ES

LANGUAGE COURSE

# Spanish Grammar 1

11 Chapters

Philip Osztromok

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SPANISH GRAMMAR 1

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# 🔊 The Sound & Spelling Map — El mapa de los sonidos

*Spanish is one of the most regular written languages in Europe. Each vowel has **one sound**, most consonants have one or two, and the written accent tells you exactly where the stress falls. Once you know the map below you can read almost any Spanish word aloud, and spell most of what you hear. This course turns ready-made phrases into rules you can apply to words you have never seen. Because every later chapter leans on sounds (the endings that tell you a noun's gender, the accent that separates él from el), this chapter comes first. It is the only chapter in the course with a pronunciation respelling, and it describes the pronunciation of Spain (Castilian), with notes on Latin America.*

**How to read the respellings:** **ah** as in *father* **eh** as in *bed* **ee** as in *see* **oh** as in *go* (without the glide) **oo** as in *food* **th** as in *think* (Spain) **kh** as the *ch* in Scottish *loch* **rr** a rolled *r* **CAPITALS** the stressed syllable

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

Spanish is read **letter by letter**. There are **five pure vowels** (*a e i o u*) that never change. **Stress** follows two simple rules: words ending in a **vowel, -n or -s** are stressed on the **second-to-last syllable**; words ending in **any other consonant** are stressed on the **last syllable**. A **written accent** marks every word that breaks these rules. The traps are few: **c, g** (soft before *e, i*), **silent h**, **rr / r**, and the sounds **b/v** (the same) and **ll / y**.

## The five vowels

Spanish vowels are **short and pure**: your mouth stays in one position. English vowels often glide (*no* becomes *noh-oo*); Spanish ones do not.

| LETTER | SOUND | EXAMPLE | SAY IT |
|---|---|---|---|
| **a** | *ah* | **casa, agua** (house, water) | KAH-sah, AH-gwah |

| LETTER | SOUND | EXAMPLE | SAY IT |
|---|---|---|---|
| e | *eh* | **mesa, verde** (table, green) | MEH-sah, VEHR-deh |
| i | *ee* | **mini, vida** (mini, life) | MEE-nee, VEE-dah |
| o | *oh* | **hola, todo** (hello, all) | OH-lah, TOH-doh |
| u | *oo* | **uno, tú** (one, you) | OO-noh, too |

**Diphthongs.** Two vowels can share one syllable when at least one is the weak vowel *i* or *u*: **bien** (BYEHN), **cuando** (KWAHN-doh), **aire** (AH-ee-reh, said in one beat), **auto** (OW-toh, as in *ow*), **seis** (SEH-ees, one beat), **muy** (MOO-ee, one beat). When *i* or *u* carries the stress next to another vowel, they split into two syllables and the **accent** shows it: **día** (DEE-ah), **país** (pah-EES), **maíz** (mah-EETH).

## The alphabet

The Spanish alphabet has **27 letters**: the 26 English letters plus **ñ**. (*ch* and *ll* used to count as separate letters; since 2010 they are treated as two letters each.) You need the letter names to spell your name on the phone (*¿Cómo se escribe?*).

| LETTER | NAME | LETTER | NAME | LETTER | NAME |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | a (ah) | J | jota (KHOH-tah) | S | ese (EH-seh) |
| B | be (beh) | K | ka (kah) | T | te (teh) |
| C | ce (theh) | L | ele (EH-leh) | U | u (oo) |
| D | de (deh) | M | eme (EH-meh) | V | uve (OO-veh) |
| E | e (eh) | N | ene (EH-neh) | W | uve doble (OO-veh DOH-bleh) |
| F | efe (EH-feh) | Ñ | eñe (EH-nyeh) | X | equis (EH-kees) |

| LETTER | NAME | LETTER | NAME | LETTER | NAME |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| G | ge (kheh) | O | o (oh) | Y | ye or i griega (yeh, ee GRYEH-gah) |
| H | hache (AH-cheh) | P | pe (peh) | Z | zeta (THEH-tah) |
| I | i (ee) | Q | cu (koo) | | |
| | | R | erre (EH-rreh) | | |

**Latin America note: b and v**

*b* and *v* sound **exactly the same** in Spanish (**vaca** and **baca** both start with the same sound). To tell them apart aloud, Spain says *b de burro* and *v de vaca*, and much of Latin America says *be larga / ve corta* or *be grande / ve chica*. Between vowels the sound is soft, with the lips barely touching.

## The consonants

| SPELLING | SOUND | EXAMPLE | SAY IT |
|---|---|---|---|
| **b, v** | one sound, a soft *b* | **bien, vino** | BYEHN, VEE-noh |
| **c** before *a, o, u* or a consonant | *k* | **casa, cosa, cuna** | KAH-sah, KOH-sah, KOO-nah |
| **c** before *e, i* | Spain: *th* (think) · Latin America: *s* | **cena, cine** | THEH-nah, THEE-neh (Spain) · SEH-nah, SEE-neh |
| **z** | Spain: *th* · Latin America: *s* | **zapato, plaza** | thah-PAH-toh, PLAH-thah (Spain) · sah-PAH-toh, PLAH-sah |
| **qu** | *k* (only before *e, i*; the *u* is silent) | **queso, quiero** | KEH-soh, KYEH-roh |
| **g** before *a, o, u* or a consonant | hard *g* | **gato, gracias** | GAH-toh, GRAH-thyahs |

| SPELLING | SOUND | EXAMPLE | SAY IT |
|---|---|---|---|
| **gu** before *e, i* | hard *g*; the *u* is silent | **guerra, guitarra** | GEH-rrah, gee-TAH-rrah |
| **gü** before *e, i* | *gw*: the diaeresis says pronounce the *u* | **pingüino, vergüenza** | peen-GWEE-noh, behr-GWEHN-thah |
| **g** before *e, i*; **j** | *kh*, a throaty sound (softer in Latin America) | **gente, jamón** | KHEHN-teh, khah-MOHN |
| **h** | silent | **hola, hombre** | OH-lah, OHM-breh |
| **ch** | *ch* as in *church* | **chico, noche** | CHEE-koh, NOH-cheh |
| **ll** | *y* as in *yes* (most speakers) | **llave, calle** | YAH-veh, KAH-yeh |
| **y** | *y* as in *yes*; alone, the word *and* = *ee* | **yo, mayo; tú y yo** | yoh, MAH-yoh; too ee yoh |
| **ñ** | *ny* as in *canyon* | **niño, España** | NEE-nyoh, ehs-PAH-nyah |
| **s** | always *s*, never *z* | **casa, mismo** | KAH-sah, MEES-moh |
| **d** between vowels | soft, like *th* in *this* | **nada, todo** | NAH-dah, TOH-doh |
| **x** | *ks* (often *gs* between vowels) | **taxi, examen** | TAHK-see, ehk-SAH-mehn |
| **k, w** | only in foreign words | **kilo, whisky** | KEE-loh, WEES-kee |

**Watch out: c and g are soft before e and i**

The same letter changes its sound with the vowel after it, and the spelling shifts to keep the sound steady: **chico** (CHEE-koh, boy) becomes **chiquito** (little boy): *c* becomes *qu* before *i* to keep the *k*. In the same way **amigo** (friend) becomes **amiguito**, with *gu* to keep the hard *g*, and **lápiz** (pencil) becomes **lápices** (pencils), with *c* in place of *z* before *e*. You will meet these changes again in Spanish Grammar 1 3 (plurals).

## The two r sounds

Spanish has a **tap** and a **trill**, and the difference changes meaning. The single **r** between vowels is a quick tap of the tongue, like the *tt* in a quick "butter" (and like the Scottish *r* in "very"). **rr**, and **r at the beginning of a word** or after *l, n, s*, is a **rolled** sound.

| SPELLING | SOUND | EXAMPLE | SAY IT |
|---|---|---|---|
| **r** between vowels or after a consonant | tap | **pero** (but), **tres** (three) | PEH-roh, trehs |
| **rr** | trill | **perro** (dog), **carro** (car) | PEH-rroh, KAH-rroh |
| **r** at the start of a word, or after *l, n, s* | trill | **rojo** (red), **Enrique** | RROH-khoh, ehn-RREE-keh |

## Stress and the written accent

Every Spanish word has one **stressed syllable**. You do not need an accent mark for most words, because two rules predict the stress:

| THE WORD ENDS IN… | STRESS FALLS ON… | EXAMPLE | SAY IT |
|---|---|---|---|
| a **vowel**, **-n** or **-s** | the **second-to-last** syllable | **casa, hablan, lunes** | KAH-sah, AH-blahn, LOO-nehs |
| any **other consonant** | the **last** syllable | **hablar, ciudad, Madrid** | ah-BLAHR, thyoo-DAHD, mah-DREED |

A word that **breaks the rule** carries a **written accent** (a mark over the vowel of the stressed syllable). So the accent is not decoration: it tells you where to stress.

| CASE | WHY THERE IS AN ACCENT | EXAMPLE | SAY IT |
|---|---|---|---|
| ends in a vowel, -n, -s, but stressed on the **last** syllable | breaks rule 1 | **café, canción, además** | kah-FEH, kahn-THYOHN, ah-deh-MAHS |
| ends in another consonant, but stressed on the **second-to-last** | breaks rule 2 | **árbol, lápiz, fácil** | AHR-bohl, LAH-peeth, FAH-theel |
| stressed on the **third-to-last** syllable | always written | **teléfono, rápido, música** | teh-LEH-foh-noh, RAH-pee-doh, MOO-see-kah |
| *i* or *u* stressed next to another vowel | splits the diphthong | **día, país, río** | DEE-ah, pah-EES, RREE-oh |

## Accents that separate two words

A few short words sound the same and are told apart **only by an accent**. This is the one place where the accent is purely written.

| WITH ACCENT | WITHOUT ACCENT |
|---|---|
| **él** he · **tú** you · **mí** me (after a preposition) | **el** the · **tu** your · **mi** my |
| **sí** yes · **té** tea · **sé** I know | **si** if · **te** you (as an object) · **se** (as in *se llama*) |
| **más** more | **mas** but (literary) · **de** of, from |
| **question words**: qué, cómo, dónde, cuándo, quién | **other uses**: que, como, donde, cuando, quien |

> **Watch out: question marks come in pairs**
> Spanish writes an **upside-down mark at the start** of a question or exclamation as well as the usual one at the end: **¿Dónde vives?** and **¡Qué bien!**. The opening mark shows where the question begins when the sentence starts with something else: **Si no tienes hambre, ¿por qué comes?**

## Spain against Latin America: the th sound

The biggest sound difference inside the Spanish-speaking world is what happens to **c (before e, i)** and **z**.

| VARIETY | HOW *C* (E, I) AND *Z* SOUND | EXAMPLE CINCO / ZAPATO | NAME |
|---|---|---|---|
| Spain (north and centre) | *th* as in *think*, different from *s* | THEEN-koh / thah-PAH-toh | *distinción* |
| Latin America, the Canary Islands and parts of southern Spain | *s*: the same as the letter *s* | SEEN-koh / sah-PAH-toh | *seseo* |

Both are completely correct, and speakers understand each other without trouble. This course follows Spain: **gracias** is GRAH-thyahs in Madrid and GRAH-syahs in Mexico City. If you spend time with Latin American speakers, simply use the *s* sound everywhere. Two other differences you will hear: **j** and **g** (before e, i) are a strong throaty *kh* in Spain but softer, closer to English *h*, in much of Latin America; and **ll** and **y** sound like English *y* for most speakers, with a *sh* or *zh* sound in Argentina and Uruguay.

## 🗣️ In Use — En situación

*Read the exchanges aloud, using the respellings above.*

### ① Spelling a name

**A:** ¿Cómo se escribe su apellido?
How do you spell your surname?

**B:** G-U-E-R-R-E-R-O: ge, u, e, erre, erre, e, erre, o.
G-U-E-R-R-E-R-O (kheh, oo, eh, EH-rreh, EH-rreh, eh, EH-rreh, oh).

### ② Pero or perro?

**A:** ¿Es «pero» o «perro»?
Is it "pero" or "perro"? (PEH-roh or PEH-rroh)

**B:** «Perro», con dos erres: es un animal.

"Perro", with two r's: it is an animal. (Pero, with one r, means "but".)

### ③ Which sound?

**A:**

¿Cómo se pronuncia «cinco»?

How do you pronounce "cinco"?

**B:**

En España, con el sonido «th»; en Latinoamérica, con «s».

In Spain, with the "th" sound; in Latin America, with "s". (THEEN-koh / SEEN-koh)

## 📋 Quick Reference — Resumen

| TOPIC | SUMMARY |
|---|---|
| vowels | a = ah · e = eh · i = ee · o = oh · u = oo; short and pure; *i, u* pair with another vowel in diphthongs |
| alphabet | 27 letters (plus ñ); *ch, ll* no longer separate letters |
| silent letters | h always; u in *que, qui, gue, gui* |
| b / v | the same sound |
| c, z (e, i) | Spain: th · Latin America: s |
| g, j | kh before e, i (and for j); hard g elsewhere; gu = hard g; gü = gw |
| ll, y, ñ | y · y · ny |
| r, rr | r between vowels = tap; rr and initial r = trill |
| stress rule 1 | ends in vowel, -n, -s → second-to-last syllable |

| TOPIC | SUMMARY |
| --- | --- |
| stress rule 2 | ends in another consonant → last syllable |
| written accent | marks every exception; always on third-to-last stress; splits diphthongs; separates él / el, tú / tu, sí / si, qué / que |
| punctuation | ¿ … ? and ¡ … ! |

## 🖍️ Try It Yourself — Ejercicios

*Say the answer first, then click to check.*

**1.** Read aloud: *casa, mesa, vino, todo, uno*.

▼ Show answer

KAH-sah, MEH-sah, VEE-noh, TOH-doh, OO-noh. (Each vowel has one pure sound.)

**2.** Which letter is always silent? Read aloud: *hola, hombre, hijo*.

▼ Show answer

*h*. OH-lah, OHM-breh, EE-khoh.

**3.** Say *cena* and *cosa*. Why do the two *c*'s sound different?

▼ Show answer

THEH-nah (or SEH-nah) and KOH-sah. *c* before *e, i* is soft (th in Spain, s in Latin America); before *a, o, u* it is a hard *k*.

**4.** How do you write the hard *g* sound before *e*, and the *w* sound in *pingüino*?

▼ Show answer

Hard *g* before *e, i* is spelled *gu* (*guerra*, GEH-rrah). To say the *u*, put a diaeresis on it: *gü* (*pingüino*, peen-GWEE-noh).

**5.** Say the difference: *pero* and *perro*.

▼ Show answer

PEH-roh (one tap, "but") and PEH-rroh (a trill, "dog").

**6.** Where is the stress? *hablan, lunes, hablar, ciudad.*

▼ Show answer

AH-blahn and LOO-nehs (end in -n and -s: second-to-last) · ah-BLAHR and thyoo-DAHD (end in other consonants: last).

**7.** Why do *café*, *canción* and *árbol* need accents, but *casa* and *hablar* do not?

▼ Show answer

The accent marks words that break the stress rules. *café* ends in a vowel but is stressed last; *canción* ends in *n* but is stressed last; *árbol* ends in *l* but is stressed second-to-last. *casa* and *hablar* follow the rules.

**8.** What is the difference in meaning between *el* and *él*, and *si* and *sí*?

▼ Show answer

*el* = the; *él* = he. *si* = if; *sí* = yes. The accent is the only difference, so check it when you write.

**9.** Spell your first name aloud with Spanish letter names, for example *ANA*.

▼ Show answer

A-N-A: a, ene, a (ah, EH-neh, ah).

**10.** Say *gracias* the way a person from Madrid would, and the way a person from Mexico City would.

▼ Show answer

Madrid: GRAH-thyahs (th, *distinción*). Mexico City: GRAH-syahs (s, *seseo*). Both are correct.

**Coming up in Chapter 2: Nouns and Gender.** Masculine and feminine; the endings that predict gender (*-o, -a, -ción, -dad, -aje, -ma*); the exceptions (*el día, la mano, el problema*); nouns with two forms (*el / la estudiante*); and the names of professions.

