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& Practice

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MANAGING EDITORS  
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EDITOR  
Susanne Reichert

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# Foreword for language teachers

The *Easy Learning Spanish Grammar & Practice* is designed to be used with both young and adult learners, as a group revision and practice book to complement your course book during classes, or as a recommended text for self-study and homework/coursework.

The text specifically targets learners from *ab initio* to intermediate or GCSE level, and therefore its structural content and vocabulary have been matched to the relevant specifications up to and including Higher GCSE.

The approach aims to develop knowledge and understanding of grammar and to improve the ability of learners to apply it by:

- defining parts of speech at the start of each major section, with examples in English to clarify concepts
- minimizing the use of grammar terminology and providing clear explanations of terms both within the text and in the **Glossary**
- illustrating all points with examples (and their translations) based on topics and contexts which are relevant to beginner and intermediate course content
- providing exercises which allow learners to practice grammar points

The text helps you develop positive attitudes to grammar learning in your classes by:

- giving clear, easy-to-follow explanations
- highlighting useful **Tips** to deal with common difficulties
- summarizing **Key points** at the end of sections to consolidate learning
- illustrating **Key points** with practice examples

In addition to fostering success and building a thorough foundation in Spanish grammar, the optional **Grammar Extra** sections will encourage and challenge your learners to further their studies to higher and advanced levels.

# Introduction for students

Whether you are starting to learn Spanish for the very first time, brushing up on topics you have studied in class, or revising for your GCSE exams, the *Easy Learning Spanish Grammar & Practice* is here to help. This easy-to-use revision and practice guide takes you through all the basics you will need to speak and understand modern, everyday Spanish.

Newcomers can sometimes struggle with the technical terms they come across when they start to explore the grammar of a new language. The *Easy Learning Spanish Grammar & Practice* explains how to get to grips with all the parts of speech you will need to know, using simple language and cutting out jargon.

The text is divided into sections, each dealing with a particular area of grammar. Each section can be studied individually, as numerous cross-references in the text guide you to relevant points in other sections of the book for further information.

Every major section begins with an explanation of the area of grammar covered on the following pages. For quick reference, these definitions are also collected together on pages viii–xii in a glossary of essential grammar terms.

## What is a verb?

A **verb** is a 'doing' word which describes what someone or something does, what someone or something is, or what happens to them, for example, *be, sing, live*.

Each grammar point in the text is followed by simple examples of real Spanish, complete with English translations, helping you understand the rules. Underlining has been used in examples throughout the text to highlight the grammatical point being explained.

- In orders and instructions telling someone TO DO something, the pronoun joins onto the end of the verb to form one word.

**Ayúdame.**

Help me.

**Acompáñanos.**

Come with us.

In Spanish, as with any foreign language, there are certain pitfalls which have to be avoided. **Tips** and **Information** notes throughout the text are useful reminders of the things that often trip learners up.

### Tip

Don't forget to use personal **a** before indefinite pronouns referring to people when they are the object of a verb.

**¿Viste a alguien?**

Did you see anybody?

**No vi a nadie.**

I didn't see anybody.

**Key points** sum up all the important facts about a particular area of grammar, to save you time when you are revising and help you focus on the main grammatical points.

### KEY POINTS

- ✓ Like other adjectives, Spanish indefinite adjectives (such as **otro** and **todo**), must agree with what they describe.
- ✓ They go before the noun to which they relate.

After each Key point you can find a number of exercises to help you practice all the important grammatical points. You can find the answer to each exercise on pages 277-294.

If you think you would like to continue with your Spanish studies to a higher level, check out the **Grammar Extra** sections. These are intended for advanced students who are interested in knowing a little more about the structures they will come across beyond GCSE.

---

#### *Grammar Extra!*

**por** is often combined with other Spanish prepositions and words, usually to show movement.

**Saltó por encima de la mesa.**

She jumped over the table.

**Nadamos por debajo del puente.**

We swam under the bridge.

**Pasaron por delante de Correos.**

They went past the post office.

---

Finally, the supplement at the end of the book contains **Verb Tables**, where 7 important Spanish verbs (both regular and irregular) are conjugated in full. Examples show you how to use these verbs in your own work.

We hope that you will enjoy using the *Easy Learning Spanish Grammar & Practice* and find it useful in the course of your studies.

# Glossary of Grammar Terms

**ABSTRACT NOUN** a word used to refer to a quality, idea, feeling or experience, rather than a physical object, for example, *size, reason, happiness*. Compare with **concrete noun**.

