

# Beginner's Basque

BASQ 401 - Taught by Maialen Casquete De La Puente

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## Abstract

Comprehensive study notes for BASQ 401, covering the fundamentals of Euskara (Basque language). Topics include basic grammar structures, verb conjugations, vocabulary for daily life, pronunciation, and cultural context including the Basque diaspora. Basque is the only non-Indo-European language in Western Europe, spoken by approximately 300,000 people in northeastern Spain and southwestern France.

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# Part I

## Foundations & Introduction

### 1 Introduction to Basque

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#### 1.1 What is Basque?

Basque (Euskara) is a unique language isolate with several distinctive characteristics:

- One of the co-official languages in Spain (alongside Spanish, Catalan, and Galician)
- The only non-Indo-European language in Western Europe
- Spoken by approximately 300,000 people in northeastern Spain and southwestern France
- Was the majority language in the territory several centuries ago
- In Nafarroa and Araba, Basque was lost between the 18th and 19th centuries
- Lapurdi, Zuberoa, and Nafarroa beherea are now part of France

#### 1.2 Pre-history of Basque

According to Trask (2013):

- "Few languages have exercised so much fascination upon the collective linguistic consciousness as Basque and at the same time few European languages are so little known to professional linguists"
- Information in general literature is sparse, uninformed, and frequently inaccurate
- First book: 16th century - *Linguae Vasconum Primitiae* by Etxepare
  - For comparison: the first manuscript of English is dated around the sixth century
- Writings from the arrival of the Romans (1st-3rd centuries) contain non-Latin proper names

#### 1.3 Dialects of Basque

Martinez Areta (2013) notes:

- Intelligibility varies according to many factors
- Two speakers of Bizkaian and Zuberoan (at opposite ends of the Basque-speaking territory) will find it difficult to communicate
- From Leizarraga's 1571 preface to his translation of the New Testament:

*"(...) batbederak daki Heuskal Herrian kasi etxe batetik berzera-ere minzatzeko mannerán zer differentiá eta dibersitatea den"*

Translation: "One knows that in the Basque Country, the way you speak changes greatly almost from house to house"

## 2 Fundamental Grammar Concepts

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### 2.1 Sentence Structure

One of the most important differences between Basque and English:

- **English:** SUBJECT - VERB - OBJECT (fixed order)
  - I have apples
  - You are a student
- **Basque:** SUBJECT - OBJECT - VERB (flexible order)
  - Nik sagarrak ditut (I apples have)
  - Zu ikaslea zara (You a student are)

*Note: As in Spanish, subjects are optional in Basque: "Nik sagarrak ditut" = "sagarrak ditut"*

### 2.2 Gender in Basque

**Basque has no grammatical gender!**

- Third person pronouns don't distinguish gender
- Nouns don't have gender
- This is a major simplification compared to Romance languages

### 2.3 Verb Structure

Except for a few main verbs (izan, egon, \*edun), most Basque verbs consist of two parts:

1. **Main verb:** Carries the lexical meaning (ikusi - to see, joan - to go, idatzi - to write)
2. **Auxiliary:** Carries grammatical information (tense + person)

**Example 2.1.** Nik egin dut

- *egin* = to do (main verb)
- *dut* = auxiliary (first person singular, present perfect)
- Translation: "I did" or "I have done"

## 3 Pronunciation Guide

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Practice these distinctive Basque sounds:

Person	Singular	Plural
1st	d(it)ut	d(it)ugu
2nd	d(it)uzu	d(it)uzue
3rd	d(it)u	d(it)uzte

*Note: Add -it- for plural direct objects*

## Question Words Summary

Basque	English	Suffix/Pattern
Nor?	Who?	
Zer?	What?	
Zenbat?	How many?	
Nongoa?	Where from?	-koa / -etakoa
Non?	Where?	-n / -etan
Noiz?	When?	-an / -etan
Zergatik?	Why?	-lako (because)

## Frequency Expressions

Basque	English
Egunero	Daily / Every day
Astero	Weekly / Every week
Hilabetero	Monthly / Every month
Urtero	Yearly / Every year
Egunean behin	Once a day
Astean behin	Once a week
Hilabetean behin	Once a month
Urtean behin	Once a year

## Study Tips

1. **Verb Transitivity:** Always determine if a verb is transitive (needs an object) or intransitive (doesn't need an object) before choosing the auxiliary.
2. **Word Order:** Remember that Basque is SOV (Subject-Object-Verb), not SVO like English. The verb comes last.
3. **No Gender:** Unlike Romance languages, Basque has no grammatical gender - a major simplification.
4. **Suffixes:** Many grammatical functions are expressed through suffixes:
  - Location: -n, -etan
  - Origin: -koa, -etakoa
  - Time: -an, -etan
5. **IZAN vs EGON:** Like Spanish ser/estar:
  - IZAN: permanent states, identities
  - EGON: temporary states, locations
6. **Present Progressive:** Always uses IZAN as auxiliary, even with transitive verbs. Add "ari" between verb and auxiliary.
7. **GUSTATU:** Remember it works like Spanish gustar - the thing being liked is the subject, not the person who likes it.

### Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Using EDUN with intransitive verbs (except noun + egin verbs)
- Forgetting to add -it- for plural objects with EDUN
- Using English SVO word order instead of Basque SOV
- Trying to apply gender to nouns or pronouns
- Using "ez...ahal" for negation (correct: ezin)
- Forgetting that IZAN is always the auxiliary for present progressive

Letter(s)	Example Word
S	SU
Z	ZU
X	XERRA
TS	KIRATSA
TZ	ARMINTZA
TX	TXOKOLATEA

## Part II

# Basic Communication

## 4 Greetings and Common Phrases

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### 4.1 Basic Greetings

#### To Begin (Hasteko)

- **Kaixo** - Hello
- **Egun on** - Good morning
- **Eguerdi on** - Good noon
- **Arratsalde on** - Good afternoon/evening
- **Gabon** - Good night

*Note: Arratsalde = afternoon/evening; on = good*

#### To End (Amaitzeko)

- **Agur** - Goodbye
- **Adio** - Goodbye
- **Gero arte** - See you later
- **Bihar arte** - See you tomorrow

### 4.2 How Are You?

**Zer moduz (zaude)?** - How are you?

#### Possible Responses

- **Ni triste nago** - I am sad
- **Ni pozik nago** - I am happy
- **Ni nekatuta nago** - I am tired
- **Ondo / Oso ondo** - Good / Very good

#### Reactions

- **Sentitzen dut** - I'm sorry
- **Pozten naiz** - I'm glad



### 4.3 Thanks and Courtesy

- **Eskerrik asko** - Thank you
- **Mila esker** - Thanks a lot (literally: "Thanks a thousand")
- **Ez horregatik** - You're welcome
- **Mesedez** - Please
- **Barkatu** - Sorry
- **Bai** - Yes
- **Ez** - No

### 4.4 Basic Questions

- **Zergatik?** - Why?
- **Eta zu?** - And you?

## 5 Personal Pronouns

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### 5.1 Subject Pronouns (Subjektu izenordainak)

Basque	English
Ni	I
Zu	You (singular)
Bera	He/She/They (singular)
Gu	We
Zuek	You (plural)
Haiek	They (plural)

### 5.2 Possessive Markers

- **Nire** - My (e.g., Nire ama = My mom)
- **Zure** - Your (e.g., Zure etxea = Your house)
- **Bere** - His/Her/Their (e.g., Bere ama = His/her mom)

## Part III

# The Verb System

### 6 The Two Auxiliary Verbs

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The choice between IZAN and \*EDUN depends on verb transitivity.

#### 6.1 IZAN (Intransitive - "to be")

Used with intransitive verbs - verbs that DO NOT require an object. The subject is the only participant.

##### Present Tense Conjugation

Person	Singular	Plural
1st	naiz	gara
2nd	zara	zarete
3rd	da	dira

##### Examples

- Ni geratu naiz - I have stayed
- Zu joan zara - You have gone
- Gu mugitu gara - We have moved
- Zuek etorri zarete - You (plural) have come
- Ni etxera etorri naiz - I have come home
- Gu asko mugitu gara - We've moved a lot

#### 6.2 \*EDUN (Transitive - "to have")

Used with transitive verbs - verbs that require an object other than the subject.

