



Pronunciation Guide

Please Note: This guide covers the most basic and common sounds in Spanish. A more thorough guide may be accessed at <https://studyspanish.com/pronunciation>. Also, Ana at Butterfly Spanish has a great video on pronunciation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hsLYD1Jyf3A&t=38s>

A = “ah”
(as in “ball”)

E = “ay”
(as in “hay”)*

I = “ee”
(as in cheese)

O = “oh”
(as in “Okay”)

U = “ew”
(as in “New”)

*In some regions E may be pronounced as “eh”

C is pronounced differently depending on the vowel that follows:

Ca = “Kah”

Ce = “Say”

Ci = “See”

Co = “Koh”

Cu = “Kew”

G also is pronounced differently depending on the vowel that follows:

Ga = “Gah”

Ge = “Hay”

Gi = “Hee”

Go = “Goh”

Gu = “Gew”

H is always silent!

J is pronounced like an H as in “Hotel”

LL is pronounced like a Y as in “Yellow,” or in some regions like a G as in “Wage”

Ñ is called “en-yay” and is pronounced like NY as in “Canyon”

Q is pronounced like a C as in “cake” or a K as in “kite”

R is pronounced with a slight roll of the tongue or harder when it is the first letter of a word

RR is pronounced with a hard roll of the tongue

V is pronounced like a B as in “Bay”

X is usually pronounced like KS as in “Talks” (e.g. “examen”), but it also is pronounced like an English H in certain proper names (e.g. “Mexico,” “Xavier”)

Z is pronounced like an S as in “Sorry” (At least in South America)

Y as a consonant is pronounced differently depending on the region. It can either be pronounced like Y as in “Yes” or like J as in “Joy” (NOTE: As a vowel, it is pronounced EE as in “Cheese”)

B, D, F, K, L, M, N, P, S, W, Y are very similar to their English equivalents

STRESS ON SYLLABLES:

The next-to-the last syllable is stressed in all words ending in a vowel, “n,” or “s”

- camas (KAH-mahs) (beds)
- mariposas (mah-ree-POH-sahs) (butterflies)
- pollo (POH-yoh) (chicken)

The last syllable is stressed in all words that **do not** end in a vowel, “n,” or “s”

- cantar (kahn-TAHR) (to sing)
- feliz (feh-LEES) (happy)

The syllable with an accent mark above the vowel is always accented

- balcón (bahl-KOHN) (balcony)
- fotógrafo (foh-TOH-grah-foh) (photographer)
- pájaro (PAH-hah-roh) (bird)