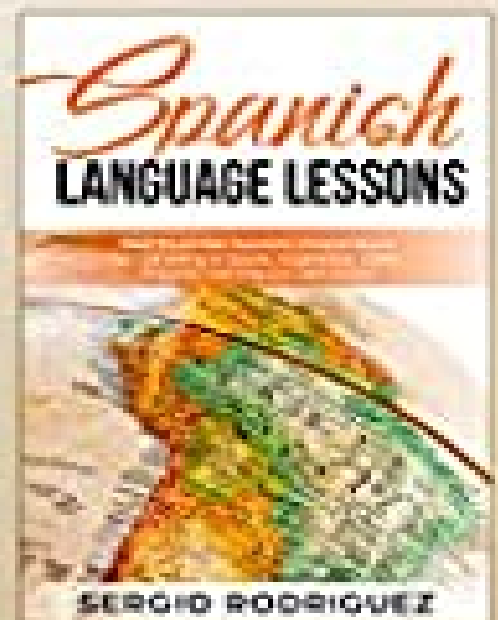
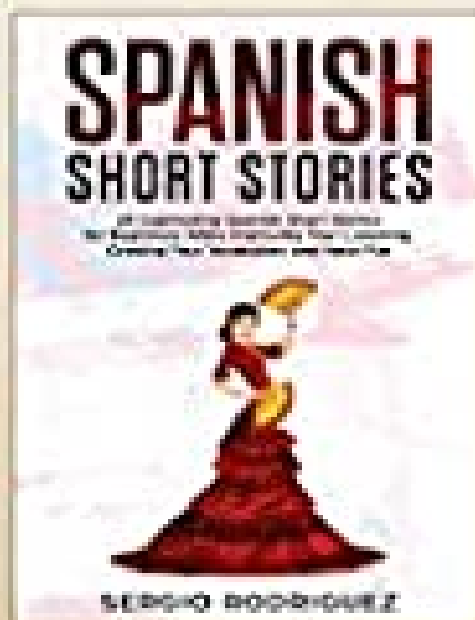


# SPANISH LANGUAGE

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Sergio Rodriguez

**Spanish for Beginners**

*Learn the Basics of Spanish  
in 7 Days*

By Sergio Rodriguez

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## INTRODUCTION

Spanish is the most widely spoken Romance language, with more than 400 million native speakers all over the world. It is the official language in 21 countries including Spain, Mexico, Colombia, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Argentina, and Equatorial Guinea. It is the most popular second language in the United States and Europe. The large population of Spanish speakers around the world in four continents and beyond makes it a smart choice for a second language.

The fast and steady growth of the Spanish speaking population has made Spanish a necessity in business. Learning Spanish will empower you to communicate in the most productive way with Spanish speaking co-workers, employees, or customers. Hispanic consumers are the most dynamic market segment in North America.

Knowing Spanish is particularly advantageous if you're in the healthcare or education sector. The globalization trend has made it possible to tap this vast and fast growing market segment. Health practitioners and professionals who want to provide the best services to

their Spanish-speaking clients will want to speak and understand their language to ensure that there are no barriers to excellent service.

If you're looking for job opportunities worldwide, having Spanish in your résumé will certainly confer definite advantages over those who are monolingual.

If you have plans of travelling to Spanish-speaking regions, the ability to understand and speak the language will make your trip a truly enriching experience.

If this is your first time learning a Romance language, you can use this knowledge to easily learn other related languages.

The book "Spanish for Beginners" is designed to help you learn Spanish and bridge the communication gap in as fast as one week. It is written with the self-learner in mind and organized to help its readers understand and speak the language confidently within a short span of time.

This learning material will prove that by identifying the most important features of a language and by applying proven techniques and strategies to language learning. Anyone can master the basics of the language and use this knowledge base to start speaking confidently and properly in Spanish in as little as seven days.

Most English speakers will find Spanish a relatively easy language to learn. For one, like English, it uses the same Latin or Roman alphabet.



Except for the letter Ññ, the rest of the alphabet will look familiar. There are no special characters to learn. In addition, the vowels have the same sound wherever you find them. As both English and Spanish have Latin roots, there are thousands of cognates between them that will make vocabulary building an easier task.

While they share the same roots, English and Spanish have vastly distinct grammar and pronunciation rules. An area that always poses a challenge to an English-speaker is the extensive application of gender in Spanish. Gender, along with the number of nouns, influences the way modifiers like adjectives and articles are formed. This book provides the techniques you need to overcome difficulties with gender and noun identification.

Learning a language permanently requires mastery of its fundamentals. This book highlights the important features of the Spanish language in the areas of grammar, pronunciation, syllabication, sentence formation, and communication. It provides the strategies you need to understand the Spanish numeric system easily and be able to count in Spanish in less than thirty minutes.

By learning the core of the language, you will be able to build other important skills such as telling time, forming your own sentences, introducing yourself to people, reading literary works, and taking part in daily conversations in Spanish. This learning material will provide the steps and strategies you need to give yourself a solid foundation in Spanish.

The book ‘Spanish for Beginners’ is a complete training course for beginners who want to learn Spanish quickly, easily, and permanently. It is developed for self-learners who are looking for a well-organized and comprehensive yet concise and straightforward approach to language learning.

This learning material will help you overcome the apprehensions and frustrations language learners face when using conventional methods. By helping you achieve learning milestones in a short amount of time, you will be able to build the confidence and skills you need to level up, speak confidently, and hold conversations with native speakers in no time at all.

While the lessons in this book are organized with the beginner in mind, the lessons can also be used by anyone with or without a background in Spanish. You can work at your own pace but to maximize learning time, it is best to take up the lessons sequentially.

The book begins with tips and strategies to maximize your learning sessions and help you learn Spanish in record time. It provides a guide for studying the lessons on a daily basis for the next seven days. The book ends with a list of useful words and common expressions that you can use immediately to deal with real life situations.

The topics are presented in a straightforward and concise manner to keep the reader’s interest and to highlight the important points of the subject. You will find relevant examples and charts which are designed to complement the discussion and ease the task of memorization.

The book covers the important topics that every beginner should know to start speaking Spanish. It presents grammar rules in a simplified manner and clarifies issues that are hindering most language students from fully absorbing the lessons. It discusses the three moods in Spanish and imparts the techniques to understand their rules of usage.

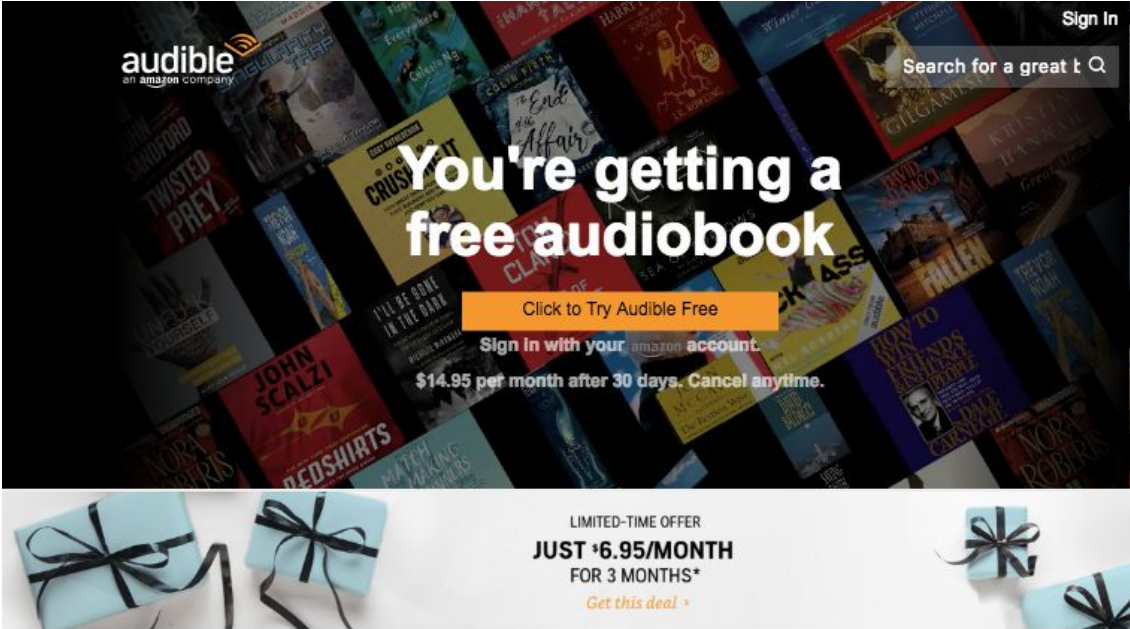
The book “Spanish for Beginners” is ideal for professionals who are working with Spanish-speaking clients and must learn the language fast. It is recommended for travellers, business owners, and language enthusiasts who want to expand their horizon, learn the Hispanic culture, and take advantage of the consistently growing market.

Thank you for buying this book. I am confident that by following the steps and focusing on the task of learning the language consistently, you will be able to understand, use, and speak the Spanish language in practically no time at all.

Regards,  
*Sergio Rodriguez*

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# CHAPTER 1: LEARNING STRATEGIES

## HOW TO LEARN SPANISH QUICKLY AND EASILY

Acquiring a new language requires time, effort, dedication, and willpower. To learn Spanish quickly and easily, you will have to take advantage of available resources, tools, and opportunities to optimize your study time. Successful language learners use the following strategies to learn Spanish in a short span of time:

### **Allot a specific time every day for language training.**

Consistently studying at a specific time each day will help build your study habits. In addition, it can help accelerate learning time by eliminating the need to relearn or re-acquire language skills that could have been easily forgotten due to prolonged intervals in learning sessions.

### **Learn the most important words in Spanish.**

The most important words in Spanish are those that are commonly used in regular or day to day conversations. By learning and mastering these words, you will be able to communicate in record time. Strive to memorize at least 20 important words a day and you will be able to build a strong vocabulary in less than two months.

### **Learn Spanish-English cognates.**

English, Spanish, and other Romance languages share thousands of common words. These are words that have identical spelling and meaning in both languages. Most cognates will have different pronunciation but learning them can help you build a large vocabulary overnight.

### **Speak the language and interact with Spanish speakers on a daily basis.**

Interacting with Spanish speakers on a daily basis helps you hone your listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills. Nowadays, the internet facilitates communication between people from different parts of the world. It is also a valuable resource for obtaining video and audio files that you can use to enhance your listening skills.

### **Learn to sound like a native speaker.**

Acquiring the accent, intonation, pronunciation, and other peculiarities of Spanish will require regular practice, repetition, and advanced listening skills.

**Establish specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound goals.**

As soon as you have committed yourself to learn Spanish, you must establish daily, weekly, and monthly goals that will motivate you and serve as your yardstick for evaluating your progress.



## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK TO LEARN SPANISH

Learning Spanish can pose many challenges to a native English speaker. The grammar and pronunciation rules in English are vastly different from the Spanish language. If you use conventional methods to learn Spanish, it may take years to master even just the basics.

To achieve fluency in Spanish, or in any language for that matter, you will have to develop important language skills such as listening, reading, speaking, and writing. To acquire these skills in as little time as possible, you will need to use various tools, strategies, and resources to maximize your learning activities.

One of the most important tools that will come in handy when learning a language is memorization. You need to use this learning tool to remember rules, important phrases, words, and sentences. The ability to memorize effectively will help you reduce learning time considerably.

When acquiring a new language, you have to start with the basics: the alphabet and pronunciation. To master these skills, you need to memorize, speak, repeat, and practice. Hence, the first steps in this training course are to master the alphabet, learn pronunciation by heart, and understand how syllabication and stress works. Once you have mastered these topics, you will be ready to proceed to the next challenges.

You can use the following study guide to learn Spanish in 7 days:

Day 1: Chapter 2 (The Fundamentals of Spanish)

Day 2: Chapter 3 (Numbers, Colors, Date, and Time)

Day 3: Chapter 4 (Nouns and Articles); Chapter 5 (Pronouns)

Day 4: Chapter 6 (Verbs)

Day 5: Chapter 7 (Adjectives); Chapter 8 (Prepositions, Adverbs, and Conjunctions)

Day 6: Chapter 9 (Forming Sentences); Chapter 10 (Subjunctive and Imperative Moods)

Day 7: Chapter 11 (Making Comparisons); Chapter 12 (Common Words and Phrases)

# CHAPTER 2: THE FUNDAMENTALS OF SPANISH

## THE SPANISH ALPHABET

The alphabet is the building block of a language. By learning the Spanish alphabet, you will gain an understanding of the uniqueness of this language. The Spanish alphabet uses the Latin or Roman alphabet and the same 26 letters found in the English alphabet. In addition, it uses ‘ñ’, a letter which has come to be associated with the language. The letters Kk and Ww were added to the original alphabet to accommodate words of foreign origin.

Here is the Spanish alphabet, their letter names, and sound:

Letters	Name	Pronunciation
A a	a	ah
B b	be	bay
C c	ce	say
D d	de	day
E e	e	ay
F f	efe	effay
G g	ge	hay
H h	hache	ah-chay
I i	i	ee

J j	jota	hotah
K k	ka	kah
L l	ele	el-lay
M m	eme	em-ma y
N n	ene	en-nay
Ñ ñ	eñe	en-yay
O o	o	ooh
P p	pe	pay
Q q	cu	coo
R r	erre	air-ray
S s	ese	es-say
T t	te	tay
U u	u	oo
V v	uve	beh
W w	uve doble	bveh doh-bleh
X x	equis	ay-keys
Y y	I griega	ee-gree-ay-gah
Z z	zeta	say-tah

## **PRONUNCIATION**

Proper pronunciation is an essential element of efficient communication. Since Spanish words are spelled according to how they are pronounced, accuracy has become even more important.

Proper pronunciation involves familiarity with the pronunciation and sound of each letter and their combination, syllabication, and stress.

In English, vowel sounds may vary from one word to another. Spanish vowels are pronounced in the same manner and never vary from word to word. Except when placed after q or g, vowels are almost always voiced.

Letter	Pronunciation	Example
a	like “a” in father	papa (potato)
b	hard sound, no aspiration – like “b” in ball	ente (good)
	soft sound – lips don’t touch like the English “v”	hablar (to speak)
c	hard sound before a, o, u – like the “c” in car	camino (path)
	soft sound before e and I – like “c” in cell; in Spain, like “th” in thick	cielo (sky)
d	hard sound: like the “d” in door after l, m, n or a pause	falda (skirt)
	soft sound: like the “th” sound in there	nada (nothing)
e	sounds close to the “a” in	cereza

	late but shorter and crisper	(cherry)
f	like the “f” in fast	grifo (faucet)
g	hard g: before a, o, u, and n like the “g” in gas	entesi (slender)
	soft g: commonly occurs when ‘g’ is found between vowels	agua (water)
	before e and i: like the “h” in hot but raspier	gente (people)
h	silent	la hora (hour)
i	like the “I” in machine	idioma (language)
j	the throaty English “h” in hack	viaje (trip)
k	like the “k” in kiss	kilómetro (kilometer)
l	like the “l” in mall	futbol (soccer)
ll	like the “y” in year	llamar (to call)
m	like the “m” in month	mano (hand)
n	like the “n” in net	nada (nothing)

o	like the “o” in no	poco (little)
p	like the “p” in pit but with no aspiration	perro (dog)
q	like the “k” in kitchen, always used with ‘u’	aquí (here)
r	at the start of a word or after l, n, or s: trilled like RR	rico (rich)
	elsewhere – like the “dd” in ladder	ce ro (zero)
rr	trilled or vibrating sound, like saying “brr” with the tongue instead of the lips	perro (dog)
s	like the “s” in sit	ser (to be)
t	like the “t” in top but softer with no puff of air	triste (sad)
u	like the “u” in lunar	rubio (blond)
v	sounds like the Spanish “b” where the lips don’t touch	avión (airplane)
w	like the “w” in wait, found in foreign words	ente (water)
x	in general, like the “x” in taxi	examen (exam)
	at the start of a word –	xilófono

	like “ss” in kiss	(xylophone )
	like a throaty “h”	México (Mexico)
y	like “y” in yes	mayor (older)
	when used as a word or vowel, like the Spanish i	y (and)
z	like the “s” in supper, like “th” in thin in Spain	zapato (shoe)

## Diphthongs

Diphthong	Sound	Examples
au	like the ‘ow’ in bow	aunque (although)
ia	ya	piano (piano)
ai	eye	aire (air)
ei	like the ‘ey’ in hey	rey (king)
eu	close to ‘ew’	entesi (neutral)
io	like ‘yo’ in	radio (radio)



	yoyo	
iu	you	viuda (widow)
ue	like the 'we' in wet	fuego (fire)
oi	like the 'oy' in boy	hoy (today)

## SYLLABICATION

### *Syllabication Rules*

Understanding how syllables are formed is a vital step to learning proper pronunciation in Spanish. It is important to know how to divide words into syllables as the letter combination generally determines proper pronunciation and use or placement of an orthographic accent.

Whenever possible, a syllable should end in a vowel. In many cases, a syllable consists of a consonant followed by a vowel:

niña ni-ña young girl

casa ca-sa house

boda bo-da wedding

A consonant placed between two vowels forms a syllable with the second vowel:

oro o-ro gold

acá a-cá here

Two successive consonants will generally form two syllables in which the first consonant forms a syllable with the preceding vowel while the second consonant forms a syllable with the succeeding vowel.

Escuela es-cue-la school

banco ban-co bank

cantante can-tan-te singer

cuando cuan-do when

When there are three or more consecutive consonants, the first two will generally remain with the preceding vowel while the rest of the consonants will form a syllable with the succeeding vowel.

Consciente conscien-te aware

panfleto pan-fle-to pamphlet

obstrucción obs-truc-ción obstructon, blockage

ombligo om-bli-go belly button

entesim con-stan-te constant

entrada en-tra-da entry

### *Weak and Strong Vowels*

Spanish vowels are either weak or strong and their classification as such has an impact on syllabication. The strong vowels are ‘a’, ‘e’, and ‘o’ and the weak vowels are ‘i’ and ‘u’.

A Spanish syllable may only contain one strong vowel. A strong vowel placed beside one or more weak vowels may form one syllable together. Two adjacent weak vowels form a diphthong. Two adjacent strong vowels form two separate syllables.

Examples:

ciudad ciu-dad city

caer ca-er to fall

toalla to-a-lla towel

reina rei-na queen

poeta po-e-ta poet

Some consonant combinations are not separated: br, ch, bl, cl, cr, dr, gr, gl, fl, fr, ll, pl, pr, qu, rr, and tr.

Broma bro-ma joke

hablar ha-blar to speak

carro ca-rro car

clima cli-ma climate

clave cla-ve key

bicicleta bi-ci-cle-ta bicycle

trabajo tra-ba-jo job

llamar lla-mar to call

aplicar a-pli-car to apply

hecho he-cho fact

perro pe-rro dog

fruta fru-ta fruit  
gloria glo-ria glory  
pueblo pue-blo town  
siempre siem-pre always  
frecuente fre-quen-te frequent  
entesim a-ma-ri-llo yellow  
merengue me-ren-gue meringue  
entesim cas-ti-llo palace  
atrás a-trás behind

However, the combinations “rl,” “sr”, “tl”, “nr”, and “sl” form distinct syllables as follows:

isla is-la island  
perla per-la pearl  
atlas at-las atlas  
atlantico at-lan-ti-co atlantic

A word’s prefix forms a syllable of its own:

subliminal sub-li-mi-nal  
desorden des-or-den

X is considered as two consecutive consonants when it takes the sound of ks.

Éxito ek-si-to success  
exámen ek-sa-men exam

## STRESS AND ACCENT MARK

Spanish uses one accent mark: the tilde or the acute accent. It is written above a vowel to indicate stress on a syllable. Spanish words are generally stressed on one syllable which may or may have a written accent.

Here are the most important rules on stress and accentuation:

The syllable with the accent mark receives the stress.

Víveres  
cómo  
pájaro  
día

When a syllable does not contain an accented vowel, the following rules will determine the implicit location of the stress:

Words ending in n, s, or a vowel are stressed on the penultimate syllable.

Blanco **blan** -co white  
roja **ro** -ja red  
naciones na- **cio** -nes countries  
bonita bo- **ni** -ta pretty  
casa **ca** -sa house

Words ending in a consonant other than n or s are stressed on the final syllable.

Ciudad ciu- **dad** city  
papel pa- **pel** paper  
reloj re- **loj** watch  
hablar hab- **lar** to speak

If the stress on a word violates the above rules, the word should have a tilde.

If a word ends in a vowel and the accent is on the final syllable, a tilde is required:

es **tá** to be

If the consonant ending is other than –n or –s and the stress is on the penultimate syllable, it should have a tilde:

**ár** bol \_tree

a **zú** car \_sugar

**fá** cil easy

If a word is accented on a syllable other than the last or the penultimate syllable, a tilde is needed:

A- **mé** -ri-ca

In some cases, an accent mark is used to differentiate homonyms and monosyllabic words but has no effect on pronunciation:

sí (yes) si (if)

tú (you) tu (your)

él (he) el (the)

mí (me) mi (my)

dé (give) de (of, from)

té (tea) te (you, yourself)

más (more, most) mas (but)

sé (I know, be) se (himself, herself)

When an unaccented weak vowel forms a syllable with an adjacent strong vowel, the strong vowel receives the spoken stress.

Examples:

peru **a** no

pu **e** de

An accented weak vowel placed beside a strong vowel form two distinct syllables:

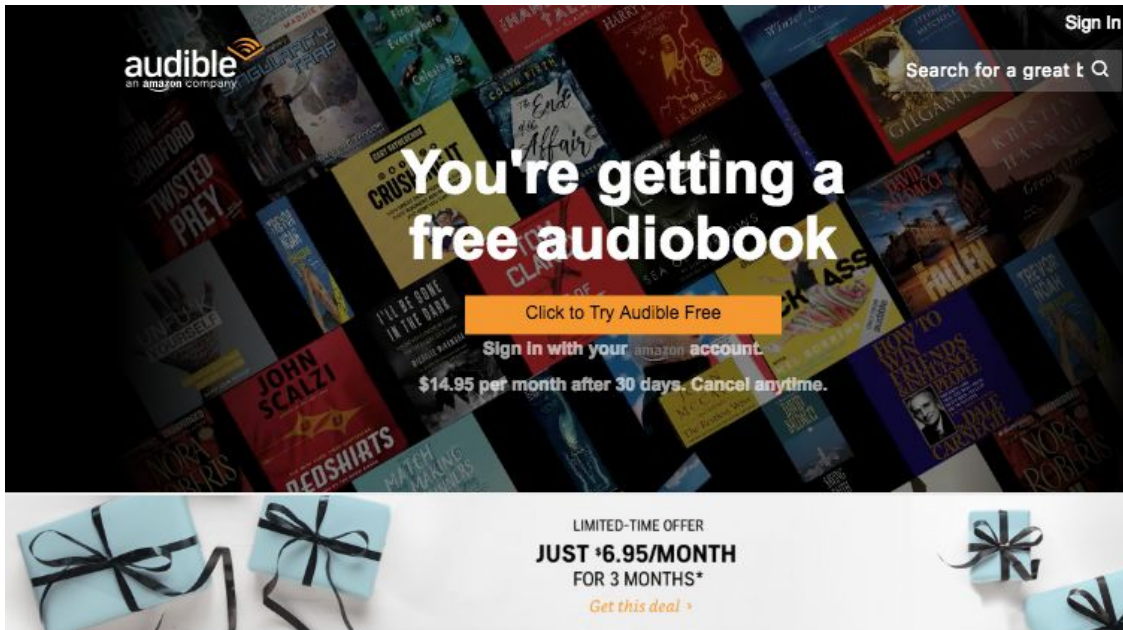
biología bio-lo- **gí** -a biology

policía po-li- **cí** -a police

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# CHAPTER 3: NUMBERS, COLORS, TIME, AND DATE

## CARDINAL NUMBERS

Counting and using numbers are important skills that you must learn in order to acquire other essential skills such as telling time and date and expressing quantity.

Spanish numbers are fairly easy to learn and can be mastered in less than two hours if you know the basic principles governing their formation.

It's important to memorize the numbers 1 to 19 as these are unique numbers. You will also need to remember the unique words for tens (veinte, treinta, cuarenta, noventa), hundreds (ciento, doscientos, quinientos), and thousands (mil, dos mil). For the numbers 21 to 29, you will have to combine veinte (20) with the unit digit by first replacing its letter ending of 'e' to 'i' before affixing the unit digit. After treinta (30) and succeeding tens digits, you will simply combine the tens and units with the conjunction 'y' (and). Hence, thirty-two is treinta y dos, sixty-four is sesenta y cuatro, and ninety-nine is noventa y nueve.

When writing numbers in Spanish, take note that like most European languages, the comma and period are used inversely. That is, the comma is used to introduce the decimal numbers while the period is

used to separate numbers by hundreds. For instance, to write 2,484,257.95 in Spanish, you will write 2.484.257,95.

Here are other important rules on cardinal numbers:

## Uno

The number 'uno' (one) becomes 'un' when used before a masculine noun and 'una' when used before a feminine noun.

Examples:

un chico one boy

un caballo one horse

una muchacha one girl

cuarenta y uno hombres forty-one men

setenta y una casas seventy-one houses

## Cien/Ciento

The number ciento (100) is contracted to 'cien' when spoken, placed before a noun of whatever gender, or when used on its own. The longer form, 'ciento', is used when expressing large numbers except before 'mil' (thousand).

Examples:

cien casas 100 houses  
cien hombres 100 men  
cien mil casas 100,000 houses  
ciento cinco hombres 105 men

The hundreds digits starting with two hundred have to change in form to agree with the gender of the noun they modify. This is true regardless of any intervening numbers between the hundreds digits and the noun they modify.

Examples:

doscientos carros two hundred cars  
doscientas mesas two hundred tables  
doscientos cinco carros two hundred five cars  
doscientas cuatro mesas two hundred four tables  
quinientos cinco libros five hundred five books

*The Cardinal Numbers*

0	cero
1	uno
2	dos
3	tres
4	cuatro
5	cinco
6	seis
7	siete
8	ocho
9	nueve
10	diez
11	once
12	doce
13	trece
14	catorce
15	quince
16	dieciséis
17	diecisiete
18	dieciocho
19	diecinueve
20	veinte
21	veintiuno
29	veintinueve
30	treinta
31	treinta y uno
39	treinta y nueve
40	cuarenta
41	cuarenta y uno
50	cincuenta
60	sesenta
70	setenta
80	ochenta
90	noventa
100	cien
102	ciento dos
182	ciento ochenta y dos
200	doscientos
201	doscientos uno
300	trescientos
500	quinientos
1000	un mil
2000	dos mil
1.000.000	un millón
1.000.000.000	mil millones
1.000.000.000.000	un billón

## ORDINAL NUMBERS

Ordinal numbers are used to indicate order, rank, or placement of a series of nouns. While each cardinal number corresponds to an ordinal number, only cardinal numbers from the first to the tenth are commonly used in Spanish.

Cardinal numbers end in 'o' and like other adjectives with -o ending, they have four forms to modify a noun as to gender and number. Hence:

Masculine Singular -o primero

Masculine Plural -os primeros

Feminine Singular -a primera

Feminine Plural -as primeras

When used before singular masculine nouns, primero and tercero have to take a shortened form:

el primer año the first year

el tercer año the third year

Ordinal numbers are generally used before a noun. However, when they are used to refer to a pope, a street, or royalty, ordinal numbers should be placed after the noun.

El papa Juan Pablo II Pope John Paul II

el papa Benedicto Decimosexto Pope Benedict XVI

Carlos Quinto Carlos V

Isabel Segunda Isabel II

la Calle Sexta the Sixth Street

Ordinal numbers are generally used only up to the tenth (decimo). After this, you will need to use cardinal numbers.

For example, when stating the century:

the nineteenth century el siglo diecinueve

the twenty-first century el siglo veintiuno

To learn ordinal number quickly and easily, you will need to memorize the numbers from the first to the twelfth as there are all unique numbers. When you reach 13<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>, you will need to drop any written accent in the tens and attach it to the ordinal number from third to ninth.

Examples:

13<sup>th</sup> – décimo+tercero decimotercero

16<sup>th</sup> - décimo+sexto decimosexto

19<sup>th</sup> – décimo+noveno decimonoveno

This pattern, however, does not apply to the ordinal number 18<sup>th</sup> as this would result to consecutive letter 'o'. Thus, eighteenth is written as decimoctavo.

From 21<sup>st</sup> to the 99<sup>th</sup>, you will need to remember the words for the multiples of ten and write it as a separate word. In the process, the ordinal number maintains its written accent.

For example:

21<sup>st</sup> vigésimo primero

31<sup>st</sup> trigésimo primero

99<sup>th</sup> nonagésimo entos

### *Abbreviating ordinal numbers*

When describing nouns, you may want to abbreviate ordinal numbers. To do this, you will just have to add a decimal after the numeral and the superscript 'o' for most nouns, 'a' for feminine nouns, and 'er' for shortened forms primer and tercer.

Examples:

1<sup>st</sup> primer 1er

3<sup>rd</sup> tercer 3er

2<sup>nd</sup> entesi 2o

2<sup>nd</sup> segunda 2a



first	primero
second	segundo
third	tercero
fourth	cuarto
fifth	quinto
sixth	sexto
seventh	septimo
eighth	octavo
ninth	noveno
tenth	decimo
11 <sup>th</sup>	undecimo
12 <sup>th</sup>	duodecimo
13 <sup>th</sup>	decimotercero
14 <sup>th</sup>	decimocuarto
15 <sup>th</sup>	decimoquinto
16 <sup>th</sup>	decimosexto
17 <sup>th</sup>	decimoséptimo
18 <sup>th</sup>	decimooctavo
19 <sup>th</sup>	decimonoveno
20 <sup>th</sup>	vigésimo
21 <sup>st</sup>	vigésimo primero
22 <sup>nd</sup>	vigésimo segundo
23 <sup>rd</sup>	vigésimo tercero
24 <sup>th</sup>	vigésimo cuarto

25 <sup>th</sup>	vigésimo quinto
26 <sup>th</sup>	vigésimo sexto
27 <sup>th</sup>	vigésimo séptimo
28 <sup>th</sup>	vigésimo octavo
29 <sup>th</sup>	vigésimo noveno
30 <sup>th</sup>	trigésimo
31 <sup>st</sup>	trigésimo primero
32 <sup>nd</sup>	trigésimo segundo
33 <sup>rd</sup>	trigésimo tercero
34 <sup>th</sup>	trigésimo cuarto
35 <sup>th</sup>	trigésimo quinto
36 <sup>th</sup>	trigésimo sexto
37 <sup>th</sup>	trigésimo séptimo
38 <sup>th</sup>	trigésimo octavo
39 <sup>th</sup>	trigésimo noveno
40 <sup>th</sup>	cuadragésimo
41 <sup>st</sup>	cuadragésimo primero
50 <sup>th</sup>	quincuagésimo
60 <sup>th</sup>	sexagésimo
70 <sup>th</sup>	septuagésimo
80 <sup>th</sup>	octogésimo
90 <sup>th</sup>	nonagésimo
100 <sup>th</sup>	centésimo

200 <sup>th</sup>	ducentésimo
300 <sup>th</sup>	tricentésimo
400 <sup>th</sup>	cuadringentésimo
500 <sup>th</sup>	quingentésimo
600 <sup>th</sup>	sexcentésimo
700 <sup>th</sup>	septingentésimo
800 <sup>th</sup>	octingésimo
900 <sup>th</sup>	noningentésimo
1,000 <sup>th</sup>	milésimo
2,000 <sup>th</sup>	dosmilésimo
3,000 <sup>th</sup>	tresmilésimo
4,000 <sup>th</sup>	cuatromilésimo

## FRACTIONS (FRACCIONES)

Fractions express quantity of a part of a whole.

The fractions la or una mitad (1/2) and el or un tercio (1/3) have distinct forms in Spanish:

la mitad/un medio one-half  $\frac{1}{2}$

un tercio one-third  $\frac{1}{3}$

dos tercios two-thirds  $\frac{2}{3}$

For the rest of the fractions, you will use a cardinal number as numerator and an ordinal number as denominator:

un cuarto one-fourth  $\frac{1}{4}$

un quinto one-fifth  $\frac{1}{5}$

un séptimo one-seventh  $\frac{1}{7}$

un noveno one-ninth  $\frac{1}{9}$

tres cuartos three-fourths  $\frac{3}{4}$

un centesimo one-hundredth  $\frac{1}{100}$

## DECIMALS AND PERCENTAGES

Parts of a whole may be expressed in decimal or percentages.

Percentage phrases are classified as masculine and are modified by a masculine article. For example:

*El cincuenta por ciento de los matrimonios tiene éxito.*

(Fifty percent of marriages are successful.)

In most Spanish-speaking countries, commas and periods are used inversely when writing numbers. Countries such as Mexico, Puerto Rico, and most parts of Central America follow the standard English usage.

Decimals are commonly expressed digit by digit when spoken. In Spain, you would say dos coma cinco cuatro (2,54). In other Spanish-speaking regions, you would say dos punto cinco cuatro (2.54).

## COLORS

Colors are generally used as adjectives. Hence, most color names change their form to reflect the gender and number of the noun they modify.

Examples:

red apple la manzana roja

red apples las manzanas rojas

red car el coche rojo

red cars los coches rojos

Here are the exceptions:

Violeta (violet) is invariable.

Azul (blue), verde (green), and gris (gray) are invariable in gender but change in form to reflect the noun's number.

Here are the color names in Spanish:

amarillo	AH-mah-REE-	yellow
----------	-------------	--------

	yoh	
azul	ah-SOOL	blue
naranja	nar-AHN-hah	orange
crema	krema	cream
café	kah-FAY	dark brown
dorado	do-rado	gold
gris	GREESS	gray
verde	BAYR-day	green
azul marino	a-SOOL ma- reeno	navy blue
rojo	ROH-hoh	red
rosa	ROH-sah	pink
púrpura	POOR-poor-ah	purple
marrón	mah-RON	brown
plateado	pla-te-ado	silver
violeta	vee-oh-LEH-tah	violet
blanco	BLAHN-koh	white
negro	NAY-groh	black

## **DAYS OF THE WEEK**

The days of the week are never capitalized except when used at the beginning of a sentence. All days are masculine.

When a definite article is used before a day, it is translated as ‘on’.

For example:

Hay una fiesta de cumpleaños el viernes.

There is a birthday party on Friday.

Mi padre no trabaja los domingos.

My father doesn't work on Sundays.

Take note that the days ending in –s retain their form in the plural. The article, however, must change to its plural form. Days that don't end in –s form the plural by adding s.

Examples:

el lunes los lunes

el miércoles los miércoles

el sábado los sábados

el domingo los domingos

Spanish	Pronunciation	English
lunes	<i>LOOH-nayss</i>	Monday
martes	<i>MAHR-tayss</i>	Tuesday
miércoles	<i>mee-AIR-coh-layss</i>	Wednesday
jueves	<i>WHAY-vayss</i>	Thursday
viernes	<i>vee-AIR-nayss</i>	Friday
sábado	<i>SAH-bah-doh</i>	Saturday

domingo	<i>doh-MEEN-goh</i>	Sunday
---------	---------------------	--------

## MONTHS OF THE YEAR

The months of the year are not capitalized except when used at the start of a sentence. Names for months are masculine.

Spanish	Pronunciation	Months
enero	eh-NEH-ro	January
febrero	feh-BREH-ro	February
marzo	MAR-zo	March
abril	ah-BRIL	April
mayo	MAY-o	May
junio	HOO-nio	June
julio	HOO-lio	July
agosto	ah-GO-sto	August
setiembre	se-TEE-YEM-bray	September
octubre	ok-TOO-brey	October
noviemb e	no-VEE-YEM-bray	November
diciembre	dee-CEE-YEM-bray	December



## SEASONS OF THE YEAR

Seasons of the year are not capitalized except when used at the start of a sentence.

verano	VEH-ra-no	Summer
primavera	pri-ma-VEH-rah	Spring
invierno	in-VYEH-no	Winter
otoño	OH-to-NYO	Autumn

## TELLING TIME AND DATE

Knowing how to tell time and date are important skills that you can use on a daily basis.

To ask for time, you can say:

¿Qué hora es? What time is it”

To tell time in Spanish, you will use one of the feminine articles ‘la’ and ‘las’ to describe the ‘hora’ (hour), a feminine noun.

When the hour is at one o’clock’ you will use the article ‘la’ with the verb ‘es’, the present tense third person singular form of the verb ser (to be).

To express all other hours, you will use the article 'las' and the verb 'son', the present tense third person plural form of 'ser'.

For example, to express the exact time, you will say:

Es la una. It's one o'clock.

Son las dos. It's two o'clock.

When the time is past the exact hour, you will express time by stating the minutes after the conjunction 'y' (and).

Examples:

9:25 Son las nueve y veinticinco.

It's twenty-five minutes past nine o'clock.

1:10 Es la una y diez.

It's ten minutes past one.

When the time is a few minutes short of the exact hour, you can use 'menos' to express the number of minutes before the coming hour.

Examples:

9:45 Son las diez menos quince.

It's 15 minutes before ten o'clock.

7:50 Son las ocho menos diez.

It's 10 minutes before eight o'clock.

In addition, you can use *media* (half) to express the half hour and *cuarto* (quarter) to express the quarter.

2:30 Son las dos y media. It's half past two.

4:15 Son las cuatro y cuarto. It's a quarter past four.

3:45 Son las cuatro menos cuarto. It's a quarter before four.

12:15 Son las doce y cuarto. It's a quarter past 12 o'clock.

The expression a.m. and p.m. are not commonly used in Spanish regions. Instead, you can describe the time of day by adding 'de la tarde' (in the afternoon), "de la mañana" (in the morning), and "de la noche" (in the evening).

Examples:

Son las ocho y media de la mañana.

It's half past eight in the morning.

Son las tres de la tarde.

It's three o'clock in the afternoon.

Son las diez de la noche.

It's ten o'clock in the evening.

## ***The 24-hour Clock***

You can also use the 24-hour time, also known as military time, to express the hours.

Examples:

13:20 Son las trece veinte. It's 1:20 pm.

16:30 Son las dieciséis treinta. It's 4:30 pm.

## ***Asking for and Telling the Date***

To ask for the date, you can use one of these phrases:

What day is today? ¿Qué día es hoy?

What is the date today? ¿Cuál es la fecha de hoy?

What day is it today? ¿A cuántos estamos hoy?

To tell the date in Spanish, use this pattern:

el + cardinal number + de + month + de + year.

Examples:

English Spanish

January 6, 2017 el seis de enero de 2017

May 21, 1995 el veintiuno de Mayo de 1995

December 25, 1945 el veinticinco de diciembre de 1945

Take note, however, that you will use the ordinal number when expressing the date on the first day of the month.

Example:

Hoy es el primer día de febrero de 2017.

Today is the first day of February, 2017.

To express the date in full:

Hoy es viernes, el 13 de enero de 2017.

Today is Friday, the 13th day of January, 2017.

When writing the date in figures, you have to remember to place the date before the month and year:

Thus, January 13, 2017 is written as 13/01/2017.

### ***Expressing the Year***

To tell the year in Spanish, you will have to express it in the same way that you would express a regular number.

To express the year 2017 in Spanish, you would say ‘dos mil diecisiete’.  
To express the year 1995, you would say mil novecientos noventa y cinco.

### ***Expressing the Century***

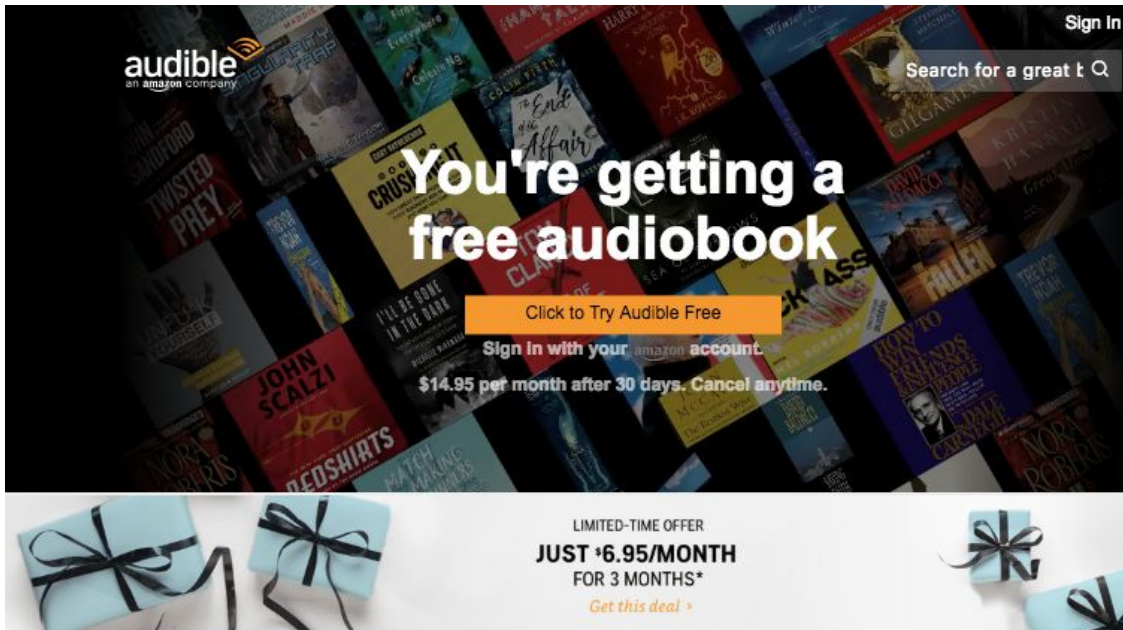
To express the century, you will use a cardinal number after the phrase ‘el siglo’:

the 20th century el siglo veinte

the 21st century el siglo veinte uno

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# CHAPTER 4: NOUNS AND ARTICLES

A noun is a word that names people, things, places, animals, ideas, and events. In Spanish, a noun's gender and number are important information that you will need to construct a grammatically sound sentence.

Unlike English, Spanish is a gender-specific language. Articles and adjective must agree with the noun or pronoun they modify both in gender and in number. Hence, there are usually four forms of modifier corresponding to the two genders and numbers.

## ARTICLES

Spanish articles must match the gender and number of the noun they modify.

### *Definite Articles*

There are four definite articles in Spanish and they all correspond to the English article 'the':

Gender	Singular	Plural

Masculine	el	los
Feminine	la	las

The definite article 'el' is used before a singular masculine noun while 'los' is used before a plural masculine noun.

Examples:

el chico (the boy) los chicos (the boys)  
el gato (the male cat) los gatos (the male cats)  
el coche (the car) los coches (the cars)  
el libro (the book) los libros (the books)

The article 'la' is used before a singular feminine noun while 'las' is used before a plural feminine noun.

la chica (the girl) las chicas (the girls)  
la gata (the female cat) las gatas (the female cats)  
la mesa (the table) las mesas (the tables)  
la ramita (the twig) las ramitas (the twigs)

### *Nouns of Mixed Genders*

When modifying a group consisting of both masculine and feminine members, you will use the masculine article 'los' and the masculine form of the noun.

Examples:

los padres the parents

los hermanos the siblings

los perros male and female dogs

los gatos male and female cats

### *Article Contraction*

While contractions are quite common in English, there are only two instances of contractions in Spanish. They are required to ease pronunciation and both involve the masculine definite article 'el'.

When 'el' is used after the preposition 'a' (to), they contract and form 'al' (to the):

a + el = al

Iremos al mercado. We will go to the market.

Voy al hotel. I'm going to the hotel.

When 'el' is used after the preposition 'de' (of), they combine and form 'del' (of/from the):

de + el = del

¿Cuál es la comida del día? What is the meal of the day?

Es un empleado del hotel. He is an employee of the hotel.

Take note that no contraction is done when the article 'el' is part of the name of a city or country.

Examples: El Salvador, El Paso

### *Indefinite Articles*

The indefinite articles 'a', 'an', and 'some' corresponds to four articles in Spanish:

Gender	Singular	Plural
Masculine	un	unos
Feminine	una	unas

Examples:

un chico a boy unos chicos some boys

una chica a girl unas chicas some girls

un gato a cat unos gatos some cats

un libro a book unos libros some books

una mesa a table unas mesas some tables

## GENDER OF NOUNS

Spanish nouns are either masculine or feminine and they are modified by a corresponding article. When it concerns living creatures, grammatical gender generally follows natural gender. Hence:

Masculine Feminine

el hombre (man) la mujer (woman)

el hermano (brother) la hermana (sister)

el abuelo (grandfather) la abuela (grandmother)

el perro (male dog) la perra (female dog)

el gato (male cat) la gata (female cat)

el oso (male bear) la osa (female bear)

On the other hand, the grammatical gender of inanimate objects follows certain rules which must be learned in order for you to be able to construct accurate Spanish phrases or sentences.

While it may take some time to memorize nouns and their gender, some gender rules or guidelines exist.

Nouns ending in 'o' are generally masculine

el campo field

el vestido dress

el cabello hair

el dedo finger

el cielo heaven, sky

el teatro theatre

el trabajo job

el dormitorio bedroom

el ojo eye

Nouns ending in 'a' are generally feminine

la rama branch

la hora time, hour

la manzana apple

la guitarra guitar

la rosa rose

la tumba tomb

la mesa table

la palabra word

la oficina office

la piscina pool

la cama bed

Some nouns referring to occupations have similar forms for both genders and are only modified by the accompanying article.

Masculine Feminine

model	el modelo	la modelo
judge	el juez	la juez
poet	el poeta	la poeta
boss	el jefe	la jefe
soldier	el soldado	la soldado
manager	el gerente	la gerente
athlete	el atleta	la atleta
pianist	el pianista	la pianista
singer	el cantante	la cantante
astronaut	el astronauta	la astronauta
journalist	el periodista	la periodista
pilot	el piloto	la piloto
student	el estudiante	la estudiante

Some occupations have slight difference in the endings for each gender:

teacher	el maestro	la maestra
doctor	el doctor	la doctora
banker	el banquero	la banquera
waiter	el mesero	la mesera
mail carrier	el cartero	la cartera
president	el presidente	la presidenta

teacher el profesor la profesora  
engineer el ingeniero la ingeniera

Nouns ending in –ción, –sión, -dad, -umbre, ión, -ion, and –tud are feminine:

la dedicación the dedication

la canción the song

la decisión the decision

la soledad the solitude

la ciudad the city

la legumbre the vegetable

la certidumbre certainty

la muchedumbre crowd

la juventud the youth

la habitación bedroom

la estación station

la religion religion

la legion legion

la región region

la tension tension

Most nouns that end in –e, -l –r, -aje, or -or are masculine.

el traje suit

el garaje garage



el perfume perfume  
el maquillaje make-up  
el personaje character  
el paisaje landscape  
el final end  
el papel paper  
el hotel hotel  
el lugar place  
el temor fear  
el favor favor  
el valor value

Nouns ending in –ma, -pa, or –ta which are usually words of Greek origin take on the masculine gender:

el programa program  
el sistema system  
el axioma axiom  
el stigma stigma  
el clima the climate  
el mapa map  
el tema topic, theme  
el charisma charisma  
el telegrama telegram  
el dilemma dilemma  
el fantasma ghost  
el idioma language

el poema poem  
el prisma prism  
el cometa comet  
el problema problem  
el planeta the planet

Some nouns ending in 'o' are feminine while some nouns ending in 'a' are masculine.

Feminine nouns ending in -o:

la radio the radio  
la mano the hand  
la polio polio  
la foto the photo  
la moto the motorcycle

Masculine nouns ending in -a:

el día the day  
el cura the priest  
el aroma fragrance  
el sofá sofa  
el tranvía tram  
el panda panda

Names for months, days, oceans, seas, numbers, rivers, mountains, and compound nouns are generally masculine.

el mayo May

el martes Tuesday

los cincuenta fifty

el Océano Pacífico Pacific Ocean

el mar Báltico Baltic sea

el Monte Everest Mount Everest

los abrelatas can opener

Nouns ending in z are feminine:

la nariz nose

la voz voice

la nuez nut

la vejez old age

la paz peace

la faz face

la cruz cross

la luz light

la vez time

la validez validity

la raíz root

la rigidez rigidity

la actriz actress

la directriz directress  
la emperatriz empress

### Víctima and Persona

The nouns 'víctima' and 'persona' are special feminine nouns that are invariable regardless of the gender of the person they refer to.

Mi madre es una persona agradable.

My mother is a nice person.

Mi padre es una persona valiente.

My father is a brave person.

La víctima murió en el camino al hospital.

The victim died on the way to the hospital.

## **FORMING PLURAL NOUNS**

Spanish plural nouns generally end in –s or –es. You must learn some simple rules to determine which ending should be applied.

