

## IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Perfecting your pronunciation
- » Counting with cardinal and ordinal numbers
- » Expressing dates
- » Telling time
- » Reviewing parts of speech

# Chapter 1

## Brushing Up on the Basics

**P**ronouncing the language correctly, 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.

### Pronouncing Properly

Naturally, when you speak Spanish, you want to sound as authentic as possible. The good news is that Spanish is quite easy to pronounce because it's a phonetic language. What does that mean? Simply say each word exactly as you see it and put on your best Spanish accent. Chances are you'll sound more like a native speaker than you could imagine.



REMEMBER

The Spanish alphabet contains all the letters of the English alphabet plus ñ, which follows the letter n.

## Voicing vowels

Unlike in English, each Spanish vowel is pronounced consistently. This table breaks down the basics:

Vowel	English Sound	Spanish Example
a	ah as in <i>spa</i>	<b>papa</b> ( <i>pah-pah</i> ) ( <i>potato</i> )
e	eh as in <i>red</i>	<b>ella</b> ( <i>eh-yah</i> ) ( <i>she</i> )
i	ee as in <i>key</i>	<b>idea</b> ( <i>ee-deh-yah</i> ) ( <i>idea</i> )
o	oh as in <i>no</i>	<b>ojo</b> ( <i>oh-hoh</i> ) ( <i>eye</i> )
u	oo as in <i>do</i>	<b>uno</b> ( <i>oo-noh</i> ) ( <i>one</i> )

## Practicing diphthongs and vowel combinations

Confronting diphthongs, or a combination of two vowels, gets a little tricky. Use this table to put your concerns to rest:

Diphthongs/ Vowels	English Sound	Spanish Example
ae, ai, ay	ahy as in <i>eye</i>	<b>aeropuerto</b> ( <i>ahy-roh-pwehr-toh</i> ) ( <i>airport</i> ) <b>aire</b> ( <i>ahy-reh</i> ) ( <i>air</i> ) <b>ayudo</b> ( <i>ahy-oo-doh</i> ) ( <i>help</i> )
au	ow as in <i>owl</i>	<b>autor</b> ( <i>ow-tohr</i> ) ( <i>author</i> )
ea	eh-ah	<b>fea</b> ( <i>feh-ah</i> ) ( <i>ugly</i> )
ei, ey	a as in <i>day</i>	<b>seis</b> ( <i>say-s</i> ) ( <i>six</i> ) <b>rey</b> ( <i>rray</i> ) ( <i>king</i> )
eo	eh-oh	<b>leo</b> ( <i>leh-oh</i> ) ( <i>I read</i> )
eu	eh-oo	<b>Europa</b> ( <i>eh-oo-roh-pah</i> ) ( <i>Europe</i> )
ia	ee-ah	<b>seria</b> ( <i>seh-ree-ah</i> ) ( <i>serious</i> )

Diphthongs/ Vowels	English Sound	Spanish Example
ie	<i>ee-eh</i>	<b>siete</b> ( <i>see-eh-teh</i> ) ( <i>seven</i> )
io	<i>ee-oh</i>	<b>avión</b> ( <i>ah-bee-ohn</i> ) ( <i>airplane</i> )
iu	<i>ee-oo</i>	<b>ciudad</b> ( <i>see-oo-dahd</i> ) ( <i>city</i> )
oa, ua	<i>wah</i> as in <i>watch</i>	<b>toalla</b> ( <i>toh-wah-yah</i> ) ( <i>towel</i> ) <b>agua</b> ( <i>ah-gwah</i> ) ( <i>water</i> )
oe, ue	<i>weh</i> as in <i>wet</i>	<b>oeste</b> ( <i>wehs-teh</i> ) ( <i>west</i> ) <b>cuento</b> ( <i>kwehn-toh</i> ) ( <i>tale</i> )
oi, oy	<i>oy</i> as in <i>boy</i>	<b>oigo</b> ( <i>oy-goh</i> ) ( <i>I hear</i> ) <b>soy</b> ( <i>soy</i> ) ( <i>I am</i> )
ui, uy	<i>wee</i> as in <i>we</i>	<b>cuido</b> ( <i>kwee-doh</i> ) ( <i>I take care of</i> ) <b>muy</b> ( <i>mwee</i> ) ( <i>very</i> )
uo	<i>woh</i> as in <i>woe</i>	<b>cuota</b> ( <i>kwoh-tah</i> ) ( <i>quota</i> )

## Verbalizing consonants

Consonants are a snap to master because most are pronounced exactly the same as they are in English. They are **b, d, f, k, l, m, n, p, s, t, w, y**. Note the exceptions in the following table.



