

immigrants have always acquired languages. After a getting your hands on a couple of inexpensive, simple aids to learning listed below, the main path of learning is in reading and listening to materials easily and cheaply acquired in Mexico or the United States. Easy reading that develops natural speech pattern and reinforces everyday common speech patterns effortlessly, while having fun reading things that Mexicans read for enjoyment, not homework.

Click on the pictures of study aids below to visit sites where they are shown or sold. The first step is to get hold of an essential tool that all language students use: a Spanish-English dictionary. But not just any given dictionary: I would University of Chicago ones) because of it's very special key verb

of deal with conjugation, by far. Any verb you look up has a number. Go to that number in the middle section and you'll see a sample of full conjugation. Your verb will use

regular

use the same model. So you know that if the first person singular for the former is "conozco", then the same tense for the latter will be "parezco". A beautifully simple method to give you all the verb trees you need in a small space. I highly recommend this over all those "501 Verbs" books, which I consider bulky and useless. So many of those verbs are conjugated identically... why bother to have hundreds of pages for them when a few will do? When you're picking up you dictionary also grab a steno notebook or something similar that fits your habits in having paper handy to jot on quickly. En las rayas esperamos una guia En el margen un limite Perforadas las hojas no se pueden escapar van y vienen,nada más Between the lines we expect a quide La espiral es una ilusión. seeween the unes we expect a guine seeween the margin a limit can't escape In the margin the sheets as want a pen or pencil handy. Las palabras pueden volar This is the active The spiral pad is an illusion They just came and go. phrase, jot it down in your pad and look it up as soon as you get the chance. If you can't find it in a dictionary, ask the next

section in the middle. It's the most efficient way

irregular verb will follow some model in that section. For instance, "conocer" and "paracer"

For

structure.

hundreds will follow that same

conjugation

UNIVERSIDAD DE CHICAGO Diccionario INGLES-ESPANOL Mexican stores always have a good variety of handy notebooks, by the way—ask for cuadernos or look in the section for escolares items or papeleria stores. In the U.S. of course, you can get anything from pocket pads to elegant leather Moleskines. And, of course, you part of studying language—your own collection and lexicon. When you hear a new word or turn of

explain it, then right that down. Periodically your notes, committing definitions and idioms to memory repetition. You'll be creating customized guide to speaking Spanish—the Spanish used and understood in

person you

Grammar

Spanish-speaking

It takes some learners dandy cribsheet, or Google, jot it in your notebook and wait for a chance to

good pronunciation. Join online groups dedicated to Spanish. One thing to be very careful of... just as English is very different as spoken in England, compared to the U.S. or Jamaica or Nigeria, Spanish has regional differences that can be very different, indeed. Be sure to learn the kind spoken where you are going to learn. If you get a textbook slanted towards Spain, rather than Latin America, you will be like a person trying to prepare for living in Texas by studying British magazines, thus referring to "kerbs" and "lifts". The biggest divide in the New World is between "voseo" countries like Argentina and "tuteo" countries like Mexico and most of the rest. So instead of saying "Tu eres", you'd say "Vos sos". Only different in second person. If you are going to Argentina, get Mafalda books, mentioned

below. If you're going to Cuba, God help you. Native Spanish speakers

newspapers and "Don Quixote", you extend your familiarity with children's books and comics. When Mexicans ask me how I learned Spanish, I sometimes say that my maestro was Condorito. The little condor, here on your left, is ubiquitous in Latin America with thousands of little comic books on newsstands and used magazine stores. He's a wild and irreverent bird, even more so than Bugs Bunny, and he always speaks the local variations. And has a cute girlfriend, and the usual little nephew, who sometimes stars in his own comics for younger children. I highly recommend getting and reading his comics (or historietas) and other kid's comics for beginning language acquisition. Some prospective learners are surprised, even offended, at

And since you now have your basic tools, lets move on to what you want to read in order to most effortlessly learn Spanish.. The novelty of the Cabo Bob Method is that instead of bulky, boring texts, or trying to read

