



# SOS Spanish Basic Grammar Toolkit



@OpenUCT

by María Recuenco Peñalver  
and Mercedes Rodríguez-Rubio Camacho

This work is licensed under  
Creative Commons Attribution  
4.0 International (CC BY 4.0).



# Contents for SLL1073F (part 1)

1. Gender: feminine, masculine
2. Number: singular, plural
3. Definite Article: *el, la, los, las*
4. Indefinite Article: *un / uno, una, unos, unas*
5. Personal Pronouns
6. Verbal Conjugation: -ar, -er, -ir. Present Tense
7. Spanish options for “to be”
8. Verb *haber*
9. Verb *ser*
10. Verb *estar*
11. Superlative
12. Quantifiers: *mucho/a/os/as, muy*
13. Interrogative pronouns
14. Demonstrative pronouns
15. *el / la / los / las* + adjective
16. *Tener que* + infinitive

## Before we start:

Spanish is a Romance language  
(comes from Latin) and works in a  
completely different way to African  
languages and English.

Be open to that.

Take it as a challenge.

Keep the eye on the prize\*

Enjoy it!!!

\*

Spanish is the second most  
commonly spoken  
native language  
in the world,  
ranking ahead of English  
and behind only Mandarin



LET'S GO!

# Glossary

**Subject:** word or group of words in a sentence indicating who performs the action of the main verb.

**Verb:** word used to describe an action, state, or occurrence.

**Object:** person or thing that receives the action of the verb.

**Direct object (DO):** noun or pronoun that receives the verb's action (direct object answers the questions "what?").

**Indirect object (IO):** noun or pronoun that receives the direct object (indirect object answers the question "to/for what?" or "to/for whom?")

Los niños escriben una carta a sus padres

Subject      Verb      DO      IO

# Glossary

**Grammatical agreement:** phenomenon in which related words in a sentence need to display same gender and number.

**Noun:** word (other than a pronoun) used to identify any of a class of people, places, or things (*common noun* ⇨ girls), or to name a particular one of these (*proper noun* ⇨ Maria).

**Pronoun:** word that substitutes for a noun or noun phrase in a sentence.

**Personal pronoun:** pronoun that refer to a particular person, group, or thing. They are associated with a particular grammatical person - first, second, or third person - and take different forms depending on number, gender, and formality. ⇨ I (1<sup>st</sup> person of singular)  
they (3<sup>rd</sup> person of plural)...

# Glossary

**Adjective:** word that describe or modify nouns and pronouns.  
⇒ *sweet, big..*

**Adverb:** word or group of words that modify or qualify another word (adjective, verb, or adverb), expressing a relation of place, time, manner, cause, degree, etc. ⇒ *quickly, enough..*

**Article:** word used before a noun to specify it grammatically and to definite it as specific or unspecific. ⇒ *the, a..*

**Infinitive:** basic form of a verb, without an inflection binding it to a particular subject or tense. ⇒ *to play, to make..*

**Verbal conjugation:** the way a verb changes to show person, number, and tense. ⇒ *I play, she plays, they played..*

**Verbal tense:** category to indicate the time period when an action occurs. ⇒ *Present / future / past*

1

# Gender

All Spanish nouns  
(for people and things)  
have a lexical gender.

[This is just a way to classify words. It  
has nothing to do with their reality]

Nouns can be masculine or feminine

Sometimes, the ending of the words gives if  
the word is feminine or masculine.

(Sometimes...)

# Most common masculine and feminine endings

## Feminine nouns

-a

Also: -ción, -sión, -dad, -tad...

\*Attention: They are words with those endings that are not feminine.

*día* (day) or *problema* (problem), for example, are masculine nouns...

## Masculine nouns

-o

\*Attention: They are words ending in -o that are not masculine.

*mano* (hand), for example, is a feminine noun...

2

# Number

Spanish nouns can be singular or plural.

*Pera* is a singular noun (pear)  
*Peras* is a plural noun (pears)

To pluralize Spanish nouns:

- ending in vowel (a, e, i, o, u) ➡ + -s
- Ending in consonant ➡ + -es
- Ending in -z ➡ -ces

Un mapa - unos mapas

Un mes - unos meses

Un pez - unos peces

2

# Number

\* Nouns ending in -í or ú  
have two possible plurals



-s / -es

Eg.: tabú ⇨ tabús / tabúes  
Iraní ⇨ iranís / iraníes

Plural in -es  
is preferred

3

## Definite Article (=THE)

An **article** is a word that is used with a noun to help define it. There are two types of articles: definite and indefinite.

	Singular	Plural	Examples
Masculine	el	los	el mapa (the map)  los días (the days)
Feminine	la	las	la mano (the hand)  las radios (the radios)

## 4

## Indefinite Article (=A, AN, SOME)

	Singular	Plural	Examples
Masculine	un / uno	unos	un mapa (a map)  unos días (some days)
Feminine	una	unas	una mano (a hand)  unas radios (some radios)

*un / uno* is the way for the masculine singular. The -o drops when it's followed by a masculine singular noun.

