

Languages of Spain

España. 40,280,780. National or official languages: Spanish, regional languages: Aragonese, Asturian, Basque, Galician, Gascon (Aranese), Catalan. Literacy rate: 93% to 97%. Also includes Fa D'ambu (600), Judeo-Tunisian Arabic, Kabuverdianu (10,000), Portuguese, Tarifit, Vlax Romani (998), Western Farsi (25,000), Arabic (200,000), Chinese (20,000), from Latin America (150,000). Information mainly from M. Stephens 1976; P. Blanchet 1986; B. Comrie 1987; J. Fishman 1991. Blind population: 30,000 (1982 WCE). Deaf population: 120,000 to 2,383,940. Deaf institutions: 129. The number of languages listed for Spain is 15. Of those, 13 are living languages and 2 are extinct.

Living languages

Aragonese	[arg] 11,000. Ethnic population: 2,000,000 (1994). Zaragoza, Uesca Province. The northern limit is the Pyrenean border, separating Aragon from Occitania; the western limit is the border of Navarra; the eastern limit is north of Montsó. Western Aragonese includes the towns of Ansó, Echo, Chasa, Berdún, and Chaca; Central Aragonese the towns of Panticosa, Biescas, Torla, Broto, Bielsa, Yebra, and L'Ainsa; Eastern Aragonese the towns of Benás (Benasque, Benasc, Patués), Plan, Bisagorri, Campo, Perarruga, Graus, Estadilla; Southern Aragonese the towns of Agüero, Ayerbe, Rasal, Bolea, Lierta, Uesca, Almudébar, Nozito, Labata, Alquezra, Angüés, Pertusa, Balbastro, Nabal. <i>Alternate names:</i> Aragoieraz, Altoaragonés, Aragonés, Fabla Aragonesa, Patués, High Aragonese. <i>Dialects:</i> Western Aragonese (Ansotano, Cheso), Central Aragonese (Belsetán, Tensino, Pandicuto, Bergotés), Eastern Aragonese (Benasqués, Grausino, Ribagorzano, Fobano, Chistabino), Southern Aragonese (Ayerbense, Semontanés). There are local varieties. Different from the local variety of Spanish (also called 'Aragonese', which is influenced by High Aragonese). Eastern Aragonese is transitional to Catalan. Similarities to Catalan, Occitan, and Gascon. <i>Classification:</i> Indo-European, Italic, Romance, Italo-Western, Western, Pyrenean-Mozarabic, Pyrenean More information.
Asturian	[ast] 100,000 in Spain (1994). Population includes 50,000 in Central Asturian, 30,000 in Western Asturian, 20,000 in Eastern Asturian. Population total all countries: 125,039. Ethnic population: 550,000 (1996). Principedom of Asturias except for the most western section where Galician is spoken, the western part of Cantabria and Leon, and northern Castilla-Leon. In Cantabria and Las Peñamelleras (Asturies) people

	<p>speak Montañés, a Spanish dialect with Asturian influence. Leonese associations promote their language variety. There are Leonese minorities in Portugal. Also spoken in Portugal. <i>Alternate names:</i> Astur-Leonese, Asturian-Leonese, Asturianu. <i>Dialects:</i> Leonese (Lleones), Western Asturian, Central Asturian (Bable), Eastern Asturian. As different from Spanish as Galician or Catalan; more different than Murcian and Andalusian. Close to Leonese. About 80% intelligibility of Spanish (R. A. Hall, Jr. 1989, personal communication); enough to cause disruption of communicative ability (T. Erickson SIL 1992). The Vaqueiros ethnic group speaks Western Asturian. Intelligibility among the three dialects is functional. Close to Mirandés in Portugal. Leonese may be a separate language. Central Asturian is considered the model, and has the most speakers. <i>Classification:</i> Indo-European, Italic, Romance, Italo-Western, Western, Gallo-Iberian, Ibero-Romance, West Iberian, Asturo-Leonese</p> <p>More information.</p>
Basque	<p>[eus] 580,000 in Spain (1991 L. Trask U. of Sussex). There are 2,000,000 residents of the 3 provinces of Basque territory; 25% were born outside the territory, 40% in the territory were born to Basque parents. 4,400,000 in Spain have a Basque surname; 19% live in Basque country. Population total all countries: 588,108. French-Spanish border, 3 Basque provinces: Alava (Araba), Biskaia (Biskay), and Gipuzkoa of the Autonomous Basque Community (CAV); in the northern area of the Autonomous Region of Navarra (Nafarroa) of north central Spain. Also spoken in Australia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Philippines, USA. <i>Alternate names:</i> Vascuense, Euskera. <i>Dialects:</i> Guipuzcoan (Guipuzcoano, Gipuzkoan), Alto Navarro Septentrional (High Navarrese, Upper Navarran), Alto Navarro Meridional, Biscayan (Vizcaino), Roncalese, Avalan. A degree of inherent intelligibility among all regional varieties except Souletin. Regional varieties are sometimes preferred for oral use, but in Spain there is also a fairly strong desire for the Batua unified standard.</p> <p><i>Classification:</i> Basque</p> <p>More information.</p>
Caló	<p>[rmr] 40,000 in Spain. Population total all countries: 76,580. Also spoken in Brazil, France, Portugal. <i>Alternate names:</i> Gitano, Iberian Romani, Hispanoromani. <i>Dialects:</i> Spanish Caló, Portuguese Calão (Calão, Lusitano-Romani), Catalan Caló, Basque Caló, Brazilian Calão. A Gypsy language very different from other Romani. A cryptological variety of Spanish (I. Hancock 1995). McLane found 300 to 400 words based on Romani, but no individual was acquainted with more than 100. The Iberian base for Caló is regional dialects, where the overlap is not distinct between Spanish and</p>