Mexican gags and cheesecake, had a great little comic packed with jokes of all quality and the cream of Mexican

into words and usage that made no sense and had no dictionary explanation. Asking people about them was leading me into the territory of national "guy talk" and popular idioms. So if you want to be au currant with hip people,

artists' renderings of sexy women. Unfortunately (and inexplicably) the magazine went out of print, but it was so popular that there are still thousands of copies around to

It was Mil Chistes who brought me to Slang. I was running

be had, not to mention all over the Internet

created by the Argentine cartoon genius "Quino" is a unifying actor in Latin America. If you become familiar with the delightful little girl in the comic strip you'll find that everybody is familiar with her, her quotes, family and friends. She is the "Peanuts" of Hispanic America. But more grown up. Drawn during Argentina's turbulent sixties, she is always quick with a social or political quip, in addition to endearing kid humor. Her books are available throughout the world and are richly suggested as

music and bookstores for "Cancioneras" that listed song lyrics, sometimes with chords or staffs for the melody. Especially hand are the "Guitarra Facile" series if you play guitar or keyboards. Linda Ronstadt's "Canciones De Mi Padre" records are perfect for this perfect: popular in Mexico (they are "old timey" Mexican songs known to all generations), easily available in the USA, and both come with lyrics in Spanish and good English translations. But anything you can find the lyrics for will work, and

The Internet offers a lot of good instructional

of the films are subtitled in Spanish. (Not children's films, and you want to look at the

cartelera of chains like Cinepolis for "SUB" rather than "DOB" or "ESP" for films dubbed into or filmed in Spanish. You'll find that the

The slang book all Mexico knows about, the new book of jokes and very Mexican forms of humor. Proclaimed as fun, cultural guides, big trouble, and just plain

A perfect souvenir and way hip gift!

**CABO BOB'S DEFINITIVE** 

for your attention and money. But Cabo Bob has a plan for learning Spanish that doesn't cost a lot of money, doesn't require a bunch of heavy books, lets you learn about the current culture as you go... and is a lot of fun. This approach has worked well for those who've taken the excellent advice, basically a supercharger for the natural means by which children and very, very strongly recommend the pocket-sized paperback. It's compact, cheap, and superior to other Span/Eng dictionaries (even the big thick

The words can fly the world you inhabit, not an office or classroom. The third item for your initial kit can be found in any college bookstore or ordered online: a one-page plastic laminated study guide to grammar. These one-sheet guides, generally three-hole punched for notebooks, are a compact presentation of basic grammar like you'd find at greater bulk in a textbook. But they are weight nothing, take up no space in your luggage, and are impermeable to water damage and damned near indestructible. awhile to get enough vocabulary to start worrying about grammar rules, but it's all there for you when you need it. These three items equip you to start learning, and to be able to "live off the land" once in

a Spanish-speaking country or neighborhood. There are now "cheat sheets" larger than one page, two-fold or even three-fold guides to grammar. really doesn't matter that much. The idea is to have access to "the rules" for help when you need it. you have questions you can't solve with your handypester somebody for an explanation. You'll find that people actually enjoy educating people about their language. Speaking of "ready for grammar", by the way, the worst thing you can do is to refrain from speaking out of embarrassment because you're not yet fluent or competent. If you haven't attained full mastery yet, speaking to people is more important than it ever will be again. If you don't know conjugation, use infinitives. They will hear this as "cave man talk"--savages in their comics talk like that. They will get the drift, perhaps correct you, and you'll learn strong when being aided like that. See if you can find local conversation groups. Try to find a Mexican restaurant to patronize to the point that they will talk with you, give you

despair of comprehending the island's machine gun delivery and dropping or swallowing of final consonants. One more introductory comment: one of the beauties of Spanish (and horrors of English) is that in Spanish any word you can read, you can pronounce. There are no weird sounds, an "a" is always pronounced the same way. This is the pronunciation guide from my "Mexican Slang 101" books, nice and brief. Any other rules will be found in your grammar sheets. Learn the vowels, what the accents mean, and you will find that, unlike English, you can acquire Spanish very nicely just by reading. The question is, what to read? Read on...

the suggestion that they peruse things written for children and semi-literates, books with pictures. They miss the point that if you don't speak a language, you ARE a child in that tongue. In fact, it's great if you can learn around children. They are delighted to encounter a grown-up who is for some reason stupider than they are and needful of being taught the ropes. The thing is, do kids learn their own language with newspapers and novels? Or course not, they learn from kid's books, generally with pictures or Dick and Jane or The Cat In The Hat. Follow their lead.