Nouns ending in é or in an unstressed vowel form the plural by adding –s:

el bebé (baby) los bebés (babies)

el chico (boy) los chicos (boys)

el padre (father) los padres (fathers)

el café (coffee) los cafés (coffees)

el hincapié (emphasis) los hincapiés (emphases)

la tribu (tribe) las tribus (tribes)

el sonido (sound) los sonidos (sounds)

la pera (pear) las peras (pears)

el juego (game) los juegos (games)

la bota (boot) las botas (boots)

el hermano (brother) los hermanos (brothers)

la casa (house) las casas (houses)

el vaso (glass) los vasos (glasses)

el color (color) los colores (colors)

la pluma (pen) las plumas (pens)

la cama (bed) las camas (beds)

la mesa(table) las mesas (tables)

el mono (monkey) los monos (monkeys)

la cosa (thing) las cosas (things)

la puerta (door) las puertas (doors)

Nouns ending in –y, a stressed vowel (á, í, ó, ú) other than é, and a consonant form the plural by adding –es:

el rey (king) los reyes (kings)  
el borrador (eraser) los borradores (erasers)  
la pared (wall) las paredes (walls)  
el botón (button) los botones (buttons)  
el león (lion) los leones (lions)  
la majá (pestle) las majaes (pestles)  
el maní (peanut) los maníes (peanuts)  
el profesor (teacher) los profesores (teachers)  
el mes (month) los meses (months)  
la ciudad (city) las ciudades (cities)  
el reloj (watch) los relojes (watches)  
el autobús (bus) los autobuses (buses)  
el país (country) los países (countries)  
el papel (paper) los papeles (papers)  
el bambú (bamboo) los bambúes(bamboos)  
el tabú (taboo) los tabúes (taboos)  
el jabalí (wild boar) los jabalíes (wild boars)  
la universidad (university) las universidades (universities)

### Exceptions:

Nouns ending in z form the plural by replacing z with c and adding –es:

el lapiz (pencil) los lápices (pencils)  
la vez (time) las veces (times)  
la actriz (actress) las actrices (actresses)  
la voz (voice) las voces (voices)

la paz (peace) las paces (peace)  
el avestruz (ostrich) los avestruces (ostriches)  
el pez (fish) los peces (fishes)  
el tapiz (tapestry) los tapices (tapestries)  
la luz (light) las luces (lights)

Some nouns ending in *-ión* form the plural by dropping the written accent and adding *-es*:

la oración (sentence) las oraciones (sentences)  
la conversación (conversation) las conversaciones (conversations)  
la sección (section) las secciones (sections)  
el avión (airplane) los aviones (airplanes)  
la canción (song) las canciones (songs)  
la televisión (television) las televisiones (televisions)

Some nouns ending in a stressed vowel other than *é* form the plural by adding *-s*:

el sofá (sofa) los sofás (sofas)  
el menú (menu) los menús (menus)  
la mamá (mom) las mamás (moms)  
el papá (dad) los papás (dads)  
el champú (shampoo) los champús (shampoos)

Nouns ending in –c or –g form the plural by replacing –c with –qu or -g with –gu and adding –es:

el frac (skirt) los fraques (skirts)

el zigzag (zigzag) los zigzagues (zigzags)

Some nouns have identical forms in the singular or plural and their number is determined by the accompanying appropriate article:

Nouns ending in –x have the same form for singular and plural

el fénix (phoenix) los fénix (phoenixes)

el tórax (thorax) los tórax (thoraces/thoraxes)

el bórax (borax) los borax (boraxes)

Nouns ending in –s have similar forms in the singular and plural if the final syllable is unstressed:

el atlas (atlas) los atlas (atlases)

el énfasis (emphasis) los énfasis (emphases) el

sacacorchos (corkscrew) los sacacorchos (corkscrews)

el análisis (analysis) los análisis (analyses)

el virus (virus) los virus (viruses)

el jueves (Thursday) los jueves (Thursdays)



## PLURALIA TANTUM

These nouns are used dominantly or exclusively in the plural form:

los víveres supplies

los modales manners

los celos jealousy

las nupcias nuptials

las fauces jaws

los ambages hesitation

las afueras outside

los fastos chronicle

las gafas sunglasses

las cosquillas tickling

las albricias glad tidings

las pertenencias belongings

las pinzas pincers

los anales annals

las creces the increase

los gastos expenses

Some geographical names only take the plural form:

los Andes the Ands

los Alpes the Alps

las Antillas the Antilles  
los Carpatos the Carpathians  
las Baleares the Balearic Islands  
las Azores the Azores

Some nouns can take on either the plural or singular form without changing their meaning:

la tijera, las tijeras scissors  
la tenaza, las tenazas pincers  
la enagua, las enaguas underskirt  
el pantalon, los pantalones pants  
la calza, las calzas stockings

## **SINGULARIA TANTUM**

Some nouns are only used in the singular.

Nouns that designate unique phenomena and objects:

la luna moon  
el sol sun  
el horizonte horizon  
el sur south

el norte north

Nouns that identify substances, products, and materials:

la leche milk

el carbón coal

el trigo wheat

la mantequilla butter

el pan bread

Abstract nouns that identify state, action, or quality:

la alegría joy

el desarrollo development

el orgullo proud

la valentía valor

Nouns that suggest total plurality:

la gente people

el dinero money

la ropa dress

Names of sciences as well as nouns ending in –ismo:

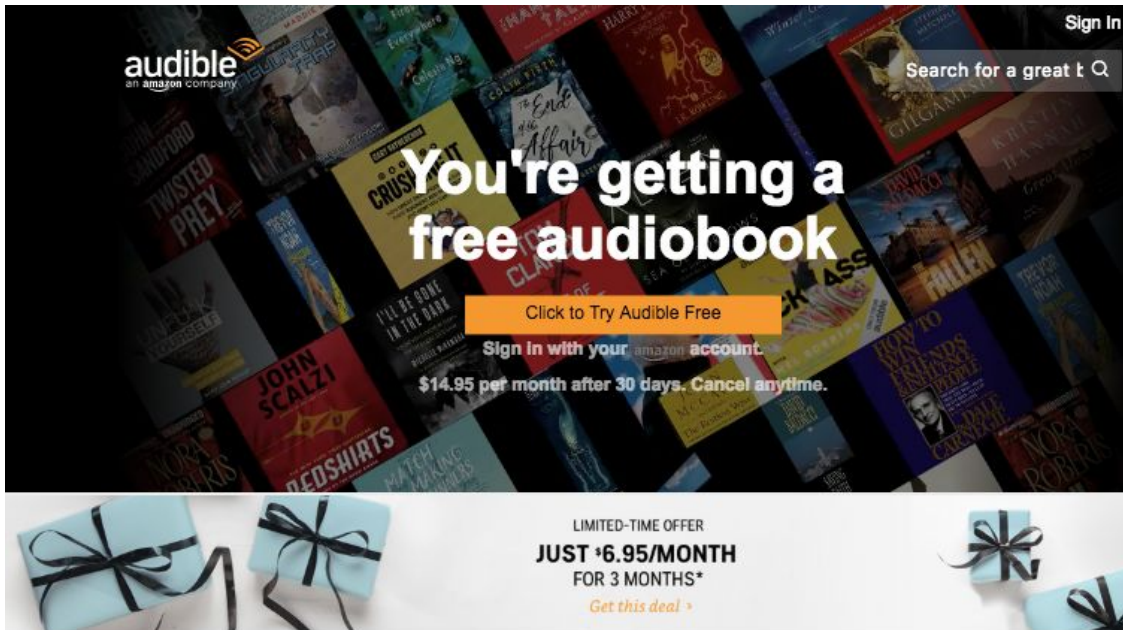
la medicina medical science

la ingeniería engineering

el impresionismo impressionism

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# CHAPTER 5: PRONOUNS

A pronoun is a small word that you can use in place of a noun or noun phrase. Pronouns are usually classified according to their purpose or use in a sentence.

Personal pronouns represent specific people or objects. They can be the subject of a sentence or the object of a verb or preposition. Some are used to express possession.

## SUBJECT PRONOUNS

Subject pronouns are personal pronouns that are used to refer to subject nouns. In English, you will always need a personal pronoun in place of a noun in a sentence or phrase. In Spanish, however, personal pronouns are not commonly used as the subject is generally identifiable through the verb's conjugation or ending.

### *Subject Pronouns*

Singular	
I	yo

you informal	–	tú
you –formal		usted, Ud.
he, she		él, ella
Plural		
We		nosotros (m), nosotras (f)
you all informal	–	vosotros (m), vosotras (f)
you all formal	–	ustedes, Uds.
They		ellos, ellas

Here are the most important features of Spanish subject pronouns:

The pronoun ‘yo’ (I) is never capitalized except when used at the start of a sentence.

**vosotros** The pronoun tú is the informal or familiar form of ‘you’ and it is used when addressing close friends, relatives, children, or pets. Take note of the written accent which differentiates it from the possessive pronoun ‘tu’ (your). Vosotros is the plural informal form of ‘you’.

**usted, ustedes** The pronouns usted (singular) and ustedes (plural) are the formal forms of you in Spanish. You will use them to address older people, superiors, dignitaries, and other people you would normally want to address with formality.



## DIRECT OBJECT PRONOUNS

A direct object pronoun takes the place of a noun used as a direct object. Here are the direct object pronouns in Spanish:

Number	English	Spanish
1st singular		me
2nd singular		te
3rd singular	him, her, it, you (formal)	lo, la
1st plural		
2nd plural		nos
3rd plural		os
4th plural	them, you (formal)	los, las

### *Placement of Direct Object Pronouns*

Direct object pronouns are placed before the conjugated verb or attached at the end of the infinitive or imperative forms of the verb.

Examples:

la quiero. I love her.

vimos. We saw him.  
 conozco. I know you.  
 se llamaron. They called us.  
 conozco. I know you.  
 tengo. I have it.  
 las chicas **los** leen. The girls read them.  
 se llamamos. We call them.

## INDIRECT OBJECT PRONOUNS

An indirect object pronoun takes the place of a noun used as an indirect object. They indicate 'to whom' or 'for whom' an action is performed.

Here are the indirect object pronouns in Spanish:

	Indirect	Object Pronouns
singular		
me, for me	me	
you, for you	te	
for him, her, it, you (formal)	le	
plural		
us, for us	nos	

you, for you	os	
for them, you (formal)	les	

mples:

hermano **le** compró una casa.

brother bought him a house.

**Les** dije un secreto.

I told them a secret.

## POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

A possessive pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun modified by a possessive adjective. Possessive pronouns are used with a definite article and have four forms to indicate the gender and number of the noun they replace. They are the equivalent of the English possessive pronouns mine, ours, yours, his, hers, its, and theirs.

Here are the Spanish possessive pronouns:

	Masculine		Feminine	
	Singula		Singula	
Singular	r	Plural	r	Plural

mine	el mío	los míos	la mía	las mías
yours (familiar)	el tuyo	los tuyos	la tuya	las tuyas
his/hers/yours	el suyo	los suyos	la suya	las suyas
Plural				
ours	el nuestro	los nuestros	la nuestra	las nuestras
yours (familiar)	el vuestro	los vuestros	la vuestra	las vuestras
theirs/yours	el suyo	los suyos	la suya	las suyas

Este coche es el **mío** . This car is mine.

Estos coches son los **míos** . These cars are mine.

Su coche es mejor que el **mío** . Your car is better than mine.

Esa mesa es la **suya** . That table is hers.

Esas mesas son las **suyas** . Those tables are hers.

La pluma es la **vuestra** . The pen is yours.

Estas casas son las **nuestras** . These houses are ours.

Esta casa es la **nuestra** . This house is ours.

## INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS

Interrogative pronouns are words used for asking questions. An interrogative pronoun is commonly placed at the beginning or near the beginning of a sentence. Some Spanish pronouns have plural and singular forms and some have masculine and feminine forms to correspond with the number and gender of the noun they refer to.

The following are the interrogative pronouns in Spanish:

quién, quiénes (who, whom)

The pronoun *quién* is used to ask questions about people. Its plural form is *quiénes*.

¿Quién es el presidente de la clase?

Who is the president of the class?

¿Quiénes son sus amigos?

Who are your friends?

¿Para quien son estos regalos?

For whom are these gifts?

qué (what)

The pronoun *qué* is used to ask for information regarding the identification or definition of a thing or idea.

¿Qué pasa? What's happening?

¿Qué quiere usted? What do you want?

The phrases *por qué* and *para qué* are both commonly translated as “why”. In this sense, *por qué* is the more commonly used phrase. *Para qué* is more commonly translated as “what for” and it is used to ask about the purpose or intent of something that occurred or is occurring.

¿Por qué estás aquí? Why are you here?

¿Por qué tiene miedo? Why is she afraid?

¿Para quien son estas manzanas? For whom are these apples?

*cuál, cuáles* (which one(s), what)

The use of *cuál* or *cuáles* generally conveys making a choice between two or more options. These pronouns are often translated as ‘what’.

¿Cuál quieres – el pastel o el pan?

Which do you want – the cake or the bread?

¿Cuáles prefiere usted?

Which ones do you prefer?

cómo (how)

¿Cómo está usted? How are you?

¿Cómo te llamas? How do you call yourself?

cuánto, cuántos, cuánta, cuántas (how many, how much)

This interrogative pronoun has four forms to indicate the number and gender of the object or objects they refer to.

¿Cuántos coches tiene?

How many cars do you have?

¿Cuántas casas hay?

How many houses are there?

¿Cuánto azúcar está en esta taza?

How much sugar is in this cup?

dónde (where)

The interrogative pronoun donde is used to ask about the location of a person or object.

¿Dónde vive usted? Where do you live?

¿Dónde está mi amiga? Where is my friend?

¿De dónde es Martha? From where is Martha?

If you want to ask “to where”, you will use the form adónde:

¿Adónde vas? Where are you going?

Take note that interrogative pronouns are marked by a written accent to distinguish them from relative pronouns with similar spelling.

## **INDEFINITE PRONOUNS**

Indefinite pronouns are words that stand for nonspecific person or thing. They are commonly used when making generalizations or when referring to no particular person or object. They may function as subject or object of the verb or preposition.

alguien (someone, somebody, anybody, anyone)

Alguien horneó un pastel ayer.



Someone baked a cake yesterday.

Alguien derramó la leche.

Someone spilled the milk.

algo (something, anything)

Algo provocó el ataque. Something provoked the attack.

Algo falló. Something failed.

alguno, alguna — one, a certain one

Hay muchos buenos cantantes aquí. Conozco alguno.

There are many good singers here. I know some.

algunos, algunas – some, a few (people or things)

Algunos están aquí solamente para pasar las horas.

Some are here only to pass the hours.

mucho, muchos, mucha, muchas – many, much

Muchos están satisfechos de su liderazgo.

Many are satisfied with his leadership.

cada uno, cada una – each one

Cada uno es un candidato para la graduación.

Each one is a candidate for graduation.

todo, toda – everything, all

Todo es como un sueño.

Everything is like a dream.

todos, todas – everyone, all

Todos están invitados a la fiesta.

Everyone is invited to the feast.

cualquiera - anybody, anyone, whoever

Cualquiera puede aprender a leer.

Anyone can learn to read.

otro, otros, otra, otras - another, another one, other one,

Uno da una pluma mientras el otro da un pedazo de papel.

One gives a pen while another gives a piece of paper.

uno, una, unos, unas —one, some

Unos no están interesados.

Some are not interested.

Una no está contenta con su vida.

One is not satisfied with her life.

nada — nothing

Nada va a pararlo. Nothing is going to stop him.

nadie — nobody, no one

Nadie es perfecto. Nobody is perfect.

Nadie lo quiere. Nobody wants him.

ninguno, ninguna — nobody, none, no one

Ninguno va al banquete. Nobody is going to the banquet.

A double negative can occur when the negative pronouns nada, nadie, or ninguno are used after the verb as the part before the verb is generally formed as a negative.

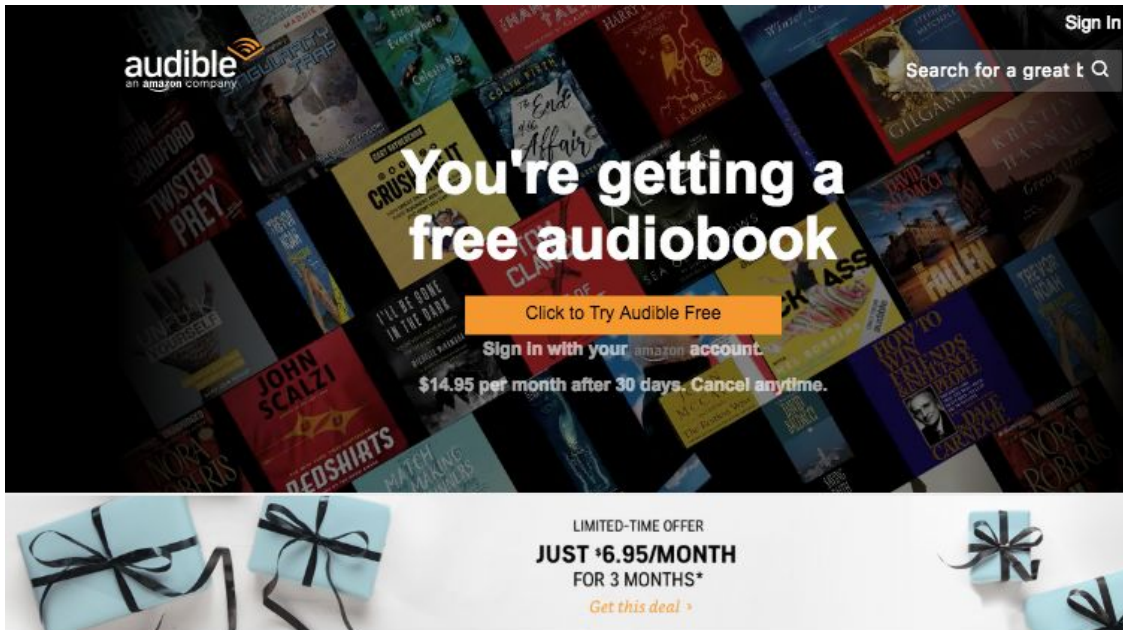
Examples:

No veo nadie. I don't see anyone.

Él no tiene nada. He has nothing.

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# CHAPTER 6: VERBS

Verbs are words that denote an action or a condition. In Spanish, verbs change their ending, stem, or both to convey the person, mood, voice, and tense. This means that you can easily form a simple, one-word sentence with a single verb. This makes verb a very important part of speech. If you wish to express yourself properly in a short span of time, you must study a great number of commonly-used verbs and learn their endings in the different tenses and moods.

## **•b Moods**

Mood is a verb's property that indicates the speaker's perception of the action denoted by the verb. There are three verb moods in Spanish: *indicativo* (indicative), *subjuntivo* (subjunctive), and *imperativo* (imperative).

## **THE INDICATIVE MOOD**

The indicative mood is the most commonly used mood in daily conversations. You will use it to express facts and reality in the present, past, and future.

There are 7 tenses in the indicative mood:

present tense

imperfect tense

pluperfect tense

preterite

present perfect tense

imperfect perfect tense

future perfect tense

## CONJUGATING REGULAR VERBS

A verb may be regular or irregular. Regular verbs are those that form the past and future tenses in a predictable manner. A verb may be regular in some tenses and irregular in one or more tenses. There is no way to tell whether a verb is irregular or regular at a glance. You need to learn the irregular ones as they are the most commonly used verbs in Spanish.

Regular verbs are grouped into three main categories according to their ending in the infinitive: AR verbs, ER verbs, and IR verbs. The classification is important as each verb group follows a unique pattern of conjugation.



To conjugate regular verbs in the present indicative tense, you must extract the stem of the infinitive by dropping the endings –ar, -er, or –ir.

Infinitives are verb forms which are not bound by time. Here are some examples:

lar to talk

er to drink

ribir to write

to obtain the stem you, you must drop the ending. Thus:

Infinitive stem and ending stem

lar habl + ar habl

er beb + er beb

ribir escrib + ir escrib

Once you have obtained the verb stem, you will need the applicable personal endings to properly conjugate the verb. Hence, the next step is to identify the subject. Once this is done, you will affix the prescribed ending for the verb according to its mood, tense, and subject.

## **THE PRESENT TENSE**

The Spanish present tense verb form is equivalent to several tenses in English. For instance, ‘como’, the verb form of comer in the first person

present indicative tense, may be used to convey the following meanings:

habitual action I eat.

action in progress I am eating.

near future action I will eat.

interrogative Do I eat?

emphatic form I do eat.

past action continuing to the present I have been eating.

### *Verb Chart*

To express the present indicative tense, regular verbs should be conjugated using the following endings for each verb group:

Subject	-ar Verbs	-er Verbs	ir Verbs
yo	-o	-o	-o
tú	-as	-es	-es
él/ella/usted	-a	-e	-e
nosotros/nosotras	-amos	-emos	-imos
vosotros/vosotras	-áis	-éis	-ís
ellos/ellas/ustedes	-an	-en	-en

Take note that –er verbs and –ir verbs have similar endings for most subjects except for the first person plural and second person plural. In addition, the second person formal singular pronoun usted takes on the third person singular ending while its plural form ustedes takes on the third person plural ending.

Hence, when you conjugate the verbs hablar, comer, and escribir in the present indicative tense, you will have the following forms:

Subject	hablar	comer	escribir
	(to speak)	(to eat)	(to write)
yo	hablo	como	escribo
tú	hablas	comes	escribes
él/ella/usted	habla	come	escribe
nosotros/nosotras	hablamos	comemos	escribimos
vosotros/vosotras	habláis	coméis	escribís
ellos/ellas/ustedes	hablan	comen	escriben

## STEM-CHANGING VERBS

Besides the change in their endings to reflect the person and number, some Spanish verbs change their stem in the present tense except in the first person and second person plural forms. In addition, except for –ir verbs which undergo stem changes in the preterite and present subjunctive, other verb groups generally do not change their stem in other tenses.

**Verbs that change their stem from e to ie:**

Here is how you will conjugate the verbs pensar, querer, and sentir in the present indicative tense:

	<b>pensar</b>	<b>querer</b>	<b>sentir</b>
	(to think)	(to want/love)	(to feel)
yo	pienso	quierdo	siento
tú	piensas	quieres	sientes
él/ella/usted	piensa	quiere	siente
nosotros/nosotras	pensamos	queremos	sentimos
vosotros/vosotras	pensáis	queréis	sentís
ellos/ellas/ustedes	piensan	quieren	sienten

The following verbs change their stem in a similar manner:

- atravesar to cross
- calentar to heat
- cerrar to close
- comenzar to begin
- despertar to awaken
- empezar to begin
- gobernar to govern
- defender to defend
- divertir to amuse
- perder to lose
- tropezar to stumble
- advertir to warn, notify
- convertir to convert
- herir to injure

**Verbs that change their stem from o to ue:**

To conjugate the verbs encontrar, mover, and dormir, you'll have the following verb forms:

	encontrar	mover	dormir
	(to find)	(to move)	(to sleep)

yo	encuentro	muevo	duermo
tú	encuentras	mueves	duermes
él/ella/usted	encuentra	mueve	duerme
nosotros/nosotras	encontramos	movamos	dormimos
s	s	s	s
vosotros/vosotras	encontráis	mováis	dormís
s			
ellos/ellas/ustedes	encuentran	muevan	duermen
s			

The following verbs also fall under this group:

contar to count

almorzar to eat lunch

apostar to bet

costar to cost

encontrar to find

probar to try, prove

recordar to remember

rogar to beg

sonar to sound(sound)

soñar to dream

volar to fly

llover to rain

volver to return

oler to smell

poder to be able

morir to die

**IR verbs that change their stem from e to i when stressed:**

To conjugate the verbs servir, repetir and medir:

	servir	repetir	medir
	(to serve)	(to repeat)	(to measure)
yo	sirvo	repito	mido
tú	sirves	repites	mides
él/ella/usted	sirve	repite	mide
nosotros/nosotras	servimos	repetimos	medimos
vosotros/vosotras	servís	repetís	medís
ellos/ellas/ustedes	sirven	repiten	miden

Here are the other –ir verbs that change their stem from e to i when stressed:

conseguir to get

competir to compete

corregir to correct

despedir to say goodbye

derretir to melt

elegir to elect

pedir to ask for

reír to laugh

seguir to follow, to continue

sonreír to smile

vestir to dress

**The verb jugar changes its stem from u to ue:**

yo	juego
tú	juegas
él/ella/usted	juega
nosotros/nosotros s	jugamos s
vosotros/vosotros s	jugáis
ellos/ellas/ustedes s	juegan

**Verbs with irregular verb form in the first person singular**

Some verbs have special forms in the first person singular.



Verbs that change from c > zc in the yo form:

	conocer	producir	aparecer
	(to know)	(to produce)	(to appear)
yo	conozco	produzco	aparezco
tú	conoces	produces	apareces
él/ella/usted	conoce	produce	aparece
nosotros/nosotras	conocemos	producimos	aparecemos
vosotros/vosotras	conocéis	producís	aparecéis
ellos/ellas/ustedes	conocen	producen	aparecen

This is generally true for verbs with –cer or –cir endings. Here are other verbs with special first person singular form:

agradecer to thank

amanecer to dawn

crecer to grow

establecer to establish

enflaquecerse to get thin

enriquecerse to get rich

nacer to be born

merecer to deserve

ofrecer to offer  
 obedecer to obey  
 permanecer to remain  
 padecer to suffer  
 parecer to seem  
 producir to produce  
 reducir to reduce  
 traducir to translate  
 conducir to drive, to conduct

The letter 'g' appears in the first person singular forms of some verbs:

caer (to fall)	caigo, caes, cae, caemos, caéis, caen
hacer (to do/make)	hago, haces, hace, hacemos, hacéis, hacen
traer (to bring)	traigo, traes, trae, traemos, traéis, traen
poner (to put)	pongo, pones, pone, ponemos, ponéis, ponen
valer (to be worth)	valgo, vales, vale, valemos, valéis, valen
tener (to have)	tengo, tienes, tiene, tenemos, tenéis, tienen
decir (to tell/say)	digo, dices, dice, decimos, decís, dicen
salir (to leave)	salgo, sales, sale, salimos, salís,

		salen
venir (to come)	(to come)	vengo, vienes, viene, venimos, venís, vienen

Some verbs form their first person singular in a different manner:

	dar	caber	saber	ver
	(to give)	(to fit)	(to know)	(to see)
yo	doy	quepo	sé	veo
tú	das	cabes	sabes	ves
él/ella/usted	da	cabe	sabe	ve
nosotros/nosotras	damos	cabemos	sabemos	vemos
vosotros/vosotras	dais	cabéis	sabéis	veis
ellos/ellas/ustedes	dan	caben	saben	ven

### **Verbs which are accented on the final weak vowel**

The weak vowels “i” and “u” form a diphthong when placed beside other vowels. To prevent them from forming a diphthong, a written accent is added to the last weak vowel. The accent is generally required when the weak vowels are stem vowels.

The following chart shows the conjugation for the verbs vaciar, continuar, and actuar:

	vaciar	continuar	actuar
	(to empty)	(to continue)	(to act)
yo	vacío	continúo	actúo
tú	vacías	continúas	actúas
él/ella/usted	vacía	continúa	actúa
nosotros/nosotras	vaciamos	continuamos	actuamos
vosotros/vosotras	vacíais	continuáis	actuáis
ellos/ellas/ustedes	vacían	continúan	actúan

The following verbs likewise take a written accent on the weak vowel in the final syllable:

enviar to send

criar to raise or bring up

efectuar to bring about

confiar to trust

esquiar to ski

graduar to graduate

In most cases, however, the weak vowels are not stem vowels and must form a diphthong when placed beside another vowel.

Examples:

apreciar to appreciate

asociar to associate

anunciar to announce

divorciar to divorce

cambiar to change

copiar to copy

ensuciar to dirty

negociar to negotiate

iniciar to initiate

estudiar to study

renunciar to renounce

limpiar to clean

### **Verbs ending in –uir**

Verbs ending in –uir takes a ‘y’ in the indicative present tense ending whenever the ‘i’ is not found in the ending. Take note that this rule

excludes verbs ending in –guir. The change takes places in all verb forms except for the first person plural and the second person plural.

Here are some examples:

	incluir	construir	contribuir
	(to include)	(to build)	(to contribute)
yo	incluyo	construyo	contribuyo
tú	incluyes	construyes	contribuyes
él/ella/usted	incluye	construye	contribuye
nosotros/nosotras	incluimos	construimos	contribuimos
s	s	s	s
vosotros/vosotras	incluís	construís	contribuís
ellos/ellas/ustedes	incluyen	construyen	contribuyen

	influir	huir	disminuir
	(to influence)	(to escape)	(to diminish)
yo	influyo	huyo	disminuyo
tú	influyes	huyes	disminuyes
él/ella/usted	influye	huye	disminuye

nosotros/nosotras	influímos	huímos	disminuímos
vosotros/vosotras	influíd	huíd	disminuíd
ellos/ellas/ustedes	influyen	huyen	disminuyen

An orthographic or spelling change may occur to maintain the stress on the final stem consonant.

Verbs ending in –gir change from g to j when placed before ‘a’ or ‘o’:

	corregir	dirigir	exigir
	(to correct)	(to direct)	(to demand)
yo	corrijo	dirijo	exijo
tú	corríges	diríges	exíges
él/ella/usted	corrige	dirige	exige
nosotros/nosotras	corregimos	dirigimos	exigimos
vosotros/vosotras	corregís	dirigís	exigís
ellos/ellas/ustedes	corrigen	dirigen	exigen

--	--	--	--

	surgir	fingir	elegir
	(to arise)	(to pretend)	(to elect)
yo	surjo	finjo	elijo
tú	surges	finges	eliges
él/ella/usted	surge	finge	elige
nosotros/nosotras	surgimos	fingimos	elegimos
vosotros/vosotras	surgís	fingís	elegís
ellos/ellas/ustedes	surgen	fingen	eligen

Verbs ending in –guir drop ‘u’ in the first person singular when it precedes ‘a’ or ‘o’:

	conseguir	seguir	distinguir
	(to get)	(to follow)	(to distinguish)
yo	consigo	sigo	distingo
tú	consigues	segues	distingues
él/ella/usted	consigue	sigue	distinguee
nosotros/nosotras	conseguimos	seguimos	distinguimos
vosotros/vosotras	conseguís	seguís	distinguish



ellos/ellas/ustedes	consiguen	siguen	distinguen
---------------------	-----------	--------	------------

## SER AND ESTAR

The Spanish irregular verbs *ser* and *estar* both translate to the English verb ‘to be’ and are highly irregular in forms. *Ser* and *estar* are used differently and most Spanish learners encounter difficulties on their usage. Since both verbs are two of the most commonly used ones in Spanish, it is important to learn when one should be used over the other to be able to form accurate sentences.

### Ser

The following chart shows the conjugation of the verb ‘*ser*’ in the simple tenses:

Subject	Present	Future	Imperfect	Preterite
yo	soy	seré	era	fui
tú	eres	serás	eras	fuiste
Él/ella/usted	es	será	era	fue

Nosotros/nosotras	somos	seremos	éramos	fuimos
Vosotros/vosotras	sois	seréis	erais	fuisteis
Ellos/ellas/ustedes	son	serán	eran	fueron

### Usage of Ser

Ser is used to describe inherent characteristic or quality and conditions that are more or less permanent or long term.

Soy alto. I'm tall.

Él es pequeño. He is short.

Ella es divertida. She is funny.

El coche de Carlo es rojo. Carlo's car is red.

Mis hermanas son hermosas. My sisters are beautiful.

Arturo es un hombre inteligente. Arthur is an intelligent man.

Su familia es católica. Her family is Catholic.

Ser is used to express time, day, and hour:

¿Qué hora es? What time is it?

Es la una y diez. It's ten minutes after one o'clock.

Son las dos de la tarde. It's two o'clock in the afternoon.

Hoy es lunes. Today is Monday.

Es 5 de enero de 2017. It's January 5, 2017.

Ser is used to tell a person's origin or nationality.

¿De dónde eres? Where are you from?

Soy un americano. I'm an American.

Soy Estado Unidense. I'm from the United States.

Mi esposa es alemana. My wife is German.

Él es francés . He is French.

Ser is used to express relationships:

Carla es la esposa de Jaime. Carla is Jaime's wife.

Él es mi primo. He is my cousin.

Ser is used to tell a person's profession or occupation.

Soy contador. I'm an accountant.

Mis padres son abogados. My parents are lawyers.

Mi hermana es una maestra. My sister is a teacher.

Ser is used to indicate a person's marital status.

Soy soltero(a). I'm single.

Soy casado(a). I'm married.

Mi amigo es divorciado. My friend is divorced.

It is used to express possession:

Este libro es el mío. This book is mine.

Ese coche es el suyo. That car is his.

Ser is used with 'para' to express for whom something is intended:

El pastel es para mi sobrina.

The cake is for my niece.

Esta fiesta de cumpleaños es para mi madre.

This birthday party is for my mother.

Ser is used to tell the venue of an event:

El banquete es en el Grand Hotel.

The banquet is at the Grand Hotel.

Ser is used for impersonal expressions:

Es verdad. It's true.

## Estar

Conjugation of the verb 'estar' in the four simple tenses:

Subject	Present	Future	Imperfect	Preterite
yo	estoy	estaré	estaba	estuve
tú	estás	estarás	estabas	estuviste
él/ella/usted	está	estará	estaba	estuvo
nosotros/nosotras	estamos	estaremos	estábamos	estuvimos
vosotros/vosotras	estáis	estaréis	estabais	estuvisteis
ellos/ellas/ustedes	están	estarán	estaban	estuvieron

## Usage of estar

Estar is used to convey conditions which are temporary.

Estar is used to indicate or ask for physical or geographical locations:

¿Dónde están sus hijos? Where are your children?

Donna está en el mercado. Donna is in the market.

¿Dónde está Canadá? Where is Canada?

Estar is used with an adjective to express a changeable condition:

Carla está enferma. Carla is sick.

Estoy cansado(a). I'm tired.

¿Cómo está el pastel? How's the cake?

Su madre está enojada. His mother is angry.

¿Cómo estás? How are you?

Estoy bien. I'm well.

Estar is used to describe the weather, a constantly changing condition.

Está nevando. It's snowing.

Está nublado. It's cloudy.

Está lloviendo. It's raining.

Estar is used with a gerund to form progressive tenses.

In Spanish, a gerund is an invariable verb form which ends in *-ndo* for all verb groups. It is formed by dropping the infinitive endings and adding *-ando* (AR verbs) and *-iendo* (ER and IR verbs) to the stem.

Examples:

Estábamos durmiendo cuando llegó la tormenta.

We were sleeping when the storm arrived.

Estaba durmiendo cuando el perro mordió el niño.

I was sleeping when the dog bit the child.

## **Ser and Estar with Adjectives**

Some adjectives convey an entirely different meaning depending on which verb they are used with.

Examples:

Ella está lista. (She is ready.)

Ella es lista. (She is clever.)

Carla está feliz. (Carla is happy).

Carla es feliz. (Carla is a happy person).

Él está vivo. (He is alive.)

Él es vivo. (He is lively.)

Ella está orgullosa. (She is proud.)

Ella es orgullosa. (She is conceited).

Él está callado. (He is quiet.)

Él es callado. (He is introverted.)

## SIMPLE PAST TENSES

There are two past tenses in Spanish, the preterite and the imperfect.

### **Preterite**

In general, the preterite is used to describe actions that were completed in the past. It indicates that the action has a definite beginning and that it happened within a specific time period.

Here are some phrases that indicate the use of the preterite:

ayer yesterday

anoche last night

el mes pasado last month

la semana pasada last week

entonces then

una vez one time

el año pasado last year

el otro día the other day

en ese momento at that moment



To conjugate verbs in the preterite, you will drop the infinitive verb endings and add the following endings:

	<b>AR</b>	<b>ER</b>	<b>IR</b>
Subject	<b>verbs</b>	<b>verbs</b>	<b>verbs</b>
yo	-é	-í	-í
tú	-aste	-iste	-iste
él, ella, usted	-ó	-ió	-ió
nosotros, nosotras	-amos	-imos	-imos
vosotros, vosotras	-asteis	-isteis	-isteis
ellos, ellas, ustedes	-aron	-ieron	-ieron

Here is how you will conjugate the verbs hablar, comer, and escribir in the preterite:

Subject	<b>hablar</b>	<b>comer</b>	<b>escribir</b>
stem	<b>hab-</b>	<b>com-</b>	<b>escrib-</b>
yo	hablé	comí	escribí
tú	hablaste	comiste	escribiste
él/ella/usted	habló	comió	escribió
nosotros/nosotras	hablamos	comimos	escribimos
s	s	s	s
vosotros/vosotras	hablasteis	comisteis	escribisteis

s	s	s	s
ellos/ellas/ustedes	hablaron	comieron	escribieron
s		n	n

Examples:

**Comimos** el pastel ayer.

We ate cake yesterday.

**Limpié** mi cuarto la semana pasada.

I cleaned my room last week.

Le **escribí** una carta el mes pasado.

I wrote her a letter last month.

Bebieron el jugo de pomelo el martes pasado.

They drank pomelo juice last Tuesday.

## **The Imperfect Tense**

The imperfect tense is used to denote past actions with no definite end. These may include actions that were habitually repeated in the past or to a general time in the past. It is used to describe a person's age, characteristics, or physical and mental condition in the past.

These expressions indicate the use of the imperfect tense:

cada día every day  
cada semana every week  
todos los días everyday  
todos los años every year  
cada mes every month  
cada año every year  
a menudo often  
a veces sometimes  
rara vez rarely  
frecuentemente frequently  
siempre always  
generalmente usually  
muchas veces many times  
algunas veces at times  
con frecuencia frequently  
mientras while  
todas las semanas every week  
tantas veces so many times  
por lo general generally  
nunca never  
mucho a lot  
casi nunca almost never  
por un rato for a while  
varias veces several times  
todo el tiempo all the time  
de vez en cuando once in a while

To conjugate verbs in the imperfect tense, you will have to add the following endings to the verb stem:

	<b>AR</b>	<b>ER</b>	<b>IR</b>
Subject	<b>verbs</b>	<b>verbs</b>	<b>verbs</b>
yo	-aba	-ía	-ía
tú	-abas	-ías	-ías
él/ella/usted	-aba	-ía	-ía
nosotros/nosotras	-		
	ábamos	-íamos	-íamos
vosotros/vosotras			
	-abais	-íais	-íais
ellos/ellas/ustedes			
	-aban	-ían	-ían

To conjugate the verbs hablar, comer, and escribir in the imperfect:

Subject	hablar	comer	escribir
stem	hab-	com-	escrib-
yo	hablaba	comía	escribía
tú	hablabas	comías	escribías
él/ella/usted	hablaba	comía	escribía
nosotros/nosotras	hablábamos	comíamos	escribíamos
	s	s	s
vosotros/vosotras			
	hablabais	comíais	escribíais

ellos/ellas/ustedes	hablaban	comían	escribían
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Examples:

**Limpiaba** el cuarto cada dos días.

I used to clean the room every other day.

**Vivía** con mi tía por un rato.

I lived with my aunt for a while.

Ella **dormía** cuando llegamos.

She was sleeping when we arrived.

## THE FUTURE TENSE

There are two ways to express the future tense in Spanish: the simple future and the informal future.

### The Simple Future

To conjugate verbs in the simple future tense, you will retain the infinitive ending and simply add the prescribed personal ending. The three groups of verbs share the same ending in the simple future tense:

yo	-é
tú	-ás
él/ella/usted	-á
nosotros/nosotras	-emos
vosotros/vosotras	-éis
ellos/ellas/ustedes	-án

Hence, here is how you will conjugate the verbs hablar, beber, and abrir:

Subject	hablar	beber	abrir
yo	hablaré	beberé	abriré
tú	hablarás	beberás	abrirás
él/ella/usted	hablará	beberá	abrirá
nosotros/nosotras	hablaremos	beberemos	abriremos
vosotros/vosotras	hablaréis	beberéis	abriréis
ellos/ellas/ustedes	hablarán	beberán	abrirán

s			
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### **Uses of the Simple Future Tense**

The Spanish simple future is most commonly used to express a guess or supposition:

Examples:

Probablemente visitaré a mi abuela el año próximo.  
I will probably visit my grandmother next year.

Los niños tendrán hambre.  
The children might be hungry.

The simple future is likewise used to make predictions or assumptions about the future but which outcome is uncertain or unknown.

For example:

Encontrará a un nuevo amigo.  
He will find a new friend.

Mi hermano se casará con una mujer agradable.  
My brother will marry a nice woman.

Take note that if you want to express something that is bound to happen or with reasonable certainty of happening in the future, you should use the present tense instead of the future tense.

Examples:

Se casa el 14 de febrero de 2017.

He is getting married on February 14, 2017.

Mis primos me visitan este sabado.

My cousins are going to visit me this Saturday.

Mis amigos vienen este sábado.

My friends are coming this Saturday.

Take note of several irregular verbs with different stems in the simple future:

**Infinitive Stem Meaning**

hacer har- to make, to do

decir dir- to say

poder podr- to be able

saber sabr- to know

haber habr- to have

tener tendr- to have

poner pondr- to put, place, set



querer querr- to want, love  
valer valdr- to be worth  
venir vendr- to come  
salir saldr- to leave, go out

## The Informal Future

The informal future is formed using the conjugated form of the verb 'ir' (to go) and the infinitive form of the verb:

present tense of ir + a + infinitive

The verb 'ir' takes the following forms in the present tense:

	ir (to go)
yo	voy
tú	vas
él/ella/usted	va
nosotros/nosotros	vamos
vosotros/vosotras	vais
ellos/ellas/ustedes	van

Examples:

Van a comprar en el centro comercial la semana próxima.  
They will shop at the mall next week.

Él va a trabajar inmediatamente después del colegio.  
He will work immediately after college.

Voy a comprar un vestido nuevo el próximo fin de semana.  
I will buy a new dress next weekend.

## **THE PERFECT TENSES**

The perfect tenses are compound tenses which are formed using an auxiliary verb and the past participle of the main verb.

Here are the perfect tenses in the indicative mood:

Present perfect

Past perfect

Future perfect

Perfect tenses express actions that are completed or perfected in the past, present, or future. It is formed with the conjugated form of haber and the past participle form of the main verb.

### **Past Participle**

The past participle is formed by dropping the verb ending and adding the following ending:

AR verbs -ado

ER verbs -ido

IR verb -ido

Examples:

Verb Past participle

hablar hablado

comprar comprado

comer comido

beber bebido

vivir vivido

salir salido

Some verbs have irregular past participle forms. Here are the most commonly used ones:

abrir abierto

escribir escrito

hacer hecho

ver visto

decir dicho

volver vuelto

absolver absuelto  
 satisfacer satisfecho  
 prender preso  
 poner puesto  
 romper roto  
 resolver resuelto  
 cubrir cubierto  
 morir muerto  
 freír frito

The following verbs have irregular past participle form when used as an adjective but have regular forms when used as a verb:

Verb	Meaning	Adjective	Verb
despertar	to wake up	despierto	despertado
absorber	to absorb	absorto	absorbido
corromper	to corrupt	corrupto	corruptido
poseer	to have	poseso	poseído
proveer	to provide	provisto	proveído
suspender	to hang	suspenso	suspendido

bendecir	to bless	bendito	bendecido
confundir	to confuse	confuso	confundido
imprimir	to print	impreso	imprimido
maldecir	to curse	maldito	maldecido
presumir	to presume	presunto	presumido

## Haber

The verb haber is commonly used as an auxiliary verb in compound tenses. When used as such, it conveys the meaning ‘to have’. This, however, does not imply possession and you must be careful not to confuse it with another irregular verb, tener (to have).

When used as an impersonal verb, haber takes the form ‘hay’ in the present indicative tense which is translated as ‘there is’ or ‘there are’.

Examples:

Hay cinco libros en el escritorio.  
There are five books on the desk.

Hay muchos niños en la playa.  
There are many children on the beach.

When used as an auxiliary verb, haber has the following conjugations in the present indicative tense:

Subject	<b>haber</b>
yo	he
tú	has
él/ella/usted	ha
nosotros/nosotros	hemos
vosotros/vosotras	habéis
ellos/ellas/ustedes	han

### ***The Present Perfect Tense***

The present perfect tense is used to denote a condition or an action that has been completed or has occurred prior to the present time. The present indicative form of haber is used with the past participle form of the verb to form the present perfect tense.

Examples:

He hablado.

I have spoken.

Hemos decidido asistir a la fiesta.  
We have decided to attend the party.

Ha escrito una carta a su amigo.  
He has written a letter to his friend.

Has terminado las especulaciones.  
You have ended the speculations.

Han dimitido de su trabajo.  
They have resigned from their job.

### ***The Past Perfect Tense***

The past perfect tense conveys an action that was completed at some point in the past before another event or action has occurred. The imperfect form of haber is paired with the past participle to form the past perfect tense.

Imperfect forms of haber:

Subject	haber
yo	había

tú	habías
él/ella/usted	había
nosotros/nosotras	habíamos
vosotros/vosotras	habíais
ellos/ellas/ustedes	habían

Examples:

El sospechoso **había limpiado** la habitación antes de que los policías llegaron.

The suspect had cleaned the room before the policemen arrived.

(Ellos) **habían hablado** contra la minería irresponsable.

They had spoken against irresponsible mining.

**Había caminado** tres millas al mediodía.

I had walked three miles by noon.

### ***The Future Perfect Tense***

The future perfect tense expresses an action that will have been completed at some point in the future. To form the future perfect tense,



you'll use the future form of haber and the past participle.

Future forms of haber

Subject	haber
yo	habré
tú	habrás
él/ella/usted	habrá
nosotros/nosotras	habremos
vosotros/vosotras	habréis
ellos/ellas/ustedes	Habrán

Examples:

**Habré ahorrado** veinte mil dólares antes del próximo año.

I will have saved twenty thousand dollars by next year.

**Habrá entrado** en el concurso de matemáticas por el mes que viene.

She will have entered the mathematics competition by next month.

## REFLEXIVE VERBS

Reflexive verbs denote an action that a person is performing towards himself or herself. A verb is reflexive if its subject and direct object are one. Reflexive verbs are frequently used in Spanish and they typically convey actions or activities related to personal routines such as taking a bath, combing one's hair, or brushing one's teeth. A reflexive verb requires a reflexive pronoun as a receiver of the action.

The infinitive form of a reflexive verb ends in –se which can translate to 'oneself'.

### Examples

vestirse to dress oneself

cepillarse to brush oneself

lavarse to wash oneself

To conjugate a reflexive verb, drop the –se ending and conjugate normally. The reflexive pronoun which acts as the receiver of the action is placed before the verb. Reflexive pronouns must agree with the subject in both gender and number.

Here are the reflexive pronouns and the subject pronouns they refer to:

Subject Pronouns	Reflexive Pronouns
yo	me
tú	te

él/ella/usted	se
nosotros/nosotras	nos
vosotros/vosotras	os
ellos/ellas/ustedes	se

Examples:

(Yo) me baño.

I bathe (myself).

(Ella) se viste para el banquete.

She dresses herself for the party.

(Ellos) se despertaron temprano.

They woke up early.

### *Placement of Reflexive Pronouns*

Reflexive pronouns are placed before the verb. They may also be found at the end of the verb. Whenever the infinitive form is used, you must add the pronoun at the end of the verb.

Examples:

Quiero ducharme.

I want to bathe myself.

Debo afeitarme.

I have to shave myself.

The reflexive construction is likewise used to indicate ownership. In English, you will usually do this with a possessive adjective. In Spanish, since the reflexive construction clearly shows that the object is owned by the subject, you can use a definite article before the body part or the object.

For example:

Me lavo las manos. I wash my hands.

Most commonly used reflexive verbs:

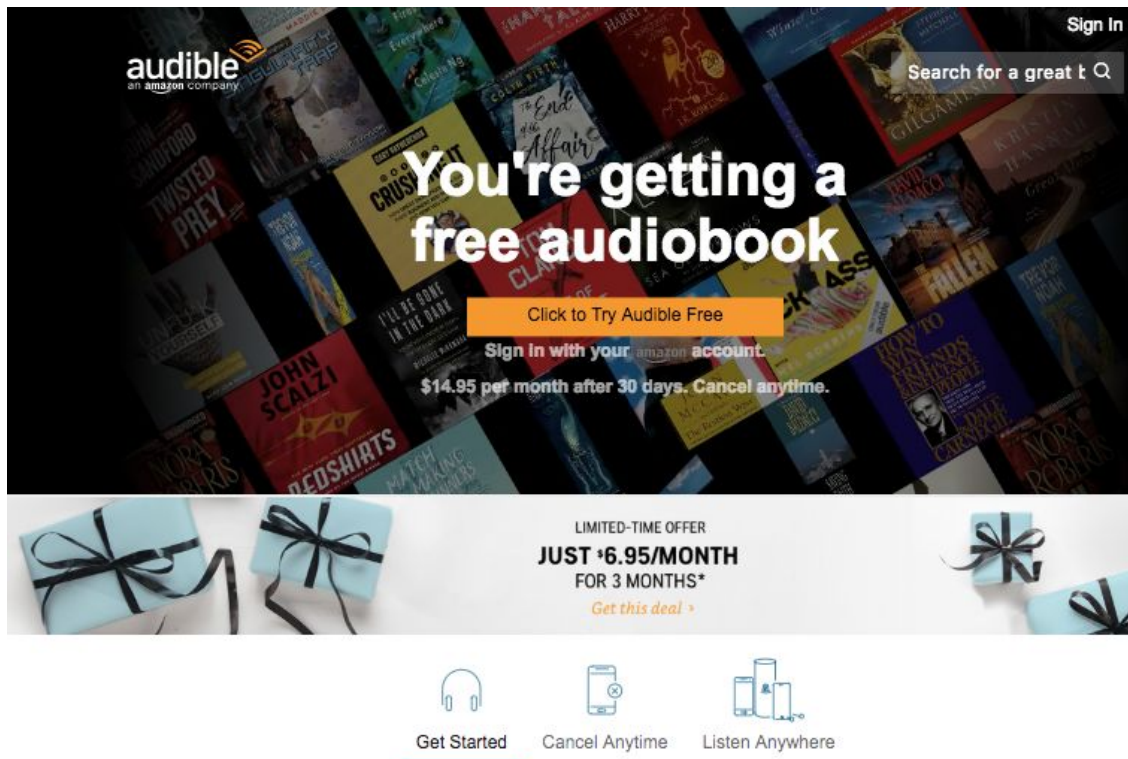
bañarse	to bathe
alegrarse (de)	to be glad about
disgustarse (de)	to be upset about
convertirse (en)	to become
volverse	to become
enfermarse	to become ill

cepillarse	to brush
peinarse	to comb one's hair
taparse	to cover up oneself
distraerse	to distract oneself
secarse	to dry off
desayunarse	to eat breakfast
divertirse (con)	to enjoy oneself with
limarse (las uñas)	to file
olvidarse (de)	to forget about
reponerse	to get better
aburrirse (de)	to get bored with
vestirse	to get dressed
enojarse (con)	to get mad about
arreglarse	to get oneself ready
desvestirse	to get undressed
subirse	to get up
levantarse	to get up
enloquecerse	to go crazy

acostarse	to go to bed
dormirse	to go to sleep
irse	to leave
mirarse	to look at oneself
ponerse	to put on
pintarse (los labios)	to put on lipstick
maquillarse	to put on makeup
acordarse (de)	to remember
despedirse	to say good-bye
afeitarse	to shave
afeitarse	to shave oneself
ducharse	to shower
sentarse	to sit down
sostenerse	to support
quitarse	to take off
probarse	to try on
torcerse	to twist
destaparse	to uncover
despertarse	to wake up

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# CHAPTER 7: ADJECTIVES

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Adjectives are words that modify a noun or a pronoun. In Spanish, adjectives must agree in number and gender with the words they describe. Hence, an adjective can have four forms.

For example:

el libro nuevo los libros nuevos

la casa nueva las casas nuevas

An adjective will normally appear in a dictionary in its singular masculine form. Hence, you must know how to form the feminine and the plural form.

Most singular adjectives end in –o but there are also many adjectives that end in –e, -ista, or a consonant. Here are quick guidelines that will help you form the feminine and the plural for adjectives:

## **Adjectives ending in –o**

Adjectives that end in –o have four forms to match the gender and number of the word they describe. They form the plural by adding –s at the end of the word. Here are the endings for this group of adjectives:

Masculine Feminine

Singular -o -a

Plural -os -as

Examples:

el hombre alto (the tall man) los hombres altos (the tall men)

la mujer alta (the tall woman) las mujeres altas (the tall women)

### **Adjectives ending in –e or –ista**

Adjectives that end in –e or –ista have similar forms for the masculine and feminine gender but have two forms to describe the singular and plural nouns.

*Adjectives ending in –e:*

Singular -e

Plural -es

The above endings indicate that you will only need to add –s to the adjective in its singular form.

Examples:

Mi padre es amable. My father is friendly.

Mi madre es amable. My mother is friendly.

Mis padres son amables. My parents are friendly.

*Adjectives with –ista ending:*

Adjectives ending in –ista have the following endings in the singular and plural:

Singular -ista

Plural -istas

This means that to form their plural, you will have to add –s to their ending in the singular form.

