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Lección Número Uno



el mono (the monkey)

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It is very easy to build a large vocabulary of Spanish words. In fact, you already know thousands of English words that become Spanish words if you change them very slightly. These words fall into several large categories.

CATEGORY I

The first and easiest category is made up of words which end in “or.” These words are often identical in Spanish and English.

Remember: “el” means “the,” “un” means “a” or “an.”

the actor = el actor; an actor = un actor

el actor	el doctor	un tractor	interior
el color	el error	un profesor	exterior
el conducto	el favor	un inventor	superior

NOTE: Spanish words that end in “or” are stressed on the last syllable.

Example: doc-TOR. The letter “r” is trilled in Spanish.

CATEGORY II

Next there is a category of words that end in “al.” These also are often identical in Spanish and English.

the animal = el animal

el animal	central	local	personal
el criminal	comercial	musical	rural
el canal	legal	natural	social

NOTE: Spanish words that end in “al” are stressed on the last syllable.

Example: lo-CAL.

CATEGORY III

Then comes a category of words that end in “ble.” These also are often identical in Spanish and English.

the cable = el cable

el cable	possible	formidable	noble
notable	flexible	probable	horrible
terrible	visible	honorable	inevitable

NOTE: Spanish words that end in “ble” are stressed on the next to the last syllable. EXAMPLE: no-TA-ble.

CATEGORY IV

A fourth large category is made up from those words that end in “ic” in English. To change them into Spanish simply add the letter “o.”

IC = ICO
the public = el público

el Atlántico	democrático	elástico
el público	artístico	eléctrico
romántico	aristocrático	automático

NOTE: In Spanish the accent never alters the sound of letters. Whenever a letter is accented, stress the letter firmly. Example: PU-bli-co.

CATEGORY V

Another large category is made up from those words which end in “ent” or “ant.” If you simply add the letter “e” to many of these, they magically become Spanish words.

ENT = ENTE
ANT = ANTE

the president = el presidente; *important* = importante

el presidente	excelente	conveniente
el accidente	importante	el elefante
el cliente	diferente	inteligente

NOTE: Words that end in “ent” or “ant” are accented on the next to the last syllable. EXAMPLE: pre-si-DEN-te.

The letter “g” is pronounced “h” as in “hen” when it appears before “e” or “i.” EXAMPLE: “inteligente” is pronounced “intelihcnte.”

Now that you know all these words, let’s see how easy it is to put them into sentences. Just remember that:

“es” means “is” “no es” means “is not” “el” means “the” “un” means “a” or “an”

El actor es popular.
El tenor es romántico.
El presidente es diplomático.
El actor no es un animal.
El elefante es un animal.
El conductor no es insolente.
El doctor es inteligente.
El canal es importante.
El restaurante es excelente.
El criminal es terrible.
El cliente es importante.
El elefante es fantástico.

El cable es urgente.
El hotel es excelente.

NOTE: The letter “h” is always silent in Spanish: “hotel” is pronounced “otel.”

The sentences above can be made into questions by changing the word order. In Spanish you do not say, “Is the actor popular?” You must say, “Is popular the actor?”

EXAMPLES:

- ¿Es popular el actor? *Is the actor popular?*
¿Es romántico el tenor? *Is the tenor romantic?*
¿Es diplomático el presidente? *Is the president diplomatic?*
¿Es importante el canal? *Is the canal important?*

WORDS TO REMEMBER

el, <i>the</i>	el mono, <i>the monkey</i>	es, <i>is</i>
un, <i>a</i> , <i>an</i>	el estudiante, <i>the student</i>	no es, <i>is not</i>
curioso, <i>curious</i>	en mi opinión, <i>in my opinion</i>	sí, <i>yes</i>
popular, <i>popular</i>		
ay no, <i>oh no</i>		

CONVERSACIÓN

- ¿Es popular el actor? *Is the actor popular?*
Sí, el actor es popular.
- ¿Es terrible el profesor? *Is the professor terrible?*
No, el profesor no es terrible. El profesor es excelente.

- ¿Es romántico el tenor? *Is the tenor romantic?*
Sí, el tenor es romántico.

- ¿Es romántico el mono? *Is the monkey romantic?*
Ay no, el mono no es romántico.

- ¿Es curioso el mono? *Is the monkey curious?*
Sí, el mono es curioso.

