

## How to Understand Basic Spanish - A Beginners Basics

In this article we aim to provide you with an easy to follow guide on the basics of the Spanish language, concentrating on the differences between Spanish and English sentence structure.

### Sentence Structure

If you want to understand basic Spanish you need to know that the main difference between English and Spanish is in the way that sentences are constructed. Firstly let us look at a typical Spanish sentence.

“Me gusta el vino español”.

This sentence means;

“I like Spanish wine”.

Did you notice that in the English version “wine” comes after “Spanish”, but in the Spanish sentence “vino” comes before “español”? This is because in the Spanish language the adjective (an adjective is a word that is used to describe something, in this case we have used “español”, which means Spanish), always comes after the noun (a noun is basically another name for a thing, in this case “vino” meaning wine).

So if I wanted to say, I like white wine, in Spanish I would say “Me gusta vino blanco”. Blanco means white in Spanish.

The rule applies whether we are referring to a drink or a person.

The English sentence “A Spanish man”.

Would translate in Spanish to “Un hombre español”

Have you noticed another difference between the English and Spanish sentences? In the example we have used we can see that “español” starts with a lower case, or small “e”, but in English when saying “Spanish” we use a capital “S”, this is because any reference to a country in English should have a capital letter at the start of the word, but in Spanish you would only use a capital letter when using the country's name directly.

If we say “Soy de España”

This translates as,

“ I am of Spain”

Because we used “España” which is the name of the country it gets a capital letter. Therefore if I say;

“Soy americano”(I am an American man). In Spanish we have a small “a”, as opposed to;

“Soy de América”(I am of America). Because we use the word for America (which is called a proper noun) we use an “A”.

### How To Recognize Questions

In English we can change a statement to a question by adding the word DO and a question mark (?). As an example the statement “you have a pencil” could be something I say as I hand over a pencil or merely a statement of fact. But if I say “do you have a pencil?”, then there is no doubt that I am asking a question.

There is no word for DO in Spanish so we have to have another way of knowing that the sentence we have just started is a question. To do this the Spanish language uses two question marks “¿?”, the inverted one at the start of the sentence and the standard one at the end. Therefore:

“Tiene un lápiz”, (“tiene” can mean “you have” and “lápiz” is “pencil”)

This statement becomes a question when we add ¿ and ?.

“¿Tiene un lápiz?” so if you see the question mark at the start of a sentence you know that you have to alter the tone of your voice to make it questioning.

We hope that these few tips might make understanding basic Spanish that little bit easier for you, and hopefully got you excited about learning more!

### About the Author

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