

Lesson A: The Alphabet And Pronunciation Rules

Today, you will learn...

- The Alphabet
- Spanish Pronunciation Rules

By the end of this lesson, you will...

- ★ Know how to read in Spanish
- ★ Know how to speak Spanish in terms of pronunciation
- ★ Know about verbal contractions in Spanish

The Alphabet

El Alfabeto

Letra (Letter) | Nombre (Name) | Pronunciación (Pronunciation)

A | A | An “A” sound between sound in “Father” and “Sam”

B | Be | B as in Bee

C | Ce | “S” sound as in “song” and “K” as in “Kite”

Ch | Che or Ce hache | “Ch” as in “Chair”

D | De | “D” as in “Dog” and soft “Th” sound

E | E | “E” in “Men”

The Alphabet

F | Efe | “F” as in “Food”

G | Heh | “G” as in “Goat” and a harsh “H” sound

H | Hache | No sound

I | I | “Ee” as in “Sheep”

J | Jota | Hash “H” sound

K | Ka | “K” as in “Kite”

L | Ele | “L” as in “Lemon”

The Alphabet

Ll | Elle | A bit of a harsh “Y” sound, “Y” as in “Yes”

M | Eme | “M” as in “Mom”

N | Ene | “N” as in “No”

Ñ | Eñe | French “Gn” sound

O | O | Like the “O” in “Hope” but the sound is cut off

P | Pe | “P” as in “Pizza”

Q | Cu | “C” as in car

The Alphabet

R | Erre | Soft “D” sound, Rolled “R” sound

S | Ese | “S” as in “Soft”

T | Te | “T” sound but not forced

U | U | “Oo” as in “Moon”

V | Ve | “B” as in “Bee”

W | Doble U | “W” as in “Win”

X | Equis | “X” as in “Max”, “S” as in “Song”, Harsh “H” sound/ Spanish “J”, “Sh” as in “Sheep”

The Alphabet

Y | I griega | “Y” as in “Young”

Z | Zeta | “S” as in “Song”

Rr | Doble erre | Rolled “R” sound

Did you know?: “I griega” literally means “Greek i”

The Alphabet | Practice

El Alfabeto | Práctica

Di (Say)

Say the following in Spanish.

1. Q
2. T
3. V

Pronunciation Rules: Letter Pronunciation

Reglas De Pronunciación: Pronunciación De Letras

- B and V
 - Both pronounced as “B” as in “Bee”
 - When in the beginning of a word, they are pronounced as “B”. When not in the beginning of a word, they are pronounced like a softer “B”.
 - Ex: Abeja (Bee)
- C
 - When followed by “e” or “i”, it is pronounced like an “S”
 - Ex: “Cinco” (5) is pronounced “See-n-koh”
 - When followed by other vowels or another consonant (except for “h”), it is pronounced like a “K”
 - Ex: “Carro” (Car) is pronounced “Kah-rroh”
- D
 - When in the beginning of a word, it has the “d” sound
 - When in the middle or end of a word, it has the “th” sound
 - Ex: “Dedo” (Finger) is pronounced “Deh-thoh”
- G
 - When followed by “e” or “i”, it is pronounced like the Spanish “j”
 - Ex: “Gigante” (Huge) is pronounced “Hee-gah-n-teh”
 - When followed by any other vowel, it is pronounced like the “G” in “Guitar”
 - Ex: “Guapo” (Handsome) is pronounced “Goo-ah-poh”

Pronunciation Rules: Letter Pronunciation

- H
 - Makes no sound! Slight pause when in the middle of a word.
 - Ex: "Ahora" (Now) is pronounced "Ah-oh-rah"
- J
 - Makes a harsh "H" sound. Almost as if you are trying to pronounce the French "R".
 - Ex: "Jarra" (Jug) is pronounced "Hah-rrah"
- Ñ
 - Pronounced as "Ny" (As in "Nya") or the French "gn"
 - Ex: "Montaña" (Mountain) would be pronounced "Moh-n-tah-nya"
- R
 - When in the beginning of a word, it will sound like "rr"
 - Ex: Roca
 - When in the middle or end of a word, it will sound like a soft "d" sound.
 - Ex: Marco
- X
 - When the "x" is between two vowels (Like in "exacto" [exactly]), it is pronounced "ks"
 - When "x" is before another consonant (Like in "excelente" [excellent]), it is pronounced "ks"
 - When "x" is in the beginning of a word (like in "xenofobia" [xenofobia]), it is pronounced "s"
 - In some Mexican place names (even in the word "México"), the "x" is pronounced like the Spanish "j"
 - In very few place names in Southern Mexico and Central America (Like "Xela"), the "x" is pronounced "sh"

Pronunciation Rules: Natural Stress

Reglas De Pronunciación: Estrés Natural

- You add stress to the second to last syllable when...
 - A word ends in a vowel
 - A word ends in “n” or “s”

Ex 1: Mañana (Tomorrow)

Ex 2: Examen (Exam)

- You add stress to the final syllable when...
 - A word ends in a consonant that is not “n” or “s”

Ex: Azul (blue)

Letter Pronunciation & Natural Stress | Practice

Pronunciación De Letras Y Estrés Natural | Práctica

Di (Say)

Say the following words.

