

SPANISH GRAMMAR

STEP-BY-STEP



vaughan

SPANISH GRAMMAR STEP-BY-STEP

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Welcome to ***Spanish Grammar Step-by-Step***!

Spanish Grammar Step-by-Step is the perfect guide to help you get a real understanding and an excellent foundation of the most important grammatical structures in the Spanish language. It's full of tips, tricks, advice and exercises with the unique Vaughan teaching method that isn't just incredibly effective, but that will motivate you to keep up the effort.

In order to make the most of this book, do the following:

- 1. Download the audio!** The audio recordings are vital for your oral comprehension. It's going to help you get a real feel for Spanish and to get your pronunciation spot-on from the beginning!
- 2. Go through maximum one chapter per day** and follow all the instructions. It's much better to properly get your head around **one** grammar point than studying five but without assimilating any of them.
- 3. Always practise saying the examples out loud.** Translate them first and cover the right-hand column and then repeat it again with the text in front of you. Compare your pronunciation with your teacher on the audio recordings!
- 4. Review** what you have learnt every few days. This is key to making sustainable progress, which in turn will motivate you to put in the effort!
- 5. Enjoy!**

SPANISH
GRAMMAR
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STEP 1 The verb *ser* (affirmative)

One of the peculiarities of the Spanish language is that there are two verbs that mean **to be**: **ser** and **estar**. In general terms, we use the verb **ser** to talk about permanent states like **Soy alto** (I'm tall), whereas **estar** expresses temporary ones like **Estoy triste** (I'm sad). In this very first *Step*, we're only going to focus on **ser** and how to use the subject pronouns (I, you, he, etc.) in Spanish.



How interesting!

In Spanish, there is more than just one way to express **you**: we have **tú**, which we use to address one person, and we use **vosotros** if we're referring to more than one person. In formal Spanish, we use **usted** instead of **tú** and **ustedes** instead of **vosotros**.



Keep this in mind!

I'm David in Spanish is **Yo soy David**, but it's actually more common to simply say **Soy David**, without **yo** (I). Since verbs in Spanish change their endings to indicate the subject they are referring to, there's no need to include the subject pronoun.

HOW IT ALL WORKS

We use **ser** to talk about inherent characteristics (**Madrid es grande** – **Madrid is big**), someone's origin or nationality (**Soy de España** – **I'm from Spain**) as well as their profession (**Soy dentista** – **I'm a dentist**). It's also used to describe the relationship between people (**Somos hermanos** – **We're brothers**). This is how **ser** is conjugated in the present simple:

(yo) soy	/yo soy/	I am
(tú) eres	/too eres/	you are
(él/ella) es	/el/eya es/	he/she is
(nosotros/nosotras*) somos	/nosotros/nosotras somos/	we are
(vosotros/vosotras*) sois	/bosotros/bosotras soys/	you (plural) are
(ellos/ellas*) son	/eyos/eyas son/	they are

* **Nosotros**, **vosotros** and **ellos** refer to a group of men or a mixed group of men and women. If every member of the group is female, the ending changes to **-as**: **nosotras**, **vosotras**, **ellas**.

Bear in mind that **usted**, the formal way of expressing **tú**, is conjugated in the same way as **él/ella**: **usted es**. The plural form of **usted** is **ustedes**, which is conjugated like **ellos/ellas**: **ustedes son**. The use of **usted** and **ustedes** is particularly common in South America.

Pronunciation tip

There are two **"r"** sounds in Spanish. In order to pronounce the simple, soft **"r"** in words like **eres**, the tip of your tongue should touch the area just behind your front teeth. To achieve the hard, rolled **"rr"** sound in words like **Inglaterra** (**England**), do the same but exhale, allowing your tongue to vibrate.



STEP 1 Put yourself to the test!

Study the sentences with the audio. Then cover the right-hand column and translate out loud:

Let's get started with the use of **ser + de** (to be + from) to talk about someone's origin. Make sure you pronounce the "c" in **Barcelona** like the English 'th' in think. We say /barthelona/!

I'm Daniela and I'm from London. (Yo) **Soy Daniela y soy de Londres.**

You're Marta and you're from Barcelona. (Tú) **Eres Marta y eres de Barcelona.**

He's Luis and he's from Madrid. (Él) **Es Luis y es de Madrid.**

Remember that, unlike in English where the **I**, **you** and **he** are necessary, in Spanish we tend to omit them.

Now, let's practise **ser + de** with countries. In the third example, **ellos** and **ellas** aren't optional as we're differentiating two groups of people.

