

LEARNING MADE EASY



# Spanish

## WORKBOOK

for  
**dummies**<sup>®</sup>  
A Wiley Brand

Grasp basic  
grammar concepts

Learn to read, write,  
and speak Spanish

Get a handle on  
key vocabulary terms



**Gail Stein**



# Spanish Workbook

by Gail Stein

for  
**dummies**  
A Wiley Brand

## **Spanish Workbook For Dummies®**

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## Table of Contents

[Cover](#)

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Introduction](#)

[About This Book](#)

[Foolish Assumptions](#)

[Icons Used in This Book](#)

[Beyond the Book](#)

[Where to Go from Here](#)

[\*\*Part 1: Getting Started with the Basics\*\*](#)

[\*\*Chapter 1: Getting a Jump Start in Spanish\*\*](#)

[Expressing Greetings and Salutations](#)

[Referring to Others Using Subject Pronouns](#)

[Focusing on Numbers](#)

[Making Dates](#)

[Telling Time](#)

[Answers to “Getting a Jump Start” Practice Questions](#)

## **Chapter 2: Selecting the Proper Part of Speech**

[Identifying and Using Parts of Speech](#)

[Using a Bilingual Dictionary](#)

[Recognizing Cognates](#)

[Answers to “Selecting the Proper Part of Speech” Practice Questions](#)

## **Part 2: The Here and Now**

### **Chapter 3: Sorting Out Word Gender**

[Marking Gender with Definite Articles](#)

[Marking Gender with Indefinite Articles](#)

[Being Demonstrative with Demonstrative Adjectives](#)

[Identifying the Gender of Singular Spanish Nouns](#)

[Adding to Your Knowledge with Noun Plurals](#)

[What's Mine Is Mine: Expressing Possession](#)

[Answers to “Sorting Out Word Gender” Practice Questions](#)

### **Chapter 4: Coloring Your Sentences with Adjectives**

[Describing People and Things with Adjectives](#)

[Using Ser and Estar in Descriptions](#)

[Answers to “Coloring Your Sentences with Adjectives” Practice Questions](#)

### **Chapter 5: Expressing Yourself in the Present**

[Using and Omitting Spanish Subject Pronouns](#)

[Expressing the Present](#)

[Progressing with the Present Progressive](#)

[Answers to “Expressing Yourself in the Present” Practice Questions](#)

### **Chapter 6: Expressing Yourself with Subjunctive Feeling**

[Forming the Present Subjunctive](#)

[Spanning the Uses of the Present Subjunctive](#)

[Answers to “Expressing Yourself with Subjunctive Feeling”  
Practice Questions](#)

## **Chapter 7: Enriching Your Sentences with Adverbs and Comparisons**

[Describing Verbs with Adverbs](#)

[Making Comparisons](#)

[Answers to “Enriching Your Sentences with Adverbs and  
Comparisons” Practice Questions](#)

## **Part 3: Giving and Obtaining Information**

## **Chapter 8: Getting Answers with the Right Questions**

[Inquiring in Spanish](#)

[Asking Yes/No Questions](#)

[Answering Questions with Yes and No](#)

[Asking for Information](#)

[Answering Information Questions](#)

[Answers to “Getting Answers with the Right Questions”  
Practice Questions](#)

## **Chapter 9: Being Clear and Concise with Object Pronouns**

[Dealing Directly with Direct Object Pronouns](#)

[Using Indirect Object Pronouns](#)

[Selecting a Direct or an Indirect Object Pronoun](#)

[Placing Object Pronouns Correctly](#)

[Doing Double Duty with Double Object Pronouns](#)

[Getting by with Gustar](#)

[Answers to “Being Clear and Concise with Object  
Pronouns” Practice Questions](#)

## **Chapter 10: Reflecting on Reflexive Pronouns and Verbs**

[Recognizing and Using Reflexive Verbs](#)

[Properly Placing Reflexive Pronouns](#)



[Answers to “Reflecting on Reflexive Pronouns and Verbs” Practice Questions](#)

## **Chapter 11: Getting Attention with Commands**

[The Imperative Mood](#)

[Forming Formal Commands](#)

[Issuing Informal Commands](#)

[Using Object Pronouns in Commands](#)

[Answers to “Getting Attention with Commands” Practice Questions](#)

## **Chapter 12: Preparing to Connect with Prepositions**

[Using Common Spanish Prepositions](#)

[Distinguishing One Preposition from Another](#)

[Focusing on Prepositions Used with Infinitives](#)

[Using Prepositional Pronouns](#)

[Answers to “Preparing to Connect with Prepositions” Practice Questions](#)