I particularly advise against trying to use newspapers to learn in Mexico. Unlike (or worse than) American papers, they are written in a very stilted elevated style, not the way people talk. Calling doctors "Galeanos" instead of "Medicos", tossing out complicated words and arcane usage like "en esta

Plunging into a novel is extremely punishing for a beginner. Most tire quickly of slogging through words to look up without getting to anywhere entertaining. With comics you read one page, maybe learn a few words, then you're done with that "lesson", maybe had a laugh, maybe learned a joke you can pass on, read as many as you have patience for. Painless and productive. There are plenty of booklets available; I suggest Condorito because many times something like Bugs or Japanese anime will be translated and not have quite the right "ring". Local comics are very

Puerto" instead of just saying, "Here in Mazatlan".

populist. And, ideally, you will outgrown them. At some point you should be able to read through a Condorito or one of the crime, western, romance, or cartoon booklets without needing a dictionary or jotting. You'll be a man, my son. You might still find that attempting literature is fatiguing, but there are books for the nominally grown up. My second major teacher was Mil Chistes. The four-eyed "Thousand Jokes" dude, a sort of Alfred E. Newman of

intellectually and culturally significant, that I will wholeheartedly recommend. Mafalda,

NCIONES words.

and explanations. And of course watching a news show also helps you get the picture on the society and culture behind the language. The advanced step would be to just watch normal TV shows. If you can do

> necessary for travelers, expats, students. Let's put it this way... if you don't have Cabo Bob's books around, why bother to even learn Spanish? Available in paper

America...you should buy this book!

subtitles aren't perfect translations: they are greatly "cleaned up" for one thing, and sometimes have errors that can be a little funny, or annoying. But it's a great form of immersion with "training wheels". viewing, too—and you don't have to be in Mexico to do it. Netflix is widely use in Mexico for films and TV programs in both languages. (Note many residents and expatriates get Virtual Private Networks, so they can watch Netflix and other streaming movie sites from both Mexican and U.S. "locations". YouTube is invaluable for learning and searching for "learn Spanish" and other terms can show you anything from songs to films to news broadcasts. A huge advantage is that you can pause and replay in order to slow things down and learn. You can even send links to friends who speak Spanish and ask for translations

Check 'em out, let us know how you liked

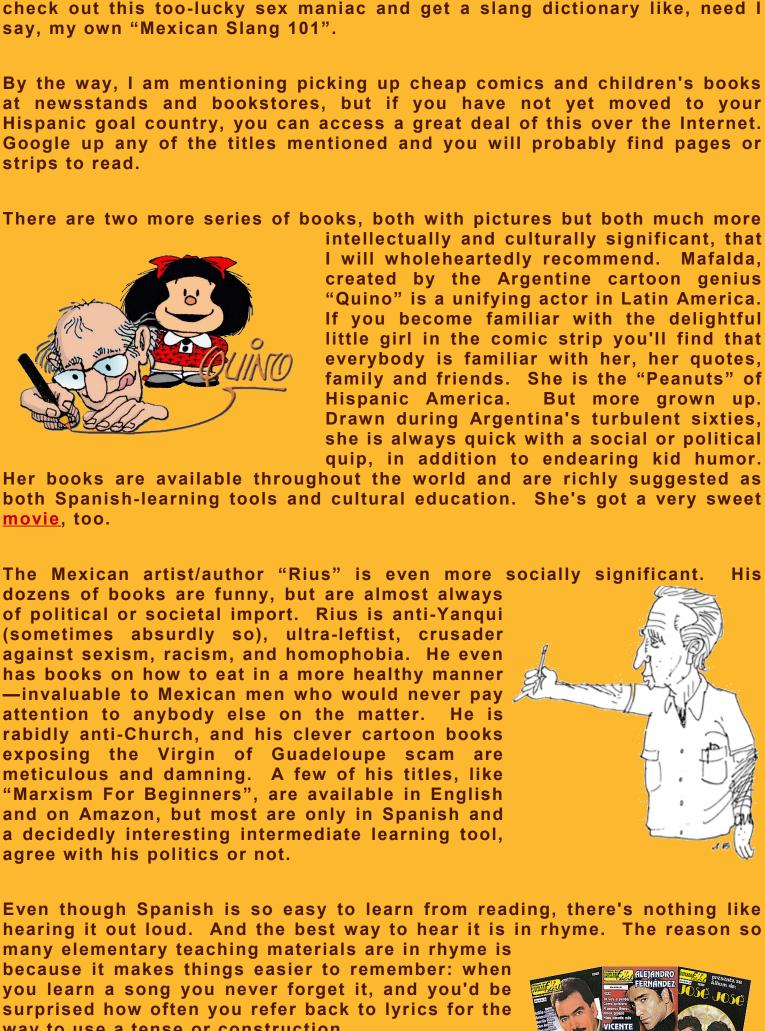
both Spanish-learning tools and cultural education. She's got a very sweet The Mexican artist/author "Rius" is even more socially significant. dozens of books are funny, but are almost always of political or societal import. Rius is anti-Yanqui (sometimes absurdly so), ultra-leftist, crusader though of course is you have the Spanish "letra" you can always translate them one way or the In pre-Internet days the hot set up was looking in

