

HOW TO LEARN SPANISH IN 30 DAYS

Giovanni Sordelli



HOW2
EDIZIONI

HOW TO LEARN SPANISH IN 30 DAYS

Giovanni Sordelli



WARNING: All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced by any means without the prior written permission of the Publisher. **It is expressly prohibited to transmit to others the present book**, not in paper nor in electronic form, not for money nor for free. The strategies and the pieces of advice presented in this book are the result of years of

studies and personal specializations of the Author. Merely reading this book must not be considered a guarantee of achieving the same results of personal or professional growth. The reader takes full responsibility for their choices, aware of the risks connected to any form of training. All the information and the pieces of advice contained in this book must be acknowledged with critical sense. Therefore, the Publisher is relieved of any responsibility towards the reader or a third party for any damage, to people or property, arising from initiatives undertaken after reading the text. The book has exclusively educational purpose and does not replace any kind of medical or psychological treatment. If you suspect or if you are aware that you have physical or psychological problems or disorders you will need to undergo an appropriate medical treatment.

Copyright © 2021 HOW2 Edizioni

All Rights Reserved – Any reproduction is forbidden

SUMMARY

PREFACE

1st DAY – HOW TO PRONOUNCE WORDS CORRECTLY (WITH SOME SPECIAL TRICKS!)

1.1. Neither fish nor fowl: B and V

1.2. How to pronounce C imitating a snake

1.3. How to pronounce G imitating a moka pot

1.3.1. GUE-GUI: watch out!

1.3.2. GÜE-GÜI: watch out for the diaeresis!

1.4. H is mute

1.5. Second coffee of the day to learn how to pronounce J

1.6. You write it double, but LL is not actually double

1.7. An ingredient for lasagna? Ñ!

1.8. QUE-QUI: watch out again!

1.9.X: many but little problems

1.10. Y: a bit like LL

1.11. How to pronounce Z imitating a snake

1.12. How to best pronounce the other letters, like true Spaniards!

The secrets revealed in this chapter

2nd DAY – HOW TO DISTINGUISH CASTILIAN FROM SPANISH (YES, THERE IS A DIFFERENCE!)

2.1. How to distinguish a Madrilenian from an Andalusian

2.2. How to distinguish a Spaniard from the rest of the world

The secrets revealed in this chapter

3rd DAY – HOW TO BEST START WITH GRAMMAR: ARTICLES, PERSONAL PRONOUNS AND THE PLURAL FORM OF WORDS

3.1. Definite and indefinite articles and more!

3.2. How to memorize personal pronouns with no stress

3.3. How to form the plural of words

The secrets revealed in this chapter

4th DAY – WAIT, ARE ACCENTS REALLY THAT IMPORTANT IN SPANISH? I DID NOT KNOW THAT!

4.1. Approaching accents is a bit like flirting, especially with proparoxytone words

4.2. Oxytones and paroxytones: do not worry, they are not medicines!

4.3. Monosyllables, those little pests

4.4. Encounters between vowels: better not to fight!

4.5. One final brief comment (actually, two!)

The secrets revealed in this chapter

5th DAY – HOW TO AVOID UNPLEASANT SITUATIONS, GAFFES AND EMBARRASSMENT: FALSE FRIENDS (AND THEY ARE REALLY COMMONPLACE!)

5.1. Outward friends, every day

The secrets revealed in this chapter

6th DAY – HOW TO START SAYING THE FIRST SENTENCES IN SPANISH AFTER LESS THAN A WEEK: THE PRESENT INDICATIVE

6.1. How to learn auxiliary verbs fast (and with some necessary clarifications)

6.2. How to learn regular verbs in the present indicative in few minutes

The secrets revealed in this chapter

7th DAY - THE IRREGULARITIES OF THE VERBS IN THE PRESENT INDICATIVE. NOTHING SPECIAL ABOUT IT IF YOU FOLLOW MY LEAD

7.1. Regular irregularities: an oxymoron? Not at all!

7.1.1. A little caveat: the pronunciation remains the same, the consonants will adjust!

7.2. How to memorize the other irregularities without worries

7.2.1. -cer/-cir → -zco

7.2.2. With -uir remember the “Y”

7.2.3. Out of nowhere a “G” pops up

7.2.4. Out of nowhere a “Y” pops up as well!

7.2.5. Any other business

The secrets revealed in this chapter

8th DAY - OK, ALL RIGHT, LET’S TAKE A BREAK. LET’S GO TO SPAIN!

8.1. In Spain there is everything and more, for every taste

The secrets revealed in this chapter

9th DAY - CROSS AND DELIGHT OF SPANISH: “SER”, “ESTAR” AND “HABER”

9.1. A “ser” is like a diamond: it is forever

9.1.1. How to use “ser” in a se(r)lf-confident way

9.1.2. How to use “estar” in a self-confident way

9.2. How to best use the verbs “haber” and “estar”

The secrets revealed in this chapter

10th DAY - ANOTHER CROSS AND DELIGHT: “POR” AND “PARA”.
TWO DIFFERENT PREPOSITIONS TO SAY “FOR”?!

10.1. How to clearly understand the uses of “por” and “para” without
racking your brains too much

The secrets revealed in this chapter

11th DAY – AN EASY LESSON FOR TODAY, LET’S LEARN
NUMBERS

11.1. How to memorize cardinal numbers

11.2. A quick look at ordinal numbers

The secrets revealed in this chapter

12th DAY - THE PAST IS THE PAST, BUT THE LESSON ON THE
SIMPLE PAST IS NOW!

12.1. How to learn the simple past of the regular verbs in a few
minutes

The secrets revealed in this chapter

13th DAY – HOW TO FACE THE IRREGULARITIES OF THE
SIMPLE PAST WITHOUT PANICKING

13.1. How to memorize a list of irregular verbs easily

13.2. A “J” in the simple past

13.3. Some strange irregularities, but so strange that there hardly
any

The secrets revealed in this chapter

14th DAY – HOW TO FORM THE PAST PARTICIPLE

14.1. How to learn all the past participles in no time

14.2. How to use the past participle

The secrets revealed in this chapter

15th DAY – HOW TO ENJOY AN EXCELLENT SPANISH DINNER. TODAY IT'S ON ME, FROM THE APPETIZER TO THE DESSERT, DRINKS INCLUDED!

15.1. How to best choose an aperitif: there is something for every taste!

15.2. First course, second course and so on up to the dessert!

The secrets revealed in this chapter

16th DAY – ON A FULL STOMACH LET'S FACE THE IMPERFECT

16.1. How to learn the imperfect in less than ten minutes

16.2. Three simple little irregularities

The secrets revealed in this chapter

17th DAY – HOW TO GET THROUGH A CONVERSATION EASILY MAKING THE MOST OF PAST TENSES

17.1. Past and past perfect: how to find your way in the Black Forest

17.2. How to remember the main functions of the gerund

The secrets revealed in this chapter

18th DAY – AN EASY LESSON FOR TODAY: THE PARTS OF THE YEAR AND THE HOURS

18.1. Days of the week, seasons and months: the whole year in few lines!

18.2. How to be able to tell the time to a Spaniard... sounding like a Spaniard!

The secrets revealed in this chapter

19th DAY- 50 SHADES AND MORE IN SENTENCES: PRONOUNS, ADVERBS, ADJECTIVES AND PREPOSITIONS

19.1. Me, I like learning Spanish

19.1.1. Articles and personal pronouns sometimes quarrel

19.2. The underworld of adverbs

19.3. Some main and important details about adjectives

19.4. Many, many prepositions... but fortunately few difficulties!

The secrets revealed in this chapter

20th DAY – WHICH IS THE FAIREST LESSON OF THEM ALL? MAYBE THE ONE ON THE COMPARATIVE AND THE SUPERLATIVE?

20.1. How to avoid terrible gaffes with comparatives: “better”, not “more good”!

20.1.1. The irregularities of comparatives

20.2. Double effort = double satisfaction. Actually, facing superlatives I would say the greatest satisfaction!

The secrets revealed in this chapter

21st DAY – TIME WILL TELL. LET’S FACE THE FUTURE, THEN WE’LL SEE

21.1. How to learn to know the future without using magic

21.2. How to deepen the knowledge of (our) future

21.3. Poor future perfect, so ill-treated...

The secrets revealed in this chapter

22nd DAY – IT IS NOT JUST BULLFIGHTING: SPANISH FOLKLORE IS UNIQUE!

22.1. Not just bullfighting: in Spain it's a party all year long!

22.2. Religiosity as an element of unifying celebration

The secrets revealed in this chapter

23rd DAY – LET'S HURRY UP AND LEARN THE IMPERATIVE!

23.1. Stand at attention: here comes the imperative!

23.2. The imperative and the pronouns joined together at the hip

The secrets revealed in this chapter

24th DAY – AND IF WE LEARNED THE SUBJUNCTIVE TENSES TODAY? I THINK IT'S HIGH TIME!

24.1. Simple tenses: present and imperfect

24.2. Compound tenses: perfect and past perfect

The secrets revealed in this chapter

25th DAY – LET'S KEEP GOING AND LEARN HOW TO USE THE NEGATIVE IMPERATIVE! AFTER THE SUBJUNCTIVE?! WELL YES, THERE'S A REASON!

25.1. Don't waste time: let's face the negative imperative (with all the etceteras)!

The secrets revealed in this chapter

26th DAY – TODAY WE SHOULD FACE THE CONDITIONAL. ACTUALLY, LET'S JUST DO IT!

26.1. How to learn the conditional in no time

Do you remember the irregularities of the future? Well, apply them here and there you have the conditional, without a different conjugation.

For all the other verbs, you just need to remember the diphthong “ía” after the infinitive of the verb besides the usual endings for each person

26.2. How to best use the conditional without being “subjunct-gated”

The secrets revealed in this chapter

27th DAY – IF YOU HAD NEVER STARTED, YOU WOULD NOT HAVE GOT TO THIS POINT. BY THE WAY, HOW DO YOU FORM CONDITIONAL SENTENCES?

27.1. English first, then Spanish: the three conditional sentences

The secrets revealed in this chapter

28th DAY – HOW DO YOU USE THE SUBJUNCTIVE? I'M WARNING YOU, IT WON'T BE EASY, BUT TRUST ME AND FOLLOW MY LEAD

28.1. The subjunctive is quite “tempor...amental”!

28.2. I think that the subjunctive is very difficult

28.3. The subjunctive likes to be in charge

28.4. The light at the end of the tunnel

The secrets revealed in this chapter

29th DAY – HOW IS IT GOING WITH THIS MANUAL? I HOPE YOU WILL HAVE A GREAT TIME EVEN TODAY, LEARNING HOW TO USE SOME IDIOMS AND SET PHRASES

29.1. Many idioms for every occasion

29.2. How to sound like a true Spaniard with a few more words

The secrets revealed in this chapter

30th DAY - CONCLUSIONS: FOR THE LAST DAY, LET'S GET DRESSED UP (AND FOR THE LADIES A BIT OF MAKE-UP, TOO!)

30.1. How to look like a true gentleman

30.2. How to let female charm conquer you

The secrets revealed in this chapter

GRAMMAR OVERVIEW TABLES

CONCLUSIONS

PREFACE

Learning a foreign language means knocking at the door of a new world and asking to be part of it. But it is also a way to understand ourselves, because we get the chance to face our reality.

You will never stop learning Spanish. Surely, this is not exactly an encouraging sentence for you who are just beginning this one-month journey, but the truth is this: **in 30 days you will find your way in the maze of a language found all over the globe**, in every continent and with different peculiarities which reflect the culture and the worldview of its speakers. You will learn a language in which to invest for the future, because it is constantly growing and expanding. It is not a heresy then to say that Spanish fits comfortably next to, or at least just below, English.

You are going to tell me: “so, in 30 days I will be able to learn an entire language?!”. The answer is yes. First of all, as any valuable product, it has brilliantly passed the quality check: friends and relatives have tested this manual and the following month they did pretty well with grammar and vocabulary, trust me.

Of course, in 30 days no one becomes a native speaker: but you can build a strong foundation on which to build a beautiful house. Do you get what I mean? This course must help you every day to encourage your wish to learn a beautiful, not overly difficult, fun and challenging language.

Any similarity with English will make the learning easier, although there are traps here and there (see false friends, for example).

How to learn every day while having fun? “Practice makes perfect” we would repeat all together as children, and for foreign languages it is like that: trying again and again, falling and rising again, getting a sentence wrong or getting stuck. And then starting again faster than before. Studying a little bit every day is a secret as simple as it is effective to make the learning easier and quicker. I will give you the opportunity to analyse in depth every little secret about grammar and vocabulary, and you must really promise me that you will do everything you can to complete this rich training: consult online newspapers, watch films or TV series with subtitles, read a good book with a dictionary next to you, in short take every little opportunity to be in contact with Spanish as much as possible.

When does it work? When your partner will tell you: “what, you choose Spanish over me?”. Here the secret is not giving up: keep up with passion, intensity and almost amorous commitment.

Then there will be space for real dialogues in Spanish, the testing ground for your theoretical skills.

The beginning will maybe be discouraging, but the will to improve will be for you a confidence booster. When you go on holiday to a Spanish-speaking country or you will have to use Spanish in any other situation, you will just want to do your best.

Think about this: one month. 30 days of studying will help you learning a new language, improving your curriculum, immersing yourself in a new and different world. It will be a special month, and you will be satisfied.

I am sure that you are not starting from scratch: surely you know some Spanish words already. At least “paella”, no doubt about that. In a month who knows how much you will have learned and made it yours. Even if maybe at the restaurant you will keep ordering only paella, like me!

1st DAY – HOW TO PRONOUNCE WORDS CORRECTLY (WITH SOME SPECIAL TRICKS!)

Are you ready then? We can begin and you will see that learning Spanish will be a pleasure, I would say a fun experience. The important thing is to put perseverance and dedication every day, without getting discouraged in the difficult moments that may come. Daily devoting time to the learning of a foreign language is the right attitude, in the same way that many hours of study at the last minute will not help you to prepare for a test properly. You will see that with this course in a month you will be able to have a conversation in Spanish without too many difficulties, maybe enriching it with some idioms, so common in speech. They say that to learn Spanish it is enough to roll your Rs. If this were the solution, everyone would be a native speaker!

First it is fundamental to understand how to pronounce the various letters of the Spanish alphabet, which contains one more letter than the English one: have you spotted it yet?

First of all, one important thing: **Spanish pronunciation is not as difficult as the English one.** For example try to think about the English words “blood” and “wood”: the vowel “o” is read in two different ways, and there

is not a rule that enables us to understand the pronunciation of a phoneme or a diphthong. Instead this is possible in Spanish, where there are clear rules and no exception on this subject.

So, let's see which letters are the ones that can cause us some problems, and let's understand how to pronounce them. For the sake of simplicity we will review them all in alphabetical order, so you will be able to get back to them in case you have some doubts in the future. The missing letters, on the other hand, are pronounced as in English.

1.1. Neither fish nor fowl: B and V

Let's start with a bang. Well yes, these two letters, as a matter of fact, are pronounced in the same way, but beware: their pronunciation is nearly indescribable, since it is represented by a sound exactly halfway between B for Ball and V for Vase. They taught me that in this way and it worked: try to close your lips a little as if to blow gently. Now do not simply blow, but at the same time make a soft sound with your vocal chords: there it is, the pronunciation of these letters is exactly the one of the **combination of the blow and the sound**.

You just need a bit of practice with some Spanish words (better when you are alone, so you do not look crazy!) and then it all comes naturally. For instance, how would you pronounce "lavar" (to wash) and "lobo" (wolf), maybe put in a sentence like "Yo lavo el lobo"? This exercise is also best done in the silence of your home!

1.2. How to pronounce C imitating a snake

Try to think about how you pronounce the English word “think”: there, that sound similar to the **hiss of a snake** is used in all the Spanish words with “ce” and “ci”.

“Think” and “Ciego” are then pronounced in the same way. People who smoke surely need a “cenicero” that collects the ash. There, try to pronounce this word, which is not so easy!

Moreover, in the words with “ch”, the letter “h” is not pronounced at all.

Any difficulties? No, because if you know the cha cha you are golden!

1.3. How to pronounce G imitating a moka pot

To learn how to pronounce the words that contain “ge” and “gi” you need to go to the kitchen: **make some coffee with a moka pot and try to reproduce its noise as it comes up.**

There, this is the exact sound to pronounce words like “gente” and “página”. You will see that the more you practice and read out loud sentences that contain these letters, the pronunciation will become spontaneous and absolutely natural.

P.S. Do not worry if the letter “a” in “página” is accented: in a few days I will explain to you the reason. However, it is good to know early on that accents are fundamental in the written language, and they are always used. Ok, let’s move on and focus again on pronunciation.

1.3.1. GUE-GUI: watch out!

In this case you just need to replace the letter “u” with “h”, as in the English words “ghetto” and “ghoul”. That being said, how do you pronounce then “guerra” and “guitarra”?

1.3.2. GÜE-GÜI: watch out for the diaeresis!

There are few words that contain the diaeresis, and beware not to pronounce them for example as in the German words “für”, which means “for”. In Spanish, in fact, the diaeresis indicates that the vowel in question must be pronounced.

A very nice animal (you need to go a long way to see it!) comes to mind: I am talking about the “pingüino”. Without the diaeresis on the vowel, the pronunciation would be mangled. Or, if you go on holiday to the Caribbean Sea and you happen to stay in Nicaragua, you will reside in a “nicaragüense” facility.

1.4. H is mute

We know that in English the letter “h” (except for some cases) is aspirated. In Spanish, on the contrary, “h” is mute: you do not need then to aspirate the “h” to say “hora” or “hierba”.

1.5. Second coffee of the day to learn how to pronounce J

Make another coffee with a moka pot as before, imitate its sound as it comes up and there you have it. Between a sip and another, savour also the fact of understanding how to pronounce “j” next to each vowel. One example? As you may have noticed, I like peculiar animals: so after visiting some nice penguins in the South Pole, why not hopping over to the African savannah to see some “Jirafas” which can be over 5 metres tall thanks to their long necks?

An excellent exercise to learn this strange sound: make some fresh coffee with a moka pot and meanwhile leaf through the atlas to looking for the Spanish town of Gijón. While you are searching and the coffee is coming up, keep pronouncing this very strange and very difficult word: the others will then be a piece of cake. Among the others, try to say out loud “general”, “ángel”, “nostalgia” and “original”. They are written in the same way in English, but how would you pronounce them if you were in Spain?

1.6. You write it double, but LL is not actually double

There is no doubling of the letter “L”, so when we come across words like “Paella” the sound is like the one you pronounce in the word “yes”.

Have you ever been to Barcelona? You might have seen the very strange letter “L·L” somewhere, maybe if you have taken the metro at “Paral·lel” station: in Catalan the dot between the two Ls indicates the doubling of the consonant. Since it does not exist in Spanish, the pronunciation is the one described above.

1.7. An ingredient for lasagna? Ñ!

Bolognese lasagna is so good, is it not? Not surprisingly it is the favourite dish of many people, and it is so good that it is highly popular even in Spain: just go into any supermarket, read “Lasañas” and buy it.

Anyway, as far as I am concerned the taste of the homemade one is unique and unmatched.

1.8. QUE-QUI: watch out again!

These trigraphs cause some problems only at the beginning: indeed, when you learn that the pronunciation is actually the same as the English “ke-ki”, there you have it.

Surely you know the great Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez, so the pronunciation is already served on the table!

Or, if you whisper “te quiero” to your partner, you will surely make them very happy.

1.9.X: many but little problems

The words that contain this letter are very rare, and moreover the pronunciation varies significantly depending on the different Spanish regions, called “Comunidades Autónomas”.

