

Telling Time

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn how to express the time correctly in Spanish.

1. ¿Qué Hora Es? (What Time Is It?)
2. Describing Time
3. ¿A Qué Hora? (At What Time?)



BEFORE YOU START

Watch the following video to get a preview of the vocabulary you will be learning in this lesson. You will have a chance to practice this material later, once you have progressed through the lesson.

1. ¿Qué Hora Es? (What Time Is It?)

When giving the current time in Spanish, there are certain steps for you to follow:



STEP BY STEP

1. Start your sentence with **Son las....** unless you are starting with one o'clock, in which case you would say, **Es la una: *Es la una. Son las dos. Son las tres.*** "Son las" is used with all of the plural hours.
2. State the nearest hour. If it is 4:15, you would begin your phrase, "Son las cuatro...." If it is 4:45, you would begin your phrase "Son las cinco...."
3. Connect the hour and the minutes with either: **y** (and) or **menos** (minus). If it is the first half of the hour (from one minute to thirty minutes past), then you will use "y." If it is the second half of the hour, you will use "menos." Using the above examples, 4:15 would be "Son las cuatro y..." and 4:45 would be "Son las cinco menos."
4. Next, you need to state the number of minutes either after the hour or before the hour that you stated (the latter will require some math!): 4:15 would be "Son las cuatro y quince" and 4:45 would be "Son las cinco menos quince."
5. Finally, add any descriptive phrases you'd like. You will find these in the list below, along with some other helpful expressions you can use when talking about time.

Additionally, there is an easier, more casual way of telling time. You can simply state the hour and then add the number of minutes.

➞ EXAMPLE 4:50 could be stated as "Son las cuatro y cincuenta."

Some Spanish speakers will use **para** when subtracting minutes from the next hour and stating the minutes.

➞ EXAMPLE Instead of "Son las siete menos diez," they might say, "Son las diez para siete," which would translate to "It's ten till seven" or "It's ten of seven."



DID YOU KNOW

Many digital clocks in Spanish-speaking countries and many schedules will display military time. At 1:00 p.m., the military time would display as 13:00 and so on until 24:00, which is midnight.

2. Describing Time

In Spanish, they do not say a.m. or p.m. to describe the part of day. Instead, you will choose from:

- De la mañana
- De la tarde
- De la noche

Use **de la mañana** to talk about any morning hour from midnight to noon. **De la tarde** refers to the afternoon hours. Depending upon what time supper is eaten in each of the different Spanish-speaking countries, "de la tarde" might be used until 10 o'clock. **De la noche** is used from supper time until midnight.

The following table lists descriptive phrases and other helpful expressions you can use when talking about time.

English	Spanish
half (30 minutes) past	...y media (or: y treinta)
quarter (15 minutes) past	...y cuarto (or: y quince)
quarter (15 minutes) until	...menos cuarto (or: menos quince)
on the dot	..en punto
a.m.	...de la mañana
p.m. (until ~6:00)	...de la tarde
p.m. (~6:00 until midnight)	..de la noche
midnight	medianoche
noon	mediodía
24 hours	veinticuatro horas
hour(s)	hora(s)
minute(s)	minuto(s)
second(s)	segundo(s)
day	día
night	noche

week	semana
month	mes
season	estación
year	año
now	ahora
later	más tarde
today	hoy
tomorrow	mañana
yesterday	ayer
this weekend	este fin de semana
next weekend	el fin de semana que viene
next	que viene
last week	la semana pasada
last	pasado/a

3. ¿A Qué Hora? (At What Time?)

When telling someone at what hour something will occur, you can start by following the exact same steps as above and using the same list of expressions to help you.

However, instead of beginning your sentence with "Es la..." or "Son las...", you will begin your sentence with **A la...** or **A las...**

The following dialogue demonstrates a typical exchange between a patient and a nurse.

Nurse: ¡Hola! ¡Buenas tardes! (Hello! Good afternoon!)

Patient: ¿Puedo hacer una cita? (Can I make an appointment?)

Nurse: Sí, pero estoy ocupada ahora. (Yes, but I'm busy right now.)

Patient: Pues, ¿qué hora es? (Well, what time is it?)

Nurse: Ahora, son las cuatro y veinte. (Now, it's 4:20.)

Patient: ¿Y a qué hora puedo volver? (And at what time can I return?)

Nurse: ¿Podiera volver a las seis menos cuarto? (Could you please return at 5:45?)

Patient: Okay. (Okay.)

Nurse: Gracias. ¡Hasta luego! (Thank you. See you later!)



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned the steps to follow to ask or state **what time it is** by using "Es la..." or "Son las..." You also learned some useful expressions for **describing the time** when having casual

conversations. To state **at what time** something will occur, you can follow many of the same steps as you would for stating what time it is, except you will use "A la..." or "A las...."

¡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.