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Spanish All-in-One For Dummies®

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She is also an artist and has had her work shown in many countries in North, Central, and South America and in Europe.

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Dedication

To my children, Nick and Ali, who have opened my eyes anew through their explorations of Spanish language and culture and who make great travel companions. — Cecie Kraynak

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Introduction

Gaining mastery over your first language is as easy as learning to walk. One day it's all goo-goo ga-ga, and the next you're stringing together words like a born orator. Picking up a second language, particularly when you're not immersed in it, is quite a bit more challenging. You have to set aside the conventions of your own language and get up to speed on new rules, structures, and vocabulary all at the same time.

Sure, you can pick up a handful of phrases overnight and perhaps recite the alphabet and count to ten by the end of the week, but that's not going to get you through a normal dinner conversation or enable you to understand foreign soap operas. You need some serious training to reach that point. Fortunately, *Spanish All-in-One For Dummies*, along with some practice, can get you there.

About This Book

Spanish All-in-One For Dummies is a comprehensive guide to acquiring Spanish as a second (or third or fourth or fifth) language that delivers the information and instruction in easily digestible, bite-sized chunks. It's the closest thing to a Spanish language immersion program you can get off a bookshelf — addressing both spoken and written Spanish and presenting it in the context of real-life situations. Think of it as your own personal tutor, reference book, and workbook all rolled into one.

This book is not a class that you have to drag yourself to twice a week for a specified period of time. You can use

Spanish All-in-One For Dummies however you want to, whether your goal is to pick up a few common words and phrases, write a Spanish-speaking pen pal, or travel to a Spanish-speaking country. We set no timetable, so proceed at your own pace, reading as much or as little at a time as you like. You don't have to trudge through the chapters in order, either; just read the sections that interest you.

And don't forget to practice by using the CD at the back of this book for help in pronunciation. The only way to really know and love a language is to speak it. Throughout the book, we give you lots of words, phrases, and dialogues, complete with pronunciations. Only a sampling of them are on the CD, but we've provided a broad selection that should serve most of your basic needs.

Conventions Used in This Book

To make this book easy for you to navigate, we've set up a couple of conventions:

Spanish terms are set in **boldface** to make them stand out.

English pronunciations, set in *italics*, accompany the Spanish terms.

Whenever we include the phonetic pronunciation of a Spanish word, we also use italics to denote any stress you add to that word. (See Book 1, Chapter 1 for more on pronunciation and stress.)