# 🏷️ Nouns and Gender — Los sustantivos y el género

*Every Spanish noun is **masculine** or **feminine**, including things: a table is feminine (la mesa), a book is masculine (el libro). Gender is not about meaning; it is a property of the word, and it decides the article, the adjective and the pronoun that go with it. The good news is that the **ending** of a noun predicts its gender correctly most of the time. This chapter gives you the endings, the exceptions you must learn, and the way professions and family words change with the person.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

**People and animals** follow their sex (*el hombre / la mujer*). **Things** follow their **ending**: *-o* is usually masculine, *-a* is usually feminine, and a handful of other endings are very reliable (*-ción, -dad* feminine; *-aje, -or, -ma* masculine). For every other word, **learn the article with the noun**: *la noche*, *el coche*.

## -o and -a: the main pattern

| ENDING | USUALLY | EXAMPLES |
|---|---|---|
| -o | masculine | **el libro** (book), **el vaso** (glass), **el trabajo** (job, work), **el niño** (boy) |
| -a | feminine | **la casa** (house), **la mesa** (table), **la puerta** (door), **la niña** (girl) |

**Watch out: the exceptions you must learn**

A few very common words go against the pattern:

- **-o but feminine: la mano** (hand), **la foto** (photo), **la moto** (motorbike). The last two are shortened forms of *la fotografía* and *la motocicleta*, which is why they stay feminine.
- **-a but masculine: el día** (day), **el mapa** (map), **el planeta** (planet), **el pijama** (pyjamas), **el sofá** (sofa).

## Endings that predict gender

These endings are reliable enough that you can usually guess the gender of a new word from them.

| GENDER | ENDING | EXAMPLES |
|---|---|---|
| **feminine** | **-ción, -sión, -xión** | **la canción** (song), **la estación** (station), **la televisión**, **la conexión** |
| **feminine** | **-dad, -tad, -tud** | **la ciudad** (city), **la verdad** (truth), **la libertad**, **la actitud** |
| **feminine** | **-umbre** | **la costumbre** (custom, habit) |
| **feminine** | **-ez, -eza** | **la rapidez** (speed), **la belleza** (beauty), **la tristeza** (sadness) |
| **feminine** | **-ura** | **la altura** (height), **la cultura**, **la temperatura** |
| **feminine** | **-ía** (stressed) | **la economía**, **la geografía**, **la energía** |
| **feminine** | **-ncia** | **la ciencia** (science), **la importancia**, **la paciencia** |
| **masculine** | **-aje** | **el viaje** (journey), **el paisaje** (landscape), **el garaje**, **el mensaje** |
| **masculine** | **-or** | **el color**, **el dolor** (pain), **el amor** (love), **el calor** (heat) |
| **masculine** | **-ma** (words of Greek origin) | **el problema**, **el sistema**, **el tema** (topic), **el programa**, **el idioma** (language) |
| **masculine** | **-miento** | **el momento**, **el pensamiento** (thought), **el movimiento** |
| **masculine** | **-ismo** | **el turismo**, **el realismo** |

**Watch out: exceptions to the endings**

- **la flor** (flower) and **la labor** (labour) are feminine, against the *-or* rule.
- Most words in *-ión* that are not *-ción / -sión* are feminine (**la región, la unión, la opinión**), but **el avión** (plane) and **el camión** (lorry) are masculine.

- The *-ma* rule has an easy test: if it came from Greek and describes an idea, it is masculine (*problema, sistema, programa*). Ordinary feminine words in *-ma* exist too: **la cama** (bed), **la forma** (shape).
- **el día** ends in *-ía* but is masculine, against the *-ía* rule above. So are **el mediodía** (noon) and **el guía** (a male guide).

## Words ending in -e or in a consonant

With **-e** there is no reliable pattern: some nouns are masculine (**el coche** car, **el nombre** name, **el padre** father) and some feminine (**la noche** night, **la leche** milk, **la calle** street, **la gente** people, **la clase**). Learn each with its article.

With a **consonant** the most useful guide is the last letter:

| ENDING | USUALLY | EXAMPLES | EXCEPTIONS |
|---|---|---|---|
| **-l, -n, -r, -s** | masculine | **el papel, el pan, el mes, el país, el autobús** | **la sal, la miel, la piel, la flor, la mujer** |
| **-z** | often feminine | **la luz, la voz, la paz, la vez** (time, occasion), **la cruz** | **el lápiz, el arroz, el pez** (fish) |
| **-d** (not *-dad, -tad, -tud*) | mixed | **la pared** (wall), **la red** (net, network), **el ataúd** | learn each word |

## Categories that are always masculine or feminine

| CATEGORY | GENDER | EXAMPLES |
|---|---|---|
| days of the week | masculine | **el lunes, el martes, el domingo** |
| months | masculine | **enero, febrero, marzo** (used without an article: *en enero*) |
| seasons | mostly masculine | **el verano, el otoño, el invierno**, but **la primavera** |

| CATEGORY | GENDER | EXAMPLES |
|---|---|---|
| languages | masculine | el español, el inglés, el alemán, el francés |
| colours | masculine | el rojo, el verde, el azul |
| rivers, seas, mountains | masculine | el Ebro, el Támesis, el mar, el Everest |
| letters of the alphabet | feminine | la a, la b, la hache |

## Nouns for people: the sex decides

For people and animals, the gender follows the sex. There are three ways to make the feminine.

| PATTERN | MASCULINE | FEMININE |
|---|---|---|
| **-o → -a** | el niño, el hijo, el amigo, el gato | la niña, la hija, la amiga, la gata |
| **consonant + -a** | el profesor, el doctor, el escritor | la profesora, la doctora, la escritora |
| **-e → -a** or **+ -esa** | el jefe, el alcalde, el conde | la jefa, la alcaldesa, la condesa |
| **-or → -triz** | el actor, el emperador | la actriz, la emperatriz |
| **different word** | el padre, el hombre, el rey, el toro, el caballo | la madre, la mujer, la reina, la vaca, la yegua |

## One form for both: el / la estudiante

Many nouns for people have **one form**, and only the **article** shows whether the person is a man or a woman. This is typical of nouns in **-ista**, **-ante / -ente** and several others.

| MASCULINE | FEMININE | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| el estudiante | la estudiante | student |
| el artista | la artista | artist |
| el turista | la turista | tourist |
| el periodista | la periodista | journalist |
| el dentista | la dentista | dentist |
| el cantante | la cantante | singer |
| el gerente | la gerente | manager |
| el joven | la joven | young man / young woman |
| el colega | la colega | colleague |

**Watch out: fixed gender, whoever the person is**

A few nouns keep one gender even when they describe a man or a woman: **la persona** (person), **la víctima** (victim), **el personaje** (character), **el ángel** (angel). You say *la persona* for a man as well as for a woman. For most animals the same is true: **la jirafa** is always feminine, and you add *macho* or *hembra* to say which sex you mean.

## Professions

Professions combine all the patterns above. In Spain and across Latin America it is now normal to use a **feminine form** for a woman: *la médica, la ingeniera, la abogada, la jueza*.

| PATTERN | MASCULINE | FEMININE | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|---|
| -o → -a | el médico | la médica | doctor |
| | el abogado | la abogada | lawyer |
| | el camarero | la camarera | waiter / waitress |

| PATTERN | MASCULINE | FEMININE | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **el técnico** | **la técnica** | technician |
| | **el cocinero** | **la cocinera** | cook |
| consonant + -a | **el profesor** | **la profesora** | teacher |
| | **el programador** | **la programadora** | programmer |
| | **el director** | **la directora** | director, head |
| same form | **el dentista** | **la dentista** | dentist |
| | **el periodista** | **la periodista** | journalist |
| | **el gerente** | **la gerente** | manager |
| other | **el jefe** | **la jefa** | boss |
| | **el actor** | **la actriz** | actor / actress |

**Latin America note**

Gender can change between countries for a few common words, usually because the word itself is different: Spain says **el ordenador** (masculine) for "computer", while Latin America says **la computadora** (feminine). The feminine professions in *-a* (*la médica, la presidenta, la ingeniera*) are used everywhere, and *la clienta* is common alongside *la cliente*. When in doubt, ask or listen to how people around you say it.

## Same word, two genders, two meanings

For a small group of words the gender **changes the meaning**. They are worth learning in pairs.

| MASCULINE | FEMININE |
|---|---|
| **el capital** money invested | **la capital** capital city |

| MASCULINE | FEMININE |
|---|---|
| **el cura** priest | **la cura** cure |
| **el orden** order, tidiness | **la orden** order, command |
| **el policía** policeman | **la policía** the police force; policewoman |
| **el frente** front (of a building, war) | **la frente** forehead |
| **el cometa** comet | **la cometa** kite |
| **el guía** male guide | **la guía** female guide; guidebook |
| **el mañana** the future | **la mañana** morning |

**Coming up: a few feminine nouns that use "el"**

**el agua** (water), **el águila** (eagle) and a few more feminine nouns take *el* in the singular for a sound reason, not because they are masculine. Spanish Grammar 1 4 explains the rule.

## In Use — En situación

*Read the exchanges aloud and notice the gender of each noun.*

### ① Jobs

**A:**

¿A qué te dedicas?

What do you do for a living?

**B:**

Soy programador. Mi hermana es médica y mi madre es profesora.

I'm a programmer. My sister is a doctor and my mother is a teacher.

**A:**

¿Y tu padre?

### ② Artists and dentists

**A:**

¿Pablo es artista?

Is Pablo an artist?

**B:**

No, Pablo es dentista. La mujer de Pablo es artista.

No, Pablo is a dentist. Pablo's wife is an artist.

And your father?

**B:**

Mi padre es camarero.

My father is a waiter.

### ③ Capital and capital

**A:**

¿Cuál es la capital de España?

What is the capital of Spain?

**B:**

Madrid.

Madrid.

**A:**

¿Y qué es el capital de una empresa?

And what is a company's capital?

**B:**

Es el dinero de la empresa.

It is the company's money.

## 📋 Quick Reference — Resumen

| TOPIC | SUMMARY |
|---|---|
| people, animals | gender follows sex: *el hombre / la mujer* |
| -o / -a | usually masculine / feminine; exceptions *la mano, la foto, el día, el mapa* |
| feminine endings | *-ción, -sión, -dad, -tad, -tud, -umbre, -ez, -eza, -ura, -ía, -ncia* |
| masculine endings | *-aje, -or, -ma* (Greek), *-miento, -ismo* |
| -e | no pattern; learn with the article |

| TOPIC | SUMMARY |
|---|---|
| consonants | *-l, -n, -r, -s* usually masculine; *-z* often feminine |
| always masculine | days, months, languages, colours, rivers and seas |
| always feminine | letters of the alphabet |
| professions | *-o* → *-a*; add *-a* to a consonant; *-ista, -ante* unchanged; *el actor* → *la actriz* |
| meaning changes | *el capital / la capital, el cura / la cura, el orden / la orden* |

## 📝 Try It Yourself — Ejercicios

*Say the answer first, then click to check.*

**1.** Masculine (*el*) or feminine (*la*)? *libro, casa, ciudad, viaje, canción.*

▼ Show answer

el libro · la casa · la ciudad (*-dad*) · el viaje (*-aje*) · la canción (*-ción*).

**2.** Masculine or feminine? *problema, sistema, mano, día, mapa.*

▼ Show answer

el problema · el sistema · la mano (exception, *-o* but feminine) · el día · el mapa (exceptions, *-a* but masculine).

**3.** Add the right word, *el* or *la*: ____ luz, ____ lápiz, ____ flor, ____ color, ____ información.

▼ Show answer

la luz · el lápiz · la flor · el color · la información.

**4.** Give the feminine: *el profesor, el médico, el actor, el jefe, el director.*

▼ Show answer

la profesora · la médica · la actriz · la jefa · la directora.

**5.** Which of these has the same form for a man and a woman? *estudiante, camarero, dentista, abogado, periodista.*

▼ Show answer

*estudiante, dentista, periodista*: *el / la estudiante* and so on. *camarero* and *abogado* change (*camarera, abogada*).

**6.** Say in Spanish: "My sister is a dentist and my father is a teacher."

▼ Show answer

Mi hermana es dentista y mi padre es profesor.

**7.** What is the difference between *el capital* and *la capital*? And between *el cura* and *la cura*?

▼ Show answer

*el capital* is money invested; *la capital* is the capital city. *el cura* is a priest; *la cura* is a cure.

**8.** Correct the mistakes: *la problema · el mano · la ciudad es grande · el canción*. (Only fix the article.)

▼ Show answer

el problema (*-ma* from Greek) · la mano (exception) · la ciudad is correct · la canción (*-ción* is feminine).

**9.** Why are *la foto* and *la moto* feminine although they end in *-o*?

▼ Show answer

They are shortened forms of feminine words: *la fotografía* and *la motocicleta*.

**10.** Which word do Spain and Latin America use differently for "computer", and what gender is each?

▼ Show answer

Spain: *el ordenador* (masculine). Latin America: *la computadora* (feminine).

**Coming up in Chapter 3: Plurals.** The endings *-s* and *-es*; spelling changes (*lápiz → lápices*); stress shifts (*joven → jóvenes*); words that do not change; nouns used mostly in the plural; and the plural of mixed groups (*los padres*).

# 🔢 Plurals — El plural

*Making a Spanish noun plural is simple at heart: add **-s** after a vowel and **-es** after a consonant. The complications are small and logical: a **z** turns into **c**, a written **accent** appears or disappears so that the stress stays where it was, and some words end in -s already and do not change at all. This chapter also covers the nouns that exist mostly in the plural (las gafas) and the rule that a group of men and women is **masculine plural** (los padres).*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

**Vowel → add -s** (*casa → casas*). **Consonant → add -es** (*ciudad → ciudades*). **-z → -ces** (*lápiz → lápices*). A word ending in **-s** with an **unstressed** last syllable does **not change** (*el lunes → los lunes*). The **stress stays on the same syllable**, so the written accent is added or dropped to match (*joven → jóvenes*, *canción → canciones*).

**Unlike French, the plural is spoken**

In French the plural *-s* is usually silent and shown only by the article. In Spanish the **-s is always pronounced** (*casa* against *casas*, *flor* against *flores*), so the noun itself tells you the number. The article follows the noun in number: *el → los* and *la → las*.

## The basic rule: -s or -es

| SINGULAR ENDS IN… | PLURAL | EXAMPLES |
|---|---|---|
| an unstressed **vowel** (*a, e, i, o, u*) | add **-s** | la casa → las casas · el libro → los libros · el coche → los coches · la noche → las noches |
| a stressed **-á, -é, -ó** | add **-s** | el sofá → los sofás · el café → los cafés · el papá → los papás · la mamá → las mamás |

| SINGULAR ENDS IN… | PLURAL | EXAMPLES |
|---|---|---|
| a stressed **-í, -ú** | add **-es** (careful writing); **-s** is common in speech | **el rubí → los rubíes** · **el tabú → los tabúes** · **el menú → los menús** |
| a **consonant** | add **-es** | **la ciudad → las ciudades** · **el color → los colores** · **el papel → los papeles** · **la mujer → las mujeres** · **la pared → las paredes** |
| **-y** | add **-es** | **la ley → las leyes** (law) · **el rey → los reyes** (king) |

## Spelling changes: z → c

Spanish does not write **ze** or **zi** in most words, so a final **-z** becomes **-c-** before the *-es*. The sound stays the same (*th* in Spain, *s* in Latin America).

| SINGULAR | PLURAL | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| el lápiz | los lápices | pencil |
| la luz | las luces | light |
| la voz | las voces | voice |
| la vez | las veces | time, occasion |
| el pez | los peces | fish |
| la nariz | las narices | nose |
| la actriz | las actrices | actress |

> **Watch out: the same logic as in Chapter 1**
>
> The z/c change is the same idea you met in Spanish Grammar 1 1: the spelling shifts to keep the sound steady. The other pairs (*c → qu* and *g → gu*) appear when other endings are added, for example **chico → chiquito** and **amigo → amiguito**, not in the plural.