## **Part 4: Reminiscing about the Past and Seeing into the Future**

### **Chapter 13: Leaving It Completely in the Past**

[Forming the Preterit](#)

[Using the Preterit](#)

[Answers to “Leaving It Completely in the Past”](#)

### **Chapter 14: Looking Back with the Imperfect**

[Perfecting the Imperfect](#)

[Comparing the Preterit and the Imperfect](#)

[Finding Clues to the Preterit and the Imperfect](#)

[Answers to “Looking Back with the Imperfect” Practice Questions](#)

### **Chapter 15: Seeing into the Future**

[Forming and Expressing the Future](#)

[Using the Future Tense to Foretell, Predict, and Wonder](#)

[Answers to “Seeing into the Future” Practice Questions](#)

## **Part 5: The Part of Tens**

### **Chapter 16: Ten Most Common Mistakes in Spanish**

[Confusing Gender Differences](#)

[Insisting on Word-for-Word Translations](#)

[Forgetting the Personal “A”](#)

[Using the Indefinite Article with an Unqualified Profession](#)

[Being Confused about Time](#)

[Avoiding Double Negatives](#)

[Misusing Gustar](#)

[Forgetting about Idioms with Tener](#)

[Using the Incorrect Past Tense \(Preterit or the Imperfect\)](#)

[Ignoring the Subjunctive](#)

### **Chapter 17: Ten Important Verb Distinctions**

[Ser versus Estar](#)

[Saber versus Conocer](#)

[Deber versus Tener Que](#)

[Preguntar versus Pedir](#)

[Jugar versus Tocar](#)

[Gastar versus Pasar](#)

[Dejar versus Salir](#)

[Volver versus Devolver](#)

[Tomar versus Llevar](#)

[Poder versus Saber](#)

## **Part 6: Appendixes**

### **Appendix A: Verb Charts**

[Regular Verbs](#)

[Stem-Changing Verbs](#)

[Spelling-Change Verbs](#)

[Irregular Verbs](#)

## **[Appendix B: Thematic Vocabulary](#)**

[EDUCATION](#)

[PERSONAL INFORMATION](#)

[EARNING A LIVING](#)

[LEISURE ACTIVITIES](#)

[THE FAMILY](#)

[MEALS, FOODS, BEVERAGES, AND QUANTITIES](#)

[APPAREL](#)

[HEALTH](#)

[HOUSE AND HOME](#)

[TRAVEL](#)

[THE NEIGHBORHOOD, THE COMMUNITY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT](#)

[THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT](#)

[TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATION](#)

[MUSIC](#)

## **[Appendix C: English-Spanish Dictionary](#)**

## **[Appendix D: Spanish-English Dictionary](#)**

**[Index](#)**

**[About the Author](#)**

**[Connect with Dummies](#)**

**[End User License Agreement](#)**

# List of Tables

## **Chapter 1**

[Table 1-1 Spanish Subject Pronouns](#)

## **Chapter 2**

[Table 2-1 Useful Abbreviations](#)

## **Chapter 3**

[Table 3-1 Demonstrative Adjectives](#)

[Table 3-2 Possessive Adjectives](#)

## **Chapter 5**

[Table 5-1 Regular -ar Verb Conjugation in the Present](#)

[Table 5-2 Regular -er Verb Conjugation in the Present](#)

[Table 5-3 Regular -ir Verb Conjugation in the Present](#)

[Table 5-4 Spelling Changes in the Present Tense](#)

[Table 5-5 Verbs with Spelling and Stem Changes in the Present](#)

[Table 5-6 Irregular Verbs in All Forms Except Nosotros and Vosotros](#)

[Table 5-7 Irregular Verbs in All or Most of Their Forms](#)

## **Chapter 6**

[Table 6-1 The Present Subjunctive Endings of Regular Verbs](#)

[Table 6-2 Subjunctive Stems Derived from the Present-Tense Yo Form](#)

[Table 6-3 Present Subjunctive of Verbs with Spelling Changes](#)

[Table 6-4 Verbs with Stem Changes in the Present Subjunctive](#)

[Table 6-5 Certain -ir Verbs with Stem Changes](#)

[Table 6-6 Stem and Spelling Changes in the Present Subjunctive](#)

[Table 6-7 \(Very\) Irregular Verbs in the Subjunctive](#)

## **Chapter 7**

[Table 7-1 Forming Various Types of Adverbs](#)

[Table 7-2 Frequently Used Adverbs and Adverbial Phrases](#)

## **Chapter 9**

[Table 9-1 Spanish Direct Object Pronouns](#)

