

2. **PRACTICE DAILY** — Set aside a block of time each day for studying Spanish. Don't get behind. It's almost impossible to catch up because you need time to absorb the material and to develop the skills.
3. **LEARN NEW VOCABULARY** — Memorization plays an important role in language learning. For instance, you will have to memorize the new vocabulary items in order to produce them as you speak or write. One way to learn the new vocabulary is by making flashcards. Write each new vocabulary item on a separate index card with Spanish on one side and English on the other. To review, look at the English word. Say the corresponding Spanish word aloud or write it down; then flip the card over to check your answer. You can also use the vocabulary lists in your Spanish textbook to learn new words. First, look at the Spanish words and try to say the corresponding English words. Then look at the English words and try to say or write the corresponding Spanish words.
4. **LEARN NEW GRAMMAR FORMS** — In addition to memorizing vocabulary, you will need to memorize verb conjugations, noun and adjective endings, and other grammatical forms. However, simply memorizing new grammatical forms is not enough. You will need to understand when and how to use the grammatical forms so that you can produce them as you speak or write. By using *English Grammar for Students of Spanish* to compare the grammar structures in English and Spanish, you will learn how these structures function. Once you understand how the grammatical structures function, it will be easier for you to learn to produce the forms by completing the exercises and activities in your Spanish textbook.
5. **LEARN TO COMMUNICATE** — The principle goal of your Spanish instruction is for you to be able to communicate with Spanish speakers and to function in a Spanish-speaking country. Learning vocabulary and grammar is not the end goal; it is a means to develop your ability to communicate. Keeping the goal in mind will help you see the purpose behind the exercises you do and will ultimately help make you a successful language learner.

Buena suerte,
Emily Spinelli



INTRODUCTION

When you learn a foreign language, in this case Spanish, you must look at each word in three ways:

MEANING, PART OF SPEECH, and FUNCTION.

MEANING

An English word may be matched with a Spanish word that has a similar meaning.

House, a building in which people live, has the same meaning as the Spanish word *casa*.

Words with equivalent meanings are learned by memorizing vocabulary. Sometimes two words are the same or very similar in both English and Spanish. These words are called **COGNATES** and are, of course, easy to learn.

SPANISH	ENGLISH
inteligente	intelligent
problema	problem
visitar	visit

Occasionally knowing one Spanish word will help you learn another.

Knowing that **niño** means *boy* should help you learn that **niña** is *girl*; or knowing that **hermano** is *brother* should help you remember that **hermana** is *sister*.

Usually, however, there is little similarity between words and knowing one Spanish word will not help you learn another. As a general rule, you must memorize each vocabulary item separately.

Knowing that **hombre** is *man* will not help you learn that **mujer** is *woman*.

In addition, every language has its own phrases or way of expressing ideas; these are called **IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS**, or **IDIOMS**. For example, "*to fall asleep*" or "*to take a walk*" do not have their usual meaning as in "*to fall down the stairs*," or "*to take a book to school*." You will have to be on the alert for these idioms because they cannot be translated word-for-word in Spanish.

The Spanish equivalent of the English idiom "to fall asleep" is "dormirse" [literally, "to put oneself to sleep"] and "to take a walk" is equivalent to the Spanish idiom "dar un paseo" [literally, "to give a walk"].

PART OF SPEECH

In English and Spanish a word can be classified as belonging to one of eight categories called PARTS OF SPEECH:

adjective	adverb
article	conjunction
noun	preposition
pronoun	verb

Some parts of speech are further broken down according to type. Adjectives, for instance, can be descriptive, interrogative, demonstrative, or possessive. Each part of speech has its own rules for spelling, pronunciation and use.

In order to choose the correct Spanish equivalent of an English word, you will have to identify its part of speech. For example, look at the word *what* in the following sentences.

What do you want?
interrogative pronoun → **qué**

What movie did you see?
interrogative adjective → **cuál**

I'll do *what* you want.
relative pronoun → **lo que**

The English word is the same in all three sentences. In Spanish, however, three different words are used because each *what* belongs to a different part of speech.

FUNCTION

In English and Spanish the role a word plays in a sentence is called its FUNCTION. Depending on the sentence, the same word can have a variety of functions:

- subject
- direct object
- indirect object
- object of a preposition

Let us look at the function of the word *him* in the following sentences and see the various functions it can have in a sentence.