REMEMBER

Castilian Spanish (spoken in Spain) pronounces the letters **c** before **e** or **i** and **z** as **th**. In Latin America, however, **c** before **e** and **i** and **z** are pronounced as **s**. The following table shows the differences.

Consonant	English Sound	Spanish Example
c	<i>th</i> in Spain	<b>centro</b> ( <i>thehn-troh</i> ) ( <i>sehn-troh</i> ) ( <i>center</i> )
	<i>s</i> in Latin America	<b>cinco</b> ( <i>seen-koh</i> ) ( <i>five</i> )
	<i>k</i> elsewhere	<b>casa</b> ( <i>kah-sah</i> ) ( <i>house</i> )
ch	<i>ch</i> as in <i>chair</i>	<b>chico</b> ( <i>chee-koh</i> ) ( <i>boy</i> )

Consonant	English Sound	Spanish Example
g	<i>h</i> before <i>e</i> and <i>i</i> hard <i>g</i> elsewhere	<b>gente</b> ( <i>hehn-teh</i> ) ( <i>people</i> ) <b>gira</b> ( <i>hee-rah</i> ) ( <i>tour</i> ) <b>gordo</b> ( <i>gohr-doh</i> ) ( <i>fat</i> )
h	silent	<b>hora</b> ( <i>oh-rah</i> ) ( <i>hour</i> )
j	<i>h</i>	<b>junto</b> ( <i>hoon-toh</i> ) ( <i>together</i> )
ll	<i>y</i>	<b>llama</b> ( <i>yah-mah</i> ) ( <i>llama</i> )
ñ	<i>ni</i> as in <i>onion</i>	<b>niño</b> ( <i>nee-nyoh</i> ) ( <i>child</i> )
r	slightly rolled <i>r</i>	<b>oro</b> ( <i>oh-roh</i> ) ( <i>gold</i> )
rr	rolled 2 or 3 times at the beginning of the word and after <i>l</i> , <i>n</i> , or <i>s</i>	<b>carro</b> ( <i>kah-rroh</i> ) ( <i>car</i> ) <b>rico</b> ( <i>rree-koh</i> ) ( <i>rich</i> ) <b>alrededor</b> ( <i>ahl-rreh-deh-dohr</i> ) ( <i>around</i> ) <b>Enrique</b> ( <i>ehn-rree-keh</i> ) ( <i>Henry</i> ) <b>Israel</b> ( <i>ees-rrah-ehl</i> ) ( <i>Israel</i> )
v	similar to <i>b</i>	<b>vaca</b> ( <i>bah-kah</i> ) ( <i>cow</i> )
x	<i>s</i> followed by a consonant <i>ks</i> followed by a vowel	<b>extra</b> ( <i>ehs-trah</i> ) ( <i>extra</i> ) <b>exacto</b> ( <i>ehks-ahk-toh</i> ) ( <i>exact</i> )
z	<i>th</i> in Spain <i>s</i> in Latin America	<b>zoo</b> ( <i>thoh</i> )( <i>zoo</i> ) <b>zoo</b> ( <i>soh</i> ) ( <i>zoo</i> )

## Understanding stress and diacritical marks

In Spanish, words are pronounced just like they sound. Take note of the following rules for how words are stressed:

- » Words ending in a vowel, an *n*, or an *s* are stressed on the next to the last syllable:

**libro** (*lee-broh*) (*book*)

**bajan** (*bah-hahn*) (*they go down*)

**cuadernos** (*kwah-dehr-nohs*) (*notebooks*)

- » Words ending in a consonant (except *n* or *s*) are stressed on the last syllable:

**felicidad** (*feh-lee-see-dahd*) (*happiness*)

**hablar** (*ah-blahr*) (*to speak*)

- » When the preceding rules aren't followed, use an accent:

**canción** (*kahn-see-ohn*) (*song*)

These diacritical marks help with stress and pronunciation:

- » An acute accent (´), the most common, indicates that you put more stress on the vowel of the syllable containing the accent:

**interés** (*een-teh-rehs*) (*interest*)

- » A tilde (~) is only placed above an *n* (which is considered a different letter):

**mañana** (*mah-nyah-nah*) (*tomorrow*)

- » A diaeresis (¨) is only placed above a *u*:

**lingüista** (*leen-gwees-tah*) (*linguist*)

A diaeresis is used in syllables with “*gue*” and “*gui*” to indicate that the **u** must be pronounced.



