

STROMMEN INC. · SPANISH, TAUGHT THE STROMMEN WAY

Español en **Vivo**

Conversación, dialectos y cultura
para los niveles A1 y A2

NIVELES A1 → A2 **PARA** ESTUDIANTES & TUTORES **EDICIÓN** PILOTA 2026

Español en Vivo

A Strommen Inc. textbook for adult learners of Spanish, levels A1 through A2. First edition, pilot release.

Published by Strommen Inc., Los Angeles, California. Written and curated by the Strommen language team and the Strommen network of native Spanish tutors from Madrid, Ciudad de México, Buenos Aires, Cartagena, Lima, La Habana, San Juan and beyond. © 2026 Strommen Inc. Distributed free for use with a Strommen tutor.

Spanish spelling follows the Real Academia Española standard for what we call *español neutro* here. Regional variants and slang are flagged by country or region, and they are descriptive — your tutor will refine pronunciation and register in lesson.

How to use this book

This is a tutor-companion textbook. Every chapter is built around a **scene**, a place somewhere in the Spanish-speaking world where the language gets used, and gives you four things:

1. **A dialogue.** Read it aloud with your tutor. Spanish is on the left, the English gloss below each line.
2. **Vocabulary and grammar.** The new pieces, explained briefly and laid out so you can refer back during conversation.
3. **Sidebars.** Slang, dialect comparisons, cultural notes, and a private "Tutor's corner" with teaching tips.
4. **A role-play.** A live conversation script you and your tutor run together. The role-plays start scripted and get more open as you progress.

Each role-play is tagged with a **tier**:

- **Tier 1, scripted:** read together, line by line. Builds confidence.
- **Tier 2, branching:** the script has decision points. Your tutor will choose the harder branch when you're ready.
- **Tier 3, improvised on a frame:** you and your tutor invent the specifics inside a scenario.
- **Tier 4, open:** you debate, plan, or negotiate. Grammar serves real intent.

When you finish A2, the next book begins at Tier 5: the philosophical conversation over a glass of wine in Buenos Aires, in the subjunctive.

A note from the founder

Spanish is not one language. It is the one you read in a textbook and the dozen you hear on the street, in homes, at family Sunday meals that go from one in the afternoon until dusk. It is what gets ordered in a Madrid tapas bar at midnight and what gets shouted across a Caribbean street and what an abuela in Cuzco answers her grandson with in three words and a smile.

I started Strommen in Los Angeles in 2006. The city we live in is the second-largest Spanish-speaking city in the United States, and one of the largest in the world. Half our roster of Spanish tutors are native. They come from Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Spain. The Spanish you will hear back from a Strommen tutor depends on who you sit down with. We think that is the feature, not the bug.

This book is structured around that idea. Every chapter is a scene. Every scene is somewhere specific in the Spanish-speaking world: a tapas bar in Madrid, a family table in Mexico City, the cobblestones of Cartagena, the Mercado Central in Lima, a Sunday morning in Buenos Aires, a clinic in Havana. The grammar shows up because the scene needs it.

The role-plays are the heart. They are written for your Strommen tutor to run with you, in real time. The early ones are scripted; the later ones are not. By the end of A2, you can walk into a taquería in Coyoacán and order with a clear head, ask for an extra *salsa verde*, and trade two sentences with the cook before the tacos hit the plate.

One last thing. The dialect material in this book is not decoration. The difference between *¿qué hacés vos?* in Buenos Aires and *¿qué onda, güey?* in Mexico City and *¿qué pasa, tío?* in Madrid is more than a different word. It is a different relationship to the language, to authority, to humor. Knowing which is in front of you is the start of being part of the conversation.

FIND YOUR SPANISH TUTOR →

Garrett Strommen

FOUNDER, STROMMEN INC. · LOS ANGELES

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The Spanish-speaking world — a dialect map

Twenty-one countries claim Spanish as an official or co-official language. They share a written standard and split widely in spoken form. This book teaches a clean Latin American baseline (close to what Mexican and Colombian tutors call *español neutro*) as the spine, and uses sidebars throughout to show you what shifts when you cross a border.



REGION / CITY	VARIETY	WHAT STANDS OUT	FEATURED CHAPTERS
España / Madrid · Sevilla	<i>Castellano</i>	The "ceceo" — c before e/i and z pronounced like English "th." Use of <i>vosotros</i> for plural-you. Sharp consonants.	1, 2, 9

REGION / CITY	VARIETY	WHAT STANDS OUT	FEATURED CHAPTERS
México / CDMX · Oaxaca	<i>Español mexicano</i>	Clear, deliberate cadence. Rich slang (<i>órale, chido, no manches, güey</i>). Native to the largest Spanish-speaking population in the world.	3, 7, 7½
Argentina / Buenos Aires	<i>Rioplatense</i>	Voseo — <i>vos</i> instead of <i>tú</i> , with its own verb forms. <i>ll/y</i> pronounced "sh." Italian-influenced intonation.	6, 8
Colombia / Bogotá · Cartagena	<i>Español colombiano</i>	Often called the world's clearest Spanish. Heavy use of <i>usted</i> even among friends. Coastal Cartagena drops syllables and quickens.	4
Perú / Lima · Cuzco	<i>Español andino</i>	Vowels stay distinct, consonants stay clean. Code-switching with Quechua in the highlands. The phrase <i>no más</i> used everywhere as a softener.	5, 11, 12
Cuba / La Habana	<i>Español caribeño</i>	Fast, syllable-dropping ("ehtá" for <i>está</i>). Soft consonants. Musical and idiomatic.	8, 10
Puerto Rico / San Juan	<i>Puertorriqueño</i>	The Spanish of reggaeton and bachata. Aspirated <i>s</i> , English borrowing, vibrant slang. Featured in the DtMF interludio (next page).	Interludio

WHY THIS MATTERS

If you only learn one variety, you are fine inside that variety — and lost the moment you cross a border. We teach the neutral baseline because it is what gets you understood everywhere, then layer in the regional knowledge so you understand what comes back at you. Your tutor is the next layer: pick the country your tutor is from and your ear shapes naturally.

[WORK WITH A SPANISH DIALECT COACH →](#)

Pronunciation **primer**

Spanish is phonetic. If you read what is written, you are almost always right. The few traps live in C, G, J, LL, Ñ, Z, the silent H, and the accent marks. Once those are in muscle memory, you can read aloud from a menu without thinking.

Vowels — five sounds, always

A

casa

like the a in "father"

E

mesa

like the e in "bet"

I

vino

like the ee in "see"

O

cosa

like the o in "open"

U

tú

like the oo in "moon"

ACCENTS

café · cómo · José

tell you which syllable to stress. Always say the marked vowel loudly.

Two letters that change

C AND G – SOFT OR HARD DEPENDS ON WHAT FOLLOWS

SPELLING	SOUND (LATIN AMERICA)	SOUND (SPAIN)	EXAMPLE
ca, co, cu	hard k	hard k	casa, cosa, cubo
ce, ci	soft s	soft "th"	cena, ciudad
qu + e, i	hard k (u is silent)	hard k	queso, quien
ga, go, gu	hard g	hard g	gato, gota
ge, gi	like English h	like English h (or harsh ch)	gente, gigante
gue, gui	hard g (u silent)	hard g	guerra, guitarra
j (any vowel)	like English h	harsh ch (back of throat)	jamón, jefe, junio
z (any vowel)	soft s	soft "th"	zapato, plaza

The Spain-vs-Latin-America difference on c/z is the famous **ceceo**. Spaniards say *cerveza* as "ther-VAY-tha." Latin Americans say "ser-VAY-sa." Both are correct; neither is wrong.

Three combinations English speakers fight

Ñ

español · año · niño

Like the *ny* in "canyon." A separate letter, not a fancy N.

LL / Y

llamar · yo · pollo

Latin America: like English *y*.
Argentina/Uruguay: like English *sh*. Both correct.

RR / R-TRILL

perro · carro · ferrocarril

A rolled trill. The hardest sound for English speakers. Patience, drills, time.

SILENT H

hola · ahora · hablar

The H is never pronounced. *Hola* is "OH-la," not "HO-la."

Where the stress falls

Spanish has three rules. Learn them once, never wonder again.

- If a word ends in a **vowel, N, or S** — stress falls on the **second-to-last** syllable. *CA-sa, JO-ven, CAN-tan.*
- If a word ends in **any other consonant** — stress falls on the **last** syllable. *ho-TEL, ciu-DAD, doc-TOR.*
- If there is an **accent mark (´)** — stress falls on the marked vowel, no matter what. *ca-FÉ, MÉ-xi-co, RÁ-pi-do.*

TUTOR'S CORNER

For the first three lessons, dedicate the last five minutes to pronunciation drills with the words from that chapter. The two persistent failures: the silent H (students keep aspirating "Hola") and the RR trill (which simply takes time). Don't waste the early lessons on the trill. Get an approximation, move on, and circle back at A2 when the rest of the ear is more developed.

PRONUNCIATION WORK WITH A SPANISH DIALECT COACH →

The dual register – Spain vs Latin America

Spanish-speakers in Spain and Spanish-speakers in Latin America share the same written language, the same grammar, and a vocabulary that overlaps about ninety-five percent. The remaining five percent is where the action is, and this book treats both sides honestly.

Spanish is taught in two main "flavors" in the United States:

THE TWO MAIN REGISTERS	
CASTELLANO (SPAIN)	LATIN AMERICAN SPANISH
vosotros for informal plural-you ("you all, friends")	ustedes for plural-you, every register
ceceo : c/z sound like English "th"	seseo : c/z sound like English "s"
Spain-specific vocab: <i>coche, ordenador, móvil, patatas, vale, tío, guay</i>	LatAm vocab: <i>carro, computadora, celular, papas, OK, amigo, chido</i>
Roughly 47 million speakers	Roughly 440 million speakers — the bulk of the Spanish-speaking world
Most common in Hollywood-dubbed European films, classical literature, Spain travel	Most common in US Latino communities, Mexican, Cuban, Argentinian and other Latin American media, Hollywood-dubbed Latin American films

What this book teaches

The spine of this book is a **clean Latin American baseline** — close to what Mexican and Colombian tutors call *español neutro*. Most chapters use *ustedes* for plural-you, use *seseo* pronunciation, and lean on Latin American vocabulary.

But because Strommen also serves students who travel to Spain, study Spain's literature, or have Spanish family, we include the Spanish-from-Spain features **alongside** the LatAm baseline, clearly marked:

- Verb conjugation tables include the *vosotros* row, always flagged "(Spain only)." If you are learning for Mexico, Colombia, or anywhere in Latin America, you can skip that row entirely.

- The pronunciation primer (previous page) shows both *seseo* and *ceceo*. Pick whichever your tutor uses.
- The vocabulary tables sometimes show both forms, side by side (*boleto* · *billete*, *carro* · *coche*).
- Chapters set in Spain (1, 2, 9) lean into Castellano features and slang (*tío*, *vale*, *tapeo*). Chapters set in Latin America (3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 7½, 8, 10, 11, 12) use the LatAm baseline.
- The dialect appendix (Appendix B) details six varieties: Mexican, Castellano, Rioplatense (Argentina/Uruguay), Colombian, Cuban, Andean.

PICK A PRIMARY LANE — YOUR TUTOR DECIDES FOR YOU

The fastest path to fluency is to pick one register as your primary and learn the other as recognition-only. Your Strommen tutor is the easiest way to decide: the country your tutor is from is the register your ear shapes around. A Mexican tutor will teach you Mexican Spanish with *ustedes* and no *vosotros*. A Spanish tutor from Madrid will teach you Castellano with *vosotros* and *vale*. Either way, you read this book the same — you just emphasize different sections.

IF YOU DON'T HAVE A TUTOR YET — THE CHEAT SHEET

- **Going to Mexico, Central America, or doing US Latino-community work?** Lean Mexican Spanish. Skip the *vosotros* row in every table. Use Chapters 3, 7, 7½ as your home base.
- **Going to Spain?** Lean Castellano. Learn the *vosotros* forms. Pronounce *c/z* like "th." Chapters 1, 2, 9 are your home base.
- **Going to South America?** Mostly LatAm baseline, but the dialect shifts hard by country. Argentinian = voseo (Ch 6). Colombian and Andean = the cleanest standard you'll find anywhere.
- **Going to the Caribbean (Cuba, PR, DR)?** LatAm baseline + the Caribbean syllable-dropping (Ch 8, 10 + the DtMF Interludio). Fast, musical, takes ear training.

What the tutor's role is

Every dialogue in this book reads naturally in either register with small substitutions. Your tutor will make those substitutions in real time as you run the role-plays. They will tell you, the first or second time it comes up, whether to switch your *plural-you* to *ustedes* only or to learn *vosotros* too. That decision then stays consistent across the rest of the book.

MATCH WITH A TUTOR — MEXICAN, CASTELLANO, OR ANYWHERE IN BETWEEN →

INTERLUDIO · STROMMEN CLASSIC



Escuchar DtMF

Bad Bunny, 2025 — your first listen in Puerto Rican Spanish

TIPO

LISTENING + CULTURE
+ SLANG PREVIEW

FUENTE

STROMMEN'S DTMF
LESSON

MATERIALES

YOUTUBE + THE
STROMMEN LYRIC
TRANSLATION

TIEMPO

~25 MINUTOS

Before you start Chapter 1, listen to a song. *DtMF — Debí Tirar Más Fotos*, "I should have taken more photos" — is the title track from Bad Bunny's 2025 album of the same name. It is sung in Puerto Rican Spanish, blends modern reggaeton with traditional Puerto Rican *jíbaro* instrumentation, and became the most-streamed Spanish-language song of its release year worldwide.

It is also the most efficient single piece of A1-level Spanish ear training you can do as a beginner. Puerto Rican Spanish is fast, slang-rich, and full of the syllable-dropping that defines Caribbean Spanish. If you can pick out the chorus the first time through, you have ears that are ready for the rest of this book.

HOW TO USE THIS LESSON

1. Watch the music video on YouTube. **2.** Read the slang preview below. **3.** Watch the video a second time, listen for the words from the preview. **4.** Open the full Strommen DtMF lesson (link below) for the line-by-line translation and the cultural references behind every verse.

[OPEN THE FULL STROMMEN DTMF LESSON →](#)

The Puerto Rican slang you will hear

WORD BANK – LISTEN FOR THESE IN THE SONG

<i>debi tirar más fotos</i>	I should have taken more photos — the regretful nostalgia at the heart of the song
<i>na'</i>	short for <i>nada</i> ("nothing") — the dropped final consonant is pure Caribbean Spanish
<i>pa'</i>	short for <i>para</i> ("for / to") — same syllable drop, used constantly
<i>to'</i>	short for <i>todo</i> ("all, everything") — listen for "to' el mundo" = "everyone"
<i>a'onde</i>	short for <i>adónde</i> ("to where")
<i>tar / tá</i>	short for <i>estar / está</i> — the verb <i>estar</i> loses its first syllable in Caribbean Spanish
<i>jíbaro</i>	a Puerto Rican country person, by extension Puerto Rican rural identity — the cultural anchor of the song
<i>la isla</i>	"the island" — what Puerto Ricans call Puerto Rico when they speak from the diaspora
<i>brother / bro</i>	English loans are constant in Puerto Rican Spanish, especially in music

What the song is about

DtMF is a song of regret framed as a love letter to Puerto Rico. Bad Bunny mourns gentrification, displacement, the friends and family he lost track of, the photos he never took. The chorus, repeated, is the simple line: "*Debí tirar más fotos de cuando te tuve.*" — "I should have taken more photos of when I had you." The "you" is the island, the relationship, the lost moment, the version of Puerto Rico that does not exist anymore.

You will not understand most of the verses on a first listen. That is the right outcome. Pick up the chorus, hear the dropped consonants, recognize a few of the Puerto Rican slang words from the bank above, and you have done the work. The full lesson on Strommen has every line translated, every slang term unpacked, and every cultural reference explained — go there for the deep read.

CULTURAL NOTE · THE POST-STREAMING SPANISH SINGER

Bad Bunny is what global Spanish music looks like now. He sings in Puerto Rican Spanish, refuses to translate, and is the most-streamed artist in the world. A generation of non-Spanish-speakers learns Spanish in part because they want to understand his lyrics. If your interest in Spanish started here, you are in good company.

LINGUIST'S NOTE · WHY THE CONSONANTS DROP

Caribbean Spanish (Cuba, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, coastal Venezuela and Colombia) systematically drops syllable-final *s*, *r*, and *d*. "*Estás*" becomes "*tá*". "*Vamos*" becomes "*vamo*". "*Para*" becomes "*pa*". This is not careless speech. It is a consistent phonological rule that defines the region. You will learn to hear it in this book and your tutor will help you produce it later if you choose to lean toward a Caribbean accent.

TUTOR'S CORNER

Run the listening in three passes. Pass 1: video only, no lyrics, just listen for the chorus phrase. Pass 2: scroll the Strommen lesson side-by-side, follow along. Pass 3: pause after each verse and have the student paraphrase what they understood, even if it is just "the singer is sad about something." Resist the urge to translate every word. The goal is not comprehension; the goal is the student learning that Spanish at native speed is a thing they can survive.

[FULL STROMMEN DTMF LESSON WITH TRANSLATION →](#)

CAPÍTULO UNO · MADRID

01

Saludos y Presentaciones

Greetings, introductions, and the first decision: tú or usted?

NIVEL

A1 · FOUNDATION

GRAMÁTICA

SER · PRONOMBRES ·
TÚ VS USTED

ESCENA

CAFÉ GIJÓN, MADRID

ROLE-PLAY TIER

1 · SCRIPTED

The first thing you ever say in Spanish decides how the rest of the conversation goes. Open with *hola* to a stranger your own age and you start as friends. Open with *buenos días, señora* to a grandmother behind a counter and she treats you like family within the week. Spanish reads register fast — every line you produce signals where you want to stand.

The greetings

Spanish splits greetings two ways at once: by time of day, and by formality. You don't need every variant on day one; you need five.

FIVE GREETINGS TO LEARN FIRST

SPANISH	WHEN	REGISTER
<i>Hola</i>	Any time	Informal. Friends, peers, anyone you know.
<i>Buenos días</i>	Morning until ~2pm (mealtime)	Polite-friendly. Default in shops, hotels, offices.
<i>Buenas tardes</i>	~2pm until dark	Polite-friendly afternoon version.
<i>Buenas noches</i>	After dark / when arriving at night	Polite. Also used as "good night" when leaving.
<i>Adiós · Hasta luego · Hasta pronto</i>	Leaving	"Goodbye" / "see you later" / "see you soon."