[Table 9-2 Spanish Indirect Object Pronouns](#)

## **Chapter 10**

[Table 10-1 Properly Using Reflexive Pronouns](#)

[Table 10-2 Common Reflexive Verbs](#)

[Table 10-3 Spanish Verbs with Different Reflexive Meanings](#)

## **Chapter 11**

[Table 11-1 Verbs with Irregular Yo Forms](#)

[Table 11-2 Verbs with Spelling and Stem Changes](#)

[Table 11-3 Irregular Verbs](#)

[Table 11-4 Irregular Verbs](#)

[Table 11-5 Verbs with Spelling and Stem Changes](#)

[Table 11-6 Negative Vosotros Commands](#)

## **Chapter 12**

[Table 12-1 Common Spanish Prepositions](#)

[Table 12-2 Spanish Verbs Requiring A](#)

[Table 12-3 Spanish Verbs Requiring De](#)

[Table 12-4 Spanish Verbs Requiring En](#)

[Table 12-5 Spanish Verbs Requiring Con](#)

[Table 12-6 Verbs That Require No Preposition](#)

[Table 12-7 Prepositional Pronouns](#)

## **Chapter 13**

[Table 13-1 The Preterit for Verbs Ending in -car, -gar, and -zar](#)

[Table 13-2 The Preterit for Verbs That Change -i to -y](#)

[Table 13-3 The Preterit for -ir Infinitive Verbs with a Stem Change in Present T...](#)

[Table 13-4 The Preterit of Irregular Verbs with -i in the Preterit Stem](#)

[Table 13-5 The Preterit of Irregular Verbs with -u in the Preterit Stem](#)

[Table 13-6 The Preterit of Irregular Verbs with -uv in the Preterit Stem](#)

[Table 13-7 The Preterit of Irregular Verbs with -j in the Preterit Stem](#)

[Table 13-8 The Preterit of Dar and Ver](#)

# Introduction

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You've picked up this book because your goal is to learn and communicate in Spanish. That's fantastic! Knowledge of a foreign language will open up a world of opportunities for you. So here you are, eager to jump in and acquire a new skill. Whether you're planning a trip, engaging in business with Spanish speakers, or just a lover of languages, *Spanish Workbook For Dummies* will help you achieve your goals quickly, painlessly and effortlessly. Turn the page and enter a world that will provide you with endless opportunities, intriguing experiences, and exciting challenges. Embark on a journey that will open the door to a different culture, a unique lifestyle, and a distinctive outlook on life. Immerse yourself in all things Spanish-related and perfect your foreign language skills. Therein lies the main goal of this book.

*Spanish Workbook For Dummies* not only presents you with all the grammar you need to know to communicate on a beginning level but also provides you with clear examples and interesting and meaningful theme-based exercises that will help you hone your skills. I give you the opportunity to put what you've learned to work and to express your thoughts and ideas fluidly. If you can finish the exercises in a flash, you know you've mastered the material well. Some exercises, of course, present more of a challenge and require additional attention and focus. That's to be expected. Just keep in mind that after you finish all the chapters, you'll be a full-fledged beginning graduate! Feel free to give yourself a pat on the back!

# *About This Book*

This book is for anyone who wants to have a basic, working knowledge of Spanish. It's a reference book and a workbook for people who strive to communicate and improve their proficiency in a language that is popular worldwide. If you want to get “up to speed” with language structures so you can understand, speak, read, and write in Spanish, this book is for you.

Each chapter in this book covers a different topic that affords you the opportunity to practice your skills by completing exercises designed to increase your vocabulary and develop your grammar skills. I reinforce nuances of style, usage, and grammar rules every step of the way so that you understand and practice how native speakers and writers use the language. I also include plenty of examples to guide you through the rules and exercises and to expose you to colloquial, everyday, correct Spanish that native speakers expect to hear from someone using Spanish.

Each section covers a different topic. Rest assured that basic elementary Spanish is fully covered. Each chapter includes exercises that allow you to practice and master what you've learned. More specifically, I make sure that each chapter contains the following:

- » An introduction to the material being presented
- » An explanation of how the grammar works
- » Sample questions and answers that show you how to complete the exercises
- » Exercises that help you perfect your skills
- » An answer key with detailed explanations for each exercise

Before you move on, I must reiterate an important point: This is a workbook! Don't be afraid to write in it. Use your favorite colored highlighter or your trusty red pen to underline the points you want to remember. Complete an exercise, commit to your answers, then flip to the end of the chapter where the answer key will provide you not only with the correct answers but also a detailed explanation of how to get to that answer.