A quite common indication, but still subject to variations, is that at the beginning of a word “x” is pronounced like “s” (xilófono), while it is pronounced normally in all the other cases.

Luckily there are few exceptions, since the numbers of words with “x” is indeed very limited. If this is a problem, you will agree that it is really little and easily solved.

1.10. Y: a bit like LL

In Spanish as spoken in Spain, correctly referred to as Castilian, the sound of Y is exactly like the one of LL that you already know.

In the rest of the Spanish-speaking world this is actually one of the features that differentiates it from Spain. How? And the others? Be patient, in the next chapter you will find all the answers.

I will just tell you in advance that speaking Spanish in Madrid, in Mexico City or in Buenos Aires is not exactly the same thing, including for a matter of pronunciation of other letters. Enough, I have already said too much!

Try to pronounce for example “yogurt” (with the accent on the “u” though!) or Goya, the name of the famous painter.

1.11. How to pronounce Z imitating a snake

Do you know what a hissing snake sound like? Surely you do, since now you can read words like “Barcelona” or “Cine” (cinema). You do the same with the last letter of the alphabet.

A little trick: in Spanish there are not words with “ze” and “zi”, since their function is carried out by “ci” and “ce” respectively.

An easy example is represented by the number “zero”, which in Spanish is in fact “cero”.

And if we went from Barcelona to Zaragoza? From the pronunciation point of view nothing changes, while geographically speaking it is a whole different story.

1.12. How to best pronounce the other letters, like true Spaniards!

The letters that you do not find in this chapter are pronounced exactly as in English. However, some little tricks will allow you to get as close as possible to real Spanish pronunciation: for example, “R” is always rolled and at the beginning of words it becomes double (now try to pronounce “El Real Madrid”!).

Moreover, “S” is always voiceless and never voiced: to be clear, a Spaniard would not find any difference of pronunciation between the English “his” and “hiss”, pronouncing both like the last word.

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. Spend even just a little time to learn Spanish, but do it daily. Languages are like little plants: they need little water every day to grow solid and strong.

. Learning how to pronounce the words right is not difficult, you just need a bit of practice. Remember: the hiss of the snake and the moka pot are the greatest obstacles; the other problems will disappear even faster, thanks to your constant and accurate dedication to this manual.

2nd DAY – HOW TO DISTINGUISH CASTILIAN FROM SPANISH (YES, THERE IS A DIFFERENCE!)

You are right, yesterday was the first day of lessons and you worked hard. But you must understand that pronunciation is fundamental and comes prior to any speech about grammar and syntax. Trust me, not every day will be as full of notions: today for example I will explain to you how to recognize the differences between Castilian and Spanish, and the amount of work will be smaller.

It is difficult to estimate it accurately, but **according to a report published by Instituto Cervantes in 2013**, the cultural institution that has the task of promoting the Spanish language and culture abroad, **Spanish is the second most spoken language in the world** after Chinese, even ahead of English and Arabic. In this study they say that in 2012 native speakers were a little less than 500 million and that in 2030 it will be spoken by 7,5% of the world population. Nowadays almost a billion people speak it, and it is only natural that a language spoken all over the world has its own peculiarities depending on the place where one lives. The document also shows that in 2012 Spanish was the third most used language on the Internet.

Many people have ancestors who at the beginning of the last century emigrated to South America looking for work and hoping for a better life. Obviously their children and grandchildren, as well as the following generations, learned Spanish and there are people among those ones who do not even know the language of their ancestors anymore.

I am fortunate to be able to talk often with one of these “aunts” of mine as I affectionately call her, even though the time zone does not help. She lives in Buenos Aires with her husband and her two children; her grandfather was Italian and was one of the many emigrants. Once we said: why not trying to call each other? Nowadays technological applications eliminate distances even overseas, and therefore we find ourselves listening to each other’s voices after months and months of computer-mediated conversations. The result: a much greater difficulty in understanding her who is Argentinian than a Spaniard. Is there really any difference between “Castilian” and “Spanish”? How can you distinguish an Argentinian speaker from a Spanish one?

2.1. How to distinguish a Madrilenian from an Andalusian

Let us start with a basic difference: **Castilian is the Spanish language spoken in Spain, while Spanish is the Spanish language spoken in the rest of the world.** We talk about Castile, because the birthplace of Spanish was precisely the Kingdom of Castile, corresponding to the central area of the current State. Not only does Castilian have many variants in Spain, but there are three other co-official languages:

Basque, spoken in the north-eastern regions bordering France, called precisely the Basque Country;

Galician, used in the north-western autonomous community of Galicia;

Catalan, which is further divided in its western variant spoken in Catalonia and in the Balearic Islands, and in the Valencian variant. Not to mention the other non-official languages which are still recognized by the State.

The situation is actually not so different in English speaking countries: think about the French spoken in Canada, the Spanish spoken in the United States, Welsh in Wales, Pidgin, Creoles and all the minority languages, not to mention the endless number of dialects all over the English world.

Even the English language itself when spoken in London is very different from when you hear it spoken by a Geordie.

In the same way, in Madrid and in Seville they speak the same language but with different intonations and characteristics.

An unwritten rule is that **the farther south you go in Spain, the faster they speak**, with the result that some letters are “clipped” and get lost in the middle of the sentence.

Andalusia is the southernmost autonomous community, and many letters like “d” and “s” are almost not even perceived in speech: a person from Cantabria or Asturias, two communities in the north of the country, would struggle to understand singular and plural forms, verb endings, past participles, and many other words. Moreover in the capital it is peculiar the fact that the nexus “tl” is read as a double L and that all the “Ds” at the end of words are pronounced like the now famous hissing snake: so, how do you think a Madrilenian would pronounce “Atlético Madrid”, the name of the famous team?

To start learning Spanish in situ, the best place to choose is the north then, even though tourists prefer the south and the Balearic and the Canary Islands. Anyway, it is also true that if you interact with an Andalusian you will get used to that level of difficulty and, therefore, your speaking skills will become even better.

2.2. How to distinguish a Spaniard from the rest of the world

But let's go back to the phone call between me and my Argentinian aunt. Granted that there are really many differences between Castilian and Latin America Spanish and it would take a manual just to list them all, from the very first greetings we might feel a bit lost. Indeed, I felt lost myself.

In South America the third person plural pronoun is used very frequently instead of the second one, both in informal and formal contexts: for example, "You are beautiful" is rephrased as "They are beautiful".

Furthermore, instead of the second person singular pronoun "Tú" they use the pronoun "Vos", corresponding to the Spanish "Vosotros" which actually indicates the second person plural pronoun. That is why I felt lost when she kept speaking to me using the pronoun "Vos", since in Argentina it is very common.

Besides this phenomenon, called "Voseo", even "Seseo" is a characteristic of American Spanish: do you remember the snake's hissing which is needed to pronounce "z" and some words with "c"? We will always use it during this month-long course, but you must know that in America there are no snakes, and that these same words are pronounced with "s".

The result is that words like "casa" and "caza" (which mean "house" and "hunting" respectively) are pronounced differently in Spain, but in the same

way for instance in Peru or in Nicaragua. What is more, if we were for example in Chile and if we pronounced them with the help of the snake, someone would probably correct us or would mock us a little.

And it does not end here: the letter “Y” is read a bit like the pronunciation of “J” in the French name “Jean”. Think then how you should ask for a yogurt in Lima or in Santiago de Chile!

There are then many differences from a lexical point of view, also considering the fact that Native Americans and their cultural practices have influenced the language deeply. If you notice a Spanish girl (but obviously the example works with a boy as well!) and you whisper in the ear of the friend you are walking with: “¡Qué guapa!” to say that she is beautiful, in Argentina for example you will have to say “¡Qué linda!”.

If you come across the sign “Almacén” (by the way, watch out for the different pronunciation of the letter “c”!), in Spain you are entering a department store, while in America you are shopping in a little grocery.

Moreover, many words connected to the uniqueness of the American traditions, like food and clothing, are inherently untranslatable and incomprehensible for a Spaniard: these are the so-called “realia”, which belong only to that specific geographical and cultural context.

The truly marvellous thing in all of this is that Spanish, definitely one of the most spoken languages in the world, is easily understood everywhere, despite its own characteristics which today you have started to learn and recognize.

Just think about it, in a month you will be able to make yourself understood literally all across the world, on average by one in seven people in the world.

Learning from the very beginning the main peculiarities and variants of Spanish means immersing yourself even deeper in the language and the culture of a people, and thus getting more involved in them.

This does not mean that there is a right Spanish and a wrong one: instead you have learned that there are many differences that contribute to the enrichment of linguistic and cultural nuances.

While you go to bed tonight, fall asleep repeating the sounds you are still not familiar with and get ready: tomorrow is the first real lesson of Spanish grammar!

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. Spanish is one of the most spoken languages in the world, therefore it is normal that every country where it is used has its own characteristics and peculiarities.

. Seseo and voseo are the main differences between Castilian, spoken in Spain, and Spanish as spoken in the rest of the world. Indeed, in America it is the “s” sound that replaces the snake’s hiss (seseo), and they address people using “they” instead of “you” (voseo).

. You have also learned that even in Spain itself there are different ways of speaking Spanish. Have you noticed the differences between an Andalusian and a Madrilenian? At the beginning it is easier to interact with northerners, who speak more slowly and use grammar in a more standard and precise way.

3rd DAY – HOW TO BEST START WITH GRAMMAR: ARTICLES, PERSONAL PRONOUNS AND THE PLURAL FORM OF WORDS

Two days ago you had not even opened this manual and now you have already learned how to pronounce words and to understand the main differences of Spanish around the world.

Well, I would say it is time to face the grammar. Be careful though: you must not see it as a sacred and unbeatable monster, but rather as the access key to a full understanding and development in the studying of Spanish.

If you are a bit perplexed or nervous, relax: you will be guided step by step in every little detail, from the easiest notions to the most complicated ones. You will see that learning a language will turn out to be fun and fascinating, also thanks to this method. I will be your torch through the dark tunnel.

Ready, set, go!

Today we will learn articles, personal pronouns (useful when we study verbs), the plural form of words and how to use them. Do you think it is too

much?

Trust me, in one day you can store everything that you need to know about these three little big grammar topics.

3.1. Definite and indefinite articles and more!

In English the definite article is always “the”, no matter what word follows it. The article does not change because in English there is no distinction between feminine or masculine nouns: we say then, for example, “the horse” or “the stone”, because nouns are neuter.

In Spanish, the situation is different since there are masculine and feminine nouns. The singular masculine definite article is “el”, while its plural form is “los”.

El caballo – Los caballos

Similarly, the feminine forms are “la” and “las”

La piedra – Las piedras

“Un” and “una” are the indefinite forms of the article.

Un caballo – Una piedra

Up until now the difficulty is minimal, is it not? One important thing to remember is that **in Spanish the indefinite article has a plural form and it is very used in the written and the spoken language**: “unos caballos” and “unas piedras”, in fact, can be translated in English as “some horses” and “a few rocks”.

3.2. How to memorize personal pronouns with no stress

Here we are, this is the first real obstacle that we are going to face. But well, it is also good to see this month as a sort of challenge, and so be it!

First of all, you need to know that personal pronouns can be useful in signalling subjects and objects inside a sentence, besides making clear who they refer to.

“I go”, “You comb your hair”, “You give us a book”, I would say they are worth a thousand words.

To learn them well, there is nothing better than a table that shows every form, then we will analyse the peculiarities and any critical points:

SUBJECT	DIRECT OBJECT	INDIRECT OBJECT
Yo	Me	Me
Tù	Te	Te
Él/Ella/ Usted	Le /Lo-La	Le (Lo/La in South America)
Nosotros/Nosotras	Nos	Nos
Vosotros/Vosotras	Os	Os
Ellos/Ellas/ Ustedes	Les	Les

As you can see, personal subject pronouns are not really difficult to memorize: maybe you already know a few sentences or expressions which contains some of them. Obviously, you find them before every verbal forms

and moods, but beware that in Spanish it is not mandatory to state the subject, as it is in English.

Watch for the forms “Usted” and “Ustedes”: they are the polite forms. In English we simply use “You”, in the singular form if we talk to our boss and in the plural form if we talk to our bosses. On the contrary, a Spanish employee will have to say for example “Usted es mi jefe” or “Ustedes son mis jefes”, that is “You are my boss” or “You are my bosses”.

The pronouns that form direct and indirect objects are the same: we are super lucky! By memorizing one column, we learn two in one go. Indeed, “He watches me” and “He gives the book to me” are translated as “Me mira” and “me da el libro” respectively.

Watch out for the strange direct object form in the second person plural and especially for the one in the third person singular.

You will tell me: what is the difference between “Le” and “Lo-La”?

You are analysing a peculiarity of Spanish, as special as it is important: indeed it is fundamental that you know that, if the object of a sentence is a person, you need to use “Le”; if it is an animal or a thing you need to use “Lo-La” depending on whether it is masculine or feminine.

Ok I get it, here is an example to make it clearer:

“I watch José – I watch him”

is translated as...

“Yo miro a José – Yo le miro”.

“I watch the dog – I watch it”

instead is translated as...

“Yo miro el perro – Yo lo miro”.

As you have noticed, in the first sentence the object, who is watched, is a person: therefore the object is treated as if it were an indirect object, as opposed to the second sentence where the object is an animal.

I know, it is not easy to memorize; or maybe it seems easy, but you are afraid of forgetting this characteristic when you speak or write.

Do not worry: work a little bit every day and you will be able to do everything. It was not by accident that the Romans said “Divide et impera”. There, if you need a motto for the 30 days of the course, I would say that this quotation is perfect!

Now let's face the plural forms of words (nothing difficult) and then a well-earned rest awaits you!

3.3. How to form the plural of words

There are two main groups concerning this topic, and they are both very easy and intuitive:

If a word ends with a vowel, you need to add an –s:

“Casa – Casas”.

If a word ends with a consonant (including Y) or with an accented vowel, you need to add –es: “Ley – Leyes” (“The law – The laws”), “Bajá – Bajaes” (The pasha – The pashas).

There, now you already know how to form 90% of the plural of all the words. “And how do you form the remaining 10%?” you will wonder.

There are little specific cases, but do not worry too much: you encounter them few times and after a bit of practice you will master them easily.

You need to know, for example, that the plural of words ending in –z is formed by adding the suffix –ces, which replaces the “z”.

So it is that “Luz – Luces” are the equivalent of “Light – Lights”.

Furthermore, the words ending in “s” have some more peculiarities: if they are stressed on the last syllable or they are monosyllabic you just need to add –es, otherwise they do not change.

A couple of examples? “Tos – Toses” (“The cough – The coughs”), but “Dosis – Dosis” (“The dose – The doses”).

Once again: do not worry too much about these trifles, time and the experience that you will gain are on your side. Always remember, the important thing is to work a little every day.

That is enough for today, tomorrow we will understand how to put accents on words.

Just go back one second: have you noticed for example that the pronoun “Él” has an accent while its feminine equivalent “Ella” does not? It is not sexism, and tomorrow I will prove it to you.

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. Definite and indefinite articles, to be honest, are not difficult: watch out for the articles “unos – unas”, widely used in every context.

. Personal pronouns are easy to memorize, also because you might have already seen or read them somewhere; special attention is given to the peculiarity of the direct object in the third person singular, which differs depending on whether the object itself is a human being or an animal/a thing.

. Polite forms: always address people with “Usted” and “Ustedes”, therefore using the third person pronouns.

. Plural forms follow few, clear rules. The exceptions can be counted on one hand (maybe even half a hand) and you do not find them daily.

4th DAY – WAIT, ARE ACCENTS REALLY THAT IMPORTANT IN SPANISH? I DID NOT KNOW THAT!

You know what is perfect for hot summer days? A nice bowl of ice cream! Everyone loves ice cream, but not everyone pronounces it in the same way. In British English, in fact, the word “cream” is stressed, while in America it is the first syllable “ice” that is stressed.

And how do you pronounce the word “salon”? And the word “garage”?

Everyone has their own pronunciation, mainly depending on the great number of English varieties spoken all over the world.

Not to mention the mistakes that you make when you say the name of a country or a surname with an ambiguous pronunciation, maybe in public and looking bad with in front of the people you are talking to.

“Record”: outside a specific context it could mean both the best result achieved in one field (if stressed on the first syllable), or storing sounds through electronic machines (then the second syllable is stressed). For a foreign person studying English surely it is not easy.

You are learning Spanish, and after this lesson I guarantee you that you will know how to pronounce all the words in this language, even the ones you will encounter for the first time, including proper names.

There are so-called “homographic” words, as there exist in English, but the accent is used precisely to distinguish them.

By the way, how do you pronounce the word “accent” here?!

4.1. Approaching accents is a bit like flirting, especially with proparoxytone words

Well yes, the trick to get started is this one: you must not rush things, actually you need to have patience, positivity and spirit of initiative. For example when you see a girl that you like, you can charm her by aiming for the things that she likes and which allow you to know her better. Obviously this example also works with a boy.

Accents like being courted: but how do you court an accent? Knowing where and when to use it, obviously!

For example, rest assured that **there is an accent on all proparoxytone words, that is, the ones where the stress falls on the third syllable from the end.**

For example, English speaking people stop at the “traffic light”, while Spaniards wait in tailbacks at the “semáforo”: you see, the accent falls on the third syllable from the end, that is on the “a”. In English we may have some difficulty understanding where the accent falls, since we never have to put it in the middle of a word.

A good way to understand the position would be to emphasize the pronunciation of the accented vowel, pronouncing for example in this case “semaaaforo”.

In the long run, even recognizing this will become natural, if it is not already.

The same rule applies to (the few) words stressed on the fourth-last syllable: you can especially find them with verbs which are added pronominal particles.

If when you were young your mum ordered you to wash your hands before eating screaming from the kitchen: “Wash them!”, a caring Spanish mother will shout “¡Lávatelas!”.

A brief digression: as you have just noticed, before every exclamation and every question you need to add upside-down exclamation and question marks respectively.

Maybe you already knew that: it is a curious peculiarity of Spanish, and it is useful to let the reader and the speaker set the right intonation of the sentence, which may be several lines long.

4.2. Oxytones and paroxytones: do not worry, they are not medicines!

Here the situation gets a little more complicated, especially since oxytones and paroxytones take the lion's share.

First of all, you need to know that paroxytone words are the ones where the stress falls on the penultimate syllable (think about the English words “potato”, “music”, “Arizona” and “banana”), while in oxytone words the stress falls on the last syllable. This means that “café” and “Madrid” are both part of this last group, do you agree? Dividing words into syllables, which was a nightmare in primary school, comes in handy now.

To learn the accents of these two word categories just remember two letters: N and S.

Everything, indeed, revolves around them. For example, the opposition North-South still helps me a lot, given the initials of these words.

Surely you know two great past and present Spanish figures: the painter Velázquez and the director Almodóvar.

Well yes, in the correct writing the accents are well evident: **indeed, you always put the accent on paroxytones if they end in a consonant different from n and s.**

In these cases, the words end in z and r, so we put the accent. It is difficult only at the beginning, but with a bit of practice and training you will see that putting the accent correctly will become really natural.

The opposite is true for oxytones: indeed, the accent is only put if the words ends in a vowel, –n and –s. If a Spaniard calls home saying that he is having a coffee in Milan, they will say “Me tomo un café en Milán”.

And now, which of these words would you put the accent on?

A hint: there is a dot after the vowel where the stress falls.

Example: “hue•sped” (guest). In this case you know that you need to put the accent, because it is a paroxytone ending in a consonant different from *n* and *s*.