¿Hay **un** parque cerca?  
- Sí, hay **uno**.

(Is there a park close by?  
Yes, there is one)

5

## Personal pronouns (subjects)

Yo



I

Tú



You  
(one person in an  
informal context)

Él / Ella



He / She

Usted



You  
(one person in a  
formal context)



YOU



TÚ

VOSOTROS

Nosotros /  
Nosotras



We

Vosotros /  
Vosotras



You  
(more than one  
person in an  
informal context)

Ellos / Ellas



They

Ustedes



You  
(more than one  
person in a formal  
context)

USTED

USTEDES

Nosotros, vosotros and ellos:  
only males or mixed groups.  
Nosotras, vosotras and ellas:  
only females

6

# VERBAL CONJUGATION

All non-conjugated verbs in Spanish end in one of these 3 options:

-ar

Cantar (to sing)  
Tomar (to take)  
Jugar (to play)

-er

Beber (to drink)  
Comer (to eat)  
Leer (to read)

-ir

Dormir (to sleep)  
Escribir (to write)  
Reír (to smile)

These are **infinitives** = basic form of a verb, when unrelated to specific subjects or tenses.



6

When conjugated, endings change depending on the subjects:

Endings for Present Tense ➔

Cantar

Comer

Vivir

Yo

canto (I sing)

como (I eat)

vivo (I live)

Tú

cantas (you sing)

comes (you eat)

vives (you live)

Él/Ella

canta (s/he sings)

come (s/he eats)

vive (s/he lives)

Usted

canta (you sing)

come (you eat)

vive (you live)

Nosotros/as

cantamos (we sing)

comemos (we eat)

vivimos (we live)

Vosotros/as

cantáis (you sing)

coméis (you eat)

vivís (you live)

Ellos/Ellas

cantan (they sing)

comen (they eat)

viven (they live)

Ustedes

cantan (you sing)

comen (you eat)

viven (you live)

7

# Spanish verbs for "to be"

There are three different verbs in Spanish for the English verb "to be"

HABER



to indicate the existence of something  
( = there is, there are)

SER



mainly used to describe characteristics that can be considered permanent or essential

ESTAR



mainly used to describe states related to a specific time or to indicate location

Spoiler: ser and estar

There are many exceptions regarding the use of these two verbs.

8



Present Tense

# Haber

(there is, there are)

To indicate the existence of someone or something, the Spanish verb *haber* is only conjugated in 3rd person of singular.

**Haber** ➔ **hay** (= *haber* in 3<sup>rd</sup> p. sg.)

**Hay** un coche en la calle

(**There is** a car in the street)

**Hay** dos coches en la calle

(**There are** two cars in the street)

9



Present Tense

## Ser (to be)

Yo	soy
Tú	eres
Él / ella	es
Usted	es
Nosotros / Nosotras	somos
Vosotros / Vosotras	sois
Ellos / ellas	son
Ustedes	son

Somos sudafricanos  
We are South Africans

Ellas son muy simpáticos  
They (only females) are very nice

10



Present Tense

# Estar

(to be)

Yo	estoy
Tú	estás
Él / ella	está
Usted	está
Nosotros / Nosotras	estamos
Vosotros / Vosotras	estáis
Ellos / ellas	están
Ustedes	están

Está muy cansada  
She is very tired

Estamos en Sudáfrica  
We are in South Africa

# II Superlative

Adjectives are words used to describe a noun.

"big house" ⇨ big = adjective  
house = noun

Adjectives have levels or degrees:  
big ⇨ bigger, the biggest

The superlative is the highest level of an adjective used in a comparison

# Structure of superlatives

The + adjective ending in -est

The longest river in the world

The most / least +  
adjective

The most touristic cities  
The least dangerous beach

El/la/los/las + noun + más  
adjective

El río más largo del mundo

El / la / los / las + noun  
+ más/menos adjective

Las ciudades más turísticas  
La playa menos peligrosa

Article and  
adjective agree  
in gender and  
number with  
noun

# 12 Quantifiers: mucho/a/os/as

Mucho/a/os/as + noun

They are adjectives and need to agree in gender and number with the noun they modify.

No tenemos mucho vino /  
mucha leche.

Visitamos muchos pueblos.

Ciudad del Cabo tiene  
muchas playas bonitas.

= lots of,  
a lot of

We do not have a lot of  
wine / a lot of milk.

We visit a lot of villages.

CT has a lot of beautiful  
beaches.

12

# Quantifiers: mucho

Verb + mucho

Mucho never changes when it goes with a verb: It is an adverb

Estudiamos mucho.

(We study a lot)

= a lot

## 12 Quantifiers: muy

Muy + adjective.

Muy never changes: It is another adverb.

La Montaña de la Mesa es  
muy conocida.