Examples:

Mi hermano es optimista. My brother is optimistic.

Mi hermana es optimista. My sister is optimistic.

Mis hermanos son optimistas. My brothers are optimistic.

Mis hermanas son optimistas. My sisters are optimistic.

**Adjectives ending in a consonant**

Most adjectives that end in a consonant have similar forms for masculine and feminine but change their form to agree with the number of the word they describe.

To form their plural, you will add –es to the singular form.

Examples:

El examen es difícil. The examination is difficult.

Los exámenes son difíciles. The examinations are difficult.

However, take note of the following exceptions:

Adjectives ending in –z in the singular change their ending from z to c before adding –es.

Example:

El perro es feroz. Los perros son feroces.

### **Adjectives ending in –or, –ón, -an, and -ín**

Adjectives that end in –or, –ón, -an, and -ín have feminine forms. To form the feminine, simply add –a (singular) or –as (plural) to the masculine singular form and drop the written accent when needed.

Examples:

Mi amigo es hablador.

My friend is talkative.

Mi amiga es habladora.

My friend is talkative.

Mis amigos son habladores.

My friends are talkative.

Mis amigas son habladoras.

My friends are talkative.

## **PLACEMENT OF ADJECTIVES**

In English, adjectives are always placed before the word they modify. In Spanish, however, adjectives generally come after the noun they modify.

Examples:

el niño juguetón the playful boy

la niña rubia blonde girl

el atleta valiente the brave athlete  
la chica simpatica the nice girl

Some adjectives can come before the noun they modify.

Adjectives may be placed before the noun to emphasize its inherent quality:

el valiente león el azul cielo  
the brave lion the blue sky

la dulce miel la blanca nieve  
the sweet honey the white snow

las verdes hojas la bella flor  
the green leaves the beautiful flower

An adjective may also appear before the noun to emphasize its special quality.

For instance, to stress that Maria is such a good singer:

Maria es una buena cantante.

Limiting adjectives are placed before the noun they modify.

Limiting adjectives are words that restrict the amount, quality, or quantity of a noun. This group of adjectives includes numbers, possessive adjectives, moral qualifiers not otherwise introduced by adverbial modifiers, comparative and superlative adjectives mejor (best) and peor (worst), as well as some words that indicate quantity.

Here are examples of quantity words that function as limiting adjectives:

alguno some

todo all

poco a little

ninguno no, none

suficiente enough, sufficient

cuanto as much

mucho many

menos less

varios some, few

bastante enough

Examples:

Maria necesita algunos trabajadores.

Maria needs some workers.

Él tiene muchos amigos.

He has many friends.

Tengo tres hermanos y una hermana.

I have three brothers and one sister.

Hoy es el mejor día de mi vida.

Today is the best day of my life.

Some adjectives convey a different meaning according to their placement. Here are some examples:

Adjective	Adjective Placement	
	Before the noun	After the noun
alto	top, high-class	tall
bueno	simple, good	good, gentle, generous
cierto	certain	true, right
dulce	good, nice	sweet
grande	great	big
medio	average	half
mismo	same	himself/herself, very
nuevo	different,	new



	another	
pobre	poor: unfortunate	poor: penniless
propio	his, her own	proper
raro	rare	strange
simple	mere	simple
triste	dreadful	sad
único	only	unique
varios	several	different
viejo	former	old, aged

### Shortened Adjective Forms

Some adjectives take shortened forms when placed before a masculine singular noun. These adjectives drop the final –o but retain the original meaning in the short forms. This process is called apocoptation and the shortened form is called an apócope.

Examples:

bueno buen el buen rey (the good king)

malo mal mal cocinero (bad cook)

primero primer el primer amor (first love)

tercero tercer el tercer edificio (third building)

uno un un hombre (a man)

alguno algún algún día (some day)  
ninguno ningún ningún regalo (no gift)

The word 'Santo' takes the shortened form 'San' when placed before a singular masculine noun except when the noun starts with 'Do' or 'To'.

San Pedro Saint Peter

San Pablo Saint Paul

San Francisco Saint Francis

Santo Domingo Saint Dominic

Santo Tomás Saint Thomas

Some adjectives have shortened forms regardless of the gender of the noun that comes after them:

ciento cien niñas (one hundred girls)

cualquiera cualquier mujer (any woman)

grande un gran edificio (a great building)

## **Multiple Adjectives**

In Spanish, you can use a series of adjectives to describe a noun. They can be placed before or after the noun or scattered in different parts.

To emphasize the noun's characteristics or inherent qualities, you can place one or more adjectives before the noun:

Mi padre es un inteligente y valiente caballero.

My father is an intelligent and brave gentleman.

You can place two or more adjectives after a noun to restrict or clarify the noun:

Él es un hombre inteligente y valiente.

He is an intelligent and brave man.

You can split multiple adjectives by placing the subjective ones before the noun and the objective one after it.

Él es un gran cantante canadiense.

He is a great Canadian singer.

## **MOST COMMONLY USED ADJECTIVES**

Spanish	English
agresivo	aggressive
enojado	angry

enfadoso	annoying
malo	bad
bello	beautiful
hermoso	beautiful
querido	beloved
mejor	better
grande	big
amargo	bitter
ciego	blind
hervido	boiled
aburrido	bored
quebrado	broken
quemado	burnt
tranquilo	calm
capaz	capable
cuidadoso	careful
caritativo	charitable
barato	cheap
limpio	clean
claro	clear
frío	cold
confortabl e	comfortable
complicad o	complicated
contento	satisfied

fresco	cool
correcto	correct
cortés	courteous
loco	insane
cruel	cruel
curioso	curious, odd
oscuro	dark
sordo	deaf
delicioso	delicious
sabroso	delicious
difícil	difficult
duro	difficult
aplicado	diligent
sucio	dirty
descortés	discourteous
borracho	drunk
seco	dry
temprano	early
fácil	easy
comestible	edible
vacío	empty
divertido	entertaining
igual	equal
excelente	excellent
caro	expensive, dear

apagable	extinguishabl e
rápido	fast
gordo	fat
favorito	favorite
feroz	ferocious
cochino	filthy, nasty
llano	flat, even
extraño	foreign, strange
rompible	fragile, breakable
oloroso	fragrant
libre	free
frito	fried
amable	friendly
helado	frozen
lleno	full
cómico	funny
apacible	gentle
bueno	good
grave	grave
culpable	guilty
guapo	handsome
alegre	happy
feliz	happy

sano	healthy
pesado	heavy
honesto	honest
caliente	hot
húmedo	humid
ignorante	ignorant
analfabeto	illiterate
inteligente	intelligent
interesante	interesting
corajudo	irritable
celoso	jealous
tarde	late
flojo	lazy, loose
perezoso	lazy
poco	little, few
largo	long
perdido	lost
cariñoso	loving
hecho	made
magnífico	magnificent
mucho	many, much
casado	married
maduro	mature, ripe
travieso	mischievous
modesto	modest
baboso	moronic

móvil	moveable
mudo	mute
desnudo	naked
encuerado	naked
estrecho	narrow
natural	natural
nervioso	nervous
nuevo	new
ruidoso	noisy
antiguo	old
viejo	old
doloroso	painful
pálido	pale
paciente	patient
simpático	pleasant
venenoso	poisonous
pobre	poor
embarazad a	pregnant
bonito	pretty
profundo	profound
orgullosa	proud
listo	ready, quick- witted
rico	rich
asado	roasted



podrido	rotten
redondo	round-shaped
corriente	running, flowing
triste	sad
salado	salty
asustado	scared
severo	severe, harsh
corto	short
vergonzos o	shy
enfermo	sick
sencillo	simple
flaco	skinny, thin
despacio	slow
lento	slow
pequeño	small
apestoso	smelly
picante	spicy, sharp
fuerte	strong
tonto	stupid
superior	superior, better
sospechos o	suspicious
dulce	sweet

alto	tall, high
doméstico	tame
grueso	thick
delgado	thin
cansado	tired
feo	ugly
inolvidable	unforgettable
único	unique, sole
usado	used
inútil	useless
tibio	warm, tepid
débil	weak
mojado	wet
ancho	wide
salvaje	wild, savage
sabio	wise
joven	young

## **DEMONSTRATIVE ADJECTIVES**

Demonstrative adjectives describe the noun they refer to in terms of its distance from the speaker. There are three types of demonstrative adjectives and each of them has four forms to agree with the number and gender of the noun they modify.

Demonstrative adjectives that describe nouns which are close to the speaker's location (this/these):

	Singular	Plural
Masculine	este (this)	estos (these)
Feminine	esta (this )	estas (these)

este libro es mío. This book is mine.

esta casa es pequeña. This house is small.

estos libros son interesantes. These books are interesting.

estas faldas son bonitas. These skirts are pretty.

Demonstrative adjectives that describe a noun which is not close to the speaker (that/those):

	Singular	Plural
Masculine	ese (that)	esos (those)

Feminine	esa (that)	esas (those)
----------	---------------	-----------------

esa gata es divertida. That cat is funny.

Quiero esa falda azul. I want that blue skirt.

Esos pendientes son costosos. Those earrings are expensive.

Esas muñecas son bonitas. Those dolls are pretty.

Demonstrative adjectives that describe noun or nouns which are far from the speaker (that/those over there):

	Masculine	Feminine
Singular	aquel (that over there)	aquella (that over there)
Plural	aquellos (those over there)	aquellas (those over there)

Aquel hombre es un buen cantante.

That man is a good singer.

Aquella cobra es peligrosa.

That cobra is dangerous.

Me gustan aquellas flores.

I like those flowers.

.quellas sillas son de madera de roble.

those chairs are made of oakwood.

### Demonstrative Adjective Placement

Demonstrative adjectives are generally placed before the noun they modify. If more than one noun is being described, each should be modified by an appropriate demonstrative adjective.

Examples:

esa casa y este coche son caros.

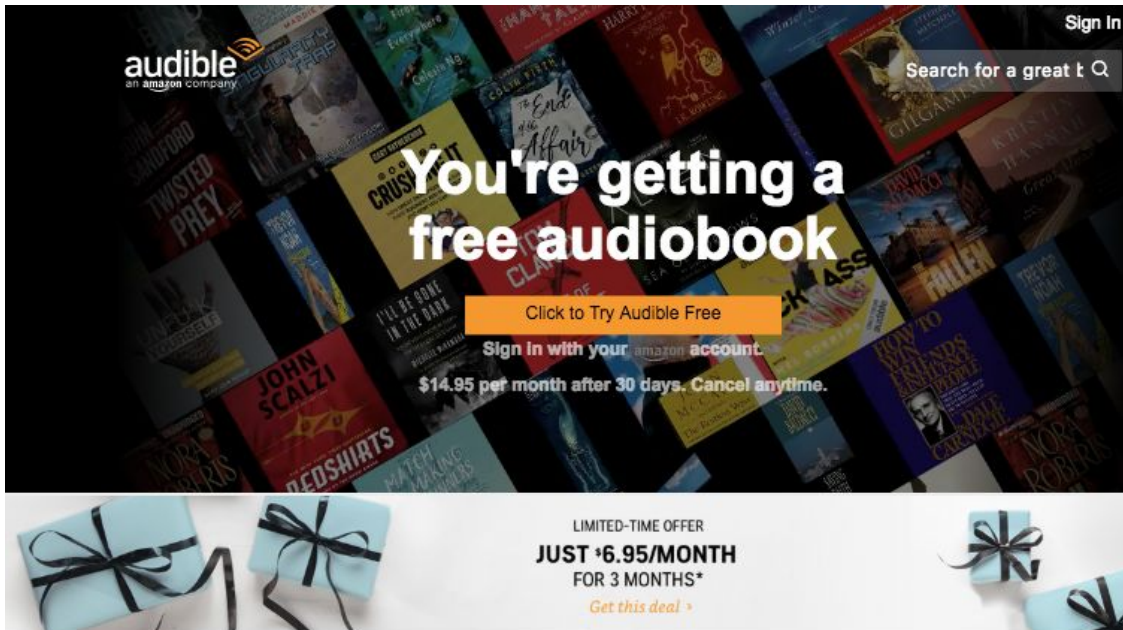
that house and this car are expensive.

.quellas camisas y esos pantalones son bonitos.

those shirts and those pants are pretty.

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# CHAPTER 8: PREPOSITIONS, ADVERBS, AND CONJUNCTIONS

## PREPOSITIONS

A preposition connects words together and establishes a relationship between them. In general, prepositions are invariable words. Except when the prepositions 'a' and 'de' contract with the definite article 'el' to form 'al' and 'del', prepositions do not vary with gender or number. They are usually placed before a noun, a pronoun, or a verb used as a noun.

Los visitantes son de España. The visitors are from Spain.

Los niños van al zoológico. The children are going to the zoo.

Este pastel es para mi madre. This cake is for my mother.

Caminamos en el parque. We strolled in the park.

Corrió hacia su madre. He ran towards his mother.

### *Prepositions*

a	to, for, by, at
al	upon
al lado de	beside
ante	before

antes de	before
bajo	under
cerca de	near
como	like
con	with
contra	against
de	of, from, about
debajo de	beneath, under
debido a	due to
delante de	in front of
dentro de	inside
dentro de	inside, within
desde	since
después de	after
detrás de	behind
durante	during
en vez de	instead of
en	in, on, at, about
en	in, on, at, about
encima de	on top, above
enfrente de	in front of
entre	among,



	between
fuera de	outside
hacia	towards
hasta	until
incluso	including
lejos de	far from
menos	except
para	for
por	on account of, for
salvo	except
según	according to
sin	without
sobre	on, above, about
tras	after
vía	via

## **ADVERBS**

Adverbs are words that provide more details to sentences by describing verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. They are invariable words that provide more information on manner, time, quantity, intensity, and frequency.

### *Forming adverbs*

Adverbs are usually formed by adding the suffix *-mente* to the feminine singular form of adjectives. This is similar to the suffix *-ly* in English.

For instance, to express ‘Marina talks slowly’, you can add *-mente* to *lenta*, the feminine singular form of the adjective *lento* (slow), to form *lentamente*. Hence:

Marina habla lentamente.

Here are other examples of adverbs of manner:

Masculine	Feminine	Adverb	Meaning
alegre	alegre	alegremente	happily
breve	breve	brevemente	briefly
claro	clara	claramente	clearly
cortés	cortés	cortésmente	courteously
especial	especial	especialmente	specially
fácil	fácil	fácilmente	easily

final	final	finalmente	finally
frecuente	frecuent e	frecuentement e	frequently
paciente	paciente	pacientemente	patiently
rápido	rápida	rápidamente	quickly
sincero	sincera	sinceramente	sincerely

Examples:

Esperó pacientemente a su amiga.  
She waited patiently for her friend.

Habló claramente en la fiesta.  
He spoke clearly at the party.

Agradeció sinceramente a su madre.  
He sincerely thanked his mother.

### ***Forming adverbial phrases with 'con'***

You can form adverbial phrases by using the preposition 'con' (with) with a noun.

Examples:

Adverbial Phrase Meaning

con claridad clearly  
con cortesía courteously  
con alegría happily  
con rapidez rapidly  
con perfección perfectly  
con respeto respectfully  
con habilidad skillfully

Besides adverbs of manner which are formed with –mente and –con, there are several adverbs in Spanish that will help you convey information on manner, time, place, quantity, frequency, affirmation, and negation:

Adverbs of Manner	
alrededor	around
bajo	softly
alto	loudly
mejor	better
peor	worse
duro	hard
bien	well
muy	very
sereno	calmly
mal	badly or poorly

así	so, like this
-----	---------------

Mi hermana es **muy** hermosa.

My sister is very beautiful.

Trabajó **duro** para su familia.

He worked hard for his family.

Adverbs of Time	
aún	yet, still
ayer	yesterday
después	later, after
ahora	now
ya	already
hoy	today
anoche	last night
luego	soon
temprano	early
mientras	while
tarde	late
entonces	then
a veces	sometimes
pronto	soon
todavía	yet, still
todavía no	not yet

mañana	tomorrow
cuando	when

Ella llegó **temprano** . She arrived early.

Fue a la escuela **hoy** . She went to the school today.

Adverbs of Place	
	in
adelante	front/ahead
abajo	downstairs
arriba	upstairs, above
por arriba	up there
detrás	behind
enfrente	in front of
por delante	in front
dentro	inside
adentro	inside
por abajo	down there
todas partes	everywhere
lejos	far
aquí	here

por atrás	in back
donde	where
debajo	under
ahi	there
allí	over there
cerca	nearby
del lugar	of place
encima	on top, above
acá	over here
afuera	outside
fuera	outside
alguna parte	somewhere
allá	over there
por acá	around here
para allá	that way
para acá	this way

Se esconde **dentro** .

He is hiding inside.

Estoy parado **aquí** .

I'm standing here.

Los gatitos están jugando **debajo** de la cama.

The kittens are playing under the bed.

Adverbs of Quantity	
mucho	a lot
poco	little, few
bastante	enough
más	more
menos	less
demasiad o	too much
casi	almost
suficiente	enough
apenas	hardly
tanto	so much, as much

La comida es **apenas** suficiente para ellos.

The food is hardly enough for them.

Están **casi** terminados.

They are almost finished.

Adverbs of Frequency	
siempre	always
a veces	sometime s
frecuentement	frequentl



e	y
raramente	rarely
rara vez	rarely
semanalmente	weekly
anualmente	yearly
cada hora	every hour
casi nunca	seldom
nunca	never

Mi madre está **siempre** en casa.  
My mother is always at the house.

**Raramente** comemos la carne.  
We rarely eat meat.

*Other Adverbs:*

Adverbs of Affirmation	
si	yes
ciertamente	for sure
verdaderament e	for sure
tambien	also
seguramente	surely
efectivamente	for sure
asimismo	as well

en efecto	in fact
cierto	that's right
desde luego	of course

Adverbs of Negation	
nunca	never
jamás	never
nada	nothing
tampoco	neither
ni	nor
no	no
ni...no	neither...nor

Interrogative Adverbs	
¿adónde? ?	Where to?
¿cómo?	How?
¿cuándo? ?	When?
¿cuánto?	How many/much?
¿dónde?	Where?
¿por	Why?

que?	
------	--

Adverbs of Opinion	
quizás	perhaps
evidentemente	obviously
personalmente	personally

## CONJUNCTIONS

A conjunction is a word that joins words, phrases, or clauses together. There are three types of conjunctions in Spanish: coordinating, subordinating, and correlative conjunctions.

### *Coordinating Conjunctions*

A coordinating conjunction connects words or clauses of similar kind or function.

y	and
o	or

pero	but
pues	then
entonces	thus, so
sino	but

Take note that when the conjunction 'y' is placed before a word that starts with 'i' or 'hi', 'y' changes to 'e' to avoid pronouncing successive 'i' sound and thus ease pronunciation.

Similarly, the conjunction 'o' changes to 'u' when used before a word that starts with 'o' or 'ho'. In addition, 'o' changes to 'ó' when placed between numbers. Hence: to express 'six or seven', you will write: 5 ó 3.

Examples:

Juego el tenis y leo libros cada fin de semana.

I play tennis and read books every weekend.

Habla francés, alemán, español e inglés.

He speaks French, German, Spanish, and English.

Ama su marido pero no puede olvidar su infidelidad.

She loves her husband but she cannot forget his infidelity.

## ***Subordinating Conjunctions***

Subordinating conjunctions connect a dependent (subordinate) clause to an independent (main) clause.

Here are the commonly used subordinating conjunctions:

tan pronto como	as soon as
como	as, since
porque	because
antes (de) que	before
aunque	even though
asi que	therefore
bien que	even though
como quiera que	since, although
pues	for, because
si	if
así	just as
además	also
en caso de que	in case
mientras que	while, whereas
siempre que	provided that
empero	yet

puesto que	since
ya que	since
a fin de que	so that
para que	so that
que	that
a menos que	unless
hasta que	until
cuando	when
sin que	without
a pesar de que	in spite of

Examples:

No puede jugar el fútbol **porque** está enfermo.

He can't play football because he's sick.

Miraré la película **si** no estoy ocupado este fin de semana.

I will watch the movie if I'm not busy this weekend.

El perro ladró fuertemente **cuando** el cartero llamó.

The dog barked loudly when the postman called.

### ***Correlative Conjunctions***

Correlative conjunctions show the relation between different ideas in a sentence and are always used in pairs.

The following are examples of correlative conjunctions:

o...o	either...or
ni...ni	neither...nor
sea...sea	either...or
bien... bien	either...or
uno...otro	one... another
tal...tal	this...that
ora...ora	now...now
cual... cual	like...like
ya...ya	whether...or
que...que	or

Examples:

**Ni** Rica **ni** Selina fue elegido como candidato para el desfile.  
Neither Rica nor Selina was chosen as candidate for the pageant.

Él es **o** un criminal **o** un héroe.  
He is either a criminal or a hero.





# CHAPTER 9: FORMING SENTENCES

## SENTENCE PATTERNS

To form a basic sentence, you need a subject and a verb. To these two elements, you can add other elements such as direct objects, indirect objects, or prepositional phrases. The basic pattern is identical to the subject-verb-object (S-V-O) pattern in English.

For example:

Yo leo libros. I read books.

S V O

Él come el pastel. He eats cake.

S V O

Native speakers typically drop the subject as the conjugated verb clearly shows who or what is the subject. Hence, the following are complete sentences:

Leo libros. I read books.

Come pastel. He eats cake.

Spanish word order is more flexible than English word order. You can rearrange words in a sentence to highlight a different grammatical

element without changing the idea.

For example:

leo libros. The sentence indicates that it is me who reads the books and not another person.

ros leo. The sentence emphasizes that I read books instead of magazines or other reading materials.

o libros. The sentence emphasizes the act of reading the books instead of giving them away or storing them.

## **DECLARATIVE SENTENCES**

In general, declarative sentences use this pattern:

subject + predicate + object

Example:

Janna vende coches. Janna sells cars.

Michelle hornea un pastel. Michelle bakes a cake.

When an object pronoun takes the place of the noun object, the object pronoun is placed before the verb.

Janna los vende. Janna sells them (cars).

Myra lo hornea. Myra bakes it (the cake).

When a sentence has a direct and indirect object, the direct object is usually placed before the indirect object.

Example:

Janna vende coches a sus amigas.

Janna sells cars to her friends.

Myra hornea un pastel para su madre.

Myra bakes a cake for her mother.

Adverbs are generally placed near the word they modify. When they modify adjective and adverbs, they are usually placed before the word they modify. When they modify verbs, they are usually found after the verb.

Examples:

Mi amiga es muy agradable.

My friend is very nice.

Vin juega el tenis frecuentemente.

Vin plays tennis frequently.

Spanish sentence pattern is quite flexible and you will most probably see the above statements in a different word order such as the following:

Frecuentemente, Vin juega el tenis.

Frequently, Vin plays tennis.

Vin frecuentemente juega el tenis.

Vin frequently plays tennis.

## **INTERROGATIVE SENTENCES**

Interrogative sentences generally begin with an inverted question mark and a regular question mark at the end. There are several ways of forming yes-no questions in Spanish.

To form a declarative sentence, simply switch the subject and the verb.

For example:

Declarative sentence: Marina cose. Marina sews.

Interrogative sentence: ¿Cose Marina? Does Marina sew?

Another way to ask a question is by simply raising the tone when asking verbally.

For example, read the following and raise your tone at the end of the sentence:

¿Martha cocina? Martha cooks?

In English, you can form questions by adding tag words such as ‘is it?’, ‘right’, ‘isn’t it?’ at the end of the sentence. You can also form questions in Spanish by adding tag words.

Examples:

Marina cose, ¿no?

Martha cocina, ¿es verdad?

Take note that the inverted question mark was only placed at the start of the tag question words.

## **NEGATIVE SENTENCES**

To form negative sentences, simply place the word ‘no’ before the verb.

For example:

Él toca la guitarra. Él no toca la guitarra.

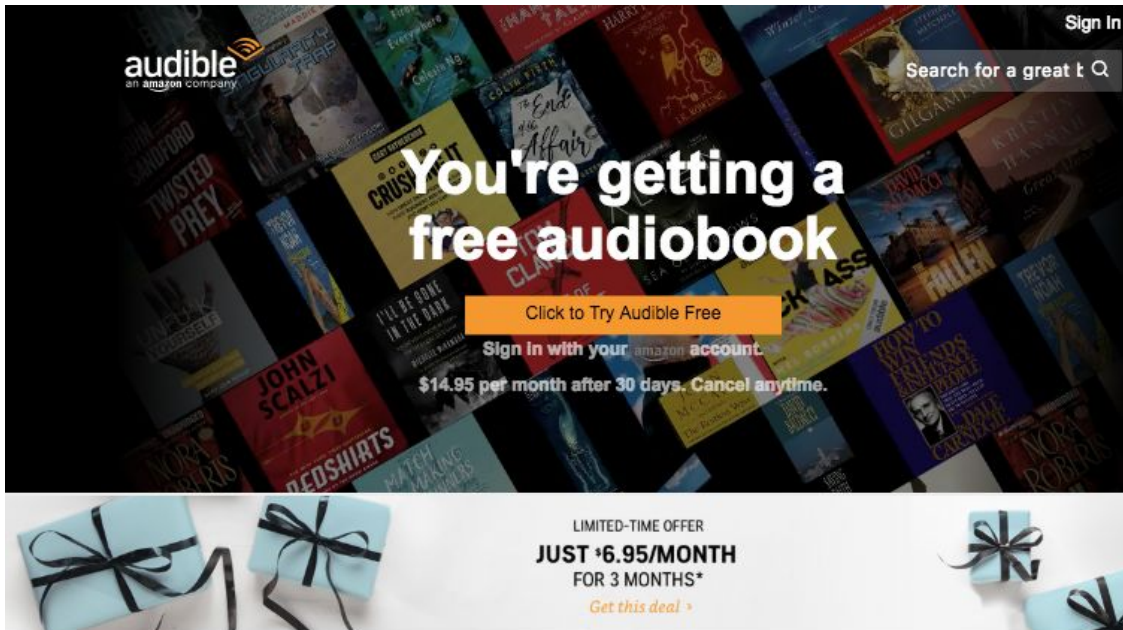
He plays the guitar. He doesn't play the guitar.

Yo escribo canciones. Yo no escribo canciones.

I write songs. I don't write songs.

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# CHAPTER 10: THE SUBJUNCTIVE & IMPERATIVE MOOD

## THE SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD

The subjunctive mood is used to convey doubts, wishes, emotions, hypothetical situations, and uncertainties. It is used to express opinion, make recommendations, or express feelings. While the indicative mood is an objective mood, the subjunctive mood is generally subjective. The subjunctive mood is commonly used in Spanish and it includes almost all tenses found in the indicative mood.

A sentence in the subjunctive mood generally has three parts:

### *Two subjects*

A subjunctive sentence will have one subject each in the main clause and the subordinate clause.

### *Two verbs*

The main clause has one verb in the indicative mood which will trigger the subjunctive mood. The subordinate clause has a separate verb in the subjunctive mood.

### *Relative pronoun (que, quien, como)*

The relative pronoun is the link between the main clause and the subordinate clause.

Here are examples of sentences in the subjunctive mood:

Es posible que Marty hable francés.  
It's possible that Marty speaks French.

Es probable que llegue tarde a la fiesta.  
It's likely that he will arrive late at the party.

Take note of the following phrases which generally indicate the use of the subjunctive mood:

It is good that \_\_\_ Es bueno que \_\_\_  
It's better that \_\_\_ Más vale que \_\_\_  
It is bad that \_\_\_ Es malo que \_\_\_  
It is doubtful that \_\_\_ Es dudoso que \_\_\_  
It is not certain that \_\_\_ No es cierto que \_\_\_  
It's preferable that \_\_\_ Es preferible que \_\_\_  
It is not likely that \_\_\_ Es difícil que \_\_\_

### **Conjugating the Verb in the Present Subjunctive Mood**

To conjugate verbs in the present subjunctive mood, you will use the first person singular form of the verb and drop the –o ending. Following are the personal endings for the present tense in the subjunctive mood:

AR Verbs:

yo	-e
tú	-es
él/ella/usted	-e
nosotros/nosotras	-emos
vosotros/vosotras	-éis
ellos/ellas/ustedes	-en

ER and IR Verbs

yo	-a
tú	-as
él/ella/usted	-a
nosotros/nosotras	-amos
vosotros/vosotras	-áis

ellos/ellas/ustedes	-an
---------------------	-----

## THE IMPERATIVE MOOD

The imperative mood is used for stating a direct command or for telling someone to do something. Since there are two ways of addressing a person in Spanish, the formal and the informal, commands can take different forms.

### Informal (tú) commands

The affirmative tú command is used when you're addressing a command to a family member, a friend, a pet, or someone you would normally address informally. The negative tú command is used to tell the same group not to do something.

### *Affirmative Informal or tú Commands*

To express a familiar command, you will use the present indicative third person singular form.

--	--	--	--

	-ar verbs	-er verbs	-ir verbs
tú	-a	-e	-e

Hence, the verbs comprar (to buy), comer (to eat), and abrir (to open) will have the following forms in the imperative:

	compra r	come r	abrir
tú	compra	come	abre

Examples:

Compra el bolso. Buy the bag.

¡Come las verduras! Eat the vegetables!

¡Abre la puerta! Open the door!

Spelling changes for stem-changing verbs in the present tense are maintained when these verbs are used in the imperative.

Examples:

Encontrar (to find) ¡Encuentra el libro! Find the book!

Mover (to move) ¡Mueve la silla! Move the chair!

Dormir (to sleep) ¡Duerme ahora! Sleep now!

## *Irregular Affirmative Informal Commands*

Some verbs have irregular forms in the imperative mood.

Examples:

ser (to be) sé

hacer (to make) haz

tener (to have) ten

decir (to tell) di

ir (to go) ve

salir (to leave) sal

poner (to put) pon

venir (to come, arrive) ven

¡Ve ahora! Go now!

¡Di la verdad! Tell the truth!

¡Sal ahora! Leave now!

## *Pronoun Placement*

A pronoun used in an affirmative command is attached to the end of the verb. In addition, an accent mark is added to the verb to retain its original stress.

Examples:

¡Díselo! Tell it to her!

¡Cómpramelo! Buy it for me.

¡Tráeselo! Bring it to him.

## **Punctuations in Imperative Sentences**

The use of exclamation points or naming the receiver of the command clarifies the subject of the verb and helps avoid confusion with the present indicative third person singular form when writing imperative sentences.

Compare these sentences:

Present indicative

Compra el bolso. He buys the bag.

Informal command

¡Compra el bolso! Buy the bag!

Present indicative

Annie compra el bolso. Annie buys the bag.

Informal command

Annie, ¡compra el bolso! Annie, buy the bag!

## ***Negative Informal or tú Commands***

A negative informal command is formed by placing no before the tú form in the present subjunctive.

Present subjunctive tú forms:

AR verbs	-es
ER verbs	-as
IR verbs	-as

Hence, the verbs comprar, comer, and abrir will have the following forms in the negative:

	compra r	come r	abrir
tú	compre s	coma s	abras

Examples:

No compres el bolso. Don't buy the bag.  
¡No comas el pastel! Don't eat the cake!  
¡No abras la caja! Don't open the box!

### **Formal commands – Affirmative and Negative**



The formal command is used to address people who are older, new acquaintances, and people you would normally address formally like a superior, teacher, government officials, or a religious leader. Except for Spain, Spanish-speaking countries only use the formal command to address all people.

Whether you're using an affirmative or negative command, the formal command uses the present subjunctive form of the verb.

	AR verbs	ER verbs	IR verbs
usted	-e	-a	-a
ustedes	-en	-an	-an

### ***Affirmative formal commands***

Examples:

comprar (to buy) Compre el bolso para mi, por favor.

Please buy the bag for me.

ser (to be) Sea amable a la personas mayores.

Be polite to older people.

abrir (to open) Abra la puerta.

Please open the door.

Ustedes:

pagar (to pay) Paguen la cuenta, por favor.

Please pay the bill.

comer (to eat) Señoras coman por favor.

Mesdames, please eat.

abrir (to open) Abran sus bolsas.

Please open your bags.

### ***Negative Formal Commands***

To form the negative formal command, add a negative word before the affirmative formal command.

Examples:

No hablen por favor. Please don't speak.

No abran sus bolsas. Don't open your bags.

No paguen la cuenta. Don't pay the bill.

No coman, por favor. Don't eat, please.

### **Pronoun placement in Affirmative commands**

Object pronouns are attached immediately at the end of the verb in the imperative mood. When both direct and indirect object pronouns are

used, the indirect object pronoun is placed before the direct object pronoun. When verbs have more than one syllable, a written accent is used to maintain its original stress.

Buy it. Cómprelo Ud.

Eat it. Cómalo.

Bring it to me. Traígameló.

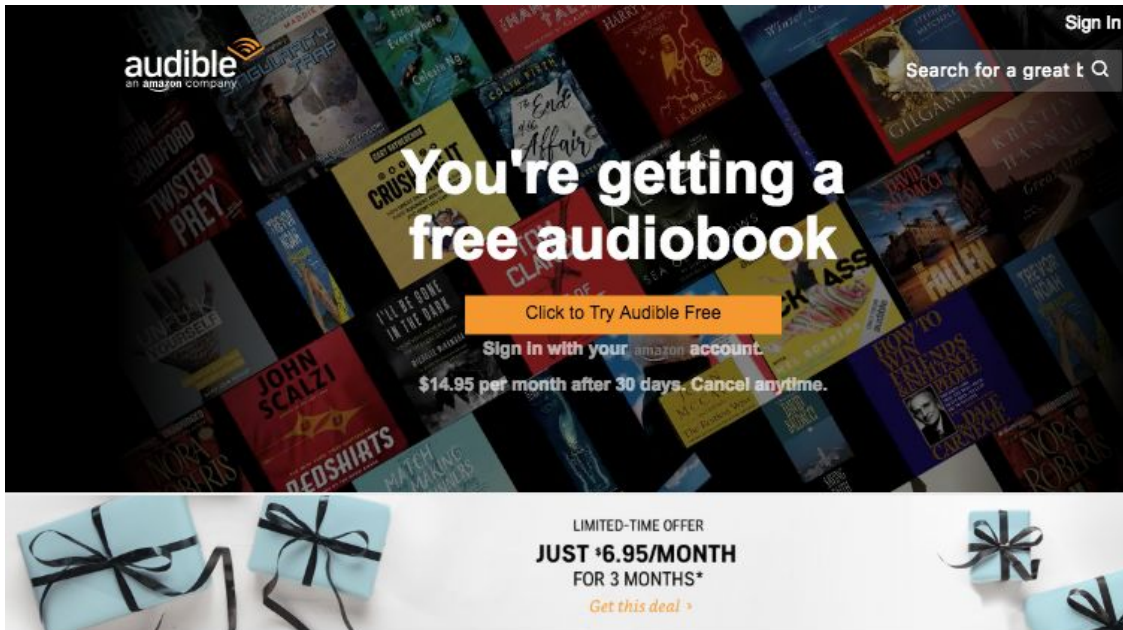
### **Pronoun Placement in Negative Commands**

In formal negative commands, the object pronoun appears before the verb and after the negative word.

Don't buy it for them. No se los compre.

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# CHAPTER 11: MAKING COMPARISONS

There are different ways to make comparisons in Spanish. You can compare adjectives, verbs, or adverbs. You can make comparisons of equality or inequality and absolute or relative superlative.

## COMPARISONS OF EQUALITY

The comparison of equality is used to compare things of equal qualities or characteristics.

You will use the following format for this type of comparison:

*To compare with adjectives or adverbs*

tan + adjective/adverb + como

When using an adjective to make comparisons, it should agree with the number and gender of the first noun.

Ella es tan bella como su madre.

She is as beautiful as her mother.

Mi padre es tan bueno como mi madre.

My father is as good as my mother.

*To compare with nouns*

tanto/tanta/tantos/tantas + noun + como

Tanto should agree with the noun in gender and number. Hence:

Marco tiene tantas amigas como Francisco.

Marco has as many female friends as Francisco.

Ella tiene tantas bolsas como su amiga.

She has as many bags as her friend.

*To compare with verbs:*

verb + tanto + como

Karen trabaja tanto como Ricardo.

Karen works as much as Ricardo.

## **COMPARISONS OF INEQUALITY**

Comparison of inequality refers to the comparison of two unequal objects or people in which one has more or less of a particular characteristic or quality.

Here is the format for comparing adjectives or adverbs:

más/menos + adjective/adverb + que

Carlota es más alta que Marita.

Carlota is taller than Marita.

Soy menos inteligente que mi hermano.

I am less intelligent than my brother.

Verbs can also be used to make comparisons:

Usted estudia más que su amiga.

You study more than your friend does.

## **Comparisons with Superlatives**

### *Relative Superlative*

Relative superlative expresses that one or more people or object has the greatest or the least degree of a specific quality relative to others in the group.



You will use this pattern for this type of comparison:

subject + verb + el/la/los/las + más/menos + adjective + de + group

Marian es la más activa de la clase.

Marian is the most active of the class.

Es la menos costosa de las opciones.

It's the least expensive of all the options.

### *Absolute Superlative*

Absolute superlative expresses a greater degree of characteristic or quality. It is formed by adding –érrimo(a), –bilísimo(a), or ísimo(a).

Examples:

amable (kind) amabilísima (extremely kind)

celebre (famous) celebérrimo (extremely famous)

bella (beautiful) bellísima (extremely beautiful)

## **IRREGULAR COMPARISON**

Irregular comparison involves the use of irregular comparison words similar to the words 'bad' or 'worse' in English.

The following are the irregular comparison words in Spanish:

### **Adjectives**

Positive Comparative

joven (young) menor (younger)

viejo (old) mayor (older)

pequeño (little) menor (littler/younger)

grande (big) mayor (bigger/older)

bueno (good) mejor (better)

malo (bad) peor (worse)

### **Adverbs**

Positive Comparative

poco (little) menos (less)

mucho (much) más (more)

mal (badly) peor (worse)

bien (well) mejor (better)

# CHAPTER 12:

## CONVERSATIONAL PHRASES

### TALKING ABOUT YOURSELF

Knowing how to introduce and tell something about yourself is one of the basic skills you should acquire when learning a new language.

Here is an example:

Me llamo John Vasquez. Nací el 12 de enero de 1985. Tengo treinta y dos años cumplidos. Trabajo como enfermero en Hospital de XYZ. Vivo en Nueva York pero soy de Barcelona, España. Estoy casado con dos hijos. Tengo dos hermanos y una hermana. Mi padre es abogado mientras que mi madre es un médico. Mis pasatiempos son jugar al tenis y dibujar.

My name is John Vasquez. I was born on January 12, 1985. I am thirty-two years old. I work as a nurse in XYZ Hospital. I live in New York but I'm from Barcelona, Spain. I'm married with two kids. I have two brothers and a sister. My father is a lawyer while my mother is a doctor. My hobbies are playing tennis and sketching.

## INTRODUCTIONS

If you want to meet new people and make Spanish-speaking friends, you should know how to introduce yourself properly to avoid awkward situations.

In general, the formal way of addressing people is used when meeting someone for the first time.

To ask for someone's name, you would say:

¿Cómo se llama usted? What's your name?

KOH-moh say YAHM-ah oo-STED

The informal form may be appropriate if you're talking to someone who is obviously younger, like a child, or a pet:

¿Cómo te llamas? What's your name?

KOH-mo tay YAHM-ahss

To reply and introduce yourself, you can use any of the following phrases:

Mi nombre es \_\_\_\_\_. My name is \_\_\_\_\_.

Me llamo \_\_\_\_\_. My name is \_\_\_\_\_.  
may YAHM-oh

It is customary to express your pleasure at the introduction. Here are the acceptable phrases:

¡Muchísimo gusto! I'm very pleased to meet you!

¡Mucho gusto! I'm pleased to meet you!

¡Tanto Gusto! Nice to meet you!

If you want to know more about the person, you may ask him or her some questions such as the following:

### *Formal*

¿Donde vive? Where do you live?

¿De dónde es usted? Where are you from?

¿Está usted casado/casada? Are you married?

¿Cuando es su cumpleaños? When is your birthday?

¿Cuántos años tiene? How old are you?

¿Cuál es su edad? What is your age?

### *Familiar:*

¿Donde vives? Where do you live?

¿De dónde eres? Where are you from?

¿Estás casado/casada? Are you married?

¿Cuándo es tu cumpleaños? When is your birthday?

¿Cuántos años tienes? How old are you?

Take note that it is generally considered rude to ask about someone's age.

You can use the following phrases to respond:

Soy de los Estados Unidos.

I'm from the United States.

Vivo en Chicago.

I live in Chicago.

Tengo veintiocho años.

I'm twenty-eight years old.

Mi cumpleaños es el 25 de marzo.

My birthday is on March 25.

No, estoy soltero/soltera.

No, I am a bachelor/bachelorette.

Si, estoy casado/casada.

Yes, I am married.

To introduce a third person, you can use these phrases:

To introduce your spouse:

Esta es mi esposa, Lolita. This is my wife, Lolita.

Este es mi marido, Arturo. This is my husband, Arturo.

To introduce a friend:

Se llama Martha. Her name is Martha.

Ella es de Texas. She is from Texas.

Este es mi amigo, Mario. This is my friend, Mario.

Es un escritor. He is a writer.

## **THE FAMILY**

Learning the names for each member of the family is one of the initial steps that you should take in your language learning journey. Knowing how to call your parents, spouse, brothers, sisters, and other relatives will help you learn to talk about your family.

Here is a vocabulary list for the members of the family:

---

los padres	parents
el padre	father
la madre	mother
los abuelos	grandparents
la abuela	grandmother
el abuelo	grandfather
el marido	husband
la esposa	wife
la hija	daughter
el hijo	son
el nieto	grandson
la nieta	granddaughte r
el ahijado	grandson
la ahijada	granddaughte r
la hermana	sister
el hermano	brother
el hermano mayor	older brother
la hermana mayor	older sister
el hermano menor	younger brother
la hermana menor	younger sister



el hermanito	baby brother
la hermanita	baby sister
el medio hermano	half brother
la media hermana	half sister
la tía	aunt
el tío	uncle
los primos	cousins
el primo	male cousin
la prima	female cousin
la sobrina	niece
el sobrino	nephew
la suegra	mother-in-law
el suegro	father-in-law
la cuñada	sister-in-law
el cuñado	brother-in-law
el yerno	son-in-law
la nuera	daughter-in-law
los hijastrados	stepchildren
el hermanastro	stepbrother

la hermanastra	stepsister
-------------------	------------

## **PARTS OF THE HOUSE**

The house is where you spend most of your time. Hence, you should familiarize yourself with the vocabulary words for each part of the house as well as the objects inside or around it.

These are the names of the rooms:

la habitación room

el dormitorio bedroom

el salon living room

la cocina kitchen

el comedor dining room

el despacho study

cuarto para visitas guest room

el cuarto de baño bathroom

el cuarto del bebé baby's room

la despensa pantry

lavandería laundry room

el aseo toilet

The other parts of the house are:

la cochera garage

el sótano basement

la chimenea fireplace

el balcón balcony

el pasillo hall

el techo ceiling

la pared wall

el suelo floor

el jardín garden

la terraza terrace

las escaleras stairs

el ascensor elevator

el césped lawn

la puerta door

la ventana window

el portal porch

el desván loft

el tejado roof

calefacción central central heating

abajo downstairs

arriba upstairs

## TALKING ABOUT THE WEATHER (EL TIEMPO)

Asking someone about the weather is a common way of starting a conversation.

The following questions are used to find out what the weather is:

¿Qué tiempo hace?

¿Cómo está el tiempo?

They are both translated as “How’s the weather?”.

You can also say “¿Cómo está el clima?” which means “How’s the weather/climate?”

Alternatively, you can ask:

“¿Cómo está por afuera?” which means “What is it like outside?”

The verbs hacer, estar, and haber are used to express weather conditions.

These expressions tell something about the weather:

Hace buen tiempo. The weather is good.

Hace mal tiempo. The weather is bad.

Hace sol. It’s sunny.

Hace viento. It's windy.

Hay niebla. It is foggy.

Hace frío. It's cold.

Hace calor. It's hot.

Está nevando. It is snowing.

Está lloviendo. It is raining.

Llueve. It rains.

Nieva. It snows.

Brilla el sol. The sun shines.

The following are the most common weather terms:

una brisa	a breeze
un cielo despejado	a clear sky
un chaparrón	a cloudburst
un frente frío	a cold front
un turbión	a downpour
un relámpago	a flash of lightning
una inundación	a flood
una racha	a gust of wind
una granizada	a hailstorm
una ola de calor	a heat wave
una brisa marina	a sea breeze
una bola de nieve	a snowball
una tormenta	a storm
un día soleado	a sunny day

un claro	a sunny spell
un trueno	a thunderclap
un nubarrón	a thundercloud
borrascoso	blustery
una nube	cloud
húmedo	damp
el rocío	dew
llovizna	drizzle
una culebrina	forked lightning
escarcha	frost
húmedo	humid
la humedad	humidity
un huracán	hurricane
la neblina	mist
el sereno	night dew
la lluvia	rain
chubascos aislados	scattered showers
la bruma	sea mist
aguanieve	sleet
chubascos de aguanieve	sleet showers
la nieve	snow
chubascos de nieve	snow showers
el sol	sun
el litoral	the coastal area
los truenos	thunder

nevar	to snow
deshelar	to thaw
la turbulencia	turbulence
el viento	wind

## GREETINGS AND COMMON EXPRESSIONS

English	Spanish
Good morning!	¡Buenos días!
Good afternoon!	¡Buenas tardes!
Good evening!	¡Buenas noches!
Hello! (informal)	Hola!
See you tomorrow.	Hasta mañana.
See you soon.	Hasta pronto.
See you.	Hasta la vista.
See you later.	Hasta luego.

We'll see you!	¡Nos vemos!
Have a nice day!	¡Que le vaya bien!
Good luck!	¡Buena suerte!
Goodbye.	Adiós.

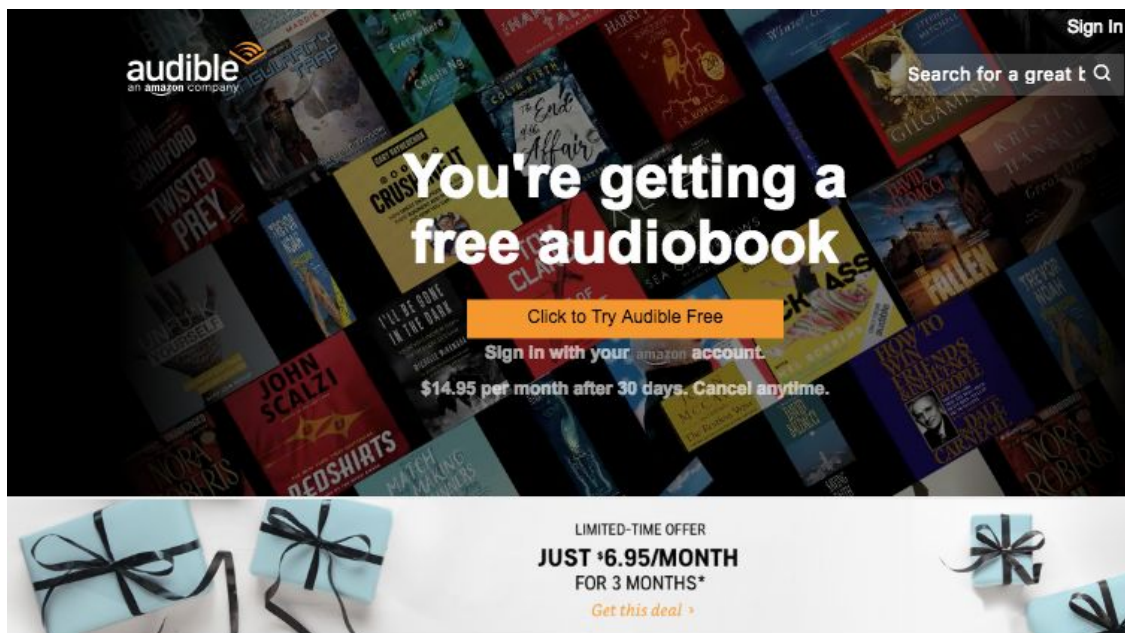
Welcome!	¡Bienvenidos!
Congratulations!	¡Felicitaciones!
Bless you!	¡Salud!
I'm sorry.	Lo siento.
Thank you (very much).	(Muchas) Gracias.
You're welcome.	De nada.
Please.	Por favor.
I love you.	Te amo.
How are you? (inf)	¿Cómo estás?
How are you? (formal)	¿Cómo está usted?
How's it going?	¿Qué tal?
Very good.	Muy bien .
That's alright.	Está bien.
Yes.	Sí.
No.	No.
Sure.	Claro.
Of course.	Claro que sí.
Mister	Señor
Mrs.	Señora
Miss	Señorita
What's happening?	¿Qué pasa?
Maybe.	Quizás.
It depends.	Depende.
Ready?	¿Listo?



I'm hungry.	Tengo hambre.
I'm thirsty.	Tengo sed.
I'm cold.	Tengo frío.
I'm hot.	Tengo calor.
I forgot.	Me olvidé.
Not yet.	Todavía no.
Good idea!	¡Buena idea!
What is that?	¿Qué es eso?
There is/are ____.	Hay ____
There was/were ____.	Había ____
Here	Aquí
There	Ahí
Can you help me? (formal)	¿Puede ayudarme?
Do you understand? (formal)	¿Entiende usted?
Do you understand? (informal)	¿Entiendes?
Help!	¡Ayuda!
I'm sick.	Estoy enfermo.
I don't know.	No lo sé.
I understand.	Entiendo.
I don't understand.	No Entiendo.
How much is this?	¿Cuánto cuesta?

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## **CONCLUSION**

Thank you for buying the “Spanish for Beginners” book.

I hope that this book was able to help you to learn Spanish quickly and easily. I am confident that by the time you finished the book, you will be able to speak confidently and eloquently in Spanish. The next step is to apply your knowledge and hone your language skills by reading short stories in Spanish, speaking with native speakers, taking up advanced language courses, and perhaps travelling to a Spanish-speaking country.

I wish you the best!

Thank you so much,

***Sergio Rodriguez***

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# **Spanish Short Stories**

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Your Listening, Growing Your Vocabulary and Have Fun

By Sergio Rodriguez

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# INTRODUCTION:

Have you ever wanted to learn Spanish and have fun at the same time? Most of the time, teaching books are boring. They always have the same kind of format: Two (sometimes more) people talking about where the library is, or where to find Juan.

That's boring, and to be honest, it's not a great way to learn the language (not to mention that they don't always talk about things that you might encounter in your daily life, for example, a judgmental ghost, being the last man on Earth, or maybe find that the love of your life has been stolen).

But in this book, I will give you 20 short stories that will range from science fiction to romance, everything in between and sometimes even more. These stories will give you an entire picture of the Spanish language, and how to appreciate the subtlety of the language.



