



## El alfabeto - Beginner's 1, phonetic foundations

### Las vocales (vowels)

In English, a vowel can have more than one sound. i.e. fat, and fate

Spanish is 100% phonetic, this means once you learn the sound, you always pronounce that vowel the same way, every time you find it in a new word. So let's learn the vowels...

**A: Amapola** (ah-mah-poh-lah) – poppy flower. Or **Amigo** (ah-mee-goh).

**E: Elefante** (eh-leh-fahn-teh) – elephant. Or **Estrella** (eh-streh-yah) – star.

**I: Isla** (ees-lah) – island. Or **Imán** (ee-mahn) – magnet.

**O: Oso** (oh-soh) – bear. Or **Océano** (oh-seh-ah-noh) – ocean.

**U: Uva** (oo-bvah) – grape. Or **Universo** (oo-nee-bvher-soh).

Letter	Name	Pronunciation	Examples
A	A	ah	Amigo, Arte, Abrir, Agua
B	Be	bveh	Beso, Banco, Barco, Botas
C	Ce	seh / kah	Cero, Cine (soft) / Casa, Color, Curso (hard)
D	De	deh	Dedo, Disco, Drama, Dulce
E	E	eh	Enero, Escuela, Elegante, Entrar
F	Efe	eh-feh	Fresa, Flor, Famoso, Futuro
G	Ge	heh / geh	Gente, Girasol (soft) / Gato, Gota, Guante (hard)
H	Hache	ah-cheh	Hola, Helado, Huevo, Hora
I	I	ee	Isla, Idea, Imán, Iglesia



J	Jota	hoh-tah	Jardín, Joven, Jugo, Joya
K	Ka	kah	Kíwí, Karaoke, Karma
L	Ele	eh-leh	Luz, Libro, Limón, Lejos
M	Eme	eh-meh	Mesa, Mundo, Mano, Música
N	Ene	eh-neh	Noche, Nube, Nota, Nunca
Ñ	Eñe	eh-nyeh	Baño, Piña, Otoño, Montaña
O	O	oh	Ojo, Oreja, Oro, Ola
P	Pe	peh	Pan, Perro, Padre, Puente
Q	Cu	koo	Queso, Querer, Quince, Quemar
R	Ere	eh-reh	Rosa, Ropa, Río, Radio
S	Ese	eh-seh	Sol, Salir, Silla, Sopa
T	Te	teh	Tren, Tigre, Taza, Tarde
U	U	oo	Uva, Uno, Útil, Unión
V	Uve	oo-bveh	Vino, Vida, Verde, Verano
W	Doble u	doh-bleh oo	Waffle, Web, Washington
X	Equis	eh-kees	Éxito, Taxi, Xilófono
Y	I griega	ee-gree-eh-gah	Yate, Yoga, Ya, Yuca
Z	Zeta	seh-tah	Zorro, Zapato, Zona, Zumo

### Consonantes - consonants

- The consonants in Spanish sound are the same as in English. The Spanish alphabet no longer has the CH, LL and RR - there are now only 27 letters, the same as in English except that Spanish has one more- the ñ.

### The letters B and V

- These letters are pronounced the same, they sound like a combination of the two letters "bv" sound (position your lips and teeth to make a V sound)  
Ej: cabeza (kah-bveh-sah) head, vida (bvee-dah) life, violín (bveeh-leen) violin



### The letter C

- In front of the vowels **A, O** and **U**, the **C** sounds like the letter **K** in English.  
Ej: acabar (ah-kah-bvahr) to finish, café (kah-feh) coffee, casa (kah-sah) house
- In front of the vowels **E** and **I**, it sounds like the **S** in English.  
Ej: acero (ah-seh-roh) steel, cero (seh-roh) zero, cine (see-neh) cinema.

### The letter G

- Double personality, like the letter c.
- Combined with the letters e and I, G sounds like the Spanish J. Ej: agenda, gerente
- Combined with the vowels **A, O & U** - it sounds like "g" in goose. Ej: gol, goma (eraser).
- To say words like guia, or guerra, you must insert a U in front of the vowels **E** and **I**, then you get the sounds gue and gui.

### The letter H

- Is mute. Examples: ~~H~~ueso (ooeh-soh) bone, ~~H~~uevo (ooeh-bvoh) egg.

### The letter J

- Sounds like a guttural h. Ex: cajeta (kah-heh-tah) a desert, cajón (kah-hohn) big box.

### The letter K

- Is only used in words with a foreign origin. i.e. kilo (kee-loh) means 1,000 in Greek

### The letters S and Z

- **Latin America:** S and Z both sound like the English "S." (Ej: **Sol**, **Zapato**.)
- **Spain:** Z (and C before E/I) is pronounced like "th." (Ej: **Zapato** (th-ah-pah-toh), **Gracias** (grah-th-ee-ahs).

### The letter Q

- It's not used much in the Spanish language. It sounds like a K sound in front of the letters e and I, like in queso (cheese).  
Examples: pequeño, tequila



### The letter Ñ

- This letter is pronounced (Eh-nyeh), like in the English word onion. The wiggly line is called a Tilde (teel-deh). **Examples:** **Cuñado**, **mañana**, **nina**