## Accents added and lost: the stress stays put

Adding *-es* adds a syllable, so the stress can end up in a position that no longer follows the rules from Spanish Grammar 1 1. The stress stays on the **same syllable**, and the written accent is added or removed to show it.

| WHAT HAPPENS | SINGULAR | PLURAL |
|---|---|---|
| **accent lost** (the stress is now second-to-last, the normal place) | la canción · el camión · el jardín · el autobús · el inglés | las canciones · los camiones · los jardines · los autobuses · los ingleses |
| **accent added** (the stress is now third-to-last, which is always written) | el joven · el examen · el origen · la imagen · el resumen | los jóvenes · los exámenes · los orígenes · las imágenes · los resúmenes |
| **accent unchanged** (it was already third-to-last or stays written) | el árbol · la cárcel · el móvil | los árboles · las cárceles · los móviles |

> **Watch out: two words where the stress really shifts**
>
> Two common words are exceptions to "the stress stays put": **el carácter → los caracteres** (character) and **el régimen → los regímenes**. Learn them as exceptions; most Spanish speakers never need them.

## Words that do not change

A word that already ends in **-s** (or **-x**) with an **unstressed last syllable** has the **same form** in the plural. Only the article and the context show the number.

| SINGULAR | PLURAL | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| el lunes, el martes, el viernes | los lunes, los martes, los viernes | Mondays, Tuesdays, Fridays |
| la crisis · la tesis · la dosis | las crisis · las tesis · las dosis | crisis, thesis, dose |

| SINGULAR | PLURAL | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| el análisis · el virus · el atlas | los análisis · los virus · los atlas | analysis, virus, atlas |
| el paraguas | los paraguas | umbrella (*para* + *aguas*) |
| el cumpleaños | los cumpleaños | birthday |
| el sacapuntas · el abrelatas · el lavaplatos | los sacapuntas · los abrelatas · los lavaplatos | pencil sharpener, tin opener, dishwasher |

**Watch out: stressed -s still takes -es**

The rule for "no change" is about the **last syllable being unstressed**. **el país**, **el mes** and **el autobús** are stressed on the last syllable, so they do change: **los países, los meses, los autobuses**. Family surnames never change: **los García, los Martínez** ("the Garcías"), never *los Garcías*.

## Nouns used mostly in the plural

Some things are plural in Spanish, even when English uses a singular, or sometimes the other way round. Use the plural form even for one object:

| SPANISH | ENGLISH | NOTE |
|---|---|---|
| las gafas | glasses (spectacles) | *unas gafas* = a pair of glasses |
| las tijeras | scissors | |
| los pantalones | trousers | *el pantalón* is also heard, especially in Latin America |
| las vacaciones | holidays, vacation | always plural |
| las afueras | outskirts | |
| los alrededores | surroundings | |
| las gracias | thanks | *dar las gracias* = to say thank you |

| SPANISH | ENGLISH | NOTE |
|---|---|---|
| los celos | jealousy | plural for the feeling |

**Latin America note**

Vocabulary changes more than the plural rule: "glasses" are **las gafas** in Spain but **los lentes** or **los anteojos** in much of Latin America, and "jeans" are **los vaqueros** in Spain and **los jeans** in Latin America. The plural endings themselves are the same everywhere.

## Mixed groups: the masculine plural

When a group contains **men and women**, or when the sex is not stated, Spanish uses the **masculine plural**. It is the standard way to say a family relation as a pair:

| MASCULINE PLURAL | MEANS |
|---|---|
| los padres | the parents (father and mother) |
| los hermanos | brothers and sisters, siblings |
| los hijos | sons and daughters, children |
| los abuelos | grandparents |
| los tíos | uncle and aunt, uncles and aunts |
| los reyes | the king and queen |
| los niños | the children (boys, or boys and girls) |
| los españoles | the Spanish (men, or men and women) |

Use the **feminine plural** only when the whole group is female: **las madres**, **las hermanas**, **las niñas**. In formal speeches you will sometimes hear both forms spelled out (*los niños y las niñas*), but the masculine plural alone is normal in everyday Spanish.

## 🗣️ In Use — En situación

*Read the exchanges aloud and notice each plural.*

### ① Shopping

**A:**

Quiero pantalones, camisas y zapatos.

I want trousers, shirts and shoes.

**B:**

Aquí hay pantalones y zapatos. Las camisas están allí.

Here there are trousers and shoes. The shirts are over there.

### ② Family

**A:**

¿Tienes hermanos?

Do you have brothers and sisters?

**B:**

Sí, tengo dos: un hermano y una hermana.

Yes, I have two: a brother and a sister.

**A:**

¿Y primos?

And cousins?

**B:**

Sí, tengo tres primos.

Yes, I have three cousins.

### ③ Days of the week

**A:**

¿Qué días trabajas?

Which days do you work?

**B:**

Trabajo los lunes y los martes.

I work on Mondays and Tuesdays.

## 📋 Quick Reference — Resumen

| TOPIC | SUMMARY |
|---|---|
| vowel | add *-s*: *casa → casas*; stressed *-á, -é, -ó* also *-s* |
| consonant | add *-es*: *ciudad → ciudades*; *-y → -yes* |
| -z | *→ -ces*: *lápiz → lápices* |
| accent lost | stressed last syllable becomes second-to-last: *canción → canciones* |
| accent added | stress now third-to-last: *joven → jóvenes*, *examen → exámenes* |
| no change | unstressed *-s / -x*: *lunes, crisis, paraguas, cumpleaños*; surnames |
| stressed -s | takes *-es*: *país → países*, *autobús → autobuses* |
| plural only | *las gafas, las tijeras, los pantalones, las vacaciones* |
| mixed groups | masculine plural: *los padres, los hermanos, los reyes* |

## 🖍️ Try It Yourself — Ejercicios

*Say the answer first, then click to check.*

**1.** Make plural: *casa, libro, coche, café, sofá*.

▼ Show answer

casas · libros · coches · cafés · sofás. (Vowel, stressed or not, takes *-s*.)

**2.** Make plural: *ciudad, color, papel, mujer, ley*.

▼ Show answer

ciudades · colores · papeles · mujeres · leyes.

**3.** Make plural: *lápiz, luz, voz, vez, pez*.

▼ Show answer

lápices · luces · voces · veces · peces. (*z* becomes *c* before *-es*.)

**4.** Make plural, and say what happens to the accent: *canción, camión, autobús, inglés*.

▼ Show answer

canciones · camiones · autobuses · ingleses. The written accent disappears, because the stress is now on the second-to-last syllable.

**5.** Make plural, and say what happens to the accent: *joven, examen, origen, imagen*.

▼ Show answer

jóvenes · exámenes · orígenes · imágenes. An accent appears so that the stress stays on the same syllable.

**6.** Which do **not** change in the plural? *lunes, país, crisis, paraguas, mes, cumpleaños*.

▼ Show answer

*lunes, crisis, paraguas, cumpleaños*. *país* and *mes* are stressed on the last syllable, so they become *países* and *meses*.

**7.** Say in Spanish: "I need glasses and scissors."

▼ Show answer

Necesito gafas y tijeras. (Both words are plural in Spanish.)

**8.** What does *los padres* mean? And *los reyes*? Which word would you use for a group of only women, such as the daughters?

▼ Show answer

*los padres* = the parents (father and mother); *los reyes* = the king and queen. For a female group use the feminine plural: *las hijas*.

**9.** Correct the mistakes: *los lápizes · las canciónes · los ciudads · los paraguases*.

▼ Show answer

los lápices (*z* → *c*) · las canciones (accent lost) · las ciudades (*ciudad* is feminine and takes *-es*) · los paraguas (no change).

**10.** Say the plural of the family surname *Martínez* in "the Martínez family", and explain the rule.

▼ Show answer

los Martínez. Surnames do not take a plural ending in Spanish.

**Coming up in Chapter 4: Articles.** *el, la, los, las* and *un, una, unos, unas*; *al* and *del*; *el* before stressed *a-* (*el agua*); *lo* + adjective; and when Spanish uses or leaves out the article (professions, days, languages, parts of the body).

# 📌 Articles — Los artículos

*The article is the small word in front of a noun, and in Spanish it must agree with the noun in **gender** and **number**. You have already used el, la, los, las to show gender and plural; this chapter gives the full system: the **definite** articles ("the"), the **indefinite** articles ("a, some"), the two contractions al and del, one famous sound rule (el agua), the neuter lo, and, most useful of all, the cases where Spanish uses an article and English does not, and the other way round.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

**the** = *el, la, los, las* · **a / some** = *un, una, unos, unas*. The article matches the noun's gender and number. **a + el = al** and **de + el = del**. Before a feminine noun that begins with a **stressed a-**, the singular takes *el* (*el agua*). Spanish uses the definite article for **general ideas** and **days** where English has none (*Me gustan los gatos*, *el lunes*) and **drops** the indefinite article after *ser* with a **profession** (*Soy programador*).

## The forms

| | MASCULINE SINGULAR | FEMININE SINGULAR | MASCULINE PLURAL | FEMININE PLURAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **definite** (the) | **el** libro | **la** casa | **los** libros | **las** casas |
| **indefinite** (a, some) | **un** libro | **una** casa | **unos** libros | **unas** casas |

**Definite or indefinite?** Use *el / la* for something both people already know about, and *un / una* for something new:

| USE | EXAMPLE |
|---|---|
| introducing something new | **Hay un banco en la calle Mayor.** (There is a bank on the high street.) |

| USE | EXAMPLE |
|---|---|
| referring back to it | **El** banco está cerca. (The bank is near.) |
| *unos / unas* = some, a few, about | Compro **unas** manzanas. · Tardo **unos** veinte minutos. |
| *unas* with things that come in pairs | **unas** gafas, **unas** tijeras (a pair of glasses, a pair of scissors) |
| *un / una* can also mean "one" | un euro, una hora |

## al and del

Two small words always **merge** with *el*:

| RULE | EXAMPLE |
|---|---|
| **a + el → al** | Voy **al** mercado. (I go to the market.) |
| **de + el → del** | la casa **del** profesor (the teacher's house) |
| no contraction with *la, los, las* | Voy a la playa. · Vengo de los Estados Unidos. |
| no contraction with the pronoun *él* | Hablo de él. · Voy con él. |

> **Watch out: when el belongs to a name**
>
> If *El* is a **capital letter that is part of a proper name**, writers usually leave it separate: **Vamos a El Salvador** and **la capital de El Salvador**, not *al Salvador*. Use *al* and *del* with ordinary nouns (*al hotel, del coche*).

## El agua: a feminine noun with "el"

A feminine singular noun that begins with a **stressed a-** (or *ha-*) takes ***el*** instead of *la*. The reason is sound: *la agua* would run together and be hard to say. The noun stays feminine, which you can see from the **adjective** and from the **plural**.

| SINGULAR | PLURAL | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| el agua fría | las aguas frías | cold water |
| el águila | las águilas | eagle |
| el hacha | las hachas | axe |
| el hada | las hadas | fairy |
| el alma | las almas | soul |
| el aula | las aulas | classroom (in a school) |
| el área | las áreas | area |
| el arma | las armas | weapon |
| el hambre | (no plural in use) | hunger |

**Watch out: only stressed a-, only the article**

The rule needs the **stress on the first syllable**: **el agua** (A-gwa) but **la ambulancia** and **la avenida** (the stress is later in the word). It changes only the article: the **adjective stays feminine** (*el agua fría*, never *el agua frío*), and the plural is regular (*las aguas*).

## Lo + adjective: the neuter article

The neuter article **lo** turns an adjective into an abstract noun, "the ... thing" or "what is ...". It never changes for gender or number.

| SPANISH | ENGLISH |
|---|---|
| lo bueno · lo malo | the good thing, the bad thing |
| lo importante | the important thing |
| lo mejor · lo peor | the best thing, the worst thing |

| SPANISH | ENGLISH |
|---|---|
| **lo difícil** | the difficult part |
| **Lo bueno de Madrid es la comida.** | The good thing about Madrid is the food. |

## Where Spanish uses the article and English does not

| CASE | SPANISH | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| general ideas and things | Me gustan **los** gatos. · **El** café es caro. · **La** vida es corta. | I like cats. Coffee is expensive. Life is short. |
| days of the week | Voy al gimnasio **el** lunes. · Trabajo **los** lunes. | on Monday · on Mondays |
| time and "every" | Son **las** tres. · todos **los** días | It is three o'clock. every day |
| price per unit | tres euros **el** kilo | three euros a kilo |
| titles when you talk *about* someone | **El** señor García está aquí. · **La** doctora Ruiz habla. | Mr García is here. Dr Ruiz is speaking. |
| parts of the body | Me lavo **las** manos. · Me duele **la** cabeza. | I wash my hands. My head hurts. |
| a language as the subject | **El** español es fácil. | Spanish is easy. |

## Where Spanish leaves the article out

| CASE | SPANISH | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| *ser* + profession, nationality, religion | Soy programador. · Es médica. · Somos escoceses. | I'm a programmer. She's a doctor. We're Scottish. |

| CASE | SPANISH | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| ...but the article returns if you add a description | **Es una médica muy buena.** | She's a very good doctor. |
| a language after *hablar, estudiar, aprender*; after *en* and *de* | **Hablo español. · en español · clase de español** | I speak Spanish. in Spanish, a Spanish class |
| direct address with a title | **Buenos días, señor García.** | Good morning, Mr García. |
| after *tener, llevar, buscar, sin* for an unspecific thing | **Tengo coche. · Busco piso. · sin coche** | I have a car. I'm looking for a flat. without a car |
| with *hambre, sed, frío, calor, miedo* | **Tengo hambre. · Tengo sed.** | I'm hungry. I'm thirsty. |
| after *otro, medio, cien, mil*, and in *¡Qué …!* | **otro libro · medio kilo · cien euros · ¡Qué día!** | another book, half a kilo, a hundred euros, What a day! |

**Latin America note**

A few country names may be used with or without the article: **(los) Estados Unidos, (la) India, (el) Perú, (la) Argentina**. The article is optional and is falling out of use, whereas **el Reino Unido** always keeps it. In some regions of Spain and parts of Latin America you will also hear an article before a first name (*la María, el Pablo*) in familiar speech; this is not used in standard written Spanish.

## 🗣️ In Use — En situación

*Read the exchanges aloud and notice which article each noun takes.*

**① There is… and the…**

**A:**

¿Hay un banco por aquí?

Is there a bank around here?

**② El agua**

**A:**

Tengo sed.

I'm thirsty.

**B:**

Sí, hay un banco en la calle Mayor. El banco está cerca.

Yes, there is a bank on the high street. The bank is near.

**B:**

Hay agua en la nevera.

There is water in the fridge.

**A:**

¿El agua está fría?

Is the water cold?

**B:**

Sí, el agua está fría.

Yes, the water is cold.

### ③ A profession

**A:**

¿Tu hermana es médica?

Is your sister a doctor?

**B:**

Sí, es médica. Es una médica muy buena.

Yes, she's a doctor. She's a very good doctor.

## 📋 Quick Reference — Resumen

| TOPIC | SUMMARY |
|---|---|
| definite | *el, la, los, las* |
| indefinite | *un, una, unos, unas* (unos / unas = some, about, a pair) |
| contractions | *a* + *el* = *al*, *de* + *el* = *del*; not with *la, los, las* or *él* |
| el agua | stressed *a-* or *ha-*: *el* in the singular; adjective stays feminine |
| lo | *lo* + adjective = the … thing: *lo bueno, lo mejor* |

| TOPIC | SUMMARY |
|---|---|
| article used | general ideas, days, time, price per unit, titles, body parts |
| article left out | *ser* + profession; *hablar* + language; *tener* + *hambre, sed*; *otro, medio, cien, mil* |

## 📝 Try It Yourself — Ejercicios

*Say the answer first, then click to check.*

**1.** Put in the definite article: ____ libro, ____ casa, ____ coches, ____ mesas.

▼ Show answer

el libro · la casa · los coches · las mesas.

