Mastering

Spanish

Second edition

Robert Clarke

Lecturer, University of York Language Teaching Centre

Betty Parr

Founding Editor

palgrave

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Contents

<i>Introduction: how to use this book</i>	<i>viii</i>
<i>Guide to pronunciation</i>	<i>xi</i>
 1 Buenos días. ¿Cómo está usted? Identification: introductions and goodbyes	 1
<i>Topics</i> Passing through Customs; Arrival at a hotel; Meeting friends	
<i>Grammar</i> Forms of address; Possession and identity; Asking questions; Numbers 1–20; Plural	
 2 ¿Tiene usted familia? Identification: descriptions of oneself and family	 15
<i>Topics</i> Talking about one's home town; Giving address and telephone number	
<i>Grammar</i> 'Para'; Adjectives; Numbers 21–100; 'Tener'; 'Me llamo' + name; Work and status	
 3 ¿Cómo es su ciudad? Describing places and things	 28
<i>Topics</i> Description of home town; Recovery of lost property	
<i>Grammar</i> 'Ser' and 'estar'; Contractions; Modifying adjectives; 'Hay'	
 4 ¿Dónde está su ciudad? Finding out where things are	 40
<i>Topics</i> Finding places in a strange town; Describing the weather in a strange town and at home	
<i>Grammar</i> Finding out; Time and weather; 'Mucho'; Negatives	

5	¿En qué trabaja usted? Daily routine	53
	<i>Topics</i> Talking about one's work; Enquiring about other people's jobs and lives	
	<i>Grammar</i> Regular and irregular verbs in the present tense; Numbers 100–1000; Telling the time	
■	Revision and self-assessment test for Chapters 1–5	66
6	¿Qué hace usted en sus ratos libres? Leisure activities	69
	<i>Topics</i> Conversation after a meal; Discussion of leisure activities and facilities	
	<i>Grammar</i> Let's ...; Wishes and preferences; 'Tener que' + infinitive; 'Saber'; Time of day; Comparisons	
7	¿Qué desea? Obtaining goods and services	84
	<i>Topics</i> Shopping for a dress and for shoes	
	<i>Grammar</i> 'Quiero' + noun; 'Quisiera ver' + noun; Sizes; '¿De qué es?'; '¿Cuánto vale?'; 'Me lo quedo'; 'Me parece' + adjective; 'Valer'	
8	¿Qué va a tomar? Ordering a meal	98
	<i>Topics</i> Eating in a restaurant	
	<i>Grammar</i> 'Tener hambre', 'tener sed'; Polite requests; Third person plural; Imperative; 'Voy a' + verb	
9	¿Adónde vamos? Obtaining services – 1	111
	<i>Topics</i> Travel by taxi, train and bus	
	<i>Grammar</i> '¿Dónde?'; 'Tener prisa'; 'Próximo'; 'Se puede' + infinitive; 'Sentir'; 'Conocer'; Personal pronouns; 'Poder'; 'Se' + verb to express passive; Shortened adjectives	

10	¿Tiene una habitación libre? Obtaining services – 2	125
	<i>Topics</i> Booking a room in a hotel; Simple complaints <i>Grammar</i> Days; ‘Creo que’, ‘me parece que’; Complaints; Radical-changing verbs	
■	Revision and self-assessment test for Chapters 6–10	139
11	¿Le gusta? Likes, dislikes and preferences	143
	<i>Topics</i> Visiting a tourist shop; Selecting presents; Ordering a snack in a café <i>Grammar</i> ‘Gustar’; ‘Encantar’; Lists; ‘Este’, ‘ese’, ‘aquel’	
12	¿Por qué no vamos al cine? Planning social activities	157
	<i>Topics</i> Planning a trip to the cinema; Obtaining tickets; Inviting someone for a drink after the cinema <i>Grammar</i> ‘Porque’, ‘¿por qué?’, ‘No importa’; ‘Ir en,’ ‘ir a’; ‘¡Qué’ + adjective!; ‘De acuerdo’; ‘Poner’; adverbs	
13	¿Cuánto vale? Obtaining goods and services in a strange town	171
	<i>Topics</i> Buying postcards; Finding out postage rates; Buying food for a picnic <i>Grammar</i> Quantities in shops; Omitting nouns; ‘Soy extranjero’; ‘¿Cuánto vale?’; Orders for shopping; ‘Este’, ‘ése’, ‘aquel’; ‘¿Cuánto quiere?’	
14	¿En qué puedo servirle? Finding out what is possible	183
	<i>Topics</i> Hiring a car; Parking a car; Buying petrol <i>Grammar</i> ‘¿Es posible’ + infinitive?; ‘Por’; ‘Listo’; ‘Prohibido’; ‘Lo mejor’; Negatives; ‘Lo’ + adjective; ‘Dejar’	

