vehicle through which this cultural exploration takes place is the diverse readings in each chapter. Including but not restricted to short stories, newspaper articles, essays, poetry, music lyrics, student testimonials, and community activist manifestos, these readings present a variety of divergent perspectives on identity, race and ethnicity, politics, community, language, nationality, family, history, and values as these critical themes relate to being Hispanic and living in the United States. The activities surrounding these readings, in addition to developing strategies for reading comprehension, linguistic awareness, and communicative fluency, aim to help students reflect on their own identities and personal cultural histories while making important connections between themselves, the communities in which they live, and other communities that may differ (sometimes radically) from their own. Activities in the first segment of each chapter focus first on basic reading comprehension, then on establishing connections between individual and community-based cultural perspectives, and finally on specific issues of language, grammar, and linguistic register. By presenting a wide variety of perspectives and providing activities that promote individual reflection and the establishment of connections between individual and community, *¡Si se puede!* seeks to approach the cultural communities as non-monolithic identities that are complex, multifaceted, and diverse.

¡Si se puede! Nuts and Bolts

The wide variety of learning objectives and corresponding activities presented in this text can be contoured to fit the broad array of linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the growing number of students enrolled in heritage speaker Spanish classes in the United States. Objectives are outlined at the start of every chapter and fall under the following general categories:

- *Orgullo cultural*
- *Gramática*
- *Ortografía*
- *Registro*
- *Estrategia de lectura*
- *Estrategia de escritura*

Each chapter of *¡Sí se puede!* focuses on one of the following US Latino ethnic groups:

1. Mexican
2. Puerto Rican
3. Dominican
4. Cuban
5. Colombian and Venezuelan
6. Salvadoran and Nicaraguan
7. Panamanian
8. Guatemalan and Hispano-Indigenous
9. Argentinean and Chilean
10. Iberian Spanish

Chapter Structure

Each chapter contains the following sections:

Identidades

This section, which starts off each chapter, includes:

- a warm-up with discussion questions based on a picture, quote, or short reading.
- strategies and related activities designed to improve reading comprehension, such as skimming and scanning for main ideas, using pictures as visual comprehension cues, and identifying meaning through cognates and loan words.
- reading activities based on a short story, essay, or testimonial by a US Latino(a) author from the ethnic group upon which the particular chapter's cultural theme is based. A brief profile of the author in question is also presented.
- reading activities that present information regarding a US-based Hispanic community.
- comprehension and additional discussion questions that allow students to internalize the readings and relate them to their own personal experiences.
- vocabulary glosses and activities designed to develop effective reading and writing strategies.

Reading activities in this section are generally subdivided into three categories:

1. *¿Qué pasó en la lectura?* targets basic reading comprehension.
2. *La lectura, la vida y tú* connects readings with students' personal experiences and challenges them to draw parallels between their own realities and those of the cultural community under study in each chapter.
3. *La lectura y la lengua* highlights the key functional and grammatical concepts presented in the chapter as they appear in the readings.

In some sections, we have also included additional exercises that relate more specifically to particular readings or themes. Moreover, throughout the text



students are encouraged to consult the *¡Sí se puede!* student website for even more activities for discussion and skill development.

Puentes

The goal of this section is to bridge the structural gap between students' academic training in English and their knowledge of Spanish by teaching them about key functional aspects of the language. This section covers the following topics:

- the notion of register within the context of chapter theme.
- exposition of fundamental functional and grammatical concepts.
- corollary activities for groups and pairs.
- linguistic phenomena such as code-switching, English and Spanish loan words and their absorption into both languages, rural dialects, slang, and the linguistic contributions of indigenous languages to Spanish syntax.
- multi-leveled writing activities dealing with topics from the simple to the complex—from sentence formation, vocabulary-building, and accentuation to the finer nuances of composition.
- Visit the *¡Sí se puede!* online study center for additional spelling and grammar practice.



Herencias

This section includes the following:

- a reading that examines the historical, geographic, and socio-economic realities of the country of origin of the U.S. Hispanic community explored in *Identidades*.
- a profile of a famous person or phenomenon from the Spanish-speaking country connected to that chapter's Latino ethnic group of focus, and brief readings on the history of that country or countries.
- discussion and comprehension questions.
- a series of Web-based resources for further information and reading, writing, and communicative activities.
- writing activities that include peer-editing strategies and self-editing exercises based on the reading.

¡Sí se puede!

This section centers on a series of culminating tasks in which students directly apply what they have learned in the chapter in terms of register, morphology, and writing skills. The segment includes:

- communicative exercises, such as role-plays, in which students are asked to make use of spoken language in a variety of registers.
- activities in which students are asked to recognize register variance either in authentic documents or in their own daily exchanges in Spanish.

- personalized writing activities such as journals, interviews, biographies, poetry creation, and personalized dictionaries in which students relate the cultural components of the chapter to their own personal experience and language use.
- experiential learning activities involving community service and interaction designed to foster awareness and challenge students' pre-existing assumptions regarding culture, language, and identity.

How to Use This Book

As with any textbook, *¡Sí se puede!* can be used in a variety of ways. It contains reading and writing activities and presentations for individuals, pairs, and small groups. These activities are designed to develop heritage students' presentational, interpretive, and analytical skills in Spanish and can be personalized to fit a variety of levels of communicative proficiency. In each of the four chapter segments, the *¡A ver qué tanto sabes ya!* activities highlight the knowledge of Spanish that students already have, and the *¡A ver qué aprendiste!* activities focus on basic comprehension of materials presented and are well within the skill set of the majority of heritage students. Reading comprehension activities also progress in steps, from basic comprehension (*¿Qué pasó en la lectura?*) to making interpretations and connections (*La lectura, la vida y tú*). The *¡Vamos más allá!* and *Exploraciones* activities include a variety of both discussion and writing exercises, including short answers, personal histories, PowerPoint presentations, journal entries, biographies, and more. These activities begin at the basic level and gradually increase in complexity in order to ensure that students from all proficiency levels can further develop their unique skill sets by working individually and cooperatively. Finally, the *¡Sí se puede!* section at the end of each chapter presents activities that tie together the topics presented in the previous three sections and invite written responses that can range from simple to complex—again depending upon the individual student's skill set. In short, all of the activities in this book are designed to engage students from a variety of communicative backgrounds with the goal that all students be able to participate by showcasing their often already considerable skills and building upon them.

By focusing on linguistic register and functional structure, English-to-Spanish skill transfer, and the cultural contributions and heritage of the diverse groups of Latinos in the United States, this textbook offers the heritage speaker of Spanish a unique resource that will provide the basic tools to increase both proficiency in the language of cultural origin and pride in one's cultural identity, always reinforcing the idea that, regardless of one's previous training or experience, *¡sí se puede!*