They don't see *him*.
direct object → **lo**

I wrote *him* a letter.
indirect object → **le**

Are you going with *him*?
object of a preposition → **él**

The English word is the same in all three sentences, but in Spanish three different words will be used because each *him* has a different function.

In order to choose the correct Spanish equivalent of an English word, you will have to identify its function.

SUMMARY

As a student of Spanish you must learn to recognize both the part of speech and the function of each word in a sentence. This is essential because words in a Spanish sentence have a great deal of influence on one another.

My older brother works in that large modern office.

Mi hermano mayor trabaja en esa oficina grande y moderna.

In English, the only word that affects another word in the sentence is *brother*, which forces us to say *works*. If the word were *brothers*, we would have to say *work*.

In Spanish, the word for *brother* (**hermano**) not only affects the word for *works*, (**trabaja**), but also the spelling and pronunciation of the Spanish words for *my* (**mi**) and *older* (**mayor**). The word for *office* (**oficina**) affects the spelling and pronunciation of the Spanish words for *that* (**esa**), *large* (**grande**), and *modern* (**moderna**).

Since parts of speech and function are usually determined in the same way in English and in Spanish, this handbook will show you how to identify them in English. You will then learn to compare English and Spanish constructions, focusing on similarities and differences. This will give you a better understanding of the explanations in your Spanish textbook.

WHAT IS A NOUN?

A **NOUN** is a word that can be the name of a person, animal, place, thing, event, or idea.

- a person professor, clown, student, girl, baby
Professor Smith, Dr. Anderson, Bill, Mary
- an animal elephant, horse, snake, eagle
Lassie, Bambi, Garfield, Teddy
- a place stadium, restaurant, city, state, country
Madrid, Michigan, Mexico, South America
- a thing apple, lamp, dress, airplane
Coca-Cola, the White House, a Cadillac
- an event or activity graduation, marriage, birth, Thanksgiving
the Olympics, shopping, rest, growth
- an idea or concept democracy, humor, hatred, honor
time, love, justice, jealousy, poverty

As you can see, a noun is not only a word that names something that is tangible (i.e., something you can touch), such as *lamp*, *horse*, or *White House*, it can also be the name of things that are abstract (i.e., that you cannot touch), such as *justice*, *jealousy*, and *honor*.

A noun that does not state the name of specific person, place, or thing, etc. is called a **COMMON NOUN**. A common noun does not begin with a capital letter, unless it is the first word of a sentence. All the nouns above that are not capitalized are common nouns.

A noun that is the name of a specific person, place, thing, etc. is called a **PROPER NOUN**. A proper noun always begins with a capital letter. All the nouns above that are capitalized are proper nouns.

Bill is my friend.
 | |
 proper common
 noun noun

A noun that is made up of two or more words is called a **COMPOUND NOUN**. A compound noun can be composed of two common nouns such as *ice cream* or *comic strip*, or two proper nouns, such as *South America* or *Mexico City*.

IN ENGLISH

To help you learn to recognize nouns, look at the paragraph below where the nouns are in italics.

The *countries* that make up the Spanish-speaking *world* export *products* that we use every *day*. *Spain* produces many of the *shoes*, *purses*, and *gloves* that are sold in *stores* throughout the *United States*. *Spain* also sells us much *wine*, *sherry*, and *brandy*. The *islands* of the *Caribbean* and the *nations* of *Central America* supply us with tropical *fruits* such as *bananas* and *melons*; *sugar* is another important *export* of these *regions*. While *oil* is a major *source* of *income* for *Mexico* and *Venezuela*, the *economies* of several other *countries* of *Latin America* depend upon the *production* and *exportation* of *coffee*.

IN SPANISH

Nouns are identified in the same way they are in English.

TERMS USED TO TALK ABOUT NOUNS

- **GENDER** — A noun can have a gender; that is, it can be classified according to whether it is masculine, feminine, or neuter (see *What is Meant by Gender?*, p. 6).
- **NUMBER** — A noun has number; that is, it can be identified according to whether it is singular or plural (see *What is Meant by Number?*, p. 10).
- **FUNCTION** — A noun can have a variety of functions in a sentence; that is, it can be the subject of the sentence (see *What is a Subject?*, p. 23) or an object (see *What are Objects?*, p. 124).

