



National Customs

Task: Stereotypes in Spain

Activity 1: Listening

Welcome to a practice listening task for the GESE 7.

You are going to hear a talk about **stereotypes in Spain**. You will hear the talk twice. The first time, just listen. Then I'll ask you to tell me generally what the speaker is talking about. Are you ready?

Audio Script

Every country has stereotypes that represent it. Some have truth and some don't show a good representation of the country in itself. Have you ever been pegged to a stereotype before?

So, let's look at some stereotypes that have truth to them. You probably have heard about tapas and perhaps even that all Spaniards eat tapas. Tapas are readily available for everybody, but this isn't considered a meal in itself, but more like an appetizer before the meal. Another stereotype is that Spaniards like to have a good time. This may be viewed as so due to the many different festivals and celebrations that they have throughout the year. In addition, it has been said that Spaniards like to drink. While you ought to know that alcohol is readily available in Spain, this does not mean that everybody is a drunk. There is a notable wine and beer culture that can be appreciated by people and most people drink quite sensibly. Here is one stereotype that holds a lot of truth to it. Spaniards are family-oriented. Family usually comes first with most families in Spain. Foreigners that have spent time in Spain will often mention how welcomed they felt with a Spanish family, which had invited them into their home and spent time with them over a nice big family meal. Also, it is claimed the Spaniards speak very loudly, to the point that somebody could consider them to be screaming when they are talking. Well, it is true, Spaniards are a loud people but this is usually because they are very expressive and show different emotions in this way.

Of course, there are some that are not true, or only true in a small amount. One of these would be that women in Spain wear flamenco dresses. Well, neither do all women wear these dresses, nor are they worn all year round. These dresses are special for fairs known as "ferias" and for dancing the traditional dance of flamenco. Another stereotype is that it is always sunny in Spain. While it is true that Spain enjoys good weather, it does rain as well and some areas of Spain rain more and are colder than other areas. Another interesting misconception is to think that everybody in Spain must speak Spanish. You might actually find yourself communicating in Castilian, Catalan, Basque or Galician, depending where you are at. Although, it should be mentioned that Castilian is the Spanish dialect of Spain. Furthermore, Spanish food is believed to be spicy by some people. This is completely false because most of the Spanish cuisine does not use spicy sauce. This would be due to confusing the cuisine of Spain with that of Mexico or South America, and it is completely different. Although there are many more, but one more to mention is the idea that all Spaniards love bullfighting. Even though this is a long standing tradition in Spain, it used to



be more popular before and has decreased in popularity some in modern times and there is a lot of controversy about bullfighting within the Spanish society. Interestingly enough, it has even been made illegal in the Canary Islands.

Ultimately, to understand the stereotypes you have to experience the culture of a country with an open mind. If I were you, I would embrace the opportunity to learn more about the national customs and culture through stereotypes as was mentioned before.

Can you tell me in one or two sentences what the speaker was talking about?

Now listen to the talk again. This time make some notes as you listen, if you want to. Then I'll ask you to tell me which stereotypes are more true and which or less true.

Now tell me which stereotypes are more true and which or less true. You have one minute to talk.

This is the end of the listening task.

Answers:

Stereotypes with some truth to it	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spaniards eat tapas: before main meal / appetizer• Spaniards have a good time: many different festivals and celebrations throughout the year• Spaniards like to drink: alcohol available, wine and beer culture• Spaniards are family-oriented• Spaniards speak very loudly: screaming when they are talking
Stereotypes that aren't always true	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• women in Spain wear flamenco dresses• always sunny: rains more and colder in other areas• in Spain they speak spanish: 4 languages: Castilian, Catalan, Basque, Galician• Spanish food is spicy: Different from Mexican and South American food• Spaniards love bullfighting: decreasing in popularity / controversy

Marks: +_ / +10