DIALECT COMPARE · "HEY"

Castellano: *hola, ¿qué tal?* · Mexican: *¿qué onda?* (informal) or *¿qué hubo?* · Argentinian: *¿qué hacés?* · Colombian: *¿qué más?* · Cuban: *¿qué bolá?*

DÍALOGO 1 · EN EL CAFÉ, POR LA MAÑANA

Ana walks into the *Café Gijón* in Madrid at 9:00 a.m. The waiter, an older man, is at the bar.

ANA *Buenos días.*
Good morning.

CAMARERO *Buenos días, señorita. ¿Qué le pongo?*
Good morning, miss. What can I get you? (formal — "le")

ANA *Un café con leche, por favor.*
A café con leche, please.

CAMARERO *Marchando.*
Coming right up.

Notice Ana said *buenos días*, not *hola*. She did not know the camarero, he is older, and they are in a place of business. Three signals pointing at the same answer.

Ser — to be (identity, origin, profession)

Spanish has two verbs for "to be": *ser* and *estar*. *Ser* is for permanent or essential things — who you are, where you are from, what you do for a living. *Estar* is for states and locations — how you feel right now, where something is right now. The full *ser/estar* split is in Chapter 6. For now: introductions = *ser*.

SER · PRESENT TENSE

PRONOUN	FORM	EXAMPLE
yo	soy	Soy Ana. I am Ana.
tú	eres	¿Eres español? Are you Spanish? (informal)
él / ella / usted	es	Usted es la señora Ruiz, ¿verdad? You are Mrs. Ruiz, right? (formal)
nosotros / nosotras	somos	Somos americanos. We are American.
vosotros / vosotras (Spain only)	sois	¿Sois de Madrid? Are you from Madrid? (plural, Spain)
ellos / ellas / ustedes	son	Son españoles. They are Spanish. / You all are Spanish.

Spanish drops the subject pronoun because the verb ending already tells you who. *Soy Ana* is more natural than *Yo soy Ana*. Use the pronoun for emphasis or to clarify.

tú · usted · vos · vosotros · ustedes — the formality map

Spanish has more "you" pronouns than English by a wide margin. The good news: you only need a few, and the rest are regional.

THE "YOU" MAP

PRONOUN	WHO USES IT	WHEN
tú	Spain + most of Latin America	Informal singular. Friends, family, peers.
usted	Everywhere	Formal singular. Anyone you don't know, older people, professionals.
vos	Argentina, Uruguay, Costa Rica, parts of Central America	Informal singular, replaces <i>tú</i> . Has its own verb forms — covered in Chapter 6.
vosotros / vosotras	Spain only	Informal plural. <i>Vosotros sois, vosotros tenéis</i> .
ustedes	Everywhere outside Spain · also formal plural in Spain	Plural "you all," every register in Latin America.

Quick rule for a beginner: use *tú* with friends, *usted* with anyone older or in a position of service, and *ustedes* for any group. You will not say *vosotros* unless you are in Spain or with Spaniards. You will not say *vos* unless you are in Argentina or Uruguay or Costa Rica.

CULTURAL NOTE · THE MOMENT YOU SWITCH TO TÚ

An older Spaniard or Latin American will often say "*podemos tutearnos*" ("we can use *tú* with each other") — that is the invitation. Accept it. In Colombia and many other parts of Latin America, *usted* is the default even among close friends and family — that is not coldness, it is the regional norm. In Argentina, *vos* is what friends use; switching back to *tú* there would sound stiff.

Llamarse — to be called

This is how you introduce yourself. The verb is reflexive — literally "I call myself."

LLAMARSE · PRESENT TENSE

yo	me llamo	Me llamo Ana.
tú	te llamas	¿Cómo te llamas? What's your name? (informal)
él / ella / usted	se llama	¿Cómo se llama? What's your name? (formal)
nosotros	nos llamamos	Nos llamamos Ruiz.
vosotros (Spain)	os llamáis	¿Cómo os llamáis?
ellos / ustedes	se llaman	Se llaman Bianchi.

DIÁLOGO 2 · EN LA OFICINA

First day at a new job in Madrid. Ana meets her supervisor, Sra. Ruiz.

SRA. R. *Buenos días. ¿Cómo se llama usted?*

Good morning. What is your name?

ANA *Me llamo Ana García. Encantada.*

My name is Ana García. Pleased to meet you. (feminine — "encantado" if male)

SRA. R. *Mucho gusto. Yo soy la señora Ruiz.*

Pleasure. I am Ms. Ruiz.

ANA *¿Es usted española, señora?*

Are you Spanish, ma'am?

SRA. R. *Sí, soy de Madrid. ¿Y usted?*

Yes, I'm from Madrid. And you?

ANA *Soy estadounidense, de Los Ángeles.*

I'm American, from Los Angeles.

VOCABULARY

<i>hola</i>	hi (informal)
<i>buenos días / buenas tardes / buenas noches</i>	good morning / afternoon / evening-night
<i>adiós · hasta luego · hasta pronto</i>	goodbye · see you later · see you soon
<i>¿cómo te llamas? / ¿cómo se llama?</i>	what's your name? (inf. / form.)
<i>me llamo...</i>	my name is...
<i>encantado / encantada</i>	pleased to meet you (m / f — match your own gender)
<i>mucho gusto</i>	a pleasure (response, gender-neutral)
<i>soy de...</i>	I'm from...
<i>señor / señora / señorita</i>	sir / ma'am / miss
<i>por favor · gracias · de nada</i>	please · thank you · you're welcome
<i>sí · no · quizás · tal vez</i>	yes · no · maybe · perhaps

SLANG SPOTLIGHT · MADRID

tío / tía — literally "uncle / aunt," but in Spain a constant friendly address for any peer. "*¿Qué pasa, tío?*" = "what's up, dude?" Strictly informal, friends only, very Spanish. Latin Americans almost never use this.

TUTOR'S CORNER

Spend ten minutes on the *tú/usted/ustedes* drill before the role-play. Give the student five scenarios — a barista, a colleague, the colleague's grandmother, a child, a group of friends — and have them pick the right pronoun before producing anything. Once that decision is automatic, the rest of the dialogue holds together. Most students under cognitive load default to *tú* with everyone, including the bank teller.

Ejercicios

- Conjuga *ser*: Marco y Ana _____ españoles. Tú _____ americano. Yo _____ de Madrid. Nosotros _____ estudiantes.
- Conjuga *llamarse*: ¿Cómo _____ (tú)? ¿Cómo _____ (usted)? (Yo) _____ Ana.
- ¿*Tú, usted o ustedes*? (a) an 8-year-old child, (b) a doctor, (c) your friend's mother you've just met, (d) two fellow students in your Spanish class.
- Traduce: "Good morning. My name is Marco. I'm from Bogotá. Pleased to meet you."
- You walk into a Madrid shop at 7 p.m. and want to greet the older owner. What do you say?

ROLE-PLAY · TIER 1 · SCRIPTED

Primer encuentro en un café madrileño

Tuesday morning, 9:00. The student is on day three of a trip to Madrid. They walk into the *Café Gijón*. The tutor plays the older waiter, polite and busy. Read the script as written, then run it again switching roles.

ESTUDIANTE: *Buenos días.*

TUTOR (CAMARERO): *Buenos días. ¿Qué le pongo?*

ESTUDIANTE: *Un café con leche, por favor.*

TUTOR: *Marchando. ¿Usted es americana?*

ESTUDIANTE: *Sí, soy de [ciudad]. Me llamo [nombre].*

TUTOR: *Mucho gusto. Yo soy Marco.*

ESTUDIANTE: *Encantada. (or "encantado" if male)*

TUTOR VARIATIONS (RUN AFTER THE SCRIPTED PASS)

- Switch the camarero to *tú* mid-conversation. Student must follow into informal register.
- Make the camarero a young woman in her twenties. Student should now lead with *hola* instead of *buenos días* and use *tú*.
- Add a Madrid slang line on the way out: "*Vale, tía, hasta luego, ¿eh?*" ("OK, dude, see you later, yeah?"). Discuss what the student understood.

RUN THIS ROLE-PLAY WITH A STROMMEN SPANISH TUTOR →

ANSWER KEY · CHAPTER 1

1. son · eres · soy · somos
2. te llamas · se llama · me llamo
3. (a) tú · (b) usted · (c) usted · (d) ustedes (or *vosotros* if you're in Spain)
4. *Buenos días. Me llamo Marco. Soy de Bogotá. Mucho gusto.*
5. *Buenas tardes.* (After ~2pm and before dark, with someone you don't know.)

02

En el Bar de Tapas

Jamón, tortilla, vermut — and the small ritual that runs the Spanish evening



NIVEL

A1 · FOUNDATION

GRAMÁTICA

ARTÍCULOS · -AR
VERBOS · TOMAR

ESCENA

BAR DE TAPAS, SEVILLA

ROLE-PLAY TIER

1 → 2

A Spanish bar de tapas is the social hardware of the evening. Stand at the counter. Order a *caña* (a small draft beer) or a *vermut*. The barman puts a small plate of olives or jamón in front of you for free. You eat it, you order another, you have a conversation, you move to the next bar after one round. The Spanish word for this entire activity is *tapeo*. Learning to do it well is learning how Spain spends its evenings.

Articles — el, la, los, las

Spanish nouns have gender — masculine or feminine — and every noun needs the right article. Spanish articles are simpler than Italian or French. There are only four definite articles, and the indefinite ones are equally clean.

DEFINITE AND INDEFINITE ARTICLES

GENDER / NUMBER	"THE"	"A / SOME"	EXAMPLES
Masculine singular	<i>el</i>	<i>un</i>	el café, un vermut, el bar
Feminine singular	<i>la</i>	<i>una</i>	la tortilla, una caña, la cerveza
Masculine plural	<i>los</i>	<i>unos</i>	los churros, unos calamares
Feminine plural	<i>las</i>	<i>unas</i>	las aceitunas, unas patatas bravas

Gender clues: most nouns ending in *-o* are masculine, most ending in *-a* are feminine. Exceptions exist (*el día, la mano, el problema*) and have to be memorized. Words ending in *-ción* (*la canción*) and *-dad* (*la ciudad*) are almost always feminine.

Regular -ar verbs

Most Spanish verbs end in *-ar*, *-er*, or *-ir*. The *-ar* group is the largest and the most regular. Learn this pattern and hundreds of verbs are unlocked.

HABLAR · TO SPEAK – THE MODEL -AR VERB

PRONOUN	FORM	ENDING
yo	<i>hablo</i>	-o
tú	<i>hablas</i>	-as
él / ella / usted	<i>habla</i>	-a
nosotros	<i>hablamos</i>	-amos
vosotros (Spain)	<i>habláis</i>	-áis
ellos / ustedes	<i>hablan</i>	-an

Apply the same pattern to *tomar* (to take / have), *comprar* (to buy), *trabajar* (to work), *estudiar* (to study), *preguntar* (to ask), *esperar* (to wait).

Tomar – to take, to have (food/drink)

Tomar is the verb you use to "have" a coffee, a beer, a tapa. *¿Qué tomas?* = "What are you having?" Standard everywhere.

TOMAR · PRESENT TENSE (REGULAR -AR)

yo	<i>tomo</i>	Tomo un café.
tú	<i>tomas</i>	¿Qué tomas?
él / ella / usted	<i>toma</i>	Ella toma un vermut.
nosotros	<i>tomamos</i>	Tomamos dos cañas.
vosotros (Spain)	<i>tomáis</i>	¿Qué tomáis, chicos?
ellos / ustedes	<i>toman</i>	Toman siempre vino tinto.

DIÁLOGO · TAPEO EN EL BARRIO

8:30 p.m., a small bar in Triana, Sevilla. The student is at the counter with a friend.

ESTUDIANTE *Hola. ¿Qué hay para tapear?*

Hi. What's on for tapas?

CAMARERO *Tenemos jamón ibérico, tortilla, croquetas, aceitunas, boquerones, patatas bravas... ¿qué os pongo?*

We've got Iberian ham, tortilla, croquettes, olives, anchovies, patatas bravas... what shall I get you? (Spain plural — "os")

ESTUDIANTE *Una de jamón, una tortilla, y dos cañas, por favor.*

A plate of ham, a tortilla, and two small beers, please.

CAMARERO *Marchando. Las aceitunas están de la casa.*

Coming up. The olives are on the house.

ESTUDIANTE *Gracias. ¿Cuánto es?*

Thanks. How much?

CAMARERO *Siete con cincuenta.*

€7.50.

CULTURAL NOTE · THE TAPA IS THE MEAL

In Spain, dinner is usually late — 9pm at the earliest, often 10 or 11. Spaniards bridge the gap between the working day and dinner with *el tapeo*: walking from bar to bar, ordering a small drink and a small plate at each. You do not sit down to a multi-course tapas dinner the way a tourist menu sells it. You stand, you graze, you move. The bartender keeps a running tab with chalk marks on the counter or your napkin.

DIALECT COMPARE · "GIVE ME A BEER"

Castellano: *una caña, por favor* (a small draft) · Mexican: *una chela* (slang for a beer) · Argentinian: *una porrón* (a small bottle) · Colombian: *una pola* (slang for a beer)

The tapas menu — what to order

TAPAS — THE STAPLES

<i>jamón ibérico / jamón serrano</i>	Iberian cured ham (premium) / serrano ham (standard)
<i>tortilla (de patatas)</i>	Spanish potato omelet — nothing like a Mexican tortilla
<i>croquetas (de jamón / pollo / bacalao)</i>	breaded creamy croquettes — ham / chicken / cod
<i>aceitunas</i>	olives — usually free with your drink
<i>patatas bravas / patatas alioli</i>	fried potatoes with spicy sauce / with garlic mayo
<i>boquerones (en vinagre / fritos)</i>	anchovies (marinated in vinegar / fried)
<i>queso manchego</i>	aged sheep's milk cheese from La Mancha
<i>gazpacho</i>	cold tomato soup — summer staple in Andalucía
<i>calamares a la romana</i>	fried calamari rings

TO DRINK

<i>una caña</i>	a small draft beer — the default Spanish bar order
<i>una jarra / un tercio</i>	a half-liter mug / a 33cl bottle
<i>una clara</i>	beer with lemon soda — shandy, very Spanish
<i>un vermut</i>	vermouth on the rocks with an olive — the classic pre-meal drink
<i>un vino tinto / blanco / rosado</i>	red / white / rosé wine
<i>un tinto de verano</i>	red wine + lemon soda — Andalucía summer drink
<i>una sangría</i>	red wine + fruit — mostly for tourists, not what locals order
<i>un café con leche / un cortado / un café solo</i>	coffee with milk / espresso with a dash of milk / espresso

CULTURAL NOTE · DON'T ORDER SANGRÍA IN FRONT OF LOCALS

Sangría is for tourists. Locals drink *tinto de verano* (the same idea, simpler, what your Spanish grandmother would actually make at home). If you want red wine with something refreshing in it, ask for that. If you want sangría, order it — no one will stop you — but understand the room.

SLANG SPOTLIGHT · ANDALUCÍA

¡qué arte tienes! — literally "what art you have!" — said about someone who does something with style: a flamenco dancer, a barman who pours a perfect caña, a cook who plates beautifully. Very Andalusian. The compliment of compliments.

TUTOR'S CORNER

The article drill is where A1 students wobble. Drill *el / la / los / las* across 20 nouns until the student produces the right article in under 2 seconds. Don't introduce the gender exceptions yet (*el día, la mano*) — they'll memorize them naturally. Get the rule first, exceptions second.

Ejercicios

- Añade el artículo definido: _____ café · _____ tortilla · _____ aceitunas · _____ jamón · _____ patatas bravas · _____ vermut
- Conjuga *hablar*: yo _____, tú _____, ella _____, nosotros _____, ustedes _____.
- Conjuga *tomar*: Ana y Marco _____ dos cañas. Yo _____ un café. ¿Qué _____ vosotros?
- Traduce: "I'd like a tortilla, a plate of jamón, and a small beer, please. How much is it?"
- You're in Madrid and want a beer with lemon soda. What do you order? What do you *not* order if you want to fit in?

ROLE-PLAY · TIER 1 → 2

El tapeo de la tarde

9pm in Triana. The student walks into a busy bar with a friend. The bartender (tutor) is fast. Start scripted; tutor escalates with branching choices on the second pass.

Pass 1 — scripted

ESTUDIANTE: *Hola. ¿Qué hay de tapas?*

CAMARERO: *Jamón, tortilla, boquerones, croquetas, patatas bravas.*

ESTUDIANTE: *Una de jamón y dos cañas, por favor.*

CAMARERO: *Marchando.*

ESTUDIANTE: *¿Cuánto es?*

CAMARERO: *Siete con cincuenta.*

PASS 2 — TIER 2 BRANCHES THE TUTOR INTRODUCES

- The bar is out of jamón. Student must pick another tapa.
- The tutor asks "*¿también de comer?*" ("anything bigger to eat?") — student must decline politely without saying just "no."
- The student orders sangría. Tutor reacts with a smile. Student switches the order.
- Tutor uses Andalusian-style fast Spanish: *¿Qué le pongo, mi arma?* ("My soul" = friendly Andalusian endearment). Student stays calm, asks for repetition if needed.

PRACTICE CASTELLANO WITH A SPANISH TUTOR →

ANSWER KEY · CHAPTER 2

1. el café · la tortilla · las aceitunas · el jamón · las patatas bravas · el vermut
2. hablo · hablas · habla · hablamos · hablan
3. toman · tomo · tomáis
4. *Quiero una tortilla, una de jamón y una caña, por favor. ¿Cuánto es?*
5. Order *una clara*. Don't order *sangría*.

CAPÍTULO TRES · CIUDAD DE MÉXICO

03

En Familia

Sunday comida in Coyoacán — and the verb that makes possession easy

NIVEL

A1 · FOUNDATION

GRAMÁTICA

TENER · POSESIVOS ·
FAMILIA

ESCENA

COMIDA FAMILIAR,
CDMX

ROLE-PLAY TIER

2 · BRANCHING

In Mexico, Sunday *comida* is the meal. It starts at 2pm and runs until 6. The whole family shows up. The abuela has been cooking since 9am. There is rice, beans, mole, tortillas warming under a cloth, agua de jamaica in glass jars, kids running through the patio. Your job as a guest is to introduce yourself to everyone, accept three helpings without complaint, and compliment the food in a way that does not sound rehearsed.

Tener — to have

The second-most-used verb in Spanish after *ser/estar*. Used for possession (I have a sister), for many idioms (I'm hungry, I'm 30 years old), and as an obligation construction (*tener que + infinitive* = "I have to...").