**2.** Put in the indefinite article: ____ problema, ____ ciudad, ____ gafas, ____ amigos.

▼ Show answer

un problema · una ciudad · unas gafas (a pair) · unos amigos.

**3.** Combine: *Voy a* + *el cine*; *la casa de* + *el profesor*; *Voy a* + *la playa*.

▼ Show answer

Voy al cine · la casa del profesor · Voy a la playa (no contraction with *la*).

**4.** Why do we say *el agua* but *la avenida*?

▼ Show answer

*agua* begins with a stressed *a-* (A-gwa), so it takes *el* for the sound. *avenida* is stressed later (a-ve-NI-da), so it keeps *la*. *agua* is still feminine: *el agua fría*.

**5.** Say in Spanish: "The good thing about the city is the food."

▼ Show answer

Lo bueno de la ciudad es la comida.

**6.** Say in Spanish: "I work on Mondays and I go to the gym on Tuesday."

▼ Show answer

Trabajo los lunes y voy al gimnasio el martes. (*los lunes* = every Monday; *el martes* = this Tuesday.)

**7.** Add or remove the article if needed: *Soy ____ ingeniera.* · *Hablo ____ español.* · *Tengo ____ hambre.* · *____ señor Ruiz es profesor.*

▼ Show answer

Soy ingeniera (no article) · Hablo español (no article) · Tengo hambre (no article) · El señor Ruiz es profesor (article, because you talk *about* him).

**8.** Which is correct? *Ella es una médica.* or *Ella es una médica muy buena.* Explain.

▼ Show answer

Both are possible, but plain *Ella es médica* is the normal way to give a profession. When you add a description (*muy buena*) the article comes back: *Es una médica muy buena.*

**9.** Say in Spanish: "I like cats" and "Life is short".

▼ Show answer

Me gustan los gatos. · La vida es corta. (Spanish uses the definite article for general ideas.)

**10.** Give the plural of *el águila* and *el hambre*.

▼ Show answer

las águilas (the plural is regular and uses *las*). *el hambre* has no plural in everyday use.

**Coming up in Chapter 5: Adjectives: Agreement and Position.** Agreement in gender and number; adjectives in *-o/-a*, *-e* and consonants; nationalities; position (*un buen amigo* against *un amigo bueno*); shortened forms (*buen, gran, mal, primer*); and adjectives whose meaning changes with position.

# 🎨 Adjectives: Agreement and Position — Los adjetivos

*In Spanish an adjective **agrees** with its noun in gender and number: un coche rojo, una casa roja, unos coches rojos, unas casas rojas. It also normally comes **after** the noun, but a few adjectives change form (buen, gran, mal, primer) or change meaning when they come before it. This chapter gives the agreement patterns, the nationalities (which are adjectives and nouns at once), the position rules and the word pairs that mean two different things.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

An adjective **matches its noun** in gender and number, **whether it follows the noun** (*una casa grande*) **or follows ser** (*La casa es grande*). Adjectives in **-o** have four forms (*alto, alta, altos, altas*); adjectives in **-e or a consonant** have two (*grande, grandes*). The usual place is **after the noun**. *bueno, malo, primero* lose their final **-o** before a masculine singular noun (*un buen amigo*), and *grande* becomes **gran** before any singular noun, with the meaning "great".

## Agreement: four forms or two

| TYPE | MASC. SING. | FEM. SING. | MASC. PL. | FEM. PL. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **-o** (four forms) | alto | alta | altos | altas |
| **-e** (two forms) | grande | grande | grandes | grandes |
| **consonant** (two forms) | fácil | fácil | fáciles | fáciles |
| **-z** (z → c) | feliz | feliz | felices | felices |
| **-or, -ón, -án, -ín** (four forms: add *-a*) | trabajador | trabajadora | trabajadores | trabajadoras |

The plural follows the rules from Spanish Grammar 1 3: *-s* after a vowel, *-es* after a consonant, *z → c*, and the accent is added or lost to keep the stress (**joven → jóvenes**, **inglés → ingleses**).

| NOUN + ADJECTIVE | EXAMPLE |
|---|---|
| masculine singular | un coche rojo · un libro fácil |
| feminine singular | una casa roja · una clase fácil |
| masculine plural | unos coches rojos · unos libros fáciles |
| feminine plural | unas casas rojas · unas clases fáciles |
| after *ser* | Mi hermana es alta. · Mis hermanos son altos. |

**Watch out: one adjective, two nouns**

If the adjective describes **two nouns of different gender**, or a mixed group, it takes the **masculine plural**: **Ana y Pablo son escoceses.** · **un niño y una niña simpáticos**. If both nouns are feminine, it is feminine plural: **Ana y Marta son altas.**

## Colours

| TYPE | COLOURS |
|---|---|
| four forms | rojo, blanco, negro, amarillo → *roja, blancas, negros…* |
| two forms | verde, azul, gris, marrón → *verdes, azules, grises, marrones* |
| one form for both genders (from a noun) | naranja, rosa → *naranjas, rosas* in the plural |

## Nationalities

Nationalities are adjectives and also the nouns for the people. They are written with a **small letter** in Spanish, and the feminine usually adds *-a*. Those that end in *-és, -án, -ón* lose their written accent in every other form (*inglés → inglesa*).

| MASCULINE | FEMININE | PLURAL | COUNTRY |
|---|---|---|---|
| español | española | españoles, españolas | España |
| escocés | escocesa | escoceses, escocesas | Escocia |
| inglés | inglesa | ingleses, inglesas | Inglaterra |
| francés | francesa | franceses, francesas | Francia |
| alemán | alemana | alemanes, alemanas | Alemania |
| húngaro | húngara | húngaros, húngaras | Hungría |
| italiano | italiana | italianos, italianas | Italia |
| japonés | japonesa | japoneses, japonesas | Japón |
| estadounidense | estadounidense | estadounidenses | Estados Unidos |
| canadiense | canadiense | canadienses | Canadá |
| marroquí | marroquí | marroquíes | Marruecos |

> **Latin America note**
>
> **americano** is used in Spain for someone from the United States, but many Latin Americans object, because they are Americans too. **estadounidense** is the neutral word, and **norteamericano** is also common. For colours, Spain says **marrón** for brown, while Mexico and much of Central America say **café**; and "pink" is **rosa** in Spain but often **rosado** in Latin America.

## Position: after the noun, with exceptions

A **descriptive adjective** normally comes **after** the noun, because it tells you *which one* or what it is like: *un coche rojo*, *una casa grande*, *un libro interesante*. Words that count or point

out the noun (**limiting adjectives**) come **before** it: numbers, *mucho*, *otro*, *este*, *mi*.

| POSITION | KIND OF ADJECTIVE | EXAMPLES |
|---|---|---|
| **after** the noun | colour, shape, nationality, material, any adjective that distinguishes | **un coche rojo, una mesa redonda, un amigo español, una mesa de madera** |
| **before** the noun | numbers, quantities, *otro*, and the possessives and demonstratives you will meet in Spanish Grammar 1 7 | **tres libros, mucha gente, otro día** |
| either, with a shade of feeling | evaluative adjectives: *bueno, malo, bonito, hermoso* | **un buen libro** / **un libro bueno** |

Putting a descriptive adjective **before** the noun makes it sound **subjective or emotional**, or it describes a quality we take for granted: **la blanca nieve** (the white snow). In everyday speech you will meet this mostly with *bueno, malo, grande, pequeño, bonito* and similar evaluations.

## Shortened forms: buen, mal, primer, gran

Some adjectives **lose their ending** before a noun:

| FULL FORM | SHORTENED | WHEN | EXAMPLE |
|---|---|---|---|
| **bueno** | **buen** | before a **masculine singular** noun | **un buen amigo**, but **una buena amiga**, **buenos amigos** |
| **malo** | **mal** | before a **masculine singular** noun | **un mal día**, but **una mala idea** |
| **primero** | **primer** | before a **masculine singular** noun | **el primer día**, but **la primera vez** |
| **tercero** | **tercer** | before a **masculine singular** noun | **el tercer piso**, but **la tercera calle** |

| FULL FORM | SHORTENED | WHEN | EXAMPLE |
|---|---|---|---|
| grande | gran | before **any singular** noun (masculine or feminine); means "great" | **un gran hombre, una gran mujer** |
| santo | san | before most saints' names | **San Pedro**, but **Santo Tomás, Santo Domingo** |

> **Watch out: the short forms only work before the noun**
>
> *bueno* and *malo* keep the full form after the noun (**un amigo bueno**, **un día malo**), and after *ser* (**Es bueno.**). The short forms also do not apply to the plural or the feminine of *bueno, malo, primero*. Only *gran* is used for both genders, and only in the singular.

## Meaning changes with position

With a small group of adjectives, position **changes the meaning**: before the noun they have a figurative sense, after the noun a literal one.

| BEFORE THE NOUN | AFTER THE NOUN |
|---|---|
| **un gran hombre** a great man | **un hombre grande** a large man |
| **un viejo amigo** a long-standing friend | **un amigo viejo** an elderly friend |
| **un pobre hombre** a poor (unfortunate) man | **un hombre pobre** a man with no money |
| **una nueva casa** a different, new-to-me house | **una casa nueva** a brand-new house |
| **mi antiguo jefe** my former boss | **un edificio antiguo** an old, ancient building |
| **el único problema** the only problem | **un problema único** a unique problem |
| **un simple error** a mere mistake | **un error simple** a simple, uncomplicated mistake |
| **el mismo día** the same day | **el día mismo** the very day |

# 🗣️ In Use — En situación

*Read the exchanges aloud and check each agreement.*

### ① Describing people

**A:**

¿Cómo es tu amiga?

What is your friend like?

**B:**

Es alta, morena y muy simpática.

She is tall, dark-haired and very friendly.

**A:**

¿Y su marido?

And her husband?

**B:**

Es bajo y muy trabajador.

He is short and very hard-working.

### ② Nationalities

**A:**

¿De dónde eres?

Where are you from?

**B:**

Soy escocés. Mi amiga Anna es húngara y su marido es inglés.

I'm Scottish. My friend Anna is Hungarian and her husband is English.

### ③ A hotel

**A:**

¿Qué tal el hotel?

How is the hotel?

**B:**

Es un buen hotel. Hay una buena piscina, pero hace mal tiempo.

It's a good hotel. There's a good pool, but the weather is bad.

# 📋 Quick Reference — Resumen

| TOPIC | SUMMARY |
|---|---|
| agreement | adjective matches noun in gender and number, also after *ser* |
| four forms | *-o*: *alto, alta, altos, altas*; also *-or / -ón / -án / -ín + -a* |
| two forms | *-e* and consonants: *grande(s), fácil(es), feliz → felices* |
| mixed group | masculine plural |
| nationalities | small letter; *inglés → inglesa*; *-ense* and *-í* unchanged |
| position | descriptive adjectives after the noun; numbers and quantity words before |
| short forms | *buen, mal, primer, tercer* before masculine singular; *gran* before any singular noun |
| meaning shifts | *gran / grande, viejo, pobre, nuevo, antiguo, único, simple, mismo* |

## 🖍️ Try It Yourself — Ejercicios

*Say the answer first, then click to check.*

**1.** Make the adjective agree: *una casa (blanco)*, *unos libros (fácil)*, *mis hermanas (alto)*, *unos niños (feliz)*.

▼ Show answer

una casa blanca · unos libros fáciles · mis hermanas altas · unos niños felices.

**2.** Give the feminine and plural: *trabajador*, *español*, *inglés*, *alemán*.

▼ Show answer

trabajadora, trabajadores · española, españoles · inglesa, ingleses · alemana, alemanes. (The written accent is lost.)

**3.** Say in Spanish: "Ana and Pablo are Scottish." and "Ana and Marta are tall."

▼ Show answer

Ana y Pablo son escoceses. (mixed group: masculine plural) · Ana y Marta son altas. (both feminine)

**4.** Put the adjective in the right place: *un coche (rojo)*, *tres libros (interesante)*, *mucha gente*. Why is the position different?

▼ Show answer

un coche rojo (a descriptive adjective goes after the noun) · tres libros interesantes · mucha gente (a quantity word goes before the noun).

**5.** Shorten if needed: *un (bueno) día*, *una (bueno) idea*, *el (primero) piso*, *la (primero) vez*, *una (grande) mujer*.

▼ Show answer

un buen día · una buena idea (feminine, no change) · el primer piso · la primera vez (feminine, no change) · una gran mujer (*gran* before any singular noun).

**6.** What is the difference: *un viejo amigo* and *un amigo viejo*?

▼ Show answer

*un viejo amigo* is a long-standing friend (not necessarily old); *un amigo viejo* is an elderly friend.

**7.** What is the difference: *un gran hombre* and *un hombre grande*? And *una nueva casa* and *una casa nueva*?

▼ Show answer

a great man against a large man · a different (new-to-me) house against a brand-new house.

**8.** Correct the mistakes: *una casa grande blanco* · *el buen día malo* · *un mal idea* · *mis amigas escoceses*.

▼ Show answer

una casa grande blanca (or *blanca grande*; the adjective is feminine) · un buen día / un día malo (do not use both) · una mala idea (feminine) · mis amigas escocesas (feminine plural).

**9.** Say in Spanish: "She is Hungarian and he is Canadian."

▼ Show answer

Ella es húngara y él es canadiense. (*canadiense* has one form for both genders.)

**10.** Say in Spanish: "It's a good hotel and a very big city."

▼ Show answer

Es un buen hotel y una ciudad muy grande. (*buen* before a masculine singular noun; *grande* after the feminine *ciudad*, here meaning "big".)

**Coming up in Chapter 6: Comparison and Superlatives.** *más / menos … que*, *tan … como*, *tanto … como*; the irregular forms *mejor, peor, mayor, menor*; *el más …*; the absolute superlative in *-ísimo*; and *cuanto más … más*.

# ⚖️ Comparison and Superlatives — Comparativos y superlativos

*Spanish compares things with a small set of patterns:* ***más / menos … que*** *("more / less … than"),* ***tan … como*** *and* ***tanto … como*** *("as … as"), and the superlative* ***el más …*** *("the most …"). Four adjectives and four adverbs have irregular forms (mejor, peor, mayor, menor), and the ending* ***-ísimo*** *says "extremely". This chapter gives each pattern with its small rules: de before numbers, de after a superlative, and the pronoun that follows que.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

**More / less:** *más / menos + adjective, adverb or noun + que* (*Madrid es más grande que Valencia*). **Equal:** *tan + adjective / adverb + como, tanto + noun + como*. **Best / worst:** *mejor, peor* (never *más bueno, más mal*). **The most:** *el / la / los / las (+ noun) + más + adjective + de*. **Very very:** adjective + *-ísimo*.

## More and less: más / menos … que

| COMPARES… | PATTERN | EXAMPLE |
|---|---|---|
| an adjective | *más / menos + adjective + que* | Madrid es **más grande que** Valencia. · El tren es **menos caro que** el avión. |
| an adverb | *más / menos + adverb + que* | Ana corre **más rápido que** Pablo. |
| a noun | *más / menos + noun + que* | Tengo **más libros que** tú. · Hay **menos gente que** ayer. |
| a verb | *verb + más / menos + que* | Trabajo **más que** mi hermano. |

Three small rules go with this pattern:

| RULE | EXAMPLE |
|---|---|
| The adjective keeps its normal form and **agrees** with the noun it describes, as in Spanish Grammar 1 5. | Ana es más alta que Pablo. · Los libros son más caros que las revistas. |
| Before a **number** use **de**, not *que*. | Hay más **de** diez personas. · Cuesta menos **de** cinco euros. |
| After *que* a **subject pronoun** is used (*yo, tú*), not *mí, ti*. | Es más alto **que yo**. · Trabajas más **que tú**. |

## Equal: tan … como and tanto … como

| COMPARES… | PATTERN | EXAMPLE |
|---|---|---|
| an adjective or adverb | *tan + adjective / adverb + como* | Ana es **tan alta como** Pablo. · Habla **tan rápido como** yo. |
| a noun | *tanto / tanta / tantos / tantas + noun + como* (agrees with the noun) | Tiene **tantos libros como** yo. · Hay **tanta gente como** ayer. |
| a verb | *verb + tanto como* (*tanto* does not change) | Trabaja **tanto como** yo. |

**Watch out: tan against tanto**

**tan** is short and goes before an **adjective or adverb** (*tan alta*, *tan rápido*). **tanto** goes before a **noun**, where it agrees (*tantos libros*), or after a **verb**, where it stays *tanto* (*trabaja tanto*). The second half is always **como**, never *que*: *tan alto como*, not *tan alto que*.