TIP

## Counting Down

You need numbers 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. You probably use them at least once an hour in normal conversation or in writing. The Spanish cardinal numbers are as follows:

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

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



REMEMBER

Keep the following in mind when using cardinal numbers:

- » **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. **Un** isn't used before **cien(to)** or **mil**:

**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*)

**cien páginas** (*100 pages*)

**ciento cuarenta niños** (*140 children*)

**mil dólares** (*1,000 dollars*)

- » You use the conjunction **y** (*and*) only for numbers between 31 and 99. You don't use it after hundreds:

**ochenta y ocho** (88)

**doscientos treinta y siete** (237)

- » You generally write the numbers 16 through 19 and 21 through 29 as one word. The numbers 16, 22, 23, and 26 have accents on the last syllable:

16: **dieciséis**

22: **veintidós**

23: **veintitrés**

26: **veintiséis**

- » When used before a masculine noun, **veintiún** (21) has an accent on the last syllable: **veintiún días** (21 days)

- » **Ciento** (100) becomes **cien** before nouns of either gender and before the numbers **mil** and **millones**. Before all other numbers, use **ciento**. Unlike with **cien(to)** and **mil**, **millión** is preceded by **un**. When a noun follows **millón**, put the preposition **de** between **millón** and the noun. **Millón** drops its accent in the plural (**millones**):

**cien sombreros** (100 hats)

**cien blusas** (100 blouses)

**cien mil millas** (100,000 miles)

**cien millones de estrellas** (100 million stars)

**ciento noventa acres** (190 acres)

**mil posibilidades** (1,000 possibilities)

**un millón de razones** (1 million reasons)

- » Compounds of **ciento** (**doscientos**, **trescientos**) must change to agree with a feminine noun:

**cuatrocientos muchachos** (400 muchachos)

**seiscientas muchachas** (600 muchachas)



TIP

With numerals and decimals, Spanish uses commas where English uses periods, and vice versa:

English	Spanish
6,000	6.000
0.75	0,75
\$14.99	\$14,99

## Using ordinal numbers

You use *ordinal numbers* — those used to express numbers in a series — far less frequently than cardinal numbers, but they still have some very important applications in everyday life. The following table presents the Spanish ordinal numbers:

Ordinal	Spanish
1st	<b>primero</b>
2nd	<b>segundo</b>
3rd	<b>tercero</b>
4th	<b>cuarto</b>
5th	<b>quinto</b>
6th	<b>sexto</b>
7th	<b>séptimo</b>
8th	<b>octavo</b>
9th	<b>noveno</b>
10th	<b>décimo</b>



REMEMBER

The following list outlines what you must remember when using ordinal numbers in Spanish:

- » Spanish speakers rarely use ordinal numbers after 10th. After that, they usually use cardinal numbers in both the spoken and written language:  
**El siglo quince** (*the 15th century*)
- » Ordinal numbers must agree in gender (masculine or feminine) with the nouns they modify. You can make ordinal numbers feminine by changing the final **-o** of the masculine form to **-a**:  
**la cuarta vez** (*the fourth time*)
- » **Primero** and **tercero** drop the final **-o** before a masculine singular noun:  
**el primer muchacho** (*the first boy*)  
**el tercer hombre** (*the third man*)

# Dealing with Dates

Dates are important parts of everyday life. To write out dates in Spanish, you have to practice the days of the week, the months of the year, and numbers (see the preceding section).

## Expressing the days of the week

If you hear *¿Qué día es hoy?* (*What day is it?*), respond with **Hoy es . . .** (*Today is . . .*) and then provide the name of one of the days listed here:

Spanish	English
<b>lunes</b>	<i>Monday</i>
<b>martes</b>	<i>Tuesday</i>
<b>miércoles</b>	<i>Wednesday</i>
<b>jueves</b>	<i>Thursday</i>
<b>viernes</b>	<i>Friday</i>
<b>sábado</b>	<i>Saturday</i>
<b>domingo</b>	<i>Sunday</i>



Unlike the English calendar, the Spanish calendar starts with Monday.

