

MLS Easy Immersion™ Spanish Pro (Magnum Language Systems)

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Of all the Spanish language software packages you can buy, very few stand out, and Magnum Language Systems' Easy Immersion Spanish Pro is one of those sleek, attractive and polished products which easily stands apart. It does this with the help of some rather impressive, not to mention unique and useful, features.

Price: \$49.99 Per Course

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Magnum Language Systems are obviously a big name in the language business, with software products for over 70 languages, including quite a few of the less popular or more obscure languages such as Romansch, Quechua, Albanian, Breton, Cornish and so on. These folks have modularized language learning, with the same features being offered for all the languages they teach.

Unusual Features

One of the more interesting features, and a sure hint at how polished this product is, is that the software can be localized in a variety of languages - meaning you can adjust the settings to one of 20 languages in order to learn Spanish using your native tongue. Once you've chosen your preferred language all lessons will then be offered in that language. As far as we know, this is not offered in any other Spanish course, but it makes perfect sense since software is able to exploit this capability.

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Another unusual capability of Easy Immersion Spanish Pro is the fact that it uses speech recognition. It does this by analyzing your own voice to let you know when your pronunciation and speech patterns match that of a native Spanish speaker. This is not something usually offered by language learning software so it's always a pleasure to see it.

Useful Features

The course includes a talking dictionary which lets you to not only look up Spanish words but also hear their pronunciation in the context of different uses. This surely has many lasting and practical applications for anyone learning the language. Most students of the language will own Spanish/English dictionaries which obviously cannot provide this sort of nuance.

In addition to being able to adjust your localization settings, you're also able to adjust what they call the software's "auto-learning" feature, which means you can set the software to automatically adjust difficulty (or "threshold") levels based on how well you are progressing. And you could just as easily choose to make these adjustments yourself.

As you move through the course you're able to change to one of three operating modes: browse, auto-word and normal. In browse mode you do not have to fill in any answers; in auto-word mode you enter a single letter and, if correct, the software completes the phrase for you. In normal mode you must correctly fill in all answers before progressing to the next lesson.

The Lessons

As with most Spanish lessons, you'll learn the language by being taken through a battery of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation lessons or practices, including stories and quizzes. Most lessons will, of course, involve reading, writing and aural comprehension - but this course is unusual in how it also allows oral practice using the voice recognition feature. Ordinarily this can only be provided by a live Spanish instructor, so this is quite an impressive feat.

Criticism

Our only criticism of the software, and it's not necessarily a real criticism, has to do with what we feel is its limited breadth - the length of the course is advertised as 80 hours of instruction, with 30 levels of grammar and 10 levels of vocabulary. However, this is probably more than adequate for most people, especially for such a reasonable price, and we recognize that with this software you'll have the tools needed to expand your Spanish horizons.

Our Score

The sheer level of polish and professionalism offered by this software ensures we'll give it a score of 90% and we'll gladly recommend it to anyone. It contains features, capabilities a lesson quality we believe will be useful to almost anyone wanting to learn the language. The price is in the low range for software of this kind, but the depth of offering is probably just about right for the price.