Corazo•n (heart)

La•piz (pencil)

Camise•ta (shirt)

Esto•mago (stomach)

Ca•ma (bed)

Ore•jas (ears)

Peli•cula (film)

Mie•do (fear)

Zapa•tos (shoes)

Cienti•fico (scientific)

How has it gone?

Have you noticed that this is also a good exercise to consolidate the correct pronunciation of words?

And now, let's face the monosyllables!

4.3. Monosyllables, those little pests

They may be terrible rascals, but like every self-respecting brat monosyllables just need some brief rules and the situation comes back to normal.

Yesterday you learned personal pronouns: have you noticed that “él vive” has an accent, while for example “el perro” (the dog) does not? As a matter of fact, monosyllables need an accent only to distinguish two homographic words, which are written in the same way; otherwise no accent. In this case, the pronoun “Él” is distinguished from the article “El”.

There are others like them:

“Tú” (pronoun) different from “Tu” (possessive adjective: “your”)

“Mí” (pronoun “me”) different from “Mi” (possessive adjective: “my”)

Más (“more”) different from “Mas” (“yet” in poetic language)

Dé (“that he/she give” – present subjunctive) different from “De” (simple preposition “of”)

There are few other examples, but as you can see you do not need to store that much information to learn the accents of monosyllables. I would say that we put them in their place!

And above all, I hope that you will say: “¡A mí me gusta mi curso de español!”

4.4. Encounters between vowels: better not to fight!

This is the most difficult topic of the day, but if you follow my instructions step by step you are golden.

First of all, you need to know that the five vowels are divided in weak (I, U) and strong (A, E, O).

There are many words that contain a union of these vowels: a diphthong is created if there is at least one weak vowel, otherwise there is a hiatus if both vowels are strong. “Maestro” contains a hiatus, and the division into syllables is “Ma-e-stro”. “Piano” contains instead a diphthong, and the division into syllables is “Pia-no”. However, the word “Maria” is stressed on the i, which is the weak vowel.

Therefore, the two vowels must be separated, because it is as if the stress strengthened the weak vowel: so here is “Ma-ri-a”.

Do not get lost right now, look at this simple subdivision:

. Case 1: **two weak vowels: you must follow the accentuation rule of the word.** Example: “mosquito”: this word presents a diphthong formed by two weak vowels, therefore you follow the normal rule: it is a paroxytone word ending in a vowel, so you must not put the accent. You have got it! If there is a diphthong or a hiatus you need to go a step further to understand if the accent must be put or not: and I am helping you take this little big step.

. Case 2: **stressed strong vowel + weak vowel: as before, you must follow the accentuation rule of the word.** Example: “Puerta” (“door”): the stress falls on the strong vowel (“pueerta!”), so you need to follow the normal rule: it is a paroxytone word ending in a vowel and therefore has no accent. On the contrary, “Huésped” has an accent despite presenting the same diphthong: this is because, following the rules, the word (which means “guest”) is paroxytone and ends in a consonant different from –n and –s.

If you are trembling or feeling demoralized, do not worry: it is the most normal reaction (as well as the calmest one!) and I myself felt a sense of disorientation and fear, as if I were climbing Mount Everest. Later, though, as you read words, you will realize why the accent is needed or not, you will know the reason and feel pleased with yourself. On we go then!

. Case 3: **stressed weak vowel + strong vowel: the accent is always needed.** Thank God, a breath of fresh air! “Río” (“river”) is stressed on the weak vowel i, therefore you need to put the accent anyway. It is a bit like with proparoxytone words, remember? Always put the accent!

. Case 4: **two strong vowels: follow the accentuation rule of the word.** “Mediterráneo” has an accent because the division in syllables creates “Me-di-ter-ra-ne-o”, therefore the word is proparoxytone and has an accent.

Read the rules again, try to remember them and to understand on which words you need to put the accent among these ones:

Oficia•l (official)

Caresti•a (famine)

Destrui•r (destroy)

Lue•go (later)

Trae•r (bring)

One last effort, then I assure you that tomorrow we will have more fun than today!

4.5. One final brief comment (actually, two!)

Do you remember that monosyllables need an accent to be distinguished from their homographs? There, **the same happens with some non-monosyllabic words.**

“Éste” is a pronoun, but “Este” is an adjective, meaning “this one/this” (masculine form) respectively. Consider this sentence: “¿Me da este libro?” “¿Éste o el otro?”. I would say that it is clearer now!

The same happens with “ésta-esta” (“this one/this” in its feminine form, the pronoun being always accented), “aquél-aquel” (“that one/that ... over there”), “aquélla-aquella” (“that one/that ... over there” in its feminine form), “ése-ese” (“that one/that”, in its masculine form, widely used in Spanish), and ésa-esa (“that one/that” in its feminine form). In short, it always happens with demonstratives!

The pronoun “Esto” instead is used in those cases where you do not know exactly the object you refer to: “¿Qué es esto?”.

Watch out also for adverbs and interrogative and exclamatory pronouns, which always need an accent.

The word “cual” does not require an accent, but if it becomes an interrogative adverb (direct or indirect it is the same), then you need to put it: “¿Cuál es tu nombre?” or, “Quería saber cuál es su nombre” (which means “I would like to know what his name is”).

Well done, I would say that is enough for today.

Try to read these rules two, three, ten, twenty more times. Reading a lot in Spanish (on the Internet for example) helps to understand where the accents are needed and to use them correctly.

One trick: at the beginning always ask yourself why that word has or does not have an accent, and try for example to pronounce it as if the accent were or were not there.

You will realize that they are two different pronunciations, one of them being clearly wrong and which you will do everything to avoid.

Trust me, it is a fun little game that will facilitate your learning. Tonight you will absorb all the rules.

Tomorrow we will learn that many people that you believe to be your friends actually hide another reality. Do not worry, I am still talking about grammar!

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. Proparoxytones and words stressed on the fourth-last or fifth-last syllable... always have an accent, you cannot go wrong.

. Paroxytone and oxytone words have reference consonants for their rules: N and S.

. There are monosyllables, pronouns and adverbs that have an accent to be distinguished from their homographs.

. Four simple rules to avoid confusion in the encounters between vowels, that is hiatuses and diphthongs.

. Read, re-read, keep reading words and sentences not only to learn the pronunciation, but also to understand if the accent is needed or not. And remember: putting an accent in a wrong position or not putting it are big mistakes in writing.

5th DAY – HOW TO AVOID UNPLEASANT SITUATIONS, GAFFES AND EMBARRASSMENT: FALSE FRIENDS (AND THEY ARE REALLY COMMONPLACE!)

I still remember a really poor show put up by a dear friend of mine in a pharmacy in Cordoba. The situation is this one: my friend did not feel really well so he decided to go into a pharmacy to get some medicines. Trying to describe his problem to the pharmacist, he said:

“I am a bit embarrassed, but I am constipated. Do you have some medicines for me?”. The pharmacist looked at him in a perplexed way, then went away and came back with a... cold medicine! “How is that possible?” my friend told me “I asked for a totally different thing! Did I say something weird?”.

“Well yes, my dear” I replied, “he understood that you were pregnant and that you had a cold!”.

Later I had to explain to him that “embarrassed” is similar to the word “embarazada”, which means “pregnant”, and “constipated” is similar to “constipado”, which means “cold”.

It is normal then the pharmacist looked a bit confused...

5.1. Outward friends, every day

Be careful then when you go into a pharmacy and ask for medicines! Also, when you see the sign “librería”, you need to know that it does not mean “library”, but “bookshop”.

Another example: the verb “realizar” means “carry out”, not “realize” (which is translated as “darse cuenta”).

Be careful then if you need to pay with your credit card in Spain or in a Spanish-speaking country: “tarjeta” means “card”, whereas a “carta” is a “letter”.

A university course may include some interesting lectures (“conferencias”), which are not mere reading (“lectura”) activities.

In short, false friends in Spanish are no joke.

The thing is that there are many of them and are obviously similar to English words meaning something completely different. Moreover, and you must be careful, as you have noticed **there are many false friends that are used daily.**

As in every language there is not a fixed rule to find them, just a lot of practice and memory. The fact that they are used every day is good, because it means that you will learn a large number of them in a short time and you will be able to remember them quickly.

By the way, “remember” in Spanish is “recordar”:
another false friend!

These words then seem to make your life easier by saying “Look, I am just like the word you use in English, use me in the way you know it!”, but they are actually like the sirens’ song for Ulysses: **we recognize them and we are satisfied with being able to control them, therefore we remember them better.**

Here lies the secret for an excellent learning process of these specific linguistic terms.

It is useless to present you a list of false friends: it would be too long and moreover it is unthinkable to learn hundreds of words by heart. Also take into account that in America there are other false friends different from the ones in Spain: the word “papa” is especially used in Latin America not to indicate someone’s father (that would be “papá”), but to indicate a potato (or the Pope, depending on the context)!

If you are really curious to know about them and try to learn others than the ones I have taught you today, online you are spoilt for choice.

Anyway, the road to an easy, quick and fun learning of false friends is to read in Spanish, encounter them for the first time and understand their meaning from the context.

This means that you get directly to the right solution, without the help of tables, diagrams or graphs that already give you the translation.

Being able to understand the meaning of a new word, especially a false friend, is the best way to go.

Yesterday was a very busy day, while today has definitely been easier. Remember, now the important thing is going to your “dormitorio” and sleep well: from tomorrow, sure enough, you will be able to conjugate the first verbs, and then to speak using complete sentences.

P.S. “Dormitorio” is another false friend, but maybe you already understood that from the context. I will give you the solution at the end of the sentence, but try to guess it by yourself. “Dormitorio” means “Bedroom”.

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. Today we have not spent a too “largo” time on Spanish, but it compensates with yesterday’s lesson.

By the way, “largo” in Spanish means “long”, and it is a false friend. How to recognize and deal with them? There is not a specific rule to recognize them: there are many of them, they are used daily and even change depending on the countries in the world where Spanish is the official language.

. The ideal thing is not so much to find a list of all the false friends and learn them by heart, but rather to read in Spanish (which is always good, even to learn new words) and understand them by yourselves from the context. This is the secret to a quick, intuitive and fun learning.

6th DAY – HOW TO START SAYING THE FIRST SENTENCES IN SPANISH AFTER LESS THAN A WEEK: THE PRESENT INDICATIVE

Five days ago you were opening this manual for the first time, and from tonight you will already be able to conjugate verbs in the present indicative.

Not all of them though: today we will start with regular verbs, but I tell you in advance that the irregular ones are really very intuitive to learn.

Moreover, if you learn the verb endings and persons, you will already have built the foundation for the most difficult tenses and moods.

So, let's not waste time and start immediately with auxiliary verbs.

6.1. How to learn auxiliary verbs fast (and with some necessary clarifications)

SER (to be)	HABER (to have)
Yo soy	Yo he
Tú eres	Tú has
Él/Ella/Usted es	Él/Ella/Usted ha
Nosotros somos	Nosotros hemos
Vosotros sois	Vosotros habéis
Ellos/Ellas/Ustedes son	Ellos/Ellas/Ustedes han

In the great majority of languages auxiliary verbs are antisocial and they keep to themselves: they are obviously fundamental verbs, but they do not have much in common with the other verbs.

Watch out for a couple of things: first of all, **the verb to be is not exactly used as it is in English**. You will see it better in a few days, do not worry now. But you use it to say, for example: “Soy inglés”, or “Tú eres una chica muy guapa” if you want to pay a compliment to a beautiful girl.

Another very important thing: **the verbo “haber” is only used to form compound tenses**. If I need to say that I have something, both material and immaterial (a house, a book, fear) you must always use the verb “tener”.

You will learn it tomorrow since it is irregular.

Lastly, have you noticed the accent on “habéis”? It is an oxytone word ending in –s, therefore it needs an accent. Remember: **all verbs in the**

second person plural require an accent (obviously except monosyllables like “sois”).

Come on now, we have opened our minds to new notions: let’s make the most of it and move on to regular verbs.

6.2. How to learn regular verbs in the present indicative in few minutes

So, first of all a very easy thing: in fact, you need to know that in Spanish there are three conjugations and they end in –ar, –er and –ir. So far, no difficulty!

How about this: I will mark the endings in bold, so you will remember them better. Know that, once you conjugate these, you will be able to conjugate on your own all the other regular verbs of the Spanish language. Not bad, after just five days!

For the sake of simplicity, the third person pronouns will just be represented by “Él” and “Ellos”. Obviously the feminine and the polite form still exist and they are used, make no mistake!

CANTAR (to sing)	COMER (to eat)	SUBIR (to go up)
Yo canto	Yo como	Yo subo
Tú cantas	Tú comes	Tú subes
Él canta	Él come	Él sube
Nosotros cantamos	Nosotros comemos	Nosotros subimos
Vosotros cantáis	Vosotros coméis	Vosotros subís
Ellos cantan	Ellos comen	Ellos suben

From experience I can tell you that the main difficulties lie in the second person singular form of the verbs ending in –ar (it is a bit like Latin, if you

have classical notions!) and in the second and third person forms of the verbs ending in –ir, since you do not expect the presence of the vowel “e”.

As for the rest, you can see how the endings run parallel and therefore it becomes quite easy to remember the verb formation. Have you seen the accent on the verbs in the second person plural? Never forget it!

Have you noticed the verb “subir”, which means “to go up”? Look at this series of verbs: “to go out” is “salir”, “to go up” is “subir”, “to go down” is “bajar” and “to go” is simply “ir”. There is a lot going on!

Now try to conjugate these verbs:

Mirar (to look at), hablar (to speak), beber (to drink), escribir (to write), prometer (to promise), insistir (to insist), necesitar (to need), vivir (to live).

Sleep peacefully tonight, tomorrow we will complete all the present analysing even the irregular verbs and learning how to recognize them: these are indeed recognizable, not like the elusive false friends!

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. The auxiliary verbs are obviously “ser” and “haber”, but they are both used a bit differently than in English.

. You have seen that it is not hard to learn regular verbs: you just need to learn the endings and deal with the most complex points.

. Are you asking me which parts are the most difficult?!? Here they are: the second person singular form of the verbs of the first conjugation, the second and third person forms of the verbs of the third conjugation and the accent on the verbs in the second person plural, which many forget.

7th DAY - THE IRREGULARITIES OF THE VERBS IN THE PRESENT INDICATIVE. NOTHING SPECIAL ABOUT IT IF YOU FOLLOW MY LEAD

Take it from me: you have already learned regular verbs and you even know the endings and the tricks to memorize the crucial parts better: I would say that we can then analyse the irregularities of the verbs in the present indicative.

Maybe you are one of those readers who is used to go through the chapter to see how many pages are left: I always do it myself, so I would get you if you did that!

As a matter of fact, there are many irregularities, but I know an excellent method to make you remember them in the easiest and most direct way possible.

How? Follow my lead!

7.1. Regular irregularities: an oxymoron? Not at all!

I will immediately give you an example so you can understand this slightly bizarre statement. Think about three English verbs like “to be”, “to have” and “to go”: their third person singular forms are “it is”, “it has” and “it goes” respectively. They are all irregular forms and there is no rule to guide you: you simply need to learn them by heart.

On the contrary, **in Spanish there are indeed irregularities, even many of them, but they always follow a well-defined pattern which rarely presents exceptions.**

I will show it with this table, which summarizes the main regular irregularities. Look at the thematic vowels, how and where they change, and there you have it!

E? IE: CERRAR (to close)	O? UE: PODER (can/to be able to)	E? I: PEDIR (to ask for)
C ierro	P uedo	P ido
C ierras	P uedes	P ides
C ierra	P uede	P ide
Cerramos	Podemos	Pedimos
Cerráis	Podéis	Pedís
C ierran	P ueden	P iden
Empezar, Entender, Querer, Preferir, Encender...	Probar, Volver, Dormir, Encontrar, Contar...	Repetir, Servir, Impedir, Medir, Vestir...

As you can see, the thematic vowels change in the same way in every column: the irregularities are then present in the same four out of six persons.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to ascertain in advance if a verb is irregular or not, although in time you will gain the experience necessary to understand that.

What is certain is that the irregularity always follows these rules and therefore you know how to deal with it.

7.1.1. A little caveat: the pronunciation remains the same, the consonants will adjust!

Let's consider the verb "Elegir", another false friend which means "to choose" and which must be put in the third column. Look how it behaves in the first person singular.

ELEGIR (to choose)
Elijo
Eliges
Elige
Elegimos
Elegís
Eligen

This is a very common fact in all verbs and it is fundamental to remember it: **the pronunciation of the verb in the infinitive** (in this case there is the moka pot!) **is the same even in the conjugation of all the verbal moods and tenses.**

Therefore it could be necessary, as in this case, to change the consonant to keep the same pronunciation, otherwise the pronunciation of a hypothetical "Eligo" would be different from the infinitive "Elegir": do you agree?

The same applies for other verbs:

“Conseguir” means “to achieve”, and to keep the hard sound of the “g” it is necessary that the first person singular form is “consigo”; indeed, you do not say “consiguo”, since the sound is different.

For example, verbs like “recoger → recojo” (to collect → I collect), “exigir → exijo” (to demand → I demand) and many others behave in the same way.

Are you scared? You should not be, if you recall what is written in bold above!

7.2. How to memorize the other irregularities without worries

Today you have already learned a lot, but it is not over yet: there are other irregularities left.

You know, some even concern only specific verbs, which, however, are so common that you must learn them: so here they come!

I will repeat what I said about false friends: if there are daily difficulties (in this case the irregularities), the optimist sees them as a series of great opportunities to memorize them as quickly as possible.

If you started this course, it means that you are an optimist!

7.2.1. -cer/-cir → -zco

There, this is another simple rule to memorize the variations of some verbs in the first person singular: “conocer → conozco” (to know → I know), “conducir → conduzco” (to drive → I drive: another false friend, have you seen how many there are?!).

Remember that all the other persons have the normal endings of their conjugation. Many verbs follow this specific rule, but you just need to sound the alarm bell as soon as you notice the ending in –cer and in –cir.

At the beginning it may be a bit difficult, but you just need to oil the mechanism a bit and the siren will sound!

7.2.2. With -uir remember the “Y”

As before: you just need to see an example and you will immediately understand how this irregularity works.

DESTRUIR (to destroy)
Destruyo
Destruyes
Destruye
Destruimos
Destruís
Destruyen

7.2.3. Out of nowhere a “G” pops up

up

Well yes: in some verbs, incidentally once again in the first person singular, a “G” pops up in the conjugation.

Here is the secret to learn them without too much stress.

“Poner → pongo” (to put), “hacer → hago” (to do/make), “salir → salgo” (to go out) “tener → tengo, tienes, tiene” (watch out for the irregularity that you know already!) however do not offer many reference points.

On the contrary, I can assure you that the verbs ending in –er present –aigo in the first person singular:

“traer → traigo” (to bring), “caer → caigo” (to fall).

7.2.4. Out of nowhere a “Y” pops up as well!

We are running parallel to the previous paragraph, but you must promise me not to worry: even Ys appear in the present indicative.

Dar → doy (to give → I give), estar → estoy (which replaces our use of the verb to be in many cases) are a few examples.

As you can see these verbs are too common and important not to remember the irregularity!

7.2.5. Any other business

On any agenda, this expression indicates various analyses and contributions that may take place. In our case, it means that there are several verbs that behave in their own way and that may possibly cause some problems. However, if you study well and apply yourself you will have a successful (and not just any other) business!

The verb “saber”, which means “to know”, in the first person it mysteriously becomes “yo sé”, and then it behaves like a regular verb in the rest of the conjugation.

Similarly, would you ever guess that “yo quepo” is the first person form of the verb “caber”, which means “to fit”?

“To see” is “ver”, and it is such a short verb that, poor thing, let it keep the letter “e” in its conjugation!