¿Es inteligente el mono?
Sí, en mi opinión, el mono es inteligente.

¿Es fantástico el elefante?
Sí, en mi opinión, el elefante es fantástico.

¿Es inteligente el presidente?
Sí, el presidente es inteligente.

¿Es arrogante el profesor?
Ay no, el profesor no es arrogante. El profesor es tolerante.

¿Es impertinente el estudiante?
No, el estudiante no es impertinente

¿Es ignorante el estudiante?
No, el estudiante no es ignorante.

¿Es excelente el restaurante?
Sí, el restaurante es excelente.

¿Es urgente el cable?
Sí, el cable es urgente,

¿Es importante el agente?
Sí, el agente es importante.

¿Es importante el cliente?
Sí, el cliente es importante.

“Es” means “is” and also “it is” or “it’s.”

EXAMPLES:

Es importante.	<i>It's important.</i>
Es terrible.	<i>It's terrible.</i>
Es natural.	<i>It's natural.</i>
Es personal.	<i>It's personal.</i>

Practice the following expressions:

Es posible.	Es diferente.
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Es probable.	Es fantástico.
Es romántico.	Es ideal.
Es legal.	Es original.
Es horrible.	Es conveniente.
Es inevitable.	Es imposible.
Es automático.	Es evidente.
Es excelente.	Es elegante.

“No es” means “is not” and also “it is not” or “it isn’t.”

EXAMPLES:

No es importante.	<i>It isn't important.</i>
No es automático.	<i>It isn't automatic.</i>
No es posible.	<i>It isn't possible.</i>
No es urgente.	<i>It isn't urgent.</i>

SENTENCE-FORMING EXERCISE

You will find three columns of Spanish words below. Take words from Column 1, Column 2, and Column 3 and form complete sentences with them. For example, take “el actor” from Column 1, “es” from Column 2, and “popular” from Column 3. Put them together and they form the sentence “El actor es popular.” Other sample sentences:

- El restaurante es excelente.
- El cliente es importante.
- El doctor no es terrible.

For practice, combine the words below in different ways to form as many sentences as you can. Just be sure to use words from each of the three columns in every sentence you form.

1	2	3
el actor	es	popular
el doctor	no es	importante

el conductor	inteligente
el profesor	excelente
el inventor	competente
el tenor	romántico
el presidente	democrático
el general	diplomático
el accidente	inevitable
el cable	urgente
el agente	paciente
el cliente	(patient)
el paciente	impaciente
(the patient)	(impatient)
el permanente	excepcional
el tractor	(exceptional)
el elefante	terrible
el mono	formidable
el hotel	fantástico
el restaurante	curioso
el hospital	horrible

EXERCISE IN TRANSLATION

Translate the following sentences into Spanish. Write out each sentence in Spanish, using the columns above as a guide. After you have written out all the sentences check with the correct translations below this exercise.

1. The actor is popular.
2. The tenor is popular.
3. The restaurant is excellent.
4. The hotel is excellent.
5. The doctor is intelligent.
6. The cable is urgent.
7. The hospital is excellent.

8. The client is important.
9. The conductor is patient.
10. The general is important.
11. The president is democratic.
12. The inventor is intelligent.
13. The general is diplomatic.
14. The cable is important.

Check your sentences with the correct Spanish translations below.

1. El actor es popular.
2. El tenor es popular.
3. El restaurante es excelente.
4. El hotel es excelente.
5. El doctor es inteligente.
6. El cable es urgente.
7. El hospital es excelente.
8. El diente es importante.
9. El conductor es paciente.
10. El general es importante.
11. El presidente es democrático.
12. El inventor es inteligente.
13. El general es diplomático.
14. El cable es importante.

Basic differences in spelling between Spanish and English.

1. In Spanish “ph” becomes “f.”

PH = F

ENGLISH	SPANISH
<i>elephant</i>	elefante
<i>telephone</i>	teléfono
<i>phonetic</i>	fonético
<i>phonograph</i>	fonógrafo

2. In Spanish “th” becomes “t.”

TH = T

ENGLISH	SPANISH
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<i>cathedral</i>	catedral
<i>author</i>	autor
<i>authentic</i>	auténtico
<i>methodist</i>	metodista
<i>catholic</i>	católico

3. The only letters that are doubled in Spanish are “l” and “r.”

DOUBLE ONLY L, R

All other letters, such as “ss, pp, mm, nn, tt, ff” (except “l,” “r”), which are doubled in English, become single letters in Spanish.