	<p>Portuguese. <i>Classification:</i> Mixed Language, Iberian-Romani</p> <p>More information.</p>
Catalan-Valencian-Balear	<p>[cat] 6,472,828 in Spain (1996). Population total all countries: 6,667,328. Northeastern Spain, around Barcelona; Catalonia, Valencia provinces, Balearic Islands, region of Carche, Murcia Province. Menorquin is on Menorca. Pallarese, a subdialect of Northwestern Catalan, is in Pallars. Ribagorçan, another subdialect extends from the Valley of Aran to the south of Tamarit, and from the Noguera Ribagorçana to the border with Aragonese. Also spoken in Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Switzerland, Uruguay, USA, Venezuela. <i>Alternate names:</i> Català, Catalán, Bacavès, Catalanian. <i>Dialects:</i> Catalan-Rousillonese (Northern Catalán), Valencian (Valenciano, Valencià), Balearic (Balear, Insular Catalan, Mallorqui, Menorqui, Eivissenc), Central Catalan, Algherese, Northwestern Catalan (Pallarese, Ribagorçan, Lleidatà, Aiguavivan). The standard variety is a literary composite which no one speaks, based on several dialects. Pallarese and Ribagorçan dialects are less similar to standard Catalan. Benasquese and Aiguavivan people live in isolated valleys and have a distinct phonology from their neighbors. Tortosin may be closer to Valencian. Central Catalan has about 90% to 95% inherent intelligibility to speakers of Valencian (R. A. Hall, Jr., 1989). Written Catalan is closest to Barcelona speech. Central Catalan has 87% lexical similarity with Italian, 85% with Portuguese and Spanish, 76% with Rhetto-Romance, 75% with Sardinian, 73% with Rumanian. <i>Classification:</i> Indo-European, Italic, Romance, Italo-Western, Western, Gallo-Iberian, Ibero-Romance, East Iberian</p> <p>More information.</p>
Catalonian Sign Language	<p>[csc] 18,000 (1994). Catalonia. <i>Dialects:</i> An indigenous sign language, quite distinct from Spanish Sign Language. About 50% intelligibility by users of Spanish Sign Language. <i>Classification:</i> Deaf sign language</p> <p>More information.</p>
Extremaduran	<p>[ext] 200,000. 500,000 able to use it, including some monolinguals (1994 T. Erickson). Most speakers are in the northern dialect. Ethnic population: 1,100,000 (1994). Autonomous region of Extremadura (except the Fala-speaking valley in the northwest, Portuguese dialect-speaking strips in the west, and Spanish-speaking strip in the east), and a few neighboring areas. <i>Alternate names:</i> Extremeño, Ehtremeño, Cahtúo, Cahtúö. <i>Dialects:</i> Northern Extremaduran (Artu Ehtremeño), Central Extremaduran</p>

