

ACCENTUATION OF SPANISH WORDS

Accent marks on Spanish serve as a pronunciation aid. The accented syllable receives the greatest stress. By mastering a few simple rules, you will be able to determine whether a word needs an accent mark and where to place it.

Rule 1

Most words ending in a consonant, except N or S, are naturally stressed on the last syllable. No accent mark is necessary.

Example: verdad, legal, rapidez

Rule 2

Most words that end in a vowel, or N or S, are naturally stressed on the next-to-last syllable. No accent mark is needed.

Example: casa, joven, segundo

Rule 3

Words that are stressed on the third-to-last syllable are called esdrújulas. They always have an accent mark over the vowel of the third-to -ast syllable.

Example: México, difíciles, pájaro

Words that do not follow these rules must have a written accent over the vowel of the stressed syllable. You must know how to pronounce the word in order to determine whether it follows the above rules.

Example:	<u>Breaks Rule 1</u>	<u>Breaks Rule 2</u>
	lápiz	adiós
	fácil	acción
	débil	ningún

Sometimes a singular accented word loses its accent when made plural. Since the number of syllables increases, the stress follows rule 2.

Examples:	acción	acciones
	clarín	clarines

The reverse is true when a plural accented word is made singular:

Examples:	jóvenes	joven
	crímenes	crimen

Some one-syllable Spanish words have the same spelling but different meanings due to an accent mark.

Examples:	aún: still, yet	aun: even
	él: he	el: the
	más: more	mas: but
	sí: yes	si: if

Exercises: Place accent marks if needed.

1. toman	11. dolar
2. sabes	12. avion
3. el (the)	13. ladron
4. el (he)	14. heroes
5. arbol	15. maquina
6. dificil	16. conmigo
7. estudiante	17. complicado
8. caracter	18. veintidos
9. universidad	19. apostrofo
10. estacion	20. parentesis

Answers:

1. toman	6. difícil	11. dólar	16. conmigo
2. sabes	7. estudiante	12. avión	17. complicado
3. el	8. carácter	13. ladrón	18. veintidós
4. él	9. universidad	14. héroes	19. apóstrofo
5. árbol	10. estación	15. máquina	20. parenthesis

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