

GRAMÁTICA

PARA ESTUDIANTES DE ESPAÑOL

NOUN

Nouns are the name of a person, place, thing or idea. They are used after **determiners**.

e.g. un tomate la silla
mi madre alguna cosa

GENDER

All **nouns** in Spanish belong to one of two groups - masculine or feminine. These two groups are called **genders**.

In Spanish, masculine nouns often end in -o and feminine words often end in -a.

Any **determiner** or **adjective** needs to agree with, or match, the gender of the noun.

DETERMINER

A determiner helps to specify a **noun**. For example:

indefinite articles:
un / una / unos / unas (a / some)

definite articles:
el / la / los / las (the)

possessive adjectives:
e.g. mi (my), nuestro (our)

quantifiers:
e.g. alguna (some), cada (every)

PREPOSITION

Prepositions are placed before a **noun**, **pronoun** or noun phrase to link them to another word in the sentence. They often show physical location or location in time.

For example:
al lado de (next to) detrás de (behind)
a las tres (at 3pm) en otoño (in autumn)

ADJECTIVE

Adjectives are "describing words". They describe **nouns** and make the meaning of those nouns more specific.

They need to agree in **gender** and number (singular or **plural**) with the noun that they describe.

e.g. un gato negro
una vaca blanca y negra
unos calcetines negros
unas mesas negras

The majority of Spanish adjectives need to come **AFTER** the noun that they describe. Some adjectives are allowed to go before the noun.

PLURAL

singular = one, plural = more than one

In Spanish we add the suffixes -s or -es to show that there is more than one.

Nouns ending in a vowel: add -s.
Nouns ending in a consonant: add -es.
Nouns ending in -z: change the -z to -c and add -es.

e.g. perro -> perros
ratón -> ratones
pez -> peces

CONJUNCTION

Conjunctions join two words or phrases.

Co-ordinating conjunctions link two words or phrases as equal pairs.
e.g. y (and), pero (but), o (or)

Subordinating conjunctions introduce a subordinate clause.
e.g. si (if), cuando (when), ya que (since), aunque (even though)

ADVERB

Adverbs modify a verb or adjective. In English they usually end in -ly while in Spanish they usually end in -mente.

To form an adverb, make the adjective feminine and add -mente.

e.g. actualmente precisamente
gramáticamente alegremente

ADVERBIAL

An adverbial is a word or phrase that is used like an adverb to modify a verb or clause.

Time phrases such as "in five minutes" and "last night" fall into this category.

VERB

A verb is a "doing word", which shows an action that something or someone does as well as a state. It can be transitive (requires an object) or intransitive (does not have an object).

INFINITIVE

The infinitive is the basic "name" of the **verb**, which is used as a head word in the dictionary.

In English the infinitive is always preceded by "to".

In Spanish, infinitives comprise one word only. They end in -ar, -er or -ir.

AUXILIARY VERB

An auxiliary **verb** helps us to build compound tenses such as the present progressive (a.k.a. present continuous) along with **participles**.

In Spanish the verb *estar* (to be) is used as auxiliary in the progressive tenses and *haber* (to have) in the perfect tense.

TENSE

The tense is the time in which the **verb** happens. In Spanish this difference in time is usually shown by distinct verb forms.

e.g. canto I sing (present tense)
cantaré I will sing (future tense)
cantaba I was singing (imperfect tense)
canté I sang (preterite tense)

PARTICIPLE

There are two participles, present and past.

The present participle in English ends in the suffix -ing.

The past participle in English often ends with the suffix -ed.

In Spanish we form the present participle by adding the suffix -ando (AR verbs) or -iendo (ER/IR verbs).

e.g. andar (to walk) -> andando (walking)

We form the past participle by adding the suffix -ado (AR verbs) or -ido (ER/IR verbs).
e.g. jugar (to play) -> jugado (played)

Participles are used in progressive tenses with **auxiliary** verbs.

PRONOUN

A pronoun replaces a **noun** in a sentence and often enables us to avoid repetition.

Subject pronouns show us which person the **verb** form belongs to, e.g. I, she, they. Spanish verbs do not require subject pronouns as the verb forms are all different and the people to whom they refer are easily identifiable.

Object pronouns replace the object of the sentence.

e.g. I saw the dog. -> I saw it.

Interrogative pronouns are also known as question words. Examples are Who? Which? and How?. In Spanish they require accents to differentiate them from the relative pronouns.

e.g. ¿quién? = who? ...quien... = ...who...