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Digital Learning Solutions accompanying *Plazas: Lugar de encuentros*

In its 5th edition, *Plazas: Lugar de encuentros* is designed to work with two different e-learning platforms: **iLrn™ Language Learning Center** and **MindTap® Spanish**. Your instructor will have chosen the option that is the best match for your course. With both **iLrn™** and **MindTap®**, *Plazas'* digital and print resources work seamlessly with a rich presentation of culture, grammar, and vocabulary to provide you with varying perspectives on all components of language learning.

If your course is using MindTap® . . .

MindTap® is a newly developed digital learning solution that will power you, the student, from memorization to mastery. All audio, visual, and other digital components that accompany the *Plazas* program have been integrated into this versatile, user-friendly, and robust online platform. Through **MindTap®** you will be able to connect with instructors and other students, organize your coursework, and access a range of study tools, all in one place!

When working online using **MindTap®**, everything that you need to complete an assignment, from content presentation to assessment, is presented on a single screen. *Plazas* uses the **MindTap®** platform to guide online instruction with a carefully designed Learning

Path that will lead you step-by-step through the content in each chapter. The Learning Path consists of five steps that characterize not only the stage of your progress through the content, but also the way in which you will interact with content at each stage:

- **Ready?:** A short introduction to the broad content of each theme encourages you to anticipate the material you will be learning.
- **Learn it!:** All new thematic vocabulary, culture and structures are presented through film, animation, voice over photos and text, and audio and text.
- **Practice it!:** This step includes activities with more extended comprehension checks of vocabulary, grammar and culture, such as multiple choice, fill in the blank, photo identification, and listening comprehension.
- **Use it!:** This step gives you a chance to use what you are learning to express yourself creatively. These activities are designed to be submitted online or prepared for class discussion.
- **Got it!:** You begin to evaluate yourself using a checklist of "Can do . . ." statements that specify what you are expected to be able to accomplish after completing the theme. You may spend time refreshing your learning before demonstrating and verifying your ability to use what you have studied.

With the MindTap course, you will have access to The **MindTap® with Mobile App**. It allows you to read and

practice any place, any time! Download at cengage.com/mindtap/mobileapp to:

- Read the e-book online or offline * Set reminders *
- View grades * Study flashcards * Take practice quizzes

If your course is using iLrn™ . . .

The **iLrn™ Language Learning Center** is an audio- and video- enhanced learning environment with sharing capability that complements your printed Student Text and Activities Manual. Through **iLrn™** you will have access to interactive enrichment activities and diagnostic activities, a personalized study plan, a variety of online tutoring services, and much more!

The **iLrn™** platform connects you to all of the *Plazas* program components:

- Audio- and video-enhanced **eBook**
- Integrated **textbook activities**
- **Student calendar** with assignment due dates
- **Companion videos** with pre- and post-viewing activities
- Partnered **voice-recording activities**
- **Online Student Activities Manual** with **audio**
- Additional **interactive practice activities**
- **Self-tests** and **personalized study plans**
- Access to a **personal tutor** online
- Media sharing and commenting capability with **Share it!**

To the Student

Spanish has become a critical second language of the United States. Although southern and coastal states have seen dramatic increases in Spanish-speaking populations for years, the presence of Latino communities in every large city throughout the nation is now a reality. Spanish radio and television stations are multiplying and playing to huge audiences, and Latino entertainers are soaring to the top of U.S. charts with smash hits. Spanish can be seen on road signs, menus, and product literature. Even in your local supermarket, chances are that some of the products you buy are marketed to Spanish-speaking customers. In the entertainment, leisure, and travel industries, Spanish is more prevalent than ever before. Businesspeople, teachers, civil servants, store clerks, and especially emergency and hospital personnel are scrambling to keep up with an increasingly Spanish-speaking client base. Questions about our national immigration policy and our country's relationship to many other countries are in the headlines.

Just recently, peoples of Hispanic descent have become the largest minority group in the United States and are shaping social and political agendas in a profound way. By 2042, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, current minority groups in the United States will constitute a majority, and the fastest growing minority group will be of Hispanic background. Real-world incentives to learn Spanish are all around you. **Plazas** welcomes you to join a community of Spanish speakers not only in your class, but also in your neighborhood, work environment, or travel destination. **Plazas** is based on the Five Cs—Communication, Communities, Connections, Comparisons, and Culture—to ensure that your interaction with the Spanish-speaking world is dynamic and profound. In **Plazas**, we not only introduce you to a language, but also to the people—through their history, traditions, and culture—who speak the language.

As a testament to the vital importance of Spanish in our world, we are also very pleased to invite you to become familiar with an exciting community of National Geographic Explorers, whose work and livelihood takes place in the Spanish-speaking countries we feature in **Plazas**. These scientists, archaeologists, anthropologists, and photographers, just to name a few of the disciplines represented, are working on some of those most exciting and vital projects of our time. Our hope is that your broad, interdisciplinary interests will resonate with many of the explorations you'll learn about.

Learning Spanish successfully requires determination, good study habits, and patience. You must commit yourself to learning the language every day. Proficiency in a new language is the result of daily study and practice. Everything you learn relies, to a certain extent, on previous material. If you invest time from the beginning, what you learn over time will build naturally upon a solid foundation of understanding and competence.

We wish you the very best in your introduction to Spanish and welcome you to the communities of **Plazas**.

Bob Hershberger

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