1. Casa (House)
2. Suerte (Luck)
3. Calor (Heat)

Pronunciation Rules: Tildes

Reglas De Pronunciación: Tildes

- When you see a tilde on a vowel in a word, you stress the vowel it is on.
- A tilde (accent mark) shows up when a word does not follow either of the rules.
- The tilde may not always be where you expect it to be. Sometimes, it will be placed on the vowel of the first syllable of a word, sometimes on the vowel on the second syllable, and so on. So, it is recommended that you memorize where the tilde goes when memorizing words.
- Interrogative (Question) words have tildes. Although, the tilde will not affect the pronunciation of the word.
- Tildes are important! Removing/adding one will change the meaning of a word.

Ex: El (The) vs Él (He, him)

Tildes | Practice

Tildes | Práctica

Di (Say)

Say the following words as best as you can.

1. Árbol (Tree)
2. Qué (What)
3. Comí (I ate)

Pronunciation Rules: Spelling Changes

Reglas De Pronunciación: Cambios En Deletreo

- Z → C
 - When you want to turn a noun or adjective ends in a z into its plural form, you change the “z” to a “c”
 - Ex: Lá

z

 (Pencil) → Lá

c

es (Pencils)
 - When a “z” is followed by “a” or “o”, it will change to “c” which will be newly followed by “e” or “i”. The “c” will make the “s” sound.
 - Ex: Comienza (Start [casual command]) → Comience (Start [formal command])
- Other Spelling Changes
 - Other spelling changes would occur when you need to keep the required sound.
 - For example, when conjugating a word like “Recoger” (To pick up) to it’s “Yo” form, you will be replacing the “-er” ending with “o”. This would make the “g” sound like the “g” in “good”. That is not what we want. We want to keep the English “h” sound, so we switch the “g” with “j” (which makes the same sound as the “g” in “recoger”) before adding “o”, making it “Recojo” (I pick up).
 - You will learn more about this as you move on.

Pronunciation Rules: Linking Sounds

Reglas De Pronunciación: Uniendo Los Sonidos

The following are reasons to link/connect sounds in Spanish.

- The last letter of one word is the same as the first letter of the next word.
 - Ex: Busca a Ana (Look for Ana)
- The last letter of one word is a vowel and the first letter of the next word is also a vowel.
 - Ex: Cuarenta y ocho (48)
- The last letter of one word is a consonant and the first letter of the next word is a vowel.
 - Ex: Un a amigo (A friend)

Linking Sounds | Practice

Uniendo Los Sonidos | Práctica

Di (Say)

Say the following words as best as you can.

1. Cincuenta y uno (51)
2. Un árbol (A tree)
3. Voy a casa (I'm going home)

Pronunciation Rules: Diphthongs

Reglas De Pronunciación: Diptongos

The following will have blended sounds when spoken.

- Ai, ay (“eye”)
 - Ex: Aire (Air)
- Ei, ey (“ay” in “May”)
 - Ex: Seis (6)
- Oi, oy (“oy” in “boy”)
 - Ex: Oigo (I hear)
- Ui, uy (A fast “ooee” or “we”)
 - Ex: Ruido (Noise)

Pronunciation Rules: Diphthongs

- Au (“Ow”)
 - Ex: Pausa (Pause)
- Eu (Eh-oo)
 - Ex: Europa (Europe)
- Ia (ee-ah)
 - Ex: Estudiar (To study)
- Ie (“ye” in “yes”)
 - Ex: Bien (Good, well)
- Io (like Spanish “Yo” [I])
 - Ex: Idioma (Language)
- Iu (“You”)
 - Ex: Ciudad (City)

Pronunciation Rules: Diphthongs

- Ua (Kind of like “Wha” in “What”)
 - Ex: Agua (Water)
- Ue (Wheh)
 - Ex: Puerta (Door)
- Uo (Like “Wo” in “Woah”)
 - Antiguo (Old, last)

Note: When “Q” or “G” is followed by “ue” or “ui”, the “u” is silent.

Ex: “Querer” (to want/to like) is pronounced “Keh-reh-r”

Diphthongs | Practice

Diptongos | Práctica

Di (Say)

Say the following words as best as you can.

1. Puerta (Door)
2. Cien (100)
3. Cuanto (How much)

Tip: Contractions

Consejo: Contracciones

You will hear a lot of contractions as you listen to people speaking Spanish.

What is a contraction? A contraction is a shortened version of words (usually 2) combined . Like the English “I am”, which is contracted/combined into making the word “I’m”.

In Spanish, there are only two contractions that you would see in written form. The rest, however are only in spoken form.

The two contractions seen in written and spoken form are “Al” [A + el (To the)], “Del” [De + el (From/of the)].

Example of spoken contraction: “Na’mas” [“Only”, “Nothing more/else”, combination of the words “Nada” (nothing) and “Más” (more)].

Any Questions?

¿Preguntas?



¡Gracias Y Adiós!

Thank You And Goodbye!

