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MASTERING SPANISH

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EDITORIAL CONSULTANT
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MACMILLAN

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SERIES EDITOR'S PREFACE

The first language books in the Master Series, which are intended primarily for adult beginners working without a teacher, should fill a notable gap in an otherwise well-cultivated field. The publishers make no promises of instant mastery, and recognise that no one slim volume can contain more than the basic essentials of any living language. It is believed, however, that these initial books provide a carefully planned introduction to the language and a secure foundation for further study, for which it is hoped that the Master Series will ultimately give additional help.

Existing publications seem either to concentrate on teaching 'how to survive abroad' or else to adopt a mainly academic approach. In these new books, the publishers aim to assist not only those studying for practical – generally touristic or commercial – purposes, but also those wishing to acquire a more formal knowledge of the language, with the intention of extending their skills of reading and writing by subsequent study. The dual aims of these books are made clear from the start, so that students may determine their own learning procedures and work in ways best suited to their needs and capacity. Clear indications make it easy to distinguish between essential basic language and the more difficult material provided for deeper study. The main emphasis is placed on understanding and speaking the language in the context of everyday life, but the importance of reading and writing has not been overlooked.

The table of contents is specific and informative, and the student may see at a glance the ground to be covered. The author's introduction explains in some detail the nature and presentation of the teaching material and suggests a variety of ways of working with it; this section will repay careful study, so that the best use may be made of the well structured and lively dialogues, the vocabulary lists, the clear explanations of background information and grammar and the varied exercises.

Mastery of the spoken language presents one of the greatest problems to the student working alone. Without considerable linguistic experience it is impossible to develop an ear for the sounds and intonation of the language by reading the printed page. Each language book in this series contains a detailed and helpful guide to pronunciation, but there is also a most useful adjunct in the form of a cassette on which the basic teaching material is recorded by native

speakers. As Spanish is a phonetic language with consistent rules for pronunciation and stress, it is relatively easy to pronounce individual words with fair accuracy. However, in order to speak good Spanish, with appropriate intonation and rhythm, and to understand native speakers of the language, the cassette is virtually indispensable; if this is intelligently used in conjunction with the admirable pronunciation guide, the familiar problems of speaking and comprehending a new language should be solved.

The authors of the language books in the Master Series, who are all gifted and successful teachers of individuality and experience, have tried to ensure that those who use these books thoughtfully may experience the pleasure of successful language-study without the direct intervention of a teacher. All concerned with the project hope that the books will establish for the learner a continuing involvement with the infinite variety and endless fascination of languages.

B E T T Y P A R R
Editorial Consultant

INTRODUCTION:

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This introduction to Spanish 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, a cassette has been provided to accompany the book. On the cassette are recorded a guide to the pronunciation of Spanish and all the dialogues in this book. Sections of the book included on the cassette are indicated by the symbol .

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 cassette. 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.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

This contains the translations of the dialogues in the first five chapters, 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.

TYPOGRAPHY

In this book words in Spanish are set in a different typeface so that they can be easily distinguished from the English text. Thus: Buenos días. Su pasaporte, por favor; but, Good morning. Your passport, please.