

Spanish Grammar

A Skill Mastery Approach to Total Linguistic Function

In Spanish

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INTRODUCTION

I. Pronunciation.

Although Spanish grammars tell us that many letters are pronounced the same in Spanish as in English, no letter in the Spanish alphabet has exactly the same pronunciation as in English. Special attention must be given to the Spanish vowels, to make them clear, clean-cut, and without the glide that is so common in English.

The pronunciation of any foreign language is acquired principally through imitation and practice. Independent reading of rules on pronunciation, except by experienced language students, is largely useless. Every rule here given should be read aloud in class and commented upon by the instructor. The lists of illustrative words under each rule are made long intentionally, in order to provide ample opportunity for individual students and groups of students to imitate the teacher's pronunciation. Mr. Potter's audio CDs will prove especially useful. Remember the **proper order** for learning a language is: Listening – Speaking – Reading – Writing (self-expression). **Listening** is the **foundation** for everything else. Total Linguistic Function means competence in hearing, speaking, reading, and writing.

El alfabeto

a	b	c	ch	d	e	f	g	h	i
a	be	ce	che	de	e	efe	ge	hache	i
j	k	l	ll	m	n	ñ	o	p	q
jota	ka	ele	elle	eme	ene	eñe	o	pe	cu
r	rr	s	t	u	v	w			
ere	erre	ese	te	u	ve	doble-u			
x	y			z					
equis	y-griega			zeta					

1. Vowels

- a** *a* as in *father*.
pan, clase, papel, hablar, casa, bajo, madre
- e** (1) *a* in *take*, at the end of a syllable (open syllable)
mesa, clase, necesario, decir, leer, señor, eso
(2) *e* in *set*, when a consonant ends the syllable (closed syllable)
cerca, usted, sentado, saber, verdad
- i** *i* in *machine*.
ir, decir, sufrir, principal, minuto, libre, ley
- o** (1) *o* in *open*, at the end of a syllable (open syllable)
hijo, caballo, otro, todo, ojo, eso, señora
(2) like *ou* in *bought*, when a consonant ends the syllable (closed syllable).
señor, contra, sombrero, dormir, calor
- u** *u* in *rule*.
mucho, nunca, pluma, una, buscar, estudiar

2. Consonants.

- b** not as explosive as in English, the lips almost touch, but let the air pass between them. When initial letter, or after m or n, pronounce like *b* in *bone*.
beber, descubrir, trabajo, escribir, bastante, pueblo, también
- c** (1) *c* in *come*, before a, o, u, or a consonant
comer, café, cuarto, corto, poco, escuela, casa, clase
(2) *c* before e or i is pronounced like *s* in *thus*, *so*.
hacer, cinco, nación, decir, ciencia, preciso
(In Spain *c* before e or i is pronounced like *th* in *thin*.)
- ch** *ch* in *much*.
mucho, ancho, muchacho, dicho, escuchar
- d** English *d*, between vowels and at the end of a word, like *th* in *they*.
donde, sed, pared, todo, vender, vida, madre
(In Latin American Spanish, final *d* is often dropped: Madrid, sed, verdad, ciudad, usted).
- f** English *f*.
frío, falta, defender, francés, difícil.
- g** (1) *g* in *give*, before, a, o, u, or a consonant.
pagar, gozar, algunos, gracia, gustar, agosto
(2) before e and i, it has a throaty *h* sound.
general, gente, ligero, sumergir, gitano
- h** always silent
hacer, hoy, hay, ahora, hermano
- j** *h* as in *hawk*.
jardín, julio, ejercicio, lejos, ejemplo, Juan

- k** English *k*, occurs only in foreign words.
kilogramo, kilómetro
- l** English *l*.
lejos, isla, general, libro, luz, salud, fácil
- ll** *y* as in *yes*.
caballo, llegar, calle, valle, llamar, hallar
- m** English *m*.
tomar, mano, minuto, llamar, importar
- n** English *n*.
junio, mano, general, pan, negro, noche, junto
- ñ** *ny* in *canyon*.
señor, niño, pequeño, cañón, año, engañar
- p** English *p* without aspiration – following puff of air.
poner, princesa, rápido, posible, tiempo, guapo
- qu** *k*; occurs only with *e* and *i*.
que, aquí, querer, quizás, aquel
- r** English *r* but with tongue touching roof of mouth behind teeth;
when initial, it is trilled.
rojo, rey, rico, río, servir, secreto, trabajar
- rr** same as *r*, but with a decided trill. (Practice rapidly saying the English words
butter up.)
guerra, arroz, arriba, sierra, irregular
- s** *s* in some [In **mismo** (same), it is pronounced *z*.]
siglo, rosa, princesa, siempre, lunes, así
- t** English *t*; tip tongue must touch upper teeth. No puff of air.
tener, santo, sentado, vista, último, tinta, tierra
- v** *v*, but not explosive, as in English; like Spanish *b*; the lips almost touch, but
let the air pass between them.
vivir, verde, verano, uva, joven, favor
- x** (1) between vowels, *gs*.
examen, éxito, existir
(2) before a consonant, *s*.
exclamar, explicar, extremo
- y** as in consonant, *y* in *yes*.
yo, ayer, ayudar, mayor
- z** *s* in *so*, *thus*. [Castilian, *th* in *thin*.]
cruz, taza, zapato, paz, pobreza, riqueza