— REVIEW —

Circle the nouns in the following sentences.

1. Students came into the classroom and spoke to the teacher.
2. The Wilsons went on a tour of Mexico.
3. Figure skating is an exciting event in the Winter Olympics.
4. Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina, is a cosmopolitan city.
5. Truth is stranger than fiction.
6. They want a boss with intelligence and a sense of humor.

ENDINGS INDICATING GENDER

Gender can sometimes be determined by looking at the end of the Spanish noun. In the lists that follow there are endings that often indicate feminine nouns and others that indicate masculine nouns. Since you will encounter many nouns with these endings in basic Spanish, it is certainly worthwhile to familiarize yourself with them.¹

FEMININE ENDINGS

-a	la casa, la biblioteca	<i>house, library</i>
-dad, -tad	la ciudad, la libertad	<i>city, liberty</i>
-z	la nariz	<i>nose</i>
-ión, -ción	la reunión, la nación	<i>meeting, nation</i>
-umbre	la costumbre	<i>custom</i>
-ie	la especie	<i>species</i>

MASCULINE ENDINGS

Any ending except those provided in the "Feminine endings" list above. In particular:

-l	el papel	<i>paper</i>
-o	el libro	<i>book</i>
-n	el jardín	<i>garden</i>
-e	el parque	<i>park</i>
-r	el dolor	<i>pain</i>
-s	el interés	<i>interest</i>

To help you remember these endings note that for the masculine endings the letters spell "loners."

There are, of course, exceptions to the above rules. For instance, **mano** (*hand*) is a feminine word even though it ends with the letter -o and **día** (*day*) is a masculine word even though it ends with the letter -a. Your textbook and instructor will point out the exceptions that you will need to learn.

CAREFUL — Do not rely on biological gender to indicate the grammatical gender of Spanish equivalents of nouns that can refer to a man or a woman. For instance, the grammatical gender of the noun "**persona**" (*person*) is always feminine, even though the person being referred to could be a man or a woman.

¹This table of endings has been adapted from John J. Bergen. "A Simplified Approach for Teaching the Gender of Spanish Nouns." *Hispania*, LXI (December, 1978), 875.

— REVIEW —

Circle masculine (M) or feminine (F) next to the nouns whose gender you can identify, and (?) next to the nouns whose gender you would have to look up in a dictionary.

GENDER IN SPANISH

1. boys	M	F	?
2. chair	M	F	?
3. Cathy	M	F	?
4. classroom	M	F	?
5. visitor	M	F	?
6. sisters	M	F	?
7. dresses	M	F	?

WHAT IS MEANT BY NUMBER?

NUMBER in the grammatical sense means that a word can be classified as singular or plural. When a word refers to one person or thing, it is said to be **SINGULAR**; when it refers to more than one, it is **PLURAL**.

one <i>book</i>	two <i>books</i>
singular	plural

More parts of speech indicate number in Spanish than in English and there are also more spelling and pronunciation changes in Spanish than in English.

ENGLISH	SPANISH
nouns	nouns
verbs	verbs
pronouns	pronouns
demonstrative adjectives	adjectives
	articles

Since each part of speech follows its own rules to indicate number, you will find number discussed in the sections dealing with articles, the various types of adjectives and pronouns, as well as in all the sections on verbs. In this section we shall only look at the number of nouns.

IN ENGLISH

A singular noun is made plural in one of two ways:

1. a singular noun can add an "-s" or "-es"

book	books
church	churches

2. other singular nouns change their spelling

man	men
mouse	mice
leaf	leaves
child	children

Some nouns, called **COLLECTIVE NOUNS**, refer to a group of persons or things, but the noun itself is considered singular.

A football *team* has eleven players.
My *family* is well.

IN SPANISH

As in English, the plural form of a noun is usually spelled differently from the singular.

1. The most common change is the same as the one made in English; that is, an "-s" is added to singular masculine or feminine nouns that end in a vowel.