WARNING



REMEMBER

Here are two more guidelines for talking about days of the week in Spanish:

- » Unless you use them at the beginning of a sentence, don't capitalize the days of the week in Spanish:

**Lunes y martes son días de la semana.** (*Monday and Tuesday are days of the week.*)

**Mi día favorito de la semana es el viernes.** (*My favorite day of the week is Friday.*)

» You use **el** to express *on* when referring to a particular day of the week and **los** to express *on* when the action occurs repeatedly:

**No trabajo el sábado.** (*I'm not working on Saturday.*)

**No trabajo los sábados.** (*I don't work on Saturdays.*)

## Naming the months of the year

If you hear **¿En qué mes . . . ?** (*In what month . . .*), someone is asking you in what month a certain event takes place. We provide the names of the months in Spanish here:

Spanish	English
enero	January
febrero	February
marzo	March
abril	April
mayo	May
junio	June
julio	July
agosto	August
septiembre (or setiembre)	September
octubre	October
noviembre	November
diciembre	December



REMEMBER

Like days of the week, the months aren't capitalized in Spanish:

**Junio y julio son meses agradables.** (*June and July are nice months.*)

**Nací en mayo.** (*I was born in May.*)

Along with the months, you may also want to talk about the seasons of the year (all except one are masculine):

**el invierno** (*the winter*)

**la primavera** (*the spring*)

**el verano** (*the summer*)

**el otoño** (*the autumn [fall]*)

## Making a date

If you want to ask a passerby or an acquaintance about the date, politely inquire **¿Cuál es la fecha de hoy?** (*What is today's date?*) The person should respond with **Hoy es . . .** (*Today is . . .*) and then use the following formula:

day + **(el)** + cardinal number (except for **primero**) + **de** + month + **de** + year

The following is an example translation, using this formula:

*Today is Tuesday, April 15, 2025: Hoy es martes, el quince de abril de dos mil veinticinco.*



REMEMBER

You need to know a few more details about writing dates:

- » You express the first day of each month with **primero**. You use cardinal numbers for all other days:  
**el primero de enero** (*January 1st*)  
**el siete de enero** (*January 7th*)
- » Use **el** to express *on* with Spanish dates:  
**Partimos el once de octubre.** (*We are leaving on October 11th.*)
- » In Spanish, you express years in thousands and hundreds, not only in hundreds:  
**1492: mil cuatrocientos noventa y dos** (*fourteen hundred ninety-two*)



TIP

In Spanish, when dates are written as numbers, they follow the sequence day/month/year, which may prove confusing to English speakers — especially for dates below the 12th of the month — you write *February 9th* as 2/9 in English, but in Spanish it's 9/2.

When speaking of dates in everyday language, the words and expressions that follow may come in handy:

Spanish	English	Spanish	English
<b>un día</b>	<i>a day</i>	<b>anteayer</b>	<i>day before yesterday</i>
<b>una semana</b>	<i>a week</i>	<b>ayer</b>	<i>yesterday</i>
<b>un mes</b>	<i>a month</i>	<b>hoy</b>	<i>today</i>
<b>un año</b>	<i>a year</i>	<b>mañana</b>	<i>tomorrow</i>
<b>en</b>	<i>in</i>	<b>mañana por la mañana</b>	<i>tomorrow morning</i>
<b>hace</b>	<i>ago</i>	<b>mañana por la tarde</b>	<i>tomorrow afternoon</i>
<b>por</b>	<i>per</i>	<b>mañana por la noche</b>	<i>tomorrow night</i>
<b>durante</b>	<i>during</i>	<b>pasado mañana</b>	<i>day after tomorrow</i>
<b>próximo(a)</b>	<i>next</i>	<b>desde</b>	<i>from</i>
<b>pasado(a)</b>	<i>last</i>	<b>en una semana a partir de hoy</b>	<i>a week from today</i>
<b>último(a)</b>	<i>last (in a series)</i>	<b>en dos semanas a partir de mañana</b>	<i>two weeks from tomorrow</i>
<b>la víspera</b>	<i>eve</i>	<b>dentro de una (dos) semana(s)</b>	<i>within one (two) week(s)</i>

## Telling Time

Knowing how to understand, speak, and write time-related words and phrases is a must for anyone who's studying a foreign language and planning to put these studies to use (to do some traveling one day, for instance).