EXAMPLES:

ENGLISH	SPANISH
<i>commission</i>	comisión
<i>apparent</i>	aparente
<i>annual</i>	anual
<i>attractive</i>	atractivo
<i>different</i>	diferente

You will find “cc” in Spanish but this is not a double “c.” Each “c” is pronounced separately since each belongs to a different syllable. The first “c” has a “k” sound and the second, an “s” sound.

correction = corrección

The two “c’s” go into separate syllables in the following way:

correc–ción
instruc–ción
construc–ción

4. In Spanish “tion” always becomes “ción.”

TION = CIÓN

ENGLISH	SPANISH
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convention
conventional

convención
convencional

Following are long lists of words that you get free, without toil or struggle, in your very first Spanish lesson. Go through the lists reading each word aloud. These words are wonderful because you don't have to memorize them or even study them to any extent. By the time you have read the lists aloud you will have mastered the technique of making up words in each of the five different categories. For a complete explanation of stresses and accents see [this page](#).

CATEGORY I

Words that end in “or” are often identical in Spanish and English.

the doctor = el doctor

actor	coautor	error	humor
agresor	(coauthor)	exterior	inferior
ardor	color	favor	inspector
autor	conductor	fervor	instructor
(author)	director	furor	interior
candor	doctor	honor	motor
censor	editor	horror	opresor
pastor	rumor	tractor	vapor
profesor	sector	tumor	(steam)
protector	superior	tutor	vigor
reflector	tenor	valor	

Some words that end in “tor” in English end in “dor” in Spanish.

TOR = DOR

the senator = el senador

acelerador dictador generador orador

colaborador	educador	investigador	radiador
creador	elevador	operador	ventilador

CATEGORY II

Words that end in “al” are often identical in Spanish and English.

abdominal	constitucional
accidental	(constitutional)
animal	continental
anual	convencional
arsenal	(conventional)
artificial	coral
beneficial	cordial
brutal	corral
canal	credencial
capital	criminal
cardinal	cristal
carnal	(crystal)
catedral	cultural
(cathedral)	decimal
central	dental
cereal	editorial
ceremonial	educacional
colonial	(educational)
colosal	electoral
(colossal)	elemental
comercial	emocional
condicional	(emotional)

(conditional)	episcopal
confidencial	esencial
(confidential)	(essential)
excepcional	imperial
(exceptional)	industrial
experimental	infernal
facial	informal
fatal	inicial
federal	(initial)
festival	instrumental
final	intelectual
formal	intencional
fraternal	(intentional)
frugal	internacional
fundamental	(international)
funeral	intestinal
general	irracional
gradual	(irrational)
gramatical	legal
(grammatical)	liberal
gutural	literal
horizontal	local
hospital	manual
ideal	material
ilegal	matrimonial
(illegal)	maternal
imparcial	medicinal

(impartial)	mental
metal	original
monumental	ornamental
moral	parcial
mortal	(partial)
municipal	pastoral
mural	paternal
musical	pedal
nacional	pedestal
(national)	personal
natural	plural
naval	portal
neutral	postal
normal	potencial
ocasional	(potential)
oficial	principal
oral	profesional
oriental	
provincial	sentimental
provisional	social
puntual	superficial
(punctual)	terminal
racial	total
racional	tradicional
(rational)	(traditional)
radical	trivial
regional	tropical

residencial	universal
(<i>residential</i>)	vertical
rival	visual
rural	vital
sensacional	vocal
(<i>sensational</i>)	jovial
sensual	judicial

NOTE: The letter “j” is always pronounced “h” in Spanish.

EXAMPLE: “jovial” is pronounced “hovial.”

Some words that end in “cal” in English end in “co” in Spanish.