The Spanish language is rich, full of small differences between the different countries. Things that might be one way in Argentina might be different in Spain or Mexico. But don't worry, with this book, you will have a firm grasp on the language, and you will be able to understand and have a conversation with any Spanish speaker.

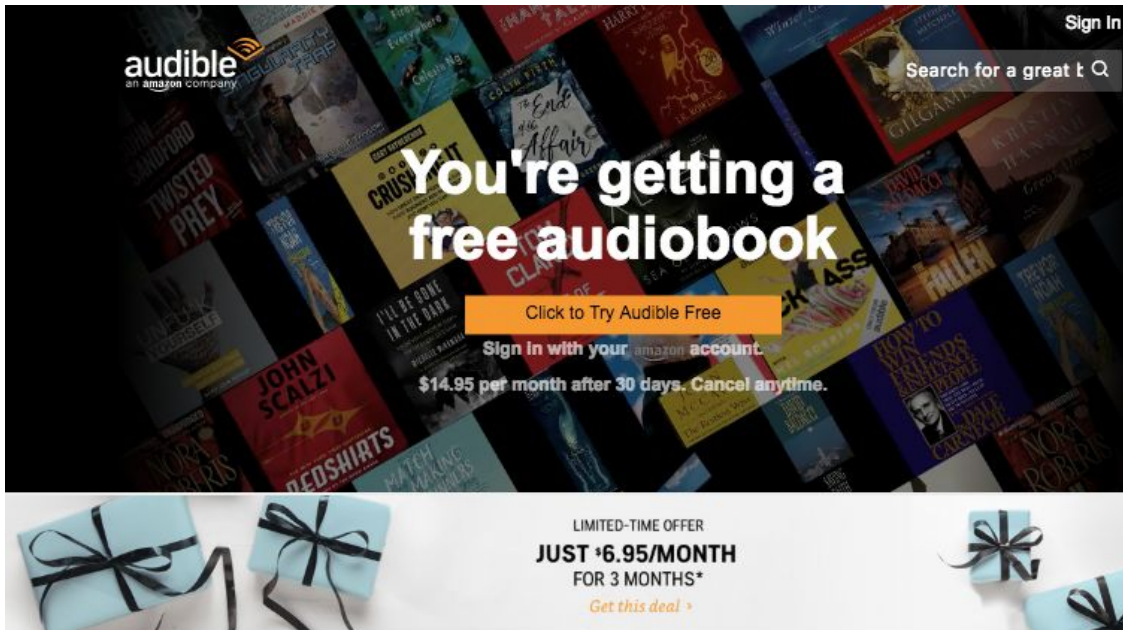
After each story, there will be a questionnaire section where you will answer questions about the stories in Spanish. I really suggest to grab a blank page, and write down the answers, or the small assignments that you will be given (don't worry, they won't be long!). Remember to write them in Spanish, so you can practice and use the language. Also, in this section, you will find grammar and fun facts not just from the stories themselves, but from the inspirations behind them, and facts about living in a Spanish country. I hope you like them.

All these stories are written from my heart, and I deeply hope that you will find them funny, mysterious, romantic, or at least entertaining. That's my goal as a writer, and I hope you enjoy your time reading (and learning!).

Without further ado, here are 20 Captivating Spanish Short Stories for you.

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# CHAPTER 1:

## "SUEÑOS/DREAMS"

Carlos llevó a su hijo a la plaza. Era algo que solían disfrutar los dos cuando hacía buen tiempo. En el medio del parque, había una estatua de bronce de un soldado mirando hacia el horizonte. Debajo de él, había una placa que decía “Sargento Gómez falleció aquí en 1880 luchando por lo que es correcto”.

Mientras su hijo jugaba en el arenero, Carlos miraba profundamente a la estatua. Siempre sintió una especie de conexión con ese sargento, aun cuando él llevaba años muerto, y no tenía ninguna conexión familiar. Pero había algo en esa estatua que le llamaba la atención, y no podía decir qué era.

Esa noche, Carlos, luego de cocinarle a su hijo su comida favorita, decidió acostarlo, y luego ver un poco de televisión. Cambió los canales, y en uno de ellos, encontró un documental sobre la guerra de la Independencia. De pronto, el sueño y el cansancio lo vencieron, y se quedó profundamente dormido.

En su sueño, se encontraba en una especie de campo de combate lleno de barro. Había caballos, explosiones y gente corriendo y gritando. De pronto, una explosión lo tiró al piso y lo dejó aturdido. Carlos tenía miedo, todo parecía muy real, y no podía entender qué es lo que estaba pasando.

Muchacho, arriba, levántese, que tenemos que seguir combatiendo – Una voz amable pero firme sonó detrás de él.

Carlos se dio vuelta y logró ver al Sargento Gómez mirándolo fijamente, con la misma seguridad que tendría en su estatua muchos años después. Como pudo, Carlos se levantó. El Sargento apoyó la mano en su espalda, y le dijo:

Vamos. No me decepcione, que la muerte todavía no nos va a conquistar hoy.

Sorprendido y asustado, Carlos se despertó. Tenía una sensación rara en su cuerpo, como si el sueño hubiera sido real. Trató de olvidarlo, pero no pudo lograrlo. Apagó la televisión, y se dirigió al baño para asearse y prepararse para ir a dormir. En el espejo, vio su reflejo y le sorprendió notar que su cara se encontraba llena de barro. Miró a su alrededor, y notó de que sus zapatos también tenían barro. Pero fue un sueño, no puede haber sido verdad.

Quizás...

## QUESTIONNAIRE

- What was Carlos doing in the park?
- Do you have a park close by? If the answer is yes, does it have a statue in the center?
- Have you ever had a dream like Carlos had? What happened?
- In five or six sentences, try to change the ending of the story. Remember, do it in Spanish, and then in English, just to be sure that you understand the vocabulary used.

*Let's review some grammar and fun facts!*

“Plaza” and “park” are the same word, and in Spanish, they are translated to plaza and parque respectively.

In most countries and main cities, you will find statues and big parks around them. It's very common to see families enjoying their day,

reading, or playing football.

## TRANSLATION

Carlos took his son to the park. It was something that they both used to enjoy when the weather was good. In the center of the park, there was a bronze statue of a soldier watching the horizon. Underneath, there was a plaque that said “Sergent Gomez passed away here in 1880 fighting for what was right.”

While his son played in the sandbox, Carlos looked deeply to the statue. He always felt some sort of connection with that sergeant, even though he has been dead for years, and he had no family connection with him. But there was something in that statue that drew attention, and he couldn't say what it was.

That night, Carlos, after cooking his son his favorite food, decided to put him down, and then watch some television. Changed the channels, and, in one of them, he found a documentary about the Independence War. Suddenly, sleep and fatigue defeated him, and he fell profoundly asleep.

In his dream, he found himself in some sort of a combat field full of mud. There were horses, explosions and people running and shouting. Suddenly, an explosion took him to the floor and left him stunned. Carlos was afraid, everything seemed so real, and he couldn't understand what was happening.

“Lad, up, get up, we have to keep fighting.” A kind but firm voice sounded behind him.

Carlos turned around and managed to see Sargent Gomez watching him fiercely, with the same certainty that his statue will have many years later. As he could, Carlos got up. The Sargent put his hand over his back and said,

“Let’s go. Don’t let me down, Death will not conquer us today.”

Surprised and scared, Carlos woke up. He had a weird feeling in his body like the dream was way too real. He tried to forget, but he couldn’t make it. Turned off the television, and went to the bathroom to clean himself up and prepare to go to bed. In the mirror, he saw his reflection and was surprised to note that his face was full of mud. Looked around, and realized that his shoes were also full of mud. But it was a dream, it couldn’t be true.

Maybe...

## CHAPTER 2

### "EL ÚLTIMO HOMBRE/THE LAST MAN"

Miguel se despertó esa mañana repentinamente. Estaba llegando tarde a clases, ya la tercera vez esa semana. No podía ser, si había puesto la alarma correctamente. Se vistió rápidamente, tomó su mochila, y salió corriendo de su casa.

Al llegar a la esquina, notó algo raro: No había nadie en la calle. No solamente gente, sino también autos o animales. Ni siquiera se escuchaban los sonidos de la construcción que estaba a una cuadra de su hogar. Había un absoluto silencio. Extrañado, y un poco asustado, Miguel comenzó a caminar hacia el colegio. No había nadie, y según su reloj, ya debería haber estudiantes en clases. Donde fuera que caminara, no había nadie. ¿Será algún tipo de broma? ¿Algo pasó mientras dormía? ¿Qué es lo que había pasado?

Miguel era fanático de la ciencia ficción, y lo primero que pensó era que toda la gente había sido raptada por extraterrestres. Pero claro, no tenía sentido, porque los extraterrestres no existen. Continuó caminando por todos lados, ya bastante desesperado de que fuera el último hombre sobre la Tierra. Entró a cines, autos abandonados, donde fuera que pudiera encontrar gente, pero no había nadie. Era como si nadie hubiera existido jamás.

A la distancia, un ser extraño lo miraba con sus diez ojos. Extendió sus tentáculos, y estableció conexión con la madre nodriza a través del pensamiento.



Nos olvidamos de un humano. XCY24 hará contacto y lo eliminará.

Miguel llegó a ver una luz violeta detrás de él, y luego nada más. Al menos no sintió dolor.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

- Have you ever been late to class? What happened?
- Do you live far away from your work?
- If you woke up and found yourself the last human on Earth, what would you do? (I personally would use that time to read all kinds of books!)
- What do you think happened to all the pets and animals?

*Let's review some grammar and fun facts!*

One example, that we will expand in the next chapter, of words that have two meanings is “*theater* :” In Spanish, it can be translated as *teatro* (where you go to see plays from Shakespeare and the like) or as *cine* (where you go to watch movies).

When you are in doubt about what it means, try to search for clues in the context. Most of the time, you can infer the word by looking at the context. But if by any chance you can't do it, and it's a conversation that you are having with someone, ask him what he meant.

## TRANSLATION

Miguel suddenly woke up that morning. He was late for classes, the third time that week. That couldn't happen if he had set up the alarm

correctly. He dressed up quickly, took his backup and left his house running.

When he reached the corner, he noticed something really strange: There was nobody in the street. Not just people, but also cars or animals. Not even the sounds of the construction a block from his house could be heard. There was an absolute silence. Amazed, and a bit scared, Miguel started walking to the school. There was nobody there, and according to his watch, there should be some students in the class. Wherever he walked, there was nobody. Is this some kind of joke? Something happened while he was sleeping? What has happened?

Miguel was a science fiction fan, and the first thing he thought was that all the people were kidnapped by aliens. But, of course, it didn't make sense, because aliens don't exist. He continued walking everywhere, already really desperate that he was the last man on Earth. He went into movie theatres, abandoned cars, wherever that he might find people, but there was nobody there. It was like no one has ever existed.

In the distance, a strange being watched him with its ten eyes. It extended its tentacles and established a connection with the mothership through its thought.

“We forgot one human. XCY24 shall make contact and eliminate him.”

Miguel saw a purple light behind him, and nothing else. At least he didn't feel pain.

## CHAPTER 3

### "MALA SUERTE/BAD LUCK"

Esteban tomaba el subterráneo todos los días a la misma hora. Durante su viaje, siempre se encontraba con las mismas personas: Mario y Lucía. Ellos eran una pareja amable, que llevaban saliendo alrededor de 5 años. Todas las mañanas, ellos compartían el viaje hacia el centro de la ciudad, y luego, cada uno se dividía para ir a sus trabajos. Esteban trabajaba como diseñador de interiores en una empresa multinacional, mientras que Mario trabajaba en sistemas programando servidores y conexiones de telefonía, y Lucía era maestra de primaria en una escuela cercana.

Un día, Esteban estaba un poco deprimido. Había intentado tener una cita la última semana, pero la realidad es que no fue muy interesante. La chica era de la misma edad que Esteban, pero al llegar al restaurante, ella no dejó de usar el celular en ningún momento. Cuando Esteban intentaba hablar o hacerle alguna pregunta personal, ella contestaba que estaba ocupada, y seguía usando el teléfono. Al final, Esteban decidió pagar la cuenta, e irse temprano a casa. Cuando le dijo esto a la muchacha, no parecía que le importaba mucho.

Bueno, Esteban, tú no tienes suerte con las relaciones, ¿eh? –

Dijo Mario, al escuchar la historia al día siguiente.

Sí – Contestó – Creo que voy a morir solo y triste.

¡Vamos, no digas eso! – Le recriminó Lucía – Mira, tengo una propuesta que capaz te interesa. Quiero que vengas a nuestra casa a cenar mañana a la noche.

No sé – comentó triste Esteban – Me parece que tengo planes.

¿Qué planes? ¿Jugar videojuegos toda la noche?

Bueno, es un plan humilde...

Vas a venir, y te aviso, no tomo un no como respuesta.

Al día siguiente, Esteban se debatió mucho entre ir o mentir y decir que estaba enfermo. Al final, decidió bañarse, vestirse e ir. Después de todo, no tenía mucho que perder, y además, él estaba seguro que una fiesta no cambiaría absolutamente nada de su situación. Al llegar, tocó el timbre y esperó. Sintió los pasos detrás de la puerta, y cuando se abrió, se quedó completamente sorprendido: En lugar de que lo recibiera Mario o Lucía, había una mujer pelirroja, con un largo vestido que le llegaba hasta las rodillas, y una sonrisa que inmediatamente lo cautivó.

Perdón, creo que... marqué el timbre equivocado – tartamudeó Esteban

¿Viene a la fiesta de Lucía? Sí, es aquí. Vamos, pasa. Tú debes ser Esteban.

Sí, sí, ¿y tú?

Mi nombre es Andrea, soy una compañera de trabajo de Lucía. La siguió dentro de la casa, aún sorprendido por la belleza de Andrea. Cuando ingresó al comedor, se encontraban sus amigos esperándolo, ambos con una sonrisa enorme. Mario, al ver la cara de sorpresa de Esteban, no pudo evitar largar una carcajada, que luego tuvo que excusar que era porque se había acordado de un chiste que le habían contado en la semana. Todos se sentaron a comer, y mientras Lucía servía la comida, Mario le hacía preguntas a Esteban sobre su trabajo.

¿Y qué tal te fue en el último proyecto que trabajaste? – Y luego, mirando a Andrea, añadió – Esteban es diseñador de interiores, y la semana pasada nos comentó que estaba

trabajando en la reformación de las galerías que se encuentran cerca del museo.

Bueno, eh, no es tan importante como parece – Tímidamente respondió Esteban – Estamos tratando de lograr hacer que esas galerías se puedan utilizar nuevamente, y para esto, bueno, estamos reformando las estructuras y la pintura.

¡Eso suena genial! – Dijo Andrea – A mi novio le encantará saber todo sobre eso.

Se hizo un profundo silencio en la mesa. Lucía la miró con dudas.

Pero... me habías dicho que estabas soltera.

Ah, sí, pero es que nos reconciamos, y decidimos volver a intentar de nuevo una relación. De todas maneras, no creí que fuera necesario aclararlo. ¿Acaso me invitaste a cenar porque querías que lo conociera a tu amigo?

Sí, de hecho, fue mi idea – Dijo Mario, tratando de calmar la situación – No pensamos que estabas saliendo con alguien – Y mirando a Esteban, añadió – Te pido disculpas.

La cena prosiguió bastante normal. Esteban ayudó a lavar los platos, y cuando estaba por salir, Andrea le pidió si no la podía acompañar mientras esperaba un taxi.

Afuera, ambos comenzaron a conversar.

Sabes... No quiero que sientas que no tendría nada contigo – Dijo Andrea

Entiendo. De todas maneras, la verdad es que la cena fue bastante buena, y con eso me quedo contento.

¿Es cierto que haces diseño de interiores? Porque creo que te puedo ofrecer algo que te gustará.

Por favor, que no sea otro encuentro forzado – Sonrió Esteban.  
A pesar de todo, le gustaba hablar con ella.

No, no – contestó entre risas- Nada parecido a eso. Toma mi tarjeta, y llámame. Ah, y una cosa más... Realmente me haces reír mucho. ¿Te parece que hablemos para juntarnos en una semana o dos?

Llegó un taxi, y se despidieron rápidamente. Esteban se quedó mirando la tarjeta, pensativo. Bueno, al menos tenía una amiga nueva. Después de todo, no fue una mala idea haber salido de casa.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

- Have you ever had bad luck at a date? What happened?
- Do you have any good friends like Mario and Lucía?
- Write down, in a few sentences, if you had a bad date, and if you did, what you did to change it. Remember, in Spanish!

*Let's review some grammar and fun facts!*

“*Date*” in English means two things, but the fun thing in Spanish is that the word also has two meanings in Spanish:

“*Date*” can be translated as *fecha* (a date, for example, July 10<sup>th</sup>) or as a *cita* (“Juan and Carlos go out on a date”).

There are a lot of words that in Spanish have two meanings. I will give you an example:

muñeca – Doll/Wrist

nada – Swim/Nothing

There are a couple of good jokes about it, for example, the one my daughter always tells me and laughs:

- Un pez se encuentra con otro, y le pregunta qué hace su papá.
- Nada.

The rough translation would be (and keep in mind that in Spanish it's hilarious, but in English it loses some of the charm):

“One fish meets another one, and asks what does his father do.”

“Nothing/Swim.”

See? There are a lot of words in Spanish that have two meanings. That's why Spanish is fantastic for double entendre jokes.

## TRANSLATION

Esteban takes the subway every day at the hour. During his trip, he always met with the same people: Mario and Lucía. They were a nice couple, who has been going out for the past five years. Every morning, they shared the ride to the center of the city, and then, they each went their own ways to their jobs. Esteban worked as an interior designer for a multinational company, while Mario worked in IT programming servers and network connections, and Lucía was a primary school teacher in a school nearby.

One day, Esteban was a bit depressed. He had tried to have a date the past week, but the reality was that it wasn't very interesting. The girl was the same age as Esteban, but after arriving at the restaurant, she didn't stop using her cell phone at any time. When Esteban tried to talk or ask her any personal question, she answered that she was busy, and

continued using her phone. In the end, Esteban decided to pay the bill and go home early that night. When he mentioned this to the girl, it didn't seem like she cared.

"Well, Esteban, you don't have any luck with relationships, eh?" said Mario after listening to the story the next day.

"Yeah," he replied. "I believe that I will die alone and sad."

"C'mon, don't say that!" Lucía reproached him. "Look, I have a proposition that might interest you. I want you to come over to our house for dinner tomorrow night."

"I don't know," said Esteban sadly. "I believe that I have other plans."

"What plans? Playing video games all night?"

"Well, it's a humble plan..."

"You are going to come, and I warn you, I don't take a no for an answer."

The next day, Esteban really debated himself between going, or lying and saying he was sick. In the end, he decided to take a shower, get dressed and go. After all, he didn't have much to lose, and also, he was sure that a party wouldn't change absolutely anything of his situation. When he arrived, he rang the doorbell and waited. He heard the steps behind the door, and when it opened, he was absolutely surprised: In place of there being Mario or Lucía, there was a redheaded woman, with a long dress that got to her knees, and a smile that immediately captivated him.

"Sorry, I think that... I rang the wrong doorbell," Esteban stuttered.

"Are you coming to Lucía's party? Yeah, it's here. C'mon, get in. You must be Esteban."



“Yeah...yeah, and you?”

“My name is Andrea, I’m a work colleague of Lucía’s.”

He followed her into the house, still surprised by Andrea’s beauty. When he entered the dining room, he found his friends waiting for him, both with a huge smile. Mario, when he saw Esteban’s surprised face, couldn't suppress a fit of laughter, that then he had to excuse himself saying that he had remembered a joke that he heard during the week. Everybody sat down to dinner, and while Lucía served the food, Mario asked questions Esteban about his work.

“And how did it go in the last project that you worked on?”

And then, watching Andrea, added, “Esteban is an interior designer, and the past week told us that he was working on the reforms of the galleries close to the museum.”

“Well, eh, it’s not as important as it sounds, timidly, Esteban replied. “We are trying to make it so those galleries can be used again, and for this, we are reforming the structures and painting.”

“That sounds great!” Andrea said. “My boyfriend would love to hear everything about that.”

A deep silence falls over the table. Lucía looked at her dubiously...

“But... You said that you were single.”

“Ah, yeah, but it happened that we got back together, and decided to try a relationship again. Anyway, I didn’t think that it was necessary to clarify that. By any chance, did you invite me to dinner because you wanted me to meet your friend?”

“Yeah, in fact, it was my idea,” Mario said, trying to calm the situation. “We didn’t think that you were dating someone.” And looking at Esteban, he added, “I apologize.”

The dinner proceeded pretty normally. Esteban helped to wash the dinner plates, and when he was about to go, Andrea asked him if he couldn't be with her while she waited for a cab.

Outside, both started to talk:

“You know, I don't want you to feel that I wouldn't have anything to do with you,” Andrea said.

“I understand. In any case, the truth is that the dinner was pretty good, and with that I'm happy.”

“Is true that you do interior design? Because I think that I can offer you something that you might like.”

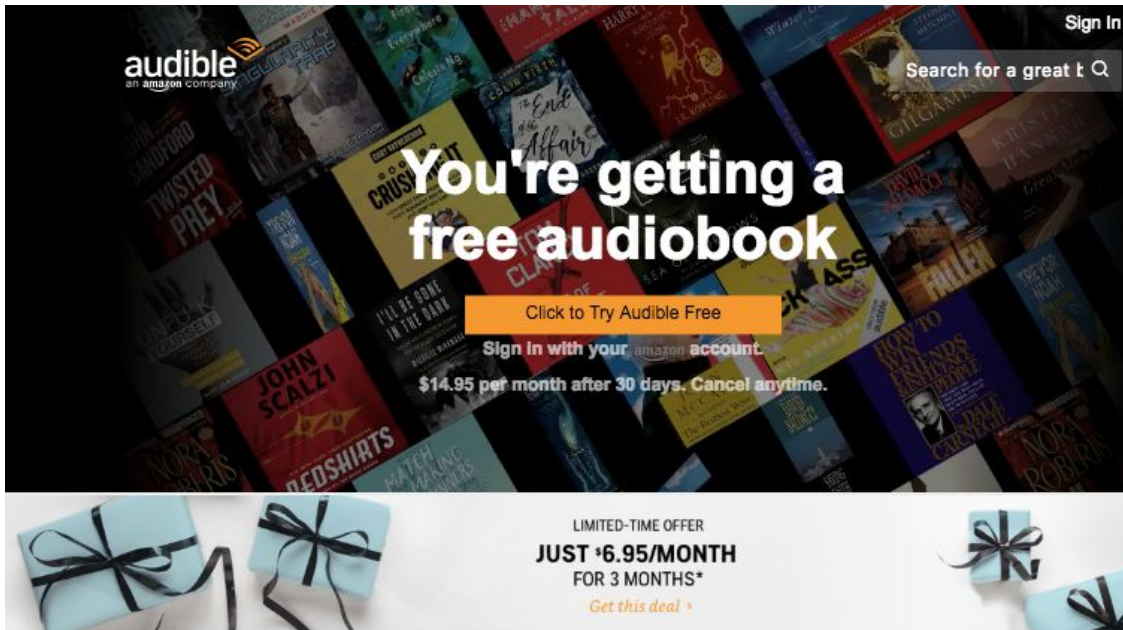
“Please, let it not be another forced encounter.” Esteban smiled. Despite everything, he enjoyed talking to her.

“No, no,” she answered while laughing. “Nothing like that. Take my card, and call me. Ah, and one other thing... You really make me laugh. How about that we talk so we can meet in a week or two?”

A cab arrived, and they quickly said goodbye. Esteban stayed looking at the card, thoughtful. Well, at least he had a new friend. After all, it hadn't been a bad idea to leave the house.

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## CHAPTER 4

### "EL VIAJE A LAS RUINAS DE LOS INCAS/THE TRIP TO THE RUINS OF THE INCAS"

Todavía recuerdo la primera vez que realmente pensé en ser arqueólogo. Tenía 10 años y mi padre me había prometido que iba a llevarme al cine si aprobaba todas mis materias. Estudié esa semana como nunca había estudiado antes, y, llegado la hora de los exámenes, los aprobé todos con una excelente nota. Siempre fiel a su palabra, papá me llevó al cine del barrio. Ahí fue cuando vi por primera vez Indiana Jones y Los Cazadores del Arca Perdida. Mientras miraba a Harrison Ford saltando, golpeando a los villanos, encontrando las pistas que lo llevarían a encontrar el Arca de la Alianza, algo dentro mío cambió para siempre: Quería ser él. Quería tener esas aventuras, enamorarme de ese tipo de mujeres, vivir al máximo.

Al llegar a casa, atormenté a mi padre con preguntas. ¿Cómo podía ser arqueólogo? ¿Había que estudiar mucho? ¿Dónde había que estudiar? ¿Qué pasos tenía que seguir?. Mi padre adoptó una actitud que voy a valorar el resto de mi vida, y comenzó a conseguir información al respecto. Él no sabía cómo se estudiaba eso, después de todo, era simplemente un obrero que nunca pudo terminar la secundaria. Pero al ver mis ojos brillando ante la posibilidad de ser como Indiana Jones, él hizo todo lo que se encontraba en sus manos (y aún mucho más) para darme todas las chances necesarias de cumplir mis sueños. Trabajó horas extras, organizamos salidas a la biblioteca para poder leer todo lo que fuera remotamente parecido a la arqueología, me compraba revistas de ciencia e investigación, recortaba partes del periódico donde se

detallaban expediciones o avances científicos en la exploración de las pirámides. Incluso logró obtener la dirección de correo postal de un famoso arqueólogo de mi país, y me insistió en que le escribiera una carta. En la carta, le pregunté absolutamente de todo, desde cuáles eran sus teorías sobre quién construyó las pirámides, hasta sobre cuál era la mejor manera de usar un látigo. Quería saberlo todo. La respuesta de la carta tardó un poco en llegar. Cuando lo hizo, 3 meses después de que yo la había enviado, fue un poco escueta. Pero la primera línea de la carta fue lo que más me llamó la atención:

“Disculpa porque no pude contestar antes, pero es que estaba de viaje en Egipto. Aparentemente, hay una tumba que no podemos explicar el origen”

¡Egipto! ¡Estuvo en Egipto! El resto de la carta eran consejos sobre qué carrera estudiar, y dónde era el mejor lugar para hacerlo. Abracé a mi papá, con lágrimas en los ojos, y le agradecí todo el esfuerzo que hizo para conseguirme esto. De más está decir que ese día los dos lloramos abrazados, y decidimos darnos un gusto comiendo un poco de helado.

Varios años después, me gradué de arqueólogo de la universidad más prestigiosa de mi país, y si bien mi padre había fallecido un par de años antes por culpa de una enfermedad, no podía dejar de sentir una tristeza, pero a la vez felicidad porque logré cumplir la meta que me había puesto desde tan chico. Al poco tiempo de haberme graduado, me ofrecieron un puesto importante de investigación en la Universidad de Oxford.

¡No lo podía creer! Tanto esfuerzo finalmente había rendido frutos. Así que empaqué, y me dirigí hacia Oxford, lugar de mi próxima aventura. Me dieron una oficina, un asistente con el que tenía que trabajar, e incluso me ofrecieron la posibilidad de dar clases. ¿Yo, dando clases de

arqueología? No lo podía creer, todo esto era mucho para mí, era como un sueño y yo seguía dormido. Así que la realidad de mi trabajo diario fue la primera que me golpeó en la cara. Todo el día encerrado en una oficina, corrigiendo exámenes, leyendo informes y trabajos de mis alumnos. ¿Dónde estaban mis viajes por las junglas de Sudamérica? ¿Dónde estaban mis villanos muy malos, y las reliquias muy viejas? ¿Acaso era todo mentira?

Decidí juntar dinero, y para mis siguientes vacaciones, irme a explorar las ruinas de los Incas. Subí a un avión, y cuando llegué allá, lo primero que hice fue anotarme en una excursión para visitar las ruinas. Llegué ahí, con mi cincel y un diario para tomar nota, esperando encontrarme con algo que nadie había explorado, con alguna reliquia perdida que había sido ignorada. Pero estaba lleno de turistas con cámaras de fotos, dejando rastros de basura por todos lados. ¿Acaso no entendían que eso podía perjudicar cualquier exploración del lugar que uno quisiera llevar a cabo? Traté de escapar de la multitud de turistas, y me adentré en un camino que decía “Prohibido pasar”. Pisé un cúmulo de hojas que parecían haber quedado del anterior otoño, y el suelo se abrió y me envolvió en una profunda oscuridad. Caí en lo que parecía ser un pozo. Tomé mi encendedor, y lo usé para iluminarme. No había ningún rastro de nada. Era un pozo sin ningún tipo de marca, ni pintura, ni tampoco alguna manera de salir de ahí. Grité y grité, pero nadie logró escucharme. El hambre me hacía doler el estómago, y mis costillas parecían fracturadas, a juzgar por el dolor que sentía. Comencé incluso a dejar de sentir mis extremidades. Hasta que una luz me envolvió, y una voz muy familiar me llamó por mi nombre.

Ven. Ya pasó todo. Ya estás bien. Toma, te traje un poco de helado.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

- What is your favorite movie? Why?
- Have you ever seen any of the Indiana Jones movies?
- Have you ever visited Oxford or do you know someone who studied there?
- Write down a different ending, where the main character, instead of falling into a well, finds an old relic.

*Let's review some grammar and fun facts!*

In Spanish, funnily enough, the name Indiana Jones isn't translated because names aren't translated for the most part. Juan would be Juan in English, although some people prefer it to translate it anyway. For example:

Juan – John

Carlos – Charles

Susana – Susan

Lucía - Lucy

But some names stay the same:

David

Andrea

Bianca

Bruno

## TRANSLATION

I still remember the first time that I really thought to be an archaeologist.



I was 10 years old and my father had promised me that he would take me to the movie theater only if I passed all my subjects. I studied that week like I never had before, and, when the exams came, I passed them all with excellent marks.

Always loyal to his word, Dad took me to my neighborhood cinema. It was where I saw for the first time Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark. While I was watching Harrison Ford jumping, punching the bad guys, finding clues that will help him to find the Ark of the Covenant, something inside me changed forever: I wanted to be him. I wanted to have those adventures, fall in love with that kind of woman, live fully.

When I arrived home, I tormented my father with questions. How could I be an archaeologist? Do I have to study a lot? Where should I study? What steps should I follow? My father adopted an attitude that I will appreciate the rest of my life and started to get information on the subject.

He didn't know where to study that. After all, he was just a worker who never finished high school. But when he saw my eyes shining before the possibility of being like Indiana Jones, he did whatever he could (and even more) to give me every necessary chance to fulfill my dreams.

He worked overtime, we organized trips to the library in order to read everything that had a remote connection with archaeology, he bought me science and research magazines, he cut articles from the newspaper where expeditions or scientific advances in the exploration of the pyramids were mentioned.

He even managed to obtain the postal address of a famous archaeologist of my country, and he insisted I write him a letter.

In the letter, I asked him absolutely everything, from what his theories were about who built the pyramids, to what the best way was to use a whip. I wanted to know everything.

The answer to the letter took a while to arrive. When it did, three months after I had sent it, it was a bit succinct. But the first line of the letter was what jumped to my attention:

“Sorry that I couldn’t reply before, but I was on a trip in Egypt.

Apparently, there is a tomb and we can’t explain its origin.”

Egypt! He was in Egypt! The rest of the letter was advice over what career to study, and where it was the best place to do it. I hugged my Dad, with tears in my eyes, and I thanked everything he did to get this for me. It goes without saying that we both cried while hugging that day, and we decided to get a treat, a bit of ice cream.

Several years later, I graduated as an archaeologist from the most prestigious university in my country, and while my father had passed away a couple of years before because of a sickness, I couldn’t stop feeling sad, but at the same time happy because I finally was able to fulfill the goal that I decided when I was a kid. Soon after graduating, I was offered an important research job at the University of Oxford.

I couldn’t believe it! So much effort had finally paid off. So I packed up and went to Oxford, the place of my next adventure.

They gave me an office, an assistant with I could work with, and they even offered me the possibility to teach. Me? Teaching archaeology? I couldn’t believe it, this was too much for me, it was like a dream and I was still sleeping.

So the reality of my daily job was the first to hit me in my face. All day locked up in an office, grading exams, reading reports and work from my students. Where were the trips through the jungles of South

America? Where were the really bad guys, and the really old relics?  
Was it all a lie?

I decided to save up some money, and for my next vacations, I went to explore the ruins of the Incas.

I got up on a plane, and when I got there, the first thing that I did was to sign up to an excursion to visit the ruins. I arrived there, with my chisel and a diary to take notes, expecting to find something that no one has ever explored before, with old lost relics that had been ignored.

But it was full of tourists with cameras, leaving trash everywhere. Did they not understand that it could harm any exploration of the place that one might want to perform?

I tried to escape the crowd of tourists, and went into a road that said, "Do not enter." I step over a cluster of leaves that were there from the past autumn, and the floor opened and swallowed me in a deep darkness. I fell in what it looked like a well.

I took my lighter and used it to illuminate my surroundings. There wasn't a sign of anything. It was a well without any kind of mark, paint or any way to get out. I screamed and screamed, but no one could hear me. Hunger made my stomach hurt, and my ribs seemed broken, judging by the pain that I felt. I started to even stop feeling my arms and legs.

Until a light enveloped me, and a very familiar voice called me by my name.

"Come. It's all over. You are all right now. Here, I brought you some ice cream."

## CHAPTER 5

### "EL TATUAJE VIVIENTE/ THE LIVING TATTOO"

Finalmente llevé a cabo la tontera más grande de mi vida. Amigos y familiares me dijeron que no lo haga, incluso mi propia consciencia me insistió que no lo haga. Pero me decidí: Me hice un tatuaje.

Elegirlo no fue fácil. Al principio pensé en hacer algo alegórico a mis gatitos, quizás una patita o algo que me recuerde lo mucho que los quiero. Pero luego, cuando comencé a ver diseños, noté que mucha gente se hacía eso, y la verdad es que no quería seguir la corriente de lo que hacen las otras personas. Siempre me definí como una chica bastante singular y especial, así que lo que menos quería era hacer era seguir la corriente.

Mi búsqueda me llevó a encontrar símbolos tribales, similares a los que tenía mi entrenador personal en el gimnasio. Esos me gustaron mucho más, pero otra vez, mis búsquedas me mostraron que todo el mundo usaba algo parecido. Ya cerca de la frustración y a punto de olvidarme de mi capricho, encontré finalmente lo que quería: Dos estrellas rodeando un animalito dentro. ¡Me encantó! Me parecía muy tierno, y si lograba cambiar y hacer que el tatuador ponga a mis gatitos, iba a quedar muchísimo mejor.

Luego de elegir el diseño, llegó el momento de encontrar el mejor precio para alguien que tiene un presupuesto chico como yo. Cada uno de los tatuadores que visité me pedían una fortuna para lograrlo, y yo no entendía por qué. Después de todo, son simplemente un par de líneas, un poco de dibujo, color, sombras, también adaptar la cara de mis bebés

al tatuaje, y por supuesto, hacerlo todo rápido y que quede perfecto. No puede costar tanto.

Por suerte, encontré en un barrio abandonado, cerca de un cementerio, en un día donde llovía muchísimo, y sólo pude darme cuenta porque un trueno iluminó el cartel que indicaba que había un tatuador que cobraba poco dinero por su trabajo. ¡Qué casualidad! Cuando entro, el tatuador me mira fijamente. Tenía una barba larga, y una mirada penetrante. Me miró de arriba abajo, y me preguntó si quería un tatuaje.

¿Cómo supo eso?

Porque soy un tatuador. La gente no entra acá buscando información de los partidos de fútbol.

Ah, claro – Contesté- ¿Puede tatuarme este dibujito, pero con unos gatitos?

Le mostré el dibujo que quería. El hombre primero miró el dibujo, y luego me miró fijamente. Suspiró profundamente, con un cansancio que parecía como si estuviera al borde de su paciencia. Al final de su suspiro, que me pareció que duró años, me invitó a pasar a otra habitación donde tenía las herramientas. Había decidido que lo quería en la parte baja de mi espalda, así que me levanté la remera y dejé que trabajara. Mientras él preparaba sus elementos, yo me sacaba fotos para compartir con mis amigos. Cuando intenté sacarle una foto al tatuador, él sólo levantó la mirada, resopló, y siguió trabajando. Me parece que no le gusté.

Finalmente terminó, y pude verme en el espejo. ¡Qué increíble que estaba mi tatuaje nuevo! ¡Encima hizo que mis gatitos tengan los ojos rojos, justo algo que hace que les resalten sus hermosas narices! Le pagué al señor, y me fui contenta del lugar. Cuando me di cuenta de que me faltó tomarme una foto con el señor, giré y me di cuenta que el local

no estaba más. ¡Qué raro! Bueno, no importaba, yo tenía un tatuaje nuevo.

Al llegar a mi casa, noté que mi vecino otra vez estaba escuchando música muy fuerte. Discutí varias veces con él la última semana, y todas esas veces terminaron conmigo llorando muy frustrada. Intenté juntar fuerzas para golpearle la puerta y prepararme para discutir, pero el cansancio era mucho mayor. No pensé que tener un tatuaje iba a cansarme tanto, nadie me había dicho nada al respecto. Le di de comer a mis gatitos, y me acosté. Ni siquiera logré llegar a cambiarme, que el sueño y el cansancio me sobrepasaron. Estaba tan cansada, que ni siquiera el ruido de mi vecino fue suficiente para mantenerme despierta. Mis sueños fueron bastante raros, llenos de sombras y figuras oscuras que sentía cerca de mí, y una voz fría que me preguntaba si deseaba ayuda.

Me despertaron mis gatitos arañando asustados mi cara, y cuando abrí mis ojos, sentí una presencia en mi habitación. Al mirar el pie de mi cama, noté una figura alta, llena de huesos y vestido sólo con una túnica negra que flameaba, aunque no hubiera ningún tipo de viento. Cuando habló, note que cada fibra de mi cuerpo temblaba y tenía miedo.

¿Por qué te atreves a despertarme?

¿Yo lo desperté? – Pregunté incrédula

Así es, humana. Dime, ¿cómo lo logró un mero humano como tú? Asustada, me levanté y me acerqué hacia la puerta de la habitación. Cuando intenté abrir la puerta, la cerradura se trabó y no importara cuánta fuerza hiciera, era imposible abrirla. Estaba encerrada en la habitación con... eso. La figura misteriosa notó mis movimientos y vislumbró mi tatuaje.

Ah, entonces ése fue el método. Esa marca que llevas en la espalda.

Debí haberlo sospechado.

¿Mi tatuaje? ¿Qué tiene que ver mi tatuaje?

Soy un espíritu milenario que vivió en el comienzo de la Humanidad. Fui apresado, gracias a la magia negra, en una marca como la que tienes en la espalda. Aunque... la marca original no tenía esos animales.

¡Hey, no digas nada malo de mis gatitos!

*Según mi castigo y mi maldición, debo servir y cumplir los deseos de la persona que lleve la marca.*

Quedé en silencio. ¿Yo... dar órdenes? Ni siquiera puedo lograr que mis gatitos tomen su medicina.

¿Qué tipo de deseos puedes cumplir?

*Los que deseas. Puedo crear fuego, por ejemplo, y destruir las aldeas de tus enemigos.*

Y al decir esto, levantó una mano huesuda, y en la punta de sus dedos, aparecieron pequeñas llamas de color azul.

Ah... Mira... No sé cómo decírtelo, pero... - Saqué mi encendedor de uno de los cajones de mi mesa de luz y lo encendí - La Humanidad ya tiene control sobre el fuego desde hace muchos años ya.

*Huh. Era esperable. También tengo la habilidad de iluminar la cueva más profunda.*

De su cara, salieron rayos de luces que lograban apenas iluminar mis sábanas. Simplemente tomé mi celular, encendí la linterna, y se la mostré.

Lo siento, señor Espíritu, pero la verdad es que no me está impresionando. Si no va a hacer nada interesante, le voy a pedir que se retire, por favor.

El espíritu, ya recurriendo a sus últimos trucos que tenía a su disposición, extendió sus brazos, o al menos, lo que parecían ser sus brazos, y en su túnica negra comenzaron a aparecer nebulosas. Cuando habló, su voz parecía más lejana y profunda.

No quería llegar a esta demostración, humana, pero no me dejás ninguna otra opción. Pregúntame lo que desees saber, y puedo ofrecer la respuesta en cuestión de horas.

Comencé a sentirme mal por el señor Espíritu. Claramente estaba intentándolo, pero no podía dejar de notar que sus habilidades ya no eran tan importantes. Tomé de vuelta mi celular, apagué la linterna y abrí la página principal de Google. Giré el celular, y se lo mostré al señor Espíritu. Inmediatamente contrajo sus brazos, y comenzó a investigar el celular.

No entiendo. ¿Quieres decir que tienes acceso a todo el conocimiento humano habido y por haber en... este aparato?

Sí, señor Espíritu.

*Entonces... ¿He sido reemplazado?*

Lo siento mucho, señor Espíritu.

Largó un suspiro lleno de tristeza. Mis gatitos, como sintiendo qué es lo que le sucedía, se acercaron y comenzaron a ronronearle. Cansado y derrotado, el espíritu se sentó en el borde de la cama, y tomó la cabeza, como si estuviera contemplando la realidad de una Humanidad que ya no lo requería como antes.

¿Sabes? Guerras enteras se han librado por tener mis poderes. Reinos y civilizaciones crecieron y cayeron gracias a mis habilidades. Mi padre me había dicho que esto podía pasarme, pero no pensé que fuera tan pronto. ¡Mírame, todavía soy joven!

No quiero ser ofensiva, pero... ¿cuántos años tiene?



Sólo tengo cien mil años. ¡Todavía soy joven!  
Traté de consolarlo, acariciando su espalda y diciendo que todo iba a estar bien. La realidad es que no sabía cómo lograr que se calme. No soy buena calmando a mis amigas, así que menos voy a serlo con un espíritu milenario.

Bueno, señor Espíritu, ya está... Dígame... ¿acaso no tiene alguna otra habilidad especial?

Bueno... Durante estos años, aprendí a cocinar... - Dijo entre lo que sonaban como lágrimas – pero nunca nadie me pidió que les cocine algo. Todos querían destrucción y terror a sus enemigos, ¡y yo soy mucho más que eso!

Al elevar la voz, los cuadros en mi pieza temblaron y se escuchaba que las alarmas de los autos cercanos comenzaban a sonar. Vi, finalmente, una posibilidad de ayudarlo.

¿Sabes cocinar? ¡Eso es genial!

*¿En serio?*

¡Sí! Yo nunca supe cómo cocinar. Siempre quemé la comida, y nunca pude seguir las más simples instrucciones. Una vez me dijeron que cocinara con sal marina, y pensé que había que ir a la playa para buscarla.

Comenzó a reír. Hasta a mis gatitos les gustó el sonido de esa risa.

*Está bien, humana. Puedo cocinarte lo que quieras.*

¿En serio? ¡Sí! ¡Muchas gracias, señor Espíritu!

Traté de abrazarlo, pero su forma huesuda me lastimó. Estaba muy feliz. Creo que conseguí un amigo nuevo.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

- Do you have a tattoo?
- Be honest: If a millennial spirit appeared in your bedroom, what would you do?
- If you have pets, do they understand you when you are having a bad or a sad day?
- What do they do to cheer you up?
- In as few sentences as possible, try to write what the day to day would be between the protagonist and the spirit. Here's a tip: what kind of food would it cook? Normal food or weird, spiritual food? In Spanish!

*Let's review some grammar and fun facts!*

In Spanish, we have few words to talk about small kittens: gatito, meaning "little cat" or "kitten." In English, we have several. It is one of the few instances where the opposite is true, since normally, it would happen backwards.

Obviously, there are a lot of ways to talk about kittens in a colloquial way, for example, michi, michifuz, etc.

There are no correct translations for those terms, and since they depend on the place of South America that you are reading about (or talking to someone from), it will always vary. The basic of that sound is the pronunciation of the miao sound, and that's a basis for the michi/michifuz name.

Try to tell your Spanish friends that, and you will find that it's an amazing detail that they probably didn't know!

## TRANSLATION

Finally, I decided to do the dumbest thing in my life. Friends and family members said that I shouldn't do it, even my own conscience convinced me that I shouldn't. But I was decided: I got a tattoo.

Choosing it wasn't easy. At first, I thought of doing something related to my little kittens, maybe a paw or something that reminds me how much I love them. But then, when I started to see designs, I realized that a lot of people do that kind of stuff and the truth is that I didn't want to go with the flow of what other people do.

I always defined myself as a pretty singular and special girl, so the last thing that I wanted to do is to follow the crowd.

My research took me to find tribal symbols, similar to what my personal trainer at the gym had. Those I liked even more, but again, my research showed me that everybody used something like it.

Close to frustration and on the edge of letting go of my whim, I finally found what I wanted: two stars surrounding a small animal inside. I loved it! It looked so cute to me, and if I managed to change and make the tattooist to insert my kittens, it would look so much better.

After choosing the design, it came the time to find the best price for someone who had a small budget like me. Each tattooist that I visited asked me for a fortune to make it, and I couldn't understand why. After all, it's just a couple of lines, a bit of drawing, color, shadow, also to adapt the faces of my babies to the tattoo, and, of course, doing it quick and perfect. It couldn't cost that much.

Luckily, I found a tattooist. In an abandoned neighborhood, close to a cemetery, one day that rained a lot, and I only realized because thunder lightened up the sign that said that there was a tattooist who charged cheap for his work. What a coincidence! When I went in, the tattooist

stared at me. He had a long beard and a penetrating gaze. He looked me up and down, and asked me if I wanted a tattoo.

“How did you know that?”

“Because I’m a tattooist. People don’t come in here searching for information on the soccer matches.”

“Ah, right, I replied. “Can you tattoo me this little drawing, but with some kittens?”

I showed him the drawing that I wanted. The man first looked at the drawing, and then stared at me. He sighed deeply, with an exhaustion that looked like it was on the edge of his patience.

At the end of his sigh, which seemed to me that lasted years, he invited me to go to the next room where he had his tools. I had decided that I wanted it on the lower part of my back so I lifted up my shirt and let him work. While he prepared his instruments, I took photos to share with my friends. When I tried to take a picture of the tattooist, he only looked up, snorted, and continued to work. I think he didn’t like me.

He finally finished, and I could look myself in the mirror. How amazing it looked, my new tattoo!

And he managed to make my kittens have red eyes, exactly what highlights their beautiful noses! I paid the man, and I happily left the place.

When I realized that I forgot to take a picture with him, I turned and realized that the place wasn’t there any more. That’s weird! Oh well, it didn’t matter, I had a new tattoo.

When I arrived home, I realized that my neighbor was again listening to music really loud. I argued with him several times last week, and all those times ended up with me crying really frustrated.

I tried to gather strength to knock on his door and prepared to argue, but the exhaustion was far worse. I didn't think that having a tattoo was going to tire me so much, no one had ever said to me anything like that. I fed my kittens, and I went to bed. I didn't even manage to change my clothes, sleep and tiredness overwhelmed me. I was so tired, that not even my neighbor's noise was enough to keep me awake. My dreams were really weird, full of shadows and dark shapes that I felt close to me, and a cold voice asked me if I needed help.

My kittens woke me up by scratching my face, and when I opened my eyes, I felt a presence in my room. When I looked at the foot of my bed, there was a tall figure, full of bones and dressed up in a flaring black tunic, even if there weren't any kind of wind. When he spoke, I noticed that every fiber of my body shook and was afraid.

“Why do you dare to wake me up?”

“Did I wake you up?” I asked incredulously.

“That's right, human. Tell me how a human like you managed to do it.”

Scared, I got up and got close to the door of my bedroom. When I tried to open the door, the lock got stuck and no matter how much force I used, it was impossible to open it. I was locked up inside my bedroom with... that. The mysterious figure noticed my movements and saw my tattoo.

“Ah, so that was the method. That mark you carry on your back. I should have guessed.”

“My tattoo? What my tattoo has to do with you?”

“I am a millennial spirit that lived since the beginning of Humankind. I was jailed, thanks to black magic, in a mark like

the one you have on your back. Although... the original mark didn't have those animals."

"Hey, don't say anything about my kittens!"

"According to my punishment and my curse, I must obey and fulfill the wishes of the person who has the mark."

I was silent. Me... giving orders? I can't even make my kittens take their medicine.

"What kind of wishes can you make?"

"Whatever you want. I can create fire, for example, and destroy the villages of your enemies."

And saying this, he showed a bony hand and, at the tips of his fingers, appeared small blue flames.

"Ah... Look... I don't know how to say it, but..." I took out my lighter from one drawer of my night table and lighted up.

"Humankind already has control over fire for a lot of years now."

"Huh. It was to be expected. I also have the ability to illuminate the deepest cave."

From its face, there were rays of light that barely were able to illuminate my sheets. I simply took out my cell phone, turned on the light, and showed it to him.

"I'm sorry, Mr Spirit, but the truth is that you are not impressing me. If you are not going to do something interesting, I'm going to ask you to leave, please."

The spirit, already using his last tricks in his sleeve, extended his arms, or at least, what looked like his arms, and in his black tunic, nebulae started to appear. When he spoke, his voice appeared far away and deep.

“I didn’t want to reach this demonstration, human, but you leave me no choice. Ask me anything you wish to know, and I can offer you the answer in a matter of hours.”

I started to feel bad for Mr Spirit. It was clearly trying, but I couldn’t stop noticing that his skills weren’t that important anymore. I took my cell phone again, turned off the flashlight, and opened the Google homepage. I turned the cell phone, and showed it to Mr Spirit. It immediately contracted its arms and started to investigate the cell phone.

“I don’t understand. Are you trying to say that you have access to the entire human knowledge in this... device?”

“Yes, Mr Spirit.”

“So... I have been replaced?”

“I’m so sorry, Mr Spirit.”

He sighed full of sadness. My kittens, feeling what was happening with him, went closer and started to purr. Tired and defeated, the spirit sat on the edge of the bed and shook his head, like he was contemplating the reality of a Humankind that he didn’t know that much anymore.

“Do you know? Entire wars took place to get my powers. Kingdoms and civilizations grew and fell thanks to my abilities. My father told me this might happen to me, but I didn’t think that it would happen so soon. Look at me, I’m still young!”

“I don’t want to be rude, but... how old are you?”

“I’m only a thousand years old. I’m still young!”

I tried to comfort him, rubbing his back and telling him that everything was going to be alright. The reality is that I didn’t know how to calm

him down. I'm not good at comforting my friends, and I would be even worse with a millennial spirit.

“Well, Mr Spirit, it's okay... Tell me... don't you have any other special skill?”

“Well... during all these years, I learned to cook...”He replied between what sounded like tears. “But no one has ever asked me to cook something. They all wanted destruction and terror to their enemies, and I'm much more than that!”

When he raised his voice, the pictures in my bedroom shook and you could listen to the alarms of the closest cars that started to sound. I saw, finally, a way to help him.

