**San Miguel Bajo: Recursos para el estudio del español**

An open-ended collection of online resources for students and teachers of Spanish, covering a variety of levels and types of activity.

These materials have been developed in the first instance for use on courses at the University of Brighton, and are now being made available to the wider community. Any student or teacher of Spanish is welcome to use them as they see fit.

All materials can be accessed from the [San Miguel Bajo wiki](http://sanmiguelbajo.pbworks.com/), from where there are links to materials appropriate to different levels of study. Teachers can use the materials as they appear; it may also be possible to display them within an institution's virtual learning environment (VLE) - or at least in such a way that they appear to be so displayed.

*San Miguel Bajo* tries to exploit features of a number of Web 2.0 platforms, and make them accessible to students and teachers in a straightforward way; no special skills are needed to make use of these materials. Like the platforms themselves it is in a state of continual evolution. Amongst the principal platforms it uses are a wiki and a blog; within these sites it makes use of techniques such as tagging and embedding. These can be extremely powerful techniques, but the aim here is to make their use as near invisible as possible. However they are not difficult to use, and should be accessible to teachers with a reasonable level of computer literacy who would like to try something similar.

**Wiki and blog**

* the [San Miguel Bajo wiki](http://sanmiguelbajo.pbworks.com/) is the central space - Placeta, or little square - for organising and accessing the materials
* the [San Miguel Bajo blog](http://sanmiguelbajo.blogspot.com/) houses items in individual blog entries (currently over 100 items)
* the blog uses tags to organise the items into suitable topic groups
* these topics can then be displayed in pages with their own specific web address (url)
* a topic's page can then be linked to from the appropriate area of the wiki
* the wiki topic pages include links to items housed on the blog, and suggestions for activities

**Media**

Media materials are uploaded to appropriate online platforms, and are linked to from the wiki, or better still embedded in a blog entry which can then be accessed from any other website, such as a VLE:

* video materials are located on, or uploaded to, video sharing platforms such as *YouTube*
* presentations are uploaded to platforms such as *SlideBoom* or *SlideShare*, which retain slide animations
* photos are uploaded to *Flickr*, which allows linking to a slideshow, a set of photos, or an individual photo
* audio clips are uploaded to *Box.net*, a storage platform which allows you to set up an audio player for mp3 files
* text documents are uploaded to *Box.net* or *Scribd*, which displays documents online
* maps are framed in *Google Maps*, in which you can locate placemarks with a fine degree of accuracy; the placemark description can then include an active link
* photographic navigation at street level can be accessed in *Google StreetView,* which is available for some cities in Spain

**Embedding**All of these platforms offer code for embedding an item in another web page such as a blog post or wiki; most also allow the inclusion of active links within an item's descriptive text. San Miguel Bajo tries to make use of these features wherever it can - most of the blog entries consist, at least in part, of embedded media from one of the platforms listed. A significant advantage of displaying material in a blog post is that presentation can be controlled and kept simple, and we can thereby avoid the promotional and other extraneous material that often clutters up Web 2.0 sites; the original site is always only a click away if desired.

**Levels**
Materials are currently available in a few topics for Beginners' and Advanced levels, as well as one or two of more general interest. These areas will be expanded, and it is intended to develop areas for two or three intervening levels.

**Topics**
Topics currently available include:

Nivel Inicial: La comida, La ropa y los colores, En la ciudad
Nivel Avanzado: El cine español contemporáneo, La canción popular española, La sociedad española, Imágenes de España
General: Fiestas, including Las Fallas and Semana Santa

\* In case anyone was wondering, *La Placeta de San Miguel Bajo* is a square in the Albaicín district of Granada; click on the street sign on the wiki to see a map.