*Note: \*edun is a reconstructed form; there is no way to know the actual infinitive*

##### Present Tense Conjugation

Person	Singular	Plural
1st	d(it)ut	d(it)ugu
2nd	d(it)uzu	d(it)uzue
3rd	d(it)u	d(it)uzte

*Note: Add -it- when the direct object is plural*

## Examples

- Nik sagar bat erosi dut - I have bought an apple
- Nik sagarrak erosi ditut - I have bought apples (plural object)
- Nik gaztelera ikasten dut - I study Spanish
- Zuk atea zabaldu duzu - You've opened the door
- Nik ama ikusi dut - I've seen mom

## 6.3 Choosing the Right Auxiliary

### Transitive Verbs (use EDUN)

When you perform the action, you always act on something:

- Prestatu (to prepare) - you always prepare *something*
- Erosi (to buy) - you always buy *something*
- Ikusi (to see) - you always see *something*
- Ikasi (to study) - you always study *something*

### Intransitive Verbs (use IZAN)

The action doesn't require an object:

- Geratu (to stay) - you stay yourself
- Joan (to go) - you go yourself
- Mugitu (to move) - you move yourself
- Etorri (to come) - you come yourself

### Important Exception

Some intransitive verbs are formed with **noun + egin**. These use EDUN instead:

- Lo egin (to sleep) - Literally: "to do sleep"
  - NOT: Ni lo egin naiz
  - Nik lo egin dut
- Igeri egin (to swim) - Literally: "to do swim"
  - NOT: Zu igeri egin zara
  - Zuk igeri egin duzu

*Note: Linguistically, these are unergative verbs: intransitive verbs with an agentive subject*

## 7 IZAN as Main Verb (Ser)

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IZAN functions as the main verb "to be" for permanent characteristics and identities.

## 7.1 Uses of IZAN

- Identity: Ni Maialen naiz (I am Maialen)
- Origin: Zu Bilbokoa zara (You are from Bilbao)
- Profession: Bera irakaslea da (She is a teacher)
- Relationships: Nire ama Gloria da (My mom is Gloria)

## 7.2 Examples

- Ni irakaslea naiz. Nire ama ere irakaslea da.
  - I am a teacher. My mom is also a teacher.
- Zuek ingeniariak zarete, baina Ane haginlaria da.
  - You are engineers, but Ane is a dentist.
- Gu kazetariak gara, eta bera ere kazetaria da.
  - We are journalists, and he/she is also a journalist.

## 8 EGON (Estar)

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EGON is the second "to be" verb, paralleling the Spanish distinction between ser/estar.

### 8.1 IZAN vs EGON

- **IZAN:** For permanent things (she is a lawyer, she is blonde, he is tall, the sky is blue)
  - Also used for non-permanent locations of events (the meeting is in the LCLB, the party is at Kam's)
- **EGON:** For temporary states (she is at school, there are many people, the sky is clear)
  - Can be modified with time adverbials (right now, yesterday, at 10am)
  - Also used for permanent physical locations (Bilbao is in the Basque Country, the LCLB is near the quad)

### 8.2 Present Tense Conjugation

Person	IZAN	EGON
Ni	naiz	nago
Zu	zara	zaude
Bera	da	dago
Gu	gara	gaude
Zuek	zarete	zaudete
Haiek	dira	daude

*Note: Notice they start with the same letter*

### 8.3 Examples

- Neska gimnasioan dago - The girl is at the gym
- Umea etxean dago - The kid is at home
- Umeak klasean daude - The kids are in class

## 9 \*EDUN as Main Verb

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EDUN can function as the main verb meaning "to have" (possess, own).

### 9.1 Examples

- Nik txakur bat dut - I have a dog
- Zuk 25 urte dituzu - You have 25 years (You're 25 years old)
- Berak etxe bat du - She has a house
- Nik hogeita sei urte ditut - I have 26 years (I'm 26 years old)

# Part IV

## Verb Tenses

### 10 Present Perfect

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The present perfect is formed by combining the main verb (infinitive form) with the appropriate auxiliary.

#### 10.1 Formation

##### Main Verb + Auxiliary

- Nik paella prestatu dut - I've prepared paella
- Nik gazta erosi dut - I've bought cheese
- Haiek liburua irakurri dute - They've read the book

### 11 Present Habitual

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The present habitual expresses actions that happen regularly or habitually.

#### 11.1 Formation

To create the present habitual:

1. Take the infinitive (ikusi, joan, idatzi)
2. Remove the last letter
3. Add **-t(z)en**
4. Add the same auxiliary as present perfect

##### When to use -ten vs -tzen

- Use **-tzea** when the resulting form ends in a consonant
  - ibili → ibil**TZEA**
- Use **-tea** when it ends in a vowel
  - egin → egi**TEA**

#### 11.2 Examples

- Ikusi → Ikusten
- Joan → Joaten
- Nik liburuak irakurtzen ditut - I (normally) read books
- Nik kirola egiten dut - I (normally) exercise

### 11.3 Frequency Expressions

#### -ero (English -ly)

**Noizero?** - How often?

Add -ero to indicate something happens every x amount of time:

- **Egunero** - Daily (egun = day)
- **Astero** - Weekly (aste = week)
- **Hilabetero** - Monthly (hilabete = month)
- **Urtero** - Yearly (urte = year)

Examples:

- Nik astero arropa garbitzen dut - I wash clothes weekly
- Zu egunero dutxatzen zara - You shower daily

#### -an behin (Once a x)

- **Egunean behin** - Once a day
- **Astean behin** - Once a week
- **Hilabetean behin** - Once a month
- **Urtean behin** - Once a year

*Note: behin = once. "Egunean behin" and "egunero" can mean the same thing*

Examples:

- Nik astean behin zaborra botatzen dut - I take out the trash once a week
- Zuek urtean behin joaten zarete oporretan - You go on holidays once a year

#### -etan (On [day]s)

For days of the week:

- Astelehenetan - On Mondays
- Asteartetan - On Tuesdays
- Asteazkenetan - On Wednesdays
- Ostegunetan - On Thursdays
- Ostiraletan - On Fridays
- Larunbatetan - On Saturdays
- Igandeetan - On Sundays

Examples:

- Nik larunbatetan erosketak egiten ditut - I do shopping on Saturdays
- Nik igandeetan zaborra ateratzen dut - I take out the trash on Sundays

## 12 Present Progressive

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The present progressive (present continuous) expresses actions happening right now.

### 12.1 Formation

Two steps:

1. Take the present habitual tense (e.g., joaten naiz, esnatzen zara)
2. Add **ari** (continuous particle) between the main verb and auxiliary

**Critical Rule:** IZAN is *always* the auxiliary with present progressive, even for transitive verbs.

### 12.2 Examples

- Joaten naiz → Joaten ari naiz - I'm going
- Esnatzen naiz → Esnatzen ari naiz - I'm waking up
- Ikusten dut → Ikusten ari naiz - I'm seeing (Note: uses IZAN!)
- Mutila gitarra jotzen ari da - The boy is playing guitar
- Neska hortzak garbitzen ari da - The girl is brushing her teeth
- Gizona lo egiten ari da - The man is sleeping

### 12.3 Negative Form

The auxiliary moves to the front next to "ez," and "ari" stays at the end:

- Ez da abesten ari - He/she is not singing
- Ez da ikasten ari - He/she is not studying
- Ez da korrika egiten ari - He/she is not running

## 13 Future Tense

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The future tense is marked with **-ko/-go**.

### 13.1 Formation

- If the verb ends in a vowel: add **-ko**
- If the verb ends in a consonant: add **-go**

### 13.2 Examples

- Ni zinemara joango naiz - I will go to the cinema
- Ni etxean egongo naiz - I will be at home
- Euria egingo du - It will rain
- Zuk liburu bat irakurriko duzu - You will read a book
- Haiek futboleko jolastuko dute - They will play football



### 13.3 Future Time Expressions

- **Bihar** - Tomorrow
- **Etzi** - The day after tomorrow
- **Etzidamu** - The day after after tomorrow
- **Datorren asteen** - Next week
- **Datorren udan** - Next summer
- **Datorren asteburuan** - Next weekend
- **Aste bat barru** - In a week (from now)
- **Bi egun barru** - In two days (from now)

## Part V

# Questions & Expressions

## 14 Question Words (Galdetzaileak)

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### 14.1 Basic Interrogatives

#### **NOR? (Who?)**

- Nor da mutila? - Who is the boy?
- Nor zara? - Who are you?

#### **ZER? (What?)**

- Zer da hori? - What is that?
- Zer du soinean? - What is he/she wearing?

#### **ZENBAT? (How many?)**

- Zenbat txakur dituzu? - How many dogs do you have?
- Zenbat urte ditu? - How many years does he/she have? (How old is he/she?)

### 14.2 Location Questions

#### **NONGOA? (Where from?)**

Suffix: **-koa** (singular), **-etakoa** (plural)

- Nongoa zara? - Where are you from?
- Ni Txikagokoa naiz - I am from Chicago
- Ni Estatu Batuetakoa naiz - I am from the United States

#### **NON? (Where?)**

Suffix: **-n** (singular), **-etan** (plural)

- Non dago zure etxea? - Where is your house?
- Nire etxea Chicagon dago - My house is in Chicago
- Non daude umeak? - Where are the kids?
- Umeak eskoletan daude - The kids are in the schools

### 14.3 Time Questions

#### NOIZ? (When?)

Suffix: **-an** (singular), **-etan** (plural)

- Noiz da zure urtebetetzea? - When is your birthday?
- Nire urtebetetzea azaroaren 18an da - My birthday is November 18
- Noiz dugu klasea? - When do we have class?
- Klasea arratsaldeetan dugu - We have class in the evenings

#### ZERGATIK? (Why?)

- Used to ask for reasons or causes
- Answer with **-lako** (because)

## 15 GUSTATU - To Like

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GUSTATU has a special structure that resembles Spanish *gustar*. It uses a different auxiliary system.