“Do you know how to cook? That's great!”

“Really?”

“Yeah! I never knew how to cook. I always burned the food, and I never could follow the simplest instruction. Once they told me that I had to cook with sea salt, and I thought that I had to go to the beach to get it.”

The spirit started to laugh. Even my kittens liked the sound of that laugh.

“All right, human. I can cook anything you want.”

“Really? Yeah! Thank you so much, Mr Spirit!”

I tried to hug him but his bony shape hurt me. I was so happy. I think I found a new friend.

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## CHAPTER 6

### "FALTA DE MODALES A LA HORA DE VESTIR/LACK OF MANNERS WHEN IT COMES TO DRESSING"

Para serles honesto, yo no creía en los fantasmas. Cada vez que leía una historia de hechos sobrenaturales, pensaba en que la gente era fácil de engañar, o que confundía hechos con ficción. E incluso, lograba encontrarle una explicación lógica a lo que la gente creía que eran fantasmas o espíritus. Cada vez que leía que había una casa encantada donde los cuadros temblaban, yo pensaba que posiblemente el viento a través de alguna rendija los hacía mover, o que en las cercanías había alguna autopista que generaba ese temblor. Por cada historia de poltergeists, o espíritus demoníacos, yo tenía una respuesta ideal.

Por eso, comencé a escribir varios artículos sobre mis ideas en el periódico local. Esto me dio fama de escéptico, y fui invitado a dar charlas a lo largo de todo el país. La gente solía enfrentarme con sus historias de posesiones, o invitarme a sus hogares donde juraban que en la habitación había fantasmas o que el espíritu de su perrito muerto los visitaba todas las noches. Y ante cada una de estas invitaciones, siempre les daba la respuesta racional e inteligente, y siempre se ofendían conmigo. Me decían que no creía en nada, y que para poder ver los seres del más allá uno tenía que creer en algo.

Por eso, cuando me invitaron al hogar de los Perez, no pensé que iba a ser distinto a lo que ya había experimentado antes. Me habían dejado una nota, y enviado las llaves por correo. En la nota, me daban rienda libre para poder revisar el hogar sin ningún de restricción, y que podía quedarme el tiempo que quisiera. Si decidía irme, sólo tenía que avisar

al vecino, que él estaría en contacto con ellos para darles la llave. Empaqué un poco de ropa, y un diario para poder escribir todo lo que encontraba.

Llegué al hogar de los Perez, y la verdad es que de fuera no me parecía muy tétrica. Sí, lucía un poco descuidada, pero nada que un poco de pintura y cuidado no pudieran solucionar. Me elegí una de las habitaciones, y desempaqué. La primera noche no fue muy llamativa, y sólo porque el viento por momentos no me dejó dormir, podría decir que fue una noche muy tranquila. Cuando me desperté al día siguiente, noté que mis camisas y remeras estaban desordenadas, pero eso se podía explicar porque al llegar el día anterior, las había ordenado de cualquier manera. Pero, al tratar de ordenarlas, noté que están pegadas a la maleta. Atrás mío, sentí una pequeña risa. Giré y lo vi: Un ser transparente que miraba con una sonrisa burlona.

¿De verdad creías que podías combinar una camisa blanca abierta con una remera de rock pesado? ¿Acaso no te enseñaron nada?

Quedé en silencio. Los Perez no me habían dicho nada sobre qué tipo de fantasma era, simplemente que era muy molesto. La figura me miraba, y esperaba una respuesta. A pesar de mis anteriores experiencias, nunca había visto un fantasma en la vida real. De hecho, todavía seguía sin creerlo.

¿Quién eres? – Pregunté con un tono incrédulo.

¿Ahora? Un fantasma ¿Antes? Diseñador de vestuario. Pero eso no contesta mi pregunta. ¿Acaso no te enseñaron nada de cómo vestirse?

Mira, creo que no tenemos la confianza suficiente como para que me juzgues de esa manera.

Yo voy a juzgar a cualquier persona que se atreva a combinar la ropa de la manera tan horrible que lo hiciste tú.

Pero eres un fantasma, no puedes darme consejos de vestuario.

No sólo no combinas los colores y las texturas de un modo correcto, sino que, además, no escuchas. Yo era diseñador ¡Diseñador! Yo trabajaba haciendo esto. Los grandes actores de Hollywood requerían mis servicios. Scarlett Johanson, George Clooney, Chris Pratt, Ryan Gosling, Emma Stone

El fantasma continuó enumerando actores famosos a los que les diseñó. Los premios que recibió. Las películas en las trabajó. Y yo no podía dejar de pensar que era demasiado insoportable. Siguió con su discurso durante al menos 5 minutos, y yo estaba seguro que estaba mintiendo.

Mira, señor... señor Fantasma, me convocaron aquí porque me pidieron que investigue si usted era un fantasma de verdad o si había alguna otra respuesta.

¿Entonces?

Bueno, puedo llegar a una sola conclusión: Usted es un fantasma.

Wow, increíble. De verdad eres muy inteligente.

Su tono sarcástico no ayuda a la situación...

Está bien, está bien. Me quedo en silencio.

Gracias. Como decía, usted es un fantasma. Pero no un fantasma cualquiera. Usted es un fantasma insoportable.

La mirada de desilusión del fantasma, debo decir, me partió el corazón.

Oiga, oiga, tranquilo señor. Puedo ofrecerle algo, fantasma.

Lo escucho – Contestó triste el fantasma.

Usted deje en paz a los Perez, yo les daré alguna explicación que los deje contentos, y usted viene conmigo.

Pero... ¿por qué me ofrece eso?

Bueno, usted mismo lo dijo, señor fantasma: Porque no sé vestirme.

Como les decía, yo no creía en los fantasmas. Hasta hace un año. Ahora, si me disculpan, tengo que retirarme. Me invitaron a una fiesta de premiación al mejor vestido del año.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

- Do you believe in ghosts or paranormal activities?
- Have you ever seen a ghost? What about a haunted house?
- The ghost in the story is still a costume designer in the afterlife. If that happened to you, what would you be? What kind of profession would you have?
- And if you could switch professions, what would you choose?

*Let's review some grammar and fun facts!*

In South America, there are a lot of stories about ghosts. One of the most famous is the chupacabra, which isn't exactly a ghost, but no one can actually tell you what it is. Some say it is an animal, others say that it is a spirit, and some people say that it is an experiment made by the government.

Try to compare the supernatural stories from your country or city, to the kind of stories in South America. You will find that they have an amazing tradition on ghosts, possessions and poltergeists.

## TRANSLATION

To be honest, I didn't believe in ghosts. Every time I read a story of supernatural cases, I thought people were easy to deceive, or they

confused facts with fiction.

I manage to find a logical explanation for what people believed were ghost or spirits. Every time I read that there was a haunted house where the pictures shook, I thought that maybe the wind through a crack made them move, or that nearby there was some highway that generated that shake. For each story of poltergeist, or demonic spirits, I had a perfect answer.

Because of that, I started to write several articles about my ideas in the local newspaper. This gave me certain fame as a skeptic and was invited to lecture all over the country.

People used to confront me with their stories of possessions or invite me to their homes where they swore the room had ghosts or that the spirit of their dead dog visited them every night. And to each of those invitations, I always gave them the rational and smart answer, and they always got angry with me. They said that I didn't believe in anything, and to be able to see the afterlife beings you have to believe in something.

That's why, when I was invited to the Perez home, I didn't think it was going to be any different to what I had already experienced.

I had received a note and got the keys by mail. In the note, they gave me free rein to check out the home without any kind of restriction, and I could stay as long as I wished. If I decided to go, I only had to let the neighbor know, and he would be in contact with them to give them the key back. I packed up some clothes, and a diary to write anything that might happen.

I arrived at the Perez home, and the reality is that from the outside it didn't look very scary. Yes, it was a bit ruined, but nothing that a bit of painting and care couldn't fix. I chose one of the bedrooms and

unpacked. The first night wasn't very eventful, and apart from wind that didn't let me sleep, I could say that it was a very quiet night.

When I woke up the next day, I noticed that my shirts and t-shirts were messy, but that could be explained because when I arrived the day before, I sorted them out randomly. But, when I tried to tidy them, I noticed that they were stuck to the suitcase. Behind me, I heard a small laugh. I turned and saw it: A transparent being that looked on with a smile on its face.

“Did you really think that you could combine a white shirt with a heavy metal t-shirt? Haven't they thought you anything?”

I fell into silence. The Perezes hadn't said anything about what kind of ghost it was, just that it was really annoying. The shape looked at me and hoped for an answer. Despite all my previous experiences, I had never seen a ghost in real life. In fact, I still couldn't believe it.

“Who are you?” I asked with a skeptical tone.

“Now? A ghost. Before? Costume designer. But that doesn't answer my question. Haven't they thought you anything about how to dress?”

“Look, I think we don't know each other well enough for you to judge me that way.”

“I'm going to judge anybody who dares to combine clothes the horrible way you do.”

“But you are a ghost, you can't give me clothing advice.”

“You don't only just combine colors and textures in a bad way, but you also don't listen. I was a designer. Designer! I worked doing this. Hollywood's biggest actors required my services. Scarlett Johansson, George Clooney, Chris Pratt, Ryan Gosling, Emma Stone...”



The ghost continued naming famous actors which he had designed for. The awards he received. The movies he worked on. And I couldn't stop thinking that it was too intolerable. It went on with its speech for at least five more minutes, and I was sure that he was lying.

“Look, mister... mister Ghost, I was invited here because they asked me to investigate if you were a real ghost or if there were any other answers.”

“So?”

“Well, I can reach one conclusion: You are a ghost.”

“Wow, incredible. You really are smart.”

“Your sarcastic tone isn't helping the situation...”

“All right, all right. I will stay quiet.”

“Thank you. Like I was saying, you are a ghost. But not just any ghost. You are an insufferable ghost.”

The look of disappointment, I have to say, broke my heart.

“Hey, hey, easy sir. I can offer you something, ghost.”

“I'm listening,” sadly replied the ghost.

“You leave the Perezes alone, I give them some explanation that makes them happy, and you are coming with me.”

“But... why are you offering me this?”

“Well, you said it yourself, mister ghost: Because I don't know how to dress.”

Like I was saying, I didn't believe in ghosts. Until a year ago. Now, if you excuse me, I have to go. I was invited to a celebration to the best dressed of the year.

## CHAPTER 7

### "LOS VIEJOS, EL ÁRBOL Y EL CAFÉ/THE OLD MEN, THE TREE AND THE COFFEE PLACE"

En el viejo café del barrio, cerca de un antiguo árbol, se solían reunir dos señores de edad mayor. En ese café, trabajé durante todo un verano, tratando de conseguir algunos pesos y poder tomarme unas vacaciones. La mesa que siempre elegía esa inusual pareja era la mesa que se encontraba justo al lado de la ventana, a donde daba la sombra del árbol. Uno de los dos era ciego, y el otro tenía problemas para caminar, y utilizaba unos bastones. Siempre pedían café con leche, y un vaso de agua. Sus conversaciones parecían muy interesantes, porque siempre se los veía animados, sonriendo, y gesticulando con los brazos.

Un día, me tocó llevarles su pedido. Por alguna razón, quizás un rumor o porque lo había leído en algún periódico, yo estaba seguro que eran escritores. No lo había confirmado, pero mientras le servía el café y el vaso de agua, se los pregunté.

Disculpen, ¿ustedes son escritores?

El hombre ciego giró su cabeza hacia mí, y me contestó.

No, nene, somos jugadores de fútbol, y todos los domingos jugamos en el equipo del barrio. Él patea – señalando a su amigo – y yo atajo.

El silencio incómodo inundó el ambiente, hasta que el hombre ciego sonrió y largó la más sonora carcajada que jamás escuché. Una carcajada viva, llena de juventud y alegría. Me retiré de la mesa un poco más tranquilo sabiendo que no los había ofendido.

Al poco tiempo, el ayuntamiento decidió cortar el árbol, ya que consideraban que era muy viejo y que podía caerse en cualquier momento. Llegaron con sus máquinas y lo derribaron. Fue un día muy triste en el barrio. Luego de eso, nunca más volvieron a aparecer el señor ciego y su amigo. Siempre me quedará la duda de si eran escritores o no.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

- Do you have any special places to take coffee or eat? What is it like?
- What do you think happened to the odd couple in the story? Do you think they are still alive?
- What do you think the odd couple were? Writers?
- Rewrite the ending to make it a happy ending. Here's a hint: What about the main character? Maybe he searched for them.

*Let's review some grammar and fun facts!*

Did you know that the characters are based on Ernesto Sábato and Jorge Luis Borges? They were incredible writers, and if you have the opportunity, you should try to read some of their works, which might be a bit hard to understand if you started learning the language, but believe me, they are worth it. They used to have coffee in a small coffee place in San Telmo, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

On the grammar side of this story, we find the usual conundrum between football or soccer. In Spanish, football means the usual sport that we all know, and the NFL and its sports is called American Football, in order to distinguish it from the usual (and far more entertaining, if you ask me!) sports that South American love.

## TRANSLATION

In the old coffee place of the neighborhood, close to an old tree, two old people used to gather. In that coffee shop, I worked for an entire summer, trying to earn some pesos and go on vacations.

The table that the unusual couple always chose was the table right next to the window, where the shadow of the tree was. One of them was blind, and the other had walking problems and used a special cane. They always asked for coffee with milk and a glass of water. Their conversations seemed very interesting, because they always looked lively, smiling and gesticulating with their arms.

One day, I had to take them their order. For some reason, maybe a rumor or because I had read it in some newspaper, I was sure that they were writers. I hadn't confirmed it, but while I was serving them their coffee and the glass of water, I asked them:

“Excuse me, are you writers?”

The blind man turned his head to me and replied.

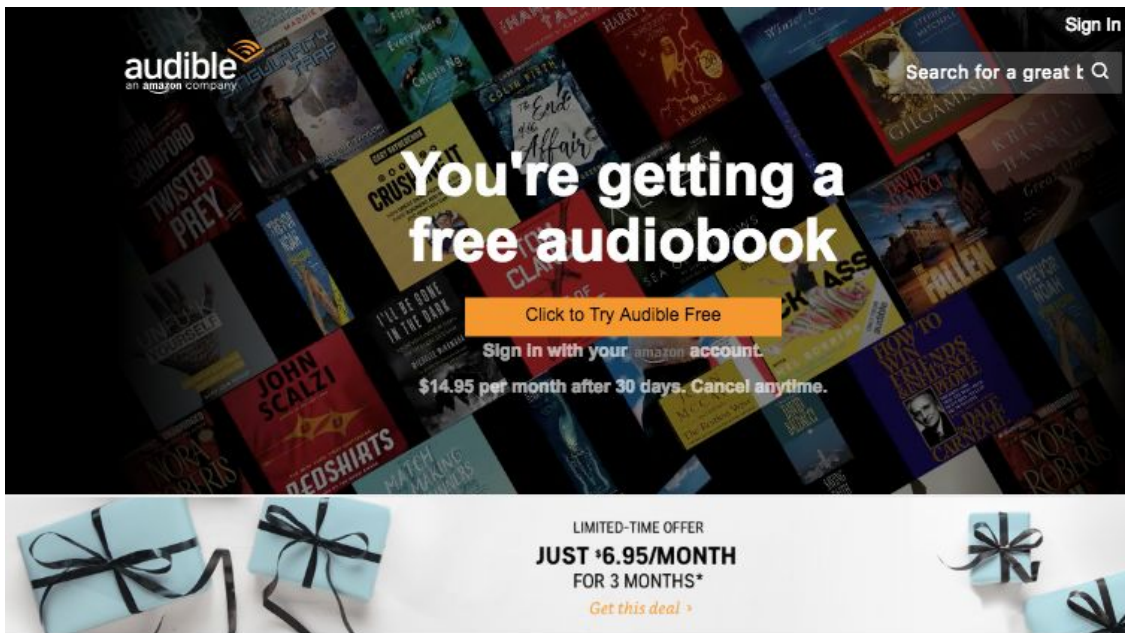
“No, kiddo, we are football players, and every Sunday we play in the neighborhood team. He kicks” – pointing at his friend –  
“and I'm a goalkeeper.

The uncomfortable silence flooded the place until the blind man smiled and had the loudest laugh that I've ever heard. A lively laugh, full of youth and joy. I left the table a bit more calm knowing that I hadn't offended them.

Soon after this, the city council decided to cut down the tree, because they considered that it was too old and it might fall at any time. They arrived with their machines and cut it down. It was a really sad day in the neighborhood. After that, the blind man and his friend never showed up again. I will always have doubt if they were writers or not.

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# CHAPTER 8

## "CRIMEN/CRIME"

Juan tomó su arma, se levantó de su silla, y salió. Subió a su auto de policía, encendió la radio, y comenzó a patrullar el barrio. Era un barrio bastante tranquilo, donde prácticamente nada sucedía, más allá de algún pequeño robo de bicicletas, o algún altercado entre los niños del colegio secundario que se encontraba a unas pocas cuadras de la estación de policía.

Patrulló durante todo el día. Llegó a su casa, besó a su mujer, y a su hija, cenaron los tres juntos, se duchó y luego se acostaron a ver un poco de televisión antes de dormir. En las noticias, escuchó sobre el enorme aumento del crimen en todo el país. Eso le pareció raro a Juan, quien jamás vio un crimen mayor que alguna discusión familiar.

Al día siguiente, hizo su rutina de todos los días, pero al patrullar comenzó a mirar todo a su alrededor con aire extrañado. ¿Será verdad lo que dicen las noticias todos los días? ¿Era cierto que había caos, y destrucción en cada una de las ciudades de la Tierra? No, no podía ser.

Al llegar al borde del pueblo, subió a una pequeña colina, y se tomó unos minutos para contemplar la ciudad. Quizás estaban equivocados. El crimen estaba allá lejos, fuera de la ciudad, y aquí dentro estaban seguros. Sí, lo más probable era que nunca iba a suceder ahí. No mientras esté Juan. Además, más allá de los problemas menores que a veces pueden suceder, ¿qué tipo de crimen podía pasar en el Paraíso?

## QUESTIONNAIRE

- What do you think it happened to Juan?
- Do you believe in Paradise?
- What kind of Paradise do you believe in?
- Write down your version of Paradise, but here's a catch:  
You have to make it in five sentences or less.

*Let's review some grammar and fun facts!*

The paradise in Spanish is mostly associated with open fields and green pastures, and not a city. But if you go to some parts of Perú, they will tell you the other way around.

Like we did before, we found names that we cannot translate. If you ever meet a Spanish person, ask him if he or she wants his/her name translated when in a normal conversation. Some people are okay with it, but some people don't like it.

## **TRANSLATION**

Juan took his gun, got up his chair, and got out. Got inside his police car, turned on the radio, and started to patrol the neighborhood. It was a really quiet neighborhood, where practically nothing happened, beyond some small bike theft, or some altercation between the kids of the high school that were a few blocks from the police station.

He patrolled all day. Came home, kissed his wife, and his daughter, had dinner with them, had a shower and then they lay down to watch some television before sleeping. In the news, he heard about the huge increase in crime all over the country. That looked weird to Juan, who had never seen a worse crime than a family argument.



The next day, he did his everyday routine, but when he was patrolling he started to look everywhere with a bewildered look. Was it true what the news said every day? Was it true that there were chaos and destruction in each city on Earth? No, it couldn't be.

When he reached the edge of the town, he went up to a small hill and took a few minutes to contemplate the city. Maybe they were wrong. The crime was far away, out of the city, and here they were safe. Yeah, most likely that it wasn't going to happen there. Not while Juan was there. Besides, leaving aside the small problems that might happen, what kind of crime might happen in Paradise?

## CHAPTER 9

### "HORRIBLE MANERA DE DESPERTAR/HORRIBLE WAY TO WAKE UP"

El jueves fue un día normal para Esteban. Se levantó, se vistió, asistió a clases, luego almorzó, llegó a casa, se puso a estudiar, luego descansó un poco jugando con la Playstation, Luego cenó con sus padres, se duchó y se acostó para dormir. Un día normal como todos.

Se despertó el día viernes, pero ya de inmediato notó algo raro. No parecía que estaba en su propia habitación. Los posters y las fotos no eran las de él, ni tampoco parecía el mismo diseño de habitación. De hecho, parecía una casa completamente distinta. Trató de vestirse, pero también notó que sus ropas eran distintas, de un tamaño mucho mayor al que normalmente usaba. Al llegar al baño, pudo mirarse al espejo. Esteban, quien era joven y vital, tenía un aspecto demacrado, viejo, como si hubiera dormido durante los últimos sesenta años. Sus manos parecían gastadas, ya arruinadas con el paso del tiempo. No tenía ya dientes, y su pelo era bastante escaso.

Trató de buscar ayuda, donde fuera posible encontrarla. Recorrió la casa rápidamente, o al menos, lo más rápido que sus frágiles huesos le permitieron. Al llegar al borde de una escalera, tropezó y cayó. El dolor lo hizo despertarse.

Esteban abrió los ojos asustado, y revisó su habitación. Todo estaba en orden. ¿Qué era lo que había pasado? Corriendo, fue hacia el baño. Era él, no un señor viejo y feo. Respiró con tranquilidad. Ya había pasado, había sido todo una pesadilla.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

- What happened to Esteban?
- Who do you think is the old man?
- Have you ever had a dream that you swore it could have been real?
- Let's say that you woke up and you think you are not in your body: What would you do? What are the first things you would do to see if you are in your body or to find out what happened?

*Let's review some grammar and fun facts!*

One of the fun things about Spanish is that people use “old man” not as an insult, but as a sign of respect. But not all people like it, so be careful when approaching the subject in a conversation.

For example, one of my closest friend's father hates the term, because it makes him feel useless. So before going out saying “viejo” to everyone you meet, try to understand the other person you are talking to, and see if he will find it very disrespectful or not.

## TRANSLATION

Thursday was a normal day for Esteban. He got up, got dressed, went to classes, then had lunch, came home, studied, then he rested for a while playing with the PlayStation. After that, he had dinner with his parents, had a shower and laid down to sleep. A normal day like any.

He woke up on Friday, but immediately he noticed something strange. It didn't look like he was in his own room.

The posters and pictures weren't what he had, nor did it look like the same room design. In fact, it looked like a completely different house.

He tried to get dressed, but he also noticed that his clothes were different, of a size much larger than what he normally used. When he reached the bathroom, he could take a look in the mirror. Esteban, who was young and vital, had a gaunt look, old, like if he had slept during the past sixty years. His hands looked worn out, already ruined by the passage of time. He didn't have any teeth left, and his hair was pretty scarce.

He tried to get help, where it was possible to find it. He searched the house quickly, or at least, as quickly as his old fragile bones allowed him. When he reached the end of the stairs, he tripped and fell. The pain made him woke up.

Esteban opened his eyes scared, and check out his bedroom. Everything was in order. What had happened? Running, he went to the bathroom. It was him, not an old and ugly man. He calmly breathes. It already passed, it was just a nightmare.

## CHAPTER 10

### "VIAJE INTERGALÁCTICO/INTERGALACTIC TRAVEL"

Tatiana abrió los ojos, respiró profundamente, y trató de distinguir su habitación. El viaje había sido bastante extraño, un poco doloroso, pero al menos fue casi instantáneo. Se encontraba en un momento en un lugar de la galaxia, y luego, en el otro. No recordaba exactamente por qué estaba acá, pero sabía que tenía un objetivo.

Al explorar a su alrededor notó que tenía solamente dos piernas, y solamente dos manos. Era raro, porque le habían prometido que iba a tener más. Pero pensó que quizás era un error de su memoria. Al levantarse, admiró con qué facilidad su cuerpo se adaptó a la gravedad de ese planeta. Probó sus piernas. Primero dobló una rodilla, luego la otra. Con qué facilidad lo hacían aquí. Pensar que estaba acostumbrada a no tener rodillas o huesos en absoluto en su galaxia. Bajó hacia el piso inferior del hogar, y decidió ingerir algunos alimentos. Cuando abrió la heladera, vio una pequeña caja de cartón de color blanco con unas letras que decían "LECHE". Eso le recordó algo. Quizás era su propósito. Quizás tenía que ver con su objetivo en la Tierra.

Tomó la caja, y vertió su líquido en el interior de un recipiente de vidrio. Cuando la probó, sus papilas gustativas se activaron con miles de sensaciones distintas. Con que esto era el sabor. Podía comprender por qué los humanos se volvían desesperados por conseguir más y más variaciones de sabores, llegando a mezclar cualquier cosa que se pudiera comer.

Salió del hogar, aun completamente sobrepasada por la mera idea de que existieran tantos sabores en algo tan simple como un líquido blanco, cuando una figura familiar la detuvo.

KVUY89, tienes que volver – dijo esa figura con forma de sombra – Nos equivocamos.

¿A qué te refieres? – Contestó Tatiana asustada

Sí, teníamos que enviarte para que investigues el planeta desde la forma de una vaca, y... bueno, nos equivocamos. Culpo al retraso de la transmisión intergaláctica.

Pero... pero...

Lo siento mucho. De verdad lo siento – Levantó lo que parecían ser sus dedos, e hizo un chasquido.

Tatiana despertó. Se encontraba en un establo con otros animales como ella. Entró un humano con un balde de metal y comenzó a ordeñar a uno de esos animales. No recordaba nada de su breve vida anterior.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

- Do you believe in extraterrestrial beings?
- If you do, what are they like, according to you?
- Let's say one of those beings appeared in front of you today, what would happen? How would you react?
- Assuming we get intergalactic travel, where would you want to live, and why? What kind of planet would you choose?
- Write down the kind of planets you would love to visit.

*Let's review some grammar and fun facts!*

Here is a handy list with the names of the planets in the Solar System and their Spanish translations, just in case you ever want to visit other worlds

Sun – Sol  
Mercury – Mercurio  
Venus – Venus  
Earth – Tierra  
Mars – Marte  
Jupiter – Júpiter  
Saturn – Saturno  
Urano – Urano  
Neptune – Neptuno  
Pluto – Plutón

Yes, I know Pluto isn't a planet anymore, but old habits die hard.

## TRANSLATION

Tatiana opened her eyes, took a deep breath, and tried to identify her bedroom. The trip had been really strange, a bit painful, but at least it was almost instantaneous. She was on one side of the galaxy and the next one, in the other. She didn't exactly remember why she was here, but she knew she had an objective.

When she explored her surroundings, she noticed that she only had two legs, and just two hands. It was weird because she had been promised that she would have more. But she thought that maybe it was a mistake of her memory.

When she got up, she admired the ease that her body adapted to the gravity of this planet. She tried her legs. First, she bent one knee, then the other one. How easily they do it here. To think that she was used to not having knees or bones in her galaxy. She went down to the lower floor of the home and decided to ingest some food. When she opened the fridge, she saw a small white carton box with some letters that said “MILK.” That reminded her of something. Maybe it was her purpose. Maybe it had to do with her objective on Earth.

She left the house, still completely overwhelmed by the mere idea that there existed so many tastes in something as simple as a white liquid when a familiar figure stopped her.

“KVUY89, you have to go back,” said that figure in the shape of a shadow. “We had a mistake.”

“What do you mean?” Tatiana replied, scared.

“Yeah, we meant to send you to research the planet from the shape of a cow, and... well... we had a mistake. I blame the delay of the intergalactic transmission.”

“But... but...”

“I’m so sorry. I really am.” He raised what appeared to be his fingers, and snapped them.

Tatiana woke up. She found herself in a stable with other animals like her. A human with a metal bucket started to milk one of those animals. She didn’t remember anything about her previous life.

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# CHAPTER 11

## "ALGUIEN ME VE/SOMEONE'S WATCHING ME"

Papá siempre nos contaba que se sentía perseguido. Desde que Mamá falleció hace cinco años, Papá no salía de casa. Sin sus anteojos, ya rotos hace años, y con su firme negación a operarse de los ojos, vivía encerrado, viendo televisión y escuchando la radio. Estaba seguro que alguien lo miraba por la ventana todos los días a la misma hora. Siempre se acercaba a la ventana del comedor, y, aunque su visión era muy borrosa debido a la edad, siempre podía distinguir una figura que lo miraba con curiosidad. Todos los días, a las cuatro de la tarde, esa misma figura lo veía sin falta.

Papá ya falleció hace una semana, y me tocaba a mí ir a su casa a buscar sus pertenencias. Entré, y de inmediato el aroma a encierro me embargó. Tantos recuerdos y tantas memorias de este hogar, y Papá ya no estaba para compartirlas con nadie. Mi hijo me ayudó a limpiar la casa. Entre tanto trabajo, olvidé qué hora era. Sonó la alarma del gran reloj del comedor indicando que eran las cuatro de la tarde, la hora en la que Papá decía que alguien lo miraba y lo espiaba.

Juan, ¿puedes ir al comedor a apagar la alarma?

Sí, papá.

Ah, y mientras estás ahí, ¿puedes fijarte si ves alguien por la ventana?

Acá no hay una ventana, hay solamente un espejo.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

- Do you have any glasses? (If not, you are lucky. I can't read without mine!)
- Let's assume that you find someone looking at you through a window (like the character in the story) every day at the same time. What would you do?
- Do you have big clocks in your house?
- Do you live in a big house?
- Write down, in ten sentences or less, the kind of house the old man lives in. Does it have any pictures? What about books or plants?

*Let's review some grammar and fun facts!*

The word "glass" is another one of those English words with three different translations: Vaso, as in glass of water, anteojos for spectacles ("I need glasses to read a book"), and vidrio, as in a glass window ("Here's my glass window"). Be mindful of the context, and like everything, practice will make you perfect.

## TRANSLATION

Dad always told us that he felt persecuted. Since Mom passed away five years ago, Dad didn't get out of the house. Without his glasses, broken years ago, and with his firm denial to get eye surgery, he lived enclosed, watching television and listening to the radio. He was sure that someone watched through the windows every day at the same time.

He always got close to the dining room window, and, even though his vision was very blurry because of his age, he could always make out a shape that looked at him with curiosity. Every day, at four in the afternoon, the same shape looked at him without fail.

Dad passed away a week ago, and I had to go to his house to search for his belongings. I went in, and immediately the aroma of confinement closed up on me.

So many memories and so many recollections of this home, and Dad wasn't around to share them with anyone. My son helped me to clean up the house. Between that much work, I forgot what time it was. The alarm of the big clock in the dining room went off, indicating that it was four in the afternoon, the hour in which Dad said that someone looked and spying on him.

“Juan, can you turn off the alarm?”

“Yes, Dad.”

“Ah, and while you are there, can you check out the window to see if you see someone?”

“There's no window in here, only a mirror.”

# CHAPTER 12

## "CLASES DE BALLET/BALLET CLASSES"

Siempre fuimos una familia muy conservadora. Nos criamos con una institutriz llamada Susana, una señora de mucha edad, que insistía que en la familia se estudiara ballet. Decía que era bueno para la personalidad, y que formaba carácter y femineidad. Así que le hicimos caso, y todas las mujeres de la familia estudiaron ballet. Mi abuela, mi madre, y mis hermanas, todas bailaron ballet, y todas ganaron premios internacionales.

Mis hijas, por supuesto, no iban a ser la excepción. Cuando nacieron, Susana las tomó en sus brazos ya viejos, y dijo que serían increíbles bailarinas, que tenían todo el potencial de ser estrellas del ballet. Pero Susana, al poco tiempo, falleció. No podíamos estar sin institutriz, porque tanto mi esposa como yo trabajamos todo el día, así que conseguimos a María, una joven que contaba con excelentes referencias de parte de la agencia de institutrices. Ella era una joven firme pero jovial, y nuestras hijas la amaron enseguida.

Al poco tiempo de que Susana falleciera, las niñas quisieron dejar de ir a las clases de ballet. Decían que no tenía sentido, que ya nadie bailaba eso, y que preferían bailar reggaetón. No, les dijimos varias veces, tenían que continuar con la tradición familiar. Tenían que continuar con el legado de Susana, en honor a todo lo que hizo por nuestra familia. Las niñas se enojaron y protestaron, pero siguieron asistiendo a las clases de Ballet.

Un día nos llamó por teléfono la profesora de las clases de Ballet, quien nos informó que las niñas no ponían atención a las clases, y que perdían el tiempo tratando de bailar otras cosas. Había decidido que era suficiente, que iba a tener una charla seria con las niñas, y que iban a acabar con ese sueño ridículo de no continuar con el mandato familiar.

Llegué a casa temprano del trabajo, y escuché en la habitación de ellas una música muy particular, como si fuera algo tribal o quizás música de baile. Me acerqué sin hacer ningún tipo de ruido, despacio para no llamar la atención sobre mi persona. Cuando abrí la puerta, vi a María bailar reggaetón junto a las chicas. Se las veía muy felices, sin la firmeza y exigencia del ballet. Las veía libres, contentas, alegres como pocas veces había visto en mi vida. Quizás estaba equivocado.

Esa noche tuve una conversación con mi esposa. Que estudien lo que quieran. Que no estén atrapadas en su vida por mandatos de gente que era de otra época.

Que sean felices.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

- What was the kind of dance the girls hated?
- And what about the kind they loved?
- Have you ever met a governess?

*Let's review some grammar and fun facts!*

In South America, it's very normal to have chaperones, but not governesses. And reggaetón is a really popular type of music in South America and parts of Europe. A couple of artists are Pitbull or Wisin and Yandel.

One of my suggestions about learning a new language is to listen to some music on the language that you want to learn. Reggaetón is a good way to do it, while you also dance!

## TRANSLATION

We were always a conservative family. We grew up with a governess named Susana, a lady of old age, who insisted that in the family we had to study ballet. She said that it was good for identity and that it shaped character and femininity. So we listened to her, and all the women in the family studied ballet. My grandmother, my mother, and my sisters, they all studied ballet, and they all won international awards.

My daughters, of course, wouldn't be the exception. When they were born, Susana took them on her already old arms and said that they were going to be excellent dancers, that they had all the potential to be ballet stars. But Susana, soon after that, passed away. We couldn't be without a governess, because both my wife and I work all day long, so we hired María, a young lady who had excellent references from the governess agency. She was a young firm but cheerful, and our daughters loved her right away.

Soon after Susana passed away, the girls wanted to stop going to the ballet classes. They said that it didn't make sense, that no one danced that anymore, and that they preferred to dance reggaeton. No, we said several times, they had to continue with the family tradition. They had to continue with Susana's legacy, in honor of all she did for our family. The girls got angry and protested, but they continued to assist the ballet classes.

One day the ballet teacher called us over the phone, and told us that the girls didn't care for the classes and that they wasted their time trying to



dance some other dance. I decided that it was enough, that I would have a serious talk with the girls, and that they will have to stop with that ridiculous dream of not continuing the family tradition.

I came home early from work, and I heard from their room a very particular music like it was something tribal or maybe dance music. I got closer without making any kind of noise, slowly so I wouldn't attract attention to myself. When I opened the door, I saw María dancing reggaeton with the girls. They looked so happy, without the firmness and demand of the ballet. I saw them free, happy, full of joy like few times I had seen them in my life. Maybe I was wrong.

That night I had a conversation with my wife. Let them study whatever they want. They shouldn't be trapped in their lives because of other people's mandates that are from another time.

Let them be happy.

## CHAPTER 13

### "LA CASA LLENA DE MOSCAS/THE HOUSE FULL OF FLIES"

Mi casa está llena de mosquitos. No importa a qué hora del día ni qué época del año se trate, siempre hay mosquitos de todos los tamaños. Los hay grandes, de esos gordos que molestan a la hora de comer, los hay chiquitos, de esos que no te dejan dormir. Incluso también los había puntiagudos, parecidos a aviones de guerra. Son insoportables.

He intentado de todo. Desde remedios caseros, hasta químicos horribles que estaban más cerca de matarme a mí que matar a los mosquitos. Gasté muchísimo dinero en esos medicamentos, e incluso tuve que pedir prestado dinero para poder lograrlo. Mi familia ya no me visita, porque detestan los mosquitos. Ya estoy harta.

Entro a un vivero, siguiendo el consejo de una amiga, tratando de encontrar algún tipo de árbol que los espante, alguna que desprenda algún olor especial que haga que se vayan y me liberen el hogar. Y, entre tantos árboles y flores de distintos colores, veo una que me llama la atención. Es muy verde, con una especie de dientes, y muy grande. Me enamoró a primera vista.

La llevo a casa, y hasta puedo sentir el miedo de los mosquitos al plantar a mi nueva amiga. Pequeña Boquita, la llamé. Y ayudó muchísimo con los invitados no deseados. A la semana, ya podía dormir tranquilamente. A los tres meses, ya podía dejar comida fuera de la heladera por más de cinco minutos que no pasaría nada. Y mi planta crecía y crecía y crecía. Ahora mide un metro y medio.

La veo en el patio, ya es más grande que yo. Muy verde, muy hermosa, muy grande. Veo una pequeña mosca gorda, una de esas que tanto me hizo la vida imposible durante tanto tiempo. La sigo con la mirada, y veo como se posa dentro de la boquita de mi planta. Me acerco mucho, quiero ver como se la come. Pequeña Boquita cierra su boca, todo se pone muy oscuro. Ya no recuerdo nada.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

- What kind of plant do you think it is?
- Do you like mosquitoes?
- Have you ever been in a vivarium?
- Do you have any plants?
- Write short sentences about what kind of plants you have.

*Let's review some grammar and fun facts!*

For the ever-expanding list of “words with several translations” (that is the official title, but it’s a bit long and not quite catchy):

Fly – volar (“Let’s fly to Argentina!”) or mosquito/mosca (“I hate this fly!”)

Context is important, especially since in this case, we are talking about flying things.

## TRANSLATION

My house is full of flies. It does not matter what time of the day or which season of the year we are talking about, there are always flies of

every size. There are big ones, those fat ones that bother even at lunchtime, there are small ones, those that will not let you sleep at night. Even those that have pointy noses, which look like warplanes. They are unbearable.

I tried everything. From home remedies to horrible chemicals that were closer to killing me than killing the mosquitos. I spent a lot of money on those remedies and even had to borrow money in order to pay them. My family does not visit me anymore, because they hate mosquitos. I am fed up.

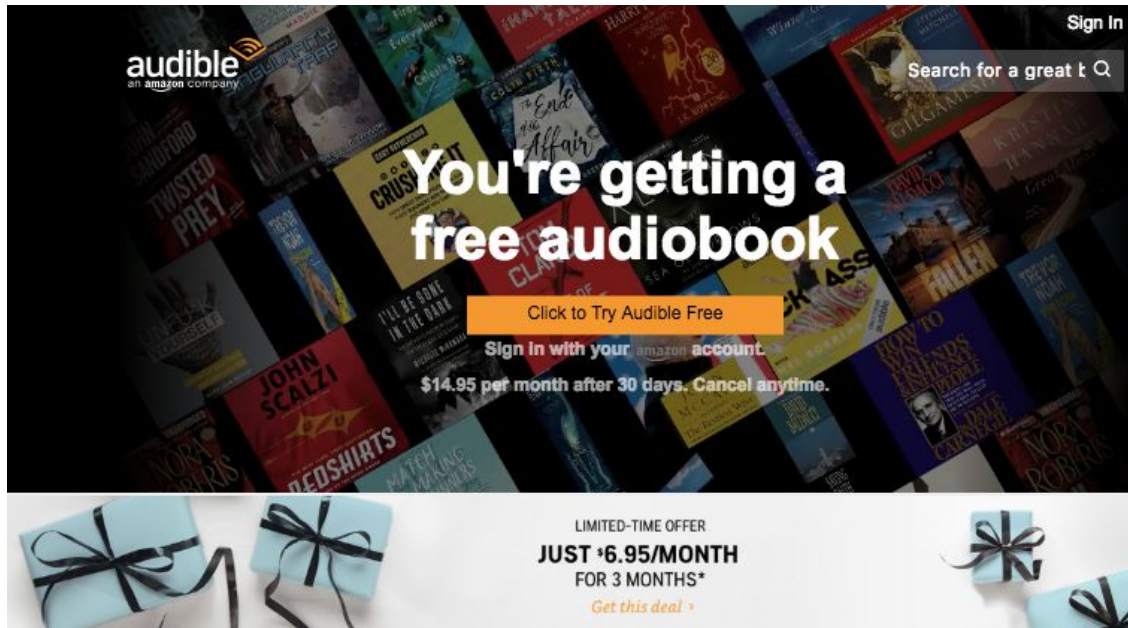
I went inside a vivarium, following a friend's advice, trying to find some kind of plant that scares them, any kind that gives off some special smell that makes them go away and free up my home. And, between so many trees and flowers of different colors, I saw one that catches my attention. It's very green, with some kind of teeth, and it was very big. I fell in love at first sight.

I took it home, and I could even feel the fear of the mosquitoes when I planted my new friend. Little Mouth, I name it. And it really helped with the unwanted guests. A week later, I could sleep peacefully. Three months later, I could leave food outside the fridge for more than five minutes and nothing would happen. And my plant grew and grew and grew. Now it is almost 5 feet tall.

I see it in the backyard, already bigger than me. Very green, very beautiful, very big. I see a small fat fly, one of those that made my life impossible for a long time. I follow it with my sight, and I see it pose down inside the mouth of my plant. I get closer, I want to see it how it eats it. Little Mouth closes its mouth. Everything gets dark. I can't remember anything.

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# CHAPTER 14

## “AMOR A PRIMERA VISTA/LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT”

El tren está lleno, es hora pico y todos nos dirigimos a nuestros trabajos. Apretados como si estuviéramos en una lata de sardinas. En medio de la gente, la veo. Ella, con su sonrisa reluciente. Ella, con ese pelo rubio hermoso. Ella, escuchando música y moviendo su cabeza. Y me enamoraste.

Llegamos a una de las estaciones principales, y la gente comienza a descender. Aprovecho para moverme desde donde estaba hacia donde estaba ella se encontraba. Quiero hablarle, quiero presentarme, quiero invitarla a salir. Pero justo cuando a punto de acercarme, mucha gente sube. Me dejan lejos de ella. Al menos mírame. Quiero sonreírte a la distancia. Mirame. Mirame. Mirame.

Girás y nuestras miradas se cruzan. Es en ese momento que te sonrío, y, por esas casualidades del destino, me devolvés la sonrisa. El mundo se me abre debajo de mis pies, y mi corazón salta ante la posibilidad de hablarte. Por supuesto, mi mente se vuelve loca con las posibilidades. Nos veo a nosotros yendo al cine, cenando en un restaurante caro, conociendo a nuestros padres, adoptando un perrito, comprando plantas, mudándonos a un hogar, discutiendo sobre quién cocina, felices porque conseguiste un trabajo nuevo, besándome porque te propuse matrimonio y dijiste que sí, casándonos, festejando, creciendo y envejeciendo juntos.

Te miro, y me pregunto si tendrás novio. Quizás tendrás ganas de conocer a alguien nuevo. ¿Y qué estarás estudiando? Yo diría que estás estudiando medicina o que estás tratando de recibirte de abogada. Miro,

a la distancia, si tenés una mochila, o algo así, pero no puedo ver nada que me otorgue una pista de lo que te gusta, ni siquiera una pista de lo que es que te gusta. Qué comida te agrada. Qué es lo que amás hacer. Nada que me regale una idea de cuál es tu nombre.

Llegamos a otra estación, y recibiste una llamada de teléfono. No voy a escuchar lo que hablás, no soy esa clase de persona, pero escucho tu “Hola!” y me hacen cosquillas el estómago. Tenés una voz muy hermosa.

Ya está, me decido, voy a hablarte. Voy a preguntarte si para ir a tal lugar tengo que bajarme en la siguiente estación. Yo ya sé la respuesta, pero quiero hacerte algún chiste, quizás un poco de charla, algo que me deje hablarte un poco. Capaz hablarte del clima, o algo así.

Llegamos a una estación, y decidiste bajarte.

Te busco desde entonces.

No puedo encontrarte.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

- Have you ever taken the subway during rush hour?
- Have you ever fallen in love at first sight?
- Write the perfect ending for you: Do they get together?  
Does she find him attractive?

*Let's review some grammar and fun facts!*

In English, you can say that you want to propose to your other half, and everybody will know what you mean. In Spanish, you have to say “propongo matrimonio” (propose marriage) because if you don't, you



are just proposing and the speaker doesn't know what are you exactly proposing!

When you say "propongo" you might be saying that we could go out to eat, or to watch a movie, etc. You are proposing a plan, one that you might have to agree with the other person in the conversation.

There was a story about a man from Utah, or at least, that's what one of my closest friends once told me, who came to live in Chile, and had that exact same problem. Obviously, he didn't find it very funny but his girlfriend definitely did!

## TRANSLATION

The train is full. It's rush hour and we are all going to work. Tight like we were inside a tuna can. In the midst of everyone, I see her. She, with her brilliant smile. She, with that beautiful blond hair. She, listening to music and moving her head. And you charmed me.

We get to one of the main stations, and people start descending. I use this to my advantage and start moving from where I was to where she is. I want to talk to her, I want to introduce myself, I want to ask her out. However, right when I was about to get close, a lot of people come in. They push me away from her. At least look at me. I want to smile at you from a distance. Look at me. Look at me. Look at me.

You turned your head and we exchange looks. It is in that moment that I smile at you, and, by one of those casualties of destiny, you smile back. The world opens under my feet, and my heart jumps at the possibility of talking to you.

Of course, my mind goes crazy with the possibilities. I see us going to the theater, having dinner in an expensive restaurant, meeting our parents, adopting a little doggy, buying plants, moving to a new home, arguing about who cooks, happy because you got a new job, kissing me because I proposed to you and you said yes, getting married, celebrating, growing old together.

I look at you, and I wonder if you are dating someone. Maybe you want to meet someone new. And what are you studying? I would say that you are going to med school or that you are trying to graduate as a lawyer. I look, from the distance, if you have a backpack, or something like that, but I can't see anything that gives me a clue on what you like, nor even an idea on what it is that you love. What kind of food you like. What is it that you love to do. Nothing that gives me an idea on what your name is.

We arrive at another station, and you get a phone call. I'm not going to listen to your conversation, I'm not that kind of person, but I manage to listen to your "Hello!" and my stomach tickles. You have a very beautiful voice.

That's it, I am decided, I'm going to talk to you. I'm going to ask you if you wanted to go to whatever place I have to off in the next station. I already know the answer, but I want to make a joke, maybe a bit of small talk, something that allows me to talk to you for a bit. Maybe talk to you about the weather, or something like that.

We get to a station, and you decide to get off.

I've looked for you since.

I can't find you.

# CHAPTER 15

## "EL EXTRAÑO LIBRO/THE STRANGE BOOK"

Encontré un libro en la biblioteca de mi abuelo. Era rojo, con letras doradas en la tapa, y en el lomo decía "Las Aventuras de Roberto" con letras negras y brillantes. Tenía una pequeña nota en la tapa.

*No abrir*

*Bajo ninguna circunstancia, no abrir.*

Mi curiosidad me ganó. Lo abrí. En la primera hoja encontré una nota escrita a mano, con la letra de mi abuelo.

*Es tu última chance. No sigas. Desaparecerás.*

Nunca fui bueno siguiendo las reglas y los pedidos, así que continué leyendo. La historia era bastante simple: Se trataba de un chico llamado Roberto, que vivía en una ciudad muy parecida a la mía. Estudiaba en un colegio, como el mío. También tenía un mejor amigo, justo igual que yo, y jugaba en el equipo de fútbol local, exactamente como yo.

Tenía el pelo rojo como el fuego, y la misma cara que la mía. Quien sea que haya escrito esto, era muy raro. Pero me encantaba seguir leyendo. En un momento, en la historia, Roberto entró en un hogar. Dentro, encontró cientos, miles de libros.

Hubo uno que le llamó la atención: "Las Aventuras de David". Me sorprendí que fuera mi nombre. Qué raro, pensé. Cuando llegué a la parte del texto donde lo abría, todo se me nubló y desaparecí dentro del libro.

Una figura me miraba fijamente, con el libro de Las Aventuras de David en las manos. Tenía una mirada profunda, penetrante.

Era yo.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

- What do you think happened?
- Have you ever read a book whose main character looked or acted just like you?
- What would you do if you find yourself inside a book?

*Let's review some grammar and fun facts!*

In Spanish, people say “dorsal” to refer to the book spine, because spine or thorn is “espina.” Be mindful of the context, like I always say.

## TRANSLATION

I found a book in my grandfather's library. It was red, with golden letters in the front, and in the spine, it said, *The Adventures of Roberto* in black and shiny letters. It had a small note on the cover.

*Don't open*

*Under no circumstance, don't open.*

My curiosity won the best of me. I opened it. In the first page, I found a handwritten note, with my grandfather's handwriting.

*It's your last chance. Don't proceed. You will be gone.*

I was never good following orders and requests, so I kept reading. The story was very simple: It was about a kid named Roberto, who lived in a city very much like mine. Studied in a school, like mine. He also had

a best friend, just like me, and played in the local football team, exactly like me.

He had red hair, like fire, and the same face, like me. Whoever had written this, it was very weird. But I loved to read it. One moment, during the story, Roberto entered a home. Inside, he found hundreds, thousands of books.

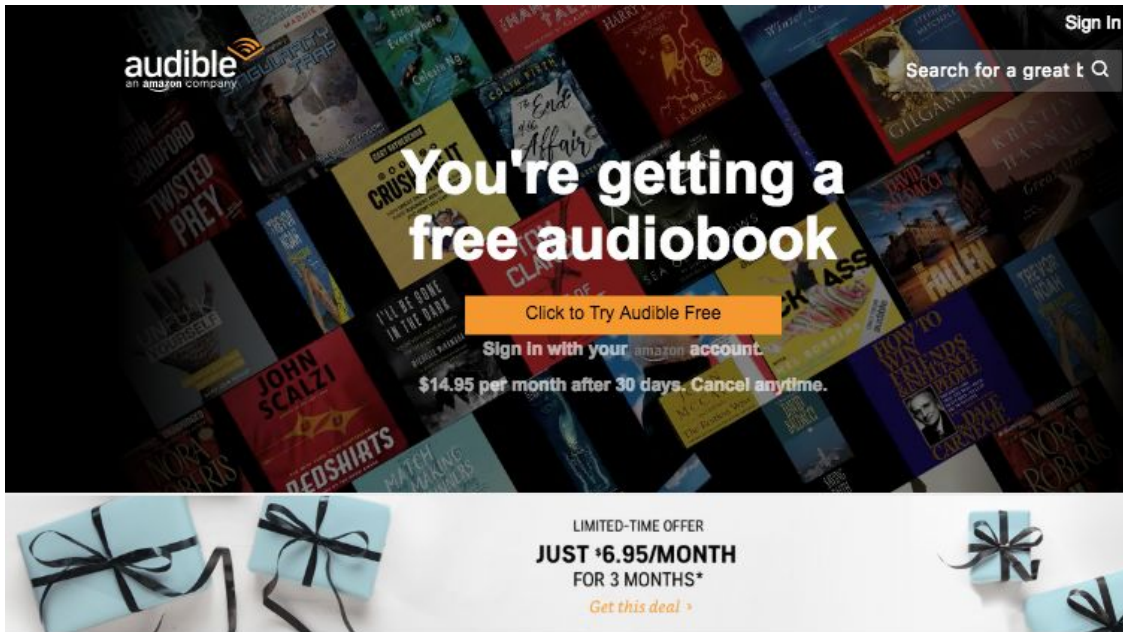
There was one that called his attention: *The Adventures of David* . I was surprised that it said my name. That's weird, I thought. When I got to the part where it opened, all went foggy and disappeared inside the book.