15	¿Qué vas a hacer? Making plans	197
	<i>Topics</i> Planning a weekend trip to a market; Arranging to play golf; Talking about future plans <i>Grammar</i> Using the telephone; 'Ir a' + infinitive; 'Conmigo'; 'Soler'; 'Tener que' + infinitive; 'Hay que' + infinitive; Months; 'Antes de'; 'Nuestro'; Future tense	
■	Revision and self-assessment test for Chapters 11–15	210
16	¿Visitaste la catedral? Talking about the past – 1	214
	<i>Topics</i> Relating a visit to a strange town; Discussing what you did in a strange town; Saying what else you did on a trip <i>Grammar</i> The past; 'Acabar de' + infinitive; 'Tocar'; Pronouns	
17	¿Compraste algo? Talking about the past – 2	227
	<i>Topics</i> Discussing purchases in a market; Recovering property left in a bar <i>Grammar</i> Exclaiming; More pronouns; Third person plurals in the past tense; 'Pasado'; 'Hace' + time; 'Estar seguro', 'estar equivocado', 'tener razón'; Possessive pronouns; 'Sin' + infinitive	
18	¿Qué deseaba? Describing things in the past	239
	<i>Topics</i> Trying to buy a blouse seen earlier in a shop window; Seeking to identify a stranger; Recalling how a town used to be <i>Grammar</i> Imperfect tense; 'Había'; 'Acordarse'; 'Tampoco'; More pronouns	
19	¿Qué te pasa? Sickness and health	252
	<i>Topics</i> Describing symptoms of illness; Telling a doctor how you feel; Obtaining medicines at a chemist's <i>Grammar</i> 'Me siento' + adverb; 'Me duele' + part of the body; '¿Qué pasa?'	

20 ¡Socorro! Emergencies	265
<i>Topics</i>	
Reporting a robbery to the police; Dealing with a road accident	
<i>Grammar</i>	
Imperfect, imperfect continuous and preterite tenses; 'Irse'; '-ísimo'; 'Tan ... como'; '¿Está muerto/herido/roto?'; 'Nuestro'; 'Estar' + adjective	
■ Revision and self-assessment test for Chapters 16–20	278
<i>Grammatical terms used</i>	282
<i>Supplementary vocabulary lists</i>	285
<i>Key to the exercises</i>	292
<i>Useful addresses and books</i>	340
<i>Grammar summary</i>	342

Introduction: how to use this book

Welcome to the new edition of *Mastering Spanish*. The course is intended for complete beginners but it also offers a valuable refresher course for those who have previously learned a little Spanish but now find that it has grown 'rusty'. A knowledge of Spanish will allow you to communicate with and understand not only the people of Spain but also the peoples and cultures of more than twenty republics in Central and South America, for Spanish is a truly international language. To help you learn quickly the sounds of Spanish and the correct intonation of spoken Spanish, two cassettes have been provided to accompany the book. On the cassettes are recorded all the dialogues in this book and listening practice. Sections of the book included on the cassette are indicated by the symbol . Some of the Listening Material consists of authentic conversation

between native speakers of Spanish. For advice on how to deal with this material, see page 12.

