

Reading

Learn to identify and read syllables:

A	E	I	O	U	GA	ge	gi	GO	GU
ma	me	mi	mo	mu	ya	ye	yi	yo	yu
pa	pe	pi	po	pu	fa	fe	fi	fo	fu
sa	se	si	so	su	ha	he	hi	ho	hu
la	le	li	lo	lu	ja	je	ji	jo	ju
na	ne	ni	no	nu	za	ze	zi	zo	zu
ta	te	ti	to	tu	lla	lle	lli	llo	llu
da	de	dí	do	du	gua	gue	gui	guo	-guu-
ra	re	ri	ro	ru	cha	che	chi	cho	chu
RRA	RRE	RRI	RRO	RRU	qua	QUE	QUI	quo	-quu-
CA	ce	ci	CO	CU	xa	xe	xi	xo	xu
ña	ñe	ñi	ño	ñu	pl	cl	bl	gl	fl
va	ve	vi	vo	vu	pr	tr	gr	dr	cr
ba	be	bi	bo	bu	br	fr			

Pronunciation Key

- A** The letter A is always pronounced "ah" as in "Ah, Sweet Mystery."
- E** The letter E is always pronounced "E" as in *bet*, *fest*, *bless*.
- I** The letter I is always pronounced "EE" as in *great*, *beef*.
- O** The letter O is always pronounced "O" as in *obey* (but without the slightest trace of a U sound. It is a clean, distinct O sound).
- U** The letter U is always pronounced "OO" as in *cool*, *pool*.
- B**
1. The letter B is pronounced "B" as in *bit*.
 2. However, when a letter B appears between vowels it is pronounced very softly. In fact, the B between vowels is so soft that your lips hardly touch when you pronounce it. Try pronouncing the word "abundancia" with a very, very soft B.
- C**
1. The C before A, O, U is hard as the C in *can*.
 2. The C before E or I is soft as the C in *cent*.
- CC** is pronounced "X." "Acción" is pronounced "axion."
- CH** As in *child*.
- D**
1. The letter D is pronounced "D" as in "do."
 2. When the D is the last letter of a word or when it appears between vowels, it is pronounced as the softest TH imaginable. Say the English word "the" several times making the TH very, very soft; then say "ciudad," pronouncing both D's with the same soft TH.
- G**
1. The G before A, O, U is hard as in *get*.
 2. The G before E or I is pronounced H as in *hen*. "General" is pronounced "heneral."
- H** The H is always silent in Spanish. "Hotel" is pronounced "otel."
- J** The J is pronounced "H" as in *hen*.
- L** The L is pronounced "L" as in *let*.
- LL** The LL is pronounced "Y" as in *yes*. "Caballo" is pronounced "cabayo"; "llevo" is pronounced "yavo."
- ñ** The ñ is pronounced "NY." "Cabaña" is pronounced "cabanya" and "señor" is "senyor."
- R** The R is slightly trilled except when it is the first letter in a word, in which case it is strongly trilled.
- RR** Always strongly trilled.
- T** The T is always pronounced as the "TT" in *attractive*. "Patio" (patio), "simpático" (simpático).
- Y**
1. The letter Y is pronounced "Y" as in *yet*.
 2. However, when the letter Y stands alone it is pronounced "EE" as in *beef*. "Y" means "and" in Spanish.
- Z** The Z is pronounced "S" as in *sent*.
- QUE** is pronounced "KE" as in *kept*.
- QUI** is pronounced "KEE" as in *keen*, *keep*.
- GUE** is pronounced "GUE" as in *guest*.
- GUI** is pronounced "GEE" as in *geese*.
- The rest of the letters are pronounced as they are in English, with only very slight variations.
- In some parts of Spain the C before E or I is pronounced "TH," and the Z is always pronounced "TH."

Accents

(Pronunciation and Stress)

Accent marks are used in Spanish for two different purposes: to indicate where the stress or emphasis falls on a word when it is pronounced, and to help differentiate between identically spelled words. They are only used over vowels (**á, é, í, ó, ú**), and are written as a short diagonal line, from upper right to lower left.

If there is an accent mark (´):

1. Stress the syllable with the accent (e.g. adiós).

If there is no accent mark (˘):

1. If the word ends in a **vowel, n** or **s**, stress the next to last syllable (e.g. cama, mariposa, pollo).
2. If the word ends in **another consonant** (other than n or s), stress the last syllable. (e.g. cantar, feliz).

Notes:

- All words where stress fall on a vowel more than two syllables from the end must have an accent (e.g. propósito, fotógrafo.)
- All words where stress falls on a weak vowel must have an accent (e.g. día).
- Accent marks are required on some words to differentiate them from otherwise identically spelled ones:
 1. Exclamation and question words (qué, cómo) vs. corresponding relative pronouns or connecting words (que, como).
 2. Several pairs of one-syllable words are distinguished by the presence or absence of accent (de, dé; si, sí).
 3. Demonstrative pronouns (éste, ése) vs. demonstrative adjectives (este, ese).