

# STOP START SPANISH

BOOK 1 / BEGINNER / A1-A2

Okay...  
maybe study  
a little.



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## The Beginner Reading Companion

A little clarity. A lot more story.

Quick grammar help for Stop Learning Spanish.

Start Reading It. Keep it nearby, look up what you need,  
and get back to the good part.

**NO POP QUIZ. NO GOLD STARS REQUIRED.**

Just enough help to keep you reading.

 **START HERE**

# You came for a story.

This pack is here for the moments when one small thing gets in the way.

Wait. A grammar guide for a book about reading instead of studying? Fair question. Sometimes a quick explanation makes a sentence click. That is the whole idea: a little help, then back to the story.

## THE 30-SECOND DETOUR

Read the sentence. Find the one bit that feels fuzzy. Check the matching page here. Read the sentence again, then keep going. You do not need to memorize the chart.

## Your very small table of contents

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Print only the pages you need, or use the clickable contents on screen. For vocabulary, check the Glosario in your book. For the explanation connected to a story, revisit its Aprendizaje Clave.

## SUBJECT PRONOUNS

# Who is doing what?

A subject is the person or thing doing the action. A pronoun stands in for a name.

| Spanish                 | English                                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| yo                      | I                                            |
| tú                      | you: one person, informal                    |
| él / ella / usted       | he / she / you: one person, formal           |
| nosotros / nosotras     | we                                           |
| vosotros / vosotras     | you: more than one person, informal in Spain |
| ellos / ellas / ustedes | they / you: more than one person             |

**The sneaky part:** Spanish often leaves the subject pronoun out. The verb ending and the scene tell you who is doing what.

## Yo vivo aquí. → Vivo aquí.

Both mean “I live here.” The yo can disappear; the meaning stays.

### A QUICK REGIONAL NOTE

In Latin America, **ustedes** is the usual plural “you.” In much of Spain, informal plural “you” is **vosotros/as**. The verb charts include both. Some regions also use **vos**; its forms are not included here.

**Small clues:** tú = you; tu = your. él = he; el = the. For all-female groups, you may see nosotras, vosotras or ellas. Nosotros, vosotros and ellos can refer to male or mixed groups.

## PRESENT TENSE / REGULAR VERBS

# Things people do.

The present can describe habits or what is happening now. Let the scene help you choose the English meaning.

For a regular verb, remove **-ar**, **-er** or **-ir** and add the ending that fits the subject. Here are three useful models.

| Who?                    | hablar / speak | comer / eat | vivir / live |
|-------------------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|
| yo                      | hablo          | como        | vivo         |
| tú                      | hablas         | comes       | vives        |
| él / ella / usted       | habla          | come        | vive         |
| nosotros/as             | hablamos       | comemos     | vivimos      |
| vosotros/as             | habláis        | coméis      | vivís        |
| ellos / ellas / ustedes | hablan         | comen       | viven        |

Vosotros/as forms are used mainly in Spain. See page 3 for the regional note.

## Ana habla español. Vive en México.

Ana speaks Spanish. She lives in Mexico.

## Comemos pizza los viernes.

We eat pizza on Fridays. The ending -emos points to “we.”

### BACK TO THE STORY

If you see **hablan**, look for a plural subject: they, or ustedes (“you all”). You do not have to recite six forms to understand one sentence.

**Happening right now?** You may also see estar + an -ando/-iendo form: **Estoy leyendo.** = “I am reading.”

## PRESENT TENSE / IRREGULAR VERBS

# The usual suspects.

These verbs show up a lot. They bend the regular pattern, but you will keep meeting them in stories.

| Who?                    | ser / be | estar / be | tener / have |
|-------------------------|----------|------------|--------------|
| yo                      | soy      | estoy      | tengo        |
| tú                      | eres     | estás      | tienes       |
| él / ella / usted       | es       | está       | tiene        |
| nosotros/as             | somos    | estamos    | tenemos      |
| vosotros/as             | sois     | estáis     | tenéis       |
| ellos / ellas / ustedes | son      | están      | tienen       |

| Who?                    | ir / go | hacer / do, make | poder / can |
|-------------------------|---------|------------------|-------------|
| yo                      | voy     | hago             | puedo       |
| tú                      | vas     | haces            | puedes      |
| él / ella / usted       | va      | hace             | puede       |
| nosotros/as             | vamos   | hacemos          | podemos     |
| vosotros/as             | vais    | hacéis           | podéis      |
| ellos / ellas / ustedes | van     | hacen            | pueden      |

## Tengo hambre, pero no puedo salir.

I am hungry, but I cannot go out. Tener hambre literally means “to have hunger.”

