

Preface

To the Instructor

Philosophy and Goals

Nuestro idioma, nuestra herencia: Español para hispanohablantes is a Spanish for Heritage Speakers textbook. It has been especially crafted for students in the United States who grew up speaking or hearing Spanish at home or in their community and who, for the most part, have been educated in English. Due to the presence of both Spanish and English in their lives, heritage speakers have a unique set of needs in terms of Spanish language acquisition. While they are typically proficient at understanding and speaking Spanish, their reading and writing skills in this language need to be further developed. Heritage speakers can often benefit from an increased command of grammatical structures, improvement in orthography, expansion of vocabulary, and development of an awareness of register—that is, knowledge of the most appropriate language to use in formal vs. informal contexts. As such, the ultimate goal of this textbook is to build upon and refine the students' Spanish language skills so that they develop the ability and confidence to use them in any context—academic, professional, or personal.

Unique in its approach, each of the eight chapters of *Nuestro idioma, nuestra herencia* highlights a Hispanic cultural genre and grounds it in relevant countries of focus. Chapter themes include, among others, the music of the Hispanic Caribbean, Mexican film, and literary traditions, myths, and legends in Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia. While the topics may be familiar, students will undoubtedly increase their knowledge on each subject and gain a greater appreciation of these particular aspects of Hispanic culture. The in-depth, nuanced, and positive treatment of culture not only provides an engaging framework but also makes the content relevant to the students' lives. Hence, the students will be motivated to learn, and, while they hone their Spanish language skills, they will also develop a deeper sense of pride in their linguistic and cultural heritage.

Organization

Each of the seven distinct sections—**Para empezar**, **Lecturas culturales**, **Ortografía**, **Gramática**, **Escritura**, **Negocios**, and the **Proyecto final**—work in unison to address the particular needs of the heritage speaker.

- Each chapter begins with the **Para empezar** section, which contains an **encuesta**: a fun and engaging survey or self-test that students take to gauge how much they already know about the chapter theme and how it relates to the country/countries of focus. At the end of each chapter, students return to the survey and retake it to see how much they have learned.

- The **Lecturas culturales**, of which there are three per chapter, are interesting and informative cultural readings that showcase the depth and richness of a given Hispanic cultural genre; they are preceded by an **Introducción**, which presents an overview of the chapter theme. The post-reading activities in this section consist of basic comprehension-check questions, small-group conversation questions to encourage critical thinking, and a three-part Web exercise where students delve deeper into the reading topic by doing research online. In the three-part Web exercise, they research and answer specific questions (**Paso 1**), share their findings in groups (**Paso 2**), and engage in a more personalized discussion guided by key conversation questions (**Paso 3**).
- The **Ortografía** section focuses on the most common spelling problems for heritage speakers (accent marks and how to know where to put them, **b** vs. **v**, **g** vs. **j**, and the like).
- The **Gramática** section focuses primarily on verb tenses and moods (the indicative vs. the subjunctive) that tend to be challenging for heritage speakers. Students learn the subtle and not-so-subtle differences between these tenses and moods and complete activities to practice what they have learned.
- The **Escritura** section presents an opportunity for students to sharpen their essay-writing skills by practicing different writing techniques such as comparison and contrast, biography and autobiography, and the argumentative essay.
- Unlike other Spanish for Heritage Speakers textbooks on the market, *Nuestro idioma, nuestra herencia* contains a **Negocios** section with a business-oriented reading related to the chapter theme. These readings enable the students to examine the intricate relationship between Hispanic cultures and the business world. The corresponding activities follow the same structure as the activities in the **Lecturas culturales** section.
- At the end of each chapter is the **Proyecto final**, a theme-related, culminating final project that students work on in pairs. The project builds on the knowledge students have gained over the course of the chapter. Examples of final projects include creating promotional posters and brochures, magazine ads, websites, and even new and innovative products. Moreover, the **Proyecto final** provides the instructor with an additional opportunity to assess student performance.

Each chapter also contains two boxed features:

- The **Nuestro idioma** boxed feature presents a brief history behind words in Spanish originally derived from a different language (Taino, Nahuatl, Greek, Visigoth, Quechua, Guarani, Arabic, and English), a list of some words from that language, and related activities.
- The **Personajes destacados** boxed feature contains several short biographies of prominent individuals from the country/countries of focus of the chapter followed by related activities.

Supplements

- The *Manual de actividades* provides additional individual practice in the areas of vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and writing.
- The *Online Learning Center* (www.mhhe.com/nuestroidioma) contains the online component of the **Investigación y conversación** activities that appear in every chapter of the text.

It is our sincere hope that you as the instructor find teaching the Spanish for Heritage Speakers course with the *Nuestro idioma, nuestra herencia* program to be a fun, inspiring, and fulfilling experience.

Warmly,
Heidi Ann García, Carmen Carney, and Trino Sandoval

To the Student

We wrote *Nuestro idioma, nuestra herencia* for students like you who were either born in the United States or immigrated to this country as a child or as a youth, grew up hearing or speaking Spanish at home or in their community, and who, for the most part, have been educated in English.

As we conceptualized and developed *Nuestro idioma, nuestra herencia*, we thought about many of our students and their frequent requests for help with improving their Spanish. They wished to further develop their Spanish language skills in order to be able to confidently use their Spanish in any context—whether it be in a university classroom, in a future business meeting, or even while on vacation in a Spanish-speaking country. Moreover, many of our students expressed a genuine interest in learning more about the culture of their families and Hispanic culture in general. As a result, the ultimate goal of *Nuestro idioma, nuestra herencia* is to help you polish the reading, speaking, and writing skills in Spanish that you already possess. Another principal goal is to help you deepen your understanding of your own culture as well as that of other Hispanic cultures. While you hone your Spanish language skills and accrue cultural knowledge, you will undoubtedly develop a greater sense of pride in your linguistic and cultural heritage.

Using the *Nuestro idioma, nuestra herencia* program will enable you to:

- acquire further knowledge about the culture of the Spanish-speaking country you or your family is from as well as other Hispanic cultures
- learn about the contributions Hispanics have made to the United States and the world at large so that you are inspired by and proud of the men and women with whom you have a shared language and heritage
- hone your reading skills
- refine your writing skills
- increase your command of grammatical structures
- improve your orthography
- expand your vocabulary
- learn the most appropriate language to use in formal vs. informal contexts

We hope that you are proud of the Spanish language skills and cultural knowledge that you already have. We also hope that you find the experience of building upon these skills and expanding your cultural horizons to be intellectually and emotionally fulfilling as well as tremendous fun!

Sincerely,
Heidi Ann García, Carmen Carney, and Trino Sandoval

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