

Spanish Grammar

WORD FORMS OF VERBS AND ADJECTIVES

THE ALPHABET

The 27 letters of the Spanish alphabet:

a	h	j	ka	r	arre
b	be	ll	lla	s	ese
c	ce	m	me	t	te
d	de	n	na	v	ve
e	é	ñ	nye	w	wave double
f	fe	o	o	x	xix
g	ge	q	qa	y	ye
h	ha	u	u	z	ze
i	í				

CARDINALS

0	cero	12	doce	22	veintidós	100	ciento uno	800	ochocientos
1	uno	13	trece	30	treinta	200	doscientos	900	novecientos
2	dos	14	catorce	31	treinta y uno	300	trescientos	1,000	mil
3	tres	15	quince	32	treinta y dos	400	cuatrocientos	2,000	dos mil
4	cuatro	16	dieciséis	40	cuarenta	500	quinientos	1,000,000	un millón
5	cinco	17	diecisiete	50	cincuenta	600	seiscientos	2,000,000	dos millones
6	seis	18	dieciocho	60	sesenta	700	setecientos	1,000,000,000	mil millones
7	siete	19	diecinueve	70	setenta				
8	ocho	20	veinte	80	ochenta				
9	nueve	21	veintiuno	90	noventa				
10	diez	22	veintidós	100	ciento				

ORDINALS

1st	primero
2nd	segundo
3rd	tercer
4th	cuarto
5th	quinto
6th	sexto
7th	séptimo
8th	octavo
9th	noveno
10th	décimo

NOTE: For cardinals, **uno** changes to **un** before masculine nouns and to **una** before feminine nouns; ordinals agree in gender and number with their nouns; **primer** and **tercer** are used before masculine singular nouns.

RULES OF STRESS

- Words ending in a vowel or the consonants **n** or **r** have stress on the next-to-last syllable and are called **palabras graves**; **ca-ja**-la (box), **ca-ja**-ra (boxer), **ca-ja**-ra (boxer), **ca-ja**-ra (boxer).
- Words ending in a consonant other than **n** or **r** have stress on the last syllable and are called **palabras agudas**; **do-cto**-ra (doctor), **ma-je**-ra (Spanish), **ni-ño**-to (boy).
- When a word does not conform to either of the previously mentioned rules, a written accent indicates where the stress falls; **ca-fee** (coffee), **ca-fee** (coffee), **ca-fee** (coffee); **ca-fee** (coffee), **ca-fee** (coffee); **ca-fee** (coffee), **ca-fee** (coffee).
- A written accent is also used to distinguish between two words with the same spelling but different meaning, such as **é** (you) and **te** (your) and **qué** (what) and **que** (what).

SYLLABIFICATION

- A single vowel sound, with or without accompanying consonants, makes up a syllable.
 - Diphthongs and triphthongs blend to make a single vowel sound and cannot be divided.
 - A diphthong combines a strong vowel (a, e, o) and a weak vowel (i, u) **ai**-ra (air), **ei**-ra (air), **oi**-ra (air); two weak vowels can also form a diphthong: **ia**-ra (city), **ua**-ra (city).
- A triphthong consists of a strong vowel between two weak ones: **au**-ra (you), **au**-ra (you).
- Two strong vowels do not form a diphthong and are separated into two syllables: **ca**-ja (box), **ca**-ja (box).
- A written accent on a weak vowel breaks a diphthong, separating it into two syllables: **ca**-ja (box), **ca**-ja (box).
- A single consonant forms a syllable with the vowel (or a single vowel sound) in the case of a diphthong or triphthong that follows it: **ca**-ja (box), **ca**-ja (box).
- The digraphs **ch**, **ll**, and **rr** represent a single sound and cannot be separated: **ca**-ja (box), **ca**-ja (box).
- When two consonants come between two vowels, the first consonant goes with the preceding vowel and the second consonant goes with the following vowel: **ca**-ja (box), **ca**-ja (box).
- Exception: When **n**, **r**, **d**, **l**, **g**, **p**, or **t** is followed by **i** or **r**, both consonants go with the following vowel: **ca**-ja (box), **ca**-ja (box).
- When three consonants come between two vowels, the first two consonants go with the preceding vowel and the third consonant goes with the following vowel: **ca**-ja (box), **ca**-ja (box).
- Exception: When **n**, **r**, **d**, **l**, **g**, **p**, or **t** is followed by **i** or **r**, only the first consonant goes with the preceding vowel; the last two consonants go with the following vowel: **ca**-ja (box), **ca**-ja (box).

CAPITALIZATION

- Capitalize in Spanish:
 - The first word in a sentence: **Yo** **voy** mañana. (I am going tomorrow.)
 - Proper nouns, such as names of countries, people, continents, and geographic features: **Estados Unidos**, **María**, **Europa**, **Everest**.
 - The first word of a title (and proper nouns, if any): **Chen** **shao** **de** **solista** (Oscar Mandarin Tenor of Solista).
- Abbreviated personal titles: **Sra.**, **Ramón**, **Dr.**, **Gómez**.
- Do not capitalize in Spanish:
 - Nouns denoting nationality or religious affiliation: **francesés** (French), **católico** (Catholic).
 - Names of languages: **español** (Spanish), **ruso** (Russian).
 - Days of the week and months of the year: **lunes**, **el día de mayo** (Monday, May 2).
 - Spelled-out personal titles: **señor** **Colombio**, **señorita** **Villagómez**.

ARTICLES

Can be feminine or masculine and may come before nouns and verbs, but never before verbs that modify nouns.