**ACTIVE** a form of the verb that is used when the subject of the verb is the person or thing doing the action, for example, *I wrote a letter*. Compare with **passive**.

**ADJECTIVE** a 'describing' word that tells you more about a person or thing, such as their appearance, colour, size or other qualities, for example, *pretty, blue, big*.

**ADVERB** a word usually used with verbs, adjectives or other adverbs that gives more information about when, where, how or in what circumstances something happens or to what degree something is true, for example, *quickly, happily, now, extremely, very*.

**AGREE (to)** in the case of adjectives and pronouns, to have the correct word ending or form according to whether what is referred to is masculine, feminine, singular or plural; in the case of verbs, to have the form which goes with the person or thing carrying out the action.

**APOSTROPHE S** an ending ('s) added to a noun to show who or what someone or something belongs to, for example, *Danielle's dog, the doctor's wife, the book's cover*.

**ARTICLE** a word like *the, a* and *an*, which is used in front of a noun. See also **definite article, indefinite article**.

**AUXILIARY VERB** a verb such as *be, have* or *do* used with a main verb to form tenses and questions.

**BASE FORM** the form of the verb without any endings added to it, for example, *walk, have, be, go*.

**CARDINAL NUMBER** a number used in counting, for example, *one, seven, ninety*. Compare with **ordinal number**.

**CLAUSE** a group of words containing a verb.

**COMPARATIVE** an adjective or adverb with *-er* on the end of it or *more* or *less* in front of it that is used to compare people, things or actions, for example, *slower, less important, more carefully*.

**COMPOUND NOUN** a word for a living being, thing or idea, which is made up of two or more words, for example, *tin-opener, railway station*.

**CONCRETE NOUN** a word that refers to an object you can touch with your hand, rather than to a quality or idea, for example, *ball, map, apples*. Compare with **abstract noun**.

**CONDITIONAL** a verb form used to talk about things that would happen or would be true under certain conditions, for example, *I would help you if I could*. It is also used to say what you would like or need, for example, *Could you give me the bill?*

**CONJUGATE (to)** to give a verb different endings according to whether you are referring to *I, you, they* and so on, and according to whether you are referring to the present, past or future, for example, *I have, she had, they will have*.

**CONJUGATION** a group of verbs which have the same endings as each other or change according to the same pattern.

**CONJUNCTION** a word such as *and, because* or *but* that links two words or phrases of a similar type or two parts of a sentence, for example, *Diane and I have been friends for years; I left because I was bored*.

**CONSONANT** a letter that isn't a vowel, for example, *b, f, m, s, v*. Compare with **vowel**.

**CONTINUOUS TENSE** a verb tense formed using *to be* and the *-ing* form of the main verb, for example, *They're swimming* (present continuous); *He was eating* (past continuous).

**DEFINITE ARTICLE** the word *the*. Compare with **indefinite article**.

**DEMONSTRATIVE ADJECTIVE** one of the words *this*, *that*, *these* and *those* used with a noun to refer to particular people or things, for example, *this woman*, *that dog*.

**DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUN** one of the words *this*, *that*, *these* and *those* used instead of a noun to point out people or things, for example, *That looks fun*.

**DIRECT OBJECT** a noun or pronoun used with verbs to show who or what is acted on by the verb. For example, in *He wrote a letter* and *He wrote me a letter*, *letter* is the direct object. Compare **indirect object**.

**DIRECT OBJECT PRONOUN** a word such as *me*, *him*, *us* and *them* which is used instead of a noun to stand in for the person or thing directly affected by the action expressed by the verb. Compare with **indirect object pronoun**.

**ENDING** a form added to a verb, for example, *go* → *goes*, and to adjectives, nouns and pronouns depending on whether they refer to masculine, feminine, singular or plural things or persons.

**EXCLAMATION** a word, phrase or sentence that you use to show you are surprised, shocked, angry and so on, for example, *Wow!*; *How dare you!*; *What a surprise!*

**FEMININE** a form of noun, pronoun or adjective that is used to refer to a living being, thing or idea that is not classed as masculine.

**FUTURE** a verb tense used to talk about something that will happen or will be true.

**GENDER** whether a noun, pronoun or adjective is feminine or masculine.

**GERUND** a verb form in English ending in *-ing*, for example, *eating*, *sleeping*.

**IMPERATIVE** the form of a verb used when giving orders and instructions, for example, *Shut the door!*; *Sit down!*; *Don't go!*; *Let's eat*.

