

Making Everything Easier!™

Spanish Essentials FOR DUMMIES®

Learn:

- The basics of Spanish grammar and sentence construction
- How to conjugate regular, irregular, and stem-changing verbs
- To express ideas about the past, present, and future

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Ser - to be

yo soy ("I am")

• tú eres ("you are")

• usted/él/ella es ("you")

• nosotros somos ("we")

• vosotros sois ("you (pl)")

Spanish Essentials For Dummies®

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**by Gail Stein, MA, and
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Introduction

As someone who's studying Spanish, you want to write and speak correctly and to master the many different verb tenses and conjugations. *Spanish Essentials For Dummies* can help you reach your goals painlessly and effortlessly as you enhance your Spanish language skills.

Spanish Essentials For Dummies presents you with all the grammar you need to know to communicate clearly. With the help of this book, you'll be ready to have a conversation about topics besides your name and the weather! And that's something to be proud of.

About This Book

Spanish Essentials For Dummies is a reference book for people who have some knowledge of the fundamentals of Spanish. If you want to get up to speed with language structures so that you can communicate comfortably and proficiently, this book is for you.

Each chapter presents a different topic that allows you to practice your communication skills. We include plenty of examples to guide you through the rules so you're exposed to colloquial, everyday, correct Spanish that native speakers expect to hear from someone using Spanish. For example, the Spanish language has its individual idioms and idiomatic expressions that give it color and flair. Here's a quick example: To say that it's sunny outside in Spanish, you remark, **Hace sol**. The literal English translation of this expression is *It is making sun*. Even my dear old grandma wouldn't have spoken

English like that! Well, make sure you don't speak Spanish that way, either.

Conventions Used in This Book

In order to highlight the most important information and to help you navigate this book more easily, we've set up several conventions:

Spanish terms and sentences, as well as endings we want to highlight, are set in **boldface** to make them stand out.

English equivalents, set in *italics*, follow the Spanish example.

We use many abbreviations throughout the book. Don't let them throw you. For instance, you may find the following:

- **fem.:** feminine
- **masc.:** masculine
- **sing.:** singular
- **pl.:** plural

Foolish Assumptions

When writing this book, we made the following assumptions:

You have some knowledge of the fundamentals of Spanish grammar. You're looking for the opportunity to review what you've already mastered and are intent on moving forward to new areas of knowledge.

You want a book that's complete but isn't so advanced that you get lost in the rules. We try to explain the rules as clearly as possible without using too many grammatical terms.

You're boning up on Spanish verbs for your own edification, or your son, daughter, grandson, granddaughter, niece, nephew, or special someone is studying Spanish and you want to help even though you haven't looked at a verb conjugation for years.

Icons Used in This Book

Icons are those cute little drawings on the left side of the page that call out for your attention. They signal a particularly valuable piece of information. Here's a list of the icons in this book:



Remember icons call your attention to important information about the language — something you shouldn't neglect or something that's out of the ordinary. Don't ignore these paragraphs.



Tip icons present time-saving information that makes communication quick and effective. If you want to

know the proper way to do things, check out the Tip icons first.



The Warning icon points out certain differences between English and Spanish that you may find confusing. If you want to know how Spanish constructions differ from those in English, these are the paragraphs you need to consult.

Where to Go from Here

One great thing about *For Dummies* books is that you don't have to read them chapter by chapter from the very beginning to the (not-so) bitter end. Each chapter stands on its own and doesn't require that you complete any of the other chapters in the book. This setup saves you a lot of time if you've mastered certain topics but feel a bit insecure about others.

So, jump right in. Get your feet wet. If you're not sure exactly where to begin, take a good look at the table of contents and select the topic that seems to best fit your abilities and needs. If you're concerned that your background may not be strong enough, you can start at the very beginning and work your way through the book.

Keep in mind that studying Spanish isn't a contest. Work at a pace that best suits your needs. Don't hesitate to read a chapter a second, third, or even a fourth time several days later. You can easily adapt this book to your learning abilities. Remember, too, that you need to have a positive, confident attitude. Yes, you'll make mistakes. Everyone does — as a matter of fact, many native

Spanish speakers do all the time. Your main goal should be to write and speak as well as you can; if you trip up and conjugate a verb incorrectly or use the feminine form of an adjective rather than the masculine form, it isn't the end of the world. If you can make yourself understood, you've won the greatest part of the battle.

Chapter 1

Brushing Up on the Basics

In This Chapter

Counting with cardinal and ordinal numbers

Expressing dates

Telling time

Reviewing parts of speech

Knowing numbers, expressing dates, relating the time of day, and recognizing parts of speech are essential Spanish skills you need in everyday life. Surely, the ability to communicate numbers, times, and dates is completely indispensable to you on a daily basis. Determining the correct part of speech to use helps you perfect your oral and written Spanish.

Counting Down

We start off this chapter with numbers because you need them in order to express dates and tell time. You use *cardinal numbers* (the more popular of the two) to count, to bargain with a merchant about a price, to express the temperature, or to write a check. You use *ordinal numbers* to express the number of a floor, the act of a play, or the order of a person in a race or competition.

Using cardinal numbers

You use cardinal numbers many times every day. As a matter of fact, you probably use them at least once an hour in the course of normal conversation or in writing. The Spanish cardinal numbers are as follows:

<i>Number</i>	<i>Spanish</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Spanish</i>
0	cero	25	veinticinco (veinte y cinco)
1	uno	26	veintiséis (veinte y seis)
2	dos	27	veintisiete (veinte y siete)
3	tres	28	veintiocho (veinte y ocho)
4	cuatro	29	veintinueve (veinte y nueve)
5	cinco	30	treinta
6	seis	40	cuarenta
7	siete	50	cincuenta
8	ocho	60	sesenta
9	nueve	70	setenta
10	diez	80	ochenta
11	once	90	noventa
12	doce	100	cien (ciento)
13	trece	101	ciento uno
14	catorce	200	doscientos
15	quince	500	quinientos
16	dieciséis (diez y seis)	700	setecientos
17	diecisiete (diez y siete)	900	novcientos

18	dieciocho (diez y ocho)	1.000	mil
19	diecinueve (diez y nueve)	2.000	dos mil
20	veinte	100.000	cien mil
21	veintiuno (veinte y uno)	1.000.000	un millón
22	veintidós (veinte y dos)	2.000.000	dos millones
23	veintitrés (veinte y tres)	1.000.000.000	mil millones
24	veinticuatro (veinte y cuatro)	2.000.000.000	dos mil millones



You need to keep the following rules in mind when using cardinal numbers in Spanish:

Uno (*one*), used only when counting, becomes **un** before a masculine noun and **una** before a feminine noun, whether the noun is singular or plural:

- **uno, dos, tres** (*one, two, three*)
- **un niño y una niña** (*a boy and a girl*)
- **sesenta y un dólares** (*61 dollars*)
- **veintiuna (veinte y una) personas** (*21 people*)

You use the conjunction **y** (*and*) only for numbers between 16 and 99. You don't use it directly after hundreds:

- **ochenta y ocho** (*88*)
- **doscientos treinta y siete** (*237*)