If you hear **¿Qué hora es?** (*What time is it?*), someone wants to know the time. You should start by responding with the following:

**Es la una** + 1 o'clock hour or **Son las** + any time after 1.

To express the time after the hour (up to and including half past the hour), use **y** (*and*) and the number of minutes. Use **menos** (*less*) + the number of the following hour to express the time before the next hour (after half past the hour).

You can also express time numerically (as shown in the third example here):

**Es la una y media.** (*It's 1:30.*)

**Son las cinco menos veinte.** (*It's 4:40.*)

**Son las cuatro y cuarenta.** (*It's 4:40.*)

If you want to discuss at what time a particular event will occur, you can use a question — **¿A qué hora . . . ?** — or answer with **A la una** or **A las** + any time after 1:

**¿A qué hora vienen?** (*At what time are they coming?*)

**A la una.** (*At 1:00.*)

**A las tres y cuarto.** (*At 3:15.*)

The following shows how to tell time after and before the hour:

Time	Spanish
1:00	la una
2:05	las dos y cinco
3:10	las tres y diez
4:15	las cuatro y cuarto or las cuatro y quince
5:20	las cinco y veinte
6:25	las seis y veinticinco
7:30	las siete y media or las siete y treinta
7:35	las ocho menos veinticinco or las siete y treinta y cinco
8:40	las nueve menos veinte or las ocho y cuarenta
9:45	las diez menos cuarto or las nueve y cuarenta y cinco

Time	Spanish
10:50	<b>las once menos diez</b> or <b>las diez y cincuenta</b>
11:55	<b>las doce menos cinco</b> or <b>las once y cincuenta y cinco</b>
noon	<b>el mediodía</b>
midnight	<b>la medianoche</b>

When expressing time, the words and expressions in the following table may come in handy:

Spanish	English	Spanish	English
<b>un segundo</b>	<i>a second</i>	<b>en una hora</b>	<i>in an hour</i>
<b>un minuto</b>	<i>a minute</i>	<b>dentro de un rato</b>	<i>in a while</i>
<b>un cuarto de hora</b>	<i>a quarter of an hour</i>	<b>hasta las diez</b>	<i>until ten o'clock</i>
<b>una hora</b>	<i>an hour</i>	<b>antes de las nueve</b>	<i>before nine o'clock</i>
<b>media hora</b>	<i>a half hour</i>	<b>después de las siete</b>	<i>after seven o'clock</i>
<b>por la mañana</b>	<i>in the morning (a.m.)</i>	<b>¿desde qué hora?</b>	<i>since what time?</i>
<b>por la tarde</b>	<i>in the afternoon (p.m.)</i>	<b>desde las ocho</b>	<i>since eight o'clock</i>
<b>por la noche</b>	<i>in the evening (p.m.)</i>	<b>hace una hora</b>	<i>one hour ago</i>
<b>¿a qué hora?</b>	<i>at what time?</i>	<b>temprano</b>	<i>early</i>
<b>a las nueve en punto</b>	<i>at exactly nine o'clock</i>	<b>tarde</b>	<i>late</i>
<b>a eso de las dos</b>	<i>at about two o'clock</i>	<b>con retraso</b>	<i>late (in arriving)</i>

# Identifying Parts of Speech

Too many people try to translate word for word from English to Spanish. And that just doesn't work. Why? Because a Spanish word may have many applications depending on its usage (for example, as a noun or as an adjective) in the sentence. In addition, many idiomatic phrases, when used properly, distinguish a native speaker from someone who's unfamiliar with the language. (An *idiomatic phrase* is a phrase used in a particular language whose meaning can't easily be understood by a literal translation of its component words. An English example is "It's raining cats and dogs.")