against sexism, racism, and homophobia. He even has books on how to eat in a more healthy manner invaluable to Mexican men who would never pay attention to anybody else on the matter. He is rabidly anti-Church, and his clever cartoon books exposing the Virgin of Guadeloupe scam are meticulous and damning. A few of his titles, like "Marxism For Beginners", are available in English and on Amazon, but most are only in Spanish and a decidedly interesting intermediate learning tool, Even though Spanish is so easy to learn from reading, there's nothing like hearing it out loud. And the best way to hear it is in rhyme. The reason so many elementary teaching materials are in rhyme is because it makes things easier to remember: when you learn a song you never forget it, and you'd be surprised how often you refer back to lyrics for the So the recommendation is to get music and listen to it; not such bad homework. And to make it come faster and more efficiently, you want to have access to the lyrics, preferably in both languages,

that means almost everything in these days of Google. Search for the name of the song with the term "letra" and you're sure to turn up the words for whatever songs you like to listen to. Type in "translate from Spanish" and you will generally get a site where you can paste in the Spanish lyrics and get a crude translation instantly. And of course, you can also use the "ask around and write it in your notebook" method. This is one of the most useful and enjoyable ways to learn, and also acquaint you with the music of the country. If you hear songs you like on the radio, or on videos in restaurants or clubs, find out the name and artist and look up the The next step should be obvious... start watching films and TV shows. You'll find that in Mexico movies are much cheaper than in the U.S. And that most

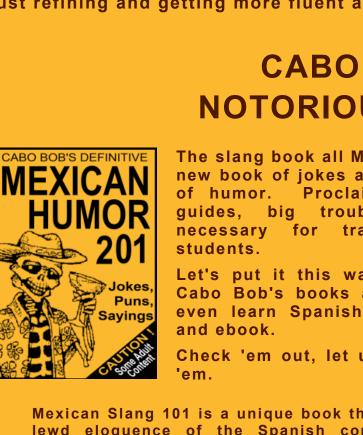
that and get most of what's going on, you're there: no longer "learning" but just refining and getting more fluent and comprehensive. **CABO BOB'S NOTORIOUS BOOKS** CABO BOB'S DEFINITIVE

Mexican Slang 101 is a unique book that reveals the hip talk and occasionally lewd eloquence of the Spanish commonly spoken in Mexico and Latin guide to a difficult subject...absolutely



agree with his politics or not. way to use a tense or construction. other.

METELLY



"Mexico Mike" Nelson This book isn't a lightweight gimmick but a useful, insightful padrisimo! Carl Franz, Author of "A People's Guide To Mexico" And don't be a stranger... Check out Cabo Bob's Website, with its cool videos. And the Learn Spanish and Crazy About Mexico FaceBook