## Irregular forms: mejor, peor, mayor, menor

| ADJECTIVE | COMPARATIVE | MEANING AND USE |
|---|---|---|
| **bueno** good | **mejor** (pl. *mejores*) | better. Not *más bueno*. **Este libro es mejor que la película.** |

| ADJECTIVE | COMPARATIVE | MEANING AND USE |
|---|---|---|
| **malo** bad | **peor** (pl. *peores*) | worse. Not *más malo*. **El tiempo es peor hoy.** |
| **grande** big | **mayor** / **más grande** | *mayor* = older, or of greater importance; *más grande* = physically bigger. **mi hermana mayor** · **una casa más grande** |
| **pequeño** small | **menor** / **más pequeño** | *menor* = younger; *más pequeño* = physically smaller. **mi hermano menor** · **un piso más pequeño** |

| ADVERB | COMPARATIVE | EXAMPLE |
|---|---|---|
| **bien** well | **mejor** | **Habla español mejor que yo.** |
| **mal** badly | **peor** | **Canto peor que tú.** |
| **mucho** a lot | **más** | **Trabajo más que antes.** |
| **poco** little | **menos** | **Duermo menos que tú.** |

> **Watch out: mejor and peor are enough**
> *mejor* and *peor* already mean "more good" and "more bad", so *más mejor* and *más peor* are mistakes. They have **one form for both genders** and add *-es* in the plural: **la mejor idea, los mejores amigos**. *mayor* and *menor* mostly speak about **age**; for size use *más grande, más pequeño*.

## The most: el más …

The **relative superlative** is the comparative with a definite article in front. It agrees with the noun, and "in" or "of" after it is **de** (not *en*).

| PATTERN | EXAMPLE |
|---|---|
| *article + noun + más / menos + adjective +* ***de*** | Madrid es **la ciudad más grande de** España. |

| PATTERN | EXAMPLE |
|---|---|
| noun left out | Ana es **la más alta de** la clase. · Estos son **los más caros**. |
| irregular forms | **el mejor, la peor, los mejores** · **el mayor** (the oldest, the biggest) · **el menor** (the youngest) |
| adverb: *lo* + comparative | **lo más rápido posible** (as fast as possible) · **lo mejor** |

**Watch out: the article stays with the noun**

The article comes **before the noun** and is not repeated: **la ciudad más grande**, not *la ciudad la más grande*. If you leave the noun out, the article moves next to *más*: **la más grande**. After a superlative, say *de*: **el edificio más alto del mundo** (*de + el = del*), **la mejor tienda de la ciudad**.

## Very, very: the ending -ísimo

The **absolute superlative** adds **-ísimo** to an adjective and means "extremely". It replaces *muy* + adjective but is stronger and more emotional. Drop the final vowel and add *-ísimo / -ísima / -ísimos / -ísimas*; the accent mark falls on the *í*.

| ADJECTIVE | -ÍSIMO FORM | SPELLING NOTE |
|---|---|---|
| grande · interesante | grandísimo · interesantísimo | drop the final vowel |
| bueno · malo · caro | buenísimo · malísimo · carísimo | regular |
| rico · poco | riquísimo · poquísimo | *c* → *qu* (keeps the *k* sound, Spanish Grammar 1 1) |
| largo | larguísimo | *g* → *gu* (keeps the hard *g*) |
| feliz | felicísimo | *z* → *c* |
| fácil · difícil | facilísimo · dificilísimo | the old accent is replaced by the one on *í* |

| ADJECTIVE | -ÍSIMO FORM | SPELLING NOTE |
|---|---|---|
| **mucho** | **muchísimo** | an adverb too: *Me gusta muchísimo.* |

It agrees like any adjective: **una casa grandísima**, **unos libros interesantísimos**. Formal Spanish has a few Latin forms, **óptimo** (excellent) and **pésimo** (dreadful), but in speech *buenísimo* and *malísimo* are normal.

## The more … the more: cuanto más … más

| PATTERN | EXAMPLE | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| *cuanto más … más* | **Cuanto más estudias, más aprendes.** | The more you study, the more you learn. |
| *cuanto más … menos* | **Cuanto más trabajo, menos descanso.** | The more I work, the less I rest. |
| *cuanto + adjective / adverb, mejor* | **Cuanto antes, mejor.** · **Cuanto más grande, mejor.** | The sooner the better. The bigger the better. |
| *cada vez más / menos* | **Cada vez hace más frío.** | It gets colder and colder. |

## Useful phrases

| SPANISH | ENGLISH |
|---|---|
| **más o menos** | more or less, roughly |
| **menos mal** | thank goodness |
| **por lo menos** | at least |
| **cada vez más** | more and more |
| **lo más rápido posible** | as fast as possible |

**Latin America note**

In many Latin American countries people use **más grande** and **más chico** for older and younger brothers and sisters (*mi hermano más grande*), where Spain uses *mayor* and *menor*. Both are understood everywhere. *-ísimo* is very common in Spain, and in some countries speakers use *bien* or *súper* before the adjective instead (*súper rico*).

## In Use — En situación

*Read the exchanges aloud and find each comparison.*

### ① Two cities

**A:**

¿Es Edimburgo más grande que Glasgow?

Is Edinburgh bigger than Glasgow?

**B:**

No. Glasgow es más grande que Edimburgo.

No. Glasgow is bigger than Edinburgh.

**A:**

¿Y cuál es más bonita?

And which one is prettier?

**B:**

Para mí, Edimburgo es la más bonita de Escocia.

For me, Edinburgh is the prettiest in Scotland.

### ② Brothers and sisters

**A:**

¿Tienes hermanos?

Do you have brothers and sisters?

**B:**

Sí, tengo una hermana mayor y un hermano menor.

Yes, I have an older sister and a younger brother.

**A:**

¿Quién es más alto, tú o tu hermano?

Who is taller, you or your brother?

**B:**

Mi hermano es más alto que yo y es menor.

My brother is taller than me and he is younger.

### ③ In a restaurant

**A:**

¿Qué tal la comida?

How is the food?

**B:**

Buenísima. La paella es riquísima y el postre es el mejor de la carta.

Excellent. The paella is delicious and the dessert is the best on the menu.

**A:**

¿Y el precio?

And the price?

**B:**

Es carísimo, pero vale la pena.

It is very expensive, but it is worth it.

## 📋 Quick Reference — Resumen

| TOPIC | SUMMARY |
|---|---|
| more / less | *más / menos … que*; *de* before numbers; subject pronoun after *que* |
| equal | *tan + adjective / adverb + como*; *tanto + noun + como*; *verb + tanto como* |
| irregular | *bueno / bien → mejor*, *malo / mal → peor*, *grande → mayor*, *pequeño → menor* |
| the most | *el / la / los / las (+ noun) + más + adjective + de* |
| -ísimo | drop the vowel; *c → qu*, *g → gu*, *z → c* |
| the more … the more | *cuanto más … más*; *cada vez más* |

## 🖍️ Try It Yourself — Ejercicios

*Say the answer first, then click to check.*

**1.** Say in Spanish: "Madrid is bigger than Valencia" and "The train is cheaper than the plane."

▼ Show answer

Madrid es más grande que Valencia. · El tren es más barato que el avión. (or *menos caro que*)

**2.** Say in Spanish: "Ana is as tall as Pablo" and "She has as many books as me."

▼ Show answer

Ana es tan alta como Pablo. · Tiene tantos libros como yo. (*tan* before an adjective, *tantos* before a noun, always *como*)

**3.** *de* or *que*? "I have more ____ ten euros." · "I work more ____ you."

▼ Show answer

Tengo más **de** diez euros (a number follows) · Trabajo más **que** tú (a pronoun follows).

**4.** Say in Spanish: "The book is better than the film", "The weather is worse today", "my older sister", "my younger brother".

▼ Show answer

El libro es mejor que la película · El tiempo es peor hoy · mi hermana mayor · mi hermano menor.

**5.** Say in Spanish: "She is the tallest in the class" and "It is the biggest city in Spain."

▼ Show answer

Es la más alta de la clase. · Es la ciudad más grande de España. (*de*, not *en*, after a superlative)

**6.** Make the *-ísimo* form: *grande, rico, largo, feliz, fácil*.

▼ Show answer

grandísimo · riquísimo (*c → qu*) · larguísimo (*g → gu*) · felicísimo (*z → c*) · facilísimo (the accent moves to *í*).

**7.** Correct the mistakes: *más mejor · tan libros como yo · más que diez personas · el más alto en la clase.*

▼ Show answer

mejor (not *más mejor*) · tantos libros como yo · más de diez personas · el más alto de la clase.

**8.** Say in Spanish: "The more you study, the more you learn."

▼ Show answer

Cuanto más estudias, más aprendes.

**9.** Say in Spanish: "the worst day of the year" and "the best shops in the city".

▼ Show answer

el peor día del año · las mejores tiendas de la ciudad. (*mejor, peor* add *-es* in the plural.)

**10.** Say in Spanish: "as fast as possible" and "It is getting colder and colder."

▼ Show answer

lo más rápido posible · Cada vez hace más frío.

**Coming up in Chapter 7: Possessives and Demonstratives.** *mi, tu, su, nuestro, vuestro*; the long forms (*mío, tuyo*) and *el mío*; *su* against *de él / de ella / de usted*; and *este, ese, aquel* with the neuter *esto, eso, aquello*.

# 👉 Possessives and Demonstratives — Posesivos y demostrativos

*Two groups of small words point at a noun: the **possessives** say whose it is (mi casa, el libro es mío), and the **demonstratives** say which one (este libro, ese libro, aquel libro). Both agree with a noun, but not always in the way you expect: mi, tu, su agree only in **number**, while nuestro, vuestro agree in gender and number, and su can mean five different things. This chapter gives the two sets of possessives, the three-way system of demonstratives, and the neuter forms for things that have no name yet.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

**Before the noun:** *mi, tu, su* (plural *mis, tus, sus*) and *nuestro, vuestro* (four forms); no article. **After the noun, or alone after ser:** the long forms *mío, tuyo, suyo, nuestro, vuestro*, with the article when they replace a noun (*el mío*). **This / that / that over there:** *este / ese / aquel* (near me / near you / far from both), with the neuter *esto / eso / aquello* for ideas and unnamed things.

## Short possessives: mi, tu, su, nuestro, vuestro

The short forms stand **before the noun** and take **no article**. *mi, tu, su* change only for **number** (the number of things possessed); *nuestro* and *vuestro* change for **gender and number** like *-o* adjectives.

| OWNER | ONE THING | SEVERAL THINGS |
|---|---|---|
| **my** | mi libro, mi casa | mis libros, mis casas |
| **your** (*tú*) | tu libro, tu casa | tus libros, tus casas |
| **his, her, its, your** (*usted*), **their**, **your** (*ustedes*) | su libro, su casa | sus libros, sus casas |

| OWNER | ONE THING | SEVERAL THINGS |
|---|---|---|
| **our** | nuestro libro, nuestra casa | nuestros libros, nuestras casas |
| **your** (*vosotros*) | vuestro libro, vuestra casa | vuestros libros, vuestras casas |

**Watch out: the possessive agrees with the thing, not the owner**

*su* does not change for a male or female owner: **su hermano** is "his brother" or "her brother". It only changes for the number of things: **sus hermanos** (his / her brothers). Also keep *tu* (your) apart from *tú* (you) and *mi* (my) apart from *mí* (me), as in Spanish Grammar 1 1.

## Su: five meanings, and how to be clear

*su* means **his, her, its, your (usted), your (ustedes), their**. Context usually decides. When it does not, replace it with **de + pronoun** after the noun:

| UNCLEAR | CLEAR | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| su casa | la casa de él | his house |
| | la casa de ella | her house |
| | la casa de usted / de ustedes | your house (formal) |
| | la casa de ellos / de ellas | their house |

**Latin America note**

Spain has *tú* and *vosotros* for "you", so **vuestro** (your, several of you) is used only in Spain. Throughout Latin America the plural "you" is *ustedes*, so its possessive is **su** (*su casa* = "your house", said to several people), and *vuestro* sounds literary or religious. Because *su* does more work there, Latin Americans use *de usted / de ustedes* more often to be clear.

# Long possessives: mío, tuyo, suyo, nuestro, vuestro

The long forms have **four forms** like an *-o* adjective and agree with the thing possessed. They appear in three places:

| OWNER | MASC. SING. | FEM. SING. | MASC. PL. | FEM. PL. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| mine | **mío** | **mía** | **míos** | **mías** |
| yours (*tú*) | **tuyo** | **tuya** | **tuyos** | **tuyas** |
| his, hers, yours (*usted*), theirs | **suyo** | **suya** | **suyos** | **suyas** |
| ours | **nuestro** | **nuestra** | **nuestros** | **nuestras** |
| yours (*vosotros*) | **vuestro** | **vuestra** | **vuestros** | **vuestras** |

| USE | EXAMPLE | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| **after the noun** ("of mine") | **un amigo mío · ¡Dios mío! · una amiga suya** | a friend of mine · my God! · a friend of hers |
| **after ser**: who it belongs to | **Este libro es mío. · Estas llaves son tuyas.** | This book is mine. These keys are yours. |
| **with an article**, replacing a noun | Mi coche es rojo; **el tuyo** es azul. · Mis llaves están aquí; **las suyas**, no. | My car is red; yours is blue. My keys are here; hers, no. |
| **lo mío**: my thing | **Lo mío es la música.** | Music is my thing. |

**Watch out: es mío against es el mío**

*Es mío* says the thing **belongs** to me. *Es el mío* picks out **which one** is mine from several: **¿Cuál es tu coche? — Es el mío, el azul.** The long forms never take an article before a noun: say *un amigo mío*, not *el mi amigo*. And for parts of the body use the **article**, not a possessive: **Me lavo las manos. · Me duele la cabeza.**

# Demonstratives: este, ese, aquel

Spanish has **three** demonstratives where English has two. They match the noun in gender and number, and each goes with a place word:

| DISTANCE | MASC. SING. | FEM. SING. | MASC. PL. | FEM. PL. | PLACE WORD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **this**, near me | este | esta | estos | estas | aquí |
| **that**, near you | ese | esa | esos | esas | ahí |
| **that over there**, far from both | aquel | aquella | aquellos | aquellas | allí |

| USE | EXAMPLE |
|---|---|
| before a noun | **este libro, esa casa, aquellos árboles** |
| alone, as a pronoun | **¿Cuál prefieres, este o ese? · Esta es mi hermana.** |
| in time: close, near, far | **este año** (this year) · **esa tarde** (that afternoon) · **aquel verano** (that summer long ago) |
| never with the definite article | **este libro**, not *el este libro* |

> **Watch out: no accent on the pronouns**
> You may see *éste, ése, aquél* with an accent in older books to show the pronoun. The current rule is that the pronouns are written **without** an accent (*este, ese, aquel*) unless there would be real confusion. The neuter forms below never had an accent.

# Neuter demonstratives: esto, eso, aquello

The neuter forms refer to something with **no gender**: an idea, a whole situation, or an object you cannot name. They never change and are never followed by a noun.

| FORM | EXAMPLE | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| **esto** (near me) | **¿Qué es esto? · Esto es importante.** | What is this? This is important. |
| **eso** (near you, or what was just said) | **Eso es verdad. · ¿Por qué dices eso? · ¡Eso es!** | That is true. Why do you say that? That's it! |
| **aquello** (far) | **Aquello fue muy difícil.** | That (long ago) was very difficult. |

## 🗣️ In Use — En situación

*Read the exchanges aloud and notice which word points at what.*

### ① Whose is it?

**A:**

¿De quién es este móvil?

Whose phone is this?

**B:**

Es mío.

It's mine.