A figure stared deeply at me, with the *Adventures of David* book in his hands. He had a deep, penetrating gaze.

It was me.

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# CHAPTER 16

## "LA MÁSCARA/THE MASK"

La máscara cayó, se quebró y se deshizo en miles de pedazos. El terror se apoderó de mí. Era la máscara que usaba mamá cuando era joven para jugar con su padre, mi abuelo. Me la regaló cuando yo era muy chico. Era algo muypreciado para mí. Y ahora yacía en el suelo destrozada, y yo hice lo que pude para no ponerme a llorar.

Llevé los trozos a mi habitación, y tomé pegamento especial. Los apoyé en mi escritorio, encendí mi luz, y comencé a trabajar. Pedazo tras pedazo, los pegué de una manera muy cuidadosa. Tomé todos los recaudos para que nada estuviera fuera de lugar. Me tomó horas, toda una noche entera para poder terminar y dejarla como si fuera nueva. Limpié los restos de pegamento, y la dejé secar mientras yo me acostaba a descansar un poco.

En medio de la noche, me desperté asustado. Había sentido unos pequeños ruidos en el suelo de mi habitación, y era algo raro, ya que no tenía mascotas. Sonaba como si unas uñas se arrastraran por el suelo, y se dirigían hacia mi cama.

Encendí rápidamente la luz y pude ver una imagen fugaz de algo que se movía rápidamente hacia debajo de mi escritorio. Tomé mi linterna que se encontraba en mi mesa de luz, me acerqué y traté de investigar qué era lo que hacía ese ruido extraño. Desde debajo del escritorio, iluminado por mi linterna, pude ver que la máscara, cuyos ojos brillaban con un rojo profundo, me miraban fijamente. La boca, apenas pegada, se abrió, y cuando habló, la voz la sentí dentro de mí. Me pidió que la tomara, y que la usara.



No pude evitarlo.

Estiré mi brazo, la tomé y me la apoyé en la cara. Inmediatamente, desaparecí en una nube. Desperté en una especie de ciudad futurista, donde había seres que tenían en la cara máscaras parecidas a la mía. Se comunicaban con su mente, o al menos, así lo sentía. Sus ciudades eran gigantes, enormes, con varias civilizaciones bajo su dominio. Se habían extendido por las estrellas, y tenían el control sobre las emociones. Caminé por la ciudad, usando el cuerpo que me otorgaba la máscara. En ellas, vi desolación, y vi también locura.

Entré a un edificio que parecía un museo. Tenían expuesto, o al menos así parecía, seres de formas que no entendía, cubos y triángulos con aspecto extraño que flotaban en una especie de líquido que hacía que estuvieran suspendidos en el aire. También podía ver que tenían fragmentos de otros planetas, y de algunos soles.

Seguí caminando, y pude ver carteles con letras extrañas, y lo que parecía ser como automóviles volando en el aire, con muchos de estas máscaras caminando por ahí. No parecía como que las máscaras habían construido esto, sino más bien, habían tomado el control del lugar, quizás tomando posesión de los seres que ya vivían acá. Cuando veo que mi cuerpo me llevaba a algunos barrios, pude notar que había seres que no tenían la máscara, y que tenían marcas en la cara como si la hubieran tenido hace tiempo. Era extraño. Mi cuerpo no me dejó ver más sobre esto, y me llevó al sector donde estarían los infantes.

Ahí estaban en filas, en lo que parecía un colegio, estudiando sobre civilizaciones, estrellas largamente perdidas, y todos, todos de ellos, con la mirada de la máscara encima de sus caras. Caras perdidas, y atentas. Era espeluznante. Comencé a tener muchísimo miedo. Pude

reconocer en una placa que parecía ser un pizarrón un sistema solar parecido al nuestro, como se lo mostraría desde el espacio.

El cuerpo me llevó hacia otro sector, el lugar donde estaban los avances científicos. Eran edificios altos, de color blanco, donde se podía ver que experimentaban sobre armas y naves de distintos tamaños. Tenían el conocimiento, o al menos eso me parecía, de poder experimentar con agujeros negros, o la materia en sí misma. Entré en una de las habitaciones más grandes, siempre llevado por el cuerpo que me otorgaba la máscara.

Vi como esa civilización estaba investigando sobre viajes en el tiempo, y cómo, uno de esos seres se subía a una máquina, y desaparecía en el espacio. De alguna manera, supe que la máscara le había informado a los otros seres que nosotros no estábamos listos. Que prepararan las armas mentales, que cuando llegaran, no podríamos hacer nada.

También vi como esa nave caía en la Tierra, hace muchísimos años. Vi como mi Abuelo tomaba la máscara, sin saber su origen. Vi los juegos de mi madre con esa máscara. Y vi, no, sentí el dolor absoluto cuando se cayó al suelo hoy y se partió.

Me saqué la máscara, respiré profundo, tomé un martillo, y la destrocé a golpes.

Espero que con esto sea suficiente.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

- What would you do if you find an old mask?
- Write ten sentences that expand the world of the mask.

*Let's review some grammar and fun facts!*

In this story, we don't have many new words, and none of the words that might have several meanings. But one example might be that "mask" might apply to a mask like in the story (or in the Jim Carrey comedy movie).

## TRANSLATION

The mask fell, broke and tore into thousands of pieces. The terror took over me. It was the mask that my mother used to play with her father, my grandfather. She gave it to me when I was really young. It was something really precious for me. And now it lay on the floor smashed, and I did what I could to not start to cry.

I took the pieces to my room and grabbed special glue. I left them on my desk, turned on my light, and started to work. Piece by piece, I glued it together in a very careful manner. I took all the precautions necessary to avoid anything to be out of place. It takes me hours, and an entire night to finish it and leave it like new. I cleaned up the glue residue and left it to dry while I laid down to get some rest.

In the middle of the night, I woke up scared. I had heard some small noises on the floor of my bedroom, and it was weird since I did not have any pets. It sounded like if some nails dragged on the floor, and approaching my bed.

I quickly turned on the light and I caught a glimpse of something that went quickly under my desk. I grabbed the flashlight that I had in my night table, got closer and tried to investigate what was doing that strange noise.

From under my desk, illuminated by my flashlight, I could see that the mask, whose eyes were shining with a deep red, stared at me deeply. The mouth, barely glued together, opened up, and when it spoke, I felt the voice inside me. It asked me to take it and use it.

I couldn't help myself.

I stretched out my arm, took it and put it on my face. Immediately, I disappeared in a cloud. I woke up in some sort of futuristic city, where there were beings that had masks like mine on their faces.

They communicated with each other using their minds, or, at least, that's how I felt it. Their cities were gigantic, huge, with several civilizations under their rule. They had extended over the stars, and had control over emotions. I walked all over the city, using the body that the mask gave me. In it, I saw desolation, and I also saw madness.

I walked inside a building that looked like a museum. They were showing, or at least that is what it looked like, beings of a shape that I couldn't understand, cubes and triangles with a strange look that were floating in some sort of liquid that forced them to be suspended in the air. I could also see that they had fragments of different planets, and from some suns.

I kept walking, and I could see billboards with strange letters, and what looked like automobiles flying in the air, with several of these masks walking around there. It didn't look like the masks had built this, but, more like they had taken over the place, maybe taking possession of the beings that were already living in here. When I see that my body took me to different neighborhoods, I notice that there were several beings that didn't have masks, and had marks on their faces like they already had it long ago. It was strange. My body didn't let me see more of this, and took me to the place where the kids would were.

There they were in rows, in what looked like a school, studying about civilizations, stars long forgotten, and all, all of them, with the look of the mask all over their faces. Lost faces, and staring. It was creepy. I started to be very afraid. I could recognize in a plaque that looked like a blackboard a solar system like ours, like one might look at it from space.

The body took me to another sector, the place where the scientific advances were. There were tall buildings, colored white, where one could see that they were experimenting with weapons and ships of different sizes. They had the knowledge, or at least that was what it looked like to me, of being able to experiment over black holes, or the matter itself. I walked inside one of the largest rooms, always carried by the body that the masks allowed me to have.

I saw how that civilization was researching on time travel, and how, one of those beings went into a machine and disappeared in space. Somehow, I knew that the mask had informed the other beings that we weren't ready. That they had to prepare the mental weapons, that when they arrive, there was nothing we could do.

I also saw how that ship fell into Earth, a long time ago. I saw how my Grandfather took the mask, without knowing its origin. I saw my mother playing with that mask. And I saw, no, I felt the absolute pain when it fell down and broke in pieces.

I took off the mask, took a deep breath, grabbed a hammer and smashed into pieces.

I hope that this is enough.

# CHAPTER 17

## "EL AMOR DE MI VIDA/THE LOVE OF MY LIFE"

La motocicleta me llevó por toda la ciudad. Era mi vieja amiga. El ruido del motor era muy suave, casi como terciopelo. La compré hace 10 años, y desde entonces que me acompaña a todos lados. La llevé en el primer día de mi trabajo, esquivamos tormentas juntos, me ayudó a conquistar chicas (y conocer a mi actual esposa), e incluso, pude rescatarla cuando la robaron. Recuerdo ese día: Salí de la oficina a las 4 de la tarde, como es usual, y cuando miro hacia donde la había dejado en el estacionamiento, ya no estaba.

Llamé a la policía, puse carteles por todos lados, investigué en los sitios de venta de motocicletas usadas, porque quizás alguien la quería vender. A esta altura, ya no quería justicia, quería a mi motocicleta de vuelta conmigo.

Pasaron 3 meses, y yo seguía sin mi moto. A la noche la extrañaba. Cuando tenía que ir a trabajar, mi primer instinto era ir a mi garaje, ponerme el casco y subirme. Durante esos tres meses, todos los días, sin falta, hacía la misma rutina. Mi motocicleta no podía estar sin mí. Necesitaba mis caricias, mis palabras de cariño. Solíamos charlar cuando volvía del trabajo, donde le contaba todo lo que me sucedía. Incluso, cuando tenía días depresivos, mi mejor remedio era subirme y simplemente andar. Mi motocicleta me entendía, y me contestaba con pequeños rugidos del motor para alegrarme, o contestarme una pregunta.

La necesitaba. Por eso no me sorprendí cuando un jueves, exactamente tres meses desde que la habían robado, abrí la puerta del garaje, y sentí un pequeño ruido familiar. Se me llenaron los ojos de lágrimas. Corrí a abrazarla, y puedo jurarles, aunque sé que no me van a creer, que la moto también estaba llorando. Su pequeño motor me hacía ronroneo. Inmediatamente la revisé, me fijé que no le faltara nada. Alguna que otra marca, mucho barro, y varias marcas de cigarrillo que me enfurecían. ¿Cómo puede ser que no te hayan cuidado, hermano? Llamé a mi trabajo, me pedí mis vacaciones debido a una emergencia familiar, y me encerré en casa a repararla. Mientras, le contaba todo lo que se había perdido en este tiempo, y mi esposa, fiel y comprensiva, me miraba con una sonrisa enorme. No quiso ayudarme, simplemente saludó a mi moto, y nos dejó solos. Sabía que era algo privado, algo que nos conectaba a los dos.

Luego de varias horas, y con la pintura ya seca y lista para ser estrenada, decidí dar una vuelta. Me subí, me puse el casco, y arranqué.

Cuánto te extrañé, mi querida moto.

No voy a dejar que te vuelva a pasar algo nunca más.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

- Have you ever ridden on a bicycle?
- What about a motorcycle?
- Try to write, in five sentences, the point of view from the bike.

*Let's review some grammar and fun facts!*

We keep adding words that have several translations (at this point, we could write a book about it!). Here's an important example that might help you on a daily basis:

In English, we say bike to refer to two different kinds of transports. In Spanish, those are two words separately:

Bicicleta: the one that Lance Armstrong used

Motocicleta/Moto: a bike with two wheels and an engine. For example, a Honda, Suzuki, etc).

And while we are on the subject of motorcycles, the Harley Davidson bikes that you might have seen in movies or TV shows are called choppers, and in Spanish, there is a word that derives from the original English one: choperas.

But, and here's the fun thing, there's also a size of glass that is named choperas. In English, it's a beer mug. In Spanish, they use choperas. It's a big large glass that is often served really cold and kept in the freezer, and only used when you open a new bottle of beer.

You won't find that kind of glass for wine or water, though. Those are specifically for alcoholic beverages.

## TRANSLATION

The motorcycle took me all over the city. It was my old friend. The sound of the engine was really soft, almost like velvet. I bought it 10 years ago, and since then it has gone with me everywhere. I took it on the first day of my job, avoided storms together, it helped me to seduce girls (and meet my actual wife), and, I even rescued it when it was stolen.



I remember that day: I left the office at four in the afternoon, like usual, and when I looked where I had left it in the parking lot, it wasn't there anymore.

I called the cops, posted signs everywhere; I looked on every used bike website because maybe someone wanted to sell it. At this point, I didn't want justice, I just wanted my bike with me again.

Three months passed, and I was still without my bike. I missed it at night. When I had to go to work, my first instinct was to go to my garage, put on my helmet and hop on. During all those three months, every day, without missing a day, I did the same routine.

My bike couldn't be without me. It needed my caresses, my words of love. We used to talk while I got back from work, where I told it everything that happened to me. Even, when I had depressing days, my best remedy was to get on and just ride. My bike understood me and answered me with small growls from the engine to cheer me up, or to answer a question.

I needed it. That's why I wasn't surprised when a Thursday, exactly three months after it had been stolen, I opened up my garage door, and I heard a small familiar noise.

My eyes were full of tears. I went to hug it, and I can swear, even though I know that you are not going to believe me, that the bike was also crying.

Its small engine purred at me. Immediately, I examined it, checking out to see that nothing was missing. It had some marks, a lot of mud and several cigarettes marks that got me really angry. How could it be that they hadn't taken care of you, man?

I called work, I asked for leave due to a family emergency, and locked up at home to repair it. Meanwhile, I told it everything that it had

missed during all this time, and my wife, loyal and understanding, watched me with a huge smile on her face. She didn't want to help me; she just waved to my bike and left us alone. She knew it was something private, something that connected us both.

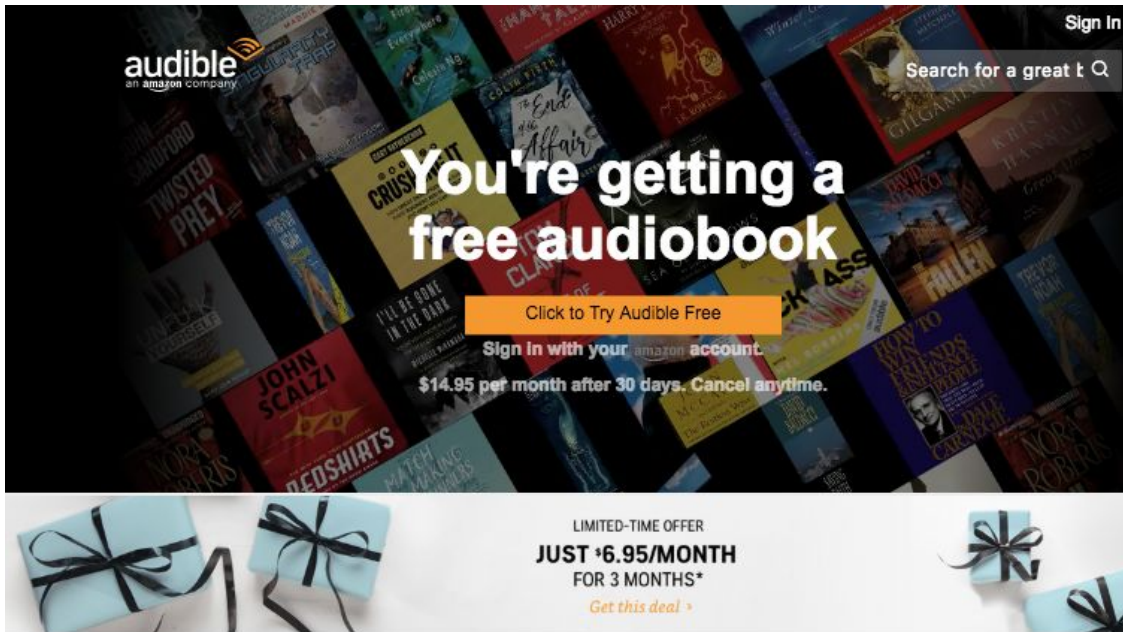
After several hours, and with the paint already dry and the bike ready to be ridden again, I decided to go for a spin. I hopped on, put on my helmet, and started it.

How much I missed you, my dear bike.

I won't let anything happen to you anymore.

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## CHAPTER 18

### “¿INOCENTE O CULPABLE?/INNOCENT OR GUILTY?”

Voy a serles enteramente honesto: Existe la posibilidad de que yo sea el causante de la Tercera Guerra Mundial. Antes que se enojen conmigo, déjenme explicarles.

Estaba aburrido en casa, sin nada que hacer, cuando decidí divertirme. Mi conexión a Internet no funcionaba, y mi computadora no era tan rápida y moderna como para poder instalar algún juego moderno, y la verdad es que ya me había aburrido de leer los textos para el colegio. Eran muy aburridos, y además, no iba a ir al colegio durante dos semanas porque estaba en vacaciones de invierno. Entonces, recordé algo que me había comentado mi padre una vez hace mucho tiempo: que cuando él era joven, se divertían jugando en el patio, o haciendo llamadas de broma.

Bueno, afuera llovía mucho, así que eso ya estaba descartado. Pero la idea de las llamadas broma me encantaba. Tomé la guía telefónica, y marqué el primer número que encontré. Me atendió un señor grande.

Hola

Eh, sí, hola. Mi nombre es... - Tuve que improvisar – David, y quería saber si cuando abre la canilla, sale agua.

A ver, un momento – No podía creerlo, el señor realmente fue a revisar. Esto no tenía sentido – Sí, está saliendo agua. ¿Por qué lo pregunta?

La risa me ganó. No pude continuar. El señor me dijo varias cosas que, por respeto a todos ustedes, no voy a repetir. Estuve toda la tarde haciéndolo, primero marcando números de la guía telefónica, y ya al

final, cuando me estaba aburriendo, números al azar. Ahí fue cuando, en una de esas llamadas, me atendió una voz rasposa y robótica

¿Contraseña?

Eh... Cuando abre la canilla, ¿sale agua?

Un silencio del otro lado de la línea.

Contraseña aceptada.

Y la línea murió. Esto sucedió el... diez de enero. Y todos sabemos qué pasó el día siguiente, ¿verdad?

*Señor, le pedimos que, a efectos de claridad, explique qué sucedió al día siguiente.*

Está bien, su Señoría. Al día siguiente, Rusia (o al menos, en ese entonces se llamaba Rusia) cerró sus fronteras, y lo que luego sería conocido como la Liga de las Naciones Nucleares lanzó sus misiles nucleares, comenzando una lluvia de destrucción sobre todo lo que tocaban.

*Está bien. Hemos oído todo lo que necesitábamos oír.*

*¿Cómo se declara el acusado?*

Inocente, su Señoría. Yo no sabía que mi broma iba a terminar generando semejante desastre. Ni menos pensé que la Humanidad se encontraría al borde de la destrucción. De hecho, yo no disparé los misiles, ni tampoco ordené a los ejércitos luchar, así que, técnicamente hablando, yo soy inocente.

*Esta Corte encuentra al acusado culpable. Se lo condena a trabajo forzado en las prisiones atómicas de la Luna. Se levanta la sesión.*

## QUESTIONNAIRE

- Have you ever made a prank call? Answer in Spanish.
- What was the prank call? Did your victim get mad?

- Let's say you find yourself in a situation just like the main character: Would you say that you are guilty, or innocent?
- What do you think happened on the Moon? What are your thoughts on it?
- Write a different ending where he is found not guilty. Try to get into the character and what he would do in that situation.

*Let's review some grammar and fun facts!*

The basis of the joke is something an old friend once told me that he used to do it when he was a kid, but the ending is a bit reworked. The original prank included an answer that it was something in the vein of, "Well, what would you expect to come out? Wine?"

That was taken from an old comedy show that was really famous on TV during the 60s, and then expanded into the rest of the continent.

What is funny is that while writing this, I actually got a prank call from some kids, but instead of innocently asking me about my water, they asked me if my fridge was working. Needless to say, I did check out if my fridge was working correctly. The laugh that I heard from this side of the line was too much, and I had to laugh with them.

In the grammar side of the story, in Spanish, dates are written like this:

14 de Febrero

10 de Enero

31 de Diciembre

Putting the day first, and then the month. In English, it's backwards. That brings several problems with the date format. In the USA and some parts of Europe, the day is written MM/DD/YYYY (months, days, and years), but in Spanish, it is written DD/MM/YYYY (days, months, and years).

Here's a handy guide of the name of the months and their respective translation:

January - Enero

February - Febrero

March - Marzo

April - Abril

May - Mayo

June - Junio

July - Julio

August - Agosto

September – Septiembre (some places write it as Setiembre, without the p. That's because the pronunciation of the p in Septiembre is hard for some dialects.

October - Octubre

November - Noviembre

December – Diciembre

## TRANSLATION

I'm going to be entirely honest with you: There exists the possibility that I might have caused World War III. Before you get angry with me, allow me to explain.

I was bored at home, without anything to do, when I decided to have some fun. My internet connection didn't work, and my computer wasn't as fast and modern so I could install any recent game, and the truth is that I got bored of reading the books for school. They were very boring, and besides, I wasn't going to go to the school for two weeks since I was in my winter holidays.



Then I remembered something that my father once told me a long time ago: That when he was young, he had fun playing in the backyard, or making prank calls.

Well, it was raining a lot outside, so the backyard was out of the question. But I loved the idea of prank calls. I took out the phone guide and dialled the first number that I found. It answered an old man.

“Hello.”

“Eh, yeah, hello. My name is...” - I had to improvise – “David, and I wanted to check that when you turn on your faucet, water comes out.”

“Let me see. One moment.” I couldn’t believe it, the guy actually went to check it out.

“This didn’t make sense. Yeah, water is coming out. Why do you ask?”

Laughter overcame me. I couldn’t continue. The mister told me several things that, out of respect to all of you, I won’t repeat. I spent all afternoon doing it, first dialing numbers from the phone book, and at the end, when I was getting bored, random numbers. That’s when, during one of those calls, it answered a raspy and robotic voice

“Password?”

“Eh... When you turn on the faucet, does wáter come out?”

Silence from the other side of the line.

“Password accepted.”

And the line went dead. That happened on... January the tenth. And we all know what happened next day, right?

*Sir, we ask you to, for the purpose of clarification, explain what happened the next day.*

All right, your Honor. Next day, Russia (or at least, during that time it was named Rusia) closed up their borders, and what was later to be known as the Nuclear League of Nations launched their nuclear missiles, starting a rain of destruction over everything they touched.

*All right. We heard everything that we needed to hear.*

*How does the defendant plead?*

Not guilty, your Honor. I didn't know that my joke was going to start such a mess. And I didn't think that humankind was going to be at the edge of destruction. In fact, I didn't shoot the missiles, nor did I ordered the militaries to fight, so, technically speaking, I am innocent.

*This Court finds the defendant guilty. He is sentenced to forced labor in the atomic jails on the Moon. Court dismissed.*

# CHAPTER 19

## "VUELVE/COME BACK"

Veo el resto de comida que dejaste en la mesa. Te extraño. No te vayas. Quiero abrazarte nuevamente. Quiero que te quedes, al menos una noche más.

Perdón. Es mi culpa. Te pido disculpas. No debí gritarte. Volvé. Quiero que nos acostemos los dos, y te acaricie la cabeza mientras vemos alguna película. Quiero que te quedes conmigo. Puedo cocinarte la comida que quieras. No me dejes.

Volvé, pequeño gatito.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

- What were you thinking the story was about before reading the twist ending?
- Have you ever gotten a pet? A cat, fish or a dog?
- Take a blank page, and write down a story about that pet. If you never had one, imagine one.
- Try to do it in Spanish.

*Let's review some grammar and fun facts!*

My stories almost always involve pets because I love them. I grew up with several cats and kittens, and I can't avoid writing about them.

On the grammar side of the (really short) story, scratch can be translated both as “rascar” (“Scratch my head, please”) and “rayar” (“This window is scratched”).

One of the fun and interesting things is that in South America, they use a lot of English words that aren’t translated, and part of the normal and usual conversation. For example, a DJ scratches a vinyl when he is making some music, right? Well, in Spanish, they don’t say “rayar el disco,” they just say, “Ese DJ scratcheó el disco!” (That DJ scratched the disk!)

## TRANSLATION

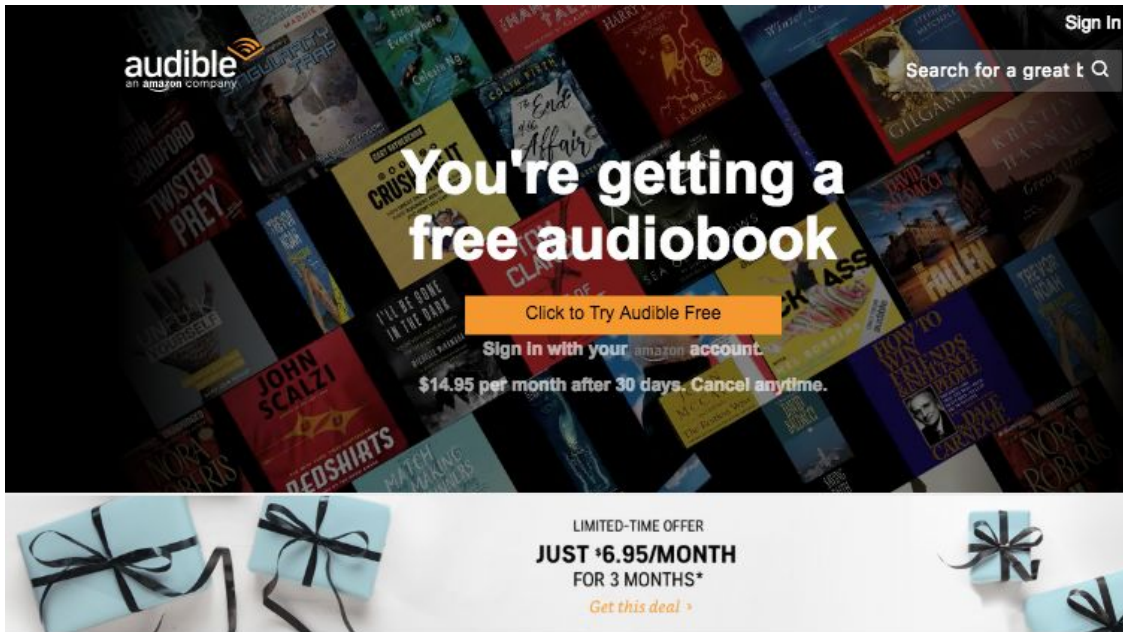
I see the leftovers that you left on the table. I miss you. Don’t go. I want to hug you again. I want you to stay, at least one more night.

I’m sorry. It is my fault. I apologize. I shouldn't have screamed at you. I want us to lie down, and I’d scratch your head while we watch a movie. I want you to stay with me. I can cook any food that you want. Don’t leave me.

Come back, little kitten.

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## CHAPTER 20

### **“EL BAILARÍN QUE SALVÓ AL MUNDO/THE DANCER WHO SAVED THE WORLD”**

La invasión fue fácil de detener. De hecho, tan fácil, que muchos dirían que casi fue una mentira. Verán, un día la Humanidad se despertó y se dio cuenta que no estaba sola en el Universo. Sí, es cierto, habíamos encontrado bacterias, e indicios de vida en Marte y Neptuno, pero nada que sea remotamente parecido a vida inteligente.

Un día nos despertamos, y todos los seres humanos notaron que tenían un ser verde, con pequeños cuernitos, flotando cerca de ellos. En todas partes del mundo, los reportes sobre la aparición misteriosa de estos seres llenaron las tapas de los diarios, y el terror tomó varias víctimas a lo largo del planeta.

Fue horrible. Varios meses de desastres, y caos, hasta que al poco tiempo nos dimos cuenta que esos seres, quienes sean que sea, no nos hacían nada. De hecho, ni siquiera tenían ojos ni oídos, o al menos nada parecido a eso. Simplemente flotaban alrededor nuestro. Algunas personas, incluso, comenzaron a adoptarlas como mascotas. Y al poco tiempo, como muchas otras veces en la historia de la Humanidad, nos acostumbramos y seguimos con nuestras vidas. Básicamente, continuamos peleando, siendo egoístas, luchando el uno contra el otro por las cosas más menores.

Llegó el punto en el que esos seres, apodados Marcianitos (aunque no sabíamos si siquiera si venían de Marte o de alguna otra galaxia), fueron tan parte de la vida cotidiana, que incluso comenzaron a tener programas de televisión, videojuegos, películas, investigaciones

científicas, libros escritos al respecto. De hecho, también se pudo verificar que alrededor de cada persona, luego de la aparición de los Marcianitos, comenzaba a aparecer un aura verde, del mismo tono que el ser extraño. Se pudo verificar rápidamente cuando se revisaron estudios antiguos, y luego, estudios hechos nuevamente. Es como si esos seres realmente sí tenían un efecto entre nosotros.

Y un día, apareció una persona que dijo que sabía cómo eliminarlos. Bueno, no fue la primera. Desde la aparición de los Marcianitos, hubo cientos de personas que ofrecían curas mágicas para solucionarlo, desde meditación hasta pastillas, todo por una módica suma, obvio.

Pero esta persona decía que desde que hizo un baile, se fue su Marcianito. Al principio nadie le creía, pero cuando se le hicieron estudios, se pudo notar que realmente había un cambio en su persona. Por supuesto, al principio se lo trató como fraude, pero la realidad es que él no quería fama, ni tampoco solicitaba dinero (a diferencia de las otras personas que ofrecían curas), y de hecho, sólo ofreció su ayuda porque la gente de su pueblo se lo pidió. Así que al que lo deseaba, podía aprender su baile, totalmente gratis, y enseñarle a otros para que pudieran lograrlo.

Su baile era extraño. No tenía forma, y ni siquiera parecía una coreografía bien pensada. Era más bien mover los brazos y las piernas de manera aleatoria, y listo. No había razón, ni estilo, ni gracia. Él decía que lo había descubierto cuando estaba tratando de aprender un nuevo estilo de baile para el que realmente no servía, y en su frustración, movió las piernas y brazos muy enojado. Y así fue como su Marcianito se fue.

Cientos de personas lo intentaron, grabaron videos y lo compartieron en todas las redes sociales. Miles de personas lo copiaron, logrando que



todos sus Marcianitos desaparecieran. Se organizaron festivales de baile y de despedida a los Marcianitos, donde la gente se juntaba, comía, y bailaban. Al poco tiempo, esto llevó a un buen acercamiento entre la gente, que a su vez llevó a entendimientos entre ciudades, luego países, y así, sin disparar un solo tiro, comenzaron a desaparecer las guerras, y de a poco, se pudo ir trabajando por un futuro mejor. Era raro de pensar, pero los Marcianitos y su posterior derrota nos habían cambiado de una manera fundamental, mostrándonos que no sólo no estábamos solos, sino que además, era demasiado inútil seguir combatiendo.

Esta forma de pensar nos llevó a las estrellas, y luego, hacia otras dimensiones. Establecimos contacto con miles de especies, y formamos alianzas. La humanidad creció a pasos agigantados, siempre siguiendo el ejemplo de ese bailarín extraño, que en su frustración, nos demostró que podemos ser mejores.

Y esta es la historia de cómo un bailarín salvó al mundo.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

- What were the creatures like?
- What was the dance like? Have you ever tried it?
- In short sentences, try to rework the ending. But here's a catch: Try to do it in Spanish.

## TRANSLATION

The invasion was easy to stop. In fact, so easy, that many might say that it was almost a lie. You see, one day, humanity woke up and realized that it wasn't alone in the Universe. Yeah, it's true; we had found bacteria and some signs of life on Mars and Neptune, but nothing that was remotely similar to intelligent life.

One day we woke up, and every human being noticed that they had a green being, with small horns, floating near them. In every part of the world, the reports over the mysterious apparition of these beings filled up the newspaper pages, and the terror took many victims across the planet.

It was horrible. Several months of disasters and chaos, until a bit later we realized that those beings, whoever they were, didn't do anything to us. In fact, they didn't even have eyes or ears, or at least nothing resembling that. They just floated around us. Some people, even, started adapting them as pets. And soon after that, like many other times in the history of Mankind, we got used to it and continued with our lives. Basically, we continued to fight, being selfish, arguing against each other for the most trivial things.

It came to the point that those beings, nicknamed Little Martians (although we didn't even know if they came from Mars or from another galaxy), were so integrated in our daily life, that we even started to have television shows, video games, movies, scientific research, books written about them.

In fact, we could also verify that each person, after the apparition of the Little Martians, started to show a green aura, the same tone of the strange being. It could be quickly checked when they checked out old studies, and then, the same studies done recently. It's like these beings had an effect over us.

And one day, someone said he knew how to eliminate them. Well, it wasn't the first one. From the first appearance of the Little Martians, there were hundreds of people that offered magical cures to fix it, from meditation to pills, all for a small fee, of course.

But this person said since he did his dance, his Little Martian went away. At first, nobody believed him, but when research took place, it could be noted that there was really a change in him. Of course, at first it was treated as fraud, but the reality is that he didn't want any fame, nor asked for money (unlike all other people who offered cures), and in fact, just offered his help because the people of his town asked him to. So to whoever wished for it, they could learn his dance, completely free of charge, and show other people to teach them to do it.

His dance was strange. It didn't have any shape, and it didn't even look like a well-thought choreography. It was more moving the arms and the legs in a random way, and that's it. It didn't have any reason, nor style, nor grace. He said that he found out when he was trying to learn a new dancing style for which he really wasn't good enough, and in his frustration, moved his legs and arms in anger. And that's how his Little Martian went away.

Hundreds of people tried, they recorded videos and shared it on all social media. Thousands of people copied it, making their Little Martian disappear. Dance and Little Martian goodbye festivals were organized where people gathered to eat and dance. Soon after that, this made people got really close, which in turn led to a really close understanding between cities, and then countries, and just like that, without shooting a single bullet, wars started to disappear, and bit by bit, everyone could start working on a better future.

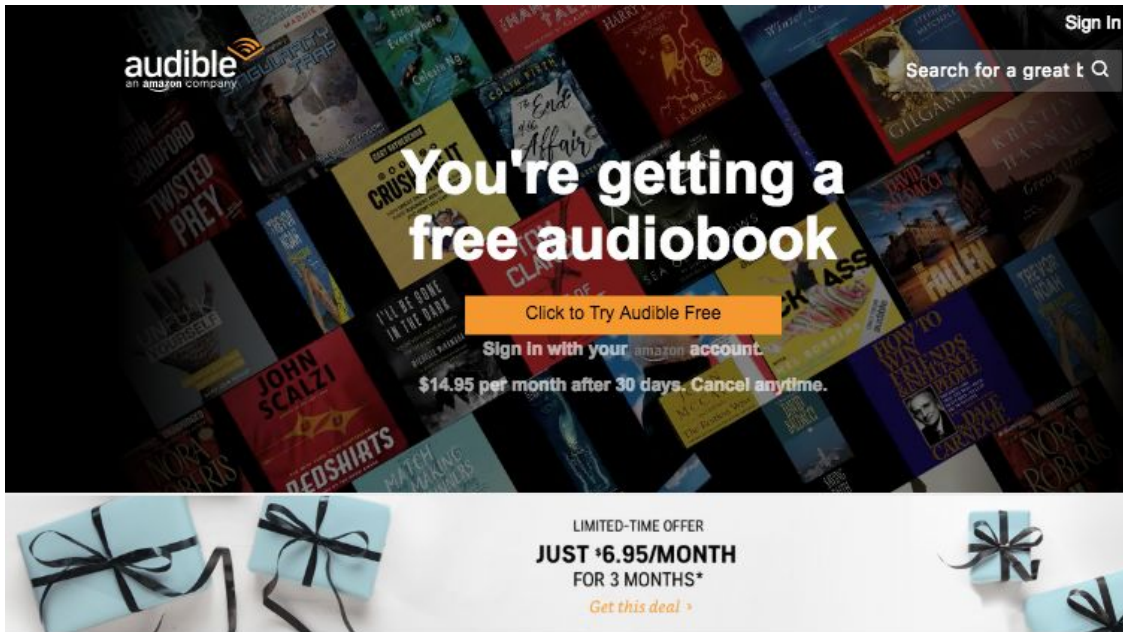
It was weird to think about it, but the Little Martians and their ulterior defeat had changed us in a fundamental way, not just showing us that we were not alone, but that it was also pointless to keep fighting.

This way of thinking took us to the stars, and then, to other dimensions. We established contact with thousands of species, and alliances were forged. Humankind grew up in gigantic steps, always following the example of that strange dancer, who, in his frustration, showed us that we could be better.

And that's the story about how a dancer saved the world.

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# CONCLUSION

I hope you enjoyed your time reading this. All these stories are original, and all these stories come from my heart and my soul. I won't say that all these stories are incredible, or that they are life-changing, because that would be a lie, but I hope that, in at least one of these stories, you found yourself reflected, or at least, represented in at least one of the characters.

And, obviously, you learn a lot in the process! That's my main motivation behind everything that I do, and hope it was good enough for you.

The main takeaway that you should learn from this book is that ghosts really exist. Oh, and there are thousands of words that have two or more translations, and like I said a million times before, you have to understand the context before deciding on what word you should use. Be on the lookout for clues in the words, the tone, and everything in between.

This book took a while to be written, and I researched quite a bit on the appropriate subjects to tackle for beginners, and what genres are the best to teach Spanish. In the end, I went with a lot of sci-fi stories, because I found that those are the best stories to start reading in another language. In fact, that's how I started learning!

I want to thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for not just reaching this point, but for taking the time to finish it. Nowadays, we buy a lot of books and we don't read them, but if you took the time to get here, it means that my hard work was at least interesting enough, and if you learned some words that you didn't know, well, in that case, my job is done.

See you soon.

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# **Spanish Language Lessons**

Your Essential Spanish Phrase Book for Traveling  
in Spain, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Mexico  
with Ease!

By Sergio Rodriguez

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## CONCLUSION

## OTHER BOOKS BY SERGIO RODRIGUEZ

## DID YOU ENJOY THIS BOOK?

# INTRODUCTION

Traveling in Spanish countries can be hard. Believe me, I'm a frequent traveler, and I've been all around the world. I've been in Europe, Asia, and South America, and I have to say that of all the places that I've been, I've never found more caring and lovely people than in Spanish countries. Maybe it is their past, maybe is their language, but they are always available to give you a hand, talk to you, have fun, grab a drink, and generally have a good time.

But the language barrier might be hard. You might find yourself trying to say something, and the interlocutor understanding another thing entirely. It might be quite frustrating, and then you end up using your fingers or pointing to what you want, and to be honest, it's quite ridiculous and a bit childish.

Sometimes, you might be lucky and find someone nearby who understands English, and that works for the moment, but what if there's no one there? What if you want a burger without cheese? Or maybe you want a diet Coke, not regular, because you don't consume sugar? Or, leaving aside the food matters (which are quite important!), let's say that you want to book a hotel room, but you don't want to spend too much, and obviously, you don't want to pay for things that you don't need. So there goes the Jacuzzi, or the HD television. And you have to

make yourself clear, that you don't want that, without using insults and pointing to the things that you don't want.

These are just two examples that you might find on your trip, but we will find several examples of how to say the things that you might want to say. Even if you have a basic grasp on the language, and you might be able to say "Hola" (Hello) or "Por favor, sin queso" (Please, without cheese), you will quickly find out that one thing that might work in Spain, it won't be the same in Argentina, or Mexico (and not to mention if you go to different parts of the same country, where different dialects and tones might confuse you).

But don't despair! That's why I'm writing this book, to help you on your travels, so if you want to take a trip to a Spanish Country, you won't find it hard to express yourself. And I will not just explain you some phrases in Spanish to ease your life in your trip, I will also teach the differences between countries, and how to travel from one place to another.

So, if you were planning a trip, or maybe you are already in one and found yourself in a problem, this is the book for you. I hope it helps you with anything that might arise on your trip.

I hope you enjoy your time reading this book and find it useful.

# **CHAPTER 1: GENERAL LANGUAGE INFORMATION**

This section will contain general information on the language that will apply to every Spanish country that you might visit. The current estimates from the United Nations say that more than 300 million people worldwide speak Spanish, and it is the officially recognized language in quite several countries, including Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Puerto Rico, Spain, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

Spanish is also spoken in several other countries, like Andorra, Belize, and the Philippines. If you are from the United States, you might know that Spanish is widely spoken in several cities and states, such as Los Angeles, Miami, New York, and San Antonio, and it is officially recognized as the second language in the state of New Mexico.

## **PRONUNCIATION**

Each vowel in Spanish is clearly and distinctly pronounced. But at the same time, keep in mind the most important consonant sounds to remember in Spanish, which are:

A like in mother

E like in Easy

I like in Kiss

O like in Mob

U like in Pug (the dog!)

Diphthongs are another thing entirely, and it might take some time to get used to, so keep trying and trying, and you will find yourself mastering them quite easily. They include the following examples:

AI like in Braid

EI like Mate (like the Australians say it!)

IO like in Axion

UE like in Were

OU like in Pour

UI like in Win

One of the main things to keep in mind when you see words in Spanish, is that an accent over a vowel indicates stress, as in *información* (information), or is sometimes just used to distinguish two identical words, as in *solo* (alone) and *sólo* (just). This will come in handy when you find that many words in English have two or several meanings in Spanish, depending on the context. I will explain them to you much later, but for the moment, always be aware of the context of the word that you have trouble translating or understanding.

Consonants are somewhat more difficult to master (and sometimes they are even hard to master for a Spanish speaker!) but if you realize that many of them sound similar to English, you might find it easier to master them .

Keep in mind that there is difference between dialects and languages in the same country. For example, things that are spoken as one thing in Mendoza, Argentina, are not the same in Barcelona, Spain. Always be mindful of these differences and apply them accordingly. When in doubt, just fall back to English, since most of the time, many

pronunciations are the same (or at least, as close as phonetically possible).

## VOCABULARY

A huge amount of the words that are part of the vocabulary in Spanish will remind you of words in English, since many English words have Latin roots, and Spanish originated from Latin. These are known as cognates. I will give you a list of several words that are the same in both Spanish and English, and they have the exact same meaning. This list is by no means exhaustive, and you will find that many aren't included (but you might be able to find them in your traveling):

Spanish English

Admirable Admirable

Agenda Agenda

Alcohol Alcohol

Altar Altar

Animal Animal

Área Area

Balance Balance

Bar Bar

Capital Capital

Central Central

Cultural Cultural

Doctor Doctor

Drama Drama

Error Error

Excursión Excursion

Experimental Experimental

Familiar Familiar

Fatal Fatal

Festival Festival

Motel Motel

Motor Motor

Múltiple Multiple

Municipal Municipal

Musical Musical

Natural Natural

Noble Noble

Normal Normal

Nostalgia Nostalgia

Ópera Ópera

Original Original

Panorama Panorama

Pasta Pasta

Perfume Perfume

Piano Piano

Plaza Plaza

Plural Plural

Popular Popular

Radio Radio

Religión Religion

Reunión Reunion

Revision Revision

Ritual Ritual

Rural Rural

Superior Superior

Taxi Taxi

Televisión Television

Total Total

Triple Triple

Tropical Tropical

Universal Universal

Usual Usual

Verbal Verbal

Versión Version

Vertical Vertical

The following basic phrases will help you to travel around in a taxi or private companies like UBER:

**Necesito ir al centro de la ciudad, ¿puede ayudarme?**

*I need to go to the center of the city, can you help me?*

**Necesito ir a X museo/galería, ¿puede ayudarme?**

*I need to go to X museum/gallery, can you help me? (Replace X with the name of the museum, gallery or the place you want to visit).*

**Tengo que ir a X hotel, ¿puede indicarme cómo ir?**

*I have to go to X hotel, can you tell me how? (again, replace X with the name of the hotel or the place you will be staying*

## GRAMMAR

Let's deal with something hard to learn so we can get it out of the way. If you want to learn Spanish, you are going to have to deal with

something that Spanish speakers deal with daily, and it is something that in English doesn't exist (or at least, with the extent that it exists in Spanish).

Remember that, unlike English, all nouns in Spanish are either masculine or feminine. This is especially hard to understand and quite hard to learn, but once you start to see the logic behind it, you will find it quite easy to understand. Like always, there are exceptions to every rule, but most of the time, nouns ending in -o are masculine (auto, libro, queso, etc.) and most ending in -a are feminine (cámara, computadora, planta, etc.).

Now, here's the fun part (or complicated part, depending on how you see it): Every time that you find masculine nouns, use the article **el** or **un** to precedes them:

**El gato (The cat)**

**Un libro (A book)**

**El Queso (The cheese)**

**Un auto (A car)**

But when they are feminine, **la** or **una** precedes them:

**La cámara (The camera)**

**Una computadora (A computer)**

**La planta (The plant)**

**Una caja (A box)**

When it comes to adjectives, they agree in gender and number with the nouns they modify:

**Un fotógrafo famoso (A famous photographer)**

**Los fotógrafos famosos (The famous photographers)**

Now, let us tackle the way to talk about other people in a conversation or in a room. Normally, in English you might use the pronoun you.



Nevertheless, in Spanish, there are two ways to use it: Both polite/formal and familiar/informal, and they all have their own forms. Always, when you want to show courtesy or respect, try to use the formal **usted** (you) and **ustedes** (you all). This is especially appreciated when you are talking to older people, who might feel offended if you address them in an informal way, especially if you do not have enough trust with the other person. Sometimes you will find older people who prefer the informal form, or even call them by their first names, and in those cases, just follow what they say. Use **tú** (you) and **vosotros/vosotras** (you all) with friends, family, or children. Please note that vosotros/vosotras is only used in **Spain** ; in the rest of the Spanish countries (especially in South America) the correct way to address is to use **ustedes** , since it is both formal and informal (so you will not have any problem with dealing with respect or unintentionally hurting someone's feelings).

One of the main pillars of Spanish that really takes the time to learn is that verbs are highly inflected, unlike English, with different endings for every person (I, you, she, all, etc.) in several different tenses. This will take quite a long time to get used to, so be prepared to make some mistakes along the way. Don't worry, you won't spark any international conflict!

On the other hand, the three major conjugations have patterns, and they are grouped according to the infinitive endings of each one –ar, -er, or –ir.

One thing to keep in mind that there are three major patterns, and they are grouped according to the infinite ending. And to add to the confusion, most of the verbs in Spanish are irregular. The following list is by no means a comprehensive list (in fact it is a quite simple list), but

it should give you a taste of the conjugation on the irregular verbs, and next to it, there will be the infinitive version of the verb:

**Pescar** (Fish) **Pesqué** (Yo pesqué), **pescaste** (tú pescaste), **pescaron** (ellos pescaron)

**Llegar** (Arrive) **Llegué** (Yo llegué), **llegaste** (tú llegaste), **llegaron** (ellos llegaron)

**Almorzar** (Have lunch) **Almorcé** (Yo almorcé), **almorzaste** (tú almorzaste), **almorzaron** (ellos almorzaron)

**Bailar** (Dance) **Bailé** (Yo bailé), **bailaste** (tú bailaste), **bailaron** (ellos bailaron)

When it comes to questions and how to write them, always keep in mind that the Spanish language uses an inverted question mark at the beginning of a question (“¿Dónde está la librería?” – Where is the library?), and an inverted exclamation points when it starts an sentences that needed it (“¡Ayúdenme!” – Help me!)

The following part will be divided in several smaller sections. Use what have you learn before to try it. Do not be afraid to make mistakes, because Spanish people would love to help you if they see that you have at least a basic understanding and would definitely understand you if you do not fully grasp the pronunciations. Just try your best and they will be so happy with your effort.

Good morning – ***Buenos días***

Good afternoon – ***Buenas tardes***

Good evening – ***Buenas noches***

**Hola** is “Hello” or “Hi” and you can say that with people you know. Keep in mind that the pronunciation of this would sound like *oh lah* , and it’s quite useful to introduce yourself or to start a conversation.

**¿Cómo está?** Is Spanish for “How are you?.” Used like this is best for people you might want to show respect (elders, bosses, etc.), since it is using the formal version of the verb *está* (to be). But, let’s say that you bumped into an old friend, or made friends with some locals after a couple of drinks, the correct term when you are referring to someone who you already know is **¿Cómo estás?** . See the difference between both? The second implies trust, while the first implies respect. Use them as your own wish.

Let us say that you meet someone, you introduce yourself saying **Hola** , and then you ask **¿Cómo está?** Because you see that it is an old person who you are speaking to, and you want your distance, or at least for now. After that, they ask you **¿Cómo está usted?** (How are you?), and since you are quite polite, and you do not want to make the impression that tourists are unpleasant, you answer **Bien, gracias** (Good, thank you).

Now, just like in English, you will use **Por favor** (Please) and **Gracias** (Thank you). These two are very important words in Spanish, to the point that most will get angry if you do not. Trust me and use my experience.

In fact, in order to illustrate this, let me tell you a story while I was traveling through Buenos Aires.

I was there with one of my closest friends (the one who later got married and most of my adventures were with him) and it was about time to get some food. I remember that we went inside a local restaurant, not a fancy one, and an old woman greeted us. In her broken English, she told us that she did not know many words, so she asked us to speak in Spanish. Obviously, we said, and we started to use (at that point in time) our broken vocabulary. We ordered some steaks, and

asked her to make them a bit rare, since that was how we liked our meat. Now, here is the fun part: We did not say **Gracias** and **Por Favor**, so when we asked, she had the worst look on her face because she thought we were some strange, rude foreigners, when it was not true. Well, when we realized our mistake that we did not say it because we were rude, we did not say it because we did not know the correct terms, and since she did not even understand the most basic English, we could not explain to her that we were not rude or aggressive, we just did not know the words. In the end, she taught us the words, and we made sure to use them after that.

The moral of the story is the following: **Gracias** and **Por Favor** must be your most used words in Spanish, because people will take it personally if you do not use them. In the end, the woman understood, and realized that we did not want to offend her. She even took a picture with us!

Now, let us say that you start a conversation with someone, and you want to know his name and introduce yourself. These questions are quite simple:

¿Cómo te llamas?/¿Cuál es tu nombre? (What is your name?)