**IMPERFECT** one of the verb tenses used to talk about the past, especially in descriptions, and to say what was happening or used to happen, for example, *It was sunny at the weekend*; *We were living in Spain at the time*; *I used to walk to school*. Compare to **preterite**.

**IMPERSONAL VERB** a verb whose subject is *it*, but where the *it* does not refer to any specific thing, for example, *It's raining*; *It's 10 o'clock*.

**INDEFINITE ADJECTIVE** one of a small group of adjectives used to talk about people or things in a general way, without saying who or what they are, for example, *several*, *all*, *every*.

**INDEFINITE ARTICLE** the words *a* and *an*. Compare with **definite article**.

**INDICATIVE** ordinary verb forms that aren't subjunctive, such as the present, preterite or future. Compare with **subjunctive**.

**INDEFINITE PRONOUN** a small group of pronouns such as *everything*, *nobody* and *something*, which are used to refer to people or things in a general way, without saying exactly who or what they are.

**INDIRECT OBJECT** a noun or pronoun used with verbs to show who benefits or is harmed by an action. For example, in *I gave the carrot to the rabbit*, *the rabbit* is the indirect object and *the carrot* is the direct object. Compare with **direct object**.

**INDIRECT OBJECT PRONOUN** a pronoun used with verbs to show who benefits or is harmed by an action. For example, in *I gave him the carrot* and *I gave it to him*, *him* is the indirect object

and the *carrot* and *it* are the direct objects. Compare with **direct object pronoun**.

**INDIRECT QUESTION** a question that is embedded in another question or instruction such as *Can you tell me what time it is?*; *Tell me why you did it.* Also used for reported speech such as *He asked me why I did it.*

**INDIRECT SPEECH** the words you use to report what someone has said when you aren't using their actual words, for example, *He said that he was going out.* Also called **reported speech**.

**INFINITIVE** a form of the verb that hasn't any endings added to it and doesn't relate to any particular tense. In English the infinitive is usually shown with *to*, as in *to speak*, *to eat*.

**INTERROGATIVE ADJECTIVE** a question word used with a noun, for example, *What instruments do you play?*; *Which shoes do you like?*

**INTERROGATIVE PRONOUN** one of the words *who*, *whose*, *whom*, *what* and *which* when they are used instead of a noun to ask questions, for example, *What's that?*; *Who's coming?*

**INTRANSITIVE VERB** a type of verb that does not take a direct object, for example, *to sleep*, *to rise*, *to swim*. Compare with **transitive verb**.

**INVARIABLE** used to describe a form which does not change.

**IRREGULAR VERB** a verb whose forms do not follow a general pattern. Compare with **regular verb**.

**MASCULINE** a form of noun, pronoun or adjective that is used to refer to a living being, thing or idea that is not classed as feminine.

**NEGATIVE** a question or statement which contains a word such as *not*, *never* or *nothing*, and is used to say that something is not happening, is not true or is absent, for example, *I never eat meat*; *Don't you love me?* Compare with **positive**.

**NOUN** a 'naming' word for a living being, thing or idea, for example, *woman*, *desk*, *happiness*, *Andrew*.

**NOUN GROUP, NOUN PHRASE** a word or group of words that acts as the subject or object of a verb, or as the object of a preposition, for example, *my older sister*; *the man next door*; *that big house on the corner*.

**NUMBER** used to say how many things you are referring to or where something comes in a sequence. See also **ordinal number** and **cardinal number**. Also the condition of being singular or plural.

**OBJECT** a noun or pronoun which refers to a person or thing that is affected by the action described by the verb. Compare with **direct object**, **indirect object** and **subject**.

**OBJECT PRONOUN** one of the set of pronouns including *me*, *him* and *them*, which are used instead of the noun as the object of a verb or preposition. Compare with **subject pronoun**.

**ORDINAL NUMBER** a number used to indicate where something comes in an order or sequence, for example, *first*, *fifth*, *sixteenth*. Compare with **cardinal number**.

**PART OF SPEECH** a word class, for example, *noun*, *verb*, *adjective*, *preposition*, *pronoun*.

**PASSIVE** a form of the verb that is used when the subject of the verb is the person or thing that is affected by the action, for example, *we were told*.

**PAST PARTICIPLE** a verb form which is used to form perfect and pluperfect tenses and passives, for example, *watched*, *swum*. Some past participles are also used as adjectives, for example, *a broken watch*.

**PAST PERFECT** see **pluperfect**.

**PERFECT** a verb form used to talk about what has or hasn't happened, for example, *I've broken my glasses*; *We haven't spoken about it*.

