

Quechua



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Quechua, also known as Runa Simi, is an indigenous language spoken primarily in the Andean region of South America. It is one of the oldest languages in the Americas and was the lingua franca of the Inca Empire. With approximately 8 to 10 million speakers today, it is recognized as an official language in countries like Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador. Interestingly, Quechua has influenced various local dialects and even Spanish spoken in these regions, contributing words to the lexicons of these languages. Words such as “*papa*” (potato) and “*puma*” (cougar) in Spanish have Quechuan origins.

Here, at LaGuardia Community College, we aim to introduce you to the basics of Quechua through vocabulary, grammar, and cultural anecdotes to enrich your learning experience.

The Quechuan Culture

The Quechua language is deeply interconnected with the cultural practices and beliefs of the Andean people. One fascinating aspect is the community concept of “*Ayni*”, which embodies the principle of reciprocity and mutual help among neighbors and family. In traditional Andean society, *Ayni* is not only a practical way to share labor but also a fundamental social value that reinforces community bonds.

Another interesting episode is the story of *Mama Killa* and *Inti*. In Quechua mythology, *Inti* (the Sun) and *Mama Killa* (the Moon) are married deities looking over the people. Celebrations in honor of these celestial beings, such as the *Inti Raymi* festival, are still practiced, highlighting the rich heritage embedded in the language.

Learning Quechua

Learning basic phrases is a great way to start. Here are some common Quechua phrases along with their meanings:

- *Rimaykullayki / Allillanchu*: Hello
- *Tupananchiskama*: Goodbye
- *Allichu*: Please
- *Sulpayki*: Thank you
- *Imanallataq*: You're welcome
- *Arí*: Yes
- *Manan*: No
- *Dispensayuway*: Excuse me
- *Allillanchu?*: How are you?
- *Allillanmi, sulpayki*: I'm fine, thank you.
- *Imataq sutiyki?*: What is your name?
- *John sutiy*: My name is John.
- *Maymantan kanki?*: Where are you from?
- *New Yorkmantan kani*: I am from New York.
- *Inglés simita rimanki?*: Do you speak English?
- *Manan yachuarqachu*: I don't understand.
- *Yanapayta atinayki?*: Can you help me?

- *Hayk'aqmi kay?*: How much is this?
- *Yaku munani.*: I would like water.
- *Kayakama.*: See you later.

Numbers are essential in any language. Here are the numbers 1 to 5 in Quechua:

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| • 1: huk | • 6: suqta |
| • 2: iskay | • 7: qanchis |
| • 3: kimsa | • 8: pusaq |
| • 4: tawa | • 9: isqun |
| • 5: pichqa | • 10: chunka |

This guide will help you learn some basic words in Quechua. Take your time to practice each section and try to use the new words in your daily conversations.

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| • wasi: house | • mikuy: food |
| • runa: person | • aycha: meat |
| • mama: mother | • chaska: star |
| • tata: father | • michi: cat |
| • wawa: child | • anku: dog |
| • urqu: mountain | • pacha: time |
| • yaku: water | • huñuy: to gather |
| • inti: sun | • rikuy: to see |
| • killa: moon | • rimay: to speak |
| • allpa: earth | • yachay: to know |

Below are some everyday Quechua phrases.

- **Allin p'unchaw**: Good day
- **Imaynalla kashanki?**: How are you?
- **Ñuqanchikqa sumaqmi kashani**: We are fine
- **Tupananchikkama**: See you later
- **Ñuqa runasimi qanri**: I speak Quechua
- **Maymanta qam?**: Where are you from?
- **Mana entiendeschu**: I do not understand
- **Ñuqaqa qampaq munani**: I like you
- **Arí, nanaylla mikhuni**: Yes, I eat a little
- **Mana qhelqayta atipunchu**: I cannot write

Where Can I Start at LaGuardia Community College

At LaGuardia Community College, the Modern Languages and Literatures Program offers dynamic courses in diverse languages, fostering global understanding and communication skills. Our dedicated faculty prepare students for exciting, multilingual futures, embracing cultural richness and enhancing career opportunities in our interconnected world. For more information about our world language courses and schedule, visit <https://lagcml.github.io>.