### 15.1 Structure

**Niri** = ni (I) + ri (to) → "to me" (like Spanish "a mí")

The literal translation is: "To me, X is pleasing"

### 15.2 Conjugation

Person	Singular Subject	Plural Subject
Niri	gustatzen zait	gustatzen zaizkit
Zuri	gustatzen zaizu	gustatzen zaizkizu
Hari	gustatzen zaio	gustatzen zaizkio
Guri	gustatzen zaigu	gustatzen zaizkigu
Zuei	gustatzen zaizue	gustatzen zaizkizue
Haiei	gustatzen zaie	gustatzen zaizkie

*Note: Add -zki- in the middle for plural subjects. The person endings are the same as with edun: dut → zait, dugu → zaigu*

### 15.3 With Nouns

- Niri euskara gustatzen zait - I like Basque
- Zuri txakurrak gustatzen zaizkizu - You like dogs
- Haiei Txikago gustatzen zaie - They like Chicago
- Guri Urbana gustatzen zaigu - We like Urbana

## 15.4 With Verbs: -t(z)ea gustatzen zait

To use gustatu with verbs:

1. Take the verb root (remove -tu, -n, or final vowel)
2. Add **-tzea** (if ending in consonant) or **-tea** (if ending in vowel)
3. Use the same gustatu structure

**Example 15.1.** • ibili → ibilTZEA

- igeri egin → igeri egiTEA
- kirola egin → kirola egiTEA
- futbolean jolastu → futbolean jolasTEA

Examples:

- Niri ibiltzea gustatzen zait - I like walking
- Zuri igeri egitea gustatzen zaizu - You like swimming
- Guri kirola egitea gustatzen zaigu - We like doing sports
- Zuei futbolean jolastea gustatzen zaizue - You (pl) like playing football
- Ez zait telebista ikustea gustatzen - I don't like watching TV

## 16 Modal Verbs

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### 16.1 NAHI + \*EDUN (To Want)

*Nahi(a)* means "the will" → Nahi dut = I have the will = I want

*Note: These look like present perfect but are actually present tense with edun as the main verb*

#### Affirmative

- Nik txakur bat nahi dut - I want a dog
- Zure anaiak bost sagar nahi ditu - Your brother wants five apples

#### Negative

- Nik ez dut txakur bat nahi - I do not want a dog
- Zure anaiak ez ditu bost sagar nahi - Your brother does not want five apples

### 16.2 BEHAR + \*EDUN (To Need)

*Behar(a)* means "the need" → Behar dut = I have the need = I need

#### Affirmative

- Gurasoek kotxea behar dute - Your parents need the car
- Nire semeak eskolara joan behar du - My son needs to go to school

### **Negative**

- Gurasoek ez dute kotxea behar - Your parents do not need the car
- Nire semeak ez du eskolara joan behar - My son does not need to go to school

### **16.3 AHAL + \*EDUN (Can)**

#### **Affirmative**

- Nik kirola egin ahal dut - I can do sports

#### **Negative**

Use **EZIN** instead of "ez...ahal":

- Nik ezin dut kirola egin - I cannot do sports
- NOT: Nik ez dut kirola egin ahal

# Part VI

## Essential Vocabulary

### 17 Numbers and Time

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#### 17.1 Days of the Week (Asteko Egunak)

#	Basque	English
1	Astelehena	Monday
2	Asteartea	Tuesday
3	Asteazkena	Wednesday
4	Osteguna	Thursday
5	Ostirala	Friday
6	Larunbata	Saturday
7	Igandea	Sunday
Asteburua		Weekend

#### 17.2 Seasons (Urtaroak)

1. **Udaberria** (Spring)
  - From *uda* (summer) + *berria* (new)
  - Literally: "new summer"
2. **Uda** (Summer)
3. **Udazkena** (Autumn/Fall)
  - From *uda* (summer) + *azkena* (final)
  - Literally: "the final of summer"
4. **Negua** (Winter)

#### 17.3 Basic Numbers

- Hogeita sei (26)
- Hogei (20)
- Hemeretzi (19)