**PERSON** one of the three classes: the first person (*I, we*), the second person (*you* singular and *you* plural), and the third person (*he, she, it* and *they*).

**PERSONAL PRONOUN** one of the group of words including *I, you* and *they* which are used to refer to you, the people you are talking to, or the people or things you are talking about.

**PLUPERFECT** one of the verb tenses used to describe something that had happened or had been true at a point in the past, for example, *I had forgotten to finish my homework*. Also called **past perfect**.

**PLURAL** the form of a word which is used to refer to more than one person or thing. Compare with **singular**.

**POSITIVE** a positive sentence or instruction is one that does not contain a negative word such as *not*. Compare with **negative**.

**POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVE** one of the words *my, your, his, her, its, our* or *their*, used with a noun to show who it belongs to.

**POSSESSIVE PRONOUN** one of the words *mine, yours, hers, his, ours* or *theirs*, used instead of a noun to show who something belongs to.

**PREPOSITION** a word such as *at, for, with, into* or *from*, which is usually followed by a noun, pronoun or, in English, a word ending in *-ing*. Prepositions show how people and things relate to the rest of the sentence, for example, *She's at home; a tool for cutting grass; It's from David*.

**PRESENT** a verb form used to talk about what is true at the moment, what happens regularly, and what is happening now, for example, *I'm a student; I travel to college by train; I'm studying languages*.

**PRESENT PARTICIPLE** a verb form in English ending in *-ing*, for example, *eating, sleeping*.

**PRETERITE** a verb form used to talk

about actions that were completed in the past in Spanish. It often corresponds to the ordinary past tense in English, for example, *I bought a new bike; Mary went to the shops on Friday; I typed two reports yesterday*.

**PRONOUN** a word which you use instead of a noun, when you do not need or want to name someone or something directly, for example, *it, you, none*.

**PROPER NOUN** the name of a person, place, organization or thing. Proper nouns are always written with a capital letter, for example, *Kevin, Glasgow, Europe, London Eye*.

**QUESTION WORD** a word such as *why, where, who, which* or *how* which is used to ask a question.

**RADICAL-CHANGING VERBS** in Spanish, verbs which change their stem or root in certain tenses and in certain persons.

**REFLEXIVE PRONOUN** a word ending in *-self* or *-selves*, such as *myself* or *themselves*, which refers back to the subject, for example, *He hurt himself; Take care of yourself*.

**REFLEXIVE VERB** a verb where the subject and object are the same, and where the action 'reflects back' on the subject. A reflexive verb is used with a reflexive pronoun such as *myself, yourself, herself*, for example, *I washed myself; He shaved himself*.

**REGULAR VERB** a verb whose forms follow a general pattern or the normal rules. Compare with **irregular verb**.

**RELATIVE PRONOUN** a word such as *that, who* or *which*, when it is used to link two parts of a sentence together.

**REPORTED SPEECH** see **indirect speech**.

**SENTENCE** a group of words which usually has a verb and a subject. In writing, a sentence begins with a capital and ends with a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark.

**SIMPLE TENSE** a verb tense in which the verb form is made up of one word, rather than being formed from *to have* and a past participle or *to be* and an *-ing* form; for example, *She plays tennis; He wrote a book.*

**SINGULAR** the form of a word which is used to refer to one person or thing. Compare with **plural**.

**STEM** the main part of a verb to which endings are added.

**SUBJECT** a noun or pronoun that refers to the person or thing doing the action or being in the state described by the verb, for example, *My cat doesn't drink milk.* Compare with **object**.

**SUBJECT PRONOUN** a word such as *I, he, she* and *they* which carries out the action described by the verb. Pronouns stand in for nouns when it is clear who is being talked about, for example, *My brother isn't here at the moment. He'll be back in an hour.* Compare with **object pronoun**.

**SUBJUNCTIVE** a verb form used in certain circumstances to indicate some sort of feeling, or to show doubt about

whether something will happen or whether something is true. It is only used occasionally in modern English, for example, *If I were you, I wouldn't bother; So be it.*

**SUPERLATIVE** an adjective or adverb with *-est* on the end of it or *most* or *least* in front of it that is used to compare people, things or actions, for example, *thinnest, most quickly, least interesting.*

**SYLLABLE** consonant+vowel units that make up the sounds of a word, for example, *ca-the-dral* (3 syllables), *im-po-ssi-ble* (4 syllables).