Veo → ves → ve → vemos → veis → ven

Now consider the strange conjugation of the verb “ir”, which means “to go”.

It is such a common verb that you will learn it in just a couple of days.

IR
Voy
Vas
Va
Vamos
Vais
Van

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. Today has been very busy, well done for going all the way. You have discovered that there are regular irregularities: when put in their place (or even better, in a table) they actually look less scary.

. G, Y, Z: as you have noticed, these are the three letters that mark the main irregularities of Spanish verbs.

The other irregular verbs are too common not to learn them quickly.

. Try to conjugate these verbs: distraer, poner, seguir, contener, ir, ver, reducir, hacer, estar, caer. Then a rest is more than deserved!

8th DAY - OK, ALL RIGHT, LET'S TAKE A BREAK. LET'S GO TO SPAIN!

After a day like yesterday, really full of contents and notions, what is the best way to relax a bit?

Obviously switching off and taking a trip to Spain, so you will also have the chance to speak directly onsite.

8.1. In Spain there is everything and more, for every taste

Where are we going exactly? Well, you decide and then we will book a flight. There is plenty of choice in a country that offers truly everything: relaxation by the sea, visits to wonderful cities of art, mountain excursions, a month-long pilgrimages. Trust me that you will not get bored. You can choose from 19 different “Autonomous Communities”. They are similar to regions, and they were created in 1978 after the dictatorial regime of Francisco Franco, which had lasted since 1939, that is since then end of the terrible Civil War so crudely represented by Picasso in “Guernica”.

By the way, if you want to see this huge work of art (nearly eight metres long and three and a half metres wide) we need to go to **Madrid**.

Not only is the city a wonder, but its surroundings as well:

in **Toledo** you dive into the Middle Ages, in the **Escorial** you discover the history of the country, and the massive walls of **Ávila** have lasted uninterruptedly for almost a thousand years.

Do you prefer the sea?! Well, the **Costa Brava** and the **Costa del Sol** offer you one of the most enchanting seas ever: all of **Catalonia**, the **Valencian Community** and, further down, **Andalusia**, offer excellent places suitable for every kind tourist: do you love discos and dance all night long?

Do you prefer to relax even at night? Do you want to combine the seaside and tourist visits? This is the place for you: I will just say that **Barcelona**, **Valencia** and **Malaga** are great for both activities; I am warning you, in

summer it is really hard to walk around without suffering from the heat, especially in the southern communities.

It is easily over 40 degrees.

If you want to live a truly unique and touching experience, regardless of your religious affiliation, you can do the **Camino de Santiago**: the entire route, which starts in France and crosses all the Spanish northern communities, takes a month and it is 800 km long.

There are obviously shorter routes, suitable for families, children and people with mobility problems. The arrival at the cathedral and the tomb of St. James is seen by everyone as an incredibly magical event, which makes us really feel part of a mankind on its journey, moving hand in hand.

Then, usually, you treat yourself to a swim in the Atlantic Ocean in **Finisterre**, a hundred kilometres from **Santiago de Compostela**: tradition dictates that the pilgrim's clothes must be burnt in a cathartic bonfire, as a symbol of a rebirth to a new life, and shells must be collected in memory of the journey started 800 km before in a small town of 30 people named **Roncesvalles**, bordering France.

Does not this tiny town ring a bell? What about Roland and Charlemagne? In 778 a battle which became legend took place there: as a matter of fact, Charlemagne wanted to enter Spain, at the time almost entirely ruled by the Moors, to annex it to his Christian empire. Not only did this venture fail, but his rearguard fell into an awful ambush which cost the life of, among others, the paladin Roland, immortalized by the famous poem of chivalry "Chanson de Roland".

Would you ever believe that the highest mountain in Spain is on an island? Well yes: in the **Canary Islands** the **Teide volcano** is 3.718 metres high. Its

national park is one of the most visited in the world, but you also would be enchanted by the cliffs overhanging the Atlantic Ocean, called “**Los Gigantes**”. The climate in the Canaries is paradisiac: all year round it is always between 15° and 25°. As a matter of fact we are far away from the European continent, try to see where they are in an atlas!

Generally speaking, though, mind where you are going! Indeed, you could find yourself saying “Buenos días” and hearing “Egun on!”.

Do not worry: you are in the Basque Country or in Navarre and here, anyway, Castilian is spoken and understood by basically everyone.

However, it is curious that on the border between France and Spain a language like the Basque is still alive, a language which maybe is even derived from Etruscan and which is not related to any language present today in Europe.

In this area, **Bilbao** and **Pamplona** are worth a visit: either now or later, you get to decide.

Even the **Principality of Asturias** is rich of traditions going back to the Middle Ages and of unspoiled natural beauties, like cliffs overhanging the Atlantic Ocean and mountains perfect for winter and summer hikes.

Not to mention **Catalonia**, which uses its own peculiarities in a political battle against the central government, in order to gain greater autonomy or even independence from the crown, currently held by Philip VI of Bourbon. Nevertheless Catalonia is a region full of history, culture and charm, as well as beaches, fun and good food.

Well, actually, you can find good food really everywhere; in a few days I will give you some advice about that as well.

As for now start booking, then we will think about filling our stomachs!

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. Spain is truly a destination suitable for any type of tourist: fun, beaches, mountains, cities of art, excursions, pilgrimages and many other opportunities.

. In Spain there are as many as 44 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, scattered all over the mainland, the Balearics and the Canaries.

. By now you will have certainly made up your mind: where would you like to go to unwind?

9th DAY - CROSS AND DELIGHT OF SPANISH: “SER”, “ESTAR” AND “HABER”

Here we are, after having ideally toured Spain while waiting for doing it in real life. Anyway, I already know where it goes: you would like to come back on the next available flight, because Spain really offers anything one could ask for, and has wonderful culture, food and mentality. In short, you would love it there.

Maybe after tonight you will think: why do Spaniards complicate their lives so much?

Good question, I asked it myself when I had to learn the right use of the verbs ser, estar and haber.

I am warning you, it will take some time before you know how to use them in a fluent and natural way.

At the beginning you just need to understand the mechanism though, then studying and consistency are the oil that will make the gears turn.

9.1. A “ser” is like a diamond: it is forever

Consider these two sentences carefully: “my brother is tall”, “my brother is angry”. Apparently, there is no difference between the two, except obviously for the meaning. Yet Spaniards would use two different verbs for these sentences.

You see, the complication of life that we mentioned before! Nothing hard, simply remember that not only is the diamond forever (and very expensive too), but the verb “ser” as well (which is also free to use, and this is certainly a nice perk!). What am I talking about? Well, if my brother is tall, he will be like that all his life, unless he suffers from serious and unlikely malformations or diseases. Surely, maybe when we are old we get a bit shorter, but let’s not complicate our lives now! **My brother is and will always be tall, therefore in Spanish you will have to use the verb ser: “mi hermano es alto”.**

On the contrary, my brother is angry maybe because he has argued with his girlfriend today: tomorrow they will make up and he will be happy and in love as before.

Being angry is just a temporary situation, then you will have to use the verb estar: “mi hermano está enfadado”.

Obviously this rule applies to every mood, unless they are an integral and specific part of our character.

Do you need another example? Here it is: if you tell the shop assistant that “esta camiseta me gusta, es ancha” it means that you like that T-shirt

because it is large and this is one of the characteristics that your T-shirt need to have.

However, if you tell them “Esta camiseta no me gusta, está ancha”, it means that you have temporarily worn it, just to try it on, and then you have realized that it is too large for you.

Remember: “ser” is forever”, “estar” does not last long instead.

Then watch out for some adjectives that change their meaning depending on the verb “ser” or “estar”: “ser negro” means “to be black”, but “estar negro” means “to be angry”; or, “ser rico” means “to be rich”, but “estar rico” means “to be tasty”.

So, watch out for these particular adjectives, although there are only a few of them luckily!

Obviously ser and estar have their specific uses, without any possibility of misunderstanding.

9.1.1. How to use “ser” in a se(r)lf-confident way

Do you need to say that you will celebrate your birthday at your house Saturday night? You will then send a message to your friends saying that “mi cumpleaños es el próximo sábado en mi casa”: this is because you are informing someone about the date and the place of an event.

Even in the description of a person you use the verb ser: for example, “mi hermano es católico, es médico, es muy alto y es una persona muy tranquila” (“my brother is Catholic, he is a doctor, he is very tall and he is a very quiet person”).

There are also some fixed expressions that require “ser”, without a particular reason: here you just need a lot of experience, and the trick is using them often to memorize them more quickly.

“Ser caradura” means “to have the cheek”, “ser un desastre” does not need to be translated!

9.1.2. How to use “estar” in a self-confident way

You have sent the invitation for your birthday, but someone does not remember exactly where you live: “mi casa está entre el banco y la farmacia”. Therefore, you will use “estar” for any geographical indication of this kind, but you also use it if you want to describe someone’s profession: if you explain to a Spaniard that “mi primo está de médico”, they will have a clear idea of your cousin’s (another false friend!) job. However, you also use it in fixed expressions: “estar por las nubes” means, in fact, “to have one’s head in the clouds”.

Now consider how you form the gerund.

HABLAR	COMER	SUBIR
He is speaking	He is eating	He is going up
Está hablando	Está comiendo	Está subiendo

The only difficulty: **watch out for the verbs that change the thematic vowel in the present, since they also change in the gerund.**

Sentir → siente → sintiendo,
dormir → duerme → durmiendo.

Even the verbs with the stem ending in a vowel change: they end in -yendo in the gerund.

So, there you have caer → cayendo or creer → creyendo

Now, let's face the last challenge of the day!

9.2. How to best use the verbs “haber” and “estar”

In order to understand how to use these verbs correctly, consider this pairing:

haber → **indefinite article;**

estar → **definite article.**

Indeed, both verbs mean “there is-there are”, but there is that main difference between them. It seems very easy and predictable, but at the beginning you will struggle a bit. Only at the beginning though!

1. It is sunny today →

Hoy está el sol (literally, “Today there is the sun”).

2. It is raining a lot today →

Hoy hay una lluvia muy fuerte (literally, “Today there is a very strong rain”).

Consider these sentences in the plural and let us draw some conclusions:

1. Tomorrow there are football matches →

Mañana están los partidos de fútbol.

2. Tomorrow there are many football matches →

Mañana hay muchos partidos de fútbol.

Two fundamental things: “hay” is used for both the singular and the plural form, and even before indefinite adjectives and pronouns.

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. You have done really well today, because you have learned several important peculiarities of Spanish: the different use of “ser” and “estar” is fundamental in basically every sentence. Remember that the former has a definitive nature, whereas the latter has a temporary one. With some exceptions and peculiarities.

. Moreover, you have learned to form and use the gerund without too much effort.

. Anything else? Yes! Another muy española characteristic that you know now is the difference between “haber” and “estar”: now you know that you use the former when the object of my speech is indefinite, whereas the latter is used when the object is definite.

. Remember: today’s notions are quite simple in theory (especially since I have presented them in the easiest way possible) but quite difficult in practice, particularly when you speak the first times. Soon you will be able to master them, I am sure.

10th DAY - ANOTHER CROSS AND DELIGHT: “POR” AND “PARA”. TWO DIFFERENT PREPOSITIONS TO SAY “FOR”?!

“Can I have this cake, please? It’s for my son”.

In order to prepare a great birthday party a cake is indispensable. Maybe you have ordered a cake to celebrate a friend or a relative, and a sentence like that is very common in this context. Actually, nothing strange about it, apparently.

Let’s try to translate this sentence in Spanish paying attention to two prepositions:

“Por favor, ¿puedes darme esa torta? Es para mi hijo”.

Well yes, you have read correctly: “Por favor” and “Para mi hijo”.

Two different forms for the same preposition.

10.1. How to clearly understand the uses of “por” and “para” without racking your brains too much

Do not worry, there are clear rules which define exactly when to use “por” and when to use “para”. To begin with, it is indispensable to have some even basic notions of clause and sentence analysis, so that the learning will definitely be more immediate.

First of all, rule number one: **“por” denotes cause, place and price, “para” instead denotes purpose, benefit and time.** “We are not going out because of the rain” denotes the cause, the reason for staying at home. Therefore, the translation is “no salimos por la lluvia”. Consider these three indications of place: “por aquí, por allá, por ahí”. They mean “here, there, around”, and, as you can see, they are fixed expressions that require “por”. Or, in the sentence “I am buying this sweater for 30 €”, the price must be indicated with “por”, and therefore the translation is “compro el jersey por 30 €”.

Now let’s consider “para”. The purpose of studying is obviously to get a good grade, therefore “José is studying to get a good grade” becomes “José aprende para sacar una buena nota”. The benefit is expressed when you say for example “for me”, that is “para mí”. The time expression “within an hour” requires “para”: the translation will be “para dentro una hora”, and this obviously applies to every temporal duration.

Already having understood and learned this rule means having taken a huge step forward.

There are obviously many other cases that at the beginning will cause some troubles, but then experience and memory will help you a lot. I always repeat this, because they are the most important things in the learning of a foreign language.

You say “te llamo por teléfono” (“I am calling you on the phone”), because “por” also denotes an adverbial of means. You use “por” even to express the agent (both animate and inanimate), therefore in passive sentences: “the apple is eaten by my brother” will then become “la manzana es comida por mi hermano”.

Trust me, this is such a strange and peculiar characteristic that you will learn it in no time!

You also use “por” in prepositional phrases of place (with “through” or “across”): “I am going to Spain passing through France” is translated as “voy a España pasando por Francia”.

A brief digression: **geographic names do not require an article, unless you specify one of their characteristics** like “la Italia del norte” or “la Francia mediterránea”.

I will explain to you a little matter, to let you know how many shades of meaning may be conveyed by these two prepositions: you have now understood what “para mí” means: well, there is also “por mí”, and you use it when any of the alternatives proposed is good, without personal interests.

For example: “To me, it is great if we spend the summer in Spain or in Argentina” is translated as “por mí es muy bueno si veraneamos en España o en Argentina”, since both options are fine.

The trick to learn them? Memorizing as much as you can set phrases containing “por” or “para”, especially when you come across them for the first time and you feel unsure about their use.

This is an excellent method, but there are many others: the important thing is to never give up when dealing with a “por” or a “para”, and to try and reflect to understand which one of the two is correct. In this way learning becomes a game, which is sort of the aim not only of this chapter, but of the entire manual!

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. We can say that today's work was "short but intense": well yes, because learning the difference between "por" and "para", which play an important part in Spanish, is not easy and above all, what counts is daily practice and training based on reading and learning from your mistakes.

. There are some rules that clarify the use of these two prepositions, but their fields of use are endless: broadly speaking, "por" denotes cause, place and price, while "para" denotes purpose, benefit and time.

You will find hundreds of them every day, in every text that you will read or listen to in Spanish: it is better this way, it means that you will be able to face and overcome many little difficulties every day!

. Meanwhile, you have also learned that geographic names do not require an article, unless you refer to one of their parts.

11th DAY – AN EASY LESSON FOR TODAY, LET’S LEARN NUMBERS

You need a relaxing day after several lessons which were very intense, full of concepts and rules to learn.

Today you will learn to say numbers and dates correctly, which obviously are used in any written or spoken context.

As usual embrace the Latin saying that you already know: “Divide et impera”. Numbers are infinite, but the tricks to learn them are few and simple. You just need to follow my every step, and you will classify numbers perfectly in your memory.

Indeed, it is not enough to learn things: what really counts is “how” you learn them.

11.1. How to memorize cardinal numbers

We are not talking about high-ranking prelates, but about the numbers that you learn in kindergarten or maybe even before.

Here is the start of the series.

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

The only difficulty is the pronunciation of number 4: for some reason, in the pronunciation people often tend to add a final “s”, which is not actually there.

Now, let's go up to 20.

13 = trece

14 = catorce

15 = quince

16 = dieciséis

17 = diecisiete

18 = dieciocho

19 = diecinueve

20 = veinte

Have you noticed how similar they are to each other? The trio 13-14-15 has a similar pronunciation, as the series 16-19.

Indeed, the trick to memorize them properly is to “organize” them in your head by putting them into groups based on their similarities.

Here, on the contrary, the problem is at the end: indeed, the number “twenty” is “veinte”, with “e” as the final vowel. Watch out!

Now, learn the ten numbers after 20.

21 = veintiuno

22 = veintidós

23 = veintitrés

24 = veinticuatro

25 = veinticinco

26 = veintiséis

27 = veintisiete

28 = veintiocho

29 = veintinueve

30 = treinta

As you can see, now “veinti” takes the lion’s share, eliminating the vowel “e” of “veinte”. Now you know it, it is a surmountable difficulty.

Watch out for the next ten numbers, those after 30.

31 = treinta y uno

32 = treinta y dos

33 = treinta y tres

34 = treinta y cuatro

35 = treinta y cinco

36 = treinta y seis

37 = treinta y siete

38 = treinta y ocho

39 = treinta y nueve

40 = cuarenta

There, **from 30 onwards all numbers behave exactly in this way:**
“tens y units”.

Consequently, the conjunction “y” must not be put between hundreds and tens, or between thousands and hundreds or between thousands and units.

If you memorize this simple little rule, you will be able to say numbers, years and dates without any problem.

Now, on to the next tens and hundreds.

50 = cincuenta

60 = sesenta

70 = setenta

80 = ochenta

90 = noventa

100 = cien

Another little difficulty: the whole number 100 is “cien”, but with any other unit it takes the form “ciento...”. For example, 164 is “cientosesenta y cuatro”. Clear, right?

100 = cien

200 = doscientos

300 = trescientos

400 = cuatrocientos

500 = quinientos

600 = seiscientos

700 = setecientos

800 = ochocientos

900 = novecientos

1000 = mil

Watch out for three things: 100 (whose secrets you already know), 500 (all numbers with this take the strange form “quinientos”) and 900 (be careful, “novecientos”, not “nuevecientos”). A small caveat: obviously, if hundreds refer exclusively to feminine elements you will need to use the numeral adjectives in the feminine form: “300 women” is in fact “trescientas mujeres”.

On with the last numbers.

1000 = mil

2000 = dos mil

10.000 = diez mil

100.000 = ciento mil

1.000.000 = un millón

1.000.000.000 = mil millones

I would say that we can stop at one billion, otherwise numbers will start looking like IBAN codes!

By the way, as you can see there is not a way to say “a billion”, but you simply say “a thousand million”.

Remember the same basic rule as before, that is “y” must be put only between tens and units: the third millennium began in 2001, therefore in Spanish it is “dos mil uno”, without any conjunction.

11.2. A quick look at ordinal numbers

Here are the first ten ordinal numbers:

primero, segundo, tercero, cuarto, quinto, sexto, séptimo, octavo, nono, décimo.

And then? Well, maybe brushing up your Latin will help you with higher ordinals: decimoprimeró, decimosegundo, and so on up to 20°, which is “vigésimo”.

Then again: trigésimo, cuadragésimo, quincuagésimo (watch out for the pronunciation!), sexagésimo, septagésimo, octagésimo, nonagésimo, centésimo.

Fun fact: **the numbers referring to centuries are always cardinal, never ordinal.**

For example: “the twentieth century” becomes “el siglo veinte”.

Maybe you are feeling dizzy tonight, but think about how many steps you have taken in ten days and how much progress you can still make.

Now absorb numbers in your sleep and tomorrow we will continue.

It will not be easy, but I will always be there explaining to you how to make easy and fun even a difficult topic like the past simple.

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. The main difficulty in learning numbers is to be shocked while facing a series of numbers and say: “It is impossible to learn them all!”. Actually, as you have realized, there are not many sore points in this topic.