TENER · PRESENT TENSE

yo	tengo	Tengo dos hermanos. I have two brothers.
tú	tienes	¿Tienes hambre? Are you hungry?
él / ella / usted	tiene	Ella tiene un hijo.
nosotros	tenemos	Tenemos una casa en Coyoacán.
vosotros (Spain)	tenéis	¿Tenéis hijos?
ellos / ustedes	tienen	Tienen tres perros.

TENER IDIOMS – THESE ARE NOT OPTIONAL

SPANISH	LITERAL	MEANING
<i>tengo hambre</i>	I have hunger	I'm hungry
<i>tengo sed</i>	I have thirst	I'm thirsty
<i>tengo calor / tengo frío</i>	I have heat / I have cold	I'm hot / I'm cold
<i>tengo sueño</i>	I have sleepiness	I'm sleepy
<i>tengo miedo</i>	I have fear	I'm afraid
<i>tengo razón</i>	I have reason	I'm right
<i>tengo veinticinco años</i>	I have 25 years	I'm 25 years old
<i>tengo que estudiar</i>	I have to study	I have to study (obligation)

Family vocabulary

LA FAMILIA

<i>el padre / la madre</i>	father / mother
<i>el hijo / la hija</i>	son / daughter
<i>el hermano / la hermana</i>	brother / sister
<i>el abuelo / la abuela</i>	grandfather / grandmother
<i>el nieto / la nieta</i>	grandson / granddaughter
<i>el tío / la tía</i>	uncle / aunt
<i>el primo / la prima</i>	cousin (m / f)
<i>el sobrino / la sobrina</i>	nephew / niece
<i>el esposo / la esposa · el marido / la mujer</i>	husband / wife — Mexico tends toward esposo/a; Spain toward marido/mujer
<i>el suegro / la suegra</i>	father-in-law / mother-in-law
<i>los padres · los hijos · los hermanos</i>	parents · children · siblings

Possessive adjectives

Spanish possessives are simpler than English. The short form (used before the noun) agrees in number, and *nuestro/vuestro* agree in gender too.

POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVES – SHORT FORM

OWNER	SINGULAR THING	PLURAL THING
my	<i>mi</i>	<i>mis</i>
your (sg, inf.)	<i>tu</i>	<i>tus</i>
his / her / your (form.)	<i>su</i>	<i>sus</i>
our	<i>nuestro / nuestra</i>	<i>nuestros / nuestras</i>
your (pl, Spain)	<i>vuestro / vuestra</i>	<i>vuestros / vuestras</i>
their / your-all	<i>su</i>	<i>sus</i>

Note: *mi padre*, not "el mi padre." Spanish possessives replace the article. **And:** *su* is ambiguous (his, her, your formal, their) — context tells you which.

DIÁLOGO · COMIDA DEL DOMINGO

Coyoacán, CDMX. 2:30 p.m. Ana is at her boyfriend Marco's family home for the first time. His abuela is bringing arroz to the table.

ABUELA *Ana, siéntate, siéntate. ¿Tienes hambre, hija?*
Ana, sit down, sit down. Are you hungry, sweetie?

ANA *Sí, señora, gracias. Tengo mucha hambre.*
Yes, ma'am, thank you. I'm very hungry.

ABUELA *Qué bueno. Mira, él es mi hijo José, el papá de Marco. Ella es mi nuera Lucía.*
Good. Look, this is my son José, Marco's dad. This is my daughter-in-law Lucía.

ANA *Mucho gusto. ¿Cuántos hijos tienen?*
Pleased to meet you. How many children do you have?

LUCÍA *Tres: Marco, Sofía y Luca. Sofía tiene veinte años, Luca tiene quince.*
Three: Marco, Sofía, and Luca. Sofía is 20, Luca is 15.

ABUELA *¡Come, come, hija, no tengas pena!*
(in Mexican Spanish) Eat, eat, sweetie, don't be shy!

CULTURAL NOTE · THE FIRST COMPLIMENT MATTERS

The first sentence after the first bite at a Mexican family comida is the most important thing you'll say that afternoon. "*¡Está delicioso, señora! Felicidades.*" ("It's delicious, ma'am! Congratulations.") is the safe answer. "*Me recuerda a la cocina de mi abuela*" ("It reminds me of my own grandmother's cooking") is the answer that gets you invited back. Be specific if you can — name the dish.

DIALECT COMPARE · "I'M HUNGRY"

Castellano: *tengo hambre* · Mexican: *tengo hambre* (same — Mexican Spanish uses standard *tener*) · Argentinian: *tengo hambre* / *tenés hambre* (with *vos* the second-person form changes) · Caribbean / Cuban: "*tengo un hambre...*" (intensified, common emphatic).

SLANG SPOTLIGHT · MEXICO

mija / *mijo* — contraction of "mi hija / mi hijo" ("my daughter / my son"). Used by older Mexicans to address anyone younger affectionately. Not just for biological children. Hearing it from a Mexican *abuela* means you have been adopted for the afternoon.

TUTOR'S CORNER

The *su* ambiguity is where A1 students freeze. Spend five minutes asking the student to translate "his book / her book / your book (formal) / their book" — all are *su libro*. Once they accept the ambiguity, they stop overthinking it. In conversation, context resolves it 99% of the time.

Ejercicios

1. Conjuga *tener*: yo _____, tú _____, ella _____, nosotros _____, ustedes _____.
2. Añade el posesivo "my": _____ padre, _____ madre, _____ hermanos, _____ hermanas, _____ abuela.
3. Añade "our": _____ casa, _____ hijos, _____ abuelos, _____ familia.
4. Traduce: "I'm thirsty and a little cold. How old are your (formal) children?"
5. Translate this Mexican-flavored line: "*Come, hija, no tengas pena.*"

ROLE-PLAY · TIER 2 · BRANCHING

La primera comida en Coyoacán

The student is meeting their host family in Mexico City for the first time. The tutor plays the role of the mother, the abuela, and a teenage cousin in rotation. The conversation lasts about six minutes. Use the script as backbone; the tutor improvises follow-up questions when the student handles a branch well.

Beat 1 – arrival

TUTOR (MADRE): Welcomes student, asks if they're hungry, asks where they're from.

ESTUDIANTE: Greets formally with *usted*, accepts the offer to eat, gives city of origin, says *tengo mucha hambre*.

Beat 2 – introductions

TUTOR (ABUELA): Introduces 3 family members in Mexican-tinted Spanish ("*Mira, él es...*"). Student must follow.

ESTUDIANTE: Asks each person at least one question (age, where they're from, what they do — but only with *ser* and *tener*; no other verbs yet).

Beat 3 – the first bite

TUTOR (ABUELA): Serves arroz con frijoles. Pauses.

ESTUDIANTE: Compliments the food using a full sentence, not just "*¡bueno!*"

TUTOR BRANCHES

- The abuela calls the student *mija/mijo* — student should not flinch, just smile and answer.
- A teenage cousin uses *tú* with the student. Does the student reciprocate, or stay on *usted*? Reciprocate.
- The abuela asks about the student's own family in the US. Student must produce 3-4 sentences about siblings/parents using *tener* and possessives correctly.

TRAIN WITH A MEXICAN SPANISH TUTOR →

ANSWER KEY · CHAPTER 3

1. tengo · tienes · tiene · tenemos · tienen
2. mi padre · mi madre · mis hermanos · mis hermanas · mi abuela
3. nuestra casa · nuestros hijos · nuestros abuelos · nuestra familia
4. *Tengo sed y un poco de frío. ¿Cuántos años tienen sus hijos?*
5. "Eat, sweetie, don't be shy." (*tener pena* in Mexican Spanish = to be embarrassed/shy, different from Spain's *tener pena* = to feel sorrow.)

CAPÍTULO CUATRO · CARTAGENA

04

Por la Ciudad

Asking directions in Cartagena — where Colombian Spanish meets the Caribbean

NIVEL

A1 · FOUNDATION

GRAMÁTICA

PREPOSICIONES · -ER /
-IR · IMPERATIVO

ESCENA

CIUDAD AMURALLADA,
CARTAGENA

ROLE-PLAY TIER

2 · BRANCHING WITH
DIALECT NOISE

Cartagena is the place to learn Caribbean Spanish gently. Bogotá Spanish (Andean, slow, precise) bleeds into Cartagena Spanish (coastal, fast, syllable-dropping) along the same Colombian highway. The local register is musical, friendly, and just hard enough on your ear to give you the first taste of the Caribbean coast without throwing you into the deep end of Cuba or Puerto Rico.

The basic prepositions — a, en, de, con, por

PREPOSITIONS YOU WILL USE EVERY SENTENCE

PREPOSITION	USES	EXAMPLES
a	"to" + destination, time, the personal-a before a human object	voy a Cartagena · a las siete · veo a María
en	"in / on / at" — place or transport	en la casa · en Colombia · en autobús
de	"from / of"	soy de Los Ángeles · el libro de Ana · de madera
con	"with"	café con leche · voy con mi hermana
por	"through / by / via / along"	por la ciudad · por la calle · gracias por todo
para	"for / in order to / by (deadline)"	para mí · para aprender · para mañana

al / del: when *a* or *de* meets *el* (masculine "the"), they contract: *a + el = al*, *de + el = del*. *al mercado*, *del hotel*. They do not contract with *la / los / las*.

-er and -ir verbs (the other two families)

THE THREE REGULAR PATTERNS SIDE BY SIDE

PRONOUN	-AR · HABLAR	-ER · COMER	-IR · VIVIR
yo	hablo	como	vivo
tú	hablas	comes	vives
él / ella / usted	habla	come	vive
nosotros	hablamos	comemos	vivimos
vosotros (Spain)	habláis	coméis	vivís
ellos / ustedes	hablan	comen	viven

Notice *-er* and *-ir* verbs are nearly identical — they only diverge in the *nosotros* and *vosotros* forms. Other useful regulars: *aprender* (to learn), *leer* (to read), *beber* (to drink), *abrir* (to open), *escribir* (to write), *recibir* (to receive).

Informal imperative — telling someone what to do

For directions and quick instructions, the informal (*tú*) imperative is what you use. The formation:

TÚ-IMPERATIVE (AFFIRMATIVE)

VERB TYPE	HOW TO FORM	EXAMPLES
Regular verbs	drop the final -s from the <i>tú</i> form	tomas → toma! · comes → come! · vives → vive!
Common irregulars	memorize	ven (venir) · ve (ir) · di (decir) · haz (hacer) · pon (poner) · sal (salir) · ten (tener)

Useful imperatives for directions: *ve* (go), *gira* (turn — also *dobla* in Mexico), *toma* (take), *cruza* (cross), *sigue* (continue), *vuelve* (come back). Formal (*usted*) imperative is different and is covered in Chapter 9.

DIÁLOGO · ¿PARA LA PLAZA DE BOLÍVAR?

Outside the Castillo de San Felipe, Cartagena, late morning. The student stops a Cartagenero (a man in his sixties).

ESTUDIANTE *Disculpe, señor. ¿Para la Plaza de Bolívar?*

Excuse me, sir. For the Plaza de Bolívar?

SEÑOR *Mire, sigue derecho por la Calle de la Soledad, cruza la avenida, dobla a la derecha y la plaza está a dos cuadras, frente a la catedral.*

Look, go straight on Calle de la Soledad, cross the avenue, turn right and the plaza is two blocks away, across from the cathedral.

ESTUDIANTE *¿Está lejos?*

Is it far?

SEÑOR *No, diez minutos caminando.*

No, ten minutes on foot.

SEÑOR *¡Cúidate, mi amor, que el sol pega duro!*

(in Colombian Caribbean) Take care, dear, the sun hits hard!

ESTUDIANTE *¡Muchas gracias!*

Thanks so much!

DIALECT COMPARE · "LOOK!"

Standard: *mira* · Mexican: *mira* (same) · Colombian (especially Caribbean): *mira* / *vea* — coastal Colombians often use *vea* as a softener at the start of an explanation. Argentinian: *mirá* (with voseo accent shift to the final syllable).

Direction vocabulary

POR LA CIUDAD

<i>(sigue) derecho / recto</i>	straight (ahead). Latin America: <i>derecho</i> . Spain: <i>recto</i> .
<i>a la derecha / a la izquierda</i>	to the right / to the left
<i>dobla / gira a la derecha</i>	turn right (Mexico/Colombia: <i>dobla</i> . Spain: <i>gira</i> .)
<i>la primera / segunda / tercera</i>	the first / second / third (street)
<i>la esquina · la cuadra (LatAm) / la manzana (Spain)</i>	the corner · the block
<i>cerca / lejos</i>	near / far
<i>delante de / detrás de / al lado de</i>	in front of / behind / next to
<i>frente a / enfrente de</i>	across from / facing
<i>cruza la calle / la avenida</i>	cross the street / the avenue
<i>el semáforo / la rotonda / el cruce</i>	traffic light / roundabout / intersection
<i>la parada del autobús / la estación</i>	the bus stop / the station
<i>a pie / en carro · en coche / en autobús / en metro / en taxi</i>	on foot / by car (LatAm <i>carro</i> , Spain <i>coche</i>) / by bus / by metro / by taxi

SLANG SPOTLIGHT · CARTAGENA

¡ajá! — a Cartagena-specific filler word, used as "well...", "ok...", "so..." The bridge between sentences in Caribbean Colombian Spanish. Locals will hit it five times in a conversation. Friendly, ubiquitous, instantly marks the speaker as costeño (from the coast).

CULTURAL NOTE · THE LONG ANSWER

Latin Americans, especially in the Caribbean, will rarely give you a five-word direction. You will get a story: landmarks, side comments, what used to be on that corner before the new bakery, what time the church bell rings. Listen for the verbs in the imperative (*sigue, dobla, cruza*) and the right/left/landmark; everything else is conversational decoration. If you miss a word, the gesture usually carries it.

TUTOR'S CORNER

For the imperative drill, use a hand-drawn map of a 6-block area. Place a starting X and a destination ★. Give the student 90 seconds to write the directions in the tú-imperative. Then swap and have them *give* the directions out loud while you follow on paper. Fastest way to surface gaps in *toma/dobla/cruza/sigue*.

Ejercicios

1. Añade la preposición: Voy _____ Cartagena · Estoy _____ Colombia · Soy _____ Los Ángeles · El libro está _____ la mesa (preposition + el).
2. Conjuga *comer*: yo _____, tú _____, ella _____, nosotros _____, ustedes _____.
3. Conjuga *vivir*: yo _____, tú _____, él _____, nosotros _____, ellos _____.
4. Forma el imperativo (tú): ir _____, doblar _____, tomar _____, seguir _____, cruzar _____.
5. Traduce: "Excuse me, where is the bus stop? Is it far? — No, take the second street on the right, the stop is at the corner."

ROLE-PLAY · TIER 2 · BRANCHING WITH DIALECT NOISE

Estoy perdido en Cartagena

The student is in the old walled city of Cartagena and has lost their group. They need to get to (a) la Plaza de Bolívar, (b) Café del Mar, or (c) the bus station — the tutor picks. The tutor plays three different people the student stops along the way: a young Bogotana (clear standard Spanish), an older costeño (Caribbean Colombian with dropped consonants), and a vendor with strong Cartagena accent (comprehension test).

Person 1 — Bogotana, slow and clean. Student follows easily.

Person 2 — costeño. Tutor drops final s sounds, uses *jajá!*, calls the student *mi amor*. Student listens for the verb + direction, ignores the rest.

Person 3 — strong accent. Tutor speaks faster. Student must say "*Disculpe, ¿puede repetirlo más despacio, por favor?*" ("Sorry, can you repeat that more slowly, please?")

TUTOR BRANCHES

- Person 2 gives wrong directions and the student arrives somewhere they didn't intend. Student must go back and ask again.
- Person 3 calls the student *mi amor*. Student should not be thrown — it is normal Caribbean address, not flirtation.

LEARN COLOMBIAN SPANISH WITH A TUTOR →

ANSWER KEY · CHAPTER 4

1. a Cartagena · en Colombia · de Los Ángeles · sobre la mesa (or "en la mesa")
2. como · comes · come · comemos · comen
3. vivo · vives · vive · vivimos · viven
4. ve · dobla · toma · sigue · cruza
5. *Disculpe, ¿dónde está la parada del autobús? ¿Está lejos? — No, toma la segunda calle a la derecha, la parada está en la esquina.*

CAPÍTULO CINCO · LIMA

05 En el Mercado

Mercado de Surquillo — numbers, weights, and the right way to ask the price

NIVEL

A1 · FOUNDATION

GRAMÁTICA

NÚMEROS ·
CANTIDADES ·
¿CUÁNTO CUESTA?

ESCENA

MERCADO DE
SURQUILLO, LIMA

ROLE-PLAY TIER

2 · BRANCHING,
BARGAINING

Lima is the place to learn market Spanish. Mercado de Surquillo is the open market in Miraflores where the chefs of Lima's famous restaurants do their morning shopping. Stalls of ají amarillo, choclo, papas (Peru has more varieties of potato than anywhere on earth), pescado fresh from the Pacific. Vendors know their product better than anyone, will give you a sample, and want you to know what you are buying.

Numbers – 1 to 1,000

THE NUMBERS YOU ACTUALLY NEED

RANGE	FORMS
1–10	<i>uno · dos · tres · cuatro · cinco · seis · siete · ocho · nueve · diez</i>
11–20	<i>once · doce · trece · catorce · quince · dieciséis · diecisiete · dieciocho · diecinueve · veinte</i>
20–100	<i>veinte · treinta · cuarenta · cincuenta · sesenta · setenta · ochenta · noventa · cien</i>
Compounds 20–29	<i>veintiuno · veintidós · veintitrés ... (written as one word through 29)</i>
Compounds 31+	<i>treinta y uno · cuarenta y cinco · noventa y nueve (written as three words)</i>
Hundreds	<i>cien (100) · ciento uno (101) · doscientos · trescientos · quinientos · setecientos · novecientos · mil (1,000)</i>

Three rules to memorize: (1) *uno* drops to *un* before masculine nouns: *un café, veintiún años*. (2) *cien* becomes *ciento* when followed by another number: *cien personas* but *ciento veinte personas*. (3) hundreds agree with the noun: *doscientas casas, quinientos dólares*.

