

Stress Rules and Punctuation

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn about more pronunciation rules for words in the Spanish language, as well as how various words and sentences may be punctuated. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Las Reglas de Acento (Stress Rules)
2. La Puntuación (Punctuation)

1. Las Reglas de Acento (Stress Rules)

The term "stress" refers to the natural emphasis put on the strongest syllable of a word.

➦ **EXAMPLE** In English, the word "father" is stressed on the first syllable: **fah**-thur

In Spanish, there are three simple rules that *always* apply. Use these rules along with the pronunciation guide above to help you pronounce any Spanish word you encounter:

1. If a word ends in a vowel, an "n," or an "s", the natural stress falls on the next-to-last syllable. Try **ho**-la, **li**-bros, **ha**-bla, **lla**-mo, me-di-**ci**-na
2. Otherwise, the natural stress falls on the last syllable. Try: ciu-**dad**, co-**mer**, ha-**blar**, pa-**pel**
3. Any exceptions to these rules will carry a written accent where the stress should fall. Try: **lá**-piz, Jo-**sé**, a-le-**grí**-a

2. La Puntuación (Punctuation)

The following are some rules for punctuation in Spanish that are different than what you may be used to in English:

1. Question marks and exclamation points are also written at the front of a sentence/phrase, but they are upside-down. For example: ¡**Hola**! ¿**Cómo** está usted?
2. Accent marks are extremely important in Spanish since they tell us how to pronounce a word, and sometimes even tell us what a word means. For example: **esta** = this, but **está** = is.
 - a. The accent mark/stress mark is always written the same way: ´
 - b. Accent marks are written over question words such as "what" and "who": ¿**Qué**? ¿**Quién**?

- c. These words only carry the accent mark when they are used to ask questions, never when they are used to give information. For example: ¿**Qué dice la madre?** (*What does the mother say?*) **Ella dice que tiene una hija.** (*She says that she a daughter.*)
3. When an accent mark is written over a word with only one syllable, it is to distinguish that word from another without an accent mark. For example: **el** = the, but **él** = he; **si** = if, but **sí** = yes.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that there are several **stress rules** that always apply in the Spanish language and will help you determine which syllables you should emphasize in different words. You also learned about the various types of **punctuation** that you will encounter when reading the Spanish language.

¡Buena suerte!

Support

If you are struggling with a concept or terminology in the course, you may contact **SpanishforNursesSupport@capella.edu** for assistance.

If you are having technical issues, please contact **learningcoach@sophia.org**.

Source: This content has been adapted from "Spanish for Nurses" by Stephanie Langston.