**A:**

¿Y esos libros?

And those books?

**B:**

Son de Ana. Son suyos.

They're Ana's. They're hers.

**A:**

¿Y aquel coche azul?

And that blue car over there?

**B:**

Aquel es el mío.

### ② Family

**A:**

¿Cómo se llama tu hermana?

What is your sister called?

**B:**

Se llama Marta. Su marido es inglés.

She's called Marta. Her husband is English.

**A:**

¿Y vuestros padres?

And your parents (you and your sister's)?

**B:**

Nuestros padres viven en Escocia.

Our parents live in Scotland.

That one is mine.

### ③ In a shop

**A:**

¿Cuánto cuesta este jersey?

How much is this jumper?

**B:**

Treinta euros.

Thirty euros.

**A:**

¿Y ese?

And that one?

**B:**

Ese cuesta cuarenta. Aquel, el del escaparate, es el más caro.

That one is forty. That one over there, in the shop window, is the most expensive.

## 📋 Quick Reference — Resumen

| TOPIC | SUMMARY |
|---|---|
| short possessives | *mi, tu, su* (+ *-s*); *nuestro, vuestro* (four forms); no article; before the noun |
| su | his, her, its, your (usted / ustedes), their; clear it with *de él / de ella / de usted / de ellos* |
| long possessives | *mío, tuyo, suyo, nuestro, vuestro*; after the noun, after *ser*, or with an article (*el mío*) |
| parts of the body | article, not possessive: *Me duele la cabeza* |
| demonstratives | *este* (aquí) · *ese* (ahí) · *aquel* (allí), four forms each |

| TOPIC | SUMMARY |
| --- | --- |
| neuter | *esto, eso, aquello*: ideas and unnamed things; never change |
| Spain / Latin America | *vuestro* (Spain) / *su* (*ustedes* in Latin America) |

## 🖍️ Try It Yourself — Ejercicios

*Say the answer first, then click to check.*

**1.** Say in Spanish: "my books", "your house" (*tú*), "our friends" (all women), "their car".

▼ Show answer

mis libros · tu casa · nuestras amigas · su coche.

**2.** *su casa* can mean five things. Make it clear: "her house", "their house", "your house" (to a stranger).

▼ Show answer

la casa de ella · la casa de ellos (or *de ellas*) · la casa de usted.

**3.** Say in Spanish: "a friend of mine", "This book is mine", "These keys are yours" (*tú*).

▼ Show answer

un amigo mío · Este libro es mío · Estas llaves son tuyas.

**4.** What is the difference between *Es mío* and *Es el mío*?

▼ Show answer

*Es mío* = it belongs to me. *Es el mío* = it is the one that is mine (picked from several).

**5.** Say in Spanish: "My car is red; yours is blue." (*tú*)

▼ Show answer

Mi coche es rojo; el tuyo es azul.

**6.** Choose the demonstrative: "this car" (near me), "that car" (near you), "that car" (far from both).

▼ Show answer

este coche · ese coche · aquel coche.

**7.** Say in Spanish: "What is this?", "That is true.", "Which do you prefer, this one or that one?" (the books are masculine)

▼ Show answer

¿Qué es esto? · Eso es verdad. · ¿Cuál prefieres, este o ese?

**8.** How would you say "your parents" to *several* people, in Spain and in Latin America?

▼ Show answer

Spain: *vuestros padres* (*vosotros*). Latin America: *sus padres* (*ustedes*).

**9.** Correct the mistakes: *el mi libro · mi amigos · nuestro amigas · este libros*.

▼ Show answer

mi libro (no article) · mis amigos (plural) · nuestras amigas (feminine plural) · estos libros (plural).

**10.** Say in Spanish: "I wash my hands" and "My head hurts." Why is there no possessive?

▼ Show answer

Me lavo las manos · Me duele la cabeza. For parts of the body Spanish uses the article, because the owner is clear.

**Coming up in Chapter 8: Quantifiers, Numbers and Indefinites.** Cardinal and ordinal numbers; *mucho, poco, bastante, demasiado*; *algún, ningún, alguno, cualquier*; *todo, cada, otro*; and *alguien, nadie, algo, nada*.

# 🔟 Quantifiers, Numbers and Indefinites — Cantidades y números

*This chapter covers the words that say **how many** and **how much**: the numbers, the quantity words (mucho, poco, bastante, demasiado), the indefinite words (algún, ningún, cualquier), todo, cada, otro, and the four little pronouns alguien, nadie, algo, nada. Most of them agree with their noun like an adjective, so everything you learned about gender and number applies. The one new idea is the **double negative**: Spanish needs no before the verb when nadie or nada comes after it.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

**Numbers:** *uno* becomes *un / una* before a noun; the hundreds (*doscientos*) agree in gender; *cien* alone, *ciento* before another number. **Quantity words** agree with a noun (*mucha gente*) and stay fixed with a verb (*trabaja mucho*); use *muy* before an adjective. **Negatives:** *no* + verb + *nadie / nada / ningún*, or put the negative word first and drop *no*.

## Cardinal numbers

| 0–10 | 11–20 | 21–30 |
|---|---|---|
| 0 **cero** | 11 **once** | 21 **veintiuno** |
| 1 **uno** | 12 **doce** | 22 **veintidós** |
| 2 **dos** | 13 **trece** | 23 **veintitrés** |
| 3 **tres** | 14 **catorce** | 24 **veinticuatro** |
| 4 **cuatro** | 15 **quince** | 25 **veinticinco** |
| 5 **cinco** | 16 **dieciséis** | 26 **veintiséis** |

| 0–10 | 11–20 | 21–30 |
|---|---|---|
| 6 **seis** | 17 **diecisiete** | 27 **veintisiete** |
| 7 **siete** | 18 **dieciocho** | 28 **veintiocho** |
| 8 **ocho** | 19 **diecinueve** | 29 **veintinueve** |
| 9 **nueve** | 20 **veinte** | 30 **treinta** |
| 10 **diez** | | |

| TENS | HUNDREDS | THOUSANDS AND MORE |
|---|---|---|
| 30 **treinta** | 100 **cien** / **ciento** | 1,000 **mil** |
| 40 **cuarenta** | 200 **doscientos** | 2,000 **dos mil** |
| 50 **cincuenta** | 300 **trescientos** | 100,000 **cien mil** |
| 60 **sesenta** | 400 **cuatrocientos** | 1,000,000 **un millón** |
| 70 **setenta** | 500 **quinientos** | 2,000,000 **dos millones** |
| 80 **ochenta** | 600 **seiscientos** | |
| 90 **noventa** | 700 **setecientos** | |
| | 800 **ochocientos** | |
| | 900 **novecientos** | |

| RULE | EXAMPLE |
|---|---|
| **y** only between tens and units, 31–99 | **treinta y uno (31), cuarenta y cinco (45)**, but **ciento veinte (120)**, no *y* |
| **cien** alone or before a noun or *mil*; **ciento** before any other number | **cien euros, cien mil · ciento uno (101), ciento veinte (120)** |
| **uno → un / una** before a noun; **veintiuno → veintiún / veintiuna** | **un libro, una casa · veintiún libros, veintiuna casas** |
| the **hundreds** agree in gender | **doscientos libros, doscientas casas** |
| **mil** never takes *-s*; **millón** is a noun and takes *de* | **dos mil euros · un millón de personas, dos millones de euros** |

| RULE | EXAMPLE |
| --- | --- |
| years are read as thousands and hundreds | **mil novecientos ochenta y cinco** (1985) · **dos mil veintiséis** (2026) |

**Latin America note: separators and "billion"**

Spain writes the decimal point as a **comma** and often groups thousands with a space or a point (*3,5* and *10 000* or *10.000*). Mexico and several other countries use a **point** for decimals and a comma for thousands, as in English. Beware of **billón**: in Spanish it is $10^{12}$ (a million million), while the English "billion" is **mil millones** (a thousand million).

## Ordinal numbers

| NUMBER | ORDINAL | EXAMPLE |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1st | **primero** (**primer** before a masculine noun) | **el primer día, la primera vez** |
| 2nd | **segundo** | **el segundo piso** |
| 3rd | **tercero** (**tercer**) | **el tercer día, la tercera calle** |
| 4th | **cuarto** | **la cuarta vez** |
| 5th | **quinto** | **el quinto día** |
| 6th | **sexto** | |
| 7th | **séptimo** | |
| 8th | **octavo** | |
| 9th | **noveno** | |
| 10th | **décimo** | **la décima planta** |

Ordinals are adjectives and agree (*la primera calle*). Above ten, Spanish usually uses the **cardinal after the noun**: **el siglo veinte** (the twentieth century), **la planta once**. **Dates**

also use cardinals: **el dos de mayo**, but **el primero de mayo** for the first.

## Quantity words: mucho, poco, bastante, demasiado

| WORD | MEANING | WITH A NOUN (AGREES) | WITH A VERB OR AN ADJECTIVE |
|---|---|---|---|
| mucho / mucha / muchos / muchas | a lot of, much, many | mucha gente, muchos libros | Trabaja **mucho**. · **muy** alto (very tall) |
| poco / poca / pocos / pocas | little, few | poco tiempo, pocas personas | Come **poco**. |
| bastante / bastantes | enough; quite a lot of | bastante dinero, bastantes sillas | Es **bastante** caro. |
| demasiado / demasiada / demasiados / demasiadas | too much, too many | demasiado ruido, demasiadas cosas | Es **demasiado** caro. |
| varios / varias | several | varios amigos, varias veces | |

**Watch out: muy against mucho**

**muy** (very) goes before an **adjective or adverb** and never changes: **muy alta, muy bien**. **mucho** goes with a **noun** (and agrees) or with a **verb** (and stays *mucho*): **mucha agua, trabaja mucho**. Before *más, menos, mejor, peor* use *mucho*, not *muy*: **mucho más grande**. *bastante* and *demasiado* work both ways: with a noun they agree (*demasiadas cosas*), before an adjective they stay *demasiado* (*demasiado caro*).

## Indefinites: algún, ningún, cualquier

| WORD | MEANING | FORMS | EXAMPLE |
|---|---|---|---|
| **alguno** | some, any | **alguno, alguna, algunos, algunas**; **algún** before a masculine singular noun | **algún día, alguna vez, algunos amigos** |
| **ninguno** | no, not any | **ninguno, ninguna**; **ningún** before a masculine singular noun; **almost never plural** | **No tengo ningún problema.** · **No hay ninguna silla.** |
| **cualquiera** | any (at all), whichever | **cualquier** before a noun (either gender); **cualquiera** alone | **cualquier libro** · **Cualquiera puede hacerlo.** |

## Todo, cada, otro

| WORD | USE | EXAMPLE |
|---|---|---|
| **todo / toda / todos / todas** | all, the whole: before *el, la, los, las* + noun | **todo el día, toda la noche, todos los días, todas las semanas** |
| **todo** (alone) | everything; *todos* = everyone | **Todo está bien.** · **Todos están aquí.** · **todo el mundo** (everybody, singular verb) |
| **cada** | each, every; never changes; always singular | **cada día, cada persona, cada vez** · **cada uno / cada una** · **cada dos días** (every other day) |
| **otro / otra / otros / otras** | another, other; **no article** before it in the singular | **otro libro, otra vez, otras cosas** · **los otros** (the others) |
| **ambos / ambas** · **los dos** | both | **ambos amigos** · **los dos amigos** |

**Watch out: "another" is just otro**

English says "**an** other book" in thought; Spanish says **otro libro**, never *un otro libro*. And *todo* takes the article **after** it: **todo el día** ("all the day"), **todos los días**.

# Alguien, nadie, algo, nada

| | POSITIVE | NEGATIVE |
|---|---|---|
| a person | **alguien** someone | **nadie** nobody |
| a thing | **algo** something | **nada** nothing |
| sometimes / never | **siempre** always · **alguna vez** ever | **nunca** never · **tampoco** neither |

They never change. In a sentence with a verb, Spanish uses a **double negative**: *no* goes before the verb and the negative word comes after it. If you put the negative word **first**, you drop *no*.

| WITH *NO* BEFORE THE VERB | NEGATIVE WORD FIRST (NO *NO*) | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| No vino **nadie**. | **Nadie** vino. | Nobody came. |
| No quiero **nada**. | **Nada** me gusta. | I don't want anything. / Nothing pleases me. |
| No voy **nunca**. | **Nunca** voy. | I never go. |
| No tengo **ningún** problema. | (not used: *ningún* normally follows the verb) | I have no problem. |

> **Watch out: the double negative is required**
>
> In English a double negative is a mistake ("I don't want nothing"); in Spanish it is **required** (*No quiero nada*). Also, when *alguien* or *nadie* is the person the verb acts on, Spanish puts *a* in front (**Veo a alguien. · No veo a nadie.**). Spanish Grammar 1 10 explains this "personal a".

## In Use — En situación

*Read the exchanges aloud and notice the numbers and the negatives.*

### ① A price

### ② At home

**A:**

¿Cuánto cuesta?

How much is it?

**B:**

Ciento veinte euros.

One hundred and twenty euros.

**A:**

¿Ciento veinte? Es demasiado caro.

A hundred and twenty? It's too expensive.

**B:**

Entonces cien euros. Es mi último precio.

Then a hundred euros. It's my last price.

**A:**

¿Hay alguien en casa?

Is anybody at home?

**B:**

No, no hay nadie.

No, there is nobody.

**A:**

¿Y hay algo para cenar?

And is there something for dinner?

**B:**

Nada. Pero hay algún restaurante abierto cerca.

Nothing. But there is a restaurant open nearby.

### ③ Exercise

**A:**

¿Vas al gimnasio todos los días?

Do you go to the gym every day?

**B:**

No, voy cada dos días, unas tres veces por semana.

No, I go every other day, about three times a week.

**A:**

Es bastante.

That's quite a lot.

**B:**

Sí, y el domingo hago otro deporte: voy a nadar.

Yes, and on Sunday I do another sport: I go swimming.

## 📋 Quick Reference — Resumen

| TOPIC | SUMMARY |
|---|---|
| numbers | *y* only 31–99; *cien / ciento*; *un / una*; hundreds agree; *mil* fixed; *un millón de* |
| ordinals | *primero (primer), segundo, tercero (tercer)*...; above ten use cardinals; dates use cardinals |
| quantity | *mucho, poco, bastante, demasiado* agree before nouns; *muy* before adjectives and adverbs |
| indefinites | *algún / alguna*, *ningún / ninguna* (singular), *cualquier* |
| todo, cada, otro | *todo el día*; *cada día* (fixed); *otro libro* (no article) |
| pronouns | *alguien, nadie, algo, nada*; double negative; personal *a* |

## 🖍️ Try It Yourself — Ejercicios

*Say the answer first, then click to check.*

**1.** Write in words: 16, 22, 35, 100, 101, 500, 2,000, 1,000,000.

▼ Show answer

dieciséis · veintidós · treinta y cinco · cien · ciento uno · quinientos · dos mil · un millón.

**2.** Say in Spanish: "21 books", "21 houses", "200 houses", "two million euros".

▼ Show answer

veintiún libros · veintiuna casas · doscientas casas · dos millones de euros.

**3.** Say in Spanish: "the first day", "the first time", "the third floor", "the twentieth century".

▼ Show answer

el primer día · la primera vez · el tercer piso · el siglo veinte.

**4.** *muy* or *mucho*? "very tall" · "a lot of people" · "She works a lot." · "much bigger"

▼ Show answer

muy alto · mucha gente · Trabaja mucho · mucho más grande.

**5.** Say in Spanish: "It is too expensive." and "There are enough chairs."

▼ Show answer

Es demasiado caro. · Hay bastantes sillas.

**6.** Say in Spanish: "I don't have any problem.", "some day", "any book".

▼ Show answer

No tengo ningún problema. · algún día · cualquier libro.

**7.** Say "Nobody came." two ways, and "I don't want anything."

▼ Show answer

No vino nadie. / Nadie vino. · No quiero nada.

**8.** Say in Spanish: "all day", "every day", "everybody", "every other day".

▼ Show answer

todo el día · todos los días (or *cada día*) · todo el mundo · cada dos días.