	SINGULAR	PLURAL		
MASCULINE	libro	libros	<i>book</i>	<i>books</i>
FEMININE	mesa	mesas	<i>table</i>	<i>tables</i>

2. Nouns that end in a consonant add "-es" to form a plural.

	SINGULAR	PLURAL		
MASCULINE	papel	papeles	<i>paper</i>	<i>papers</i>
FEMININE	ciudad	ciudades	<i>city</i>	<i>cities</i>

A few nouns will have internal spelling changes when they become plural. Your instructor and textbook will point out the exceptions to the two basic rules listed above.

— REVIEW —

Look at the English and Spanish words below. Indicate if the word is singular (S) or plural (P).

- | | | |
|-----------|---|---|
| 1. teeth | S | P |
| 2. family | S | P |
| 3. dress | S | P |
| 4. mice | S | P |
| 5. coches | S | P |
| 6. mujer | S | P |

WHAT ARE ARTICLES?

An **ARTICLE** is a word placed before a noun to show whether the noun refers to a specific person, animal, place, thing, event, or idea, or whether it refers to an unspecified person, thing, or idea.

I saw *the* boy you spoke about.
|
a specific boy

I saw *a* boy in the street.
|
an unspecified boy

In English and in Spanish there are two types of articles, **DEFINITE ARTICLES** and **INDEFINITE ARTICLES**.

DEFINITE ARTICLES

IN ENGLISH

A **DEFINITE ARTICLE** is used before a noun when we are speaking about a specific person, place, animal, thing, or idea. There is one definite article, **the**.

I read *the* book you recommended.
|
a specific book

I ate *the* apple you gave me.
|
a specific apple

The definite article remains *the* even when the noun that follows becomes plural.

I read *the books* you recommended.
I ate *the apples* you gave me.

IN SPANISH

As in English, a definite article is used before a noun when referring to a specific person, place, animal, thing, or idea.

Comí *la* manzana que me diste.
I ate *the* apple you gave me.

In Spanish, the definite article is also used when speaking in general terms.

Me gustan los gatos pero odio los perros.
I like cats [in general] but I hate dogs [in general].

Los perros son más fieles que los gatos.
Dogs are more faithful than cats.

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In Spanish, the article works hand-in-hand with the noun to which it belongs in that it matches the noun's gender and number. This "matching" is called **AGREEMENT**. One says that "the article *agrees* with the noun." (See *What is Meant by Gender?*, p. 6 and *What is Meant by Number?*, p. 10.)

A different article is used, therefore, depending on whether the noun is masculine or feminine (gender) and depending on whether the noun is singular or plural (number).

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There are four forms of the definite article: two singular forms and two plural forms.

- **el** indicates that the noun is masculine singular

el libro	<i>the book</i>
el muchacho	<i>the boy</i>

- **la** indicates that the noun is feminine singular

la casa	<i>the house</i>
la muchacha	<i>the girl</i>

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- **los** indicates that the noun is masculine plural

los libros	<i>the books</i>
los muchachos	<i>the boys</i>

- **las** indicates that the noun is feminine plural

las casas	<i>the houses</i>
las muchachas	<i>the girls</i>

Memorize nouns with the singular definite article; in most cases the article will tell you if the noun is masculine or feminine.¹

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¹There are only a few exceptions to this statement. The primary exceptions are those feminine nouns that begin with a stressed *a-* and which for pronunciation purposes take *el* as the article: *el agua*, *el águila*. The noun is nonetheless still feminine: *el agua fría*.

INDEFINITE ARTICLES

IN ENGLISH

An INDEFINITE ARTICLE is used before a noun when we are speaking about an unspecified person, animal, place, thing, event, or idea. There are two indefinite articles, *a* and *an*.

- *a* is used before a word beginning with a consonant¹

I saw *a* boy in the street.
 |
 not a specific boy

- *an* is used before a word beginning with a vowel

I ate *an* apple.
 |
 not a specific apple

The indefinite article is used only with a singular noun; it is dropped when the noun becomes plural. At times the word *some* is used to replace it, but it is usually omitted.

I saw boys in the street.
 I saw (*some*) boys in the street.

 I ate apples.
 I ate (*some*) apples.

IN SPANISH

As in English, an indefinite article is used before a noun when we are not speaking about a specific person, animal, place, thing, event, or idea.