### LOOK FOR THE PART YOU KNOW

**Voy a leer.** = “I am going to read.” Ir + a + an infinitive often points to a plan or something that is going to happen. **Vamos al parque.** = “We are going to the park.” Here, al = a + el.

## SER / ESTAR

# Two ways to be.

English uses “to be” for both. Spanish chooses a verb based on the meaning.

| SER / identity and description                 | ESTAR / location and state                          |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Soy Ana.</b><br>I am Ana.                   | <b>Estoy en casa.</b><br>I am at home.              |
| <b>Somos de Perú.</b><br>We are from Peru.     | <b>Estamos cansados.</b><br>We are tired.           |
| <b>Ella es médica.</b><br>She is a doctor.     | <b>Ella está leyendo.</b><br>She is reading.        |
| <b>La casa es grande.</b><br>The house is big. | <b>La puerta está abierta.</b><br>The door is open. |

## A SHORTCUT THAT NEEDS A WARNING

“Permanent vs. temporary” is not a reliable rule. **Madrid está en España** uses *estar* even though Madrid is not moving. Ask what the sentence means: identity or description? Location or state?

**Same adjective, different idea.** *Ser* often describes a characteristic; *estar* often describes a state or condition in the scene.

## El café es bueno. / El café está frío.

The coffee is good. / The coffee is cold.

**A useful exception:** events use *ser* for their location: **La fiesta es en mi casa.** = “The party is at my house.”

## ARTICLES / GENDER / AGREEMENT

# Little words. Big clues.

Articles tell you whether a noun is masculine or feminine, singular or plural.

|                  | Masculine                | Feminine                 |
|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| the / singular   | el libro / the book      | la casa / the house      |
| the / plural     | los libros / the books   | las casas / the houses   |
| a, an / singular | un libro / a book        | una casa / a house       |
| some / plural    | unos libros / some books | unas casas / some houses |

**Learn the little word with the noun.** Try remembering **la casa**, rather than casa alone. Nouns ending in -o are often masculine; nouns ending in -a are often feminine. But there are exceptions: **la mano** (the hand), **el día** (the day).

| One                                         | More than one                                   |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| el libro nuevo / the new book               | los libros nuevos / the new books               |
| la casa pequeña / the small house           | las casas pequeñas / the small houses           |
| el libro interesante / the interesting book | los libros interesantes / the interesting books |

## THE WORDS TRAVEL TOGETHER

Adjectives agree with the noun. Many use -o/-a and add -s in the plural. Some, like **interesante**, keep the same ending for masculine and feminine nouns but still change for the plural.

**Making a plural:** usually add -s after a vowel and -es after a consonant: casa → casas; papel → papeles. A final z becomes c: luz → luces.

## DIRECT OBJECT PRONOUNS

# Who or what gets the action?

A direct object is the person or thing the verb acts on: I see Ana. I read the book.

| Pronoun   | What it can replace                   |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|
| me        | me                                    |
| te        | you: informal singular                |
| lo / la   | him / her / it / you: formal singular |
| nos       | us                                    |
| os        | you: informal plural, mainly Spain    |
| los / las | them / you: plural                    |

For the basic pattern here, **lo / los** replace masculine nouns; **la / las** replace feminine nouns. The pronoun lets a story avoid repeating the same noun.

## Leo el libro. → Lo leo.

I read the book. → I read it. El libro is masculine and singular, so it becomes lo.

## Veo a Ana. → La veo.

I see Ana. → I see her. The a before Ana does not make her an indirect object.

### WHERE DOES IT GO?

Usually before a conjugated verb: **Te veo.** = "I see you." With an infinitive, it can attach to the end: **Quiero leerlo.** = "I want to read it." You can also say **Lo quiero leer.**

**If you meet le meaning "him":** some varieties, especially in Spain, use le for a male person as a direct object. Use the sentence and the scene to track who is meant.

## INDIRECT OBJECT PRONOUNS

# Who receives it?

An indirect object often tells you who receives something: I give Ana the book.

| Pronoun | Often means                                     |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------|
| me      | to me / for me                                  |
| te      | to you / for you: informal singular             |
| le      | to him / to her / to you: formal singular       |
| nos     | to us / for us                                  |
| os      | to you / for you: informal plural, mainly Spain |
| les     | to them / to you: plural                        |

## Le doy el libro a Ana.

I give Ana the book. El libro is what I give. Ana is the person receiving it.