Money and weight

PESOS, SOLES, EUROS – AND HOW YOU WEIGH

<i>el sol / el peso / el euro / el dólar</i>	Peruvian sol / Mexican (or Argentine, Colombian) peso / euro / dollar
<i>10 soles / 250 pesos / €4,50</i>	prices vary by country — Spain uses comma as decimal, Latin America varies (Mexico uses period like US)
<i>un kilo / medio kilo / un cuarto (kilo)</i>	1 kg / 500g / 250g
<i>cien gramos / doscientos gramos</i>	100g / 200g
<i>una libra (en Cuba, EE.UU., R.D.)</i>	a pound — Cuba, US Latino markets, Dominican Republic still use pounds
<i>una rebanada · un trozo · un pedacito</i>	a slice · a piece · a small piece
<i>¿cuánto cuesta? / ¿cuánto es? / ¿cuánto vale?</i>	how much is it? / how much total? / how much does it cost?
<i>está caro / está barato</i>	it's expensive / it's cheap (with <i>estar</i> , because it's a state)
<i>¿me da un descuento? / ¿me lo deja en...?</i>	can you give me a discount? / can you let me have it for...?

"Some" — un poco de, algo de

Spanish does not have a true partitive article like French or Italian. To say "some bread," you use *un poco de pan* ("a little of bread") or just the plural without an article (*quiero manzanas* = "I want apples").

"SOME" EXPRESSIONS

some bread	<i>un poco de pan</i>
some apples	<i>manzanas (no article) / unas manzanas</i>
some olives	<i>aceitunas / unas aceitunas</i>
a bit of cheese	<i>un poco de queso · un poquito de queso</i>
half a kilo of tomatoes	<i>medio kilo de tomates</i>

DIÁLOGO · EN EL PUESTO DE AJÍ

7:30 a.m. at the Mercado de Surquillo. The student is at the chile/spice stall.

ESTUDIANTE *Buenos días. Quisiera un poco de ají amarillo, por favor.*

Good morning. I'd like a bit of yellow chile, please.

VENDEDORA *Claro, mamita. ¿Cuánto le pongo? ¿Un cuarto, medio kilo?*

Of course, dear. How much shall I get you? A quarter (kilo), half a kilo?

ESTUDIANTE *Un cuarto está bien. ¿Es picante?*

A quarter is fine. Is it spicy?

VENDEDORA *Picante, sí, pero rico. Pruebe un pedacito.*

Spicy, yes, but delicious. Try a little piece.

ESTUDIANTE *Mmm, buenísimo. ¿Cuánto cuesta?*

Mmm, excellent. How much?

VENDEDORA *Diez soles el kilo. Un cuarto, dos cincuenta.*

10 soles per kilo. A quarter, 2.50.

ESTUDIANTE *Me lo llevo. Y también medio kilo de tomate, por favor.*

I'll take it. And also half a kilo of tomato, please.

CULTURAL NOTE · THE SAMPLE, THE PRICE, THE RELATIONSHIP

At a good Latin American market, the vendor will offer *una prueba*, a taste. Accept. It is not pressure; it is how the vendor demonstrates the product and starts a relationship that pays off in better produce next visit. Compliment honestly. "*Está delicioso*" works everywhere. Refusing flatly without trying reads cold.

DIALECT COMPARE · "HOW MUCH?"

All regions: *¿cuánto cuesta?* / *¿cuánto es?* — universal. *Andean*: vendors often answer with "*no más diez soles*" ("just 10 soles" — the *no más* functions as a softener, characteristic of Andean Spanish). *Mexican*: "*son veinte pesitos*" — the diminutive *-ito* on the currency name is common, friendly, distinctively Mexican.

SLANG SPOTLIGHT · PERUVIAN / ANDEAN

mamita · *papito* · *jovencito* — affectionate diminutives Peruvian vendors use to address customers. Not flirtation, not condescension; it's the warmth of the market. The female form *mamita* for any female customer (including 70-year-old grandmothers), the male form *papito* for any male. *jovencito/a* ("youngster") is the safer neutral choice if you want to address back.

TUTOR'S CORNER

Numbers under pressure are where students lose fluency. Drill in pairs: tutor calls a price out loud ("*siete con cincuenta*"), student writes the number. Then reverse — tutor shows a written price, student says it. Aim for 20 numbers in 90 seconds before moving on. This is the bottleneck that decides whether the market role-play feels real or panicked.

Ejercicios

1. Escribe los números: 12 _____, 21 _____, 38 _____, 65 _____, 100 _____, 250 _____.
2. Añade la cantidad correcta: Quiero _____ pan (some), _____ aceitunas (some), _____ queso (a little), _____ tomate (half a kilo).
3. Traduce: "I'd like 300 grams of yellow chile, please. How much is it?"
4. You buy 200g of ham at €18/kg. How much is it? Say it in Spanish.
5. Traduce: "It's a bit expensive. Do you have something cheaper?" (use *algo más barato*)

ROLE-PLAY · TIER 2 · BRANCHING, BARGAINING

La compra en el Mercado de Surquillo

The student has 50 soles and a shopping list: ají amarillo, tomates, una piña, un trozo de queso fresco. The tutor plays three vendors. The student must move from stall to stall, ordering by weight and managing the total spend.

Stall 1 — ají. Order yellow chile with a sample. Decide quantity.

Stall 2 — tomates. Order half a kilo. Vendor offers a free cilantro bunch — student accepts.

Stall 3 — fruit. Buy a pineapple. Ask the vendor to cut it for them.

Stall 4 — cheese. Buy 200g of *queso fresco*. Ask if it's salty or mild.

TUTOR BRANCHES

- The ají is more expensive than expected — student must scale back the quantity.
- The cheese vendor accidentally weighs out 300g instead of 200g — student must ask them to take some off.
- The fruit vendor uses heavy diminutives (*papito, una piñita*). Student stays comfortable.

PRACTICE MARKET SPANISH WITH A PERUVIAN TUTOR →

ANSWER KEY · CHAPTER 5

1. doce · veintiuno · treinta y ocho · sesenta y cinco · cien · doscientos cincuenta
2. un poco de pan · aceitunas (or unas aceitunas) · un poco de queso · medio kilo de tomate
3. *Quisiera trescientos gramos de ají amarillo, por favor. ¿Cuánto cuesta?*

4. $200\text{g} = 0.2\text{ kg} \times \text{€}18 = \text{€}3.60 \rightarrow$ "tres con sesenta"

5. *Está un poco caro. ¿Tiene algo más barato?*

CAPÍTULO SEIS · BUENOS AIRES

06

Un Día Típico

A morning in Buenos Aires — and the moment Spanish becomes vos

NIVEL

A1 → A2 BRIDGE

GRAMÁTICA

REFLEXIVOS · HORA ·
IR/VENIR/HACER · SER
VS ESTAR ·
INTRODUCCIÓN AL
VOSEO

ESCENA

UNA MAÑANA EN
PALERMO, BA

ROLE-PLAY TIER

2 · BRANCHING WITH
RAPID FOLLOW-UPS

Describing your own day is the single most useful conversation skill at A1. Almost every interaction with a tutor begins here: when do you wake up, what do you do, where do you go. This chapter teaches you the verbs to do it — reflexive verbs, the three big irregulars (*ir, venir, hacer*), and how to tell time. It also introduces the Argentinian *vos*, because Buenos Aires is where most beginners first hear it and freeze.

Reflexive verbs

A reflexive verb is one where the subject does something to themselves. *Me levanto* = "I get myself up." Spanish uses many more reflexives than English does, especially for daily routines.

LEVANTARSE · TO GET UP

yo	me levanto	Me levanto a las siete.
tú	te levantas	¿A qué hora te levantas?
él / ella / usted	se levanta	Ella se levanta temprano.
nosotros	nos levantamos	Nos levantamos a las ocho.
vosotros (Spain)	os levantáis	¿Os levantáis tarde?
ellos / ustedes	se levantan	Se levantan a las seis.

Key reflexives for your day: *despertarse* (wake up), *levantarse* (get up), *ducharse* (shower), *lavarse* (wash up), *vestirse* (get dressed), *peinarse* (do hair), *desayunar* (have breakfast — not reflexive but pairs with these), *acostarse* (go to bed), *dormirse* (fall asleep).

Telling time

¿QUÉ HORA ES? · THE SPANISH CLOCK

TIME	HOW TO SAY IT
1:00	<i>Es la una</i>
2:00 · 3:00	<i>Son las dos · Son las tres...</i>
2:15	<i>Son las dos y cuarto</i>
2:30	<i>Son las dos y media</i>
2:45	<i>Son las tres menos cuarto / Son las dos cuarenta y cinco</i>
12:00 noon · midnight	<i>Es mediodía · Es medianoche</i>
At what time?	<i>¿A qué hora?</i>
At 7am / 7pm	<i>A las siete de la mañana / de la tarde / de la noche</i>

Ir, venir, hacer — three irregulars you will use every day

THE THREE TOGETHER

PRONOUN	IR · GO	VENIR · COME	HACER · DO/MAKE
yo	<i>voy</i>	<i>vengo</i>	<i>hago</i>
tú	<i>vas</i>	<i>vienes</i>	<i>haces</i>
él / ella	<i>va</i>	<i>viene</i>	<i>hace</i>
nosotros	<i>vamos</i>	<i>venimos</i>	<i>hacemos</i>
vosotros (Spain)	<i>vais</i>	<i>venís</i>	<i>hacéis</i>
ellos / ustedes	<i>van</i>	<i>vienen</i>	<i>hacen</i>

hacer covers an enormous range: *hago ejercicio* (I work out), *hago la compra* (I go grocery shopping), *hace frío* (it's cold out), *hace dos años* (two years ago), *¿qué haces?* (what are you doing? / what do you do?).

Ser vs Estar — the second go

Chapter 1 introduced *ser*. *Estar* is the other half of the "to be" coin, and choosing between them is the single most distinctively Spanish grammar decision.

ESTAR · PRESENT TENSE

yo	<i>estoy</i>
tú	<i>estás</i>
él / ella / usted	<i>está</i>
nosotros	<i>estamos</i>
vosotros (Spain)	<i>estáis</i>
ellos / ustedes	<i>están</i>

SER VS ESTAR – THE QUICK RULE

USE SER FOR	USE ESTAR FOR
Identity — soy Ana, soy médico	Location — estoy en Buenos Aires
Origin — soy de Los Ángeles	Current state — estoy cansado, estoy contento
Permanent traits — soy alto, soy americano	Temporary states — estoy enfermo, está caliente
Time — son las tres, es lunes	Ongoing action — estoy comiendo (the gerund tense)
Material — la mesa es de madera	Result of a change — está roto, está abierto

The classic mnemonic: SER = essence (what something is), ESTAR = state (where or how something is right now). Adjectives flip meaning between them: *ser aburrido* = "to be boring" (trait); *estar aburrido* = "to be bored" (state). *Ser listo* = "to be smart"; *estar listo* = "to be ready."

The voseo — what changes when you cross into Argentina

In Argentina, Uruguay, Costa Rica, parts of Central America, and pockets of Colombia, the informal singular "you" is *vos* instead of *tú*. The pronoun changes and the verb form changes for present tense and imperative. The rest of the verb system stays the same.

TÚ VS VOS — THE PRESENT-TENSE DIFFERENCE

VERB	WITH TÚ	WITH VOS (RIOPLATENSE)
hablar	<i>tú hablas</i>	<i>vos hablás</i>
comer	<i>tú comes</i>	<i>vos comés</i>
vivir	<i>tú vives</i>	<i>vos vivís</i>
tener	<i>tú tienes</i>	<i>vos tenés</i>
ser	<i>tú eres</i>	<i>vos sos</i>

Pattern: drop the stem-change (no *tienes*, just *tenés*) and stress the final syllable. Imperative: *hablá, comé, vení, decí*. Listen for it in Buenos Aires from your first taxi driver — it's everywhere.

DIÁLOGO · LA MAÑANA PORTEÑA

A Strommen tutor (Marco, from Buenos Aires) and a student (Ana) on a video lesson. Marco asks Ana to describe her typical day.

MARCO *Bueno, Ana, contame un día típico. ¿A qué hora te levantás?*
OK Ana, tell me about a typical day. What time do you wake up? (note vos forms: contame, te levantás)

ANA *Me levanto a las seis y media. Desayuno — un café y una tostada — y voy al trabajo.*
I get up at 6:30. I have breakfast — coffee and toast — and I go to work.

MARCO *¿A qué hora llegás al trabajo?*
What time do you arrive at work? (vos: llegás)

ANA *A las ocho y cuarto. Trabajo hasta la una, después almuerzo con los colegas.*
8:15. I work until 1, then I have lunch with colleagues.

MARCO *¿Y por la noche?*
And in the evening?

ANA *Vuelvo a casa a las siete. Hago un poco de ejercicio. Ceno tarde, a las nueve y media, y me acuesto a las once.*
I get home at 7. I do a bit of exercise. I have dinner late, at 9:30, and I go to bed at 11.

DIALECT COMPARE · "LET'S GO!"

Standard: *¡vamos!* · Mexican: *¡vámonos!* (with "us" reflexive) · Colombian: *¡dale!* · Cuban: *¡échale!* · Argentinian: *¡dale!* / *¡vamos!* (both used) · Castellano: *¡venga!* (Spain-specific).

SLANG SPOTLIGHT · ARGENTINA

che — the Argentinian filler word of all filler words. Used to get attention, to mark a pause, to address someone: "*Che, ¿qué hacés?*" = "Hey, what're you doing?" Argentinians use *che* so often that the rest of Latin America calls Argentinians "los che." Use it freely with peers; not with strangers or anyone older.

CULTURAL NOTE · CENA LATE, ALMUERZO BIG

In Spain and most of Latin America, lunch (*almuerzo* in LatAm, *la comida* in Mexico, *la comida* or *el almuerzo* in Spain) is the bigger meal of the day. Dinner (*cena*) is later and lighter — 9pm in Mexico and Colombia, 10pm in Spain, sometimes later in Argentina. American "early-bird dinner" at 6pm doesn't exist; most restaurants don't open the kitchen until 7:30 at the earliest.

TUTOR'S CORNER

Have the student write their own daily routine in 8 sentences for homework using reflexives and times. The next lesson, run it as a quick-fire interview: you ask "¿a qué hora te levantas? ¿qué hacés después? ¿a qué hora almuerzas?" rapid-fire (use vos if your student is heading to Argentina, tú otherwise), and the student answers without stopping. Turns rehearsed material into reflex.

Ejercicios

1. Conjuga el reflexivo: *vestirse* — yo _____, tú _____, ella _____, nosotros _____, ellos _____.
2. Escribe las horas: 7:30 _____, 14:15 _____, 18:45 _____, 24:00 _____.
3. Conjuga *hacer*: yo _____ ejercicio · tú _____ la compra · nosotros _____ la comida · ellos _____ mucho ruido.
4. ¿SER o ESTAR? (a) Yo _____ americano. (b) Mi madre _____ enferma. (c) La fiesta _____ en mi casa. (d) Las once de la noche _____ tarde.
5. Convierte de *tú* a *vos*: tú hablas → _____, tú tienes → _____, tú eres → _____, tú dices → _____.

ROLE-PLAY · TIER 2 · BRANCHING WITH RAPID FOLLOW-UPS

Un día en Buenos Aires

The student is on a video call with a Strommen Argentinian tutor for a level check. The tutor's job is to keep the conversation flowing in Spanish for six minutes, using *vos* throughout. The student describes their day, then is asked unscripted follow-ups.

Beat 1 (90s): Student gives a 5-sentence summary of their day, using reflexives + times. Answers come back in *tú* form initially; that's fine for a beginner.

Beat 2 (90s): Tutor asks 3 unscripted follow-ups in *vos*: "¿Y los fines de semana?" · "¿Qué hacés después de cenar?" · "¿Vas mucho al gimnasio?"

Beat 3 (90s): Tutor flips it: "ahora preguntame vos sobre mi día." Student must produce questions in *tú* or *vos*.

Beat 4 (90s): Tutor introduces a problem — "hoy llego tarde al trabajo porque el subte está cortado" ("today I'm late to work because the metro is cut off"). Student responds with sympathy and a follow-up question.

TUTOR BRANCHES

- Tutor speeds up dramatically on Beat 2 with rioplatense rhythm. Student must ask "¿podés repetir más despacio, por favor?"
- Tutor accidentally calls the student *che* mid-sentence. Student should not flinch — just continue.

LEARN RIOPLATENSE SPANISH WITH A TUTOR →

ANSWER KEY · CHAPTER 6

1. me visto · te vistes · se viste · nos vestimos · se visten
2. Son las siete y media · Son las dos y cuarto · Son las siete menos cuarto · Es medianoche
3. hago · haces · hacemos · hacen
4. (a) soy · (b) está · (c) es · (d) son ... (it's late = es tarde, with ser)
5. vos hablás · vos tenés · vos sos · vos decís

**NIVEL**

A2 · REAL
CONVERSATIONS

GRAMÁTICA

PRETÉRITO (REGULAR) ·
COMIDA MEXICANA

ESCENA

CANTINA, CDMX

ROLE-PLAY TIER

3 · IMPROVISED ON A
FRAME

A Mexico City cantina is the place to learn the past tense. You ate the mole. You ordered the mezcal. You finished the chicharrón. You loved it. Every sentence wants to be in the past — the meal is the story you are about to tell your friends — and Spanish has one tense that handles most of what you need: the *pretérito indefinido*, the simple past.

Pretérito indefinido — the simple past

Spanish has two main past tenses at A2 level: the **preterit** (for completed actions with a clear endpoint) and the **imperfect** (for descriptions, habits, ongoing past states). This chapter teaches the preterit. The imperfect comes in Chapter 8.

REGULAR PRETERIT ENDINGS

PRONOUN	-AR · HABLAR	-ER · COMER	-IR · VIVIR
yo	<i>hablé</i>	<i>comí</i>	<i>viví</i>
tú	<i>hablaste</i>	<i>comiste</i>	<i>viviste</i>
él / ella / usted	<i>habló</i>	<i>comió</i>	<i>vivió</i>
nosotros	<i>hablamos</i>	<i>comimos</i>	<i>vivimos</i>
vosotros (Spain)	<i>hablasteis</i>	<i>comisteis</i>	<i>vivisteis</i>
ellos / ustedes	<i>hablaron</i>	<i>comieron</i>	<i>vivieron</i>

The accent matters: *hablo* = "I speak" (present), *habló* = "he/she spoke" (preterit). The mark over the final o changes the meaning entirely. Listen for the stress; write the accent.