Moreover, if they ask your name, the answer will be:

**Me llamo X/Mi nombre es X** (My name is X)

Obviously, replace the X with your name (unless you are a secret agent and your real name is X, in which case, please be my guest!).

Nevertheless, let us leave aside names, and let's go to one of the most important phrases you will learn. In our conversation, you already introduce yourself, and the other person starts on and on in a quick Spanish way (you will definitely find yourself in quite a lot of these

situations, since Spanish speakers love to speak fast). Now, you are in a problem. That is where you say:

**Yo (no) entiendo** - I (don't) understand

In addition, if you have a need to do it, you might always fall back to the tried classic:

**¿Habla inglés?** – Do you speak English?

Let us say that your partner does not know English, and you are in a restaurant. You are quite hungry, and your stomach starts to scream like it has not been fed in a thousand years. The food on the tables next to you seem like a treasure, so that is it, let us ask for a menu! However, as I told you, you will not have any need to point with the fingers to what you need, so here is the phrase that will get you out of trouble:

**Yo quiero un menú** – I want a menu

Most of the big restaurants will have a small translation on the menu in order to see what you are going to eat, and the corresponding prices of said food. Now, here is a small list of ingredients and food that might help you in case the menu of the restaurant that you are in has no translation:

Carne – Meat

Lechuga – Lettuce

Tomate – Tomato

Pan – Bread

Bajas calorías – Low calories

Papas fritas – French fries

Huevo – Eggs

Cerveza – Beer

Vino blanco/Vino tinto – White wine/red wine

Let's look at how you can use it:

**Yo quiero una cerveza** (I want a beer)

**Yo quiero sin lechuga** ( I want it without lettuce)

**Yo quiero pan integral** (I want integral bread)

Keep in mind that the first part of the sentence is the verb right after the subject (Yo quiero – I want). But if you would like to be a bit politer (which I deeply suggest you do), you can also use:

**Quisiera...** - I would like...

You can combine them with the noun or food that you wish to have. One of my personal suggestions is to try the local food and ask for suggestions from the chef or the waiter. They would love to help you to try new tastes. Keep in mind that in most Spanish countries (for example, Argentina or Chile) meat or food that comes from animals is part of almost every meal, so if you have a moral problem with that or you just don't want to eat meat try to find food that has vegetables. Your health and your taste will definitely thank you. I once spent my travels eating meat in almost every meal, and believe me, it was enough for me to avoid meat for a couple of months after I got back home.

Here are a couple of phrases that might help you to understand certain questions that you might hear in restaurants:

**¿Quieres algo para comer?** – Would you like something to eat?

**¿Quieres algo para beber?** - Would you like something to drink?

**¿Qué quieres comer?** – What would you like to eat?

When you read the menu, most restaurants will have food grouped into different kind of categories:

**Una entrada** – An appetizer

**Un plato principal** – A main dish

**Un postre** – A dessert

**Una bebida** – A drink

When you are ready to eat, please remember to use *Quisiera* (I would like) since it's the politest way to address someone that you don't know. Combine *Quisiera* with the items on the menu to tell the waiter what you'd like. For example:

**Una sopa** – A soup

**Una ensalada** – A salad

**El pollo** – The chicken

**La carne** – The meat

**Una agua** – A water

It is the summer, and you are craving a cold beer and a hamburger with fries. In that case, the phrase would be:

**Quisiera una hamburguesa con papas fritas y una cerveza fría, por favor** – I would like to have a hamburger with fries and a cold beer, please.

Now, let us say that you do not want meat. You want to have a salad, with a water, and you want to make it clear that you are a vegetarian or a vegan. The phrase would be:

**Quisiera una ensalada con agua, por favor** – I would like to have a salad and wáter, please.

**Soy vegetariano/vegano** – I'm a vegetarian/vegan

Keep in mind that in most places, you will have a vegetarian option, but it might be harder to find a vegan option. Try to find vegan-friendly restaurants.

Okay, let us move on. You had an amazing meal, and now it is time to pay for it. My honest suggestion is to always have cash with you, not just dollars but also the currency of the country that you are. Always

check with your personal bank before going to see which place is better for you to exchange currency. Sometimes, it is better to exchange in the airports. In addition, many places, like old restaurants and coffee places, do not accept credit cards, and you will have to rely on cash.

Here is the useful phrase for this:

**¿Aceptan tarjeta de crédito/débito?** – Do you accept credit/debit cards?

**¿Cuánto es por todo?** – How much is it for everything?

Keep in mind that many international banks ask clients to inform them if you are going to travel abroad, in order to avoid counterfeits and card cloning. If you believe that your card has been cloned, get in touch with your bank using the international numbers that they provide you with, or use each bank phone app.

Now, you want to use a bathroom; so obviously, you will need to ask for it:

**¿Dónde está el baño?** – Where is the bathroom?

It is always polite to tell the waiter if the food was good or not, and for that, you will use:

**Estuvo delicioso** – That was delicious

**No estuvo delicioso** – That wasn't delicious

Here are some other words that might help you to order food, or to recognize the ingredients:

**Pollo** – Chicken

**Picante** – Spicy

**Café** – Coffee

**Leche** – Milk

**Azucar** – Sugar

**Té con limón** – Tea with Lemon



**Té** – Tea  
**Gaseosa** – Soft drink  
**Mostaza** – Mustard  
**Aceite** – Oil  
**Vinagre** – Vinegar  
**Sopa de Fideos** – Noodle-soup  
**Sopa de cebolla** – Onion soup  
**Sopa de mariscos** – Seafood soup  
**Sopa de pescado** – Sopa de pescado  
**Rosbif** – Roast beef  
**Tocino** – Bacon  
**Chuletas de cerdo** – Pork Chops  
**Ham** – Jamón  
**Atún** – Tuna  
**Langosta** – Lobster  
**Ostras** – Oysters  
**Cangrejo** – Crab  
**Camarones** – Shrimp  
**Palitos de queso/muzarella** – Cheese/Mozarella sticks  
**Bacalao** – Cod

Obviously, you will find a lot of words that aren't contemplated in that list (or in this book) but it would be impossible to write them all. But the guides and lists that I write here are made from the words that I found most useful.

This basic phrase will help you with directions and everything related to it. Let's see an example:

**¿Dónde está el banco?** - Where is the bank?

**¿Dónde está la calle X?** – Where is X Street?

As always, replace the X with the name of the Street that you want to go to.

Let us continue with our hypothetical example: You leave the restaurant, and you wish to visit the National Museum. Let us assume that the Museum is in Alcara Street, but you might be a bit lost. Of course, you might be tempted to ask someone on the street for directions, and obviously, do not forget your manners! To get someone's attention, start by saying:

**Disculpe** – Excuse me

**Con permiso/Perdóname** - Excuse me

**Estoy perdido** – I am lost

Then, the complete phrase would be:

**Disculpe, ¿puede decirme dónde queda la calle Alcara?** –

Excuse me, can you tell me where is Alcara Street?

But, obviously, asking for directions is the first step, but it will be pretty pointless if you don't know how to understand the directions that they give you. So, here's a small list of directions:

**Aquí** – Here

**Allí** - There

**A la derecha** – On the right

**A la izquierda** – On the left

**Derecho** – Straight ahead

**En la esquina** – At the corner

**A una cuadra** – In one (or two, three, etc.) blocks

Okay, let us say that the stranger on the street says that the National Museum is ten blocks from where you are. However, you feel stuffed from all the food you just ate, and you want to take a taxi. Ask that strange man where you can get a taxi:

**¿Dónde puedo encontrar un taxi?** – Where can I get a taxi?

Or you want to get a bus, so you can check out the views:

**¿Dónde está la parada de autobús más cerca?** – Where's the nearest bus stop?

Maybe you want to catch a train:

**¿Dónde está la estación de ferrocarril más cerca?** - Where's the nearest railway station?

Obviously, you want to know how much it costs to reach the museum.

In that case:

**¿Cuánto cuesta un billete para... ?** – How much does a ticket to ...cost?

**Un billete para..., por favor** – A Ticket to... please

You arrive at the Museum, eager to take pictures and listen to the guide. Sometimes you will find a bilingual guide, but if you don't, here are a couple of small basic question words, that will help to get by in almost any common situation you find yourself in:

**¿Quién?** – Who?

**¿Qué?** – What?

**¿Dónde?** – Where?

**¿Cuándo ?** – When?

**¿A qué hora ?** – When/What time?

**¿Por qué ?** – Why?

**¿Cómo?** – How?

**¿Cuántos ?** – How many?

**¿Cada cuánto ?** - How often?

Okay, you enjoyed your time in the museum, you took several pictures and you bought souvenirs for the people back home. Now, it is time to go to the hotel, take a shower, and relax for a while. You call a cab, you

mention your hotel (as if I mentioned before) and when you arrive, you realize that you haven't checked into the hotel. In fact, this gives me the opportunity to tell you about one of my experiences when I went to Santiago de Chile:

When I arrived only with a backpack, the first thing I did was not to check into the hotel (as any normal, rational human being should do), but I went away to take pictures. When it was time to get back, I arrive at the hotel and they informed me that my room was already taken since I had not checked in before. Obviously, I started to panic, and when I panic, I start to talk really fast, but after a small talk with the hotel clerks (who were amazing and obviously have serious experience dealing with people like me), it quickly worked out in my favor (and in fact, I got an even better room!). So, always check in first, leave your belongings, maybe rest for a bit if the trip was quite long or hard (for example, an international flight usually takes about 13-17 hours from Europe to South America), and then go sightseeing. After all, those things will still be there tomorrow, and your body will thank you for it.

When you are going to check into a hotel, the following phrases will be quite useful for you. As always, please keep in mind using *Quisiera* , since using *Quiero* (I want) is a rather authoritative way to address someone, and it is not polite at all (unless you know the other person). This list will not be a comprehensive extensive list, but you will find it useful:

**¿Cuánto cuesta el cuarto?** – How much is the room?

**Quisiera una habitación con una sola cama/con dos camas para esta noche** – I would like a single/doublé room for tonight

**No tengo reserva** – I do not have a reservation

I have a reservation – **Tengo una reserva**

**Tiene...** (jacuzzi, baño privado, televisión, etc) – **Does it have...** (jacuzzi, private bathroom, television, etc.)

¿**Tiene agua caliente?** - Does it have hot water? (This is VERY important, since winters can be really hard if you are not used to it)

¿**Tiene una ducha?** – Does it have a shower?

¿**Puedo ver la habitación?** – May I see the room? (Another important question, so you can see if you like the room, and if not, ask the hotel to change it)

¿**Tiene algo mejor?** – Do you have anything better?

**Ésta es mi maleta** – This is my bag

¿**Cuánto le debo?** – How much do I owe you? (applies not just to hotels, but to any place where you have to pay for anything).

**Aquí tiene mi pasaporte** – Here is my passport.

**Soy Americano/Inglés** – I am American/English

**Me quedaré tres días** – I will be staying here three days.

Remember the numbers in Spanish:

**Uno** – One

**Dos** – Two

**Tres** – Three

**Cuatro** – Four

**Cinco** – Five

**Seis** – Six

**Siete** – Seven

**Ocho** – Eight

**Nueve** – Nine

**Diez** – Ten

**Once** – Twenty

**Doce** – Twelve

**Trece** – Thirteen

**Catorce** – Fourteen

**Quince** – Fifteen

**Dieciseis** – Sixteen

**Diecisiete** – Seventeen

**Dieciocho** – Eighteen

**Diecinueve** – Nineteen

**Veinte** – Twenty

Then it follows the English numeration: Veintiuno (Twenty-one), Veintidos (Twenty-two) and so on and so forth.

Now, let's tackle months, days, and seasons, which you will find quite useful in your daily trips (and especially when it comes to planning for excursions)

Un año A year

(Prospero) Feliz año nuevo! Happy New year!

El lunes On Monday

El martes On Tuesday

El miércoles On Wednesday

El jueves On Thursday

El viernes On Friday

El sábado On Saturday

El domingo On Sunday

La primavera Spring

El verano Summer

El otoño Fall

El invierno Winter

En enero In January

En febrero In February

En marzo In March

En abril In April

En mayo In May

En junio In June

En Julio In July

En agosto In August

En septiembre In September

En octubre In October

En noviembre In November

En diciembre In December

But let's move away from our situation, and let's imagine that you are on a really tight budget, and the place you are staying has its own kitchen and fridge. You go to the local market, but you find yourself lost. Don't despair! That's why I'm here.

As usual, here's a small list of words and phrases that will help you shop for groceries, first in Spanish and then the corresponding translation in English:

El carrito de compras Grocery cart

La leche Milk

La crema Cream

El queso Cheese

Los huevos Eggs

La mantequilla Butter

Una lata de A can of

Un kilo de A kilo of

Una caja de A box of

Un pomo de A jar of  
Una botella de A bottle of  
Una docena de A dozen of  
Medio kilo de Half a kilo of  
Carne Meat  
Pollo Chicken  
El pavo Turkey  
Las salchichas Sausages  
Jamón Ham  
El arroz Rice  
Maiz Corn  
Frijoles Beans  
Almendras Almonds

This list will give a perfect opportunity to go to any market and buy anything that you might want to prepare. But let's go back to the other example that we were using.

You already did your check in, you got in the shower to wash off the tiredness of the trip, and you want to go to explore the city and meet new people. Here is a small list of phrases that will help you to meet people. During my trip to Spain, I used the following questions and got a couple of good friends like these (some of them I even still talk today!).

**Repita eso, por favor** – Please repeat that (perfect when someone tries to explain what they do for a living, or what their hobbies are)

**Por favor, no hable rápido** – Please, do not speak fast (this will not just go perfectly with the previous one, but it will be



quite used since Spaniards really love to talk fast and quick, and things might get lost in translation)

**Voy a casa/al hotel** – I'm going home/back to the hotel (perfect to close out the night)

**Vivo cerca del mar** – I live close to the ocean

**¿Por favor, puede ayudarme?** – Please, can you help me?

**Muchas gracias** – Thank you very much

**De nada** – You are welcome

**Adiós, hasta mañana** – Goodbye, see you tomorrow

**Hasta luego** – See you later

**¡Espérame!** - Wait for me!

**Me gust air al cine** – I like to go to the movies

**¡Párese aquí, voy a sacar una foto!** - Stay here, I am going to take a photo!

**¿Podría tomarnos una foto?** – Could you take a picture of us?

**Comprendo** – I understand

**No comprendo** – I do not understand

Now, let's say that the hotel where you had a reservation has a football or a tennis field. Or maybe, you planned your trip in the winter and you want to ski down the mountains (there are several places where you can do it, especially in the southern provinces of Argentina, more on that later). Obviously, you need phrases to do that, and I've got you covered. The following phrases will help you to do it:

¿Hay una piscina en el hotel? Is there a pool in the hotel?

¿Hay Salvavidas? Is there a lifeguard?

Una toalla de playa A beach towel

Un sillón de playa A beach chair

Una sombrilla de playa A beach umbrella

	Una pelota de playa	A beach ball
	Esquis acuáticos	Water skies
	¿Dónde está la playa?	Where is the beach?
	Equipo de buceo.	Diving equipment
	¡Vamos jugar al tennis!	Lets play tennis!
¿Hay una cancha por aqui?		Is there a court nearby?
¿Cuánto cobran por hora?		How much do they charge per hour?
	¿Puedo alquilar una raqueta?	Can I rent a racket?
	¿Vende pelotas?	Do you sell balls?
	¿Tienen funicular?	Do they have ski lifts?
	¿Cuanto cobran?	How much does it cost?
	¿Puedo alquilar equipo?	Can I rent equipment?
	¿Puedo alquilar esquis?	Can I rent skis?
	Palos	Poles

See? It is not that hard to make yourself understood in Spanish. Keep this guide around and you will find yourself out of trouble in no time.

But you might be wondering, how do I deal with managing money? That's a quite important part of this lesson, and it will be quite simple to teach you. Keep in mind that in some countries (like Argentina or Venezuela) the currency exchange rate in dollars changes from one day to the next, or even the same day. Be mindful of it, and always exchange your money in authorized places, and avoid people on the streets that might want to offer to help in exchanging money (even if they claim to give you a better currency exchange). Those people often work with other petty thieves, so just ignore them and continue.

The following phrases will help you to deal with money:

¿Dónde hay un banco para cambiar moneda extranjera? Where is the currency exchange?

Quisiera cambiar I would like to change

Cheques de viajero Traveler's checks

¿Dónde está la caja? Where is the cashier window?

Dinero Money

Dólares Dollars

¿A qué hora abren/cierran? At what time do they open/close?

¿Puedo cambiar un cheque personal? Can I cash a personal check?

¿A cuánto está el cambio hoy del dólar? What is the currency exchange rate in dollars?

¿Cuál es el interés que usted cobran? What commission do you charge?

En billetes In bills

En vuelto In small change

La firma Signature

¿Dónde debo firmar? Where do I sign?

Most of the time, if you go to a bank, you will be able to find someone who speaks English, in order to avoid any kind of confusion about money. During my trips to South America, in all the banks that I have ever been, I always found someone who spoke my language. In those cases, when we are talking about exchanging currency, I prefer to speak in English, since I don't want there to be any confusion or mistake. Try to use one of the many international banks that you might find on your trips.

During your trips, you will be able to find many signs with images on them. Several of them will have a drawing alongside the sign, but sometimes there won't be any drawing, and you will have to know what they mean. Do not panic because, like I said a thousand times before,

I'm here for you. The following is a small representation of the most important signs that you might find on your trips (I know that I did!):

¡Socorro! Help me!

¡Peligro! Danger!

¡Veneno! Poison!

¡Prohibido! Forbidden!

¡Prohibido fumar! No smoking!

¡Prohibido estacionarse! No parking!

Caliente Hot

Frio Cold

¡Fuego! Fire!

¡Es una emergencia! It is an emergency!

¡Dése prisa! Hurry up!

If, by any chance, you find yourself in a dangerous situation, do not hesitate to call the police or an ambulance. Even if they don't understand your English, they will be glad to help you with whatever need or problem you might have. In most Spanish speaking countries, healthcare is free for everyone, but you always have the option to pay for private healthcare. I deeply suggest you take out travel insurance just in case. Always keep in mind that in places like Argentina, public healthcare, while absolutely professional, is a bit lacking in places or technology, since it depends on the money that the government locates to it, and that might mean that during difficult financial times, the hospital might be low in supplies. Don't worry, they will treat you just fine, and they don't discriminate or have any hard feelings against foreigners or tourists. In fact, when it comes to tourists, they will always keep an eye out for you, and might recommend you places to visit after you get out of the hospital.

Keep in mind that if you are actually under medical treatment that requires you to take pills or shots, the doctors need to know what kind of pills you are taking. A good friend of mine had to get a kidney transplant years ago and had to take 10 pills every day. Luckily, most of those pills had to be taken in the morning, without having any food before. But once, he almost passed out from the intense heat in the Spanish summer, and his doctor had told him that his pills might affect him in that kind of weather. So, being the kind of guy he is, he wrote down a list of his pills and the amount he has to take every day, along with a small note noting what kind of disease he had. That really came in handy when the medics saw him on the verge of passing out and tried to help him. Be like my friend, write down a list of your pills, what kind of medical treatment you are under, and in some extreme cases, a contact number with someone you trust. Take that note everywhere you go, especially in touristic zones.

But let's say that something happens on your trip (I really hope not!) and you have to go to the hospital or visit a doctor. Aside from taking with you the note that I mentioned earlier (and I really encourage you to do it), you might want to talk to him about your symptoms, or where it hurts. Here's a small list for you, not just to explain to your doctor what might be bothering you, but also to understand what they might be saying to you:

Necesito un médico. I need a doctor.

Necesito una enferma. I need a nurse.

¿Qué le pasa? What is wrong?

Me siento enfermo. I feel sick.

Tengo dolor de cabeza. I have a headache.

Pienso que tengo la gripe. I think that I have the flu.

Me duele aqui. It hurts here.

Tengo mareos. I feel dizzy.

Tengo nauseas. I feel nauseous.

Tengo fiebre I have fever.

Tengo dolor. I have pain.

Tengo dolor de estómago. I have stomach ache.

Soy diabético. I am a diabetic.

Tengo dolor de espalda. I have backache.

No me siento bien. I do not feel good.

Tengo dolor en el pecho. I have chest-pain.

Tuve un ataque de corazón. I had a heart attack.

Tengo calambres. I have cramps.

¿Tengo un hueso roto? Do I have a broken bone?

Tengo un dolor de garganta. I have a sour throat.

Soy alérgico I am allergic

¡Socorro! Help!

¡Llame una ambulancia,rapido! Call an ambulance quickly!

¿Es grave? Is it serious?

¿Tengo que ir al hospital? Do I need to go to the hospital?

No es grave. It is not serious.

No es contagioso. It is not contagious

Acuéstese Lie down

Respire Breathe

Abra la boca Open your mouth.

Quitese la ropa Take off your clothes.

Vistase Get dressed

¿Va a darme una receta? Are you going to give me a prescription?

Necesito algo para la gripe. I need something for the flu.

Necesito algo para un resfriado (catarro). I need something for a cold.

¿Puede darme una receta para esto? Can you give me a prescription for this?

¿Cuántas veces por día? How many times per day?

Obviously, I really hope that you will not find yourself in such a situation, and that you can enjoy your trip through several Spanish countries.

Speaking of trips, I have not taught you the several phrases about how to travel using the train or other ways of public transportation. What kind of teacher I am?

First, let me tell you a story about my time in Madrid (more on that city later!): I had to take the train at 09:00 hours, but one thing that I did not realize is that the trains leave on time. They are not going to wait for you, because it is your responsibility to be there at the corresponding time. However, being a bit lost and dazzled by the tremendous city that is Madrid, I arrived ten minutes late, thinking that ten minutes was nothing, and I would obviously find the train there. I was wrong. The train left on time, forcing me to buy another ticket, spend more money because I was used to trains being late, so I had to spend ten more minutes in the train station, ten minutes that I could have spent traveling. The moral of this story is to always be 10 to 20 minutes early before the train leaves the station, and do not expect every country to have the same kind of delays that you might find in your country.

In any case, learn from my experience, and use the following phrases that will help you to avoid the same kind of problems that I had (but they actually make a funny story to tell the kids!):

Aquí es la entrada. Here is the entrance.

Allí es la llegada. The arrival is over there.

¿Dónde está la partida? Where is the departure?

¿Dónde está la salida? Where is the exit?

Una billete de Ida. One way ticket.

Quisiera un billete de ida y vuelta. I would like a round trip ticket.

¿Va usted a...? Do you go to...?

¿Cuántas paradas? How many stops?

¿Hay un metro aqui? Is there a subway here?

¿Dónde se encuentra la estación mas cerca? Where is the closest underground station?

¿Dónde puedo comprar una ficha? Where can I buy a token?

¿Tiene un mapa que indique las paradas? Do you have a map where it is shown the stops?

¿Dónde está la parada de autobus? Where is the bus-stop?

¿Cuál colectivo/autobús debo tomar para ir a...? Which bus should I take to go...?

¿Tengo que hacer trasbordo? Do I have to change?

¿Cuánto tengo que pagar por la tarifa/token? How much is the fare/token?

¿Necesito tener cambio exacto? Do I need exact change?

¿Cuál es la línea que va a...? Which is the line that goes to..?

¿Dónde está la sala de espera? Where is the waiting room?

¡Tire! Pull!

¡Empuje! Push!

Frente a, junto a Opposite of, next to

¿Hay un ascensor? Is there an elevator?

¿Cuánta distancia hay desde aquí? How far is it from here?

¿Por dónde se va hacia...? Which way is it to...?

Estamos perdidos. We are lost.



¿Sigo derecho? Do I go straight?

¿Tiene usted un mapa de carreteras? Do you have a roadmap?

¡Siga derecho! Go straight ahead!

¡Gire en la esquina! Turn at the corner!

¡Gire a la izquierda! Turn to the left!

¡Gire a la derecha! Turn to the right!

¡Vaya al primer cruce.! Go to the next crossroad!

¡Tome la carretera a.....! Take the road to...!

¿Tiene un plano de la ciudad? Do you have a street-map?

¿Dónde está el barco/ el puerto? Where is the boat / the port?

¿Puede darme algo contra el mareo? Do you have anything against sea sick?

Quisiera un pasaje. I would like a ticket.

¿Cuándo sale el próximo bote? When does the next boat leave?

¿Cuánto dura el cruce? How long does the crossing take?

¿Hacemos escala en algunos puertos? Do we stop at any other port?

¿Cuándo desembarcamos? No me siento bien. When do we land? I do not feel good.

Quiero un pasaje para un cabina. I want a ticket for a cabin.

Quiero un ticket para la clase turista. I want a ticket for the tourist class.

¿Cuánto cuesta? How much does it cost?

Now, the part of phrases that you will find more useful than the rest:

List for shopping!

Thanks to the difference in currency exchange rates, you will be able to buy a lot for cheap, and that will work out in your favor. I personally collect a souvenir from every city that I visit, from a postcard, a small sticker, or even stones that I find on the beach. If you are like me, the following list of phrases will help you (keep in mind that some of these

we've already seen before, but it is always great to have them in just one place):

Busco I am looking for

¿Cuánto es? How much is it?

Por favor, muéstreme Please show me

Aquí está Here it is

Necesito un intérprete. I need an interpreter

¿Hay alguien aquí que hable inglés? Does anyone here speak English?

¿Puede usted ayudarme, por favor? Can you help me please?

No me gusta. I do not like it.

¿Tiene algo...? Do you have something...?

Más grande Larger

Más pequeño Smaller

Más barato Cheaper

Mejor Better

¿En qué puedo servirle? What can I do for you?

¡Fantástico! ¿Cuánto cuesta todo? Great! How much is it?

¿Dónde se puede encontrar... Where can I find...

Una farmacia A pharmacy

Una librería A bookstore

Un almacén. A department store

Una panadería A bakery

Una tienda de ropa A clothing store

Una tienda de comestibles A grocery store

Un supermercado A supermarket

Una zapatería A shoe store

Una ferretería A hardware store

Una tienda de regalos A gift shop

Una floreria A florist

Una joyeria A jewelry

¿Acepta tarjetas de crédito? Do you take credit cards?

¿Puedo pagar con un cheque de viajero? Can I pay with a traveler's check?

Un puesto de periódicos A news stand

Una juguetería A toy store

¿Puede envolverlo, por favor? Will you wrap it, please?

Me lo llevo. I will take it

Eso es todo por ahora. That's all I want for now

Congratulations, you bought a lot of stuff. But what about the trip back home? You didn't think of that, did you? Don't worry, I made the same mistake, not once, but twice! Both times, I got carried away with offers and discounts, that when the time came to pack up and go back home, I ended up with extra luggage that I didn't have before. If this happens to you, please check with your airline to see how much they charge for extra luggage on the plane. Most of the time, airline companies have discounts, depending on the country that you are visiting and the time of year (for example, they know that at Christmas or holidays people might buy a lot, so they charge a small fee to accommodate people like me).

So now comes the time to go through customs, both to enter and to leave the country. This could be a rather hard process, but most of the time they have interpreters, or the customs agents know English, so you will find no problem dealing with them. But let's say that you just arrived in a Spanish country and want to try the language. That's why I'm here, and here it is, a small comprehensive list of the words and

sentences that you might hear during your dealings with the local customs:

Buenos dias Good morning

Me llamo... My name is...

Aqui tiene mi pasaporte. Here is my passport

Soy americano(a) / español(a). I am American / Spanish.

Mi dirección es... My address is...

Mis documentos My documents

Me quedaré aquí un mes I am staying a month.

Me quedaré aquí durante una semana I am staying one week.

Me quedaré aqui unas dias. I am staying here a few days.

Este es mi bolsa. This is my bag.

Estoy visitando a mis familiares. I am visiting relatives.

Estoy en un viaje de negocios. I am on a business trip.

Estoy de vacaciones I am on vacation

Estoy en el hotel... I am staying at...

Estas son mis maletas These are my suitcases

No tengo nada que declarar. I do not have anything to declare

Un carton de cigarillos A carton of cigarettes

Una botella de vino A bottle of wine

Una botella de whisky A bottle of whisky

Un carrito para maletas A baggage cart

¿Cuántas maletas tiene usted? How many suitcases do you have?

Me falta una maleta. I am missing a suitcase

¿Tengo que pagar impuestos? Do I have to pay duty?

Sólo tengo... I only have...

Keep in mind the legal requirements to enter a country, and what things are allowed on the plane. This might change from country to country, and some of them might even ask you to prove that you have the necessary money to spend during the duration of your trip. Some of them might ask you to show that you have a return ticket already, and that it corresponds with the dates that you are staying. Sadly, there is not a universal rule for this, so you will have to check before going. One important piece of advice that I learned the hard way: Some countries will tax you on the things that you bought, or the things that you carry with you. Be aware of that so you will not find yourself in the same situation that I found myself in (and without any money left! Don't be me).

Try to memorize these question words (or write them down), and while you start to practice them, you will start noticing the patterns in Spanish grammar (some of these patterns are the same in English, so that might help you practice it), and as you learn new words on your trips, you will be able to combine them. Do not be afraid to make mistakes, because practice will make you a master.

In the following chapters, I will dedicate special attention to the differences in every country you might visit.

Jump ahead to the chapter that talks about the country you are most interested in visiting, and you will find a quick guide on food, places, museums, and interesting places to visit in each country.

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# CHAPTER 2: SPAIN

## QUICK USEFUL DATA

Currency: Euro

Electricity Socket: 230V AC electricity. If you stay in a hotel, most of them can offer you an adaptor free of charge (or with a minimum fee). Sometimes, if you stay in an Airbnb place, the owner will give you an adapter (I know it happened to me when I was in Spain!). In any case, make sure to check with the place you are staying in to see if they can give one to you. If you decide to buy one before you go, check Amazon.com or Ebay.com to see which are the best to buy. Remember: always buy from premium sellers, in order to avoid counterfeits.

Visa: Thanks to the EU agreements in terms of travels requirements, visas are not required If you stay up to 90 days, and luckily it applies to both EU and non-EU citizens, Nevertheless, for citizens from EU countries that are not part of the Schengen agreement and non-EU Citizens are required to carry a valid Schengen Visa to be able to enter the country.The following list is a comprehensive list of all the countries that signed the Schengen agreement.

Austria

Belgium

Czech Republic

Denmark

Estonia

Finland

France

Germany



Greece  
Hungary  
Iceland  
Italy  
Latvia  
Liechtenstein  
Lithuania  
Luxembourg  
Malta  
Netherlands  
Norway  
Poland  
Portugal  
Slovakia  
Slovenia  
Sweden  
Switzerland

If your plans suddenly change and you wish (or need) to get a job, or you want to stay longer than 90 days in Spain, you will need to apply for a student or work and residency visa which will be far more difficult. One of my closest relatives went on a trip to Barcelona, fell in love with a lovely girl and had to get a residency visa. It took him quite a while and he had to get back to his country before his visa was approved. Before you book your trip, call your embassy and make sure what requirements they have, and what the requisites to get it are. Do not be like my friend!

**Safety**

One of the best facts about Spain is the safety, since it is one of the best places to go on vacation since it is considered one of the most safest countries in the continent, with little to no serious crime (as of 2018) and most travelers should not have any big problems. With that out of the way, Spain is a country who that has a very important tourism industry, and just like any city that thrives with tourism, the big cities are a target for thieves and scammers so, if you want my personal advice, make sure that your travel assistance covers that kind of problem.

And in touristic places, you might find that there are a lot of pocket thieves,so I give you the advice that my father once told me:be aware of your surroundings and your belongings.If you have the feeling that someone is defrauding you, call the police or your guide to see if you are right. Sometimes it is best to be wrong and not lose money or your wallet. If someone you don't know asks you to do something that doesn't feel right, just walk away. I suggest getting a travel guide, but if you want to travel alone, be mindful of your surroundings. It always pays to be careful. Obviously, do not be scared, just be aware.

### **Languages that you might find there:**

Luckily to the education and the enormous advance of Internet every day, several people can speak good English in the major touristic cities (for example, Madrid and Barcelona), and obviously English is spoken at the biggest coastal resorts. This wasn't always like this: During the reign of Generalissimo Franco, teaching that language was forbidden, and even movies had to be dubbed into Spanish by law, to the point that most of the oldest generation of people have never seen movies in English before, or if they had, they prefer it in the Spanish version. It was so ingrained into their culture, that some video games for the

PlayStation console were dubbed in Spain (and now are worth quite a lot of money on the collector's market).

If you stay away from the main touristic places, and particularly inland towns or villages, you will not be able to find many people who speak English, and you will be finding a lot of people speaking local dialects like Catalán or Andaluz.

Even if you do not find English everywhere, the Spanish people are quite enthusiastic about their language. If you are armed with a couple of useful phrases and try to communicate with them, Spanish speaking people will definitely love it, and be more open to guide you and help you with any problem or inconvenience that you might have.

Now you might be asking which time is best to visit Spain, and the answer is quite simple: Any time of the year! Spain is a fantastic place with several different climates, so you will always find something to do. But, if you really want to enjoy Spain and its beautiful views and beaches, then Summer is the best time to go!

Summer in Spain is not only the best time for tourists that love the beach, but it is also the best time to find offers. A lot of malls and big international markets have discounts on everything, especially electronics. But there's a lot of problems with going in the summer, and one of the main problems is the heat. It can get quite hot in the afternoon, so if you are traveling to central or southern Spain in summer, take care of your health and body. Drink a lot of water, stay hydrated, and always wear white clothes. Temperatures in Seville and Cordoba regularly reach about 100°F (about 40 degrees) during the months of July and August, so, unless you are going to a beach (and even so!), try to plan your trip for another time if possible.

So, if you have a problem with this, or you think that your health might be affected (if you have a heart condition, or any kind of renal insufficiency, please check with your doctor) I would suggest avoiding the Summer. In my personal recollection and suggestion, the time that most enjoyed it was during September/October, where the climate was nice, and there weren't many people around. And since a lot of the touristic places are open all year long, there wasn't a problem when I went to visit them.

### **Budget**

There are so many different types of travel inside Spain (plane, train, bus, subway, etc.) that a daily budget is rather difficult to suggest. However, from my personal and my friends' experience, we know that it might be possible to travel around Spain for as little as \$50-90 a day, depending, of course, on what kind of accommodations you prefer as that will be the bulk of your budget. Food and beverages are rather inexpensive (obviously, it will depend on what kind of places you choose to eat, and local restaurants are quite cheap), and the transport in Spain is quite cheap and very efficient.

If you are on a tight budget, do not go to Spain during Christmas and New Year, since that is when many tourists go to have fun, and take pictures. During those dates, hotels and accommodation will be more expensive, and you might not be able to find an available place to stay (unless you plan the trip a year in advance, which, if you have the opportunity, I highly suggest you do).

Here is a rough list of budget for one person:

*Accommodation:*

Budget: Dorm €20-30 (\$25-35) / Private €55-65 (\$65-75)

Mid-Range: €65 – 140 (\$75-165)

Splurge: €150+ (\$180+)

*Food (most of the times it means a meal for one, but you might be able to find a meal for two in some places)*

When it comes to food, this is where I spent a bit more than usual. Especially since that's one of the things that I always love about taking a trip: Eating the local food. So I ended up spending about €20 per day since I always had lunch in local restaurants (sometimes I used to eat in a Mcdonald's or any other fast food chain, but those times were fewer). I had luck that my hotel offered free breakfast, so I always had a really big breakfast and then didn't eat anything until dinner.

About transportation, I can deeply suggest you take the metro or the bus. They both cover almost the entire country, and you will find it quite cheap (about €1 per trip). The trains that connect the cities are a bit expensive (€15) but they are perfect to save time traveling in the night. Obviously, like any other big city, there are taxis, but my experience always tells me to set a defined fare before taking one.

Keep in mind that these prices are approximations, since many times there will be offers, or higher prices depending on the economy, inflation, etc.

## **PLACES TO GO:**

### **Barcelona**

There are so many reasons that tourists go to the lovely and enchanting city of Barcelona, and one of them is the fascinating blend of ancient architectural treasures alongside contemporary masterpieces. It isn't weird to find a fantastic old church close to a modern subway. This mix charms people, and makes you fall in love with the city. For example, on one of my trips, I completely fell in love with one of the oldest

museums in the city: Gaudi's Sagrada Familia. If you love art and paintings, this will be the place to go. Follow the guides, and keep in mind that in many places, you cannot take pictures to avoid damage to the paintings, and if you want to have a souvenir, you will have to buy one. If you have doubts, ask the security guards or just follow the posting signs. Most of the times there are signs in different languages saying what can you do and what you cannot do inside the museum.

Now, if you want to get away from art and old paintings (I know I do, no matter how lovely and fantastic those are), Barcelona nightlife is amazing. They are quite proud of being one of the best places to drink and dining, and if you spend a few days there and you will soon be eating at midnight and having fun into the early hours of the morning. My personal advice here would be quite simple: You know that old phrase that says, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do"? Well, just apply it to Barcelona. Just follow the mood of the city, and you will find yourself having the time of your life. Enjoying the culture and the people in Barcelona was definitely one from my bucket list in my time in Spain.

If you are a football fan, you really must visit The Camp Nou, the stadium of Barcelona FC. It is considered one of the most fantastic stadiums in the world, and if you can get tickets, I would deeply suggest getting them. It is an amazing experience, especially if they are playing against Real Madrid, their most important rival. I had the opportunity to see one of their matches in the Copa del Rey (King's Cup), and I considered it one of the most amazing experiences of my life. When Lionel Messi (the Argentinian striker who is considered one of the best of all times, even surpassing Diego Maradona and Pelé) scored for the win, the entire stadium went crazy and the sound was incredible. But,

unlike you might be thinking, it is quite safe, and the Spaniards were quite friendly to someone who didn't know much about the sport itself. Other places to go is the Avenida de la Diagonal (Diagonal Avenue), a fantastic avenue where a lot of important buildings, with the interesting mix that I mentioned earlier. Some of those important buildings are quite old and are amazing places to take pictures. Here's a small list of them (but they are not the only ones in there, and like in most cities, you will have to explore the city to get the most out of it):

- **Palacio del Barón de Quadras** – It is the former place of the Museum of the Music and actually hosts the Casa Asia de Barcelona. Designed by Josep Puig I Cadafalch
- **Casa Comalat** – Designed by Salvador Valeri
- **Iglesia del Carmen** – Designed by José Doménech y Estapa, one of the main representations of the Byzantine style.
- **Casa Serra** – Also designed by Josep Puig I Cadafalch, it is now a school.
- **Casa de Terrades** – Most known as **Casa de les Punxes** and is another designed by Josep Puig i Cadafalch.
- **Palacio Real de Pedralbes** – Built for Alfonso XIII and its gardens by Francesc Nebot
- **Torre Banco Sabadell** – Designed by Francesc Mitjans, really close to the Plaza del Cinco de Oros.
- **Hotel Rey Juan Carlos I** – Along with Torre Agbar, it is one of the most modern buildings in the avenue, and it is a 5 stars hotel. Reservations in here will definitely be expensive but definitely worth it. Check with one year advance.
- **Torre Agbar** – Designed by Jean Nouvel, right along the Plaza de las Glorias Catalanas.

- **Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de Pompeya** – Designed by Enric Sagnier

When it comes to commerce, the Diagonal Avenue is one of the main commercial places of the city, especially when it comes to jewelry. Here is a small list of the places that I suggest visiting and while they are like most malls in the rest of the worlds, they have a personal Spaniard touch that you will not be able to find anywhere else:

- El Corte Inglés Avenida Diagonal
- L'illa Diagonal
- Glories
- Diagonal Mar

However, let's leave shopping aside, and let's go back to explore the culture and museums. I would really suggest you go to the Salvador Dalí Museum, in Catalonia, inside Barcelona. Dali is buried there in a crypt below the stage.

In this museum, there are displays of the biggest and most interesting collection of works by Salvador Dalí, and from what a guide there told me, apparently they were from his own private collection. Also, besides Dali's paintings, there are Dalí sculptures, collages, and other curiosities that could only come from Dalí's imagination. One of the main attractions of the museum is a three-dimensional anamorphic installation with personalized pieces of furniture, that, when looked at from a distance, looks like the face of Mae West (a world-renowned American actress, singer, comedian, and writer, and a personal friend of Salvador Dalí).

If you are curious about his crypt, he's buried below the stage floor, right under the glass geodesic dome cupola that crowns the stage of the old theater. The space that the audience in the theater used has been transformed into a courtyard open to the sky, with several Dionysian



nude figurines standing in the old balcony windows. Near the center of this space, there is a fantastic installation made by Dalí himself, which it is inside an automobile. I know it sounds crazy, but you really must see it for yourself.

As I said before, the Museum holds the largest collection of major works by Dalí in one single location. Some of the works are *Port Alguer* , *Soft self-portrait with grilled bacon* , *Poetry of America – The Cosmic Athletes* , *Leda Atomica* and *Christ de la Tramuntana*.

Also included, and something that I didn't know about beforehand, is a collection of holographic art (I thought that the holographic was modern, how wrong I was!), which is an amazing experience by itself, and a collection of jewelry he designed. If you do not know exactly what surrealism is, let me tell you that there is another room that contains a bathtub and a side table with an open drawer and a lamp, all of which had been installed upside down on the ceiling by Dalí himself. Yes, as you might be thinking, surrealism is sometimes weird. In the museum, you will be able to buy souvenirs, books, and pictures of Dalí. If you are a fan of surrealism, you have a passing knowledge on the subject, or even if you are curious about what it is all about, I would really suggest taking the time to go and visit it. You will not regret it.

However, let us get away from Barcelona, and let's go to Madrid!

## **Madrid**

If you fell in love with Barcelona, just wait to see Madrid. Madrid is a fantastic city, full of life, tourists, and energy that oozes down every street. It is one of those cities that feels alive and vibrant 24/7, and especially when it comes to midnight! It is famous for its museums, the non-stop nightlife, and the amazing and incredible cuisine. Believe me,

while I managed to get some really good food in Barcelona, Madrid is in another entire level.

But let's first talk about the cultural aspect and the museums.

In the east side of the city, you have the *Círculo de Bellas Artes*, a fantastic place that is always mentioned as a must go place when visiting Madrid (in fact, one of my cab drivers actually recommended this place when he found out that I was a big theater fan and frustrated actor!). The *Círculo de Bellas Artes* is basically a center for the entire artistic life in the city, and it is a center for experiencing all kind of different arts, from theater to dramatic readings, paintings. And it even offers classes! It is like getting to learn about democracy in the Greek Parthenon! One of the things that the driver told me to check out was the rooftop terrace, which it is one of those places that is a favorite for all the people that visit the *Círculo*. This rooftop has become a favorite hangout for locals and visitors, especially on summer evenings, when you are perfectly positioned to admire a gorgeous sunset. It is a multidisciplinary center, and in it, activities of all kind take place, from plastic arts to literature, but without excluding things like science, philosophy, filmmaking, or scenic arts.

The main objective of the *Círculo de Bellas Artes* (CBA for short) is to promote the main artistic and cultural manifestations from a plural perspective. In this place, there are around one thousand (yes, that is right!) annual events coordinated by the different areas: expositions, conferences, seminars, workshops, concerts, theater and dance representations, filmmaking, etc.

It has several divisions, which specialize in the different forms of arts, for example:

**Plastic Arts:** Drawing and painting expositions, sculptures, installations, photography, digital art, ceramics, performances and other different and current manifestations of the plastic arts take place in one of its four expositions room: Picasso, Minerva, Goya, and Juana Mordó.

**Scenic Arts – Theater, Music and Dancing:** The CBA organize any kind of concert, theater plays and dancing, contests, dramatic readings and concerts, amongst other artistic expressions. It has one theater room: the Sala Fernando de Rojas.

In addition, for a while, it even had its own radio show! Sadly, it had to be cut due to budgetary reasons, but there are talks to start it again due to the importance that it had on the propagation of music and all cultural aspects. Let us hope they do.

If you are like me, the Círculo de Bellas Artes is a place that you don't want to miss.

There is another one complementary to the CBA, and it is the Teatros del Canal, which is sometimes considered by many as one of the most modern and recent theaters in Madrid, whose programme features contemporary dance and theater. It was built in the last decade, and while most theaters would take several years to become well known, the Teatros del Canal managed to do it rather quickly, and that's all because of its amazing mix of different arts, from cabaret shows to opera, using their two theaters. Obviously, like most modern theaters in the world, it also offers you guided tours if you want to see what makes the place such a magic theater. My cab driver (basically a portable Trip Advisor!) said that there are ghosts in there, but I've never seen one. If you do, take a picture!

There's also an Egyptian temple in Madrid, so you might want to visit it before planning your trip to Egypt! It's named Templo de Debod. This

Egyptian structure, which is located right on the outskirts of the Parque del Oeste, is considered about 2.200 years old and is dedicated to the gods Amun and Isis. It was sent, block by block, by the Egyptian government in 1968 in thanking Spain for its help. Can you imagine the enormous amount of work that it took to do it? Tearing it down, and then rebuilding it again in another country. The temple was built during the reign of Pharaoh Ptolomeo IV Filoraptor, and later decorated by the Nubian king Adijalamani of Meroe. It is one of those places that you don't want to miss, because it is amazing, and is an experience that you really won't forget. Take your time to go, and you will thank me later.

But enough of culture, let's talk about the nightlife!

One thing that you must be aware of when you go to Spain is that Spanish People love to stay out late. And, while we are on the subject of socializing, Spaniards run on a completely different clock than us mere humans. In Spain, restaurants may close during the afternoon (so plan accordingly!) but they will stay open much later. It isn't uncommon to stay out past midnight on a weeknight, and until the sun comes out on the weekends.

The nightlife in Madrid is quite varied, with several places like the Literary quarter, which is considered one of the most famous places in the city, since no matter what day you are there, or what the weather is like, there's always something to do, from listening to local underground jazz bands, to a poetry reading night, with a special night dedicated entirely to old classic Hollywood films. The Literary Quarter is located right next to Plaza de Santa Ana, and you won't miss it when you are there. Try to take time from your trip to go and have the night of your life.

While you are in this neighborhood, you will quickly realize that this place specializes in the diversity and heterogeneity of its nightlife, mixing up styles, ages and all kind of leisure habits. If you think that the Santiago Bernabeú stadium is the go-to place to see a football match, then you will be correct to think this neighborhood of as the go-to to enjoy an amazing night. It's surrounded by pedestrian areas, and this makes this place a fantastic place to go out at night, since there won't be any cars, except the police just making sure everyone is enjoying it. Be warned that the neighborhood is a bit of a maze, with several narrow streets and small alleys, but unlike the alleys that you might be familiar with, these alleys are well lit and in them you will find several establishments, and most of the time they will have special offers on drinks (have 2, pay for 1 is the most common) and from the outside you will be able to see the kind of atmosphere they have and pick one that suits your needs.

You will quickly find out that this place is famous with students from all over the world and actors from tv and theater. It is not uncommon to find a familiar popular face having a drink right next to you, but if you want my opinion, unless they seem like that they would enjoy it or like it, just don't bother them. Remember: They also want to blow some steam off, and not being recognized would be one way to achieve that. Going back to the subject of discos and pubs, most of them will be open all night long, so if your plan includes dancing until the sun appears in the sky, then you will find several places to do it. But be warned that you will be completely exhausted in the morning! I used to do it when I travelled back when I was young, and I told myself that I wouldn't do it anymore since I got older and have no preferences for dancing (and my

knee injury obviously doesn't help!). If you are one of the all-night-long-dancers that populate the world, by all means, go and have fun!.

Some bars will make it possible to have dinner, and they offer the usual food that you might find in bars and pubs around the world: Hamburguers and pizzas. I absolutely prefer the former to the latter, and in the Decadente bar you will find the best hamburguer in the entire city at night.

Right from there, there is a place that you might find familiar: Café Central. Like many other cities in the world (for example, New Orleans), Madrid has an underground jazz scene, and Café Central is the place where they go to play and show their talent. It is one of those places that makes you fall in love with the place, from the instant that you enter and see the old decorations hanging in the walls, and then have a drink, enjoy small talk and just listen to the performers. If you want my advice, and you will do great to follow it, try to book a seat around the grand piano. When it starts playing, you will realize how right I was: This is the best place to chill out in the entire city of Madrid.

But let's say that you want something more jovial, more fun, more lively, then I can recommend to you a couple of places that I got to visit during my last trip there. I went because one of my friends insisted on it, and I figured that I had nothing to lose. So we went to Joy Eslava, right along the Puerta del Sol, a club that started as a theater and now is a disco. Somehow, it managed to stay relevant, even when a lot of competitors offered different and incredible experiences. So, we went there, and while I was absolutely hesitant to dance and enjoy the loud music, I have to say that I did ended up having a good time (but no, I didn't dance that much, my displaced meniscus hurts if I move the knee

too much). They serve a really good Margarita, and the DJs that work there are quite good. Somehow, even if you aren't planning on enjoying it, the atmosphere will force you to have a good night. And even if the loud music isn't your thing, at least the drinks are quite nice (and cheap!).

My friend told me that there is another place around Puerta del Sol that is well known and that is El Sol, which is famous for the international and national acts that play there. When we went there, we saw that there were a couple of really well-known bands playing in the next few months, but sadly, none were playing that night, so I can't judge how it is on the inside. But according to this friend (oh, and the cab driver!), it is a fantastic place with amazing acoustics. The cab driver told me that he met there Zeta Bosio, the bassist of Soda Stereo, an Argentinian classic rock band, and actually had a really good time with him. It is on my to-do list to plan a trip to Madrid just to see what is it all about with the place.

If you are part of the LGTBI collective, there are several places that are great and are cheap. One of those is the Morocco, and the Boite, which are discos that are open all night long. I deeply suggest you check them out, because unlike several other places in Europe and in the world, in Spain the LGTBI collective is quite respected, and they don't have to hide their love in the open, since they know they won't be discriminated against, like for example in some places of the USA. In general terms, if you stay in the big cities, you will find that the Spaniards are quite progressive and respect religions and opinions, but you might find a bit of a problem if you go to the old villages, since that's where a lot more conservative people are located. Keep that in mind when planning a trip.

But if you are a bit hardcore and love rock music (I am a child from the 70s, so I love punk music!), you can always try the Wurlitzer Ballroom, a club which only focuses on rock music. It is the best place in the city if you are a “metalero” (metalhead), and despite what you might think, people there are really chilled and fun. Well, like most places in Spain. One of my best experiences was in the Gran Vía, where I met several people who visited the city since there was a big football match in the country that same week. One of the things that I loved about my trips is that whenever I go, in every Spanish speaking country you can make friends just by talking about football. During one of those nights, we spent the entire night until dawn talking about classic football matches and the best strikers in the world (Maradona and Messi were right up there for everyone!). So, I would deeply suggest you take your time to visit it.

It isn't that they love to drink (although, like everywhere, some people really love to drink), but Spaniards really enjoy eating, and have fun over quality conversations and time with their friends. You will find this in every country in South America too. They prefer to talk with friends, have an amazing conversation, and quality time. My suggestion is just to go with the flow or the mood of the city, and you will quickly adapt to the Spanish way of life. Time in Spain just flows, and there is so much to do and so little time, that you will want to enjoy it the most. You will end up needing vacations from your vacations at the end of your trip!