## 18 Professions (Lanbideak)

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Basque	English
Ikaslea	Student
Irakaslea	Teacher
Medikua	Doctor
Erizaina	Nurse
Dendaria	Shopkeeper
Kirolaria	Athlete
Abeslaria	Singer
Musikaria	Musician
Mekanikaria	Mechanic
Polizia	Police officer
Argazkilaria	Photographer
Abokatua	Lawyer
Ile-apaintzailea	Hairdresser
Diseinatzailea	Designer
Idazkaria	Secretary
Ingeniaria	Engineer
Kazetaria	Journalist
Lorezaina	Florist
Postaria	Postal worker
Sukaldaria	Cook
Zerbitzaria	Server
Haginalaria/Dentista	Dentist
Biologoa	Biologist

### 18.1 Word Formation

- **-lea** = "-er" suffix
  - ikasi (to learn) → ikas-lea (learn-er)
  - irakatsi (to teach) → irakas-lea (teach-er)
- **Root words:**
  - denda (shop) → dendaria (shopkeeper)
  - kirola (sport) → kirolaria (athlete)
  - sukalde (kitchen) → sukaldaria (cook)

## 19 Places (Lekuak)

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Basque	English
Unibertsitatea	University
Liburutegia	Library
Taberna	Bar/Tavern
Jatetxea	Restaurant
Gimnasioa	Gym
Zinemara	Cinema
Hondartzara	Beach
Mendia	Mountain
Eskoletan	Schools

## 20 The House (Etxea)

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### 20.1 Rooms

- **Logela** - Bedroom
- **Sukaldea** - Kitchen
- **Egongela** - Living room
- **Jangela** - Dining room
- **Bainugela** - Bathroom

### 20.2 Furniture and Objects

#### Bedroom (Logela)

- Ohe-a - Bed
- Armairu-a - Wardrobe
- Aulki-a - Chair
- Ordenagailu-a - Computer
- Ispilu-a - Mirror
- Leiho-a - Window
- Alfonbra - Carpet

#### Kitchen (Sukaldea)

- Lanpara - Lamp
- Hozkailu-a - Refrigerator
- Izozkailu-a - Freezer
- Armairu-ak - Cupboards



### **Living Room (Egongela)**

- Mahai-a - Table
- Sofa - Sofa
- Telebista - Television
- Leiho-a - Window

### **Dining Room (Jangela)**

- Leiho-ak - Windows
- Mahai-a - Table
- Aulki-ak - Chairs

### **Bathroom (Bainugela)**

- Komun-a - Toilet
- Dutxa - Shower
- Lababo-a - Sink
- Ispilu-a - Mirror
- Esku-oihal-ak / toalla-k - Towels

## **20.3 Types of Housing**

- Pisua - Apartment
- Apartamentua - Apartment
- Baserria - Farmhouse
- Balkoi-a - Balcony
- Igerilekua - Swimming pool

## **21 Leisure Activities (Aisia)**

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### **21.1 Sports and Physical Activities**

- **Futbolean jolastu** - Play football
- **Saskibaloian jolastu** - Play basketball
- **Korrika egin** - To run
- **Eskalatu** - To climb (*eskalada* = climbing)
- **ibili** - To walk
- **Bizikletan ibili** - To ride a bike (*txirrindularitza* = cycling)
- **Igeri egin** - To swim (*igeriketa* = swimming)

- **Mendira joan** - To go to the mountain
- **Pisuak altxatu** - To lift weights
- **Gimnasia joan** - To go to the gym
- **Dantza egin** - To dance (*dantza* = dance)

## 21.2 Indoor and Leisure Activities

- **Zinemara joan** - To go to the cinema
- **Telebista ikusi** - To watch TV
- **Margotu** - To paint
- **Musika entzun** - To listen to music
- **Irakurri** - To read
- **Sukaldatu** - To cook
- **Janaria prestatu** - To prepare food
- **Hondartzara joan** - To go to the beach
- **Lagunekin hitz egin** - To talk with friends

## 22 Daily Activities and Chores

Basque	English
Hortzak garbitu	Brush teeth
Dutxatu	Shower
Ilea garbitu	Wash hair
Erosketak egin	Do shopping
Janaria prestatu	Prepare food
Zaborra bota	Throw out trash
(Arropa) jantzi	Get dressed
Ikasi	Study
Etxea garbitu	Clean the house
Arropa garbitu	Wash clothes
Gidatu	Drive
Lo egin	Sleep
Telebista ikusi	Watch TV
Lan egin	Work
Mezuak bidali	Send messages

*Note: Garbitu = to clean; Prestatu = to prepare*

## 23 Food (Janaria)

Basic food vocabulary for daily conversations and restaurant settings.