CAL = CO

logical = lógico

clásico	físico	mecánico	político
cómico	(<i>physical</i>)	(<i>mechanical</i>)	práctico
económico	histérico	médico	técnico
ético	(<i>hysterical</i>)	metódico	(<i>technical</i>)
(<i>ethical</i>)	idéntico	(<i>methodical</i>)	típico (<i>typical</i>)

CATEGORY III

Words that end in “ble” are often identical in Spanish and English.

the cable = el cable

abominable	adorable
acceptable	afable
(<i>acceptable</i>)	cable
adaptable	comparable

admirable	curable
deplorable	formidable
detestable	honorable
durable	ilimitable
explicable	imaginable
favorable	impenetrable
impregnable	intolerable
improbable	irreparable
inalterable	irreproachable
incalculable	irrevocable
incomparable	irritable
incurable	lamentable
inefable	laudable
inestimable	miserable
inevitable	navegable
inexplicable	noble
inflamable	notable
inimitable	presentable
insatiable	probable
inseparable	respetable
interminable	(respectable)
responsable	imperceptible
(<i>responsible</i>)	impossible
sociable	incompatible
tolerable	infalible
variable	intangible
venerable	invisible

vulnerable	irresistible
accesible	plausible
admissible	possible
compatible	preferable
digestible	susceptible
dirigible	tangible
flexible	terrible
horrible	visible

CATEGORY IV

Add the letter “o” to words that end in “ic” in English.

académico	cromático
acrobático	democrático
acuático	diabético
aeronáutico	diagnóstico
agnóstico	dinámico
alegórico	diplomático
anémico	dogmático
antiséptico	drámatico
aristocrático	drástico
aromático	económico
arsénico	elástico
Atlántico	eléctrico
atómico	enciclopédico
auténtico	enigmático
(<i>authentic</i>)	erótico
autocrático	evangélico

Báltico	excéntrico
británico	exótico
burocrático	fanático
cáustico	fantástico
científico	filantrópico
(<i>scientific</i>)	filarmónico
cosmético	fonético
fotográfico	pacífico
gálico	paralítico
geográfico	patriótico
hipnótico	plástico
histórico	platónico
idiomático	plutocrático
irónico	prehistórico
litográfico	profético
mágico	prolífico
magnético	prosaico
mecánico	público
melodramático	romántico
metálico	rústico
metalúrgico	sarcástico
microscópico	sardónico
monástico	sinfónico
mosaico	teutónico
narcótico	tónico
neurótico	tópico
nostálgico	trágico

óptico	transatlántico
orgánico	trópico
ortopédico	volcánico

CATEGORY V

Add the letter “e” to words that end in “ent” or “ant” in English.

ENT = ENTE

the agent = el agente

accidente	eminente
adolescente	equivalente
agente	evidente
astringente	excelente
cliente	frecuente
competente	(frequent)
continente	impaciente
contingente	(impatient)
conveniente	imprudente
decadente	incidente
decente	incompetente
deficiente	inconsistente
diferente	inconveniente
diligente	indecente
eficiente	independiente
elocuente	(independent)
(eloquent)	
indiferente	permanente
indolente	potente

indulgente	precedente
inherente	presente
insistente	presidente
insolente	proficiente
insuficiente	prominente
inteligente	prudente
intermitente	reciente
irreverente	(recent)
negligente	suficiente
occidente	superintendente
Oriente	tangente
paciente	transparente
(patient)	urgente
patente	vehemente

NOTE: Words that end in “ment” are changed into Spanish by adding the letter “o.”

MENT = MENTO

the instrument = el instrumento

el implemento	el linimento	el temperamento
el monumento	el fragmento	el suplemento
el armamento	el testamento	el sacramento

ANT = ANTE

the restaurant = el restaurante

abundante	consultante	importante	lubricante
consonante	elefante	incesante	radiante

constante	elegante	instante	restaurante
dominante	ignorante	intolerante	significante

Get some 3" by 5" cards at your stationer's and copy the material that is shown on the sample below on one of them. Carry the card with you, in your pocket or purse, and glance at it during your spare moments (on the bus, while you are waiting for people, etc.). Each time you look at it try to make up several words in each category aside from those that are listed on the card.

REMINDER CARD 1

I. OR (identical)

el doctor
el actor

II. AL (identical)

el animal
personal

III. BLE (identical)

el cable
probable

IV. IC = ICO

el Atlántico
eléctrico

V. ENT = ENTE

ANT = ANTE
el presidente
excelente
el restaurante
importante

Throughout your study of Spanish carry cards as reminders. Glance at them once in a while and you will progress twice as fast as you would without them.