CRITICAL IRREGULAR PRETERITS – MEMORIZE THESE NOW

VERB	YO	TÚ	ÉL/ELLA	NOSOTROS	ELLOS
ser / ir	<i>fui</i>	<i>fuiste</i>	<i>fue</i>	<i>fuimos</i>	<i>fueron</i>
hacer	<i>hice</i>	<i>hiciste</i>	<i>hizo</i>	<i>hicimos</i>	<i>hicieron</i>
tener	<i>tuve</i>	<i>tuviste</i>	<i>tuvo</i>	<i>tuvimos</i>	<i>tuvieron</i>
estar	<i>estuve</i>	<i>estuviste</i>	<i>estuvo</i>	<i>estuvimos</i>	<i>estuvieron</i>
poder	<i>pude</i>	<i>pudiste</i>	<i>pudo</i>	<i>pudimos</i>	<i>pudieron</i>
decir	<i>dije</i>	<i>dijiste</i>	<i>dijo</i>	<i>dijimos</i>	<i>dijeron</i>
traer	<i>traje</i>	<i>trajiste</i>	<i>trajo</i>	<i>trajimos</i>	<i>trajeron</i>
dar	<i>di</i>	<i>diste</i>	<i>dio</i>	<i>dimos</i>	<i>dieron</i>
ver	<i>vi</i>	<i>viste</i>	<i>vio</i>	<i>vimos</i>	<i>vieron</i>

Notable: *ser* and *ir* share the same preterit forms. Context tells you which: *fui a Cuba* ("I went to Cuba") vs *fui estudiante* ("I was a student").

Restaurant vocabulary

EN EL RESTAURANTE – BY THE COURSE

<i>la entrada / el primer plato</i>	appetizer / first course
<i>el plato principal / el segundo</i>	main course
<i>la guarnición / el acompañamiento</i>	side dish
<i>el postre</i>	dessert
<i>el café / el mezcal / el tequila</i>	post-meal coffee or digestivo
<i>el vino de la casa</i>	house wine
<i>la cuenta, por favor</i>	the check, please
<i>la propina</i>	the tip — 10-15% in Mexico, less in Spain

DIÁLOGO · UNA NOCHE EN LA CANTINA

Cantina La Sirena, Colonia Roma, CDMX. Evening. The student is with a friend.

MESERO *Buenas noches. ¿Tienen reservación?*
Good evening. Do you have a reservation?

ESTUDIANTE *Sí, a nombre de Ruiz, para dos.*
Yes, under Ruiz, for two.

MESERO *Por aquí, por favor. ¿Algo para tomar?*
This way, please. Anything to drink?

ESTUDIANTE *Sí, gracias. Dos mezcales con sal de gusano y una jarra de agua.*
Yes, please. Two mezcales with worm salt and a jug of water.

**[10 MINUTES
LATER]**

MESERO *¿Ya decidieron?*
Have you decided?

ESTUDIANTE *Sí. De entrada, una orden de chicharrón en salsa verde. De plato principal, un mole poblano para mí, y para mi amigo, los chiles en nogada.*
Yes. For appetizer, an order of chicharrón in green salsa. For main, a mole poblano for me, and for my friend, the chiles en nogada.

MESERO *Buena elección. Los chiles en nogada son de temporada, ¡aprovéchelos!*
Good choice. The chiles en nogada are seasonal, take advantage!

CULTURAL NOTE · THE RULES OF A MEXICAN CANTINA

A traditional cantina was a men-only drinking establishment. The modern *cantina* is mixed and family-friendly, but the soul is the same: long bar, dark wood, regulars at fixed tables, free or cheap *botanas* (snacks) with every drink. *Mole poblano* is the national dish of Puebla, a complex sauce with chocolate, chiles, nuts, and 20+ ingredients. *Chiles en nogada* are seasonal — late summer, the three colors of the Mexican flag (green chile, white walnut sauce, red pomegranate). If the menu has them, order them.

DIALECT COMPARE · "THE BILL, PLEASE"

Mexico: *la cuenta, por favor* · Spain: *la cuenta, por favor* (same — universal) · Argentina informal: *¿me cobrás?* ("can you charge me?" — literally) · Colombia: *¿me regalas la cuenta?* ("can you give me the bill" — *regalar* as polite request, very Colombian).

SLANG SPOTLIGHT · MEXICO

¡provecho! — said before anyone starts eating, by everyone at the table or by people who walk past your table on their way out. Closest English: "enjoy your meal" / "bon appétit." Always reply with "*gracias*" or "*igualmente*" ("same to you"). A Mexican who doesn't say *provecho* when they pass an eating table is being rude.

TUTOR'S CORNER

Preterit irregulars are the A2 choke point. Drill 10 verbs in 60 seconds: tutor calls the infinitive + person ("hacer, yo"), student produces the form ("hice"). Repeat across three lessons. Once the irregulars are automatic, story-telling unlocks immediately — the next chapter depends on this being reflex.

Ejercicios

1. Forma el pretérito: yo / comer → _____; tú / hablar → _____; ella / vivir → _____; nosotros / ir → _____; ellos / hacer → _____.
2. Conjuga al pretérito: *Anoche yo (cenar) _____ en una cantina, (pedir) _____ mole y (tomar) _____ un mezcal.*
3. Traduce: "Yesterday we went to a cantina. I had the mole poblano, my friend had the chiles en nogada, and we shared a mezcal."
4. Order an appetizer, main course, side, and a glass of red wine. Write the full order in Spanish.
5. You finished the meal. Ask for the bill, ask if they take cards, and say goodbye.

ROLE-PLAY · TIER 3 · IMPROVISED ON A FRAME

Una cena en la cantina

Full dinner from arrival to bill. The student plays themselves, the tutor plays the mesero and one chatty regular at the next table. The student must navigate the menu (the tutor projects the actual menu of La Sirena or another real cantina), handle two surprises, and tell a small story at the end of the meal using pretérito.

Beat 1 — arrival & ordering. Reservation under student's name. Order an entrada, plato principal, and one drink. Use polite forms.

Beat 2 — surprise 1. One dish is sold out. Pick another.

Beat 3 — between courses. The regular at the next table starts a friendly conversation in *tú*: "*¿De dónde son, muchachos?*" Student answers and asks back.

Beat 4 — surprise 2. A dish arrives wrong (the wrong main). Student must politely correct.

Beat 5 — telling a story. The regular asks "*¿Y qué hicieron hoy?*" Student must produce 4-5 sentences in *pretérito* about the day — what they visited, where they walked, what they ate at lunch.

Beat 6 — paying. Ask for the bill, ask whether they accept cards, settle up + tip.

TUTOR BRANCHES

- Mesero uses lots of Mexican slang (*jórale!*, *padrísimo*, *sale*). Student must keep up.
- The neighboring regular uses heavy CDMX accent (clear, deliberate, slang-rich). Student must understand.
- The bill is wrong (overcharged for an extra mezcal that wasn't ordered). Student must politely flag it.

EAT YOUR WAY THROUGH MEXICO WITH A MEXICAN TUTOR →

ANSWER KEY · CHAPTER 7

1. comí · hablaste · vivió · fuimos · hicieron
2. cené · pedí · tomé
3. (model) *Ayer fuimos a una cantina. Yo comí el mole poblano, mi amigo comió los chiles en nogada, y compartimos un mezcal.*
4. (model) *De entrada, una orden de chicharrón. De plato principal, los chiles en nogada con una guarnición de arroz. Y una copa de vino tinto.*
5. *La cuenta, por favor. ¿Aceptan tarjeta? Muchas gracias, buenas noches.*

7½

En la Taquería

Tacos al pastor, lengua, suadero — and a counter ritual that runs at full speed

NIVEL

A2 · STROMMEN CLASSIC LESSON

GRAMÁTICA

ÓRDENES RÁPIDAS · VOCAB TAQUERÍA · DIMINUTIVOS

ESCENA

TAQUERÍA AL PASTOR, CDMX

ROLE-PLAY TIER

2 → 3 · COUNTER IMPROVISATION

A Mexican taquería is the closest thing in the Spanish-speaking world to a perfect transactional Spanish drill. You order in fragments. You answer the taquero in two or three words. You eat standing up at the counter or carry it to a plastic table. Get good at this, and you can eat in any taquería from CDMX to East LA without missing a beat.

The two species of taquería

SIT-DOWN VS TAQUERÍA AL PASTOR

TYPE	WHAT TO EXPECT
Taquería al pastor (al trompo)	Vertical spit of marinated pork (the <i>trompo</i>), a slice of pineapple on top. Tacos are small, served on two small soft tortillas, eaten in 3-4 bites. CDMX classic.
Taquería sit-down	Same tacos, plus larger plates: alambres, gringas, costras, quesadillas. You sit, you order off a menu, the salsa bar is on every table.
Puesto callejero (street stand)	One person, one comal, one menu of 3-5 things. Quick, cheap, often the best. Standing only.

Taco vocabulary — by the protein

LOS TACOS

<i>al pastor</i>	spit-roasted marinated pork with pineapple. The CDMX classic.
<i>de suadero</i>	slow-cooked beef from the brisket area, tender and juicy
<i>de lengua</i>	beef tongue, tender and rich. Don't be scared.
<i>de buche / tripa / cachete</i>	pig stomach / intestine / cheek. The offal cuts — adventurous.
<i>de bistec</i>	grilled chopped steak
<i>de chorizo</i>	Mexican sausage
<i>de pollo</i>	chicken
<i>de carnitas</i>	slow-cooked pork (a Michoacán specialty)
<i>de canasta / sudados</i>	steamed tacos kept in a basket — usually potato, beans, or chicharrón
<i>campechano</i>	a mix — usually suadero + chorizo
<i>una gringa</i>	al pastor in a large flour tortilla with melted cheese
<i>una quesadilla</i>	in CDMX, a folded tortilla with whatever filling you want — NOT just cheese (you have to ask for cheese specifically)
<i>una costra</i>	a "crust" of melted cheese seared on the comal, with filling inside

CULTURAL NOTE · IN CDMX, A "QUESADILLA" DOESN'T HAVE CHEESE

This trips up every non-Mexican Spanish speaker. In Mexico City and central Mexico, the word *quesadilla* refers to a folded tortilla with filling, with or without cheese. If you want cheese in it, you have to specifically ask: "*una quesadilla con queso*". Outside CDMX (and outside Mexico), *quesadilla* always has cheese. The CDMX exception is famous and chilangos (Mexico City natives) will argue about it for hours.

DIÁLOGO · EN LA TAQUERÍA, A MEDIA TARDE

2:30 p.m., lunch crowd, Taquería El Califa, Condesa, CDMX. The student is at the counter.

- TAQUERO** *¿Qué le doy, joven?*
What can I get you, friend?
- ESTUDIANTE** *Tres de pastor y dos de suadero, por favor.*
Three al pastor and two suadero, please.
- TAQUERO** *¿Con todo?*
With everything? (= with onion and cilantro)
- ESTUDIANTE** *Sí, con todo. Y los de pastor con piña.*
Yes, with everything. And the al pastor with pineapple.
- TAQUERO** *Va. ¿De tomar?*
Got it. To drink?
- ESTUDIANTE** *Una Coca-Cola, fría por favor.*
A Coca-Cola, cold please.
- TAQUERO** *Las salsas están en la barra. La verde es brava, la roja es más suave. ¡Provecho!*
The salsas are at the bar. The green is fierce (spicy), the red is milder. Enjoy!

THE TAQUERÍA MICRO-VOCABULARY

<i>¿Qué le doy? / ¿qué va a ser?</i>	What can I get you?
<i>tres de pastor / dos de suadero</i>	three (tacos) of al pastor / two of suadero — drop the word "tacos"
<i>¿con todo? — sí, con todo</i>	"With everything?" = onion + cilantro. Say yes unless you have a reason not to.
<i>sin cebolla / sin cilantro</i>	no onion / no cilantro — for those who really can't
<i>con piña / con queso</i>	with pineapple (al pastor classic) / with cheese (added cost)
<i>caldoso / caldito</i>	"with broth" — common for suadero or birria, ask if you want extra juice
<i>para acá / para llevar</i>	for here / to go
<i>la salsa verde / la salsa roja / la salsa habanera</i>	green (often very spicy), red (often milder), habanero (very spicy)
<i>¿pica mucho?</i>	is it very spicy?
<i>una orden de...</i>	an order of... (e.g., <i>una orden de chicharrón</i>)
<i>la cuenta · ¿cuánto le debo?</i>	the bill · how much do I owe you?
<i>tenga · aquí tiene</i>	here, take it · here you go

SLANG SPOTLIGHT · CDMX / CHILANGO

¡órale! — the universal Mexican filler. Means anything from "hey!" to "wow!" to "let's go!" to "OK!" depending on intonation. *¿qué onda?* = "what's up?" *¡chido!* = "cool!" *¡padrísimo!* = "awesome!" Use these with peers, not with strangers or anyone older.

CULTURAL NOTE · THE SALSA BAR IS NOT A SUGGESTION

Every Mexican taquería has a self-serve salsa bar: 3 to 8 salsas in small molcajetes, plus pickled jalapeños, sliced radish, lime wedges, and chopped onion-cilantro. You walk over, fill your own little container, take it to your table. Don't put salsa directly on the taco from the counter; the taquero will look at you funny. Take it back, add it yourself.

TUTOR'S CORNER

The hardest part of this lesson is the speed of the counter. Run the role-play with a 30-second timer per beat. The student is allowed to point and gesture; the goal is to get the order in within the time, not to construct perfect sentences. Mexicans solve this with body language and rapid-fire fragments. So should the student. Once they can hit the time, drop the timer and run it again for cleaner Spanish.

Ejercicios

1. Traduce: "Three tacos al pastor with pineapple, with everything, please. And a cold Coca-Cola."
2. The taquero asks "*¿con todo?*" — what does it mean? What do you say if you want it without onion?
3. You want a quesadilla with cheese in CDMX. What do you have to remember to say?
4. List five taco fillings from this chapter (Spanish names only).
5. You don't want cilantro on your tacos. How do you say it?

ROLE-PLAY · TIER 2 → 3 · COUNTER IMPROVISATION

Cinco tacos al pastor

The student walks into a busy taquería at lunch. They have 200 pesos and 10 minutes before meeting a friend at Parque México. Tutor plays the taquero. Student must (a) order at least 5 tacos with specific preferences, (b) order a drink, (c) decide for-here-or-to-go, (d) handle the salsa bar question, (e) pay and get change.

Beat 1 — selection. Student picks their tacos: how many, what protein, with or without pineapple/onion/cilantro/cheese.

Beat 2 — drink. Tutor asks "*¿de tomar?*". Student orders.

Beat 3 — for here or to go. Tutor asks "*¿para acá o para llevar?*".

Beat 4 — salsa. Tutor explains the salsa options. Student picks (or asks "*¿cuál pica menos?*" if heat-sensitive).

Beat 5 — pay. Tutor names a total (e.g. "*ciento veinte pesos*"). Student pays with a 200 bill and asks for the right change.

TUTOR BRANCHES

- Tutor mixes in CDMX slang (*órale, va, sale, chido*). Student keeps up.
- The taquería is out of suadero — student must pick another.
- Tutor doesn't have small change and asks "*¿no tendrá feria?*" ("you wouldn't have small change?"). Student answers.

PRACTICE TAQUERÍA SPANISH WITH A MEXICAN TUTOR →

ANSWER KEY · CHAPTER 7½

1. *Tres de pastor con piña, con todo, por favor. Y una Coca-Cola fría.*
2. "With everything" = with onion and cilantro. To skip onion: "*sin cebolla, por favor*".
3. Specifically ask for cheese: "*una quesadilla con queso*". Otherwise you get a quesadilla without cheese.
4. al pastor · suadero · lengua · carnitas · chorizo (or any 5 from the list)
5. *Sin cilantro, por favor.*

08

Contando un Viaje

Recalling Havana — and the imperfect tense that lets you describe

NIVEL

A2 · REAL
CONVERSATIONS

GRAMÁTICA

IMPERFECTO · GUSTAR
· PRETÉRITO VS
IMPERFECTO

ESCENA

LA HABANA (CONTADA
DESPUÉS)

ROLE-PLAY TIER

3 · OPEN-ENDED
NARRATION

Chapter 7 covered actions you did once — *cené, pedí, tomé*. This chapter covers what was happening, what used to happen, what the scene looked like — the *pretérito imperfecto*. Spanish (unlike English) requires you to choose between the two past tenses on every verb, and the choice carries real meaning. Master both and you can tell a story.

Pretérito imperfecto — the descriptive past

REGULAR IMPERFECT ENDINGS

PRONOUN	-AR · HABLAR	-ER / -IR · COMER / VIVIR
yo	<i>hablaba</i>	<i>comía / vivía</i>
tú	<i>hablabas</i>	<i>comías / vivías</i>
él / ella / usted	<i>hablaba</i>	<i>comía / vivía</i>
nosotros	<i>hablábamos</i>	<i>comíamos / vivíamos</i>
vosotros (Spain)	<i>hablabais</i>	<i>comíais / vivíais</i>
ellos / ustedes	<i>hablaban</i>	<i>comían / vivían</i>

Only three irregular imperfects: *ser* → *era, eras, era, éramos, erais, eran*. *ir* → *iba, ibas, iba, íbamos, ibais, iban*. *ver* → *veía, veías, veía, veíamos, veíais, veían*. Memorize these three.

PRETÉRITO VS IMPERFECTO – WHEN TO USE WHICH

USE PRETÉRITO FOR	USE IMPERFECTO FOR
Single completed action – <i>fui a Cuba</i>	Ongoing past state – <i>estaba en Cuba</i>
Action with a clear beginning or end – <i>empezó a llover a las cinco</i>	Background description – <i>llovía cuando llegué</i>
Sequence of events – <i>llegué, comí, salí</i>	Habits / repeated past – <i>cada mañana iba al café</i>
Specific past time markers – <i>ayer, el lunes, hace dos años</i>	Ages and times in the past – <i>tenía cinco años · eran las tres</i>

Classic frame: use *imperfecto* for the setting, *pretérito* for what happened. "*Caminaba por el malecón cuando vi a un viejo amigo*" = "I was walking along the malecón when I saw an old friend." Background imperfect + sudden preterit. This is the structure of almost every story you'll tell.

Gustar – to please (= to like)

Spanish doesn't say "I like Havana." It says "Havana is pleasing to me." The verb agrees with what is liked, not with who likes it.

THE GUSTAR PATTERN

WHAT IS LIKED	STRUCTURE	EXAMPLE
singular noun	<i>me/te/le/nos/os/les gusta + sg.</i>	Me gusta La Habana. I like Havana.
plural noun	<i>me/te/le/nos/os/les gustan + pl.</i>	Me gustan los mojitos. I like mojitos.
infinitive (an activity)	<i>me gusta + inf.</i>	Me gusta caminar. I like walking.
past – preterit	<i>me gustó + sg. / me gustaron + pl.</i>	Me gustó La Habana. Me gustaron los museos.
past – imperfect (used to like)	<i>me gustaba + sg. / me gustaban + pl.</i>	De niño me gustaban los dibujos animados.

