Spanish-Speaking Countries

Use this key to check answers and read the explanations.

1. Which sovereign European country identifies Castilian Spanish as an official language of the state?

A. Spain
B. Portugal
C. Ireland
D. Greece

Correct answer: A. Spain
Spain’s constitution recognizes Castilian throughout the state. Other Spanish languages can also have official status within their autonomous communities.

2. Which African country lists Spanish among its official languages?

A. Kenya
B. Ghana
C. Equatorial Guinea
D. Morocco

Correct answer: C. Equatorial Guinea
Equatorial Guinea’s Fundamental Law lists Spanish, French, and Portuguese as official languages.

3. A class visits Brazil during a tour of South America. Which official language will it encounter there?

A. Spanish
B. Portuguese
C. Dutch
D. French

Correct answer: B. Portuguese
Brazil recognizes Portuguese as its official language. This distinguishes it from many of its Spanish-speaking neighbors.

4. Which pair consists of independent Caribbean countries that are predominantly Spanish-speaking?

A. Dominican Republic and Barbados
B. Haiti and Jamaica
C. Cuba and Jamaica
D. Cuba and the Dominican Republic

Correct answer: D. Cuba and the Dominican Republic
Cuba and the Dominican Republic are both independent countries where Spanish is the predominant language.

5. Which Spanish-speaking country shares its only land borders with Nicaragua and Panama?

A. El Salvador
B. Costa Rica
C. Guatemala
D. Mexico

Correct answer: B. Costa Rica
Costa Rica is between Nicaragua to the north and Panama to the southeast.

6. A student hears Spanish in Belize. Which official language does Belize’s embassy list for the country?

A. English
B. Spanish
C. Portuguese
D. French

Correct answer: A. English
Belize’s embassy lists English as the official language and describes the country’s multilingual population, including Spanish speakers.

7. Which Spanish-speaking country has land borders with Mexico, Belize, Honduras, and El Salvador?

A. Panama
B. Nicaragua
C. Costa Rica
D. Guatemala

Correct answer: D. Guatemala
Guatemala is the only Central American country bordering all four places in the question.

8. Which Spanish-speaking country in South America has mainland coasts on both the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean?

A. Peru
B. Ecuador
C. Colombia
D. Venezuela

Correct answer: C. Colombia
Colombia has a Caribbean coast to the north and a Pacific coast to the west.

9. Which Spanish-speaking country has the historic fortifications of Portobelo and San Lorenzo on its Caribbean coast?

A. Panama
B. Chile
C. Uruguay
D. Argentina

Correct answer: A. Panama
Portobelo and San Lorenzo are on the Caribbean side of Panama. UNESCO lists the fortifications together as a World Heritage site.

10. Which Spanish-speaking South American country administers Rapa Nui, also known as Easter Island?

A. Ecuador
B. Peru
C. Colombia
D. Chile

Correct answer: D. Chile
Rapa Nui lies far west of the South American mainland and is part of Chile.

11. Which South American country names both Spanish and Guaraní as official languages in its constitution?

A. Colombia
B. Uruguay
C. Paraguay
D. Ecuador

Correct answer: C. Paraguay
Article 140 of Paraguay’s constitution names Spanish and Guaraní as official languages.

12. A constitution identifies Spanish as official and also gives Quechua and Aymara official status in areas where they predominate. Which country’s Article 48 gives that rule?

A. Uruguay
B. Peru
C. El Salvador
D. Dominican Republic

Correct answer: B. Peru
Article 48 of Peru’s constitution covers Spanish and gives regional official status to Quechua, Aymara, and other Indigenous languages according to law.

13. A geography chart has one column for independent countries and one for territories. Which entry belongs in the territory column of a Spanish-speaking world chart?

A. Spain
B. Equatorial Guinea
C. Dominican Republic
D. Puerto Rico

Correct answer: D. Puerto Rico
Puerto Rico is a U.S. territory. Its law recognizes both Spanish and English for its government.

14. Which group pairs one Spanish-speaking independent country with each of these locations, in order: Europe, Africa, and North America?

A. Spain, Equatorial Guinea, Mexico
B. Spain, Mexico, Equatorial Guinea
C. Equatorial Guinea, Spain, Mexico
D. Mexico, Equatorial Guinea, Spain

Correct answer: A. Spain, Equatorial Guinea, Mexico
Spain is in Europe, Equatorial Guinea is in Africa, and Mexico is in North America.

15. A table lists the share of residents who speak Spanish in several places. What other information would you need to determine where Spanish has official status?

A. Only the total area of each country
B. The spelling of each place’s English name
C. Each jurisdiction’s constitutional or legal language rules
D. Only each place’s elevation above sea level

Correct answer: C. Each jurisdiction’s constitutional or legal language rules
A count of speakers describes language use. Official status depends on a jurisdiction’s rules, which can also recognize more than one language.