Just as with definite articles, indefinite articles must agree with the noun's gender and number.

There are four forms of the indefinite article: two singular forms and two plural forms.

- *un* indicates that the noun is masculine singular

un libro *a* book
un muchacho *a* boy

- *una* indicates that the noun is feminine singular

una casa *a* house
una muchacha *a* girl

- *unos* indicates that the noun is masculine plural

unos libros (*some*) books
unos muchachos (*some*) boys

¹Vowels are the sounds associated with the letters *a, e, i, o, u* and sometimes *y*; consonants are the sounds associated with the other letters of the alphabet.

- *unas* indicates that the noun is feminine plural

unas casas (*some*) houses
unas muchachas (*some*) girls

Your textbook will instruct you on additional uses of the definite and indefinite articles in Spanish.

CAREFUL — Unlike English where a noun can be used without an article (*Truth* is stranger than *fiction*; *Mexico* is a beautiful *country*), Spanish common and proper nouns are usually preceded by an article: definite or indefinite.

— REVIEW —

Below is a list of English nouns preceded by a definite or indefinite article.

- Write the Spanish article for each noun on the line provided. The Spanish dictionary entry shows you if the noun (n.) is masculine (m.) or feminine (f.).

	DICTIONARY ENTRY	SPANISH ARTICLE
1. the books	libro (n. m.)	_____
2. a table	mesa (n. f.)	_____
3. some classes	clase (n. f.)	_____
4. the telephone	teléfono (n. m.)	_____
5. a car	coche (n. m.)	_____
6. the sisters	hermana (n. f.)	_____
7. some men	hombre (n. m.)	_____
8. an apple	manzana (n. f.)	_____
9. the ball	pelota (n. f.)	_____

WHAT IS A VERB?

A **VERB** is a word that indicates the action of the sentence.

The word "action" is used in the broadest sense, not necessarily physical action.

Let us look at different types of words that are verbs:

- a physical activity to run, to hit, to talk, to walk
- a mental activity to hope, to believe, to imagine, to dream, to think
- a condition to be, to have, to seem

Many verbs, however, do not fall neatly into one of the above three categories. They are verbs nevertheless because they represent the "action" of the sentence.

The book *costs* only \$5.00.

|
to cost

The students *seem* tired.

|
to seem

The verb is the most important word in a sentence. You cannot write a **COMPLETE SENTENCE**, that is, express a complete thought, without a verb.

It is important to identify verbs because the function of words in a sentence often depends on the word's relationship to the verb. For instance, the subject of a sentence is the word doing the action of the verb, and the object is the word receiving the action of the verb (see *What is a Subject?*, p. 23, and *What are Objects?*, p. 124).

IN ENGLISH

To help you learn to recognize verbs, look at the paragraph below where the verbs are in italics.

The three students *entered* the restaurant, *selected* a table, *hung* up their coats and *sat* down. They *looked* at the menu and *asked* the waitress what she *recommended*. She *advised* the daily special, beef stew. It was not expensive. They *chose* a bottle of red wine and *ordered* a salad. The service *was* slow, but the food *tasted* very good. Good cooking, they *decided*,

takes time. They *ate* pastry for dessert and *finished* the meal with coffee.

IN SPANISH

Verbs are identified the same way that they are in English.

TERMS TO TALK ABOUT VERBS

- **INFINITIVE OR DICTIONARY FORM** — The verb form that is the name of the verb is called an infinitive: *to eat, to sleep, to drink* (see *What is the Infinitive?*, p. 20). In the dictionary a verb is listed without the "to": *eat, sleep, drink*.
- **CONJUGATION** — A verb is conjugated or changes in form to agree with its subject: *I do, he does* (see *What is a Verb Conjugation?*, p. 35).
- **TENSE**—A verb indicates tense, that is, the time (present, past, or future) of the action: *I am, I was, I will be* (see *What is Meant by Tense?*, p. 56).
- **MOOD** — A verb shows mood, that is the speaker's attitude toward what he or she is saying (see *What is Meant by Mood?*, p. 69).
- **VOICE** — A verb shows voice, that is, the relation between the subject and the action of the verb (see *What is Meant by Active and Passive Voice?*, p. 91).
- **PARTICIPLE**—A verb may be used to form a participle: *writing, written, singing, sung* (see *What is a Participle?*, p. 63).
- **TRANSITIVE OR INTRANSITIVE** — A verb can be classified as transitive or intransitive depending on whether or not the verb can take a direct object (see *What are Objects?*, p. 124).