**9.** Say in Spanish: "another book", "another time", "Is there anyone?", "There is something."

▼ Show answer

otro libro · otra vez · ¿Hay alguien? · Hay algo.

**10.** Correct the mistakes: *un otro libro* · *ningunos problemas* · *muy más grande* · *cien uno*.

▼ Show answer

otro libro (no article) · ningún problema (*ninguno* is singular) · mucho más grande (*mucho* before a comparative) · ciento uno (*ciento* before another number).

**Coming up in Chapter 9: Subject Pronouns and Forms of Address.** *yo* … *ellos*; dropping the subject; *tú* against *usted*; *vosotros* against *ustedes*; *vos* in outline; gender in the plural; and *ello* and impersonal subjects.

# 🤦 Subject Pronouns and Forms of Address — Pronombres y tratamiento

*Spanish has more ways to say "you" than English does, and the choice tells the listener how you see them: friend or stranger, equal or older, one person or many, in Spain or in Latin America. This chapter lists the **subject pronouns**, shows why Spanish usually **leaves them out**, and then explains the choices that matter in real life: tú against usted, vosotros against ustedes, and the vos you will hear in parts of Latin America. It ends with the "it" that Spanish never says (Llueve, Es tarde).*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

The subject pronouns are **yo, tú, él / ella / usted, nosotros / nosotras, vosotros / vosotras, ellos / ellas / ustedes**. The verb ending already shows the person, so Spanish **drops the pronoun** unless it adds emphasis, contrast or clarity. **tú** is for people you know and **usted** for strangers and in formal settings; **usted** takes the third-person verb. The plural **vosotros** is used in Spain only; Latin America uses **ustedes** for everybody.

## The subject pronouns

| PERSON | SINGULAR | PLURAL |
|---|---|---|
| **1st** (I, we) | **yo** | **nosotros** (masc. or mixed) · **nosotras** (all female) |
| **2nd informal** (you) | **tú** (**vos** in some regions) | **vosotros / vosotras** (Spain only) |
| **2nd formal** (you) | **usted** (Ud., Vd.) | **ustedes** (Uds., Vds.): formal in Spain, **every** "you" plural in Latin America |
| **3rd** (he, she, they) | **él** · **ella** | **ellos** (masc. or mixed) · **ellas** (all female) |

*yo* is written with a **small letter** (unlike English "I"), and *usted / ustedes* take the **third-person verb**, as if you were talking *about* the person politely. You will study the verb endings in Spanish Grammar 2; here is the verb *ser* (to be) as a preview, so you can see the pattern.

| PRONOUN | SER | PRONOUN | SER |
|---|---|---|---|
| yo | soy | nosotros / nosotras | somos |
| tú | eres | vosotros / vosotras | sois |
| él / ella / usted | es | ellos / ellas / ustedes | son |

## Dropping the subject

Because *soy, eres, es* already tell you who is speaking, Spanish usually **omits** the pronoun: **Soy escocés.** (not *Yo soy escocés* every time). Keep the pronoun in four cases:

| REASON | EXAMPLE |
|---|---|
| **emphasis** | **¡Yo lo hago!** (I'll do it!) |
| **contrast** | **Yo soy escocés y tú eres inglés.** · **Ella trabaja, él no.** |
| **clarity**, when the verb could mean several people (third person, and *usted*) | **Él es alto, pero ella no.** (*Es alto* alone could be "he is", "it is" or "you are") |
| **one-word answers and "too / neither"** | **¿Quién? — Yo.** · **Yo también.** · **Ni yo.** · **¿Y tú?** |

> **Watch out: after prepositions**
>
> After most prepositions Spanish uses a different set (*para mí, contigo, conmigo*), not the subject pronouns above. Spanish Grammar 1 10 gives the prepositions and these forms together. A few words take the plain subject pronoun: **entre tú y yo**, **según tú**, **como yo**.

## Tú or usted?

| | TÚ | USTED |
|---|---|---|
| who | friends, family, children, classmates, colleagues of your age, young people | strangers, older people, customers, officials, people you want to respect |
| verb | 2nd person (*eres, tienes*) | 3rd person singular (*es, tiene*) |
| greeting | **¿Cómo estás?** | **¿Cómo está?** |
| to call attention | **Perdona. · Oye. · Mira.** | **Perdone. · Oiga. · Mire.** |
| possessive | **tu** casa | **su** casa |

To switch from *usted* to *tú*, Spanish has the verb **tutear** ("to use *tú*"): **¿Nos tuteamos?** (Shall we use *tú* with each other?) or **Puedes tutearme.** (You can use *tú* with me.) The older person or the one in the position of authority normally offers.

> **Latin America note**
>
> In Spain *tú* has spread a great deal: most young people use it with everybody, and many shops and offices do too. In parts of Latin America (notably Colombia and Costa Rica) *usted* is used much more widely, even between close friends and family members, and a child may use it with parents. When in doubt, start with *usted* and let the other person invite you to use *tú*.

## Vosotros or ustedes?

| REGION | INFORMAL PLURAL (FRIENDS) | FORMAL PLURAL (STRANGERS) |
|---|---|---|
| **Spain** | **vosotros / vosotras** (*sois, vuestro*) | **ustedes** (*son, su*) |
| **Latin America** and the Canary Islands | **ustedes** for every "you" plural (*son, su*) | |

So **¿Vosotros sois españoles?** is the natural question to friends in Madrid, while **¿Ustedes son mexicanos?** is correct in Mexico City and polite anywhere.

## Vos: what you will hear in parts of Latin America

In **Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay**, most of **Central America** and parts of Colombia, Venezuela and Chile, the everyday word for informal "you" is **vos**, not *tú*. The verb has its own forms, and the pronoun that follows (*te, tu*) is the same as for *tú*. You do not need to produce it, but you should recognise it.

| MEANING | TÚ | VOS |
|---|---|---|
| you are | **tú eres** | **vos sos** |
| you have | **tú tienes** | **vos tenés** |
| you want | **tú quieres** | **vos querés** |
| you speak | **tú hablas** | **vos hablás** |

## Gender in the plural

| GROUP | USE | EXAMPLE |
|---|---|---|
| all women | **nosotras, vosotras, ellas** | **Nosotras somos españolas.** · **Ellas son altas.** |
| men, or a **mixed** group, or when the sex is not stated | **nosotros, vosotros, ellos** | **Ellos son españoles.** (a man and a woman, or men) |
| one man among ten women | **ellos** | The masculine plural wins, even for one man. |
| *usted / ustedes* | no gender: they match the people addressed in the adjective only | **Usted está cansada** (to a woman) · **Ustedes están cansados** (to a mixed group) |

## ello and impersonal "it"

English needs a subject in every sentence, so it says "**it** is late" and "**it** rains". Spanish has **no subject word** for this "it": the verb stands alone.

| KIND | SPANISH | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| weather | **Llueve. · Nieva. · Hace frío. · Hace calor.** | It rains. It snows. It's cold. It's hot. |
| time | **Es tarde. · Son las tres.** | It's late. It's three o'clock. |
| judgement | **Es importante. · Es verdad.** | It is important. It's true. |
| existence | **Hay un problema.** | There is a problem. |
| "they say" (no one in particular) | **Dicen que va a llover. · Se dice que es difícil.** | They say it's going to rain. It is said that it's difficult. |
| "one" (people in general) | **Uno nunca sabe. · Aquí se vive bien.** | You never know. One lives well here. |

The neuter pronoun **ello** ("it") exists too, but only in **formal or written** Spanish, to refer back to a whole idea: **No quiero hablar de ello.** (I don't want to talk about it.) · **Por ello, no vino.** (For that reason, he did not come.) In everyday speech people say *de eso* and *por eso* (Spanish Grammar 1 7).

## 🗣️ In Use — En situación

*Read the exchanges aloud and notice who says tú and who says usted.*

### ① Meeting a stranger (usted)

**A:**

Buenos días. ¿Es usted el señor Ruiz?

Good morning. Are you Mr Ruiz?

**B:**

Sí, soy yo. ¿Y usted?

### ② Changing to tú

**A:**

Perdone, ¿es usted escocés?

Excuse me, are you Scottish?

**B:**

Sí, pero puedes tutearme.

Yes, but you can use *tú* with me.

Yes, that's me. And you?

**A:**

Soy Ana Pérez, de la oficina.

I'm Ana Pérez, from the office.

**B:**

Encantado. Pase, por favor.

Pleased to meet you. Please come in.

**A:**

Gracias. Entonces, ¿tú vives aquí?

Thanks. So, do you live here?

**B:**

Sí, vivo en Edimburgo.

Yes, I live in Edinburgh.

### ③ In Buenos Aires (vos)

**A:**

¿Vos sos de Buenos Aires?

Are you from Buenos Aires?

**B:**

Sí, soy porteño. ¿Y vos?

Yes, I'm a *porteño* (from Buenos Aires). And you?

**A:**

Yo soy de Córdoba.

I'm from Córdoba.

## 📋 Quick Reference — Resumen

| TOPIC | SUMMARY |
|---|---|
| pronouns | *yo, tú, él / ella / usted, nosotros/-as, vosotros/-as, ellos / ellas / ustedes* |
| dropping | usually omitted; keep for emphasis, contrast, clarity, one-word answers |
| tú / usted | *tú* friends and family, *usted* strangers and formal; *usted* + 3rd person; *tutear* |
| vosotros / ustedes | *vosotros* (Spain, informal) · *ustedes* (formal in Spain, all "you" plural in Latin America) |

| TOPIC | SUMMARY |
|---|---|
| vos | Argentina, Uruguay, Central America: *vos sos, vos tenés* |
| plural gender | feminine only for an all-female group; masculine for mixed groups |
| "it" | no subject word: *Llueve, Es tarde, Es verdad, Hay*; *ello* only in formal writing |

## 🖍️ Try It Yourself — Ejercicios

*Say the answer first, then click to check.*

**1.** Say in Spanish: "I", "you" (informal), "you" (formal), "we" (all women), "they" (a man and a woman).

▼ Show answer

yo · tú · usted · nosotras · ellos.

**2.** *tú* or *usted*? You are speaking to: a classmate · your friend's grandmother, whom you have just met · a waiter in a smart restaurant · a child.

▼ Show answer

tú · usted · usted · tú.

**3.** *vosotros* or *ustedes*? You are talking to a group of friends in Madrid · in Mexico City · to strangers in Madrid.

▼ Show answer

vosotros · ustedes · ustedes.

**4.** Say in Spanish: "I am Scottish." and "I am Scottish and you are English." Which one needs the pronouns?

▼ Show answer

Soy escocés. · Yo soy escocés y tú eres inglés. (The second sentence contrasts two people, so the pronouns stay.)

**5.** *Es alto* could mean three things. Which? How do you make it clear?

▼ Show answer

"He is tall", "it is tall" and "you (usted) are tall". Add the pronoun: *Él es alto / Usted es alto*.

**6.** A woman talks about herself and two other women, and another woman talks about herself, two women and one man. Which pronoun does each use?

▼ Show answer

nosotras (all female) · nosotros (the one man makes the group masculine).

**7.** Say "you are" for *tú* and for *vos*. Where do you hear *vos*?

▼ Show answer

tú eres · vos sos. Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, much of Central America and parts of other countries.

**8.** Say in Spanish: "It's late.", "It's raining.", "It's important."

▼ Show answer

Es tarde. · Llueve. · Es importante. (Spanish has no word for "it" here.)

**9.** What does *¿Nos tuteamos?* mean? How would you attract the attention of a stranger politely, and of a friend?

▼ Show answer

"Shall we use *tú* with each other?" Stranger: *Perdone / Oiga*. Friend: *Perdona / Oye*.

**10.** What do *por ello* and *No quiero hablar de ello* mean? What would you say in everyday speech?

▼ Show answer

"For that reason" and "I don't want to talk about it". In everyday speech: *por eso* and *No quiero hablar de eso*.

**Coming up in Chapter 10: Prepositions I: a, de, en, con, sin, hasta, desde.** The commonest uses of each; the **personal *a***; *de* for possession and origin; *en* against *a* with motion and place; *conmigo* and *contigo*; and verbs that take a fixed preposition.

# 🧭 Prepositions I — Las preposiciones

*Prepositions are the small words that link a noun to the rest of the sentence: a, de, en, con, sin, hasta, desde. Each has a core meaning, but each also has many smaller uses, and English prepositions do not line up with them one for one (on, in and at are often all en). This chapter gives the commonest uses of seven prepositions, the* ***personal a*** *that has no English equivalent, the special pronouns that follow prepositions (conmigo, para mí), and a list of verbs that need a particular preposition. por, para, entre, sobre and the other prepositions come in Spanish Grammar 2 10.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

**a** = to, at, and the mark of a person object (*Veo a Ana*). **de** = of, from, about (*el libro de Ana, soy de Madrid*). **en** = in, on, at, and by with transport (*en casa, en tren*). **con / sin** = with / without. **desde / hasta** = from / until. After a preposition use **mí, ti, él…** (*para mí*), with the special forms **conmigo, contigo**. **a + el = al** and **de + el = del**.

## a

| USE | EXAMPLE | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| **destination**: to | Voy a Madrid. · Vamos al cine. | I'm going to Madrid. We're going to the cinema. |
| **time**: at, from | a las tres · a los veinte años | at three o'clock · at the age of twenty |
| **rate, distance, price** | dos veces **a** la semana · a diez kilómetros · a tres euros el kilo | twice a week · ten kilometres away · three euros a kilo |
| **manner** | a pie, a mano, a oscuras | on foot, by hand, in the dark |
| **indirect object**: to, for | Doy el libro **a** Ana. | I give the book to Ana. |

| USE | EXAMPLE | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| **direct object that is a person** | Veo **a** Ana. | I see Ana. (the personal *a*) |

## The personal a

When the **direct object** of a verb is a **specific person** (or a loved pet), Spanish puts **a** in front of it. English has nothing like this, so it is easy to forget.

| WITH *A* (A PERSON) | WITHOUT *A* (A THING) |
|---|---|
| Veo **a** Ana. · Conozco **a** tu hermano. | Veo la casa. · Conozco este restaurante. |
| Busco **a** mi amigo Pablo. (a particular friend) | Busco un piso. · Busco un médico. (any doctor) |
| Quiero **a** mi perro. (I love my dog.) | Quiero un café. |
| No veo **a** nadie. · ¿Ves **a** alguien? | No veo nada. |

**Watch out: when the personal a is not used**

There is no personal *a* after **tener** (**Tengo dos hermanos.**), after **ser**, or when the person is **not specific** (**Necesito un médico.** against **Necesito al médico.**, a doctor I already know). With a specific person the *a* also combines with *el*: **Veo al profesor.**

## de

| USE | EXAMPLE | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| **possession** | el libro **de** Ana · la casa **de** mis padres | Ana's book · my parents' house |
| **origin** | Soy **de** Escocia. · Vengo **de** Madrid. | I'm from Scotland. I come from Madrid. |
| **material** | una mesa **de** madera | a wooden table |

| USE | EXAMPLE | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| **contents, quantity** | un vaso **de** agua · un kilo **de** manzanas | a glass of water · a kilo of apples |
| **topic** | un libro **de** historia · Hablo **de** fútbol. | a history book · I talk about football |
| **time of day** | de noche, de día · las tres **de** la tarde | at night, by day · three in the afternoon |
| **job** or role | Trabaja **de** camarero. | He works as a waiter. |
| **after a superlative** (Spanish Grammar 1 6) | la más alta **de** la clase | the tallest in the class |

## en

| USE | EXAMPLE | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|
| **place**: in, on, at | Estoy **en** casa. · Vivo **en** Edimburgo. · El libro está **en** la mesa. | I'm at home. I live in Edinburgh. The book is on the table. |
| **months, seasons, years** | **en** mayo, **en** verano, **en** 2026 | in May, in summer, in 2026 |
| **transport**: by | **en** coche, **en** tren, **en** avión (but *a pie*) | by car, by train, by plane (but on foot) |
| **language** | Hablo **en** español. · **en** inglés | I speak in Spanish. in English |
| **how long until**: in, within | Llego **en** dos horas. | I'll arrive in two hours. |

**Watch out: a for movement, en for position**

Use **a** when something **moves to** a place and **en** when it **is** there: **Voy a casa.** against **Estoy en casa.** · **Voy al mercado.** against **Estoy en el mercado.** Note that *en* + *el* does **not** contract.