. Watch out for “cuatro” which does not need a final “s”, “veinte” and the conjunction “y” which must be put only between tens and units. Also beware of the naughty “cien”, “quinientos” and “novecientos”, which may cause panic among hundreds. But you are well-armoured and you will know how to fight back.

As a matter of fact, I am sure that you will perfectly master any difficulty.

. I am certain that you will have fewer problems with ordinal numbers, since they are all straightforward.

12th DAY - THE PAST IS THE PAST, BUT THE LESSON ON THE SIMPLE PAST IS NOW!

As you know, in English you use the “simple past” or the “present perfect” to talk about the past: there, in Spanish the situation is the same. There are few exceptions, but there is basically the same distinction.

Are you ready then? Let's go!

12.1. How to learn the simple past of the regular verbs in a few minutes

In Spanish, **the simple past (pretérito indefinido) is used when in the sentence there is a precise time indication referring to the past, or anyway when the action is clearly finished.**

Therefore, it is correct to say, for example, “I read a novel yesterday” or “We bought a new computer a year ago” or “I met José on 17th March last”.

Let's see how regular verbs behave. I am telling you: exceptions are few and easy to schematize.

CANTAR	COMER	SUBIR
Canté	Comí	Subí
Cantaste	Comiste	Subiste
Cantó	Comió	Subió
Cantamos	Comimos	Subimos
Cantasteis	Comisteis	Subisteis
Cantaron	Comieron	Subieron

Look at that: the second and third conjugations are identical! One less thing to worry about. The rest does not scare us.

So, how would you translate the sentences above?

“Ayer leí una novela”, “Hace un año compramos el ordenador nuevo” and “El doce de marzo pasado quedé con José”.

One very important thing: **the verbs that change the thematic vowel in the present, also modify it in the simple past, but only with this alternation: e → i o → u**

Consider this table, which will help you understand this concept:

Pedir (yo pido)	Dormir (yo duermo)
Pedí	Dormí
Pediste	Dormiste
Pidió	Durmió
Pedimos	Dormimos
Pedisteis	Dormisteis
Pidieron	Durmieron

Whatever the vowel change, remember then that if the stem of the verb in the infinitive presents an “e”, in the third person forms there is an “i”, whereas an “o” becomes a “u”.

Below you will find some time expressions that always require the simple past. When you see them or need to use them, an alarm bell must ring in your head and make you realize: “here I need to use the simple past!”.

. A year, a month, a day ago →

Hace un año, un mes, un día

. Yesterday, the day before yesterday →

Ayer, anteayer

. Last March, Autumn, 5th August →

el pasado marzo, otoño, cinco de agosto

Obviously, this list can be expanded with other different expressions: when you find them, for example, it will be good to add them to the list.

Remember: **you do not use the simple past when there is the demonstrative “this”.**

For example, “we have gone to the seaside this summer” indicates that summer is not over yet, otherwise you would say “last summer”. Therefore, in this case you must use the present perfect, which we will analyse in the next days.

I would say that it is enough for today. Keep practising with conjugations and time expressions and you will be able to master them in no time.

Tomorrow we will see the irregularities of the verbs in the past simple, but now we know each other quite well: if we walk together, we will get far.

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. Regular verbs in the pretérito indefinido do not scare us: what really helps us is the fact that the last two conjugations, are identical.

. Remember: this tense is used correctly both in the spoken and the written language. As long as there is a precise time expression of the past, you use the simple past. On the contrary, you must not use it when there are words like “this”, which locate the sentence in the present, not in the past.

. It is very useful to make a list of expressions that require the simple past, so you will immediately know when to use this tense or the simple past. A simple and effective trick, is it not?

13th DAY – HOW TO FACE THE IRREGULARITIES OF THE SIMPLE PAST WITHOUT PANICKING

“Then he came and we drank wine together”.

It could be the final sentence of a book chapter:

the main character speaks in the first person sitting at a bar table and waiting for a friend to have an aperitif together.

Who knows what will happen in the next chapter: a showdown or simply two old friends hanging out?

Let us focus on this sentence now and try to translate it in Spanish: “Luego él vino y bebimos juntos el vino”.

Luckily there are accents and we are able to distinguish “él vino” (he came) from “el vino” (wine)!

13.1. How to memorize a list of irregular verbs easily

We are lucky: there are really few irregular verbs in the simple past and they are all frequently used. They are used so much that by dint of finding them it is impossible not to memorize them.

Their conjugation is the same for all, but it is very peculiar. As you have already noticed, “él vino” is quite unusual.

The important thing is to understand that **these irregular verbs modify their stems and add specific endings**. As you have seen, “venir” change the stem into “vin”, adding then the endings.

Here they are:

Estar → Estuv-

Haber → Hub-

Hacer → Hic- (but “**él hizo**”, to keep the same pronunciation of the infinitive “hacer”)

Poder → Pud-

Poner → Pus-

Querer → Quis-

Saber → Sup-

Tener → Tuv-

Venir → Vin-

The endings are always the same, so the example of “querer” applies also to the other verbs.

Yo quise	Nosotros quisimos
Tú quisiste	Vosotros quisisteis
Él quiso	Ellos quisieron

The two main difficulties, especially at the beginning, are due to the frequent confusion between the first and the third person singular forms. They are both short words and look very similar, but you have to keep in mind the ending “e” in the first person and the ending “o” in the third person. An excellent exercise is to conjugate them all at least once, so you will have the pattern right in front of you and will not go wrong.

Remember well these endings: in the next group of verbs they will come back again!

13.2. A “J” in the simple past

In some verbs a “J” mysteriously appears, similarly to the mysterious appearances of some letters in the irregular verbs in the present. As you can see, the irregularities run parallel.

The verbs ending in -cir and other few exceptions (like “traer”) require a “j” before the usual endings. Here is an example:

Yo conduje	Nosotros condujimos
Tú condujiste	Vosotros condujisteis
Él condujo	Ellos condujeron

However, watch out for “decir”, where “e” becomes “i” in every person: Dije, dijiste, dijo... and then?

Go on!

13.3. Some strange irregularities, but so strange that there hardly any

How nice: two such common verbs like “ir” and “ser” have the exact same conjugation.

Yo fui	Nosotros fuimos
Tu fuiste	Vosotros fuisteis
Él fue	Ellos fueron

So, for example “Fui con los amigos” means both “I went with my friends” and “I was with my friends”. Obviously, the context of the sentence will help you understand which verb is correct.

Or another very common verb: “**dar**”.

Yo di	Nosotros dimos
Tú diste	Vosotros disteis
Él dio	Ellos dieron

Watch out for the pronunciation, especially in the third person singular form. The stress, in fact, falls on the “o”, do you remember why?

It is a monosyllable and you do not put the accent because there is not a homographic word with a different meaning.

Well, I would say that we have done well even today.

In two days you have learned how to conjugate and use the simple past. I suggest you revise everything, mainly focussing on the topics that you find more difficult.

Tomorrow we will expand our past further.

The secrets revealed in this chapter

- . You learned how to use the simple past yesterday, today you have discovered some strange irregularities.
- . Pay attention to the changes in the stems of some verbs, which are very common by the way, and the appearance of a “j” in another group of verbs.
- . What about “ser”, “ir” and “dar”? Different from all the others, but so common that you learn them in no time!

14th DAY – HOW TO FORM THE PAST PARTICIPLE

When you need to use the past participle, it is fundamental that you also know the auxiliary verb that precedes it. In English, as you know, “have” is the auxiliary verb that must be put before participles, for both transitive and intransitive verbs.

Besides using the right auxiliary verb, it is vital to know the correct form of the past participle that you need to use. In English, however, there are some verbs that lack past participle forms and are therefore called defective. For example, you may say “I can do anything”, but if you refer to the past you will have to use another expression (like “I was able to”). The same is true for verbs like “must” or “beware”.

Also, how many times have you been unsure about the form of a certain past participle? Think, for example, about some irregular verbs like “teach” and “catch”: how could you ever guess that their past participle forms are “taught” and “caught” respectively? Or how could you imagine that “sung” and “hung” are the past participles of “sing” and “hang”? Not to mention “lain”, which is the past participle of “lie”!

In conclusion, it is all very confusing. Luckily, the situation is different in Spain:

All verbs require the auxiliary verb “haber” (as in English) and there are hardly any irregular past participles.

There are no defective verbs and I am sure that you will have no problems learning all the participles.

14.1. How to learn all the past participles in no time

Remember these simple patterns:

ar ? ado	Lavar? Lavado
er ? ido	Beber? Bebido
ir ? ido	Traducir? Traducido

The initial difficulty concerns only the second conjugation, which is the same as the third.

Would you believe that with just these three examples you know the past participle of 99,9% of Spanish verbs?

Now, here are the main exceptions:

Abrir ? Abierto	Poner ? Puesto
Cubrir ? Cubierto	Resolver ? Resuelto
Decir ? Dicho	Romper ? Roto
Escribir ? Escrito	Satisfacer ? Satisfecho
Hacer ? Hecho	Ver ? Visto
Morir ? Muerto	Volver ? Vuelto

The fact that these verbs are very common makes it much easier for you:
in just a few days you will have them memorized.

14.2. How to use the past participle

Do you remember that you learned how to use the simple past two days ago? There, in very few words we could say that what is not simple past is present perfect; basically,

the simple past is used when in the sentence there is no precise time indication, or when there are demonstrative pronouns and adjectives.

Obviously, as in English, you can use the past participle in all compound tenses of every verb mood.

Let's go back in time again: four days ago you started to learn the differences between "por" and "para".

Remember that **the agent (both animate and inanimate), which is present in passive sentences, requires the preposition "por"**.

If a past participle is used as a qualifying adjective, obviously, must agree with the noun it modifies in gender and number.

An example is worth a thousand rules:

"We have been defeated by the strongest team" →

"Hemos sido derrotados por el equipo más fuerte".

It is such a strange peculiarity that trust me, it will be the first one that you will remember!

Is it already over? Well yes, there you have the past participle!

I will never stop repeating this: revise past lessons every day, especially the topics that you find more difficult. Tomorrow is another day... and there will

be something new to learn!

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. -Acho, -Ido, -Ido. With these three simple endings you can form the past participle of nearly every Spanish verb. The few exceptions concern very common verbs, and this will help you a lot.

. Remember: the use of the participle is the opposite to that of the simple past. Use it when there is a demonstrative and the sentence does not present any time indication about a finished action. Then, use “por” to form the agent (both animate and inanimate), making sure the participle agrees with the noun it modifies when it behaves like an adjective.

15th DAY – HOW TO ENJOY AN EXCELLENT SPANISH DINNER. TODAY IT’S ON ME, FROM THE APPETIZER TO THE DESSERT, DRINKS INCLUDED!

What is better than a dinner with friends? Maybe in a restaurant by the sea in a Spanish seaside town. I am telling you the programme already, but do not stick too much to the timetable. You do not watch the clock on holiday!

I suggest you stay on the beach since early morning and have lunch with a typical “Bocadillo”, that is a sandwich.

In Spain a very popular sandwich is the one with “los calamares”, or with the famous and delicious “Jamón ibérico”, the ham with a characteristic black colour, produced mainly in the south of the country.

There, having one for lunch together with a nice, cool “cerveza” (“beer”) sitting under the beach umbrella is truly the best thing ever.

15.1. How to best choose an aperitif: there is something for every taste!

Before the actual dinner let's have an aperitif:
it is 8 p.m.

What, an aperitif at this hour?! Of course, in Spain if you try to get into a restaurant to have dinner at this time, you will probably find it closed, or the waiters may smile at you while wondering: “are there people who eat in the afternoon?!”.

That being said, for an aperitif I would tell you to try the famous “**tapas**”: they are a combination of small dishes of food and some drinks.



Their origin has its roots in the thirteenth century, when King Alfonso X of Castile advised to serve wine along with solid food; then the bottle of wine had to be “capped” (“tapada” in Spanish, from which the name “tapas” is

derived) by the little plates containing food so that the taste of the wine was not contaminated with external impurities.

“**Pincho**” and “**montadito**” are very popular aperitifs as well.



In the former case you eat appetizers and snacks standing at the bar, while montadito is simply a slice of bread with some food on it.

A delicious aperitif is **tortilla de patatas**, typical of Spain: it does not need to be translated, just to be eaten!



15.2. First course, second course and so on up to the dessert!

Are you already full?!? Anyway, I am sure that if you see before you a plate full of **paella** you will not refuse to eat it. You are in the birthplace of this very famous dish, cooked in the homonymous pan and exported all over the world.



If you do not like fish or, like me, you are allergic to shellfish, do not worry! There is, in fact, even paella with meat and vegetables, born in the Comunidad Valenciana.

Would you have ever thought that true paella originated in this area and has only meat and vegetables?

Instead, if you are in the Balearics and you want or try a typical dish of this area, you must order **the traditional Menorcan rice with octopus**.

Octopus is generally very present in Spanish cuisine, so much so that there is the Galician version, typical of the Galician Community.

Among the soups, you can choose between the cold one, full of raw vegetables, called “**Gazpacho**” (in the picture below), or go for the hot “**Sopa de ajo**”, which is a garlic soup.



Meat and fish: well, you are truly spoiled for choice! Cod and salt cod can be found everywhere, as well as the famous “**cocido**” (in the next picture), boiled meat served with vegetables. I think that cocido sums up all of Spain, so different from region to region: in fact, in every autonomous community the meat and vegetables are different, but the name of this dish is always the same.



“**Pisto manchego**” is a side dish, a mixture of different fried vegetables like tomatoes, onions, aubergines and courgettes.

Do you have room for fruit and dessert? **Catalan cream** can be found even outside Spain, but as its name indicates it has its origin in Catalonia. Another special dessert is the so-called “**Tarta de Santiago**”, an almond cake with a layer of icing sugar forming the traditional St. James cross.



Then of course, every little village has its own typical desserts and its own culinary traditions.

Two things are certain though: leave some change as a “**propina**” for the waiters once the meal is over.

But above all, do not be surprised by Spanish prices.

Excellent quality at incredibly low prices: I am not here to advertise anything, but going to Spain is convenient even from a merely financial point of view. In conclusion, this country really offers anything that one could desire. And with a belly full of excellent food, the night will bring the perfect rest to face tomorrow’s lesson.

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. Tapas, pincho and montaditos: three excellent ways to enjoy an aperitif after a day of work, of sightseeing, at the beach... In short, any time is good to “ir de tapas”.

. Every meal will be a triumph of flavours, delicacies and new recipes. Savour each bite and seize the opportunity remember new words and recipes to take home, to have a bit of Spain in your kitchen!

16th DAY – ON A FULL STOMACH LET’S FACE THE IMPERFECT

With a nice dinner like yesterday’s you must have slept really well, maybe with your mouth still watering or with the taste of some typical dish. It is normal, when you try something, you do not want it to end.

Maybe you will experience a similar situation today: you have learned different notions about the past and you discover that there are other verb tenses? But they seem infinite too!

How will you memorize everything in a short time?

Follow me step by step and there will hardly be any problems at all.

16.1. How to learn the imperfect in less than ten minutes

The imperfect is used to describe habitual actions occurred in the past. Always remember: the first conjugation is isolated and behaves in its own peculiar way, whereas the other two go hand in hand. This is the behaviour of all Spanish verbs in the imperfect.

CANTAR	COMER	SALIR
Cantaba	Comía	Salía
Cantabas	Comías	Salías
Cantaba	Comía	Salía
Cantábamos	Comíamos	Salíamos
Cantabais	Comíais	Salíais
Cantaban	Comían	Salían

There, in bold you can find all the initial difficulties. Apart from the one concerning the stress (and consequently the pronunciation) of the verbs in the first and second person plural of the verbs in -ar, pay close attention to the first person singular forms of very conjugation. As you can see, these forms end in -a and they are exactly like the third person singular forms. At first, it may seem difficult to keep this in mind, but then you will see that it is going to be even easier to memorize the conjugations!

Always remember that being determined and aware of the difficulties are strategies that are helpful when studying a foreign language, and in life in

general.

And now let's face the irregular verbs. Guess what, there are as many as...
three!

16.2. Three simple little irregularities

“Ir”, “Ser” and “Ver” are the three verbs that in the imperfect stand out from the rest of the rest of the group and do their own thing. They do not present scary irregularities: you just need to schematize them and any fear or difficulty goes away. Try it for yourself!

IR	SER	VER
Iba	Era	Veía
Ibas	Eras	Veías
Iba	Era	Veía
Íbamos	Éramos	Veíamos
Ibais	Erais	Veíais
Iban	Eran	Veían

As usual, these are “regular irregularities”, since the endings and the pronunciations are the same as those of regular verbs. You need to pay attention to the appearance of the bilabial consonant “b” in the verb “ir” (present, by the way, even in Latin, if you have some recollections of classical studies) and to the presence of the vowel “e” in the verb “ver”.

The imperfect is served!

Any doubts or uncertainties? Besides revising these lessons on the past, my advice is to get some rest to let everything settle: tomorrow we will see

other verb tenses that are more complex (but you form them along the lines of what you already know) and how to use them in a well-organized speech.

An excellent and practical method to learn everything in an even easier way is to read online, obviously in Spanish, the biography of some historical figure, or some news updates.

Seeing the verb in a well-defined context (clause, sentence or article) and understanding why a certain verb tense is used is the best exercise ever to learn everything even faster.

And obviously with greater awareness.

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. Now that you know when to use the imperfect and that only three verbs present “regular irregularities”, what more could you ask for? Watch out for the first person singular forms and the pronunciation of the first two person plural forms.

Studying and reading exercises will be your constant points of reference to learn in an easy and fun way.

17th DAY – HOW TO GET THROUGH A CONVERSATION EASILY MAKING THE MOST OF PAST TENSES

If learning how to use past tenses looks like an insurmountable obstacle, rely on the fact that you will basically use these verb tenses in every sentence. Any speech referring to a more or less distant past necessarily requires many verb tenses: but as we have already seen, the fact that a difficulty appears many times during the day cannot but help us remember and learn it in a very short time.

17.1. Past and past perfect: how to find your way in the Black Forest

First of all you need to know that the use of the past and the past perfect in a sentence follows the so-called “consecutio temporum”, a rule already used in the Latin language for the correct use of verb tenses. Since Spanish is a neo-Latin language, the same concept is applied:

the past perfect (“pretérito pluscuamperfecto”)

is used to describe an action occurred before another one in the same sentence.

Consider this example and you will understand it immediately:

“When I came home, my mother had already cooked the rice”.

“Cuando llegué a casa, mi madre ya había cocinado el arroz”.

It is necessary to make some comments together: first of all,

the past perfect is formed in the following way: auxiliary verb in the imperfect form + past participle. No difficulty in this case, since as you know in Spanish the verb “haber” is the only auxiliary verb for any compound tense.

Another important thing is that the action of the sentence is surely completed (as a matter of fact, I am talking about that one time when I came home): the adverb “when” is the alarm bell that rings and that must immediately set off the verb in the simple past. The action of preparing

risotto occurs previously in terms of time, therefore you need to use the past perfect. But this even happens in English: the only difficulty is correctly translating the sentence that we encounter.

The fundamental notion to learn is that, **contrary to what happens in English, in Spanish you must not put any word between the auxiliary verb and the past participle**: “had already cooked” is translated in fact as “ya había cocinado”, but “había cocinado ya” is also acceptable. Saying or writing “Había ya cocinado” would be quite a big mistake, so pay a lot of attention to this peculiarity. I find it easier to put any additional word before the verb, not after: this is because at least I have the time to focus on the correct form and conjugation of the verb, otherwise it is more likely that I forget that word.

However this is a piece of advice, not a rule. The important thing in this case is to choose the best path for yourself and to follow it always.

In Spanish there is also an obsolete verb tense, the preterite perfect (“pretérito anterior”), which is formed with hub- + past participle.

