

Simplified Spanish

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Spanish Pronunciation Guide

Learn how to pronounce Spanish in this quick guide. We'll go over all of the vowel sounds, the consonant sounds that are different from English and the double consonant sounds.

Spanish Vowels

Pronunciation of A in Spanish

The letter A is pronounced "ah," like the sound of the A in the word "father" in English.

- casa
- amar
- lata

Pronunciation of E in Spanish

The letter E is pronounced "eh," like the sound of the E in the word "get" in English.

- cena
- sabe
- bebé

Pronunciation of I in Spanish

The letter I is pronounced "ee," like the vowel sound in the word "see" in English.

- isla
- tirar
- sitio

Pronunciation of O in Spanish

The letter O is pronounced "oh," like the sound of the O in the word "toe" in English.

- oso
- boca
- topo

Pronunciation of U in Spanish

The letter U is pronounced "oo," like the vowel sound in the word "moon" in English.

- nube
- suma
- túnel

Spanish Consonants

Some consonants are pronounced the same or virtually the same in Spanish as in English. In this guide we will focus on sounds that are different in Spanish.

Pronunciation of C in Spanish

The letter C is pronounced like a K before letters A, O and U.

- casa
- copa
- cubeta

The letter C is pronounced like an S before letters E and I (or like a TH in Spain)

- cena
- cinto

Pronunciation of G in Spanish

The letter G is pronounced with a hard G sound before letters A, O and U.

- gato
- gorra
- guante

The letter G is pronounced like an H before letters E and I.

- geranio
- gimnasio

When the letter G is followed by a U and then an E or I ("gue" or "gui"), the GU combination is pronounced like a hard G. Basically the U is just forcing a hard G sound in a word that would otherwise have the H sound.

- guerra
- guía

A "gue" or "gui" combination in which the letter U must be pronounced is indicated with two dots above the letter U (called a diaeresis).

- cigüeña
- pingüino

Pronunciation of H in Spanish

The letter H is silent in Spanish.

- hotel
- hilo
- hablar

Pronunciation of J in Spanish

The letter J is pronounced like an H.

- justo
- jirafa
- jabón

Pronunciation of Ñ in Spanish

The Ñ is pronounced like a combination of N and Y.

- niño
- español
- sueño

Pronunciation of QU in Spanish

The QU combination is pronounced like a K.

- queja
- quince
- porque

Pronunciation of R in Spanish

The R is rolled in Spanish.

- ropa
- pero
- saltar

Pronunciation of V in Spanish

The letter V is pronounced like the letter B.

- ventana
- viejo
- vaca

Pronunciation of Y in Spanish

The letter Y is pronounced like the letter Y in English in most cases. When Y is at the end of a word, however, it sounds like "ee."

- mayor
- ayer
- hay

Pronunciation of Z in Spanish

The letter Z is pronounced like the letter S (or like a TH in Spain).

- zoológico
- zapato
- zanahoria

Double Letters

There are a few double letter combinations that can be tricky in Spanish.

Pronunciation of CC in Spanish

The CC combination is pronounced like KS (or KTH in Spain).

- colección
- accidente
- acceso

Pronunciation of LL in Spanish

The LL combination is pronounced like a letter Y or a very soft J sound.

- llamar
- ellos
- calle

Pronunciation of RR in Spanish

The RR combination indicates a longer rolled R sound.

- perro
- carrera
- tierra

Stress and Accents

Words that end in vowel or N or S

The stress in words that end in a vowel or the consonants N or S naturally falls on the second to the last syllable.

- casa
- escuela
- computadora
- hablan
- libros

Words that end in a consonant other than N or S

The stress in words that end a consonant other than N or S naturally falls on the last syllable.

- hotel
- jugar
- actitud
- doctor
- libertad

Words with accents

If a word doesn't follow the two pronunciation rules above, an accent above the vowel indicates the stress syllable.

- condición
- artículo
- médico
- sólo
- fácil

Note: Some words have an accent to differentiate them from another word that is spelled the same. For example, question words have an accent to differentiate them from the relative pronoun (¿Quién? vs. quien). Some homonyms have accents to differentiate them from other words (el vs. él)