## con and sin

| WORD | USE | EXAMPLE | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|---|
| **con** (with) | company | Viajo **con** mi hermana. | I travel with my sister. |
| | instrument | Corto el pan **con** un cuchillo. | I cut the bread with a knife. |
| | manner | **con** cuidado · **con** mucho gusto | carefully · with pleasure |
| **sin** (without) | no article before an unspecific noun | café **sin** azúcar · **sin** coche | coffee without sugar · without a car |
| | + infinitive | **sin** hablar · **sin** querer | without speaking · unintentionally |

## desde and hasta

| WORD | USE | EXAMPLE | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|---|
| **desde** (from, since) | starting point in time or place | **desde** las nueve · **desde** mi casa | from nine o'clock · from my house |
| **desde hace** + time | duration up to now (the present tense stays) | Vivo aquí **desde hace** dos años. | I've lived here for two years. |
| **hasta** (until, as far as) | end point | **hasta** las cinco · **hasta** aquí · **Hasta** mañana. · **Hasta** luego. | until five · as far as here · See you tomorrow. See you later. |
| **hasta** | "even" | **Hasta** mi abuelo lo sabe. | Even my grandfather knows. |
| **desde … hasta … / de** | from … to … | **desde** las nueve **hasta** las cinco · **de** lunes **a** | from nine until five · from Monday to Friday |

| WORD | USE | EXAMPLE | ENGLISH |
|---|---|---|---|
| **… a …** | | viernes | |

**Latin America note**

**entrar:** Spain says **entrar en** (*Entro en la casa*); much of Latin America says **entrar a** (*Entro a la casa*); both are understood. In Argentina you will also hear **ir a lo de** (*Voy a lo de Pablo*, "I'm going to Pablo's place"). In Mexico and Central America **hasta** can mean "not until": **Abren hasta las nueve** ("They don't open until nine"), which would be *Abren a las nueve* in Spain.

## Pronouns after prepositions

After a preposition Spanish uses a special set of pronouns. They are the same as the subject pronouns, except for **mí** and **ti**, and **con** merges with them in three forms:

| PERSON | AFTER A PREPOSITION | WITH CON |
|---|---|---|
| me | **mí**: **para mí, a mí, de mí** | **conmigo** (with me) |
| you (tú) | **ti**: **para ti, sin ti, de ti** | **contigo** (with you) |
| him, her, you (usted) | **él, ella, usted**: **sin él, para ella, de usted** | **con él, con ella, con usted** |
| himself, herself, themselves | **sí**: **para sí** | **consigo** (with himself / herself) |
| us, you (all), them | **nosotros, vosotros, ellos, ellas, ustedes** | **con nosotros** and so on |

The exceptions are **entre** (between), **según** (according to), **como** (as, like), **excepto / salvo** (except), which take the plain subject pronoun: **entre tú y yo**, **según tú**, **como yo**.

## Verbs that take a fixed preposition

Many verbs are followed by a particular preposition that English does not use or uses differently. Learn the verb together with its preposition.

| WITH A | WITH DE | WITH EN | WITH CON |
|---|---|---|---|
| **ir a + infinitive** to be going to | **hablar de** to talk about | **pensar en** to think about | **soñar con** to dream of |
| **aprender a** to learn to | **depender de** to depend on | **creer en** to believe in | **casarse con** to marry |
| **empezar a** to begin to | **acordarse de** to remember | **confiar en** to trust | **contar con** to count on |
| **ayudar a** to help to | **dejar de** to stop (doing) | **tardar en** to take time to | **encontrarse con** to meet (by chance) |
| **volver a** to do again | **acabar de** to have just | **insistir en** to insist on | **salir con** to go out with |

## 🗣️ In Use — En situación

*Read the exchanges aloud and find each preposition.*

### ① A journey

**A:**

¿Adónde vas?

Where are you going?

**B:**

Voy a Madrid en tren. Salgo de Edimburgo a las ocho.

I'm going to Madrid by train. I leave Edinburgh at eight.

**A:**

¿Con quién viajas?

Who are you travelling with?

### ② The personal a

**A:**

Busco a mi amigo Pablo. ¿Ves a alguien?

I'm looking for my friend Pablo. Do you see anyone?

**B:**

No veo a nadie. Solo veo un coche rojo.

I don't see anybody. I only see a red car.

**B:**

Viajo con mi hermana.

I'm travelling with my sister.

### ③ Since and until

**A:**

¿Desde cuándo vives aquí?

How long have you lived here?

**B:**

Vivo aquí desde hace dos años.

I've lived here for two years.

**A:**

¿Hasta cuándo estás aquí?

Until when are you here?

**B:**

Hasta junio. Trabajo de lunes a viernes, desde las nueve hasta las cinco.

Until June. I work Monday to Friday, from nine until five.

## 📋 Quick Reference — Resumen

| PREPOSITION | MAIN USES |
|---|---|
| **a** | destination, time (*a las tres*), rate, manner (*a pie*), indirect object, **personal a** |
| **de** | possession, origin, material, contents, topic, time of day, job |
| **en** | place (in, on, at), months and years, transport, language, "in two hours" |
| **con / sin** | with / without; *conmigo, contigo*; *sin* + noun with no article |

| PREPOSITION | MAIN USES |
|---|---|
| **desde / hasta** | from / until; *desde hace* + time; *de … a …* |
| contractions | *a + el = al*, *de + el = del*; *en el* and *con el* stay separate |
| after a preposition | *mí, ti, él, ella, usted…*; exceptions after *entre, según, como* |

## 🖍️ Try It Yourself — Ejercicios

*Say the answer first, then click to check.*

**1.** Fill in *a, de, en, con, sin*: "Voy ____ Madrid ____ tren." · "Es el libro ____ Ana." · "Vivo ____ Edimburgo." · "un café ____ leche" · "un café ____ azúcar"

▼ Show answer

Voy **a** Madrid **en** tren. · el libro **de** Ana · Vivo **en** Edimburgo · un café **con** leche · un café **sin** azúcar.

**2.** Add the personal *a* where needed: "Veo ____ Ana." · "Veo ____ la casa." · "Busco ____ mi amigo." · "Busco ____ un piso." · "No veo ____ nadie."

▼ Show answer

Veo **a** Ana · Veo la casa (no *a*, a thing) · Busco **a** mi amigo · Busco un piso (no *a*, a thing) · No veo **a** nadie.

**3.** Combine: *Voy a + el cine · la casa de + el profesor · Estoy en + el mercado.*

▼ Show answer

Voy **al** cine · la casa **del** profesor · Estoy **en el** mercado (*en + el* does not contract).

**4.** Say in Spanish: "with me", "with you" (*tú*), "for me", "without him", "between you and me".

▼ Show answer

conmigo · contigo · para mí · sin él · entre tú y yo.

**5.** Say in Spanish: "by car", "on foot", "at three o'clock", "in May", "in Spanish".

▼ Show answer

en coche · a pie · a las tres · en mayo · en español.

**6.** Say in Spanish: "from nine until five", "from Monday to Friday", "See you tomorrow."

▼ Show answer

desde las nueve hasta las cinco · de lunes a viernes · Hasta mañana.

**7.** Say in Spanish: "to think about", "to dream of", "to learn to swim", "to stop smoking".

▼ Show answer

pensar en · soñar con · aprender a nadar · dejar de fumar.

**8.** Say in Spanish: "I've lived here for two years."

▼ Show answer

Vivo aquí desde hace dos años. (The Spanish present tense stays; *desde hace* carries the "for".)

**9.** Say in Spanish: "I'm going home." and "I'm at home."

▼ Show answer

Voy a casa. · Estoy en casa. (*a* for movement, *en* for position)

**10.** Correct the mistakes: *Voy en Madrid · Veo Ana · Vivo a Edimburgo · Estoy con ti.*

▼ Show answer

Voy **a** Madrid (movement) · Veo **a** Ana (personal *a*) · Vivo **en** Edimburgo (position) · Estoy **contigo** (*con + ti* becomes *contigo*).

**Coming up in Chapter 11: Putting It Together.** The whole noun phrase in order; a decision procedure (gender, number, article, adjective, possessive); an error-spotting clinic; and the **Course Complete** recap, with a pointer to Spanish Grammar 2.

# 🧩 Putting It Together — Todo junto

*Chapters 1 to 10 gave you the parts: sounds, gender, plurals, articles, adjectives, comparison, possessives and demonstratives, numbers and quantifiers, pronouns and prepositions. This last chapter builds whole noun phrases from them in the right order, gives you a checklist to run through whenever you write one, and lets you practise on typical mistakes.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

A noun phrase is built in this order: **preposition + determiner (article / possessive / demonstrative / number) + adjective(s) + NOUN + adjective(s)**. Every article, adjective, possessive and demonstrative **agrees with the noun in gender and number**. Decide the noun's gender and number first, and everything else follows.

## The noun phrase in order

| SLOT | WHAT GOES THERE | EXAMPLE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | preposition (Chapter 10) | **con** esos tres |
| 2 | article, demonstrative or short possessive (Chapters 4 and 7) | con **esos** tres · **mis** libros |
| 3 | number or quantifier (Chapter 8) | esos **tres** libros · muchos libros |
| 4 | short adjectives that go before: *buen, gran, mucho, poco* (Chapter 5) | un **buen** libro |
| 5 | **the noun**: gender and number (Chapters 2 and 3) | **libros** |
| 6 | adjectives after the noun: colour, nationality, shape, and anything that distinguishes (Chapter 5) | libros **interesantes** · un coche **rojo** |
| 7 | comparison (Chapter 6) | el libro **más largo** |

Put together: **Voy con esos tres buenos amigos escoceses.** (I'm going with those three good Scottish friends.) · **Es la casa más grande de la calle.** (It's the biggest house on the street.)

## A decision procedure

When you build a noun phrase, ask these questions in this order.

1. **What is the noun, and what gender?** Check the ending (*-o* usually masculine, *-a* usually feminine) and the exceptions: *el día, el mapa, la mano, el agua* (Chapter 2).
2. **Singular or plural?** Add *-s* or *-es*; watch *z* → *c* and accents added or lost: *lápiz* → *lápices, canción* → *canciones* (Chapter 3).
3. **Which determiner?** *el / la / los / las, un / una, mi / tu / su, este / ese / aquel*, or none (professions, languages, after *sin*): match gender and number (Chapters 4 and 7).
4. **Which adjectives, and where?** Match gender and number; most go after the noun; *buen / gran* shorten before it (Chapter 5).
5. **Is it a person object?** Add the personal *a* (Chapter 10).
6. **Which preposition does the verb need?** *pensar en, hablar de, soñar con* (Chapter 10).
7. **Pronoun?** Subject pronouns only for emphasis or contrast; *mí / ti* and *conmigo / contigo* after prepositions (Chapters 9 and 10).

> **Latin America note**
>
> Spain and Latin America share the whole procedure; the differences are small and have all come up already: *vosotros* against *ustedes* (Chapter 9), *vos* in Argentina and parts of Central America, the sound differences of Chapter 1 (*seseo* in Latin America), and the odd preposition (*entrar a* against *entrar en*). Write for either and you will be understood by both.

## Error-spotting clinic

These are the mistakes learners make most often with the material from this course. Each wrong sentence has a repaired version and the chapter it comes from.

| WRONG | RIGHT | WHY |
|---|---|---|
| la problema | el problema | nouns in *-ma* from Greek are masculine (Chapter 2) |
| los lápizes | los lápices | *z* → *c* before *-es* (Chapter 3) |
| una casa blanco | una casa blanca | the adjective agrees with *casa* (Chapter 5) |
| un grande hombre | un gran hombre | *grande* shortens before a singular noun (Chapter 5) |
| más bueno que | mejor que | irregular comparatives (Chapter 6) |
| el mi libro | mi libro or el libro mío | the short possessive takes no article (Chapter 7) |
| No veo nadie. | No veo a nadie. | personal *a* before a person (Chapter 10) |
| Voy en Madrid. | Voy a Madrid. | *a* for movement (Chapter 10) |
| con mí / con ti | conmigo / contigo | special merged forms (Chapter 10) |

## 🗣️ In Use — En situación

*Everything together: look for the gender, number and preposition choices.*

### ① A new flat

**A:**

¿Cómo es tu nuevo piso?

What's your new flat like?

**B:**

Es pequeño, pero tiene una cocina muy luminosa y dos balcones.

It's small, but it has a very bright kitchen and two balconies.

### ② At the office

**A:**

Estos ordenadores son más rápidos que aquellos.

These computers are faster than those.

**B:**

Sí, pero necesito a un técnico para instalarlos.

Yes, but I need a technician to install them.

③ Plans

**A:**

¿Vienes conmigo al mercado?

Are you coming with me to the market?

**B:**

Sí, voy contigo. Quiero comprar un kilo de tomates y unas manzanas rojas.

Yes, I'll come with you. I want to buy a kilo of tomatoes and some red apples.

## 📋 Quick Reference — Resumen del curso

| CHAPTER | TOPIC | KEY POINT |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Sounds and alphabet | Spelling is regular; know the Spain *th* against seseo |
| 2 | Noun gender | Endings, exceptions, professions |
| 3 | Plurals | *-s / -es*, *z → c*, accents |
| 4 | Articles | *el / la / un / una*, *al / del*, *el agua*, *lo* |
| 5 | Adjectives | Agreement, position, *buen / gran* |
| 6 | Comparison | *más … que*, *-ísimo*, *cuanto más … más* |
| 7 | Possessives and demonstratives | short and long forms; *este / ese / aquel* |
| 8 | Numbers and quantifiers | indefinites, double negative |
| 9 | Subject pronouns | *tú / usted*, *vosotros / ustedes*, no "it" |
| 10 | Prepositions I | *a*, *de*, *en*, *con*, *sin*, *desde*, *hasta*, personal *a* |

# 🖍️ Try It Yourself — Ejercicios

*Say the answer first, then click to check.*

**1.** Build: "those three good Scottish friends" (*amigo*, masculine).

▼ Show answer

esos tres buenos amigos escoceses (demonstrative, number, *buen* before the noun, nationality after).

**2.** Build: "my new red car" (*coche*, masculine; *nuevo* goes before or after, *rojo* after).

▼ Show answer

mi coche rojo nuevo, or mi nuevo coche rojo.

**3.** Correct: *la problema grande*.

▼ Show answer

el problema grande (masculine) · or **un gran problema**.

**4.** Make plural: *el lápiz azul*, *la canción española*.

▼ Show answer

los lápices azules · las canciones españolas (*z* → *c*; accent lost).

**5.** Say in Spanish: "I see Ana and I see the house."

▼ Show answer

Veo a Ana y veo la casa. (personal *a* only for the person)

**6.** Say in Spanish: "Are you coming with me?" (*tú*)

▼ Show answer

¿Vienes conmigo?

**7.** Say in Spanish: "This flat is bigger than that one." (*piso*, masculine)

▼ Show answer

Este piso es más grande que ese.

**8.** Say in Spanish: "She is a very good doctor."

▼ Show answer

Es una médica muy buena. (*médica* is feminine, so *una* and *buena* agree; *una* is needed because the profession is qualified by an adjective)

**9.** Say in Spanish: "I don't see anything and I don't see anyone."

▼ Show answer

No veo nada y no veo a nadie. (double negative; personal *a* before *nadie*)

**10.** Correct all the mistakes: *Voy en la casa de mi amigo con mí hermana.*

▼ Show answer

Voy **a** la casa de mi amigo con **mi** hermana. (*a* for movement; *mi* without accent is the possessive; *mí* with accent is the pronoun used after prepositions)

**Course complete!** 🎉 You now have the foundations of Spanish noun grammar. The next step is **Spanish Grammar 2**, which moves on to the verbs: the present tense and the building blocks of everything you will say.