**TENSE** the form of a verb which shows whether you are referring to the past, present or future.

**TRANSITIVE VERB** a type of verb that takes a direct object, for example, *to spend, to raise, to waste.* Compare with **intransitive verb**.

**VERB** a 'doing' word which describes what someone or something does, is, or what happens to them, for example, *be, sing, live.*

**VOWEL** one of the letters *a, e, i, o* or *u*. Compare with **consonant**.



<b>los periódicos</b>	the newspapers
<b>las revistas</b>	the magazines

- 7 Note that you use **el** instead of **la** immediately before a feminine singular word beginning with **a** or **ha** when the stress falls on the beginning of the word. This is because **la** sounds wrong before the 'a' sound and the use of **el** does not affect the feminine gender of the noun. **BUT** if you add an adjective in front of the noun, you use **la** instead, since the two 'a' sounds do not come next to each other.

<b>el agua limpia</b>	the clean water
<b>el hacha</b>	the axe
<b>la misma agua</b>	the same water
<b>la mejor hacha</b>	the best axe

## **a and de with the definite article**

- If **a** is followed by **el**, the two words become **al**.
- |                         |                    |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>al cine</b>          | to the cinema      |
| <b>al empleado</b>      | to the employee    |
| <b>al hospital</b>      | to the hospital    |
| <b>Vio al camarero.</b> | He saw the waiter. |
- If **de** is followed by **el**, the two words become **del**.
- |                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>del departamento</b> | of/from the department |
| <b>del autor</b>        | of/from the author     |
| <b>del presidente</b>   | of/from the president  |

## **Using the definite article**

- **el, la, los** and **las** are often used in Spanish in the same way as *the* is used in English. However, there are some cases where the article is used in Spanish but not in English.
- The definite article **IS** used in Spanish:

- when talking about people, animals and things in a general way
 

<b>Me gustan los animales.</b>	I like animals.
<b>Están subiendo los precios.</b>	Prices are going up.
<b>Me gusta el chocolate.</b>	I like chocolate.
<b>No me gusta el café.</b>	I don't like coffee.
<b>El azúcar es dulce.</b>	Sugar is sweet.
- when talking about abstract qualities, for example, *time, hope, darkness, violence*

<b>El tiempo es oro.</b>	Time is money.
<b>Admiro la sinceridad en la gente.</b>	I admire honesty in people.

- 7 Note that the definite article is **NOT** used in certain set phrases consisting of **tener** and a noun or after certain prepositions.

<b>tener hambre</b>	to be hungry ( <i>literally: to have hunger</i> )
<b>sin duda</b>	no doubt ( <i>literally: without doubt</i> )
<b>con cuidado</b>	carefully ( <i>literally: with care</i> )

⇒ For more information on **Prepositions**, see page 244.

- when talking about colours  
**El azul es mi color favorito.** Blue is my favourite colour.
  - when talking about parts of the body – you do not use *my, your, his* and so on as you would in English  
**Tiene los ojos verdes.** He's got green eyes.  
**No puedo mover las piernas.** I can't move my legs.
- 🔗 Note that possession is often shown by a personal pronoun in Spanish.
- La cabeza me da vueltas.** My head is spinning.  
**Lávate las manos.** Wash your hands.
- ⇒ For more information on **Personal pronouns**, see page 55.
- when using someone's title – for example, *Doctor, Mr* – but talking ABOUT someone rather than to them.  
**El doctor Vidal no está.** Dr Vidal isn't here.  
**El señor Pelayo vive aquí.** Mr Pelayo lives here.
  - when talking about institutions, such as school or church  
**en el colegio** at school  
**en la universidad** at university  
**en la iglesia** at church  
**en el hospital** in hospital  
**en la cárcel** in prison
  - when talking about meals, games or sports  
**La cena es a las nueve.** Dinner is at nine o'clock.  
**Me gusta el tenis.** I like tennis.  
**No me gusta el ajedrez.** I don't like chess.
  - when talking about days of the week and dates, where we use the preposition *on* in English  
**Te veo el lunes.** I'll see you on Monday.  
**Los lunes tenemos muchos deberes.** We have a lot of homework on Mondays.  
**Nací el 17 de marzo.** I was born on 17 March.
  - when talking about the time  
**Es la una.** It's one o'clock.  
**Son las tres.** It's three o'clock.  
**Son las cuatro y media.** It's half past four.
  - when talking about prices and rates  
**Cuesta dos euros el kilo.** It costs two euros a kilo.  
**20 euros la hora** 20 euros an hour

