

THE ALPHABET

A a	B a	C c	D d	E e	F f	G g	H h	I i	J j	K k	L l	M m	N n
a	be	ce	de	e	efe	ge	hache	i	jota	ka	ele	eme	ene
Ñ ñ	O o	P p	Q q	R r	S s	T t	U u	V v	W w	X x	Y y	Z z	
eñe	o	pe	cu	ere	ese	te	u	ve uve uve doble	doble u doble ve uve doble	equis	i griega ye	zeta	

PRONUNCIATION

Vowels

1. Vowels always sound the same except for Y, which can act as a consonant.

2. Spanish vowels are shorter and crisper than their English counterparts.

A	ah	As in “father”	<i>casa</i>
E	eh	As in “bed”	<i>cena</i>
I	ee	As in “bee”	<i>cine</i>
O	oh	As in “oh no”	<i>oso</i>
U	oo	As in “boo”	<i>uno</i>
Y		As in the English As in “bee” by itself	<i>yo</i> <i>y</i>

Consonants

B & V	Same sound, both pronounced as “b”.	<i>botar</i> <i>votar</i>
H	Always silent never pronounced.	<i>hola</i>
J	Pronounced like the English “h”.	<i>Juan</i>
LI, ll	Generally pronounced like the English (“y”) but varies across dialects.	<i>llama</i>
Ch (che)	Pronounced like the English “ch”.	<i>charo</i>
Ñ	Pronounced like the sound in onion.	<i>año</i>
R	R is similar to English D when between vowels. At the beginning of a word or after L, N, or S it’s pronounced like Rr .	<i>caro</i>
Rr	No English equivalent (Rolled “R”).	<i>carro</i>
Z	Pronounced like S (no buzzing sound).	<i>azul</i>

USEFUL TIP

The letters **W** and **K** are only used in foreign words.

One Letter, Two Sounds

C and **G** are pronounced differently depending on the vowel that follows.

- Pronounced "hard" like their English counterparts before **A, O, and U**.

casa cosa cuba
gato gota gusto

- Pronounced "soft" before **I** and **E***: **C** is like English **S**; **G** is like English **H**.

cena cinco
generoso gitano

USEFUL TIP

In Spain, the **C**, when followed by **I** and **E**, and the **Z** are pronounced like the English **Th** in "think."
G before **I** or **E** is more guttural.

X pronounced differently depending on its position within a word.

- Pronounced as in **taxi**, when in between vowels.

taxi exótico

- Pronounced like **S** before a consonant.

explicar extenso

- Pronounced sometimes like **H** in Mexico.

México Oaxaca

USEFUL TIP

In the River plate, such as Argentina, **ll** is pronounced like the **S** in "pleasure."

English Hang-ups

P, T, CA, are pronounced without the puff of air as in English
CO, CU (put your hand in front of your mouth).

T, D are pronounced more dental with the tongue against your top teeth.

L is always pronounced as in leaf never as in feel.

CU is pronounced like kw.

GUA is pronounced like wa.

Q is always followed by **U** and is pronounced like k.

pan taco coca-cola

ten den

lobo luna el mal

cuando cuenca cuota

agua Guatemala guacamole

Qué queso química



DENTAL T & D

ACCENTUATION

RULE 1: Words ending in a **vowel, N, or S** take stress on the **second-to-last** syllable. No accent mark required.

com- pre -do	vio- len -cia
no- ches	vo- lu -men

RULE 2: Words ending in a **consonant other than N or S** take stress on the **last syllable**. No accent mark needed.

mar-ca- dor	co- ñac
hos-pi- tal	cen- tral

RULE 3: In all other cases, the stressed syllable will be indicated by an accent mark (*la tilde*).

ac- ción	es- cá -ner
cá -ma-ra	pe- rú

NOTE: ACCENT MARKS ALSO HELP DISTINGUISH WORDS THAT ARE SPELLED AND PRONOUNCED THE SAME WAY, BUT HAVE DIFFERENT MEANINGS.

SI	if	SÍ	yes
EL	the	ÉL	he
TU	your	TÚ	you
SE	himself, herself, themselves	SÉ	I know
TE	you	TÉ	tea
MAS	but	MÁS	more