— REVIEW —

Circle the verbs in the following sentences.

1. The students purchase their lunch at school.
2. Paul and Mary were happy.
3. They enjoyed the movie, but they preferred the book.
4. Paul ate dinner, finished his novel, and then went to bed.
5. It was sad to see the little dog struggle to get out of the lake.
6. I attended a concert to celebrate the New Year.

WHAT IS THE INFINITIVE?

The **INFINITIVE** form is the name of the verb.
The Spanish equivalent of the verb *to study* is **estudiar**.
infinite

IN ENGLISH

The infinitive is composed of two words: *to* + the **DICTIONARY FORM** of the verb (*to speak, to dance*). By infinitive we mean the form of the verb that is listed as the entry in the dictionary (*speak, dance*).

Although the infinitive is the most basic form of the verb, it can never be used in a sentence without another verb which is conjugated (see *What is a Verb Conjugation?*, p. 35).

To learn is exciting.
infinite conjugated verb

It is important *to be* on time.
conjugated verb infinite

Paul and Mary *want to dance* together.
conjugated verb infinite

The dictionary form of the verb, rather than the infinitive, is used after such verbs as *let, must, should, and can*.

Mr. Smith *let* his daughter *drive* his new car.
dictionary form

Paul *must be* home by noon.
dictionary form

IN SPANISH

The infinitive form is composed of only one word. The word *to* that is part of the English infinitive has no Spanish equivalent. The Spanish infinitive is identified by the last two letters of the verb called **THE ENDING**.

hablar *to speak*
comer *to eat*
vivir *to live*

The infinitive form is important not only because it is the form under which a verb is listed in the dictionary, but because the ending indicates the pattern the verb will follow to create its various forms.

1st CONJUGATION — verbs ending in **-ar** follow one pattern

2nd CONJUGATION — verbs ending in **-er** follow another pattern

3rd CONJUGATION — verbs ending in **-ir** follow another pattern

In a sentence the infinitive form is always used for a verb that follows any verb other than *ser (to be)*, *estar (to be)*, or *haber (to have)*.

John and Mary want to dance together.
Juan y María quieren bailar juntos.
infinite

I can leave tomorrow.
Puedo salir mañana.
infinite

You should study more.
Usted debe estudiar más.
infinite

Notice that in the last two examples there is no "to" in the English sentence to alert you that an infinitive must be used in Spanish.

CAREFUL — You cannot depend upon the English sentence to alert you to the use of the infinitive in Spanish. Often the word "to" will not be used in the English sentence but the infinitive must be used in Spanish.

CONSULTING THE DICTIONARY

In English it is possible to change the meaning of a verb by placing short words (prepositions or adverbs) after it.

For example, the verb *look* in Column A below changes meaning depending on the word that follows it (*to, after, for, into*). In Spanish it is not generally possible to change the meaning of a verb by adding a preposition or an adverb as in Column A. An entirely different Spanish verb corresponds to each meaning.

COLUMN A	MEANING	SPANISH
to look	→ to look at <i>I looked at the photo.</i>	mirar
to look for	→ to search for <i>I am looking for my book.</i>	buscar

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to look after → to take care of **cuidar**
I am looking after the children.

to look into → to study **estudiar**
We'll look into the problem.

When consulting an English-Spanish dictionary, all the examples above under Column A can be found under the dictionary entry *look* (**mirar**); however, you will have to search under that entry for the specific expression *look for* (**buscar**) or *look after* (**cuidar**) to find the correct Spanish equivalent.

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Don't select the first entry under *look* and then add on the Spanish equivalent for *after*, *for*, *into*, etc.; the result will be meaningless in Spanish.

— **REVIEW** —

Circle the words that you would replace with an infinitive in Spanish.

1. Mary has nothing more to do today.
2. You must study your lesson.
3. Jeff wants to learn Spanish.
4. They cannot leave on Tuesday.
5. We hope to travel through Spain this summer.