**KEY POINTS**

- ✓ Before masculine singular nouns → use **el**.
- ✓ Before feminine singular nouns → use **la**.
- ✓ Before feminine singular nouns starting with stressed **a** or **ha** → use **el**.
- ✓ Before masculine plural nouns → use **los**.
- ✓ Before feminine plural nouns → use **las**.
- ✓ **a + el** → **al**
- ✓ **de + el** → **del**
- ✓ There are some important cases when you would use a definite article in Spanish when you wouldn't in English; for example, when talking about:
  - things in a general way
  - abstract qualities
  - colours
  - parts of the body
  - someone with a title in front of their name
  - institutions
  - meals, games or sports
  - the time, days of the week and dates (*using the preposition on in English*)
  - prices and rates

# Test yourself

## 1 Cross out the nouns which the article cannot go with.

- a el** niño/mano/agua/cine/revista/hospital/dentista/precio/chocolate/cabeza/azúcar/doctor/cárcel/tenis
- b la** chica/desayuno/hambre/casa/universidad/lunes/verde/mano/fútbol/carne/jardín
- c los** brazos/precios/manos/ojos/sábados/ciudades/empleados/peces/mesas/miércoles/zapatillas
- d las** deberes/piernas/luces/dulces/colores/chocolates/plantas/animales/autobuses/llaves/ratones/sillas
- e un** niño/mano /revista/hospital/dentista/chocolate/cabeza/doctor/cárcel
- f una** chica/desayuno/casa/universidad/lunes/mano/jardín
- g unos** brazos/precios/manos/ojos /ciudades/empleados/peces/mesas/zapatillas
- h unas** deberes/piernas/luces/dulces/colores/plantas/animales/autobuses/llaves/sillas
- i los/unos** niños/manos/revistas/dentistas/precios/cabezas/cárceles
- j las/unas** chicas/desayunos/casas/manos/jardines/ratones/pijamas

## 2 Complete the following sentences with the correct article.

- a** Está en ..... colegio.
- b** Estudia en ..... universidad de Valencia.
- c** Trabajo en ..... hospital.
- d** Se casaron por ..... iglesia.
- e** ..... agua está fría.
- f** ..... rosa te sienta muy bien.
- g** No le gustan ..... patatas fritas.
- h** ..... árboles están todos en flor.
- i** Ponte el sombrero y ..... gafas de sol.
- j** Voy a ponerme ..... sandalias rosa.

# Test yourself

## 3 Translate the following sentences into Spanish.

- a I like animals. ....
- b I don't like meat. ....
- c I like red. ....
- d She's got blue eyes. ....
- e Wash your face. ....
- f Breakfast is between 7 and 9. ....
- g I work on Tuesdays and Thursdays. ....
- h He's the doctor's son. ....
- i We went to the cinema on Saturday. ....
- j They're 5 euros a kilo. ....

## The indefinite article: **un, una, unos** and **unas**

### The basic rules

- In English, the indefinite article is *a*, which changes to *an* when it comes before a vowel or a vowel sound, for example, *an apple*. In the plural, we use *some* or *any*.
- In Spanish, you have to choose between four indefinite articles: **un, una, unos** and **unas**. Which one you choose depends on the noun that follows.
- In Spanish, all nouns (including words for things) are either masculine or feminine – this is called their gender. And, just as in English, they can also be either singular or plural. You must bear this in mind when deciding which Spanish word to use for *a*.

⇨ For more information on **Nouns**, see page 1.

- **un** is used before masculine singular nouns.
 

<b>un niño</b>	a boy
<b>un periódico</b>	a newspaper
- **una** is used before feminine singular nouns.
 

<b>una niña</b>	a girl
<b>una revista</b>	a magazine
- **unos** is used before masculine plural nouns.
 

<b>unos niños</b>	some boys
<b>unos periódicos</b>	some newspapers
- **unas** is used before feminine plural nouns.
 

<b>unas niñas</b>	some girls
<b>unas revistas</b>	some magazines

📌 Note that you use **un** instead of **una** immediately before a feminine singular word beginning with **a** or **ha** when the stress falls on the beginning of the word. This is because **una** sounds wrong before the 'a' sound.

<b>un ave</b>	a bird
---------------	--------

### Using the indefinite article

- The indefinite article is often used in Spanish in the same way as it is in English. However, there are some cases where the article is not used in Spanish but is in English, and vice versa.
- The indefinite article is NOT used in Spanish:
  - when you say what someone's job is
 

<b>Es profesor.</b>	He's <u>a</u> teacher.
<b>Mi madre es enfermera.</b>	My mother is <u>a</u> nurse.
  - after **tener, buscar**, or **llevar (puesto)** when you are only likely *to have, be looking for* or *be wearing* one of the items in question
 

<b>No tengo coche.</b>	I haven't got <u>a</u> car.
<b>¿Llevaba sombrero?</b>	Was he wearing <u>a</u> hat?