**Le does not tell you “him” or “her.”** The context does. Spanish may include both le and a name, as in the sentence above, to make the recipient clear.

## Ana me da el libro.

Ana gives me the book. Me points to the person who receives it: me.

### A FAMILIAR LITTLE WORD: ME GUSTA

**Me gusta el libro.** = “I like the book.” Think “The book is pleasing to me.” With a plural thing, use gustan: **Me gustan los libros.** = “I like the books.”

**Keep this distinction handy:** in **Me ve** (“She sees me”), me gets the action directly. In **Me da el libro** (“She gives me the book”), me receives the book. Same small word, different job.

## PAST TENSE / REGULAR VERBS

# Yesterday happened.

The preterite (pretérito) presents a past event as complete. Think: what happened?

## Ayer comí con Ana.

Yesterday I ate with Ana. Ayer is a helpful clue: yesterday.

| Who?                    | hablar / speak | comer / eat | vivir / live |
|-------------------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|
| yo                      | hablé          | comí        | viví         |
| tú                      | hablaste       | comiste     | viviste      |
| él / ella / usted       | habló          | comió       | vivió        |
| nosotros/as             | hablamos       | comimos     | vivimos      |
| vosotros/as             | hablasteis     | comisteis   | vivisteis    |
| ellos / ellas / ustedes | hablaron       | comieron    | vivieron     |

**One helpful pattern:** regular -er and -ir verbs share their preterite endings. The yo form ends in **-í**; the él/ella/usted form ends in **-ió**.

### THAT ACCENT IS DOING WORK

**Hablo** = “I speak.” **Habló** = “he/she spoke” or “you spoke” (formal). The accent helps signal both the pronunciation and the change in meaning.

**Same spelling, different time.** Hablamos and vivimos can be present or past. Compare **Hoy hablamos** (“Today we speak”) with **Ayer hablamos** (“Yesterday we spoke”). Read the whole sentence.

You will meet other past forms too. This pack gives you a small preterite reference, not every way Spanish talks about the past.

## PAST TENSE / A FEW IRREGULARS

# The past has a few surprises.

Three useful verbs, with forms you can check as you read.

| Who?                    | ir / ser | hacer / do, make | tener / have |
|-------------------------|----------|------------------|--------------|
| yo                      | fui      | hice             | tuve         |
| tú                      | fuiste   | hiciste          | tuviste      |
| él / ella / usted       | fue      | hizo             | tuvo         |
| nosotros/as             | fuimos   | hicimos          | tuvimos      |
| vosotros/as             | fuisteis | hicisteis        | tuvisteis    |
| ellos / ellas / ustedes | fueron   | hicieron         | tuvieron     |

**Yes, ir and ser share these forms.** A story tells you which verb is meant. Fui can mean “I went” or “I was.” Look at what comes next.

## Fui al parque.

I went to the park. A destination points to ir (to go).

## La fiesta fue divertida.

The party was fun. This description points to ser (to be).

## Ana hizo la cena. Tuvo un día largo.

Ana made dinner. She had a long day.

### ONE FORM IS ENOUGH FOR NOW

Recognize **hizo** when it appears; you can check the rest later. The goal is to follow the scene, not to win a conjugation contest. Oddly specific contest, anyway.

## READING RESCUE

# Find the snag. Keep going.

You do not need to understand every word to follow what is happening.

## 01 / Find the people

Who is speaking or acting? Check a name, a pronoun or the verb ending. Subject pronouns: page 3.

## 02 / Find the action

What does the verb mean? Is it happening now, happening regularly or being told as a past event? Present: pages 4-5. Past: pages 10-11.

## 03 / Follow the small words

What does lo, la or le point back to? Look at the previous sentence too. Direct and indirect objects: pages 8-9.

## 04 / Read the scene again

Try a rough meaning in your own words. If the story makes sense, keep going. If it does not, check the one word or pattern blocking you.

### A TINY EXAMPLE

**Ana tiene un libro. Lo lee en casa.**

Ana has a book. She reads it at home.

Tiene tells you what Ana has. Lo points back to un libro. Lee keeps Ana as the subject without repeating her name.

# Close the guide. Open the story.

That is plenty of studying for now.

Grammar reference: RAE / ASALE, Diccionario panhispánico de dudas.