	<p>(Meyu Ehtremeñu), Southern Extremaduran (Bahu Ehtremeñu). Related to the eastern dialect of Tur-Leonese. <i>Classification:</i> Indo-European, Italic, Romance, Italo-Western, Western, Gallo-Iberian, Ibero-Romance, West Iberian, Castilian</p> <p>More information.</p>
Fala	<p>[fax] 10,500 (1994 T. Erickson). Population includes 5,500 active speakers in the language area; 5,000 outside, many of whom return each summer. Northwest corner of the autonomous region of Extremadura, an isolated valley on the Portuguese border called Val de Xalima or Val du riu Ellas, towns of Valverdi du Fresnu, Sa Ellas and Sa Martín de Trebellu. <i>Alternate names:</i> A Fala de Xálima, A Fala do Xálima, Galaico-Extremaduran, "Chapurreáu". <i>Dialects:</i> Valvideiru, Mañegu, Lagarteiru. Not easily intelligible with the surrounding language varieties. Intelligible to speakers of Galician. <i>Classification:</i> Indo-European, Italic, Romance, Italo-Western, Western, Gallo-Iberian, Ibero-Romance, West Iberian, Portuguese-Galician</p> <p>More information.</p>
Galician	<p>[glg] 3,173,400 in Spain (1986). Population total all countries: 3,188,400. Northwest Spain, Autonomous Region of Galicia. Also spoken in Portugal. <i>Alternate names:</i> Galego, Gallego. <i>Dialects:</i> Galician is between Portuguese and Spanish, but closer to Portuguese. Portuguese has about 85% intelligibility to speakers of Galician (R. A. Hall, Jr., 1989). Many dialects. There is tension between those in Tras Os Montes Portugal and Spain over orthography. <i>Classification:</i> Indo-European, Italic, Romance, Italo-Western, Western, Gallo-Iberian, Ibero-Romance, West Iberian, Portuguese-Galician</p> <p>More information.</p>
Gascon, Aranese	<p>[gsc] 3,814 in Spain (1991 linguistic census). Ethnic population: 5,552 (1991). Aran Valley, headwaters of the Garona River in the northwest corner of the autonomous region of Catalonia, Pyrenees Mountains The capital is Viella. <i>Alternate names:</i> Aranés, Aranese, Arnais, Gascon, Aranese Occitan. <i>Dialects:</i> Baish Aranés, Mijaranés Aranés, Naut Aranés. <i>Classification:</i> Indo-European, Italic, Romance, Italo-Western, Western, Gallo-Iberian, Ibero-Romance, Oc</p> <p>More information.</p>
Quinqui	<p>[quq] Many live on the edge of towns. <i>Classification:</i> Unclassified</p> <p>More information.</p>
Spanish	<p>[spa] 28,173,600 in Spain (1986). Population total all countries: 322,299,171. Central and southern Spain and the</p>

	<p>Canary Islands. Also spoken in Andorra, Argentina, Aruba, Australia, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Canada, Cayman Islands, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Finland, France, Germany, Gibraltar, Guatemala, Honduras, Israel, Jamaica, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands Antilles, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Sweden, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, U.S. Virgin Islands, Uruguay, USA, Venezuela. <i>Alternate names:</i> Español, Castellano, Castilian. <i>Dialects:</i> Andalusian (Andalú, Andaluz, Andalusí), Murcian, Aragonese, Navarrese, Castilian, Canary Islands Spanish, American Spanish. Leonese has similarities to Asturian, and may be extinct. Lexical similarity 89% with Portuguese, 85% with Catalan, 82% with Italian, 76% with Sardinian, 75% with French, 74% with Retho-Romance, 71% with Rumanian. <i>Classification:</i> Indo-European, Italic, Romance, Italo-Western, Western, Gallo-Iberian, Ibero-Romance, West Iberian, Castilian</p> <p>More information.</p>
Spanish Sign Language	<p>[ssp] 102,000 (1994). 20,000 members of deaf associations (1986 Gallaudet University). <i>Alternate names:</i> Mímica. <i>Dialects:</i> Small differences throughout Spain with no difficulties in intercommunication, except in Catalonia. Origin unknown, but it is reported that there are influences from American, French, and Mexican sign languages. <i>Classification:</i> Deaf sign language</p> <p>More information.</p>

Extinct languages

Guanche	<p>[gnc] Extinct. Canary Islands. <i>Dialects:</i> Its relation to Berber has been questioned. <i>Classification:</i> Afro-Asiatic, Berber, Guanche</p> <p>More information.</p>
Mozarabic	<p>[mxi] Extinct. <i>Dialects:</i> A Romance language with Arabic influences. <i>Classification:</i> Indo-European, Italic, Romance, Italo-Western, Western, Pyrenean-Mozarabic, Mozarabic</p> <p>More information.</p>