

Tips for Speaking Spanish

Pronouncing the Vowels

- a** is pronounced like the English *a* in *father*.
- e** is pronounced like the English *e* in *they*.
- i** is pronounced like the English *ee* in *see* or *i* in *thing*.
- o** is similar to the English *o* in *no* but without the glide and it is rounded.
- u** is pronounced like the English *oo* in *food*.

Stressing Vowels

Always stress the vowel before the last syllable and prolong the length of the sound. If there is an accent mark, stress that vowel instead.

Pronouncing the Consonants

- b** is pronounced the same way as it is in English.
- c** is pronounced the same way as it is in English except for words with the *ción* sound (*nación*). In that case it would be like the English word *cereal* (an *s* sound).
- ch** is pronounced like the English *ch* in *child*. (coche, Chile, mucho, ...)
- d** At the beginning of a word and after **n** or **l**, the tip of the tongue is pressed against the back of your front teeth. (día, dar, el deseo, ...)
All other words, place the tip of your tongue behind your front teeth. It is pronounced like the English *th* in the word *they*, but it is softer.
- f** is pronounced like the English *f*.

g At the beginning of the word or after **n** it is pronounced like the English word *guy*. (guerra, ángulo, ...)

In other words, except before **e** or **i**, it is pronounced like the English *g* in *sugar*. (lago, amigo...)

ge is pronounced like the English *ey* in *hey* (geografía).

gi is pronounced like the English word *he* but not as strong (giro).

gua The **g** is pronounced like the English *g* but not as hard and the Spanish *u* and *a*.

gui is pronounced like the English *g* and the Spanish *i*. (guiar)

gü It is pronounced like the English *g* in *guy* and *oo* in *food*. It is similar to the English *gw* in *Gwen* but it is not as strong. (pingüino)

h In the beginning of a word, it is silent.

hia The **h** is pronounced like the English *h* in *he* and the Spanish *a*. Do not pronounce the *i*. (hiato)

hie The **h** is pronounced like the English *ye* in *yellow* and the Spanish *e*. Do not pronounce the *i*. (hielo)

j is pronounced like the English *h* in *hat* or *hey* or *hoe* (bajo) but not that strong. Some countries pronounce it even stronger.

k **k**, **c** before **a**, **o**, **u**, or a consonant, and **qu**, is pronounced like the English *k* in *key* but without the puff of air.

l is pronounced by placing your tongue on your teeth to make this letter.

y, ll In most countries it is pronounced like the English *y* in *yes*. (oye, llama, bella, ...)

When it stands alone, it is pronounced like the English *i* in *thing*. (hoy, y, muy, ...)

m is pronounced like the English *m* in *mother*.

ñ is pronounced like the English *ny* in *canyon*.

n is pronounced like the English *n*.

When the **n** occurs before **b**, **v**, or **p**, it is pronounced like an *m*. (un brazo, comen peras, un vaso, ...)

- p** is pronounced like the English *p* but without the puff of air.
- r, rr** In the beginning of a word and after **n**, **l**, or **s**, and also **rr** in the middle of a word, are pronounced by rolling it. Bring your tip of your tongue near the top of your teeth and let it vibrate.
- Tip: You can practice this by placing an **a** before **rr** until you can roll them.
- r** This is pronounced like the English *dd* in the word *ladder*. (crema, harina, oro, ...)
- s** **s**, **z**, and **c** before **e** or **i** is pronounced like the *s* in *sing*. (vaso, cima, zapato, ...)
- t** is pronounced by touching your tongue to the back of your front teeth.
- v** Always pronounce the **v** at the beginning of a word like the English **b**.
In the beginning of a word or after **m** or **n**, **b** and **v** it sounds like the word English word *boy*
- x** When the **x** is between vowels it is similar to the English *gs* in *egg*. (exacto, éxito)
When it is before a consonant, it sounds like the English *s*. (extremo, explicar)
To pronounce the word México, it is pronounced like the letter **j**.
- z** Always pronounce the **z** like the English **s**.