However, I do not recommend that you learn it from a practical point of view, since it is rare and hardly ever used. This is a verb tense that has survived as a relic of an old language, which distinguished between an action completed in the past (simple past) and another completed action preceding it (preterite perfect).

I would say that our pot is already full of enough ingredients: if you know how to use them you will cook something delicious that you will be proud of and that everyone will love.

Metaphors aside, **the correct use of past tenses, from the imperfect to the compound tenses not to mention the simple past, truly gives satisfaction and awareness of having gained familiarity with a really difficult topic.**

The last obstacle is the correct use of the gerund, which in Spanish is used really a lot, as it is in English. There you have the last ingredient for your delicious dish!

17.2. How to remember the main functions of the gerund

Do you remember how to use and form the gerund in the present? Well, the same pattern must be applied for the past tense: *estab-* + past participle.

“While I was having a shower, they called me on the phone” is translated as: “Mientras me estaba duchando, me llamaron al teléfono”.

Nothing special about it then. Moreover, as in English, the gerund is extensively used in Spanish: consider some peculiar cases, remembering that only the union between theoretical study and daily practice makes the real difference in the learning process.

For example, a very common expression that is easy to remember is “keep + -ing” which is “seguir + gerund”. “I keep eating even when I study” is therefore translated as “Sigo comiendo también mientras aprendo”.

Even the expression “be + -ing” has the gerund: “we are on the sofa reading the newspaper” will then be “estamos en el sofá leyendo el periódico”.

As in English, when there is a relative clause after verbs of perception, understanding and representation of reality, such as for example *oír*, *sentir*, *pintar*, *grabar*, *representar*, and many others. “I have seen a child running towards the school” is translated as “He visto a un niño corriendo hacia la escuela”.

Another case of using the gerund, preceded by the preposition “en”, is when the action in the subordinate clause occurs before the one in the main one.

For example: “Having said that, he started to laugh” is “En diciendo esto, empezó a reír”.

Surely you are wondering: “how can i remember every single rule, and in the meantime maybe even think about the verbs of perception inside a relative clause?! It is impossible!”. It is not! Trust me and what I am about to tell you: you know that these rules exist, and maybe at first you will use them little and poorly.

Practice and constant reading are truly the best exercise, because then the expressions different from English will become automatic and you will be really happy and excited when using them.

Day after day you are experimenting that the little plant slowly grows only with the right amount of daily water.

By the way: what time do you usually water your little plant? Ah it is true that we have not learned how to tell the time yet: we will make up for it tomorrow, ok?!

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. First of all, you need to keep well in mind the conjugation and the use of every verb tense in the past: imperfect, simple past, present perfect and past perfect. Watch out for the *consecutio temporum* and the links between the different parts of the sentence.

. Remember even the conjugation and the use of the gerund mood that, as you have seen, behaves similarly as in English.

. Daily study and constant practical exercises, such as for example reading and watching films or tv series with subtitles. This is the recipe to create your masterpiece: understanding mastering in a short time a foreign language.

18th DAY – AN EASY LESSON FOR TODAY: THE PARTS OF THE YEAR AND THE HOURS

I would say that it is time for a quiet day with few notions, so that you can absorb what you have learned about past tenses in the last few days.

I do not want you to close this book and throw it far away as Superman would do with kryptonite but today we can still add some useful topics to distinguish between the present perfect and the simple past: as a matter of fact, if in a sentence I indicate a time or a part of the year that are already over, which verb tense will I have to use? I know that you know it!

18.1. Days of the week, seasons and months: the whole year in few lines!

Here are the days of the week:

lunes, martes, miércoles, jueves, viernes, sábado, domingo.

Beware that any preposition preceding them always requires an article: “I am on holiday until Tuesday” becomes “Estoy de vacaciones hasta el martes”.

Moreover, if you need a part of the day, then you will need the preposition “por”:

“I am on holiday until Tuesday evening” will then be “Estoy de vacaciones hasta el martes por la noche”.

Watch out for the parts of the day: “mañana” is “morning” (“tomorrow morning” is in fact “mañana por la mañana”), “tarde” is “afternoon”, “noche” means both “evening” and “night”. You may make some mistakes at the beginning, but the daily use of these peculiarities will help you master them quickly, as in the other cases.

Which season do you prefer? Some people love the melancholy and the colours of “otoño”, others the cold of “invierno”, others the scents of

“primavera”, others the heat and the long holidays offered by “verano”.
Winter and summer are my favourite, what about you?

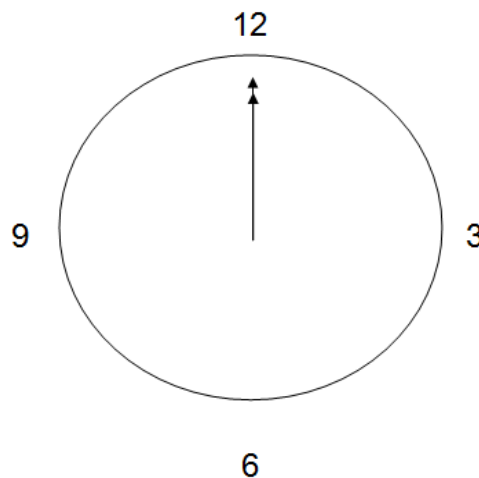
Here are the months (notice the similarity with English):

enero, febrero, marzo, abril, mayo, junio, julio, agosto, septiembre, octubre, noviembre, diciembre.

Maybe the only difficulty, if we want to split hairs, is precisely the similarity with English, which maybe makes it hard to focus on the orthography and the pronunciation. Anyway, do you agree that these notions are totally easy to understand and remember?

18.2. How to be able to tell the time to a Spaniard... sounding like a Spaniard!

"Perdone, ¿qué hora es?". You might hear this question while walking the streets of Madrid or while enjoying the sunshine on the Barceloneta beach. Pretending not to know is not smart nor effective, especially if one can clearly see a watch on your wrist. The solutions are two then: leaving on purpose your watch and your phone at home, or learning how to tell the time. It is not a difficult option and moreover it is definitely the best one. Let us draw a hypothetical clock and make some observations:



As you can see, the clock now shows that it is midday, that is “mediodía”. In twelve hours it will then be “medianoche”. We are lucky because the time indications are basically literal translations of the English ones.

Here are some examples: an appointment at 12.10 is at “doce y diez”, a lunch reserved at 12.50 begins at “una menos diez” or at “doce y cincuenta” (this last expression is mainly used when informing about the times of public transportation). Then you just need to know the numbers and the hours in English correctly!

However, watch out for the final “s” of the word “menos”, which is often forgotten.

The only difficulty is when the minute hand is on 3 and 9, that is when you say for example “A quarter past twelve”, or “a quarter to one”: in this case the indefinite article must be removed, therefore the translations are “doce y cuarto” and “una menos cuarto”.

There, you see?! How long did it take you to learn these time parts? I would say that it did not take much, and remember: as soon as you find them in a speech referring to the past, the only tense that you need to use is the pretérito indefinido.

Tomorrow we will further enrich our vocabulary with pronouns and adverbs, now get some rest and keep your mind always trained!

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. Partes del día, meses, temporadas (= seasons), horas: now you are familiar with time parts, therefore you will be able to navigate your way when you need to use these specific markers.

. Do not be afraid to show your watch: as you have seen, the difficulties of learning hours are only the cases when you need to say “a quarter past” and “a quarter to”: the indefinite article is in fact removed in Spanish. As for the rest, you just need to translate correctly and to be quick in the right pronunciation of numbers.

By the way, maybe a little revision can be useful, what do you think?

19th DAY- 50 SHADES AND MORE IN SENTENCES: PRONOUNS, ADVERBS, ADJECTIVES AND PREPOSITIONS

Let's start this quite relaxing day by "taking revenge" on our old grammar teachers...

19.1. Me, I like learning Spanish

“Me, I like ice cream!” “No need to say me!”.

How many times have you said a sentence like that, or have you heard someone say it? It is quite common to use the form “me” to emphasize the subject in a sentence, even though in theory it should just be used as a personal object pronoun.

Years and years later, studying Spanish, I took my “revenge”:

You can easily say “me I” and it is actually very used.

I do not want to advertise anything, but you surely know the lyrics of the famous song “A mí me gusta bailar el ritmo vuelta, a tí te gusta bailar el ritmo vuelta, a todos les gusta bailar el ritmo vuelta”. You see?! It works exactly like that, and as soon as I found out about it I thought that Spanish people were really lucky for not having to worry about grammar categories, at least in this case!

Personal subject and object pronouns, which you know already, can be easily attached to verbs to indicate the direct or indirect object. “Peinaros” (“to comb your hair”) can be literally translated as “to comb yourselves”, for example: not too difficult, right?!

19.1.1. Articles and personal pronouns sometimes quarrel

Well yes, when you put together these two grammar categories sometimes they want to be close, but other times they do not stand each other and need to be separated. For example, never say “el mi amigo” or “un mi amigo”! the only correct option is in fact “mi amigo”, which means “my friend”.

Consider these two sentences in parallel:

“Mi amigo fue a Francia el mes pasado” →

“My friend went to France last month”

“Un amigo mío fue a Francia el mes pasado” →

“A friend of mine went to France last month.”

19.2. The underworld of adverbs

When I went to school, we made jokes about adverbs saying that when you do not know which grammar category a word belongs to, then you can be sure that it is an adverb. Besides mastering them though, you also need to recognize that actual world containing them, which allows to enrich a sentence with many shades and tones.

There are adverbs ending in *-mente*.

Watch out for this incredible peculiarity:

If the adjective has an accent, the corresponding adverb will also have an accent.

“El tren llega rápidamente en la estación” is correct in terms of orthography, since this adverb is derived from the adjective “rápido”. In this case then you do not need to consider where the stress falls, but only the corresponding adjective.

Watch out for all the other adverbs, that is the ones that are not so easy to recognize as these ones. I am talking about adverbs of quantity, quality, time, place, and many others. There is not a rule to learn them, so as you encounter them you will know how to handle and memorize them.

19.3. Some main and important details about adjectives

On this topic, as indeed on many others that we deal with here, we could write a whole book or even just a more or less long digression. For example, do you remember that on the fourth day you learned the distinction between “ésta” and “esta”? There, this is the secret that possessive adjectives hide.

In English there is not generally a distinction between masculine and feminine adjectives (there are only rare cases like “brunet-brunette”). In Spanish adjectives ending in -dor in the masculine form simply add an -a in the feminine form.

For example, if your parents are hard-working, your father is “un gran trabajador” and your mother “una gran trabajadora”.

By the way, have you seen how the adjective “grande” is contracted into “gran”?

This happens in the masculine singular forms of adjectives like “primero”, “bueno” and “algún”, but only if the nouns they refer to are placed right after the adjectives.

“Mi primer día de trabajo fue muy bueno” is an excellent example to remember this rule. Obviously, I hope that the other days of work have been excellent as well!

19.4. Many, many prepositions... but fortunately few difficulties!

Do you remember the sentence written above about a friend of yours (or your friend) who went to France? Well, you have also learned that “fue” means both “was” and “went”.

In this case the preposition is crucial for the correct construction of the sentence.

In our case, “fue en Francia” would mean “was in France”.

Think about how lucky you are: the prepositions “a” and “de” are the only ones that you will sometimes encounter next to an adverb, there are not others. “On top of the shelf” is “En cima de la estantería”, therefore you must remember this adverbial phrase carefully; even “lejos de” must be memorized properly, and it means “far from”.

Think instead about the different English prepositions that can be found next to adverbs: in Spanish there are only two possibilities.

In conclusion, trust me that in no time you will be able to include in your speech details concerning the time, the geographical position, the character, the quality of someone or something, and many other shades impossible to define without knowing these parts of speech.

How can you memorize as many words as possible?

Reading them, finding them, trying to understand their meaning from the context, writing down the peculiarities or the differences with English.

This is one of the essential rules to learn a foreign language in a short time.

It is an inevitable step in the learning of a language, and it is truly a wonderful game.

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. One tries to remember as many words as possible of these parts of speech through reading and films in original language: there is no better way to learn a language. Another important piece of advice is to write down the anomalous patterns or the difficulties encountered along the way.

. Remember that it is not a mistake to repeat personal object pronouns referring to the same person: “Me I” can be easily said in Spanish, whereas in English it may sound a bit too emphatic.

. What about the strange accentuation rule of adverbs? It is so peculiar that you will not easily forget it!
You do not have to worry about prepositions either: only “de” and “a” can be found next to adverbs. Memorize these rules and there you go!

20th DAY – WHICH IS THE FAIREST LESSON OF THEM ALL? MAYBE THE ONE ON THE COMPARATIVE AND THE SUPERLATIVE?

In my opinion, childhood is the best period of one's life: one is pure and sincere in their relationships with others, gets easily excited, any act may hide a surprise. It is no wonder that Peter Pan and those with his syndrome dream of a life based on actions and thoughts of the childhood world.

Let's be honest though, it is also the period of little linguistic traumas: do you remember the famous "me I" followed by grammar observations? Well, for example, I was reprimanded even when I came home after a school test and I was angry because my friend had finished it before me and had even got a higher grade than me. The competition in class is typical of that age, and later I would cry with my mum and my dad telling them: "I did good on my test, but Matthew did more good". Thanks to this sentence my parents would understand why my test had not gone as well as expected!

In primary school it is not easy to learn irregular comparatives, like good → better. Then one grows up (luckily!) and finally learns them. And then one

becomes a little bit older and learns foreign languages, just like you with this manual.

Now let's go back in time: let's learn comparatives and superlatives.

20.1. How to avoid terrible gaffes with comparatives: “better”, not “more good”!

There are obviously three types of comparatives: higher, lower and same degree comparatives. After all, this is rather intuitive: in a comparison example, I can be more intelligent than Matthew, less intelligent than Matthew, or as intelligent as Matthew. The same happens in Spanish obviously:

Watch out for the way that comparatives are formed: “aquella chica es más guapa que yo” means admitting that “that girl is more beautiful than me”.

It is fundamental to understand that “than me”, that is the comparison itself, in Spanish is translated as “que yo”.

Therefore, the use of “que” and the personal subject pronoun is a quite important obstacle to overcome.

The same applies to lower comparatives: “aquella chica es menos guapa que yo”.

You also need to be careful with same degree comparatives: “aquella chica es tan guapa como yo”.

Here you need to learn that “tan como” is the translation of “as... as”.

Well, you have several irons in the fire, but there is nothing terrible about it.
Do you agree?

The only case when you use “más de” is when there are numbers.
“Mi hermano tiene más de 18 años: puede conducir el coche”.

It is the dream of every young adult!

20.1.1. The irregularities of comparatives

Now consider how some adjectives are transformed in the comparative degree.

Bueno ? Mejor	Malo ? Peor
Grande ? Mayor	Pequeño ? Menor
Alto ? Superior	Bajo ? Inferior

Watch out: “mayor” and “menor” also mean “older” and “younger” respectively. It is a characteristic that you need to keep in mind, and if you use it in speech and in writing it means that you are able to master a typical Spanish construct.

And all of this, as it has already been said, generates satisfaction and motivation to keep going. In short, is a very useful virtuous circle!

Make sure you fasten your seat belt: with superlatives there will be a double memory effort. But we have known each other for almost three weeks now and you trust my strategies to best memorize everything.

20.2. Double effort = double satisfaction. Actually, facing superlatives I would say the greatest satisfaction!

As you know, the relative superlative denotes the highest quality in relation to a small group of people or things, while the absolute one is, as the term indicates, the highest degree possible. “My friend Matthew was the best in my class in English”, that is in that group of 25 children and only in that specific subject (maybe there were children his own age from other classes who were better than him, who knows). However, if I say that “Matthew is the best”, in my sentence I do not include limitations or restrictions, therefore Matthew’s quality is indeed absolute.

This grammar concept is the same in Spanish, as well as in all the other languages.

The difficulty lies in learning only the construct then, and not the linguistic concept that you already know.

The relative superlative has the same structure as the English one: “Matthew was the best in my class in English” is then translated as “Matthew era el mejor de la clase en italiano”. Ding ding ding! Sound the alarm!

The relative superlative is formed with “más de”, while the higher comparative with “más que”.

Therefore, besides the effort of learning the rules, there is also this very important notion that you need to keep in mind.

Make sure you remember it!

In the example above, obviously the superlative is irregular, but the essence does not change: you need “de” in these cases.

And the absolute superlatives? You use the root of the adjective + “ísimo/a/os/as”, or “muy” + adjective. The adjectives ending in “-ble” require the superlative with the form “bilísimo”, like for example “Amable → Amabilísimo”

Remember a little but very important note: **“muy” is used before adjectives or adverbs, while “mucho” before nouns or verbs.**

Do you remember the irregularities of comparatives? Well, let’s add the ones of superlatives to complete the table and see the situation more clearly.

Bueno? Mejor? Óptimo (Good? Better? Best)	Malo? Peor? Pésimo (Bad? Worse? Worst)
Grande? Mayor? Máximo (Great? Greater? Greatest)	Pequeño? Menor? Mínimo (Little? Less? Least)
Alto? Superior? Supremo (High? Higher? Highest)	Bajo? Inferior? Ínfimo (Low? Lower? Lowest)

Some of these adjectives are irregular even in English and this will help you memorize them: amazing, is it not?

And now a good night's sleep: tomorrow we will face the future!

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. First of all, it is fundamental to properly revise uses and functions of comparatives and superlatives. Then, as you have seen, learning Spanish requires due attention to some specific points.

. If you have understood when to use “más que” and “más de” you are golden. Luckily, the rest is very intuitive.

. Remember the difference between the use of “muy” and “mucho”: the former is used before adjectives and adverbs, while you will find the latter before nouns and verbs.

21st DAY – TIME WILL TELL. LET’S FACE THE FUTURE, THEN WE’LL SEE

Please, be very careful: never ask anyone to tell you the future. This is because it is simply impossible to predict it: obviously, we are the masters of our own destiny, even though there surely must be a good amount of luck and chance.

Indeed, even the Latin poet Horace, about two thousand years ago, wrote “Ask not (‘tis forbidden knowledge), what our destined term of years, mine and yours; nor scan the tables of your Babylonish seers. Better far to bear the future [...]”.

This beautiful translation by the famous classical scholar John Conington conveys this concept very well: indeed, the future remains to be seen and we are the true protagonists of our tomorrow.

This does not mean that you must skip today’s lesson so you will not be able to study the future tense!

Do not make a mistake like that, especially since both the simple future and the future perfect are used exactly as they are in English, and since there are truly few and simple irregular forms. In short, there is nothing new under the sun.

21.1. How to learn to know the future without using magic

Think about it, after closing this book you will be able to say: “I know the future!”. It is always preferable not to broadcast this, people would probably not take you too seriously, unless you explain that you have been studying Spanish happily and successfully for three weeks now and that today you have learned two new verb tenses.

Here is the simple future of the three conjugations.

HABLAR	LEER	ESCRIBIR
Hablaré	Leeré	Escribiré
Hablarás	Leerás	Escribirás
Hablará	Leerá	Escribirá
Hablaremos	Leeremos	Escribiremos
Hablaréis	Leeréis	Escribiréis
Hablarán	Leerán	Escribirán

Have you seen the endings? They are the same for any verb of any conjugation: then once you have learned one of them, you have also learned the others!

So, it is all very easy: now let's face (the few) irregular verbs with serenity.

21.2. How to deepen the knowledge of (our) future

Below you will find a list of irregular verbs and the changes in their stems. Remember two very important things: first of all, the endings are obviously the same as the ones of regular verbs.

Then there is a wonderful and unexpected surprise:

the changes in the stems in the future tense are the same as the ones you will find when we face the conditional mood.