The book has a dual purpose. Firstly, it will help you learn to communicate with Spanish speakers in many everyday situations and to live among Spanish speakers without causing or suffering embarrassment or misunderstandings. If you intend to spend a holiday among Spanish speakers, or if you are involved in business activities with a Spanish or Latin American company, you will find this book will provide a grounding in the basic skills of communicating in Spanish.

Secondly, this book offers the first stages in Spanish for students who wish to acquire the basis for a more formal knowledge of the grammar and structures of the language with a view to developing a reading knowledge or writing skills at a later date. Each chapter deals with a situation you will almost certainly encounter in dealing with Spanish speakers and you will learn the language appropriate to that situation. In addition, each chapter develops the grammar and vocabulary to allow you to use it in different ways and to express ideas of your own. After Chapters 5, 10, 15 and 20 there are revision sections and tests to allow you to check your own progress in speaking and understanding Spanish.

Dialogues

The basic material of each chapter is presented in the form of dialogues; for most effective use these should be studied with the help of the cassettes. The contents list shows what is covered in each chapter – the chapter title describes

the main communicative aim and the topics set out the situations in which this aim is developed.

Vocabulary

This lists the words found in the dialogues together with other useful words and expressions. The book contains approximately 1000 words which have been selected from the lists devised by the Council of Europe in their publication *Un nivel umbral (A threshold level)*. This publication sets out guidelines for adults who wish to learn to speak and understand basic Spanish: to reach, in fact, the ‘threshold’ of genuine competence whilst being able to survive adequately in Spanish-speaking countries.

It may be useful for you to compile your own vocabulary notebook as you work through the book, listing the words either alphabetically or under headings of your own choosing such as ‘Family’, ‘Leisure’ and ‘Daily routine’. The following procedure will help you learn the words: cover up the English version, look at the Spanish words and try to guess their meanings. Check that you are right by revealing the English version and continue in this way until you can recognise all the new words. Then reverse the process and work from the English to the Spanish list. Try to learn with each new noun whether it is masculine (*el/un*), or feminine (*la/una*). A friend can help you here, asking you for the Spanish for English words and checking your answer in the book.

Explanations

Both background information and grammar are explained in this section. Students whose main concern is with speaking and understanding simple Spanish will probably not wish to pursue all the details of the grammatical explanations and, from Chapter 7 onwards, these are therefore presented in two sections: the first (marked A in the book) dealing with the basic grammar of the chapter and the second (marked B) extending the grammar and range of language covered. In addition there is in the reference section a complete summary of all the grammar covered in the book and you may wish to study each section of the summary as its content is dealt with in the chapters of the book. The grammar references given in the explanations indicate the relevant sections in the summary.

Exercises

Each chapter presents the exercises in two sections: the first set (marked A in the book) is for students who wish to learn a basic range of simple Spanish and the second (marked B) extends this basic range to include different situations

and topics. The list of grammatical terms in the reference section will help you to understand the explanations and the exercises more easily.

The role-play exercises require you to change the person of the verb as follows:

(Say you want = I want = Quiero. Ask if he/she has = Have you? = ¿Tiene usted?)

Reference material

This contains additional word lists arranged by topics, keys to the exercises, a short list of useful addresses and reference books and a summary of the grammar found in *Mastering Spanish*. This summary draws together for easy reference the fundamentals of the different grammatical subjects covered in the explanations sections – so, for instance, having studied various aspects of verbs throughout a chapter, you can check quickly how these fit into the whole picture.

Guide to pronunciation

It is worth reading through this section now so that you gather a general idea of how Spanish is pronounced, particularly if you have not purchased the accompanying cassettes. Otherwise you will soon pick up the pronunciation as you proceed through the course and you can come back to this section simply for reference.

Spanish is basically an easy language to pronounce correctly because nearly all of the sounds found in Spanish are roughly similar to sounds already found in English. Each sound is pronounced in the same way every time it occurs and the written form of words is very close to the spoken form. See the individual sounds below and repeat them several times, do the same with the short phrases which contain the sounds in full words and repeat them several times; finally, look at or listen to an English name being spelled in Spanish and work out how to spell your own name.