- 7 Note that when you use an adjective to describe the noun, you DO use an article in Spanish too.

**Es un buen médico.**

He's a good doctor.

**Tiene una novia española.**

He has a Spanish girlfriend.

**Busca un piso pequeño.**

He's looking for a little flat.

- The indefinite article is NOT used in Spanish with the words **otro**, **cierto**, **cien**, **mil**, **sin**, and **qué**.

**otro libro**

another book

**cierta calle**

a certain street

**cien soldados**

a hundred soldiers

**mil años**

a thousand years

**sin casa**

without a house

**¡Qué sorpresa!**

What a surprise!

- The indefinite article IS used in Spanish but NOT in English when an abstract noun, such as **inteligencia** (meaning *intelligence*) or **tiempo** (meaning *time*) has an adjective with it.

**Posee una gran inteligencia.**

He possesses great intelligence.

#### KEY POINTS

- ✓ Before masculine singular nouns → use **un**.
- ✓ Before feminine singular nouns → use **una**.
- ✓ Before feminine singular nouns starting with stressed **a** or **ha** → use **un**.
- ✓ Before masculine plural nouns → use **unos**.
- ✓ Before feminine plural nouns → use **unas**.
- ✓ You do not use an indefinite article in Spanish for saying what someone's job is.
- ✓ You do not use an indefinite article in Spanish with the words **otro**, **cierto**, **cien**, **mil**, **sin**, and **qué**.



# Test yourself

## 7 Translate the following sentences into Spanish.

- a I'm an actor. ....
- b My mother is a doctor. ....
- c She's a good nurse. ....
- d I want to read another book. ....
- e They don't have a garden. ....
- f My brother is a student. ....
- g He's a famous artist. ....
- h We have Australian neighbours. ....
- i She has an American boyfriend. ....
- j I don't have a boyfriend. ....

## The article **lo**

- Unlike the other Spanish articles, and articles in English, **lo** is NOT used with a noun.
- **lo** can be used with a masculine singular adjective or past participle (the **-ado** and **-ido** forms of regular verbs) to form a noun.
 

<b><u>Lo único que no me gusta ...</u></b>	The only thing I don't like ...
<b><u>Esto es lo importante.</u></b>	That's the important thing.
<b><u>Lo bueno de eso es que ...</u></b>	The good thing about it is that ...
<b><u>Sentimos mucho lo ocurrido.</u></b>	We are very sorry about what happened.

⇨ For more information on the **Past participle**, see page 164.

- **lo** is also used in a number of very common phrases:
  - **a lo mejor** maybe, perhaps  
**A lo mejor ha salido.** Perhaps he's gone out.
  - **por lo menos** at least  
**Hubo por lo menos cincuenta heridos.** At least fifty people were injured.
  - **por lo general** generally  
**Por lo general me acuesto temprano.** I generally go to bed early.
- **lo** can also be used with **que** to make **lo que** (meaning *what*).
 

<b><u>Vi lo que pasó.</u></b>	I saw what happened.
<b><u>Lo que más me gusta es nadar.</u></b>	What I like best is swimming.

### *Grammar Extra!*

**lo** can be used with **de** followed by a noun phrase to refer back to something the speaker and listener both know about.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b><u>Lo de tu hermano me preocupa mucho.</u></b> | I'm very worried about <u>that business with your brother.</u> |
| <b><u>Lo de ayer es mejor que lo olvides.</u></b> | It would be best to forget <u>what happened yesterday.</u>     |

**lo** can be used with an adjective followed by **que** to emphasize how big/small/beautiful and so on something is or was. The adjective must agree with the noun it describes.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b><u>No sabíamos lo pequeña que era la casa.</u></b> | We didn't know <u>how small</u> the house was. |
| <b><u>No te imaginas lo simpáticos que son.</u></b>   | You can't imagine <u>how nice</u> they are.    |

**lo** can also be used in a similar way with an adverb followed by **que**.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b><u>Sé lo mucho que te gusta la música.</u></b> | I know <u>how much</u> you like music. |
|---|--|

### KEY POINTS

- ✓ **lo** is classed as an article in Spanish, but is not used with nouns.
- ✓ You can use **lo** with a masculine adjective or past participle to form a noun.
- ✓ You also use **lo** in a number of common phrases.
- ✓ **lo que** can be used to mean *what* in English.