What more could you ask for?

Decir → Dir-

Haber → Habr-

Hacer → Har-

Poder → Podr-

Poner → Pondr-

Querer → Querr-

Saber → Sabr-

Salir → Saldr-

Tener → Tendr-

Venir → Vendr-

Is it already over?! Not yet, there is also the future perfect. It is a very common tense, but often misused. Let's learn how to use it properly.

21.3. Poor future perfect, so ill-treated...

For some reason it always seems complicated to use this verb tense, the last one of the eight tenses that form the indicative mood. And yet **if it is called “perfect” (which comes from the Latin term “perfectus”, that is, “completed”)** it means that the action occurs before another one in the future. “At three I will have already gone” I would say that makes this concept clear. The translation is very simple, with the auxiliary verb which is still “haber” obviously: “A las tres ya habré salido”.

The “futuro perfecto” is also used to indicate doubts or suppositions: “Where is José? Might he have already got home?” will then be translated as: “¿Dónde está José? ¿Ya habrá llegado a casa?”

However, **a past supposition requires the conditional:** “I was probably ten when they gave me this bicycle” will then become “Tendría diez años cuando me regalaron esta bicicleta”.

That is enough for today: the indicative has been analysed in every detail, and there are only ten days left to complete all the grammar.

Now let’s enjoy a Spanish show, but be prepared: it is not just bullfighting!

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. The simple future has the same endings for all three conjugations and its use is the same as the English one. Watch out for irregularities, which however do not change in the conditional mood.

. Instead, the future perfect is used to indicate an action that occurs before another one in the future. Some uses are similar to the English ones, but traps are always lurking: by the way, remember that a past supposition requires the conditional in Spanish.

. Can you believe that you know the future? You do not need cards, signs or magical concoctions. It takes studying grammar and great patience!

22nd DAY – IT IS NOT JUST BULLFIGHTING: SPANISH FOLKLORE IS UNIQUE!

Let us immediately dispel a very common belief: bullfighting does not exist only in Spain, but also in France, Portugal and many Latin-American countries. Of course, the typical fight between a bullfighter and a bull makes us immediately think of Spanish arenas full of people enjoying the show. And yet, lately, this unique event, suspended between cultural heritage and cruel barbarity, has been forbidden in the communities of Catalonia and the Canary Islands. Every bullfight includes the fighting between three bullfighters and six bulls, besides other “professionals”: the “**picador**” is in charge of restraining the bull’s attack thanks to a lance, while the so-called “**banderilleros**” provoke and plunge sticks into the bull. In southern France what is very popular is the so-called “**Camargue racing**”, which does not involve the killing of the bull, but the removal of small objects (cockades or laces), placed on the animal’s horns.

In conclusion, Spanish bullfights must be considered moments of “ferias” (commercial celebrations) and “fiestas” (religious celebrations), since tauromachy was a cultural element which was very present in classical antiquity.

22.1. Not just bullfighting: in Spain it's a party all year long!

Carefully check the period when you go to the Basque Country: in Pamplona, in fact, between 6th and 8th July of every year it is traditional to run for almost a kilometre together with some bulls! During those days, as a matter of fact, commercial, religious and social celebrations merged in a single great event which is unique of its kind. Of course, maybe it is not advisable to be right in the middle of the of it all!

Another very peculiar event that some people surely know about is the “**Tomatina**”, an actual battle which involves throwing “Tomates”, that is tomatoes. Well yes, people gather in a square, the town of **Buñol** (in the province of Valencia) provides this vegetable and you keep throwing it until the huge amount of tomatoes is over. You know, this actual “tourist festival” was born in 1945 during a fight in which the opponents precisely used tomatoes instead of weapons.

Obviously it is better this way, but for example a report of 2011 indicates that 120 tonnes of tomatoes were used exclusively for this celebration.

Carnival is a tradition which is deeply rooted in the entire country: the one that is celebrated in the Canary Islands, with the months of February and March full of parades and masks to greet the arrival of the warm weather.

For people who prefer celebrations which are quieter but not less impressive, the Andalusian city of Córdoba offers every year from 1st to 15th May the “**Festival de los patios**” (in the picture below), where “patios”

(courtyards) of houses are decorated to host concerts or traditional dances like flamenco. The best one is honoured at the end of the event.



22.2. Religiosity as an element of unifying celebration

In the collective imagination, Spain is a deeply Catholic country: this is obviously true, despite the proposal of rather unorthodox initiatives, like for example the introduction of same-sex marriage in June 2005.

And yet religion is far from being a solemn and quiet rite: on the contrary, everywhere ceremonies are experienced with great participation of people, with processions, festivals and traditional celebrations. Indeed, the saying “different folks, different strokes”, and here it also refers to differences within the same country!

The Madonna is highly revered in Spain, so much so that many first names cannot be translated in other languages for a great number of reasons: for example, do you someone named “Henar”? Well, if she were English her name would be “Hay loft”. This name has its origin, in fact, in a place, precisely a hay loft, where people say that the Madonna appeared to some humble farmers. It is not rare, even today, to encounter little girls with this name, which is very common especially in the community of **Castiglia y León** and in its town of **Segovia**.

It is not strange then to end up in some towns where the Virgin Mary is the protagonist of celebrations, dances and songs that draw people together: for example, the “**Fiesta de la Virgen del Pino**” takes place on Grand Canary

Island between 6th and 8th September, with big celebrations throughout these three days.



Of course, there are people who love a whole different kind of celebrations: would you associate Ibiza and the Balearics to a religious festival? I surely would not!

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. Besides the national holidays (12th October and 6th December are public holidays, a bit like the Fourth of July in the United States of America), in Spain it is very difficult to make a proper calendar with the feast days. One would have to include every single day thanks to the countless sacred and secular celebrations spread all over the country, including the islands.

. There is something for every taste, one cannot go wrong: are you a thrill-seeker and do you want to run with bulls? Or do you prefer the music of a disco? Or maybe a religious and cultural celebration? Any time is good to celebrate and get to know more about yourself and the place where you live.

23rd DAY – LET’S HURRY UP AND LEARN THE IMPERATIVE!

Consider words like “say” or “give”. Without any context, they could be verb forms in the present indicative or in the imperative: a sentence is therefore necessary to understand the real meaning of these verbs.

The situation is a bit different in Spanish, and definitely less confusing. You will also see that the usual irregular verbs behave in a very regular way.

Let’s face the imperative then!

23.1. Stand at attention: here comes the imperative!

As we have said before, in English some verb forms in the present indicative are the same as the ones in the imperative.

In Spanish something similar occurs: as a matter of fact, **the imperative form is exactly the same as the third person singular form in the present indicative, including the irregularities.**

“Construye el edificio!”, “Lee este libro!”, “Come el arroz!” are all excellent examples, but you can give many others very quickly too, since you now master the verbs in the indicative.

There are really few irregularities:

Decir → Di

Hacer → Haz

Ir → Ve

Poner → Pon

Salir → Sal

Ser → Sé

Tener → Ten

Venir → Ven

Remember that you need to put the accent only the verb to be, while you never put it on the other monosyllables.

What about the second person plural form?! Easy: **to form the imperative, you just need to add a final -d to the infinitive form of the verb without the -r.** Besad, Leed!, Dormid!, and so on.

Think about it: we have said almost everything about the imperative, since **to learn the negative form you need to study the subjunctive.** The same is true for the polite form.

While revising irregular verbs, let's try to add some personal object pronouns: "Bring the book!" is different from "Bring it to me!", so let's learn how to say it.

23.2. The imperative and the pronouns joined together at the hip

Do you remember that during the third day you learned the pronouns that indicate indirect objects? Let's revise them quickly:

PERSONAL OBJECT PRONOUNS
Me
Te
Le
Nos
Os
Les

Well, you just need to add these pronouns to the imperative form (whether it is positive, negative or polite) and there you have it.

“Dime: ¿Es Marcos un amigo tuyo?”

“Tráemelo aquí, por favor”.

There are only two exceptions: **the pronoun in the third person singular and the third person plural is “se”, both for the masculine and the feminine form.**

These examples will make this concept clear:

“Este libro es de Marcos: llévaselo!” →
“This book is Marcos’: take it to him!”

“Estos bolígrafos son de Henar: dáselos!” →
“These pens are Henar’s: give them to her!”

“Este piso es de mis padres: límpiaselo!” →
“This flat is my parents’: clean it for them!”

Nothing special, am I right? Now you need some time to absorb everything and get ready to face the last week of this course. I am sure that it has all been satisfying, but it is not over yet.

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. The trick to learn the imperative, but only in the positive form, is the indicative: besides the usual few and common irregular verbs, the imperative form of all the others is the same as the present form in the third person singular. The plural one, instead, has the consonant “d” as a point of reference.

. Adding the pronouns to the imperative is not so complicated: the first times you just need to watch out for accents and the pronoun “se” which may cause some troubles, but then it will all become natural.

24th DAY – AND IF WE LEARNED THE SUBJUNCTIVE TENSES TODAY? I THINK IT’S HIGH TIME!

If, like me, you are a quiet person, you probably do not like getting into fights. This does not necessarily mean that you are a coward, but maybe a bully might see you as someone who is easily subjugated.

There are also cases where the bully is the subjunctive and people are so scared of it that they hardly ever use it: you may say that they are “subjunct-gated”! “I recommend he does that”, “I suggest he goes there”, not to mention common mistakes like “if I was you, I would go to London”. Maybe it is better to revise English grammar first: this is the best way to avoid being “subjunct-gated”!

There, the subjunctive is truly the most difficult and challenging topic: not because of the conjugations and the tenses, but because **its use is indeed very different from the English one**. Or at least in Spanish it used much more than in English, where it is basically extinct.

24.1. Simple tenses: present and imperfect

In English, the subjunctive does not have its own specific form: when it is used to talk about a present situation, the verb is in the infinitive form (“I insist that he go”), whereas the past forms are the same as the indicative ones (“If I were you, I wouldn’t do that”).

In Spanish the situation is different, because the subjunctive mood is completely different from the indicative one:

LLEGAR	COMER	SALIR
Llegue	Coma	Salga
Llegues	Comas	Salgas
Llegue	Coma	Salga
Lleguemos	Comamos	Salgamos
Lleguéis	Comáis	Salgáis
Lleguen	Coman	Salgan

Do you remember the characteristics and the irregularities of the present indicative? Well, they are exactly the same as the ones of the present subjunctive: thematic vowels that change, adaption of the verb in the infinitive and accents that you need to put in the right place. For example, consider the verb “amortiguar”, which means “to cushion”: to keep the sound “gu”, in the subjunctive it is necessary to add a diaeresis. “Amortigüe-Amortigües-Et cetera”.

And now let's face the imperfect: **do you remember the irregularities of the simple past?**

They are the same as the ones of this verb tense.

LLEGAR	COMER	SALIR
Llegara	Comiera	Saliera
Llegaras	Comieras	Salieras
Llegara	Comiera	Saliera
Llegáramos	Comiéramos	Saliéramos
Llegarais	Comierais	Salierais
Llegaran	Comieran	Salieran

“Ara” and “Iera” are the special suffixes which characterize the imperfect.

What about the irregularities? “Tener → Tuve → Tuviera”, or “Hacer → Hice → Hiciera”, or even “Poner → Puse → Pusiera”. When you start to use these verb forms while you speak, you will see that you will learn them quickly. For example: conditional sentences are a wonderful exercise, because they require you to use the subjunctive and the conditional, so you kill two birds with one stone. Not too bad!

One little caveat: you might come across an imperfect subjunctive form that instead of ending in -ra ends in -se (“llegase” instead of “llegara”, for example).

It does not change anything at all, both forms are widely used, right and interchangeable.

You get to choose then: I proposed to you the one that I studied and that I find easier to use, therefore from now on you will only find this one, but there is no reason you cannot use the other one.

24.2. Compound tenses: perfect and past perfect

Now you know past participles well, so this will not cause you any problem anymore.

To form these two tenses, **the trick is to conjugate the verb “haber”, the only auxiliary verb, in the present subjunctive and in the imperfect subjunctive in order to conjugate any verb (without exceptions) in the perfect and past perfect subjunctive respectively.**

PERFECT - Besar	PAST PERFECT - Hacer
Haya besado	Hubiera hecho
Hayas besado	Hubieras hecho
Haya besado	Hubiera hecho
Hayamos besado	Hubiéramos hecho
Hayáis besado	Hubierais hecho
Hayan besado	Hubieran hecho

These tenses are “simple” as well, because they are easy to learn! They are just like that, without any skeletons in the closet.

Remember that besides “hubiera” you might also find the form “hubiese” and we are done with the subjunctive!

Of course, you are probably going to tell me that the important thing would be to learn how to use the subjunctive, especially since I told you that it is a really difficult topic and that its uses are different than the English ones.

One step at a time: knowing how to use something cannot be separated from knowing the thing itself. Right now, it is more than enough to learn how to easily conjugate these four new verb tenses. A nice rest will help you absorb everything.

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. The subjunctive is a very complicated topic that you cannot expect to know immediately: today it is enough to have understood and memorized the four verb tenses.

. Remember: in the present there are the same irregularities as those of the present indicative, while in the imperfect there are the ones of the simple past. Instead compound tenses do not present insurmountable obstacles, luckily.

**25th DAY – LET’S KEEP GOING
AND LEARN HOW TO USE THE
NEGATIVE IMPERATIVE!
AFTER THE SUBJUNCTIVE?!
WELL YES, THERE’S A
REASON!**

Think about it: in two consecutive days you learned the imperative mood and the subjunctive mood. I do not think that in other language manuals these topics are presented together.

And yet there is a reason for it, and maybe you have guessed it by reading the title of this chapter:

To form the negative imperative (but even the polite form of the positive imperative) Spanish requires the present subjunctive, whereas in English we use the infinitive.

In short, this language never ceases to surprise us: and maybe at the beginning you thought that rolling your Rs would be enough to master it!

25.1. Don't waste time: let's face the negative imperative (with all the etceteras)!

Do you remember what I told you yesterday, one moment before you closed the book? Start memorizing the theory properly, then we will move on to practice. There, the forms of the imperative are one of the many cases where the use of the subjunctive is different than the English one.

So, let's revise together the present subjunctive by forming some negative imperatives:

Haz! No hagas!

Pide No pidas!

Besar No beses!

In the same way, the rule applies to the second person plural form:

Comed! No comáis!

Llorar No lloréis

Subir No subáis!

The polite form instead requires the third person singular form if you address just one person, or the third person plural form in case we address two or more people.

Haga este trabajo por favor, gracias!

Hagan este trabajo por favor, gracias!

Watch out though, because **any pronoun accompanying the verb is attached to the verb itself, and not separated as it is in English:**

“Camarero, tráigame la cuenta, por favor!”

With this example, the meaning is clear:

“Waiter, bring me the check, please!”.

The secrets revealed in this chapter

- . Short but intense: this could be the summary of this day, in which you have learned that the subjunctive is used to form the negative imperative and the polite forms of the positive imperative.
- . Watch out for pronouns: in the negative imperative they are attached to the verb, as they are in the positive form.
- . Try using these verbs, conjugating them in the positive and negative imperative: cantar, beber, reducir, sacar, romper, elegir.

26th DAY – TODAY WE SHOULD FACE THE CONDITIONAL. ACTUALLY, LET’S JUST DO IT!

Sometimes people are “subjunct-gated” even by the conditional.

“If I would go to Rome, I would visit the Colosseum”, shows that verb moods are complete strangers.

The conditional mood is used almost in the same way as it is used in English, so you do not have to worry too much:

the ideal thing is a quick and effective study so that you can make the most of it from the very beginning.

26.1. How to learn the conditional in no time

As in any difficult situation, a trick is always useful, as well as effective, to get the right results.

Do you remember the irregularities of the future? Well, apply them here and there you have the conditional, without a different conjugation.

For all the other verbs, you just need to remember the diphthong “ía” after the infinitive of the verb besides the usual endings for each person.

SIMPLE - Aprender	PERFECT - Dormir
Aprendería	Habría dormido
Aprenderías	Habrías dormido
Aprendería	Habría dormido
Aprenderíamos	Habríamos dormido
Aprenderíais	Habríais dormido
Aprenderían	Habrían dormido

No need to worry then: the conditional mood is as simple as that.

26.2. How to best use the conditional without being “subjunct-gated”

As in English, the conditional is used to express doubts, polite requests and to describe actions which depend on a condition.

For example, “A mí me gustaría ir al cine, ¿y tu qué opinas?”, or “¿Podría ver lo que has escrito?”.

However, in Spanish the conditional is also used to express a doubt in the past: “I probably had one or two dogs, I don’t remember” is in fact “Tendría uno o dos perros, no me acuerdo”. But you learned this in the lesson about the future, do you remember?

Another situation in which you must use the conditional is when, in direct speech, a future action depends on a verb in the past (the same happens in English):

“He told me he would eat with me” is then translated as “Dijo que comería conmigo”.

By the way, have you noticed the strange forms “conmigo”, “contigo” and “consigo”?

If you have studied Latin, you will notice a certain similarity.

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. The conditional and the future have much in common: from the irregular verbs to the use of the conditional which is different from the English one.

. Do not worry, especially at the beginning! Learn the conjugations well, focus your attention on the main difficulties (which are subjective obviously) and daily practice will then help you a lot.

**27th DAY – IF YOU HAD NEVER
STARTED, YOU WOULD NOT
HAVE GOT TO THIS POINT.
BY THE WAY, HOW DO YOU
FORM CONDITIONAL
SENTENCES?**

Today is kind of a special day: you know all the verb moods and today's lesson is about conditional sentences. You will tell me: "It is already difficult to conjugate the verbs correctly in English, let alone Spanish!".

Actually, you are wrong: you have known Spanish for a short time and therefore, unlike a native speaker, you do not take anything for granted: you properly focus on every grammatical nuance, you do not rush things to avoid making mistakes and by doing that you try not to embarrass yourself.

In English, on the contrary, since many structures are unconscious, it may happen to make mistakes or to be unsure in front of a verb or a construction. Paradoxically then, today Spanish will seem easier to you than English.

Would you have ever believed it four weeks ago?

27.1. English first, then Spanish: the three conditional sentences

Since you have come this far, you know how to conjugate the three conditional sentences easily and without too many problems, also because there is no difference of conjugation or meaning between English and Spanish.

Consequently, the main difficulty lies in understanding the differences between the three conditional sentences and knowing how to use them correctly.

The first one is also called “real”: **“Si tengo dinero, iré de vacaciones”** means that, surely, if in the future I have money I will use it to go on holiday and not in any other way.

Consider this characteristic, which is also found in other languages like English:

In conditional clauses, the one beginning with “if”, you never use the future tense, not even in cases like this one when the hypothesis refers to the future.

Here come the subjunctive and the conditional: this is the second type of conditional sentences, the “possible” one.

In this case you use the imperfect subjunctive and the present conditional, as in this sentence:

“Si tuviera dinero, iría de vacaciones”.

What has changed now? This means that if I had money, I could decide to use it for a nice holiday, but there is no guarantee. There is some possibility, but first you need to work, ask your boss for some days off, make a reservation... In short, the chance of going on holiday seems small indeed!

Watch out for the third and last conditional sentence, the “unreal” one, that is the one containing absolutely impossible hypotheses referring to the past, the present or the future. If they refer to the past, the construct requires the past perfect subjunctive and the perfect conditional, whereas in the other cases the form is the one of the second conditional sentence.

Do not panic: it works in the exact same way in English, you use these constructs every day. The problem is that, as I have already told you, you use them unconsciously, therefore you are not used to thinking about grammar structures.