[Table Mountain is very popular]

= very

# 13 Interrogative pronouns

About things	What?	¿Qué?	¿Qué lees?	What are you reading?
	What/Which? What?	¿Qué + noun? ¿Qué + verb?	¿Qué libro lees? ¿Qué lees?	What/which book are you reading? What are you reading?
About things, people, places within a group	What/Which one?	¿Cuál + singular verb?	¿Cuál es tu apellido?	What is your surname?
	What/Which ones?	¿Cuál + plural verb?	¿Cuáles son las playas más famosas?	What/which are the most famous beaches?
To describe people, places, things	How/What is it like?	¿Cómo?	¿Cómo es tu barrio?	What is your neighbourhood like?

# 13 Interrogative pronouns

About location	Where?	¿Dónde?	¿Dónde vives?	Where do you live?
About quantity	How much/How many?	¿Cuánto/a/os/as + noun?	¿Cuánto vino bebes? ¿Cuánta gente hay? ¿Cuántos hermanos tienes? ¿Cuántas manzanas compramos?	How much wine do you drink? How many people are there? How many siblings do you have? How many apples do we buy?
	How much?	¿Cuánto + verb?	¿Cuánto cuesta?	How much is it?

# 14 Demonstrative pronouns

Used to point out at something/someone and to show how far or close they are.

In Spanish we have three different demonstrative pronouns depending on referrals to:

aquí/acá - here

ahí - there

allí/allá - over there

aquí



Este  
pirata

ahí



Ese  
pirata

allí



Aquel  
pirata

[Aquí / Acá]	Masculine	Feminine	Neutral*
Singular	este	esta	esto
Plural	estos	estas	

This/these



[Ahí]	Masculine	Feminine	Neutral*
Singular	ese	esa	eso
Plural	esos	esas	

That/those



[Allí / allá]	Masculine	Feminine	Neutral*
Singular	aquel	aquella	aquello
Plural	aquellos	aquellas	

That/those  
(further away)



**\* Esto/eso/aquello**  
 Used when we refer to something that we do not know or is not important:  
 ¿Qué es esto?  
 (what is that?)

Also when referring to an abstract idea:  
Eso no es lo que digo  
 (That is not what I am saying)

# 📌 Demonstratives (adjectives and pronouns)

**Important!!!**

There are demonstrative adjectives and demonstrative pronouns

Quiero comprar **esta** mesa.  
(I want to buy that table)

-¿Sabes cuál es el coche de Juan?  
- Es **aquel**.

(Do you know which one is Juan's car?  
-Is that one, over there.)

**Adjectives:** express the position of the following noun. They change according to the gender and number of the noun they are used with.

**Pronouns:** replace a noun. They need to agree with the gender and number of the noun replaced.

# 15 El/La/Los/Las + adjective

To speak about the characteristic of a noun that was mentioned previously without repeating the object again, we use the definite article followed by an adjective, describing the characteristic:

-¿Qué coche compramos? -El rojo

-What car do we buy? -The red one

The article and the adjective need to agree in gender and number with the noun.

# 16 Tener que + infinitive

Structure used to express need and obligation.

(to have to do something)

Yo	tengo		
Tú	tienes		
Él/ella/usted	tiene		
Nosotros/as	tenemos	que	infinitivo
Vosotros/as	tenéis		
Ellos/ellas/ustedes	tienen		

Tengo que ir al supermercado  
*I have to go to the supermarket*

# Thanks!

Do you have any questions?

[youremail@freepik.com](mailto:youremail@freepik.com)

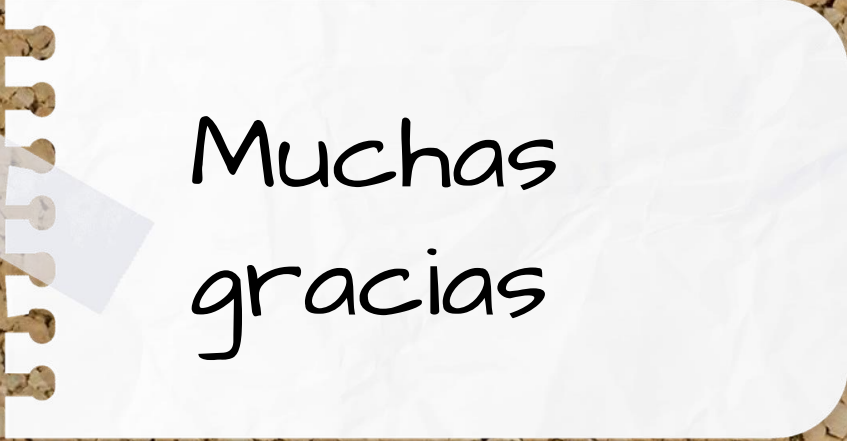
+91 620 421 838

[yourcompany.com](http://yourcompany.com)



CREDITS: This presentation template was created by Slidesgo, including icons by Flaticon, and infographics & images by Freepik.

**Please keep this slide for attribution.**

A white spiral-bound notebook is placed on the corkboard. The spiral binding is on the left side. The text "Muchas gracias" is written on the notebook page in a black, cursive font.

Muchas  
gracias