Other verbs that use this pattern: *encantar* (to love), *interesar* (to interest), *importar* (to matter), *doler* (to hurt – Chapter 10), *parecer* (to seem). "*Me encantan los museos*" = "I love museums."

DIÁLOGO · CONTANDO EL VIAJE

Monday morning, Spanish lesson on Zoom. The tutor asks the student about their weekend in Havana.

TUTOR *Bueno, ¿adónde fuiste el fin de semana?*

So, where did you go this weekend?

ESTUDIANTE *Fui a La Habana por dos días. Salí el viernes por la noche y llegué a las diez.*

I went to Havana for two days. I left Friday night and arrived at 10.

TUTOR *¿Y te gustó?*

And did you like it?

ESTUDIANTE *Sí, muchísimo. Me gustaron sobre todo los carros viejos y la música en la calle. Caminé por el malecón al atardecer, comí ropa vieja en un paladar, y vi un concierto de son en La Habana Vieja.*

Yes, hugely. I especially liked the old cars and the music in the streets. I walked the malecón at sunset, I ate ropa vieja at a paladar, and I saw a son concert in Old Havana.

TUTOR *¿Cómo era el ambiente?*

What was the atmosphere like?

ESTUDIANTE *Hacía calor pero había mucha gente en la calle, todos hablaban y reían. La música sonaba en todas partes. Era mágico.*

It was hot but there were a lot of people in the street, everyone talking and laughing. Music was playing everywhere. It was magical.

CULTURAL NOTE · PALADAR VS RESTAURANTE

In Cuba, a *paladar* is a privately-owned restaurant in someone's home. They emerged in the 1990s when the government legalized small-scale private enterprise. Paladares are where the best Cuban food is — better than the state-run restaurants, smaller, more personal. If you go to Havana, eat at paladares.

DIALECT COMPARE · CARIBBEAN SYLLABLE-DROPPING

Standard: *¿cómo estás?* · Cuban (Havana): *¿cómo tá?* (drops "es-" and "-s") · Puerto Rican: *¿cómo tú etá?* (aspirates the "s"). The dropped-consonant pattern is the same across the Caribbean (Cuba, DR, PR, coastal Venezuela and Colombia). Standard everywhere else.

SLANG SPOTLIGHT · CUBA

¿qué bolá? — the Cuban "what's up?" Universal. Used between Cubans of all ages and all classes. If a Cuban greets you with *¿qué bolá?*, the right response is *¿qué bolá?* back. The Cuban-American diaspora exports this all the way to Miami.

TUTOR'S CORNER

The preterit-vs-imperfect choice is the hardest A2 grammar in Spanish, period. Don't try to teach the rules — teach by example. Have the student tell a 5-sentence story about yesterday. Underline every verb in their first draft. For each, ask "did this happen once, or was it a state / background?" Let them feel the difference. The rule learns itself faster than it can be taught.

Ejercicios

1. Conjuga al imperfecto: yo (hablar) _____, tú (comer) _____, ella (ir) _____, nosotros (ser) _____, ellos (ver) _____.
2. Me gusta o me gustan: _____ La Habana · _____ los carros viejos · _____ caminar en el malecón · _____ la música cubana.
3. Pretérito o imperfecto: Anoche (yo / caminar) _____ por la ciudad cuando (yo / ver) _____ a un viejo amigo.
4. Traduce: "We went to Havana last weekend. We liked the old cars very much. The weather was hot but it was magical."
5. Tell your own one-paragraph travel story in 5 sentences mixing preterit and imperfect.

ROLE-PLAY · TIER 3 · OPEN-ENDED NARRATION

Mi viaje a un país hispanohablante

Student is meeting a new Spanish-speaking friend. They are asked about a trip they have actually taken (real or imagined) to a Spanish-speaking country. The student narrates in past tense, the tutor asks unscripted follow-ups. The conversation runs five to seven minutes without falling into English.

Beat 1 — opening. Tutor: "*¿Alguna vez viajaste a un país hispanohablante? Cuéntame.*" Student gives a 30-second overview using preterit.

Beat 2 — drilling down. Tutor asks where, when, with whom, by what transport. Student answers in preterit.

Beat 3 — the setting. Tutor: "*¿Cómo era todo? ¿Qué tiempo hacía?*" Student must shift into imperfect for descriptions.

Beat 4 — what stood out. Tutor: "*¿Qué fue lo que más te gustó?*" Student uses *me gustó/gustaron* + reason.

Beat 5 — recommendation. Tutor: "*¿Qué me recomiendas que haga si voy?*" Student gives 2-3 recommendations.

TUTOR BRANCHES

- Student mixes up pretérito and imperfecto. Tutor repeats the sentence with the right form — student self-corrects, then continues.
- Tutor asks for a specific detail the student didn't mention: "*¿y dónde dormiste?*" Student improvises.

ANSWER KEY · CHAPTER 8

1. hablaba · comías · iba · éramos · veían
2. me gusta · me gustan · me gusta · me gusta
3. caminaba · vi (background imperfect + sudden preterit — the classic frame)
4. *Fuimos a La Habana el fin de semana pasado. Nos gustaron mucho los carros viejos. Hacía calor pero era mágico.*
5. (open)

CAPÍTULO NUEVE · MADRID

09

Por Teléfono

Business Spanish — formal usted, on a call with a Madrid supplier

NIVEL

A2 · BUSINESS SPANISH
PRIMER

GRAMÁTICA

USTED FORMAL ·
IMPERATIVO FORMAL ·
EMAIL REGISTER

ESCENA

LLAMADA DE
NEGOCIOS, MADRID

ROLE-PLAY TIER

3 · FORMAL UNDER
PRESSURE

Business Spanish is not a different language. It is the same Spanish with the formality dial at maximum. You stay on *usted* from the first *¿diga?* to the final *gracias, hasta pronto*. You avoid slang. You use longer, more deliberate constructions. You replace *hola* with *buenos días* in every greeting. Get this register clean and you can operate inside a Spanish-speaking company — make a phone call, write a follow-up email, sit through a meeting — at A2.

Phone etiquette – the script

ANSWERING AND CALLING

Answering (Spain)	<i>¿Diga? · ¿Sí?</i>	Said when you pick up. Spain-specific.
Answering (Latin America)	<i>¿Aló? · ¿Bueno? (Mexico) · ¿Hola?</i>	Mexico uniquely uses <i>¿Bueno?</i> ; rest of LatAm uses <i>¿Aló?</i> .
Identifying yourself when calling	<i>Soy [name]. / Le habla [name].</i>	"This is [name]." / "[name] speaking" (formal).
Identifying yourself at work	<i>[Company], [name], buenos días.</i>	Standard professional answer.
Asking for someone	<i>¿Puedo hablar con... ?</i>	"May I speak with...?"
Transferring a call	<i>Le paso. / Un momento, le paso.</i>	"I'll put you through."
"They're not available"	<i>Lo siento, está reunido / está en una reunión.</i>	"Sorry, they're in a meeting."
Asking to leave a message	<i>¿Puedo dejar un mensaje?</i>	"May I leave a message?"
Confirming an appointment	<i>Le confirmo para el martes a las tres.</i>	"I confirm for Tuesday at 3."

Formal imperative – usted

The formal imperative is built from the present subjunctive. For now: most regular verbs follow this pattern.

USTED-IMPERATIVE FOR THE VERBS YOU NEED MOST

TÚ (INFORMAL)	USTED (FORMAL)	MEANING
espera	<i>espere</i>	wait
perdona / disculpa	<i>perdone / disculpe</i>	excuse me
escucha	<i>escuche</i>	listen
dime	<i>dígame</i>	tell me / how can I help you
ven	<i>venga</i>	come
ve (ir)	<i>vaya</i>	go
toma	<i>tome</i>	take
siéntate	<i>siéntese / tome asiento</i>	have a seat

DIÁLOGO · LLAMADA DE NEGOCIOS

11 a.m. Tuesday. Ana calls a Madrid supplier (Sr. Ruiz) about a delayed shipment. Stay on usted throughout.

CENTRALITA *Ruiz Suministros, buenos días.*

Ruiz Supplies, good morning.

ANA *Buenos días. Soy Ana García, de Strommen Inc. ¿Puedo hablar con el señor Ruiz, por favor?*

Good morning. This is Ana García from Strommen Inc. May I speak with Mr. Ruiz, please?

CENTRALITA *Un momento, le paso.*

One moment, I'll put you through.

SR. RUIZ *Ruiz, ¿dígame?*

Ruiz, hello?

ANA *Buenos días, señor Ruiz. Le llamo por el pedido de ayer. Quería confirmar la entrega.*

Good morning, Mr. Ruiz. I'm calling about yesterday's order. I wanted to confirm the delivery.

SR. RUIZ *Dígame el número de pedido.*

Tell me the order number.

ANA *Es el 27.498.*

It's 27,498.

SR. RUIZ *Sí, lo veo. Lamentablemente tenemos un retraso de dos días. Disculpe las molestias. La entrega será el jueves en lugar del martes.*

Yes, I see it. Unfortunately we have a two-day delay. Apologies for the inconvenience. Delivery will be Thursday instead of Tuesday.

ANA *Entiendo. ¿Me lo podría confirmar por escrito, por correo?*

I understand. Could you confirm in writing, by email?

SR. RUIZ *Por supuesto. Se lo mando ahora mismo. Deme su dirección.*

Of course. I'll send it right away. Give me your address.

ANA *Gracias. Le llamo si hay algún otro problema. Buen día.*

Thank you. I'll call if there's any other issue. Have a good day.

Business email — openings and closings

EMAIL REGISTER

<i>Estimado Sr. Ruiz, / Estimada Sra. García,</i>	Dear Mr. Ruiz, / Dear Ms. García, — formal opening
<i>Buenos días, / Buenas tardes,</i>	Less formal but professional
<i>Le escribo en relación a... / con motivo de...</i>	I am writing regarding... / on the matter of...
<i>En referencia a...</i>	With reference to...
<i>Le agradecería que...</i>	I would be grateful if you would...
<i>Quedo a su disposición</i>	I remain at your disposal
<i>Cordialmente, / Atentamente, / Un cordial saludo,</i>	Cordially / Sincerely / Best regards
<i>Quedo a la espera de su respuesta</i>	Awaiting your reply

CULTURAL NOTE · LATIN AMERICAN VS SPANISH BUSINESS REGISTER

Latin American business Spanish tends to be slightly warmer and uses more elaborate courtesies than Spanish from Spain. A Mexican email might open with "*Espero que se encuentre muy bien*" ("I hope you are doing very well") as a matter of course; a Spanish email is more likely to skip straight to "*Le escribo en relación a...*". Neither is wrong; calibrate to where your contact is from.

SLANG SPOTLIGHT · MADRID BUSINESS

Even in business calls, Spaniards may slip in *¿vale?* ("OK?") at the end of a clarification. It softens the request. Latin Americans use *¿de acuerdo?* or *¿está bien?* instead. *Vale* is famously Spanish and a give-away of register and origin.

TUTOR'S CORNER

The hardest jump for an A2 student is dropping *tú* for an entire conversation. Practice it as a constraint game: tutor and student have a 5-minute exchange. If either uses a *tú*-form, they lose a point. 3-loss limit. Most students lock in formal register after two rounds.

Ejercicios

1. Convierte a formal (usted): *espera, escucha, dime, perdona, siéntate* → _____, _____, _____, _____, _____.
2. You answer a business call at "Strommen Inc." in Madrid. What do you say?
3. Traduce (formal): "Good morning, this is Marco Rossi from Strommen. I'm calling about the delivery. Could you confirm the date in writing?"
4. Write a 4-sentence business email opening and closing about a missed delivery.
5. List five things you'd say with *usted* that you'd never say with *tú*.

ROLE-PLAY · TIER 3 · FORMAL UNDER PRESSURE

Una llamada complicada

The student is calling a Spanish supplier about a delayed order. The tutor plays the receptionist, then the manager — who is friendly but vague, gives shifting information, and slips into tú once to test whether the student stays formal.

Beat 1 — reception. Student introduces themselves, asks for the manager.

Beat 2 — opening with the manager. Student states the reason for the call clearly. Uses "*Le llamo por...*" or "*Le escribo en relación a...*" if doing via email follow-up.

Beat 3 — the inconsistency. The manager says the order will arrive Thursday. Two minutes later they say it might be next week. Student must request a firm date and confirmation in writing.

Beat 4 — the tú-slip. The manager says "*oye, te lo confirmo por correo, ¿vale?*" using *tú*. Student must stay formal: "*Le agradecería que me lo confirme por escrito.*"

Beat 5 — closing. Student confirms next steps and ends the call politely.

TUTOR BRANCHES

- The manager goes on at length about an unrelated topic. Student must politely steer the conversation back.
- The manager asks for the order number in numbers *spoken*. Student must produce 5-digit numbers cleanly.
- Follow-up email: tutor gives 5 minutes to draft a formal 4-sentence email confirming what was agreed.

WORK WITH A BUSINESS SPANISH TUTOR →

ANSWER KEY · CHAPTER 9

1. espere · escuche · dígame · perdone (or disculpe) · siéntese (or tome asiento)
2. "*Strommen Inc., [name], buenos días.*"
3. *Buenos días, soy Marco Rossi de Strommen. Le llamo por la entrega. ¿Me la podría confirmar por escrito?*
4. (model) *Estimado Sr. Ruiz, Le escribo en relación al pedido n.º 27.498. Lamentablemente no ha llegado. Le agradecería que me confirme la nueva fecha por escrito. Quedo a la espera de su respuesta. Cordialmente, [name].*

5. Examples: *dígame* · *siéntese* · *Le llamo por...* · *Le agradecería que...* · *Quedo a su disposición*

CAPÍTULO DIEZ · LA HABANA

10

En el Médico

A clinic visit — the body, the symptoms, and the modal verbs that get you treated

NIVEL

A2 · REAL
CONVERSATIONS

GRAMÁTICA

EL CUERPO · ME DUELE
· PODER / DEBER /
QUERER

ESCENA

CLÍNICA
INTERNACIONAL, LA
HABANA

ROLE-PLAY TIER

3 · HIGH-STAKES
ACCURACY

If you only learn one chapter from this book before traveling, learn this one. Knowing how to describe what hurts in clear Spanish is the difference between a 10-minute and a 3-hour wait at a clinic. The vocabulary is small. The structures are predictable. By the end of the chapter you can name twenty parts of the body and produce two reliable sentences any Spanish-speaking doctor will understand.

The body

EL CUERPO HUMANO

<i>la cabeza</i>	head
<i>la cara</i>	face
<i>los ojos · el ojo</i>	eyes · eye
<i>la nariz · las orejas / los oídos</i>	nose · outer ears / inner ears (where pain lives)
<i>la boca · los dientes · la lengua</i>	mouth · teeth · tongue
<i>la garganta</i>	throat
<i>el cuello</i>	neck
<i>los hombros · el hombro</i>	shoulders · shoulder
<i>los brazos · el brazo</i>	arms · arm
<i>las manos · la mano</i>	hands · hand (feminine despite ending in -o)
<i>los dedos · el dedo</i>	fingers · finger (also toes when on the foot)
<i>el pecho · la espalda</i>	chest · back
<i>el estómago · la barriga</i>	stomach · belly
<i>las piernas · la rodilla · el pie</i>	legs · knee · foot
<i>el corazón · los pulmones · el hígado</i>	heart · lungs · liver

"Me duele" — it hurts me

The single most useful sentence at the doctor. Built like *gustar*: the verb agrees with the body part, and the pronoun is the indirect object (me, te, le, nos, os, les).

THE ME-DUELE FORMULA

singular body part	<i>me duele + el/la...</i>	Me duele la cabeza. My head hurts.
plural body part	<i>me duelen + los/las...</i>	Me duelen las piernas.
"I have a headache"	<i>tengo dolor de + body part</i>	Tengo dolor de cabeza. Tengo dolor de garganta. Tengo dolor de estómago.
"I'm not feeling well"	<i>no me siento bien</i>	No me siento bien.
"I have a fever"	<i>tengo fiebre / tengo mucha fiebre</i>	Tengo fiebre de 38 grados.
"I'm coughing"	<i>tengo tos / estoy tosiendo</i>	Tengo mucha tos por la noche.

Poder, deber, querer — modal verbs

THE THREE MODALS TOGETHER (PRESENT)

PRONOUN	PODER · CAN	DEBER · SHOULD / MUST	QUERER · WANT
yo	<i>puedo</i>	<i>debo</i>	<i>quiero</i>
tú	<i>puedes</i>	<i>debes</i>	<i>quieres</i>
él / ella	<i>puede</i>	<i>debe</i>	<i>quiere</i>
nosotros	<i>podemos</i>	<i>debemos</i>	<i>queremos</i>
vosotros (Spain)	<i>podéis</i>	<i>debéis</i>	<i>queréis</i>
ellos / ustedes	<i>pueden</i>	<i>deben</i>	<i>quieren</i>

All three are followed by an infinitive: *puedo esperar, debo ir al médico, quiero descansar.*

DIÁLOGO · EN LA CLÍNICA

Clínica Internacional Cira García, La Habana. 11 a.m. The student went out running and twisted an ankle.

ENFERMERA *Dígame, ¿cómo se siente?*

Tell me, how are you feeling?

ESTUDIANTE *Me lastimé el tobillo. Me caí corriendo.*

I hurt my ankle. I fell while running.

ENFERMERA *¿Le duele mucho?*

Does it hurt a lot?

ESTUDIANTE *Sí, bastante. No puedo caminar bien.*

Yes, fairly. I can't walk well.

ENFERMERA *Tome asiento, por favor. El doctor lo verá en unos veinte minutos. ¿Tiene seguro de viaje?*

Have a seat, please. The doctor will see you in about 20 minutes. Do you have travel insurance?

ESTUDIANTE *Sí, aquí tengo la póliza.*

Yes, I have the policy here.

[DESPUÉS]

MÉDICO *Es un esguince, no una fractura. Debe reposar durante diez días. Le voy a recetar un antiinflamatorio. Tres veces al día, después de las comidas.*

It's a sprain, not a fracture. You should rest for 10 days. I'm going to prescribe an anti-inflammatory. Three times a day, after meals.

CULTURAL NOTE · MEDICINE ACROSS THE SPANISH-SPEAKING WORLD

Public health systems vary widely. Spain has a universal national health service. Cuba has a state-run system that is famously accessible (and famously short on supplies). Mexico has IMSS (public) and a large private network. As a foreign traveler with travel insurance, you almost always go to a private clinic. Bring a passport, the insurance card, and the policy number. English is spoken at most international clinics, but the visit goes faster in Spanish.