Now, remember when I said that most of the food included meat? Well, the reality is that being vegan in Spain is quite difficult. You will realize that a lot of the time they will have only a normal lettuce and tomato salad as the “vegan” option, which might work once or twice, but to eat



it every day will grow tiresome rather quickly. Don't take it personally if you don't find anything vegan, and the last time I was there, there were a couple of restaurants that started to include vegan-friendly options. That is not to say you cannot eat vegetarian, or that there are not vegans in Spain (in fact, my best suggestion is to search online for a vegan Spaniard groups to see what they might recommend to eat and where). My honest suggestion for vegetarians and vegans is to have a plan and cook yourself. There are several Airbnbs that have a private kitchen, and if you take the time to cook yourself and prepare some food to take out, you won't have any problem. You also have tapas, but I got tired of them after a while, since most of the time, they are made of olives and papas bravas (fried cut potatoes with sauce).

When it comes to food, the following are my suggestions on what to eat during your stay in Spain:

### **Paella**

You might have tried this plate in other cities, but believe me that there's nothing like the Spanish Paella. There are several versions of it, for example, The Paella Valenciana, the Seafood Paella or the Paella Mixta (this is the one that I tried and it was absolutely fantastic and you won't regret it. It is one of those meals that stays with you and you find yourself asking for seconds!

### ***Tortilla Española***

I first had the opportunity to eat this plate in Argentina (shame on me, I know) so I thought that they did it like the Spaniards, since they are descendants from them. But no, the Spanish version is quite simple, and it is in its simplicity the genius behind it. It's just made of potatoes, eggs and onions, but it is absolutely delicious. Like I said, you will find this food in South America too, but they usually do it with a lot of other

condiments and might not be to everyone's taste. But the Tortilla Española? That's really good food.

### ***Tapas***

While I did get tired of eating Tapas everywhere (sometimes they will give them for free with a drink in Madrid or Barcelona), there are a couple that you should really try: The Calamari a la Plancha and the Morcilla (this will also be part of the Argentinian asado, more on that later) Every one of those are amazing and will have a special place in your heart (and your stomach!)

### ***Crema Catalana***

Okay, now I have to confess something: While I do love eating all kinds of food, one of the things that I love the most is dessert. Yeah, I know, but I can't help it. Crema Catalana is one of those foods, and I actually tried the recipe back home (obviously, it wasn't quite the same, probably because the Spaniards have been doing it for decades and I just started doing it a couple of weeks ago).

Now, let's go back to the tourism!

Like most cities, there is a main square in Madrid, and it is named Plaza Mayor. It is incredible, and the most touristic place that you will find in the city, since it is surrounded by several stunning buildings, which have arch entrances and look like it was taken out of Game of Thrones. Try the Bakery House (Casa de la Panadería) while you are there, and enjoy a nice cup of coffee. Oh, and don't forget to try the ice-cream there! (Yes, it is my sweet tooth talking again!).

One of the most surreal things that I experienced during my trips to Madrid was that in that place, right there in that Plaza, people used to be executed during the Spanish Inquisition. It is an amazing piece of history, and one sign that we as a society have evolved. To think that in

that place, many people were killed for their beliefs makes you feel a bit weird, especially when you think that now, people go there to have a coffee or take pictures. I really suggest you visit it, not just to learn about the place, but also wander around the shops and coffee places under its porticoes. In addition, it is fantastic as a starting point to wander around, because you can always make your way back.

The Museo del Prado (Prado Museum) is the main Spanish national art museum, and if you are like a me, a museum connoisseur, you will have heard of the Museo del Prado before. It is huge, although not as big as the Louvre in Paris, and it will take time to see it all, so obviously plan accordingly. During my trips, I have never encountered such a fantastic place as this one. The amount of painting and works that are located in here are amazing, and one of my favorites is, obviously, *Las Meninas* by Velázquez (not for nothing it is one of the most well know pieces of art in the world!).

### **Beaches**

There are several beaches to visit. For example, if you go to Mallorca, located in the southern part of Spain, you will find a couple of beaches that might find your attention. Cala Millor was one recommended to me by my closest friend, since he spent his honeymoon there. Relaxing, although a bit crowded when the weather allows it. It has several bars and restaurants that offer you the best place to see the sunrise, and according to him, the best drinks in the entire country. Quite a big achievement, since he doesn't really drink.

Personally, I don't quite like the beaches, since like I mentioned before, they might get quite crowded, and I personally don't like when there are a lot of people around (that's why I hate the subway at rush hour and try to avoid it at all costs).

## CHAPTER 3 - ARGENTINA

Oh, Argentina, how I love you. It is one of my favorite places to visit, and I always do it when I get the opportunity. I love the people, I love the food, I love the sights, and since Argentina is quite a big place, I love that there's so much to do, that even most Argentinians don't fully travel through their country!

Buenos Aires is the main capital of the country, and that should be your main hub for every trip that you want to take. But be aware of the places that you visit: Like every big city, some places are good for tourists, and some places aren't. Do your necessary research and ask if the place that you want to visit is safe.

When you first hit the ground (well, gracefully touch down) in Buenos Aires, there are a few classic attractions that you will tick off the "to-See" list (Caminito Street, La Casa Rosada, Plaza de Mayo, Retiro Cemetery, San Telmo market). These are all the hotspots talked about in guidebooks, the standard tourist fare of all visitors to Buenos Aires.

To really get the most out of your stay in Buenos Aires, however, try to see a few of the things that are often missed. A boat ride on Tigre delta, a walk around the nature reserve, a visit to the Mataderos Gaucho market on a Sunday afternoon, a stroll around Palermo woods—these are some of the things that many of the tourists never get around to doing but will give you a real glimpse of life in this fascinating city.

Let's start first with the most famous museum of Buenos Aires: The Bellas Artes Museum of Buenos Aires, located in Recoleta, really close to the Rosedal. It has an amazing collection of works, both national and

international. Amongst all the artists that are featured in the museum, Elba Bairón, Daniel García, Miguel Harte, Graciela Hasper, Fabio Kacero, Jorge Macchi, Gumer Maier, Graciela Sacco, Román Vitali, Cristina Schiavi, and Marcia Schwartz are the most important.

Take time to go (the subway will leave you about three blocks from the museum) and enjoy the visit. Amongst all of them, one of the most important paintings that is featured there is *Coronación de la Virgen*, painted by Giovanni da Milano. It's a really beautiful representation of art in the XIV century.

But let's take time to talk about something that you might be interested in: **Safety**.

Obviously, if you have read the international news from time to time, you will have seen that Argentina is a special place when it comes to social unrest, to the point that the protests are almost part of the city, like the buses or the trees. While I'm not trying to minimize the reasons why people might be protesting (far from it!), you will see so many protests that you will start thinking that some of them are maybe too much. But on the other hand, if you go there when the economy is in bad shape, prepare to be involved or find yourself in one of those protests. That usually takes place in December, but there are protests almost every day, and using public transport to go to the center of the city (right where the Obelisco is located) might take quite a while, same with taxis.

My suggestion is to always ask your hotel or hostel about the places and times that you should avoid, since like all big cities, some places are thriving with crime. And if you decide to go to one of these places, do it with a large enough group. That would probably deter any robber. And this is advice that I will give you everytime that I need to. Keep an eye

out on your surroundings and your belongings. Don't leave them unchecked.

I once saw a man trying to pickpocket a girl and, luckily, he was not successful, but he did end up running outside the subway. If you see anything like this, call 911 or try to find police nearby. Or, if you are unable to do it, warn the people around you. Most of the time, they will help you deal with it. Please try to avoid kicking or punching the robber, however tempting it might be. He might have a knife or a gun, and you don't want to spend whatever trip you planned in the hospital. Most touristic places will be safe (although, obviously, pickpocketing might be there too) but if you stray away from there, it might stop being safe for tourists.

In big cities, like Buenos Aires, always keep your wits about you and an eye on your belongings. Tourist hotspots like La Boca and San Telmo are notorious for pickpockets, who will happily relieve you of your camera or smartphone if they get the chance. It's not a good idea to wander around alone after dark, and if you are going to take a taxi, make sure it is from a reputable company (sometimes it is better to call for a taxi than to hail one in the street).

When it comes to safety, one can never be too sure, and you might have heard about protests in Buenos Aires. If you find yourself in the middle of one, just try to leave quickly. Some of them are relaxed and nothing happens, but some of them might get worse, and the political and social tension is increasing by the economic decisions and problems the country is currently facing. Just beware of them.

In addition, drivers in Argentina tend to be aggressive and may not follow road rules such as speed limits, traffic lights, lane markings, or pedestrian crossings. In fact, according to the WHO, you are two times

more likely to be killed in a car accident in Argentina than Australia. Exercise extreme caution, whether you are a pedestrian, riding your bike, or driving a car. After a while, you will get the hang of it, but just in case, keep an eye out.

Counterfeit money is something of an issue in Argentina, so it pays to be vigilant for fake money. Always examine the large bills you receive, including the ones you get from ATMs and money exchange offices. It's easier and safer to stick to smaller bills when you are out and about.

Now, I'm not saying that you should fear Argentinians, but just keep in mind that most times, people will try to take advantage of you. Just be aware.

### **Phrases:**

Now, here's a small list of phrases in Argentinian Spanish that I've compiled during my travels that you will find most useful. Keep in mind that these phrases are used in Argentina, but since they have their own slang (a list is a bit further!) called *Lunfardo*, they have their own special way to talk:

Che Hey/you/dude/mate/friend. Universal interjection (also helpful when you can't remember someone's name)

Buena onda Good vibes. Can describe a nice person or just mean cool

Tal cual exactly / good point

Dale ok / great/ sounds good / come on

¿De donde sos? where are you from?

Escucháme hey / listen to me

Now, a small list of phrases that you might listen in a normal conversation, especially when you start talking to Argentinians, and a small explanation of each of them:

**Tener mala leche** Tough! Bad luck

When people say that they have Mala leche, it means that they don't have good luck. Maybe they lost their wallet, maybe they missed the bus, anything can be a sign of not having good luck.

### **Calentarse To get angry**

Ah, this one is typical. I heard it a lot during my trips and I think it's one of the best. Think about it, they actually tell you to chill! It's basically a slang way to say, "Chill out," especially if you hear the "No te calentés" (Don't get angry)

### **Al toque Instantly**

This doesn't actually mean that it will be done right away, but it means that it is the top priority thing to do. For example, you will find it a lot with waiters that will tell you, "Al toque" when they mean to bring you food or anything like that. It's not personal, it is just a way to talk.

### **Boludo**

This one is my favorite, and because it depends on the tone and the trust that you might have, because guess what? It is an insult. No, seriously. Argentinians call each other Boludo on a regular basis (just watch any conversation between Argentinian friends and try to count how many Boludos they use; you will quickly lose count). Now, you can't stop anyone in the street and call them Boludo, because, well, they will take it personally (and they should! It is an insult!), but if you have a friend or a relative, and call him or her boludo, chances are that they won't take it personally. A lot of kids use it even as a substitute of their names! There are several other insults that are used daily, but those aren't the purpose of this book.

### **Posta True**

This one is used quite a bit when you are talking about something that actually is true, or you are reaffirming or confirming what the other has



said. A normal exchange would be:

- Está lloviendo mucho (It's raining a lot)
- Sí, posta (Yeah, true).

### **Ser un capo Be a capo**

It is used for people who excel in their subject or sport. Therefore, you could say that Lionel Messi is a capo of football. Oh, while we are on the subject of Messi and football, do not call it soccer! Soccer is the name that it is given in the US, and Argentinians really do not like to hear it. To them (and to most of the world) it is called football. Keep that in mind when you are talking to the locals!

### **Ya fué It's over, let it go**

If something doesn't have any way to be fixed, or something is wrong, they just say "Ya fue." Basically, let it go, forget about it, it is not important. That is one of the most fantastic things that I've learned there, and something that we should learn from them. Just be worried about the things that you can change, and let go of the things that you can't change.

### **Banca, bancame To wait, wait for me**

Now, I know what are you thinking: How should I use it? And the answer is quite simple: it is slang for wait for me. Argentinians use it basically as a quick way to calm down someone: "Banca un poco" (wait a bit), basically saying to chill out and don't be angry or whatever. And also, it is used for when you want to say hold it, for example, "Bancame que reviso el celular" (hold it while I check the phone). It's basically a joker when it comes to phrases.

Now, what about mate? You heard about mate, and you even saw it in some documentaries or movies. Do you want to try one of those? Well, mate is a sign of friendship and trust. If an Argentinian offers you a

mate, accept it (most of the times, they will not be offended if you reject it, but sometimes they will, and it is a situation that it is best to avoid).

Mate is a tea-like hot beverage made of the yerba herb, and if you follow the following rules, you will do it right:

- Mate will be served in a cup made of various elements (sometimes plastic, sometimes animal bones) with a metal straw of various lengths that is called a Bombilla.
- The person who is serving the mate is called a *cebador*, and all mates should be given to him after drinking.
- A lot of times, they usually sit in a circle, but this is not as common as you might think: I have seen people drinking from it in a line, during a football match.
- Oh, and one of the most important things is that you only say “gracias” when you don’t want any more mate. Keep that in mind and don’t say gracias after each drink because people will find it funny or just won’t give you anymore mate (after all, you basically said that you didn’t want any more!)

When it comes to culture, here a small list of things that you should keep in mind when you travel to Buenos Aires (it applies to every part of the country):

While in other countries the standard greeting might be a handshake, in Argentina most people will greet each other with a small kiss on the right cheek of the other person. It doesn’t mean a full-blown kiss, just press your cheek to the other person’s cheek, and do a kiss sound. You will quickly get the hang of it. Also, be aware that most Argentinians ignore personal space, and might hug you or palm you in the back. This is a sign of trust and confidence, but if you are not okay with this, please let them know. Sometimes, they assume that everyone around

them is like them, but the reality is that most people are different (I even found some Argentinians that didn't like it!)

Christianism is the official religion, and while in Buenos Aires you might not find a lot of Christian signs (except for churches), while you go to the north of the country, you will quickly realize that a lot of people have crosses on their necks. The reality is that a lot of people will keep their religious views to themselves, especially when it comes to the Pope. My personal suggestion is to keep religious talk to a minimum, unless you trust the other person and know that they won't be offended if you have a different view. In my experience, I never argued about religion (it is something that I do not just in Argentina, but everywhere in the world), but just be aware.

Being called a gringo will be basically normal for you. Try not to take it personally. Even if you are from the UK, they might also call you gringo. Unless you sense that it is said with envy or anger, just ignore it. I must be honest, one of my cab drivers told me to never mention the Islas Malvinas, since people were still touchy about it. I did not see any problem with it, but I know that a lot of people lost family during the war, so they are still sensitive about it. It is best to ignore the subject, or, if they ask your opinion on it, just try your best to avoid it.

Bars are the best places to meet people, especially since a lot of them will actually speak English and would love to train their language with a native. Do not be afraid to engage in friendly banter or conversation. Meal times in the country vary, but most of the time, they range from 12 to 2pm. And bars will be open until 1am-2am, depending if it is a working day or a weekend.

Unlike other countries, tips are completely optional, but keep in mind that the waiters make most of their salary from tips, so if you can give it

(obviously, if it is deserved), it would be greatly appreciated. A 10% would definitely be great.

Always carry small change, most of the time people won't appreciate 100-peso bills. Although, this is changing very quickly, since the peso started to depreciate and what used to be 1 dollar = 18 pesos (in 2017) is now 1 dollar = 40 pesos (in 2018), and, from what my friends and relatives there tell me, it won't get better for a while (think years). Obviously, this will work out in your favor, since you probably have dollars. Euros are also appreciated when it comes to the exchange currency, because as of 2018, 1 euro is equal to 45 pesos. Keep in mind, and like I mentioned it before, always exchange in safe and known banks. Don't accept help from strangers that might want to take your belongings or your wallet.

Now, for the readers amongst you that might be on a really tight budget, here's a small idea of what the costs are in Buenos Aires. Keep in mind that the currency exchange will work in your favor. Meals start from \$120 pesos (a McDonald's menu will be about \$200, just to give you an idea of the prices that are currently in the country). A bus trip would be \$15 pesos, and a subway trip will start from \$14. Be aware that these prices are at the time of the writing, and they might change or get worse as the economy gets worse. Do your research before going, just in case. Now, let's leave Buenos Aires, and let's go to Mendoza, on the west side of the country.

### **Mendoza**

Mendoza is one of the loveliest provinces there, and while you might have heard of it because of its famous wines, you really have to try the steaks. The reality is that the city is nothing to write home about, but you aren't here for it, you just want the mountains and the wineries.

Before I keep writing, I really suggest you try the Malbec. Oh, what an amazing taste it has. If you can afford it (it is quite expensive compared to Buenos Aires), then try to have an asado with wine. You will never taste a better wine than those that are made here.

One of the best things about Mendoza is that it is quite small, and it isn't as big as Buenos Aires, so I really suggest you take the time to walk around the city, take pictures and avoid the public transport, since it isn't as good as the one in Buenos Aires (no subway for starters).

Try to take the time to hike to the several hills that surround Mendoza, you will thank me later. Keep in mind that in the summer, it will get quite hot, and in the winter, it will be cold as hell, so pack accordingly. Also, one thing that you might have to be aware of is that sometimes it might rain in the afternoon and then the sky will be completely clean of clouds. This might happen to you several times a day. People in Argentina are used to it but keep an eye out on the local weather (and even so, they will sometimes be wrong!).

Hike, hike, hike! Mendoza is known for their mountains, and their wine cellars. Save money to spend on them, and you will be deeply grateful that you did it. In most of the cellars, you will find people that will speak in English, so you will find yourself at home with it.

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## CHAPTER 4 CHILE

Ah, Chile. What a fantastic place this is. While it was not one of my favorite (I'm still in love with Buenos Aires), it was a lovely place to go, and the people there are great. But let's focus on its capital: Santiago de Chile

The currency is the peso (not to be confused with the Argentinian Peso, and that money will not be useful here; in South America there still isn't a universal currency like the Euro, although there are plans for it). At the time of this writing, one Euro was worth about 800 pesos, and one US dollar about 550 pesos, so keep that in mind when you are trying to exchange currency.

To give you an idea of a basic understanding of prices, a cup of coffee will range from 1 €, and a meal at McDonalds will cost you around 5 € (I use the McDonalds menu as a reference through the book since it is not only international but it has a standardized price guide as a reference). I had the opportunity to stay in a 5-star hotel, and maybe it was just this hotel, but they actually accepted my dollars and exchanged me for pesos, so maybe your hotel will have that option (probably if it is part of a chain). Like always, take enough cash in your pocket, since most of the time they won't be accepting cards, especially international cards.

If you are traveling to Santiago from Buenos Aires, my suggestion is to travel with LAN since most of the time they are cheap, and they have special discounts on food or places to go with your ticket. Basically, you can get a package for a certain amount of money, and already plan half your trip. Sometimes they even give you discounts on hotels and accommodation. My trips to Chile were always using LAN, and only



excluding one trip that had to be canceled to the bad weather, they managed to change my flight and pay for my expenses during the time I had to be in the airport.

If you come from Europe, it will be different. It is quite a long flight, and the last time that I did it, it took me about 16 hours from Spain to Santiago de Chile, staying a couple of hours in Buenos Aires for a plane change. If you can do it and have experience with long flights and all the problems that come from it, you will find good prices on LAN or Aerolíneas Argentinas (the Argentinian state airline).

Okay, you arrived in the country, and now, like every other country in the world, it's the turn to go through customs.

When it comes to the visa, if you are coming from the USA, Canada, or Great Britain (as well as from any EU country) you will not need one, and the passport will do just fine. Keep in mind that in some airports, there are special lines that are from people that come from the EU, since they don't have to do many controls as people from other countries. Always keep a copy of the tourist card that you will receive at the border, and then keep it safe, since you will have to return it when you are leaving the country. A lot of airlines will give you this form when arriving, so you can complete it on the plane and save some time.

If you are planning to import things to the country, the laws are always changing, so I would really suggest you check out with your embassy before going out on a trip, in order to avoid unnecessary problems.

When it comes to transportation to your hotel or to whatever place you might want to go, you are in luck. The public transportation system is far better than the one from Buenos Aires (and it might even rival some European countries). I took the subway and the amount of lines and the state that they were left me amazed (I wish I had that kind of networks

back in New York!). It is not expensive to travel around (around 2 € per trip), unless you are planning to take a plane around the country. In that case, yes, you will spend a lot of money on it (around 300 € per person). Taxis are always available, and take the time to set a fare before using it, since I've known that some people might charge you more if you are a tourist. Just like in Buenos Aires, keep an eye out there.

Remember, all these prices are a guide, and they might not be fully updated.

But let's say that you want to use the bus to go from Santiago to the farthest village. You will be happy to know that Chile has an excellent bus network, and it is quite cheap, compared to the planes. Normally, I would suggest to take the night buses, so you can save time traveling while you sleep. The prices are relatively low, especially since the currency will work in your favor (they don't have much inflation like in Argentina, but it is something to keep in mind). I heard fantastic opinions about the buses that go to Antofagasta (a small city located close to the Pacific Ocean), so that's what I will be taking for my next trip there.

Now, you might be wondering about the climate. Well, unlike Buenos Aires, it is a very stable climate. Obviously, pack accordingly, because winter will be hell (just like in Mendoza) since it is located near the Andes. When I arrived there, it was absolutely freezing (and I was just wearing shorts! Can you imagine my face?). But in general terms, the country can be divided into several small climates. For example, in the north, just like in Argentina, it will be hot and dry (and absolutely hell in the summer). In the extreme south, however, it will be quite cold (since it is closer to Antarctica). The central regions will have the most pleasant

climate, with a very dry summer and a rainy season (around May to August). If you want my opinion, the best time to go to Chile would be from October to April, and if you are there during New Year, you will be able to enjoy the festivities close to the ocean.

I can't vouch for other cities besides Santiago, since I didn't have much time to explore the country (I was only able to be there for four days, and believe me, it wasn't enough to see everything that there was to see).

However, what about the activities? I hear you, so while you keep in mind that these prices were when I was there (4 years ago), there shouldn't be much difference between them now. If you want to enter a National Park or museum, the entrance fee might vary from 10€ to 20€, and it depends if it is the high season. Like Argentina and especially Mendoza, cycling tours are available almost all year round, and they cover pretty much the entire country. You can expect to pay about 200€ per person for a excursion that will last several days, but you might find offers with tour guides. Keep an eye out for discounts; sometimes they give you an interesting discount if you show your LAN ticket or you book way in advance (think six months to a year).

Remember when I told you what happened when I was in Spain? Well, yeah, the same thing happened to me again in Santiago de Chile. At this point, I should have known, but it was a quick trip and I did not have enough time to plan it (like I always mention, try to plan it a year in advance). The electricity is 220 volts, 50-hertz alternating current. The sockets are not suitable for a safety plug, so I would really suggest getting an intermediate piece with different adapters or asking in the hotel if they have one to lend to you. Most of the time they do it free.

When it comes to phrases and special words that you might be able to find in Chile, you will realize that most of the time, with a basic understanding of Spanish, you will be just fine. Unlike Argentina, which has its own special brand of slang, this is the most traditional place in terms of the language. Yeah, you might find one word or two that you are not fully familiar with, but that should not be a problem. If that happens, ask your interlocutor to speak slowly and explain those words. I told you about my closest friend (the one who got later married) and he told me once that he spent about four years living in Santiago (mostly for work), and during all that time, he never encountered words that he couldn't understand. And believe me, at that point in time, he didn't know much Spanish (now he speaks like a local!). Nevertheless, to avoid every problem that might arise in your understanding, here it is a small list of slang words that you might hear (don't say I'm not generous!):

### **Wéon**

Think on it like Boludo in Argentina. Chileans use it as both an insult and as a greeting, and if someone says it to you, think of its tone: is it said with envy or anger? If not, just ignore it. But if you want to use it with another person, use it with caution, and when in doubt, don't use it. You don't want to offend anyone.

### **Carrete**

This word is slang for "fiesta". And the other word that they love to use is "mambo". You might have heard of the word "mambo" in Argentina, but it is used in a very different way ("él tiene un mambo en la cabeza" means "he has a mambo in his head", or rather, a lot of problems in his head).

### **Buena onda**

While you might be tempted to translate it just like “good wave”, in reality it just means that something or someone is really cool. “Él es buena onda” means “he’s really cool”. Just the same like in Argentina.

### **El pucho**

Instead of the Spanish word cigarro, Chileans and Argentinians use pucho for “cigarette.” It is quite common to listen “¿Me puedes dar un pucho?” which translates to “Can you give me a cigarette?”

But let’s say, and I deeply hope you won’t find yourself in this situation, that you have a health emergency. I already explained the basic phrases that you should use when it comes to health and pain, but in an emergency, you can find private hospitals with first class medical standards in all major cities. Thanks to the push for another language and the requirements that the universities have, most doctors and nurses will speak English. Pharmacies will be open all night long, and if not, you will always be able to call the emergency numbers, and they definitely will help you with absolutely anything that you might need. During one of my nights there, I had to go to the hospital since I suffer from severe migraines, and they gave me a prescription and some pills that helped me to mitigate it. I went to one of the pharmacies located around a block from it, and purchased it without any hitch (keep in mind that this happened at four AM in the morning on a weekday).

Take care with ice cream, salads, fruit juices, fried food or unpeeled fruits on dingy markets as well as raw fish and seafood. This is an important tip that you might forget when you are enjoying the city, but the reality is that sometimes, you might get an infection from the raw food. That is why I always skip raw food, because the couple of times that I ate them, I ended up with a severe stomachache, and it basically

ruined the last part of my trip. Maybe that's why I don't have any great memories from the city.

When it comes to safety, use precaution. Unlike Argentina, crime in Chile is not as bad. However, always keep an eye out for pickpockets, and try not to flash your belongings, just leave them in your hotel room. I always prefer a hotel since they take care of the security, but often, hostels will give you a safe box to keep your stuff in.

Nevertheless, let us say that you want to tell your friends back home how much fun you are having, or you want to book online a trip to another part of the country. Most hotels will offer you free internet (or at least for a small fee), but if you must go to an internet coffee place, rest assured that there are several of those places are located in the center of the major cities. Since my family was back home and I couldn't get good wifi at the hotel as they were repairing the connection, I had to use one of those. I entered one of those local cafés, and for a small fee (about 200 CLP – Chilean Pesos), I had eggs, bacon, and a couple of good sandwiches of ham and cheese, all toasted. If I keep writing about this, I will start to get hungry!

While I never had the need to call home, from what I gathered during my stay there it is quite expensive, since obviously they are international calls. But I saw several tourists paying for a special contract for international tourists, and what they told me is that you will get most for your money by buying a prepaid phone card (basically, like one of those gift cards that you might have seen in several stores in Europe). Obviously, if you have the opportunity, and a good internet connection, Skype is the best way to call home.

When it comes to taxis, use the same advice that you did in Buenos Aires. Be aware of possible frauds, and do not drive off without having

negotiated a flat fee or without the meter being turned on. This is quite important, because I heard of some cases where dishonest taxi drivers would start to charge you as soon as you start talking to them, or even if you decide to take that taxi, they will charge you extra for things that are included in every trip: luggage, etc. So my suggestion would be, if possible, to call a radio taxi, since these companies are more secure, and have a bigger standard of quality on their cars. And since they are controlled by the government, they offer fixed or preferential prices for small distances. Sometimes they will also give you a discount if you go to places like the airport or any touristic place, since they know that there will be another passenger there.

But let's talk about the food because, while I did spend very little time there, I had to be honest, I spent all that time trying out the fantastic food that is there (and at this point, this book is basically a food guide for your travels!)

For example, the **Pastel de Choclo** , which translates to “corn pie”. While from what I saw there are several variations (depending on where in the country you are), the most common recipe is made with seasoned corn with eggs, and with a bit of chicken or ground beef. This is often quite cheap, and it is one of those foods that you will want to take the recipe and try it at home, but you will fail at it. Or at least, that's what happened to me! The taste was amazing, and if you combine it with a cup of red wine, you will definitely be thankful that you took the time to go to Santiago de Chile.

Another interesting food to try (both in restaurants and from the street vendors) is the **Empanada de Pino** . The empanada is quite a common food in South American countries (not that much in Spain), and consists of a pastry filled with anything that you might imagine. And when I say

anything, I actually mean anything. During my trips I tried one filled with raisins, another with just chicken, or my personal favorite, the Empanada de Pino, which is ground beef mixed with onions, and really seasoned. Sometimes it might include eggs or olives. It really depends on the place that you are eating at. Some people do it mixing up different kinds of onions, and seasoning it with several different spices. The one that I tried was filled with rice and small pieces of cheese, which gave it an amazing taste and if the cheese is hot enough, it will melt inside and form a cover over the meat.

If you ask me, the best kind of place to eat them are the street vendors. While you might be aware of the sanitary conditions of some street vendors, in Chile they take special care of them, and some of them are even controlled by the government. Unlike Buenos Aires, where some of the times you might be wondering what you are eating exactly, in Santiago de Chile you can rest assured that the food that you are eating is fresh and of quality.

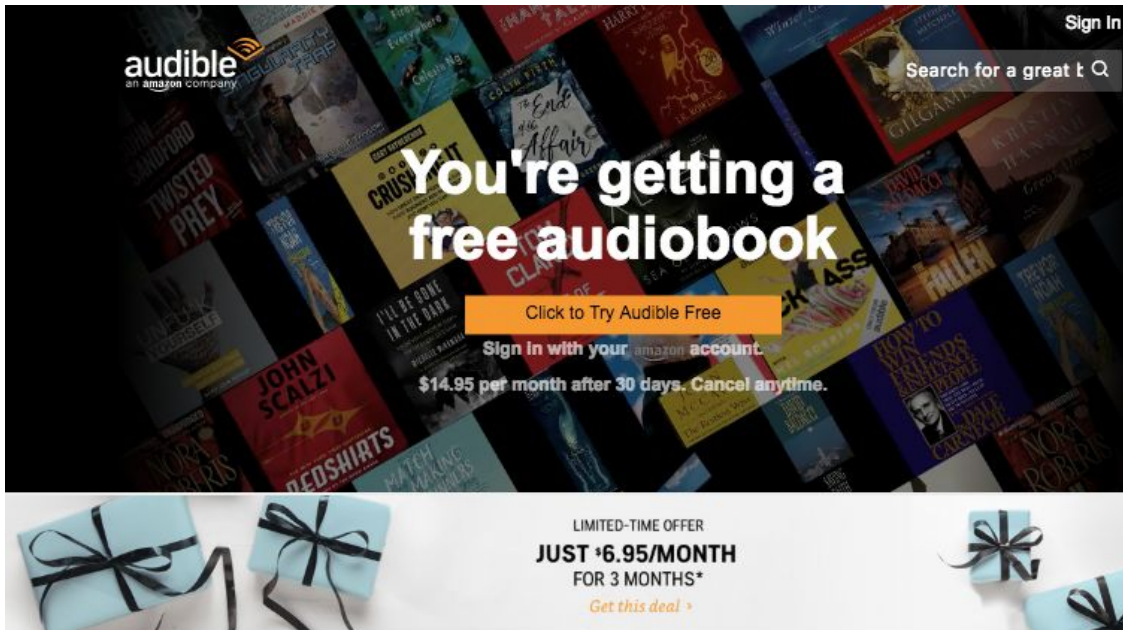
If you have a passion for meat (and if you do, you are one of mine), please try the Churrasco sandwich. You will find this sandwich almost every place you go, and even some street vendors will have it. It's basically a meat sandwich, served on a special kind of local bread, and for an extra fee (sometimes it is included), you could add some tomato or mayonnaise. Personally, I just love it with cheese and fried egg, since it's basically a thinner version of an hamburger. The bread is exquisite, and they really usually toast it to make it more crunchy and tasty. You will find that it is called "A lo pobre" (it roughly translates to "poor man's"). Don't be scared by the term "a lo pobre," it is an amazing and fantastic food. Oh, writing about this makes me want to get one!



Let's say that you finish your meal in a restaurant, and you want to pay your check. What about tipping? Well, unlike most countries, it is expected that you should tip about 10% for your waiter or porters. While it is common and they will find it quite rude if you don't tip, sometimes you might find people that won't like you to leave a tip, calling it a badge of honor to do their work correctly and not expect to get paid for it. I saw for example a porter who helped a disabled kid with his luggage, and didn't accept a tip. That was an amazing sight to see, and more proof that the South Americans are really good people.

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## CHAPTER 5 URUGUAY

If you talk to other travelers, most of the time you will hear people praising Mexico, Argentina, maybe Brasil, or Chile. But what about Uruguay? It is often wrongly ignored by travelers, which is a real shame. I remember that when I was planning my trip, I thought there were few places to visit in Uruguay, and that was quite a wrong misconception that I had. I knew about Montevideo, but that was the limit of my understanding.

But, as soon as I entered the country, I realized what an amazing place this is. From the beaches, to the city, museums, and carnavales, this country is my second favorite in the entire continent (and my third globally, right after Spain). I spent a week there, and there wasn't enough time to visit and do everything that I wanted, and I ended up wondering why I didn't go sooner. Uruguay is the perfect place to get some rest and relax.

The people are quite chilled compared to other south American countries, and it's perfect for a quick trip. In fact, I met several Argentinians that "cruzaron el charco" (crossed the pond, like they said, referring to the Río de la Plata) that spent a weekend in there. The mere atmosphere of it will help you to calm down.

The week that I spent there I was lucky enough to have good weather, and leaving aside one that day where it rained like it hasn't rained in months (later I found out it was almost true; it hadn't rained in a month!), the rest of my stay was fantastic, and I could enjoy a really nice spring, with blossoming trees and people having fun.

To think that I was about to ignore it, but keep in mind that you go from the USA and Canada, most of the time you will have to take a plane to

Brazil, and then another to Uruguay. If the trip starts from any European country, most of the times you will have to take a plane to Buenos Aires and then another to Montevideo (or a boat, called Buquebús, which are fantastic and relatively cheap). So, obviously I needed to rest.

When you look at the map, you will realize that Uruguay is in between two gigantic and completely different countries like Argentina and Brazil, but unlike anything you might think, Uruguay still is unbelievably different, and its tourist attractions are quite varied. If you want to relax, this is the place to go, since they don't have mass tourism yet (unlike Spain, for example), and most visitors are from Argentina and Brazil who goes for a week or two. I suggest that you should go between December and February, since their beaches are amazing (and have really white sand) but if you don't want to deal with crowds, then I suggest you to go on March, since it will be quieter, and you will be able to walk around with no problems.

If beaches are what you really want, then Uruguay is the place. The water is clean, and it is lovely.

If you want to visit a city that might remind you of Madrid or Barcelona, Montevideo is the place to go, because it is not just the biggest city in the country, but it has an amazing contrast between modern offices right next to the old buildings that are there since the birth of the country. I stayed really close to the historic center (Plaza Independencia) and was lucky enough to be invited to the Mercado del Puerto, which is a market right next to the harbor. Obviously, it goes without saying that they specialize in seafood, but my friend wanted me to taste the Uruguayan asado. But, between you and me, I still prefer the Argentinian asado. This is not to say that the Uruguayan asado is bad, but I prefer it to other kinds of barbeques that I found along my trip.

On Saturday afternoons, if you take a walk along the Rambla – Montevideo’s waterfront- you might be able to enjoy watching the locals sipping “mate,” and just like in Argentina, if you start talking to them in a friendly manner, they will definitely give you one to taste. The same manners that you used in Argentina will apply in Uruguay. In fact, while Uruguay has its special distinction, both cultures are similar in some ways (and different in others!).

When it comes to tango, you will find that both Buenos Aires and Montevideo had been recognized by international associations as the birthplace of tango. It is a contentious issue, but most of the time, both Uruguayans and Argentinians love to banter each other with the origin of the music and the birthplace of Carlos Gardel. In some places, it might still be a touchy subject, so approach it with caution, or avoid it altogether.

One of the loveliest things that I found during my trip to Uruguay is that they have the longest Carnavale of South America, lasting a full 40 days (even surpassing Brazil and its carioca!). I was lucky enough to be able to attend the Desfile de las Llamadas, which is a all night long party accompanied with candombe (a small instrument brought to South America by the African slaves and then adapted as their own instrument). I spent the entire night listening to those drums, people cheering and having fun. The kids were running around, imitating the dancing, and taking pictures with the dancers. It was an amazing experience, and one of those experiences that showed me that, unlike a lot of other countries, South America is basically one big family.

Right next to me, there was a couple dancing tango (what an amazing sight to see professional tango dancers), and there were guides promoting tours to the Museo Nacional del Carnaval (National Museum

of Carnaval), that offered dinner, tango, a trip to the Museum and to crown the day, a bit of candombe at night. Try to book one in advance if you can.

Uruguay is a small country and is easy to get around. Buses in Uruguay are efficient and cheap, connecting all the major towns. Car hire is reasonable, but you'll need an international driving license. There are some domestic flights but, sadly, there are no trains. From what I heard from people living there, there are always plans to create a train line, but since Uruguay is in economic turmoil (like most of the countries in South America), those plans have been scrapped, same with the plans to having a subway line.

The currency is the 'peso', but not to be confused with the Argentinian Peso, or the Chilean Peso, and like I recommend it in the chapter dedicated to Chile, try to exchange your money in banks and avoid strangers that might want to help you.

I would recommend taking some US dollars with you to Uruguay, the smaller the denomination the better. Euros will work just as well too. Always inform your local bank that you will start using your credit cards outside your own country, or you will get locked out of your accounts, and you will be left without money. Travelers' cheques (in US dollars) are accepted at reasonable rates if exchanging them for pesos.

Like in Argentina and Chile, when you eat out, after paying your bill, you should tip, and like the countries that I mentioned, while there isn't a basic rate, a 10% would be great.. Keep in mind that, just like in most countries of South America, waiters earn the minimum wage, and any tips (obviously, if they are earned) will be greatly appreciated.

Speaking of eating food, Uruguay has an interesting selection of restaurants, and the local cuisine is really memorable. While you might

think that the wine is nothing important since it's almost never mentioned when people talk about the best kind of wines to try (and that list always mentions the Chilean, Argentinian or French wines), but it is the Tannant the local specialty that will stay in your memory. I tried it with a fine steak one night, and it was one of those foods that you cherish

Speaking of food and expanding on what I mentioned earlier, here's a small list of food that you might enjoy. Like always, steak is in most food, so vegetarians and vegans use the phrases that I taught you earlier and try to find places that have food according to your tastes.

If you love Pasta, well you are in luck, since it is one of the most popular dishes in the country. It is quite usual to see people gathering to eat homemade pasta, especially if the dressing is the Caruso. One of the dishes that I tried there was the Capeletis, which were stuffed with cheese, meat and onions, and the sauce combined cream with onions and ham, which might look from the outside like a really weird recipe, but the Uruguayans made it possible to be able to not just mix it up but to create a fantastic recipe. Like other recipes during my trips, this one also failed when I tried to do it back home, to the point that I suspect that it would be better for me to just move to South America and have this food every day. In fact, I can vouch for it and let me tell you a story: one day, in Montevideo, I was really hungry. I already had McDonald's the night before because I just needed a quick dinner before going to sleep, but I had to try the local cuisine.

One guy at the hotel recommended me a small place near the main center of Montevideo, and when I entered, the smell was absolutely incredible. I had to use my Spanish to order a recommendation, and good lord it was amazing! And for dessert, I asked for Arroz con Leche.



Yeah, you might have translated as rice with milk, and that's what it is. Sometimes it is served with dulce de Leche, but if you only have one option, just going with rice with milk will be good enough. My sweet tooth approves it!

However, let us say that you want to eat something big, something huge, something that you will not forget at all (I know I did not!), you really need to try the Chivito. It's like the Churrasco sandwich that I mentioned earlier in the section dedicated to Chile, but in this case, it's a beef sandwich with several different ingredients (I had mine with mozzarella cheese and ham, but I saw it with bacon, or lettuce). And obviously, the usual amount of fries that are in all this kind of dish.

But if you want to really try some local (and really South American) food, you really have to try the Milanesa, especially the Milanesa a la Napolitana. You will see a lot of places promoting this food, especially with fries or a sandwich with lettuce and tomato (you will start seeing this kind of combination all over the continent since it is a really cheap way to fill up a sandwich). Basically, the Milanesa meat might be from steak or pork, and the Napolitana version is seared with a cover with cheese, a bit of a tomato sauce (probably a bit spicy if you are not used to this kind of food) and obviously, with French fries. In fact, they will add French fries to practically anything that you might ask them to!

When it comes to the beaches, you have several options. For example, Punta del Este, where a lot of famous people spend their summers. The beaches are amazing, the people are really nice, and while it might be full of Argentinians, it is not uncommon to see a football star just enjoying the sun right next to you. Of course, there are several private beaches in Punta del Este, and those are where the famous people stay (they even have their own hotels, like in Mexico). But for example, I

went there for a walk, and right next to me, drinking some mate and just having fun, there was Ricardo Darín! If you don't know him, he's an Argentinian actor who has an amazing film and theater career.

But not everything is crowded beaches, and Punta del Diablo is proof of that. While a lot of people go to Punta del Este because it is the most popular place around (and the one that always appears on the covers of magazines), Punta del Diablo is really relaxing, with amazing beaches and very good food. During the winter, really few people live there since it's mostly a fishing village, but during the summer, the places look amazing. There are a couple of hotels near the beach, which obviously are completely booked up during the summer (so, like always, I really suggest you plan your trip a year in advance), and there are a couple of restaurants that are located in the beach, so you can actually have lunch while enjoying the sun and the sky.

But if you want to relax, I really suggest you lie down on the beach, under the sun, and just close your eyes. But, please always take measures for it. Use sunscreen! I had a really bad burn once because I was lazy enough to ignore it, and thought that the sun wasn't that bad. I was completely wrong.

One of the people there suggested I go to the Parque Nacional Santa Teresa. She told me that it is the best place to hike and get sightseeings, but at that point, my knee injury was starting to get the better of me, and I decided to leave it for another time.

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## CHAPTER 6 MEXICO

Mexico is quite a big country and is currently having a difficult political situation. I spent just a couple of days in Mexico DF, and while I won't write about much about my experiences there, I have a few suggestions that you might be able to find useful:

While it isn't as bad as it used to be a couple of years ago, and the government actually started enforcing the laws, my best suggestion is just to stay in the most touristic places like Mexico D.F and Cancún (more on that later).

In the cities, I suggest you to go to the places that the hotel or your guide tells you to. This is not like in Spain where you could walk at almost any hour in the night and nothing would happen. In fact, one of my relatives spent her honeymoon there, and since they were used to the tranquility of Europe, they decided to walk around at night. They started walking and didn't realize that they went to a really shady part of the town. Sadly, they were mobbed by a kid with a gun. They had to give up their belongings (just a cellphone and some money) but luckily they were safe since the kid didn't do anything to them. The reality is that you might find yourself in this kind of situation, so do your best to avoid it. After all, you want your trip to be memorable, and this will be the opposite.

If you have the money or the time to plan it, I suggest you book a hotel room in Cancún or Acapulco, a place near the ocean which has amazing beaches. Inside those inclusive resorts, you will have no problem, since they are tightly guarded. And if you ever want to leave it, book a tour in the hotel to the place you want to go (for example, the ruins of the Mayans). Since they respond to the hotel, they take an extra step of

precaution to avoid anything that might happen during the trip (there have been reportings of kidnappers that stop the rented cars and kidnap the drivers, but the government really did a good job taking care of it).

While we are on the subject of car renting, well, I suggest not to. You might be stopped by the police asking for bribes (something that, sadly, happens in the rest of South American too) so they can ignore fake violations that you might be guilty of. Just use the bus, or a private taxi to go whenever you want to go. And in Mexico there are the “combis”, private vans that are perfect for transport to different hotels or resorts. Just use that and you will be great.

Remember what I told you about street vendors in other countries? Well, here it is the same as other countries: Always try to steer away from street vendors that look unhealthy. I know, they are cheap and it is fast food, but at the same time, keep in mind why they are cheap: Because they don't take care of the basic hygiene.

Obviously, this doesn't mean that you will be robbed as soon as you are in there, or that you will get a life-threatening condition right away, but it suggests you take time and go with a guide that the hotel might offer you after a small fee.

But let's talk about food, because that's what basically did during my entire stay there!

Probably you know the enchiladas, since along with tacos are the most known Mexican food. But if you ask me, there's nothing like eating enchiladas in Mexico. Sure, you might have had one in France or New York from a Mexican restaurant, but those are cheap imitations of the real deal. For example, I tried one that was filled with seafood and the chili sauce was drizzled over the entire food. It was amazing. It is one of the best foods that I've ever tasted during my time there. There's one

small restaurant located near the Plaza Mayor in Mexico DF that had the best enchiladas of the entire city. Well, that's what they proclaimed, and to be honest, I'm inclined to say that they were right.

One other food that I tried was the Pozole, which is a spicy food made from corn. It is seasoned with onions and a wide variety of herbs, and the one that I tasted had pieces of chicken meat and garlic. It might look bad from the outside, and I didn't even try to do this at home, but I took the recipe anyway. Perhaps one day, when I get better at cooking, I might manage to do it. It would be quite a surprise to serve it to my Mexican friends!

Before finishing up the food recommendations, I will like to add Tamales to the "Best food that I tasted ever". Yes, you will see it on the streets all the time, but take time to order some at a restaurant (just to be safe). It's basically a combination of corn, meat and several kind of fillings, all wrapped up on banana leaves. I would love to see your face when you read this, but believe me, they are actually really good, and the banana gives it a bit of a sweet taste that it didn't before. You might find a variation of this food in Chile or Argentina, called "Humitas" which is served basically the same as the tamales, but with a different kind of seasoning (in both Chile and Argentina, they use cheese and try not to season it too much).

About the beaches, I spent my entire trip in Cancún, and it was amazing. The beaches are just like you see in the movies (and sometimes, even better than that), and they offer you discounts on drinks, so you basically can spend your entire time on the beach, relaxing like an old iguana, and absorbing the sun and forget your entire problems. There are a lot of street vendors there, and most of them might sell you crafts that are handmade. If you want my experience, I

would suggest that, unlike Chile and Argentina, in Mexico bartering is accepted. While Chile and Argentina might take it badly if you try to lower the price of anything, in Mexico it is actually expected, and so they will always give you a higher price since they expect you to lower it by bartering. For example, I bought a small glass cup with the Mexico flag on it and a small sign that said “Mexico ‘86” (the year that they hosted the World Cup and Argentina ended up winning it in the same tournament as the Hand of God of Maradona). The vendor asked me for about 200 MXN (quite cheap), and while I was prepared to pay for it, he offered to lower the price and ended up explaining to me the rituals when it comes to buying. Now the cup is part of my collection back home, and I learned quite a few things from that vendor!

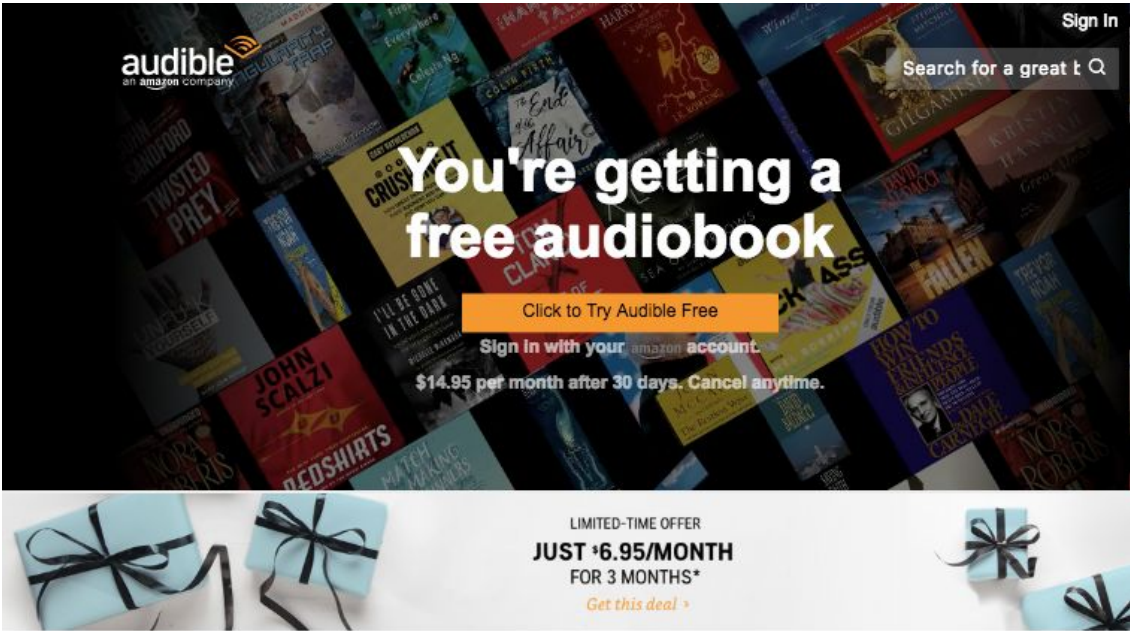
When it comes to electricity, the standard in Mexico is 110 volts, and it is the same in Canada or the United States. But keep in mind that three-pronged outlets aren’t quite as common. Be sure to pack an adapter, but if you forget one, most hotels will give you one for free, or tell you where to buy one. Remember to always buy from authentic sellers and not street vendors, since you won’t have any warrant that they will actually work.

All in all, despite some fears that something might happen during my trip, I had an amazing time in Mexico, and I would suggest you check it out if you can. I know that I’m planning a trip to the Mayans ruins, and for that kind of trip, it is better to get a travel guide who will tell you about the story behind them, and take you to special places to take pictures.

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## CONCLUSION

Spanish countries are amazing, and they have such a fantastic mix of cultures, languages, and food. If you have the opportunity, I would suggest you go from Spain to Argentina and compare both of them to see how much different (and how similar) they are.

During my trips, I had the opportunity to experience everything. From small theft, to love and joy. Took a lot of photos and made several good friends. I'm thinking of living in South America and while for the meantime it is not feasible, it is one of the plans that I have in the back on my head at all times, especially when the stress is too much back home.

I hope this book, divided into two main sections, helped you when it comes to planning your trip. Obviously, this is just a small guide, and if you find yourself in one of these countries, take the time to explore it far beyond as what I did. This is just a small guide, a small reference for you so you can start your trip beyond the scope of what is contemplated here.

Keep in mind that these aren't the only Spanish speaking countries, and while I haven't been able to visit Venezuela, or Colombia yet, from

what I heard from my closest relatives and family is that they are fantastic and lovely places to visit.

I'm planning a trip to those countries for next year, and if everything goes according to plan, I will have new experiences, and new tips for all travelers around the world.

This book was written from the bottom of my heart and took quite a while to write it down. If you enjoyed your time and wrote down some tips about it, well, in that case my work is done.

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