DEFINITE ARTICLES

- Definite articles indicate a specific person, place, or thing; the Spanish definite articles of **la**, **los**, and **las** (which translate to **the** in English) are used with:
 - Nouns used as nouns, especially at the beginning of a sentence: **El** **estudiante** **es** **honesto**. (Studying in good.)
 - Nouns in a series: **Pongo** **el** **libro**, **el** **cuaderno**, **y** **el** **bolígrafo** **sobre** **la** **mesa**. (I put the book, notebook, and pen on the table.)
 - Certain nouns such as **ciudad** (city) and **escuela** (school), where English often omits the article: **¿Van** **a** **la** **ciudad**? (Are they going to jail?) **Ellos** **van** **a** **la** **escuela**. (She is going to school.)
 - Abstract concepts: **La** **honestidad** **es** **una** **virtud**. (Honesty is a virtue.)
 - Nouns of weight or measure: **Las** **peras** **costan** **un** **dólar** **la** **libra**. (The pears cost one dollar a pound.)
 - Titles when used with a name: **La** **Dra.** **Carela** **llamó**. (Dr. Carela called.)

- Days of the week to indicate when something occurs, where English uses "on": **Vamos** **al** **cine** **el** **sábado**. (We are going to the movies on Saturday.)
- Parts of the body or articles of clothing, especially with reflexive verbs: **Me** **gustan** **el** **abrigos**. (I put on my coat.)
- Names of certain cities, countries, and continents: **la** **Florida**, **el** **Ecuador**, **la** **América** **del** **Nor**.
- Proper nouns modified by an adjective: **el** **pequeño** **Juan** (little Juan)
- The hour when telling time: **Es** **la** **una**. (It is one o'clock.)

INDEFINITE ARTICLES

- Indefinite articles **un**, **una**, and **some** in English indicate a nonspecific person, place, or thing; the Spanish indefinite articles **un**, **una**, **unos**, and **unas** are:
 - Used in the same way as in English and normally come before the noun.
 - Not used in certain situations, such as after **ser** (to be) when the noun following **ser** is not modified: **Yo** **soy** **profesora**. (I am a teacher.) But **Yo** **soy** **una** **buena** **profesora**. (I am a good teacher.)

NOUNS

Can be feminine or masculine, singular or plural, and are usually accompanied by an article.

GENDER

- Most nouns ending in **-o** and nouns denoting males are masculine: **el** **libro** (the book), **el** **hombre** (the man).
 - Exceptions: **La** **mano** (the hand) and abbreviated words such as **la** **moto** (the motorcycle, short for **la** **motocicleta**), **la** **foto** (the photo, short for **la** **fotografía**), and **la** **discoteca** (the discotheque, short for **la** **discoteca**) are feminine.
- Most nouns ending in **-a** and nouns denoting females are feminine: **la** **mujer** (the woman).
 - Exceptions: Words of Greek origin ending in **-ma**, **-pa**, and **-ta** such as **el** **programa** (the program), **el** **mapa** (the map), and **el** **planeta** (the planet) are masculine.
- Nouns ending in **-dad**, **-ción**, **-dad**, and **-ción** are feminine: **la** **ciudad** (the city), **la** **libertad** (the freedom), **la** **juventud** (the youth), **la** **muchedumbre** (the crowd).
- Some nouns have the same form for both genders: **el** **la** **artista** (the artist), **el** **la** **pianista** (the pianist), **el** **la** **cliente** (the client).

- Some masculine nouns ending in a consonant add **-o** to form the feminine: **el** **doctor** **la** **doctora** (the doctor), **el** **profesor** **la** **profesora** (the teacher), **el** **señor** **la** **señora** (Mr./Mrs.).
- Some masculine nouns ending in **-o** have a feminine form ending in **-a**: **el** **uniforme** **la** **uniforme** (the uniform), **el** **gato** **la** **gata** (the cat), **el** **muchacho** **la** **muchacha** (the boy/the girl).

NUMBER

- To make a noun plural:
 - Add **-s** to a noun ending in a vowel: **libro** (book) → **libros** (books), **puerta** (door) → **puertas** (doors).
 - Add **-es** to a noun ending in a consonant: **pared** (wall) → **paredes** (walls), **profesor** (teacher) → **profesores** (teachers).
 - Change **x** to **e** and add **-es** to a noun ending in **-x**: **lápiz** (pencil) → **lápices** (pencils), **luz** (light) → **luzes** (lights).

ADVERBS

Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs, but never nouns.

Adjective	Form	Adverb
triste	triste	tristemente
feliz	feliz	felizmente
triste	triste	tristemente
triste	triste	tristemente
triste	triste	tristemente

NOTE: A written accent is maintained in the **-mente** form of an adverb.

al (to)	ayer (yesterday)	mal (badly)	mucho (much)	tan (so)
allí (there)	ahora (now)	malísimo (awfully)	muchoísimo (very much)	tan (so, there)
allí (over there)	ahorita (now)	malísimo (awfully)	muchoísimo (very much)	tan (so, there)
aquí (here)	ayer (yesterday)	mal (badly)	mucho (much)	tan (so)

- Adverbs are placed before the adjectives they modify but usually after the verb: **La** **profesora** **es** **mucho** **simpática**. (The teacher is very nice.) **Ellos** **bailan** **bien**. (They dance well.)
- In a series of adverbs, the feminine form is used for all adverbs but **-mente** is placed only on the last one: **Elena** **habla** **lento**, **clara** **y** **constantemente**. (Elena speaks slowly, clearly, and continuously.)

Spanish Language Guides

Michael Navarro



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