DIALECT COMPARE · "I'M SICK"

Standard: *estoy enfermo* · Mexican informal: *me siento mal* · *ando malo* · Caribbean: *estoy fatal* · *estoy hecho polvo* · Argentinian: *estoy hecho mierda* (vulgar but common). At the clinic: stick to standard.

TUTOR'S CORNER

The reflexive past (*me lastimé, me caí, me corté*) is the structure students stall on. Drill three forms only — *me lastimé el / la / los / las...* for the most common body parts — until they flow. The rest of the visit hinges on this being automatic.

Ejercicios

1. Conjuga: poder — yo _____, tú _____, ella _____, nosotros _____, ellos _____.
2. Conjuga: deber — yo _____, tú _____, él _____, nosotros _____, ustedes _____.
3. Traduce: "I have a headache and a sore throat. I have a fever of 38°C. I can't sleep. I want to see a doctor."
4. Tell the nurse: you twisted your ankle this morning while running, it hurts a lot, you can't walk well.
5. The doctor prescribes a medicine, three times a day, after meals, for 10 days. Repeat the instructions back in Spanish.

ROLE-PLAY · TIER 3 · HIGH-STAKES ACCURACY

En la clínica

Student arrives at a clinic. They draw a scenario card from the tutor: (a) sprained ankle, (b) high fever and sore throat, (c) stomach pain, (d) cut hand from cooking. The conversation proceeds with reception, a nurse, and a doctor.

Beat 1 — reception. State the problem in one clear sentence. Provide name, age, country. Stay in *usted*.

Beat 2 — triage with nurse. Describe symptoms with specifics: where, how long, how bad on 1-10, whether you took anything for it.

Beat 3 — doctor's exam. Answer follow-up questions. Use preterit for what happened, present for what hurts now.

Beat 4 — prescription. The doctor gives instructions. Student must repeat them back in Spanish to confirm understanding.

TUTOR BRANCHES

- The doctor uses medical Spanish the student doesn't know (*esguince, inflamación, antiinflamatorio*). Student must ask "*¿puede repetir en palabras más sencillas?*"
- The nurse misunderstands which body part. Student must point and clarify.

PRACTICE MEDICAL SPANISH WITH A TUTOR →

ANSWER KEY · CHAPTER 10

1. puedo · puedes · puede · podemos · pueden
2. debo · debes · debe · debemos · deben
3. *Tengo dolor de cabeza y dolor de garganta. Tengo fiebre de 38 grados. No puedo dormir. Quiero ver a un médico.*
4. *Me lastimé el tobillo esta mañana corriendo. Me duele mucho. No puedo caminar bien.*
5. *Entonces, tomo el medicamento tres veces al día, después de las comidas, durante diez días. ¿Es correcto?*

CAPÍTULO ONCE · CUZCO

11

Opiniones y Preferencias

A peña in Cuzco — the verbs that let you have an opinion in Spanish

NIVEL

A2 · REAL
CONVERSATIONS

GRAMÁTICA

COMPARATIVOS ·
SUPERLATIVOS ·
GUSTAR / PREFERIR

ESCENA

PEÑA FOLKLÓRICA,
CUZCO

ROLE-PLAY TIER

4 · OPEN · DEFEND A
POSITION

Spanish speakers love to argue about food, fútbol, music, and which country's Spanish is the best. The arguments are short, theatrical, friendly, and follow patterns. To take part, you need three things: the comparative (this is better than that), the superlative (this is the best), and a handful of opinion phrases that let you push back without sounding hostile.

Comparativos — más / menos / tan

COMPARATIVE FORMS

TO COMPARE	STRUCTURE	EXAMPLE
more X than Y	más ... que	Cuzco es más alto que Lima.
less X than Y	menos ... que	El ceviche es menos picante que la salsa.
as X as Y	tan ... como	La Paz es tan alta como Cuzco.

IRREGULAR COMPARATIVES – MEMORIZE

ADJECTIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
bueno (good)	<i>mejor</i>	<i>el mejor / óptimo</i>
malo (bad)	<i>peor</i>	<i>el peor / pésimo</i>
grande (big)	<i>mayor / más grande</i>	<i>el mayor / el más grande</i>
pequeño (small)	<i>menor / más pequeño</i>	<i>el menor / el más pequeño</i>

Superlativo absoluto – the -ísimo ending

To say something is "very, very X," drop the final vowel and add *-ísimo/a/os/as*. *bueno* → *buenísimo*. *caro* → *carísimo*. *cansado* → *cansadísimo*. *rico* → *riquísimo* (spelling adjustment because of the c→qu rule). Constant in spoken Spanish.

Opinion phrases

HOW TO HAVE AN OPINION IN SPANISH

<i>en mi opinión / a mi parecer</i>	in my opinion / in my view
<i>para mí / según yo</i>	for me / according to me
<i>pienso que / creo que</i>	I think that / I believe that (indicative at A2; subjunctive comes at B1)
<i>estoy de acuerdo / no estoy de acuerdo</i>	I agree / I disagree
<i>tienes razón / te equivocas</i>	you're right / you're wrong
<i>depende</i>	it depends
<i>tal vez / quizás / probablemente / seguramente</i>	maybe / perhaps / probably / for sure
<i>prefiero / mejor</i>	I prefer / better

DIÁLOGO · EN LA PEÑA

Friday night, a peña folklórica in Cuzco. Three friends — Ana, Marco, Sofía — argue about the best Latin American food.

MARCO *Para mí, la comida peruana es la mejor del mundo. Punto.*
For me, Peruvian food is the best in the world. Period.

ANA *No estoy de acuerdo. La mexicana es más variada. Tiene más sabores, más colores, más historia.*
I disagree. Mexican is more varied. More flavors, more colors, more history.

MARCO *¿Más historia? ¡Los incas comían quinoa antes de que los aztecas conocieran el maíz!*
More history? The Incas ate quinoa before the Aztecs knew corn!

SOFÍA *Tranquilos. Depende. La peruana es la más sofisticada técnicamente — Gastón Acurio, Virgilio Martínez. Pero la mexicana es la más diversa por regiones.*
Easy. It depends. Peruvian is the most technically sophisticated — Gastón Acurio, Virgilio Martínez. But Mexican is the most regionally diverse.

MARCO *Tienes razón sobre la sofisticación.*
You're right about the sophistication.

ANA *Y yo tengo razón sobre la variedad. Quedamos empatados.*
And I'm right about the variety. We tie.

CULTURAL NOTE · DISAGREEING IN SPANISH

Spanish-speakers disagree fast, loudly, and without offense — provided the topic is opinion, not personal. "No estoy de acuerdo", "te equivocas", "¡pero no!" are normal in a friendly argument. The volume is not anger. Concede a small point ("tienes razón sobre X, pero...") and you become a better debate partner, not a weaker one.

SLANG SPOTLIGHT · PERUVIAN / ANDEAN

¡por gusto! — Peruvian phrase meaning "for nothing / pointlessly." "Caminé media hora por gusto, no estaba abierto." = "I walked half an hour for nothing, it wasn't open." Specific to Peru and the Andean region.

TUTOR'S CORNER

This is the first chapter where the student should be encouraged to *push back*. Pick a topic the student has a real opinion on — best food, best city, best film — and disagree on purpose. They will reach for English under pressure. Bring them back to Spanish with the comparative and opinion phrases. Five forced rounds in one lesson and they have a real conversational skill.

Ejercicios

1. Comparativos: forma la frase. (a) Cuzco + Lima (más alto): _____. (b) Buenos Aires + Madrid (más cara): _____. (c) el ceviche + los tacos (igual de buenos): _____.
2. Transforma con -ísimo: *bueno* → _____, *caro* → _____, *rico* → _____, *cansado* → _____.
3. Da una opinión: in your view, which is better — Mexican food or Peruvian food? Write three sentences using *para mí*, *prefiero*, *depende*.
4. Traduce: "I agree on the food, but you're wrong about the music. In my opinion, Cuban music is much better than Argentine."
5. Write your own 4-sentence opinion paragraph about your favorite Spanish-speaking city. Use one comparative and one -ísimo.

ROLE-PLAY · TIER 4 · OPEN · DEFEND A POSITION

Discusión en la peña

Student and tutor are at a peña having a glass of wine. The tutor draws a topic card: best Latin American city, best food, best Spanish-language film, where in Latin America to retire, Spain vs Latin America. The student must take a position and defend it for at least three minutes. No English. If the student stalls, the tutor offers a single Spanish word, not a translation.

Beat 1 — opening claim. Student: "*Para mí, la ciudad más hermosa de Latinoamérica es [X], porque...*"

Beat 2 — tutor disagrees. "*No, no. [Y] es mucho mejor, porque...*"

Beat 3 — student counters. Concede one point, push back on another. "*Tienes razón sobre [Z], pero...*"

Beat 4 — tutor escalates. Strong opinion language: "*¡pero no!*", "*¡eso no es así!*". Student stays in the argument.

Beat 5 — synthesis. Both arrive at "*depende*" and toast.

TUTOR BRANCHES

- Tutor uses a regional comparative ("*en Cuzco se come mejor que en Lima*"). Student responds with their own comparative.
- Tutor concedes a point — does the student double down or concede back? Both are valid; the student should choose deliberately.

ARGUE WITH A STROMMEN SPANISH TUTOR →

ANSWER KEY · CHAPTER 11

1. (a) Cuzco es más alto que Lima. (b) Buenos Aires es más cara que Madrid. (c) El ceviche es tan bueno como los tacos.
2. buenísimo · carísimo · riquísimo · cansadísimo

3. (open)

4. *Estoy de acuerdo sobre la comida, pero te equivocas sobre la música. En mi opinión, la música cubana es mucho mejor que la argentina.*

5. (open)

12

Planeando el Futuro

A road trip through the Andes — and a taste of what comes in Book Two

NIVEL

A2 → B1 BRIDGE

GRAMÁTICA

IR A + INF · FUTURO SIMPLE

ESCENA

PLANIFICACIÓN, CUZCO → AREQUIPA → LA PAZ

ROLE-PLAY TIER

4 · COLLABORATIVE PLANNING WITH DISAGREEMENT

For the near future, Spanish (like English) uses a present construction: "*voy a viajar mañana*" ("I'm going to travel tomorrow"). For longer-range futures, Spanish has its own simple future tense — *el futuro simple*. You will use the *ir a + infinitive* form 80% of the time as a beginner; the simple future is what you read in headlines, schedules, and weather forecasts.

Near future — "ir a + infinitive"

THE EVERYDAY NEAR FUTURE

I'm going to study tomorrow.	<i>Mañana voy a estudiar.</i>
We're going to leave Friday.	<i>Vamos a salir el viernes.</i>
Are you going to come?	<i>¿Vas a venir?</i>
It's going to rain.	<i>Va a llover.</i>

Pattern: conjugate *ir* in the present (voy, vas, va, vamos, vais, van) + the preposition *a* + the infinitive of the action verb. Equivalent to English "going to." This is what you'll use in conversation.

Futuro simple – the future you read in headlines

THE SIMPLE FUTURE ENDINGS (SAME FOR ALL THREE VERB GROUPS)

PRONOUN	ENDING	HABLAR / COMER / VIVIR
yo	-é	<i>hablaré / comeré / viviré</i>
tú	-ás	<i>hablarás / comerás / vivirás</i>
él / ella / usted	-á	<i>hablará / comerá / vivirá</i>
nosotros	-emos	<i>hablaremos / comeremos / viviremos</i>
vosotros (Spain)	-éis	<i>hablaréis / comeréis / viviréis</i>
ellos / ustedes	-án	<i>hablarán / comerán / vivirán</i>

Built off the infinitive directly – no stem change. The few irregulars use a modified stem: *tener* → *tendré*, *poder* → *podré*, *poner* → *pondré*, *salir* → *saldré*, *venir* → *vendré*, *hacer* → *haré*, *decir* → *diré*, *querer* → *querré*, *saber* → *sabré*, *haber* → *habré*, *caber* → *cabré*.

Planning vocabulary

PLANEANDO UN VIAJE

<i>reservar / la reserva (Spain: la reserva, LatAm: la reservación)</i>	to book / the reservation
<i>la ida / la vuelta</i>	outbound / return
<i>el boleto (LatAm) / el billete (Spain)</i>	ticket
<i>la escala / la conexión</i>	layover / connection
<i>el andén</i>	platform (train)
<i>la puerta</i>	gate (airport)
<i>temprano / tarde / a tiempo</i>	early / late / on time
<i>organizar · planear · decidir · proponer</i>	to organize · to plan · to decide · to propose

DIÁLOGO · UN VIAJE JUNTOS

Ana and Marco, in a café in Cuzco, planning a long weekend together. They can't agree on where to go.

ANA *Bueno, para el fin de semana largo, ¿adónde vamos? Yo quiero ir a Machu Picchu.*

So, for the long weekend, where are we going? I want to go to Machu Picchu.

MARCO *Machu Picchu está lleno de turistas y es carísimo. Prefiero ir al Lago Titicaca. Iremos en bus, dormiremos en Puno, cruzaremos a la parte boliviana.*

Machu Picchu is full of tourists and very expensive. I'd rather go to Lake Titicaca. We'll take the bus, sleep in Puno, cross into the Bolivian side.

ANA *Pero el lago es muy frío en esta época. Hace mucho frío por la noche.*

But the lake is very cold this time of year. Very cold at night.

MARCO *Compromiso: vamos a Arequipa. La Ciudad Blanca, el cañón del Colca, los cóndores. Más calor que Puno, menos turistas que Machu Picchu.*

Compromise: let's go to Arequipa. The White City, Colca Canyon, condors. Warmer than Puno, fewer tourists than Machu Picchu.

ANA *Vale. Yo reservo los buses para el viernes por la noche. ¿Tú buscas el hostel en Arequipa?*

OK. I'll book the buses for Friday night. Will you find the hostel in Arequipa?

MARCO *Perfecto. ¿Cuánto piensas gastar?*

Perfect. How much are you thinking of spending?

ANA *Menos de 200 soles por persona, si se puede.*

Under 200 soles per person, if possible.

CULTURAL NOTE · THE PROPOSAL-AND-COUNTER RHYTHM

Spanish-speaking planning conversations sound like Spanish-speaking arguments: lots of proposals, lots of counter-proposals, a compromise that arrives faster than the volume suggests. Stay in it. The back-and-forth is not personal — it's how the plan gets made.

DIALECT COMPARE · "WHAT SHALL WE DO?"

Standard: *¿qué hacemos?* · Mexican: *¿qué hacemos?* / *¿qué le hacemos?* · Argentinian: *¿qué hacemos?* (same form, vos doesn't change "we") · Colombian: *¿qué hacemos, pues?* (*pues* as a softener, very *paisa*).

SLANG SPOTLIGHT · STANDARD

"*vale la pena*" — "it's worth the trouble." Used when settling on a choice: "*vale la pena reservar ahora porque después subirá el precio.*" ("It's worth booking now because the price will go up later.") Useful for any decision.

TUTOR'S CORNER

Drill the future tense as recognition before production. Show 10 sentences mixing present and future; student identifies which are future and translates. Then flip — they convert 10 present-tense sentences into the simple future. Most students arrive at B1 having seen the future but rarely used it. The recognition drill closes that gap fast.

What's next: Book Two opens at B1 — the subjunctive, the conditional, indirect speech. The first chapter is a philosophical conversation with a friend over a glass of wine in Buenos Aires: "*Pienso que la vida sea...*", "*Si pudiera cambiar una cosa...*". The grammar is harder; the conversations go deeper. Welcome to the next room.

Ejercicios

1. Futuro próximo con *ir a*: yo (estudiar) _____, tú (viajar) _____, nosotros (cenar) _____, ellos (llegar) _____.
2. Futuro simple: yo (hablar) _____, tú (comer) _____, ella (ir) _____ (irregular!), nosotros (tener) _____, ellos (hacer) _____.
3. Traduce: "Tomorrow we will leave at 7. We'll take the bus to Arequipa, then we'll have lunch and we'll visit the Plaza de Armas."
4. Propose a weekend trip in 3 sentences. Counter-propose in 3 sentences. Land on a compromise in 2 sentences.
5. List five things you will do in a Spanish-speaking country next year, in the future tense.

ROLE-PLAY · TIER 4 · COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

Organicemos el fin de semana

Student and tutor plan a long weekend trip through the Andes together. The tutor wants Lake Titicaca; the student wants Machu Picchu. They have 400 soles each, 3 days, and must agree on a destination, transport, lodging, and one specific activity. Seven minutes in Spanish, with at least four uses of the future tense.

Beat 1 — opening proposal. Each side states their preference and a reason.

Beat 2 — counter and compromise. One proposes a middle option; the other accepts or counter-proposes.

Beat 3 — logistics. Bus or van? Departure time? Who books what? Use future tense for the "who will do what" decisions.

Beat 4 — the specific activity. Propose one specific thing to do on Day 2. Decide.

Beat 5 — budget check. Run through estimated costs. Resolve any over-budget items.

TUTOR BRANCHES

- Tutor pushes hard for a more expensive hotel. Student must hold the budget.
- The bus the student wanted is sold out. Student improvises an alternative.
- End on the future tense: each side says one sentence about what they will do *after* the trip.

ANSWER KEY · CHAPTER 12

1. voy a estudiar · vas a viajar · vamos a cenar · van a llegar
2. hablaré · comerás · irá · tendremos · harán
3. *Mañana saldremos a las siete. Tomaremos el bus a Arequipa, después almorzaremos y visitaremos la Plaza de Armas.*
4. (open)
5. (open)

DELE A2 • Mock exam

The Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera (DELE), issued by Instituto Cervantes, is the most widely recognized A1–C2 certification for Spanish as a foreign language. A2 is the natural goal for a student who finishes this book. This appendix is a half-length mock exam in the official format, with marking guidance for tutors.

Part 1 — Comprensión auditiva • Listening (10 minutes)

Your tutor will read the following dialogue aloud twice — once at normal speed, once slowly. Then answer.