# Test yourself

## 8 Match the Spanish with its English translation.

- a por lo menos that business with your sister
- b a lo mejor how good they are
- c lo que dice tu hermana at least
- d lo buenos que son what your sister says
- e lo de tu hermana maybe

## 9 Complete the following sentences with **lo**, **lo de**, or **lo que**.

- a Eso es ..... más importante.
- b ..... más me gusta es la catedral.
- c ..... mejor de la fiesta es la comida.
- d A ..... mejor viene mañana.
- e Lo conozco mejor de ..... piensa.
- f Hay por ..... menos 150 personas.
- g No sé bien ..... pasa ahí.
- h Es peor de ..... parece.
- i ..... Alberto es muy triste.
- j Dime ..... te pasa.

## 10 Match the two columns.

- a Por lo general es ir de tiendas.
- b A lo mejor es que no quiere venir.
- c Lo de tu primo no vienen.
- d Lo que más me gusta cenamos temprano.
- e Lo que pasa me sorprende mucho.

# Test yourself

## 11 Translate the following sentences into English.

**a** Eso es lo más importante.

.....

**b** Lo importante es ser feliz.

.....

**c** Lo bueno es que es barato.

.....

**d** A lo mejor vienen mañana.

.....

**e** Por lo general como a las dos.

.....

**f** Lo único es que es muy caro.

.....

**g** Por lo menos come algo.

.....

**h** Vienen por lo menos 20 personas.

.....

**i** Lo que más me gusta es ir al cine.

.....

**j** Lo de Isabel me sorprende mucho.

.....

## Nouns

- 1 a la reina  
b la inglesa  
c la empleada  
d la princesa  
e la hermana  
f la dentista  
g la profesora  
h la estudiante  
i la actriz  
j la mujer
- 2 a la amiga  
b la reina  
c la profesora  
d la estudiante  
e una inglesa  
f la madre  
g la princesa  
h mujer  
i camarera  
j una empleada
- 3 a La capital **de España es Madrid.**  
b El cura **dice misa.**  
c La guía **incluye un glosario.**  
d El guía **lleva los turistas por la ciudad.**  
e El capital **extranjero ayuda mucho en este país.**
- 4 a los libros  
b unas canciones  
c unas tostadas  
d unas noticias  
e las luces  
f los exámenes  
g unos hombres-lobo  
h unos jerseys  
i los lunes  
j unos muebles
- 5 a televisión/mano  
b profesor/lunes  
c madre/inglesa/moto  
d coche/planeta/padre  
e televisiones/manos  
f profesores/lunes  
g madres/inglesas/motos  
h coches/planetas/padres  
i televisión/mano  
j profesor/lunes
- 6 a un  
b una  
c un  
d un  
e una  
f un  
g una  
h un  
i un  
j un/una

## Articles

- 1 a mano/revista/cabeza/cárcel  
b desayuno/hambre/lunes/verde/fútbol/jardín  
c manos/ciudades/mesas/zapatillas  
d deberes/dulces/colores/chocolates/animales/autobuses/ratones  
e mano/revista/cabeza/cárcel  
f desayunos/lunes/jardín  
g manos/ciudades/mesas/zapatillas  
h deberes/dulces/colores/animales/autobuses  
i manos/revistas/cabezas/cárceles  
j desayunos/jardines/ratones/pijamas
- 2 a el  
b la  
c el  
d la  
e El  
f El
- 3 a Me gustan los animales.  
b No me gusta la carne.  
c Me gusta el rojo.  
d Tiene los ojos azules.  
e Lávate la cara.  
f El desayuno es entre las 7 y las 9.  
g Trabajo los martes y los jueves.  
h Es el hijo del médico/de la médica.  
i El sábado fuimos al cine.  
j Son 5 euros el kilo.
- 4 a una  
b un  
c un  
d un  
e unos  
f un  
g un  
h unas
- 5 a un  
b -  
c -  
d una  
e una  
f un  
g unas  
h unas  
i -  
j -
- 6 a Mi madre **es doctora.**  
b Su padre **es un actor famoso.**  
c Mis padres **viven en un piso.**  
d Tenemos **un coche rojo.**  
e Jaime **no tiene coche.**
- 7 a Soy actor/actriz.  
b Mi madre es médica/doctora.  
c Es una buena enfermera.  
d Quiero leer otro libro.