3. Diphthongs

a, e, o, are strong vowels.

i (y), u are weak vowels

Two strong vowels cannot stand together in one syllable

de-se-o, de-se-ar, i-de-a, te-a-tro

A strong and a weak vowel, or two weak vowels together, form a diphthong and hold together in one syllable.

due-ño, **rui**-do, **siem**-pre

If the weak vowel bears a written accent, the diphthong is broken into two distinct syllables.

le-í-do, rí-o, pa-ís, Ma-rí-a

ai, (ay)	English <i>I</i> . jai, alai, traidor, hay, vais
au	<i>ou</i> in <i>out</i> . causa, autor, bautismo
ei (ey)	<i>ey</i> in <i>they</i> reina, pleito, peine, veinte, ley
eu	English <i>a u</i> (as in <i>way to</i>); eu occurs rarely. deuda, Europa
oi (oy)	<i>oy</i> in <i>boy</i> . boina, hoy, oigo
ia	<i>ya</i> as in <i>yacht</i> . viajar, historia, pronunciar, criado, Diablo
ie	<i>ya</i> in <i>yell</i> , in closed syllable; like <i>ya</i> in <i>Yale</i> , in open syllable piedra, bien, quiero, pie, suficiente, quien, hierba
io	<i>yo</i> as in <i>yoke</i> . silencio, religioso, oriol, Dios, lecciones
ua	<i>wa</i> in <i>was</i> . Juan, agua, cuarto, guapa, cualidad, puntual
ue	<i>we</i> in <i>went</i> . muerte, puente, pueblo, suerte, bueno, duermo
uo	<i>wo</i> in <i>wove</i> . antiguo, cuota
iu	English <i>you</i> , pronounced short viuda, ciudad, triunfo
ui (y)	English <i>we</i> . cuidado, ruido, Suiza, huir, muy

II. Syllabication.

1. A single consonant (including ch, ll, rr) is pronounced with the following vowel or diphthong.
ne-ce-si-to, ciu-dad, plu-ma, a-llí, gue-rra, mu-cha-cho, ca-ba-llo, tra-ba-jar, Es-pa-ña
2. Combinations of two consonants between vowels or diphthongs are usually separated.
car-ta, fuen-te, rom-per, cuar-to, es-tá
3. If the second consonant is l or r, the combination is, as a rule, inseparable.
a-brir, te-a-tro, li-bro, pue-blo, re-cla-mar, com-prar, in-fluen-cia

III. Accent.

1. Words ending in a vowel or the consonant n or s, stress the next-to-last syllable.
car-ne, **plu-ma**, pre-**ci**-so, se-ño-**ri**-ta, se-**ma**-na, prin-**ci**-pio, ve-**ra**-no, Es-**pa**-ña, **ha**-blan, a-**mi**-gos, **u**-nos, pa-**rien**-tes
2. Words ending in a consonant (except n or s), stress the last syllable.
na-tu-**ral**, tra-ba-**jar**, se-**ñor**, sa-**lud**, pa-**pel**
3. Words that do not conform to the rules given above bear a written accent mark (´) over the stressed vowel.
América, México, médico, jamás, religión, árbol
4. A diphthong bearing no written accent and composed of a strong and a weak vowel stresses the strong vowel.
cuo-ta, re-li-**gio**-so, bien, dia-blo, gua-pa, au-tor, mien-tras.
A diphthong bearing no written accent and composed of two weak vowels (iu, ue) stresses the second vowel.
viu-da, Sui-za, rui-do, triun-fo

IV. Punctuation. English and Spanish punctuation are, in general, the same Note these differences, however:

- (a) Spanish begins questions and exclamations with their respective punctuation marks inverted.
¿Hay muchos muchachos en la clase?
¡Qué pobre es, a pesar de ser tan rico!
- (b) In dialogue, the dash is used instead of quotation marks.
– ¡Yo – yo me he hecho abogado!
– ¿Y qué ha sido de Roberto?
– A aquél le expulsaron de la universidad.
– Pues, chico, yo soy un pobre zapatero. Te quiero porque eres de los señores que no tienen a menos hablar con los pobres.
– Gracias, Juan – contestó Ramón.

V. Capitalization. Spanish employs small letters for:

- (a) Adjectives of nationality.
el vino español, las familias franceses
- (b) Names of languages.
el inglés, el español
- (a) Names of days of the week, and months.
lunes, miércoles, sábado, enero, mayo
- (d) the personal pronoun I.
yo