AUDIO SCRIPT • EN LA ESTACIÓN DE CUZCO

- VOZ** *El bus a Arequipa, de las once y cuarenta, saldrá del andén número siete. Lleva un retraso de quince minutos.*
The bus to Arequipa, at 11:40, will depart from platform 7. It's running 15 minutes late.
- MARCO** *Disculpa Ana, ¿escuchaste? Tenemos que ir al andén siete, no al cinco.*
- ANA** *Y sale a las once y cincuenta y cinco entonces. Tenemos veinte minutos. ¿Tomamos un café?*
- MARCO** *Vale la pena, sí. Pero rápido.*

1. ¿A qué hora sale el bus a Arequipa? _____
2. ¿De qué andén? _____
3. ¿Cuántos minutos de retraso? _____
4. ¿Qué deciden hacer en los veinte minutos? _____

Part 2 — Comprensión lectora • Reading (15 minutes)

Lucía tiene treinta años y vive en Lima. Trabaja en una pequeña librería del centro. Cada mañana se despierta a las siete, desayuna en casa con un café y una tostada, y va al trabajo en bicicleta. La librería abre a las nueve y media. Lucía trabaja hasta la una, almuerza con una compañera, y vuelve al trabajo a las tres. Por la tarde, cuando regresa a casa, le gusta cocinar. Los fines de semana sale con sus amigos: cine, restaurante, a veces un viaje fuera de la ciudad.

1. ¿Dónde vive Lucía? _____
2. ¿En qué trabaja? _____
3. ¿Cómo va al trabajo? _____
4. ¿A qué hora abre la librería? _____
5. ¿Qué le gusta hacer por la tarde en casa? _____

6. ¿Qué hace los fines de semana? Escribe dos cosas. _____

Part 3 – Gramática (10 minutes)

1. Pretérito: Ayer yo _____ (cenar) en un restaurante con mis amigos.
2. Pretérito: Ayer Ana _____ (ir) a Lima por el fin de semana.
3. Preposición: Voy _____ España por dos semanas.
4. Posesivo: _____ (my) hermana se llama Sofía.
5. Completa: _____ (yo, deber) estudiar más, pero no _____ (yo, querer).
6. Transforma al futuro: "Mañana voy a Madrid." → _____
7. SER o ESTAR: María _____ argentina. La fiesta _____ en mi casa. Yo _____ cansado.

Part 4 – Expresión escrita (20 minutes)

Choose **one**. Write 80-100 words in Spanish.

- A. Escribe un correo a un amigo hispanohablante contándole tu día de ayer. ¿Qué hiciste por la mañana, por la tarde, por la noche?
- B. Escribe un correo formal a un hotel para reservar una habitación doble del 15 al 18 de junio. Pregunta el precio y si el desayuno está incluido.

Part 5 – Expresión oral · Speaking (8 minutes with examiner)

The tutor plays the examiner. Three sections, each 2-3 minutes:

1. **Presentación** — "Hábleme de usted. ¿De dónde es? ¿A qué se dedica? ¿Qué le gusta hacer?"
2. **Tarea** — "Cuénteme un viaje reciente." (Use preterit and imperfect throughout.)
3. **Interacción** — Role-play card: "Está en un restaurante. Pida una comida completa, pregunte por el vino, pague."

MARKING RUBRIC · FOR THE TUTOR

Listening	/8
Reading	/12
Grammar	/14 (2 per item)
Writing	/15 — task completion (5), grammar (5), vocabulary (5)
Speaking	/15 — fluency (5), grammar (5), pronunciation (5)
Total	/64 · A2 pass mark ≈ 65%

PREPARE FOR YOUR REAL DELE A2 EXAM →

Dialectos · Six regional varieties at a glance

A reference table you can return to throughout your studies. Each entry: what the variety is, what to listen for, signature phrases. The aim is recognition, not production — a beginner should not try to speak any of these. Knowing what is being said back to you is the first step.

NORTE AMÉRICA · MÉXICO

Español mexicano

Spoken by 130 million Mexicans plus the 40 million Mexican-Americans in the United States — the largest Spanish-speaking population in the world. Mexican Spanish is clear, deliberate, slang-rich, and uses the diminutive (*-ito/-ita*) more than any other variety.

MEXICAN	STANDARD	ENGLISH
<i>órale</i>	— (<i>filler</i>)	"hey!" / "wow!" / "OK!"
<i>¿qué onda?</i>	<i>¿qué tal?</i>	what's up?
<i>chido / padrísimo</i>	<i>genial / fantástico</i>	cool / awesome
<i>güey</i>	<i>tío / amigo</i>	dude (friends only)
<i>no manches</i>	<i>no me digas</i>	no way! (mild)
<i>ahorita</i>	<i>ahora</i>	now / soon / "in a minute" — famously elastic
<i>mande</i>	<i>perdón / ¿cómo?</i>	"pardon?" — polite Mexican way to ask for repetition

[MEXICAN SPANISH TUTORS →](#)

EUROPA · ESPAÑA

Castellano

The Spanish of Spain. Two famous signatures: the **ceceo** (c/z pronounced like English "th") and the use of **vosotros** as the informal plural-you. Madrileños and Andalusians sound very different from each other within Spain.

CASTELLANO	LATIN AMERICAN STANDARD	ENGLISH
<i>cerveza</i> (" <i>ther-VAY-tha</i> ")	<i>cerveza</i> (" <i>ser-VAY-sa</i> ")	beer
<i>vosotros / vosotras</i>	<i>ustedes</i>	you (plural, informal)

CASTELLANO	LATIN AMERICAN STANDARD	ENGLISH
<i>vale</i>	<i>OK / bueno</i>	OK
<i>tío / tía</i>	<i>amigo / amiga · güey · etc.</i>	dude / friend (Spain only)
<i>guay</i>	<i>chido / bacán</i>	cool (very Spanish)
<i>coger</i>	<i>tomar / agarrar (in LatAm coger is vulgar!)</i>	to take / catch
<i>el ordenador</i>	<i>la computadora</i>	computer (Spain vs Latin America)

CASTELLANO TUTORS →

CONO SUR · ARGENTINA / URUGUAY

Rioplatense

The Spanish of Buenos Aires, Montevideo, and the river basin between them. Defined by **voseo** (the pronoun *vos* with its own verb forms) and the **yeísmo rehilado** (*ll / y* pronounced like English "sh"). Italian immigration in the 19th and 20th centuries gave it a distinctive sing-song intonation.

RIOPLATENSE	STANDARD	ENGLISH
<i>vos sos / vos tenés / vos hablás</i>	<i>tú eres / tú tienes / tú hablas</i>	you are / have / speak
<i>ella ("EH-sha"), pollo ("POH-sho")</i>	<i>ella ("EH-ya"), pollo ("POH-yo")</i>	she, chicken (with sh sound)
<i>che</i>	— (filler)	"hey" / "dude"
<i>boludo</i>	<i>tonto (lit.) / amigo (slang)</i>	idiot (literal) / friend (slang, friends only)
<i>¿qué onda? · ¿qué hacés?</i>	<i>¿qué tal?</i>	what's up?
<i>colectivo / bondi</i>	<i>autobús</i>	bus

RIOPLATENSE TUTORS →

AMÉRICA DEL SUR · COLOMBIA

Español colombiano

Often called the world's clearest Spanish — Bogotá Spanish in particular is famously deliberate and standard. Colombia uses *usted* heavily even between close friends and family, which sounds formal to other Latin Americans but is the local norm. Coastal Colombian (Cartagena, Barranquilla) is Caribbean Spanish and behaves differently.

COLOMBIAN	STANDARD	ENGLISH
<i>¿qué más?</i>	<i>¿qué tal?</i>	what's up?
<i>parcero / parce</i>	<i>amigo</i>	friend (Bogotá / paisa)
<i>¿me regalas un café?</i>	<i>me da un café</i>	"can you give me a coffee?" (<i>regalar</i> as polite request)
<i>¡chévere! · ¡bacano!</i>	<i>¡genial!</i>	cool / great
<i>vaina</i>	<i>cosa</i>	thing (very common, slightly informal)
<i>listo</i>	<i>vale / OK</i>	OK / got it

[COLOMBIAN TUTORS →](#)

CARIBE · CUBA

Español caribeño (Cuba)

Fast, musical, syllable-dropping. The defining feature of Caribbean Spanish is the loss of syllable-final *s*, *r*, and sometimes *d*. The Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico share the same phonology. Cuban specifically is also rich in African-derived vocabulary and idiom.

CUBAN	STANDARD	ENGLISH
<i>¿qué bolá?</i>	<i>¿qué tal?</i>	what's up?
<i>tá ("tah") · ehtá</i>	<i>está</i>	he/she/it is (dropped syllable)
<i>na' · pa' · to'</i>	<i>nada · para · todo</i>	nothing · for · all (dropped final consonants)
<i>asere · compay</i>	<i>amigo</i>	friend / mate
<i>jamar</i>	<i>comer</i>	to eat (slang)
<i>guagua</i>	<i>autobús</i>	bus (also Canary Islands, Puerto Rico)
<i>candela</i>	— (<i>literally "flame"</i>)	"trouble / mess / drama" — universal Cuban metaphor

[CUBAN TUTORS →](#)

AMÉRICA DEL SUR · PERÚ · BOLIVIA · ECUADOR

Español andino

The Spanish of the high Andes — Cuzco, Quito, La Paz, much of the Peruvian and Bolivian highlands. Vowels stay distinct, consonants stay clean. Code-switching with Quechua and Aymara is common in rural areas. The phrase *no más* is used everywhere as a softener.

ANDEAN	STANDARD	ENGLISH
<i>no más</i>	— (<i>softener</i>)	"just" / "only" — "pase no más" = "go ahead"
<i>papito · mamita · jovencito</i>	<i>señor / señora / joven</i>	affectionate diminutives for any customer
<i>¿en serio? · ¿de veras?</i>	<i>¿de verdad?</i>	really?
<i>chala (Bolivia) · chacra</i>	<i>terreno rural</i>	small rural property
<i>pe (Perú)</i>	<i>pues</i>	"well" / "so" — clipped Peruvian filler
<i>causa</i>	<i>amigo</i>	friend (very Peruvian slang)
<i>imiércoles!</i>	<i>imierda! (softer version)</i>	"shoot!" — non-vulgar substitute

[ANDEAN SPANISH TUTORS →](#)

[PERUVIAN TUTORS →](#)

Verb tables

Quick reference for present, preterit, and imperfect of the most common A1-A2 Spanish verbs.

The regular pattern · all three families · present

PRONOUN	HABLAR	COMER	VIVIR
yo	<i>hablo</i>	<i>como</i>	<i>vivo</i>
tú	<i>hablas</i>	<i>comes</i>	<i>vives</i>
él/ella	<i>habla</i>	<i>come</i>	<i>vive</i>
nosotros	<i>hablamos</i>	<i>comemos</i>	<i>vivimos</i>
vosotros (Spain)	<i>habláis</i>	<i>coméis</i>	<i>vivís</i>
ellos	<i>hablan</i>	<i>comen</i>	<i>viven</i>

Top 12 irregular verbs · present

VERB	YO	TÚ	ÉL/ELLA	NOSOTROS	VOSOTROS	ELLOS
ser	<i>soy</i>	<i>eres</i>	<i>es</i>	<i>somos</i>	<i>sois</i>	<i>son</i>
estar	<i>estoy</i>	<i>estás</i>	<i>está</i>	<i>estamos</i>	<i>estáis</i>	<i>están</i>
tener	<i>tengo</i>	<i> tienes</i>	<i>tiene</i>	<i>tenemos</i>	<i>tenéis</i>	<i>tienen</i>
haber	<i>he</i>	<i>has</i>	<i>ha (hay)</i>	<i>hemos</i>	<i>habéis</i>	<i>han</i>
ir	<i>voy</i>	<i>vas</i>	<i>va</i>	<i>vamos</i>	<i>vais</i>	<i>van</i>
venir	<i>vengo</i>	<i>vienes</i>	<i>viene</i>	<i>venimos</i>	<i>venís</i>	<i>vienen</i>
hacer	<i>hago</i>	<i>haces</i>	<i>hace</i>	<i>hacemos</i>	<i>hacéis</i>	<i>hacen</i>
decir	<i>digo</i>	<i>dices</i>	<i>dice</i>	<i>decimos</i>	<i>decís</i>	<i>dicen</i>
poder	<i>puedo</i>	<i>puedes</i>	<i>puede</i>	<i>podemos</i>	<i>podéis</i>	<i>pueden</i>
querer	<i>quiero</i>	<i>quieres</i>	<i>quiere</i>	<i>queremos</i>	<i>queréis</i>	<i>quieren</i>
saber	<i>sé</i>	<i>sabes</i>	<i>sabe</i>	<i>sabemos</i>	<i>sabéis</i>	<i>saben</i>
conocer	<i>conozco</i>	<i>conoces</i>	<i>conoce</i>	<i>conocemos</i>	<i>conocéis</i>	<i>conocen</i>

Critical preterit + imperfect forms

INFINITIVE	PRETERIT (YO)	PRETERIT (ÉL)	IMPERFECT (YO)
ser / ir	<i>fui</i>	<i>fue</i>	<i>era / iba</i>
tener	<i>tuve</i>	<i>tuvo</i>	<i>tenía</i>
estar	<i>estuve</i>	<i>estuvo</i>	<i>estaba</i>
hacer	<i>hice</i>	<i>hizo</i>	<i>hacía</i>
decir	<i>dije</i>	<i>dijo</i>	<i>decía</i>
poder	<i>pude</i>	<i>pudo</i>	<i>podía</i>
poner	<i>puse</i>	<i>puso</i>	<i>ponía</i>
saber	<i>supe</i>	<i>supo</i>	<i>sabía</i>
ver	<i>vi</i>	<i>vio</i>	<i>veía</i>
dar	<i>di</i>	<i>dio</i>	<i>daba</i>
traer	<i>traje</i>	<i>trajo</i>	<i>traía</i>
venir	<i>vine</i>	<i>vino</i>	<i>venía</i>

Glosario A1–A2

A condensed reference of the core A1-A2 vocabulary covered in this book, grouped alphabetically.

a — to, at	cansado/a — tired	encantar — to love (something)
a la derecha · a la izquierda — right / left	caro/a — expensive	entrar · salir — to enter · to leave
abrir — to open	carro · coche — car (LatAm · Spain)	escribir · leer — to write · to read
acostarse — to go to bed	casa — house	escuchar — to listen
aeropuerto — airport	cena — dinner	esperar — to wait, to hope
agua — water	centro — center, downtown	esposo/a · marido · mujer — husband / wife
ahora · ahorita — now / soon (Mexican)	cerca · lejos — near · far	estar — to be (state)
algo — something	cerveza · caña — beer · small draft	estudiante · estudiar — student · to study
almuerzo · comida — lunch	chico/a · joven — young person	euro · dólar · peso · sol — currencies
amigo/a — friend	ciudad — city	familia — family
año — year	cocina · cocinar — kitchen · to cook	fiebre · tos · dolor — fever · cough · pain
aprender — to learn	color — color	frío · calor — cold · heat
arroz — rice	comer — to eat	gracias · de nada — thanks · you're welcome
autobús · bus — bus	cómo · qué · quién · cuándo · dónde · por qué — how / what / who / when / where / why	grande · pequeño/a — big · small
ayer — yesterday	comprar — to buy	gustar · preferir — to like · to prefer
ayudar — to help	contar — to tell, to count	hablar — to speak
bailar — to dance	creer · pensar — to believe · to think	hacer — to do, to make
bar — bar / café	cuenta — bill, check	hambre · sed — hunger · thirst
barato/a — cheap	cuero — body	hermano/a · hijos · padres — sibling · children · parents
beber — to drink	dar — to give	hola · adiós · hasta luego — hi · bye · see you later
bicicleta — bicycle	de — of, from	hora · minuto · segundo — hour · minute · second
bien — well	decir — to say, to tell	hospital · clínica · médico — hospital · clinic · doctor
billete · boleto — ticket (Spain · LatAm)	deber — should, must	hotel · habitación — hotel · room
boca — mouth	desayuno — breakfast	ir · venir — to go · to come
brazo — arm	despertarse — to wake up	izquierda · derecha — left · right
buenas tardes · noches — good afternoon · evening	después — after, afterwards	jamás · nunca — never
buenos días — good morning	día · semana · mes · año — day · week · month · year	jueves — Thursday
bueno/a — good	dinero · plata (LatAm) — money	leche · café con leche — milk · coffee with milk
cabeza — head	doler — to hurt	levantarse — to get up
café · cafetería — coffee · café	domingo · lunes · martes · miércoles · jueves · viernes · sábado — days of week	
caliente — hot (to the touch)	dormir — to sleep	
calle — street	empezar — to start	
cama — bed	en — in, on, at	
caminar — to walk		

libro · librería — book · bookstore

llamar · llamarse — to call · to be called

llegar · llevar — to arrive · to carry

lluvia · nieve · sol — rain · snow · sun

mañana — tomorrow / morning

mano · pie · pierna · brazo — hand · foot · leg · arm

mar · montaña · río — sea · mountain · river

mejor · peor — better · worse

mercado · tienda — market · shop

mucho · poco — much, a lot · little

mujer · hombre — woman · man

museo · iglesia — museum · church

nadie · alguien — nobody · somebody

necesitar — to need

niño/a — child

noche · día · tarde · mañana — night · day · afternoon · morning

nombre · apellido — first name · surname

nuevo/a · viejo/a — new · old

ojo · oído · nariz · boca — eye · ear · nose · mouth

otro/a — other, another

pagar · pago — to pay · payment

pan · tortilla · arroz · frijoles — bread · tortilla · rice · beans

para · por — for / through · by

parada · estación — stop · station

pasar · pasado — to pass · past

pedir · ordenar — to order, request

pensar · creer · saber · conocer — to think · believe · know (fact) · know (person/place)

pequeño/a · grande — small · big

perder — to lose

perro · gato — dog · cat

pisos · apartamentos · departamentos — apartment

plaza · parque — square · park

poco · mucho · bastante — a little · a lot · enough

poder — to be able to, can

por favor — please

postre · café · sobremesa — dessert · coffee · post-meal chat

precio · cuánto — price · how much

primer · segundo · tercer — first · second · third

quizá · tal vez — maybe

recordar · olvidar — to remember · to forget

repetir — to repeat

restaurante · cantina · taquería — restaurant types

salud · enfermo/a — health · sick

señor · señora · señorita — Mr · Mrs · Miss

ser · estar — to be (identity / state)

siempre · nunca · a veces — always · never · sometimes

sin · con — without · with

subir · bajar — to go up · to go down

también · tampoco — also · neither

tarde · temprano — late · early

temer · tener miedo — to fear · to be afraid

tiempo · clima — time, weather · climate

trabajo · trabajar — work · to work

tren · avión · barco — train · plane · boat

universidad · escuela — university · school

usar — to use

vale · OK · de acuerdo — OK (Spain) · OK · agreed

venir · ir — to come · to go

ver · mirar — to see · to look at

vestirse — to get dressed

viajar · viaje — to travel · trip

vino · cerveza · agua — wine · beer · water

vivir · vida — to live · life

volver · regresar — to return

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— *fin* —

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