## 24 Adjectives (Izenlagunak)

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### 24.1 Descriptive Adjectives

Basque	English
Handia	Big
Txikia	Small
Luzea	Long
Motza	Short
Polita	Beautiful
Ederra	Beautiful
Itsusia	Ugly
Ona	Good
Txarra	Bad
Barregarria	Funny
Beldugarria	Scary
Originala	Original
Atsegina	Nice/Pleasant
Altua	Tall

### 24.2 Comparisons

#### Comparisons of Quality (-er, as \_\_ as)

##### Inequality (-er): baino + -agoa/-ago

- Owenen etxea nire etxea baino handiagoa da
  - Owen's house is bigger than mine
- Anna ni baino altuagoa da
  - Anna is taller than me

##### Equality (as \_\_ as): bezain

- Owenen etxea nire etxea bezain handia da
  - Owen's house is as big as mine
- Anna ni bezain altua da
  - Anna is as tall as me

#### Comparisons of Quantity (more/fewer, as many)

##### Inequality: baino + gehiago (more) / gutxiago (fewer/less)

- Owenek nik baino etxe gehiago ditu
  - Owen has more houses than me
- Owenek nik baino etxe gutxiago ditu
  - Owen has fewer houses than me
- Annak nik baino klase gehiago ditu

- Anna has more classes than me

**Equality:** bezain beste

- Owenek nik bezain beste etxe ditu
  - Owen has as many houses as me
- Annak nik bezain beste klase ditu
  - Anna has as many classes as me

### Other Useful Words

- **Gertu** - Close
- **Urrun** - Far
- **Urrunago** - Farther

## 25 Family Members (Familia Kideak)

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Basque	English
<b>Grandparents</b>	
Aitona	Grandfather
Amona	Grandmother
<b>Parents &amp; Relatives</b>	
Aita	Father
Ama	Mother
Gurasoak	Parents
Osaba	Uncle
Izaba	Aunt
<b>Siblings (if you're a girl)</b>	
Neba	Brother
Ahizpa	Sister
<b>Siblings (if you're a boy)</b>	
Anaia	Brother
Arreba	Sister
<b>Children</b>	
Semea	Son
Alaba	Daughter
<b>Extended Family</b>	
Lehengusu	Male cousin
Lehengusina	Female cousin
Senarra	Husband
Emaztea	Wife

### 25.1 Pets (Beste kide batzuk)

- Txakurra - Dog
- Katua - Cat
- Arraina - Fish
- Txoria - Bird
- Untxia - Rabbit
- Dordoka - Turtle

## 26 Other Essential Vocabulary

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- **Liburua** - Book
- **Ura** - Water
- **Etxea** - House
- **Arropa** - Clothes
- **Janaria** - Food
- **Sudur** - Nose
- **Eskularruak** - Gloves
- **Lore** - Flower
- **Hagin** - Tooth
- **Ile** - Hair
- **Argazki** - Picture

# Part VII

## Cultural Context

### 27 The Basque Diaspora

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#### 27.1 Early History

- Basque people worked in Roman legions
- Middle Ages: sea people, establishing trading missions in England
- Peak of emigration: colonization era
- Disproportionately represented in colonial elite in the Americas
- New World independence movements were led by people of Basque descent

#### 27.2 19th Century Emigration

The first half of the 19th century was a difficult period in the Basque Country:

- Napoleonic War and First Carlist War created refugees anxious to leave
- Emigrants included: intellectuals, lawyers, skilled workers, peasants
- Educated people found employment in populated centers
- Unskilled workers forced to outer fringes of European civilization (America)
- Peasants turned to sheep raising
- By mid-19th century: hundreds (possibly thousands) of small-scale Basque sheepmen in Argentina and Uruguay

#### 27.3 South America

Countries with significant Basque populations:

- Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Venezuela, Peru, Cuba, Mexico
- **Argentina:** Up to 1 million Basque and descendants (out of 30 million inhabitants)
- Generally well-regarded in South America
- In the American West, Basques maintained lower profile and were largely ignored or denigrated

## 27.4 The American West

### California Gold Rush Era

- Modern Basque presence began with California Gold Rush
- News of gold reached Chile and Argentina
- Basques there had better chance of arriving than from Europe or Eastern US
- First entered mining camps; many became disillusioned
- Left mountains for the coast, acquired sheep and leased land

### Transhumance Pattern

Key difference from South American pampas:

- Pampas: flat terrain
- California: desert valleys and high mountains
- Developed pattern of **transhumance**:
  - Wintered in valleys
  - Summered in high-mountain pastures

### Expansion and Reputation

- 1880s: Spread across Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, southern Idaho
- Later: Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, Montana, eastern Washington
- Became esteemed herders
- Reputation for skill and dedication
- One of prime architects of region's sheep industry

## 27.5 Conflicts and Restrictions

### Hostility

- Success evoked considerable hostility
- Operated on premise of equal access to public lands
- Ranch-based cattle and sheep operations claimed contiguous lands
- Confrontations in newspapers and litigation in courts
- Isolated cases of violence and death

## **Legal Measures**

- Political pressure mounted to limit Basques' rights
- **Three-mile-limit law:**
  - Prohibited grazing within three miles of rancher's fence
  - Applicant had to own private ranch property
  - Livestock-carrying capacity determined allotment
  - Aliens ineligible to apply
- **Taylor Grazing Act (1934):**
  - Put remainder of public lands under jurisdiction
  - Bill's author: Edward Taylor from Colorado
  - Western Colorado had become summering area for Basque itinerants
  - Marked end of era of itinerant Basque sheepman

## **Outcomes**

- Few bought ranch property and became citizens
- Most sold out and returned to Europe
- By end of 19th century, American frontier was all but closed

## **27.6 World War II Era**

- America experienced shortage of manpower
- Situation particularly acute in sheep industry
- Number of Basques herding illegally in sheep districts
- Between 1942-1961: 383 received permanent residency
- Political pressure to exempt Basque herders from immigration quota system

## **Decline of Basque Herders**

- Spanish economy improved
- Few young Basque men interested in herding
- During 1970s: typical herder more likely Mexican or Peruvian
- 1970: over 90% were Basques
- 1976: about 15% were Basques

## **27.7 Boarding Houses and Basque Hotels**

Once itinerant sheepmen and herders became established, Basque hotels emerged.



## **Locations**

- Cities: Los Angeles, San Francisco
- Towns: Reno, Boise, Bakersfield
- Developed Basque hotel districts

## **Functions**

Basque hotels served as ethnic havens:

- Hotelkeeper or spouse served as translator
  - Shopping trips
  - Doctor or dentist visits
- Storage for belongings during European visits (months or years)
  - Rifle, saddle, bedroll
- Hosted celebrations:
  - Baptismal feasts
  - Birthday parties
  - Weddings
- Place to speak Basque and meet fellow Basques

## **Transformation**

Since sharp decline in herder population:

- Hotels transformed into restaurants
- Staff possibly dressed in folk costume
- Walls adorned with Basque memorabilia
- Herding occupation romanticized
- United States became increasingly urban
- Americans began romanticizing simpler lifestyles
- Independent herder became object of positive press articles
- Basque ethnic pride and willingness to display heritage emerged

## **27.8 Modern Basque-American Community**

### **Organizations**

- Basque social clubs throughout American West
- **NABO** (North American Basque Organizations) formed
- Summer music camps (**udaleku**):
  - Children learn dance
  - Learn to play traditional txistu (flute)

### **Census Data**

- Prior to 1980: impossible to know number of Basque-Americans
- U.S. Census counted U.S.-born Basques as "American"
- Beginning 1980: sampling asked respondents to specify ethnic ancestry

### **Boise, Idaho**

Major center of Basque-American culture:

- Home to Boise State University
- Significant Basque community
- **David Bieter**: Former mayor (2004-2020)
  - Fluent in Basque
  - Represented Basque heritage in American politics
- **JAIALDI**: Major Basque festival held in Boise

### **California Centers**

- San Francisco: Historic Basque community
- Bakersfield: Continuing Basque presence

### **Arborglyphs**

- Tree carvings made by Basque sheepherders
- Historical artifacts documenting Basque presence
- Found throughout Western United States
- Serve as cultural and historical markers

## Appendix: Quick Reference Tables

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### Subject Pronouns

Basque	English	Notes
Ni	I	
Zu	You (sg.)	
Bera	He/She/They (sg.)	No gender
Gu	We	
Zuek	You (pl.)	
Haiek	They (pl.)	

### Complete Verb Conjugation Tables

#### IZAN (Present Tense)

Person	Singular	Plural
1st	naiz	gara
2nd	zara	zarete
3rd	da	dira

#### EGON (Present Tense)

Person	Singular	Plural
1st	nago	gaude
2nd	zaude	zaudete
3rd	dago	daude