We're from England. (Nosotros) **Somos de Inglaterra.**

You (pl.) are from Italy. (Vosotros) **Sois de Italia.**

They (masc.) are from Portugal and they (fem.) are from Germany. **Ellos son de Portugal y ellas son de Alemania.**

The letters "tu" in **Portugal** are pronounced like the number **two**. Plus, the emphasis is on the last syllable: /por-two-gal/!

Remember to use **usted** (or **ustedes**) when talking to someone you have a formal relationship with or to someone you don't know well. In these cases, we usually do include these subject pronouns.

You (formal) are from Lanzarote. **Usted es de Lanzarote.**

You (formal pl.) are from France. **Ustedes son de Francia.**

You (formal) are Robert and you're from Portugal. **Usted es Roberto y es de Portugal.**

The "z" in **Lanzarote** and the "c" in **Francia** are pronounced like the English 'th'!

STEP 74 *Tener que*

In this *Step* you'll learn how to express **to have to** in Spanish, which is **tener que**. Just like in English, **tener que** is followed by an infinitive: **Tengo que ir al colegio** (I have to go to school).



EXPRESSION ALERT! **LO ANTES POSIBLE**

As soon as possible is just three words in Spanish: **lo antes posible**. We also say **cuanto antes**, which is even more emphatic! Whichever option you choose, remember that **posible** is spelt with one "s" and that **cuanto** doesn't have an accent, unlike the question word **¿Cuánto...?** (How much...?).



Pronunciation tip

Que seems like an easy word to pronounce, but English speakers might mispronounce it and say /kay/ instead of /keh/. **Que** sounds like **Ken** but without the 'n'.

HOW IT ALL WORKS

Have a look at these examples of **tener que** in the present simple. As you know, **tener** is irregular:

Tengo que mejorar mi español.	I have to improve my Spanish.
Tienes que ir al médico lo antes posible.	You have to go to the doctor as soon as possible.
Esther tiene que ayudar a su hermano.	Esther has to help her brother.
(Usted) Tiene que firmar aquí.	You (formal) have to sign here.
¿Qué tenemos que comprar?	What do we have to buy?
Tenéis que encontrar una solución.	You (pl.) have to find a solution.
No tienen que traer nada.	They don't have to bring anything.
(Ustedes) Tienen que esperar fuera.	You (formal pl.) have to wait outside.

When **tener que** + infinitive is used with object pronouns, we can attach the pronouns to the infinitive or put them right before the conjugated verb (just like with **ir a** + inf):

Tengo que hacerlo. / Lo tengo que hacer.	I have to do it.
Tienes que ayudarme. / Me tienes que ayudar.	You have to help me.
Tienen que dármelo.* / Me lo tienen que dar.	They have to give it to me.

* Remember that when double pronouns are attached to the infinitive, **we have to add an accent (tenemos que añadir una tilde)**!

Good to know!

In Spanish there's also the verb **deber**, which is the equivalent of **must**. It's regular (**debo, debes, debe, debemos, debéis, deben**) and unlike **tener que**, it's followed directly by a verb: **Debes venir lo antes posible**. In *Step 126* you'll learn more about **deber** and how we use it to express **should**.



STEP 74 Put yourself to the test!

Study the sentences with the audio. Then cover the right-hand column and translate out loud:

Let's get started with **tener que**. As always, take care pronouncing your Spanish "t" correctly!

- Do you have to work tomorrow?
- No, but I have to study.

- ¿**Tienes que** trabajar mañana?
- No, pero **tengo que** estudiar.

Carlos has to travel a lot in his new job.

Carlos **tiene que** viajar mucho en su nuevo trabajo.

They have to come here as soon as possible.

Tienen que venir aquí lo antes posible.

What's another way to say the last sentence? **Tienen que venir aquí cuanto antes?**
That's it!

In these next sentences, **tener que** + infinitive are accompanied by an object pronoun.

When do I have to finish it?

¿**Cuándo tengo que** terminarlo?

You (pl.) have to tell Víctor the truth.

Tenéis que decirle la verdad a Víctor.

We don't have to ask them for permission.

No tenemos que pedirles permiso.

The pronoun can also go before the verb: **¿Cuándo lo tengo que terminar?**, **Le tenéis que decir la verdad a Víctor**, **No les tenemos que pedir permiso**.

And finally take a shot at **tener que** + infinitive + double pronouns!

You don't have to explain it to me.

No tienes que explicármelo.

And the documents, who do I have to give them to?

Y los documentos, ¿a quién tengo que dárselos?

They have to send it to us as soon as possible.

Tienen que mandárnoslo lo antes posible.

What's another way to express these sentences? If your answer is **No me lo tienes que explicar**, **¿a quién se los tengo que dar?**, **Nos lo tienen que mandar lo antes posible/cuanto antes**; well done, you're really getting the hang of it!