“Si hubiera tenido dinero, habría ido de vacaciones”, is a sentence that you may say in October thinking that if in the summer you had had just even a little money, you surely would have gone to the beach or the mountains for a few days. But it is too late now, and you cannot turn back time.

An impossible hypothesis referring to the present or the future is for example **“Si fuéramos pitufos, viviríamos en casas muy bajas”**. It is obvious, if we were Smurfs, we would live in very low houses. No matter how wild our imagination is, we will never become Smurfs, therefore the hypothesis is impossible despite having the same syntactic structure as the conditional sentence of the second type.

You see? If you know the three different constructs well and if you have also memorized Spanish verb conjugations, you are golden. A fun exercise is to use one conditional sentence and try to transform it in the other two ways.

For example, if I tell you “Si fuera a Roma, visitaría el Colosseo”, how would you phrase it in the other two structures?

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. Reality, possibility and unreality. Every conditional sentence has its own characteristics and uses, but the similarity with English helps us.

. Put this into practice every day: an exercise involving conditional sentences allows you to memorize the subjunctive and the conditional even more easily.

28th DAY – HOW DO YOU USE THE SUBJUNCTIVE? I’M WARNING YOU, IT WON’T BE EASY, BUT TRUST ME AND FOLLOW MY LEAD

Brace yourself, because we are about to enter a dark tunnel. Of course, it is not encouraging to compare today’s topic, which you know is very difficult, to a scary place. Nevertheless, there is actually no need to be afraid of the Spanish “monster”, that is, the use of the subjunctive.

You have many tricks up your sleeve: you know all the verb tenses, you are enriching your vocabulary every day, you want to improve your skills and you like challenges. You would have never opened this book if you had not liked them. And then think about the beautiful light you will see at the end of the tunnel. Do not be scared of today’s lesson, just think that you will soon overcome this challenge with your head held high.

Maybe I am exaggerating a bit and at the end of the day you will think: “Was that it?”. But I prefer to warn you so that you can be prepared.

So here it is: today’s lesson, divided in different parts to make the learning process easier.

28.1. The subjunctive is quite “tempor...amental”!

You are outside studying the use of the subjunctive in Spanish and all of a sudden it starts raining. You surely do not like that since you are wearing light clothes and you do not have an umbrella with you, so you get really angry.

Do you get angry easily? Guess what, the subjunctive is also quite “tempor-amental”:

indeed, the subjunctive is used in temporal clauses where a future intention is expressed.

Here the main concept is that the uncertainty of the future is expressed with an “uncertain” tense like the subjunctive.

“Write to me when you want” follows this logic: “when you want” means that I do not precisely know if and when you are going to write to me. The uncertainty is then conveyed in this way: “Escríbime cuando quieras”.

Or another example may be “cuando salgas de casa, cómprame dos botellas de agua”.

Even the uncertainty in a more or less distant future is expressed with the subjunctive: “Quizás Marcos llegue a las diez” means that “maybe Marcos will arrive at ten o’clock”.

And now let’s face the other cases.

28.2. I think that the subjunctive is very difficult

You have studied the first paragraph and maybe you agree with the title of this one.

In Spanish, as well as in English, a sentence like that requires the indicative: “Pienso que el subjuntivo es muy difícil”.

Then maybe in a few days, when you are more confident with the various peculiarities, you will think: “no pienso que el subjuntivo sea muy difícil”.

With these clear examples you have understood that **thinking verbs (pensar, creer, opinar, reputar, juzgar, considerar, and many others) require the subjunctive only in the negative form.**

So “¿piensas que el subjuntivo es difícil?”.

I think that the important thing is to go through this dark tunnel together, so that the obstacles will seem easier to overcome.

28.3. The subjunctive likes to be in charge

Well yes, besides being a difficult and not easily approachable tense, the subjunctive is also annoying: indeed, **in the expressions that include orders, advice, warnings and suggestions not only is the subjunctive necessary, but an infinitive subordinate clause, which is possible in English, is considered a big mistake.**

The syntactic structure of this sentence requires a clause with a finite verb in every case, which is why you need to be very careful, especially the first times. This is a true Spanish gem, and you cannot handle gems carelessly. If we are in the swimming pool under the blazing sun and I tell you: “I advise you to eat an ice cream” how would you translate that?

Step one: always use a finite verb.

As you can see, in English you may use the infinitive verb instead.

Step two: focus on the different subjects: I give you a piece of advice and YOU should eat an ice cream.

Step three: handle the gem carefully, that is, translate.

“Te aconsejo que te comas un helado”.

Instead, if I am parking my car and a traffic policeman tells me to park it a bit farther, I will say “El policía me dice que aparque más allá”.

And if I order you to read the next chapter?

“Te mando que leas el próximo párrafo”, where you will find other specific uses of the subjunctive.

28.4. The light at the end of the tunnel

We are finally out of the tunnel: now there are **many, many expressions that require the use of the subjunctive and that you need to learn.**

It is impossible to list all of them in a paragraph, but learning the main ones is very helpful. Of course, the important thing is not to be blinded by the light now: it has been quite a journey already!

The most common expressions are the following ones:

“No importa que”, “(No) es conveniente que”, “Qué raro que”, “Espero que”, “(No) quiero que”, “(No) es necesario que”, and many others that you can easily find online.

You already know the best way for a quick and intuitive learning: finding these expressions and trying to memorize them without the aid of the Internet, dictionaries or other tools.

Even final clauses, beginning in Spanish with “para que”, require the subjunctive.

I would say that you have many irons in the fire. Keep studying hard and do not expect to memorize everything in half a day. Now it is time to dress up though: tomorrow is the penultimate day and you need to look your best, as in a special occasion.

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. After learning that to form the negative imperative you need the subjunctive, there are many other syntactic structures that require the use of this verb mood in a way that is different from the English one.

. The best way to memorize everything is this one: try to guess the solution and to understand if in a certain situation you need to use the subjunctive or another verb mood.

29th DAY – HOW IS IT GOING WITH THIS MANUAL? I HOPE YOU WILL HAVE A GREAT TIME EVEN TODAY, LEARNING HOW TO USE SOME IDIOMS AND SET PHRASES

It has almost been a month since I took your hand and began to make you discover, and hopefully enjoy, the secrets and the beauty of the Spanish language and culture.

However, there is a topic that is impossible to summarize in a chapter of any manual, and it is the one you are about to face today. So what, you just close your book and you do something else? Of course not: I am here to help you discover a beautiful world, which no one talks about because it is impossible to sum up.

Indeed, you need to know that **the Spanish language, especially in speech, has many set phrases and idioms, ranging from vulgar to polite ones.** Only if you use them do you realize that you are really part of another cultural, social and linguistic reality: a nice full immersion in Spain is the best way to learn many of them!

29.1. Many idioms for every occasion

“My wife keeps talking with her friends”.

Who knows how many times you have sadly said this sentence, and maybe that day she was not even too chatty! If you were speaking with a Spaniard, the sentence would be: “Mi mujer sigue hablando con sus amigas”.

Have you noticed? **The expression “keep + -ing form” in Spanish is translated with the form “seguir + gerund”.** It is very important to memorize this expression, avoiding the embarrassment of a literal translation which will make the other person think: “Oh yes, this is an English speaker who has a smattering of Spanish”.

Another Spanish rule is this one: **if “yo” is included in a series of pronouns or nouns, it must always be placed after them. It is a polite form that is present even in English.**

If we accidentally said “Yo y tú” they might tell us “El burro adelante para que no se espante”, which means “The donkey [that is, us] ahead so that it is not afraid”. In short, we would cut a poor figure! So be careful with the first person singular pronoun!

Do you know a Stakhanovite who “works all day”? This friend of yours then surely “trabaja de sol a sol”, basically without a break, not even to sleep!

And if a child is just like his father? “Tal palo y tal astilla”, which literally means “Like pole, like splinter”.

29.2. How to sound like a true Spaniard with a few more words

If you have found it easy to study everything during this month, it means that have done it “a huevo”, or, on the contrary, “a trancas y barrancas”. Anyway, I hope that you do not think that this manual is “cutre”, that is, low-quality.

And if you are in trouble but it is your fault: “You’re on your own!”, that is “Búscate la vida!”. You must not confuse it with our informal expression “Get a life!”, said to someone who does not mind their own business or worries about everything.

If, by chance, you “cambias el chip” it means that you have found a new job, and the weekend comes after drinking too much alcohol you have a hangover, that is, a “colocón”.

We have never seen each other, but if you are someone who likes to joke around, you “estás de coña”; instead, if you are a rebel at heart, they will tell you that “te echas al monte”.

When we are surprised, we might say: “no way!”, whereas in Spain they say “La leche!”, which literally means “Milk!”. Is not the way languages work a true mystery?

This is truly “una pasada”, that is, wonderful, the coolest thing!

Finally, remember to read a good book before falling asleep: at the end of each fairy tale, especially, you will find the classic “Vivieron felices y comieron perdices”.

What? We live happily ever after, and they eat partridges too?!

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. The Spanish language is really full of colloquial expressions and idioms. Today I showed you the tip of the iceberg, so that you have an idea of what to expect in the future.

. Staying onsite, daily practice, reading a lot in Spanish: I will never stop repeating the tricks to best learn not only grammar, but also these expressions that you need to know by heart.

30th DAY - CONCLUSIONS: FOR THE LAST DAY, LET'S GET DRESSED UP (AND FOR THE LADIES A BIT OF MAKE-UP, TOO!)

At the end of any long experience (I am thinking for example about study trips for teenagers, or business trips for adults) it is customary to spend a night, or even a whole day, celebrating and saying goodbye to everyone.

Living together for a month and then having to get back to your usual routine is never easy.

Some people made new friends, some fell madly in love, some simply flirted and fantasized, some fully enjoyed living for thirty days in a context which is different in terms of the people involved, the relationships built and the environment.

Surely each person will have something to treasure for all their life, even just a little emotion that may surface after some days, month or even years.

Whether it is an all-day long party, a reception or a dinner followed by dancing, clothing is important and on these occasions you can judge a book by its cover.

On the beach it is acceptable for men to wear a “bañador” or for women to

wear a “bikini”, but on a fancy event like this one you really need to dress up.

The secret lies in getting ready in advance and without rushing, especially for women who have also the part of the “maquillaje”, that is, make-up.

30.1. How to look like a true gentleman

You surely must wear a “traje”, that is, an elegant suit. “Camisa”, “corbata” (tie) and “chaqueta” are the three things you cannot do without on this very special night.

A boy can even wear jeans, that is, “vaqueros”. You do not need anything else in warm or summer weather, otherwise you surely need a “chalé” (waistcoat) at least, but if the night is especially cold or even rainy or snowy (which is rare in Spain, but possible!) it is necessary to wear an “impermeable” (raincoat) or an “abrigo” (coat), maybe together with a “bufanda” (scarf) and “guantes” (gloves).

What about a man’s “calzado” (footwear)? Well, “los zapatos”, that is, the shoes, must be elegant: definitely avoid “sandalias” or even worse “chanclas”, that is, flip-flops. It would make a bad impression and you would cut a sorry figure.

Men usually wear simple clothes, whereas women may strike you with their originality.

You are at the party and suddenly there comes a woman who wants to dance with you. Let’s analyse her outfit!

30.2. How to let female charm conquer you

She is an attractive lady, of rare beauty: she is almost one metre eighty tall, she is wearing an elegant and long “falda” (skirt) covering all her statuesque body and which also serves as a “sujetador” (bra).

Her high-heeled (“tacones”) shoes come towards you and meanwhile she asks you: “¡Vamos a bailar!” as if it were an order to follow. You stand up and on the little platform used as a dance floor you get a better look at “las joyas”, the jewels she is wearing: “anillos” on her fingers, “pendientes” one her ears, and even a designer “collar” around her neck. Meanwhile, you display your elegant and valuable “reloj” that you are wearing on your wrist and that you keep looking at, hoping that this night is never going to end.

With a hand you touch her “pelo rubio”, her blond and waist-length hair.

Her blue-coloured eyes stand out thanks to an excellent use of the “delineador”, the eyeliner.

After a couple of dances together, she asks you to follow her.

You let her take your hand: a woman like that will surely take you to paradise.

The secrets revealed in this chapter

. A month ago you just knew some Spanish words, and maybe you even mispronounced them. Now, after thirty days, the progress is evident. Of course, you are not on the same level as a native speaker, but you have laid the foundation for a for a deeper and more informed understanding of Spanish.

. Remember: I will always be with you, so whenever you need me just open this book and ask me anything. I will gladly help you.

. Do you still believe that you just need to roll your Rs to speak Spanish properly?!

GRAMMAR OVERVIEW

TABLES

VERBS

Indicative mood

PRESENT

Hablo	Como	Sufro
Hablas	Comes	Sufres
Habla	Come	Sufre
Hablamos	Comemos	Sufrimos
Habláis	Coméis	Sufrís
Hablan	Comen	Sufren

Main irregularities:

- . **e** → **ie** (cerrar), **e** → **i** (pedir), **o** → **ue** (poder)
- . Keep the pronunciation of the infinitive form: elegir, recoger...
- . -uir → -y: construir, destruir
- . verbs with “g”: salir, caer...
- . -cer/-cir → -zco: padecer, traducir...

IMPERFECT

Hablaba	Comía	Sufría
Hablabas	Comías	Sufrías
Hablaba	Comía	Sufría
Hablábamos	Comíamos	Sufríamos
Hablabais	Comíais	Sufríais
Hablaban	Comían	Sufrían

Irregular verbs: Ir, Ser, Ver.

SIMPLE PAST

Hablé	Comí	Sufí
Hablaste	Comiste	Sufriste
Habló	Comió	Sufrió
Hablamos	Comimos	Sufrimos
Hablasteis	Comisteis	Sufristeis
Hablaron	Comieron	Sufrieron

Irregular verbs: Estar, Haber, Hacer, Poder, Querer, Saber, Tener, Venir.

SIMPLE FUTURE

Hablaré	Comeré	Sufriré
Hablarás	Comerás	Sufrirás
Hablará	Comerá	Sufrirá
Hablaremos	Comeremos	Sufriremos
Hablaréis	Comeréis	Sufriréis
Hablarán	Comerán	Sufrirán

Irregular verbs: Decir, Haber, Hacer, Poder, Poner, Querer, Saber, Salir, Tener, Venir.

PRESENT PERFECT

He hablado	He comido	He sufrido
Has hablado	Has comido	Has sufrido
Ha hablado	Ha comido	Ha sufrido
Hemos hablado	Hemos comido	Hemos sufrido
Habéis hablado	Habéis comido	Habéis sufrido
Han hablado	Han comido	Han sufrido

PAST PERFECT

Había hablado	Había comido	Había sufrido
Habías hablado	Habías comido	Habías sufrido
Había hablado	Había comido	Había sufrido
Habíamos hablado	Habíamos comido	Habíamos sufrido
Habíais hablado	Habíais comido	Habíais sufrido
Habían hablado	Habían comido	Habían sufrido

FUTURE PERFECT

Habré hablado	Habré comido	Habré sufrido
Habrás hablado	Habrás comido	Habrás sufrido
Habrá hablado	Habrá comido	Habrá sufrido
Habremos hablado	Habremos comido	Habremos sufrido
Habréis hablado	Habréis comido	Habréis sufrido
Habrán hablado	Habrán comido	Habrán sufrido

Subjunctive mood

PRESENT

Hable	Coma	Sufra
Hables	Comas	Sufras
Hable	Coma	Sufra
Hablemos	Comamos	Sufram
Habléis	Comáis	Sufráis
Hablen	Coman	Sufran

The irregularities of the present subjunctive are the same as the ones of the present indicative.

IMPERFECT

Hablara	Comiera	Sufriera
Hablaras	Comieras	Sufrieras
Hablara	Comiera	Sufriera
Habláramos	Comiéramos	Sufriéramos
Hablarais	Comierais	Sufrierais
Hablaran	Comieran	Sufrieran

The irregularities of the imperfect subjunctive are the same as the ones of the simple past.

PERFECT

Haya hablado	Haya comido	Haya sufrido
Hayas hablado	Hayas comido	Hayas sufrido
Haya hablado	Haya comido	Haya sufrido
Hayamos hablado	Hayamos comido	Hayamos sufrido
Hayáis hablado	Hayáis comido	Hayáis sufrido
Hayan hablado	Hayan comido	Hayan sufrido

PAST PERFECT

Hubiera hablado	Hubiera comido	Hubiera sufrido
Hubieras hablado	Hubieras comido	Hubieras sufrido
Hubiera hablado	Hubiera comido	Hubiera sufrido
Hubiéramos hablado	Hubiéramos comido	Hubiéramos sufrido
Hubierais hablado	Hubierais comido	Hubierais sufrido
Hubieran hablado	Hubieran comido	Hubieran sufrido

Conditional mood

PRESENT

Hablaría	Comería	Sufriría
Hablarías	Comerías	Sufrirías
Hablaría	Comería	Sufriría
Hablaríamos	Comeríamos	Sufriríamos
Hablaríais	Comeríais	Sufriríais
Hablarían	Comerían	Sufrirían

The irregularities of the present conditional are the same as the ones of the simple future.

PAST

Habría hablado	Habría comido	Habría sufrido
Habrías hablado	Habrías comido	Habrías sufrido
Habría hablado	Habría comido	Habría sufrido
Habríamos hablado	Habríamos comido	Habríamos sufrido
Habríais hablado	Habríais comido	Habríais sufrido
Habrían hablado	Habrían comido	Habrían sufrido

Imperative mood

PRESENT

¡Habla!	¡Come!	¡Sufré!
¡Hablad!	¡Comed!	¡Sufrid!

Irregular verbs: Decir, Hacer, Ir, Poner, Salir, Ser, Tener, Venir.

Gerund mood

Hablando	Comiendo	Sufriendo
----------	----------	-----------

Main irregularities: vowel changes as in the present indicative, adding “y” in some verbs (caer, creer, construir...).

PERSONAL PRONOUNS

Subject	Object
Yo	Me
Tú	Te
Él/Ella/Usted	Le (Lo/La even for indirect objects)
Nosotros	Nos
Vosotros	Os
Ellos/Ellas Ustedes	Les

POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVES/PRONOUNS

Mi/Mío
Tu/Tuyo
Su/Suyo
Nuestro
Vuestro
Sus/Suyos

DEMONSTRATIVE ADJECTIVES/PRONOUNS

Este/Éste	Esta/Ésta
Estos/Éstos	Estas/Éstas
Aquel/Aquéel	Aquella/Aquélla
Aquellos/Aquélllos	Aquellas/Aquéllas
Ese/Ése	Esa/Ésa
Esos/Ésos	Esas/Ésas
Esto	

COMPARATIVES

Más guapo que	Menos guapo que	Tan guapo como
---------------	-----------------	----------------

IRREGULARITIES IN SOME ADJECTIVES:
BUENO, MALO, GRANDE, PEQUEÑO, ALTO, BAJO.

CONCLUSIONS

Dear friend, we have come to the end of our journey-course of Spanish in 30 days. I hope that you have learned as much as possible, but I advise you to read this book over and over again, to become more and more familiar with this beautiful language.

For your information, a video version of this course is available online: visit the *HOW2 Edizioni* channel on YouTube, you will find the link there, the complete course is available on the Udemy platform.

I inform you that we are already working on a “sequel” to this book, a second volume, to raise a bit more your knowledge level of Spanish. Check on Amazon if “*How to Learn Spanish in 30 Days, volume 2*” is already available for purchase!

Finally, you need to know that we have applied this method to many other languages, like: **English, French, German, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Russian**, etc.

So, if you are interested in studying a third language or you want to recommend our books to your loved ones... go ahead!

See you soon then and all the best!

HOW2 Edizioni