The vowels

a	Un kilo de patatas A kilo of potatoes	Between 'cat' and 'father' (northern English 'cat', 'mat')
e	Un litro de leche A litre of milk	First sound of 'elephant'
i	Un litro de vino A litre of wine	Like 'ee' in 'seen' but shorter
o	Dos vasos de vino Two glasses of wine	Like 'o' in 'for' but shorter
u	Una blusa de seda pura A blouse of pure silk	Like 'oo' in 'root'; 'u' is silent after 'q' in words such as '¿qué?' (what?) or 'aquél' (that one) and also after 'gu + e' or 'gu + i' in words such as 'guisantes' (peas)
y	Mi marido y mi hijo My husband and my son	Pronounced like the Spanish 'i'

The consonants

b, v	Un vaso de vino blanco A glass of white wine	Both very similar to the English 'b'
c	Cinco copas de coñac Five glasses of brandy	Before 'i' and 'e' like 'th' in 'thin'. (In South American Spanish like 'c' in 'ice'.) Before anything else like 'c' in 'cat'
d	¿Dónde está Madrid? Where is Madrid?	Much softer than in English and rather like 'th' in 'though'
f	¿Qué tal la familia? How is the family?	As in English
g	Usted coge la maleta grande You take the big suitcase	Before 'i' and 'e' like 'ch' in 'loch'. Before anything else like 'g' in 'go'
h	¿Quién es ese hombre? Who is that man?	Always silent
j	Sopa de ajo Garlic soup	Like 'ch' in 'loch'
k	Dos kilos de uvas Two kilos of grapes	As in English
l	Un litro de leche A litre of milk	As in English
m	Se llama Manuel He's called Manuel	As in English
n	No soy alemán I'm not German	As in English
ñ	Este niño es español This boy is Spanish	Like 'ni' in 'onion'
p	Mi padre es portugués My father is Portuguese	As in English
q	¿Qué quiere usted? What do you want?	Always found with 'u' and pronounced like 'c' in 'cat'
r	¿Para qué sirve? What is it used for?	A rolled or trilled 'r'
rr	Un paquete de cigarrillos A packet of cigarettes	A strongly rolled or trilled 'r'
s	Isabel es muy simpática Isabel is very nice	Like 's' in 'simple'
t	Patatas fritas, por favor Chips, please	As in English
v	Un vaso de vino blanco A glass of white wine	See 'b, v'
w	¿El wáter, por favor? The toilet, please?	As for 'v' (only found in foreign words taken into Spanish)

x	¿El taxi está libre? The taxi is free?	Between vowels as 'gs' and elsewhere as 's'
y	Mi hijo mayor y yo My older son and I	As in 'young' but more strongly pronounced
z	Un kilo de manzanas A kilo of apples	Always like 'th' in 'thin'

Pronunciation patterns

Spanish is pronounced in a rhythmic way and the rhythm is produced by two basic rules:

- (a) If a word ends in a vowel (a, e, i, o, u), '-s' or '-n', the last but one sound is stressed:

Las peras valen cuarenta y cinco pesetas el kilo.

The pears cost 45 pesetas a kilo.

- (b) If a word ends in anything else, the last sound is stressed:

El reloj del profesor es de oro

The teacher's watch is made of gold.

Any word which breaks one of the two rules has a stress mark to show where the word should be stressed:

Quiero una ración de jamón de York, por favor.

I want a portion of York ham, please.

The Spanish alphabet

a, be, ce, de, e, efe, ge, ache, i, jota, ka, ele, eme, ene, eñe, o, pe, cu, ere, erre, ese, te, u, uve, uve doble, equis, y-griega, zeta.

- ¿Su nombre, por favor?	'Your name, please?'
- Clarke.	'Clarke.'
- ¿Cómo se escribe?	'How is it written?'
- Ce, ele, a, ere, ka, e.	'C-l-a-r-k-e.'
- Gracias.	'Thank you.'

Note that 'ñ' counts as a separate letter in Spanish and thus warrants separate treatment in alphabetical listings. So 'mañana' follows 'manzano' in a dictionary.