## Using nouns

A *noun* is the part of speech that refers to a person, place, thing, quality, idea, or action. Here are some examples:

- » Person: **El muchacho es amable.** (*The boy is friendly.*)
- » Place: **Quiero ir a casa.** (*I want to go home.*)
- » Thing: **Quisiera ver ese libro.** (*I would like to see that book.*)
- » Quality: **Admiro su coraje.** (*I admire her courage.*)
- » Idea: **El comunismo es una teoría política.** (*Communism is a political theory.*)
- » Action: **La partida del avión es inminente.** (*The plane's departure is imminent.*)

In everyday speaking/writing, you use nouns most often in the following forms:

- » As the subject of a verb: **María habla español.** (*María speaks Spanish.*)
- » As the direct object of a verb: **Yo veo a María.** (*I see María.*)
- » As the indirect object of a verb: **Yo le hablo a María.** (*I speak to María.*)
- » As the object of a preposition: **Yo salí con María.** (*I went out with María.*)



TIP

Unlike English nouns, all Spanish nouns have a gender: masculine or feminine. All words you use to qualify or describe a noun must agree with the noun with respect to gender. We discuss this in more detail in Chapter 2.

## Substituting pronouns

A *pronoun* is a part of speech used in place of a noun. The following list outlines the pronouns we discuss in this book:

- » *Subject pronouns* (see Chapter 3) are followed by the verb expressing the main action in the sentence:  
**Ud. es simpático.** (*You are nice.*)
- » *Interrogative pronouns* (see Chapter 5) ask a question (*who, which, what*, and so on):  
**¿Quién es?** (*Who is that?*)
- » *Direct object pronouns* (see Chapter 2) replace direct object nouns; they answer whom or what the subject is acting upon:  
**Te veo.** (*I'll be seeing you.*)
- » *Indirect object pronouns* (see Chapter 2) replace indirect object nouns; they explain to or for whom something is done:  
**Me escribió.** (*He wrote to me.*)
- » *Reflexive pronouns* (see Chapter 3) show that the subject is acting upon itself:  
**Él se ve en el espejo.** (*He sees himself in the mirror.*)
- » *Prepositional pronouns* (see Chapter 4) are used after prepositions:  
**Van al cine sin mí.** (*They're going to the movies without me.*)

## Acting with verbs

A verb is a part of speech that shows an action or a state of being. In Spanish, as in English, verbs change from their infinitive form (they're conjugated, in other words) as follows:

- » To agree with the person performing the action (I, you, he, she, it, we, they)

- » To indicate the time when the action was performed (past, present, future)
- » To indicate the mood (indicative, subjunctive, imperative, conditional) of the action

## Describing with adjectives

An *adjective* is a part of speech that describes a noun:

**La casa es blanca.** (*The house is white.*)

A Spanish adjective can have other applications, too, which we outline in the following list:

- » A *possessive adjective* (see Chapter 2) tells to whom the noun belongs:  
**Es mi libro.** (*It's my book.*)
- » A *demonstrative adjective* (see Chapter 2) shows *this*, *that*, *these*, or *those*:  
**Esa película es buena.** (*That film is good.*)
- » An *interrogative adjective* (see Chapter 5) asks the question *whose*, *which*, or *what*:  
**¿De quién es ese coche?** (*Whose car is that?*)
- » A number (cardinal or ordinal; see the “Counting Down” section earlier in this chapter) is an adjective that gives a specific amount:  
**Necesito un bolígrafo.** (*I need a pen.*)  
**Es su décimo cumpleaños.** (*It's his tenth birthday.*)

## Clarifying with adverbs

An *adverb* (see Chapter 4) is a part of speech that modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb:

- » Modifying a verb:  
**Ud. habla rápidamente.** (*You speak quickly.*)

» Modifying an adjective:

**Su abuela es muy vieja.** (*Her grandmother is very old.*)

» Modifying an adverb:

**Ellos comen demasiado despacio.** (*They eat too slowly.*)

## Joining with prepositions

*Prepositions* (see Chapter 4) are words used before nouns or pronouns to relate them to other words in the sentence. Prepositions connect the following:

» Noun to noun:

**Necesito esa hoja de papel.** (*I need that piece of paper.*)

» Verb to verb:

**El niño empieza a reír.** (*The child begins to laugh.*)

» Verb to noun:

**Ella estudia con sus amigas.** (*She studies with her friends.*)

» Verb to pronoun:

**¿Qué piensas de ellos?** (*What do you think about them?*)