One final thought — don't feel compelled to follow this book strictly from beginning to end. Feel free to skip around to whatever section interests you the most. Don't be shy about consulting the Thematic Vocabulary lists located at the end of the book. They will certainly be extremely useful in helping you quickly build your vocabulary skills.

## ***Foolish Assumptions***

When writing this book, I made the following assumptions about you. If they apply, you've come to the right place:

- » You have limited experience with and knowledge of the fundamentals of Spanish grammar. You're looking for the opportunity to use what you already know and intend to move forward to new areas of knowledge.
- » You want to perfect your Spanish because you're planning a trip, conducting business, or are a foreign-language student.
- » You want to speak and write Spanish colloquially, like a native does, and you want to use Spanish in practical, everyday situations.
- » You want a book that's complete but isn't so advanced that you get lost in the rules. I try to explain the rules



as clearly as possible without using too many grammatical terms. I've left out advanced grammar because you simply don't need it to be understood in everyday situations. Keep it clean and simple and you'll do just fine, and others will appreciate your honest attempts at communicating in another language.

## *Icons Used in This Book*

Icons are those cute little drawings on the left side of the page that call out for your attention. They signal a particularly valuable piece of information, a rule that you should consider if you want to avoid making an unnecessary error, or a list of exercises that you can complete. Here's a list of the icons in this book:



**REMEMBER** Remember icons call your attention to important information about the language — something you shouldn't neglect or something that's out of the ordinary. Don't ignore these paragraphs.



**TIP** Tip icons are there to show you explicitly how to execute a task. Tips present time-saving tidbits that make communication quick and effective. If you want to know the proper way to do things, check out the Tip icons first.



**WARNING** Warning icons alert you to irregularities within the language that can lead you astray and cause you to make mistakes that identify you as a non-native speaker.



**PRACTICE** The Practice icons flag exercises, which is where you need to go to put the grammar rules you read about into action. Language theory is grand, but if you can't apply it properly, it really isn't worth very much. The practice exercises are your golden opportunity to perfect your Spanish skills.

## ***Beyond the Book***

In addition to the material in this book or ebook, be sure to look for the free Cheat Sheet for additional quick reference notes pertaining to the most useful Spanish grammar topics. To get this Cheat Sheet, simply go to [www.dummies.com](http://www.dummies.com) and search for “Spanish Workbook” in the Search box.

## ***Where to Go from Here***

One great thing about this book (and all *For Dummies* books) is that you don't have to follow it chapter by chapter from the very beginning to the (not-so) bitter end. You can start where you like and jump all over the place if that is your pleasure. Each chapter stands on its own and doesn't require that you complete any of the other chapters in the book. This saves you a lot of time if

you've mastered certain topics but feel a bit insecure or hesitant about others.

So go ahead and jump right in. Get your feet wet. If you're not sure exactly where to begin, take a good look at the table of contents and select the topic that seems to best fit your abilities and needs. If you're concerned and are new to the Spanish language, you can start at the very beginning and slowly work your way through the book. If you feel confident and self-assured, skip right to the practice exercises and see how well you do. Because each lesson is an entity unto itself, you can hop around from the middle to the front to the back without missing a beat.

An important thing to keep in mind is that this isn't a race, and it isn't a contest. Work at a pace that best suits your needs. Don't hesitate to read a chapter a second or third or even a fourth time several days later. You may even want to repeat some exercises. This is a book that you can easily adapt to your learning abilities.

Remember, too, that you need to have a positive, confident attitude. Yes, you'll make mistakes. Everyone does — as a matter of fact, many native Spanish speakers do all the time. Your main goal should be to do the best you can; if you do trip up, it isn't the end of the world. If you can make yourself understood, you've won the greatest part of the battle.

**Part 1**  
**Getting Started with the  
Basics**

## **IN THIS PART ...**

Build vocabulary with cognates

Get introduced to basic grammar principles

Deal with numbers

Use bilingual dictionaries effectively

# Chapter 1

## Getting a Jump Start in Spanish

---

### IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Meeting others
  - » Identifying the subject
  - » Learning the basics: numbers, dates, and telling time
- 

Whether you're a student, a traveler, a businessperson, or simply someone who wants to learn another language, you'll need and, indeed, *want* to know certain foreign language basics for most everyday situations. For example, it's essential that you address your peers, acquaintances, as well as total strangers in a socially acceptable manner. Can you greet those around you in a casual manner, or is being more formal the appropriate way to proceed? Some social interactions require that you arrange appointments and meetings, plan trips, consult schedules, or discuss financial transactions where numbers, dates, and telling time are crucial basics to know.

This chapter provides you not only with those Spanish basics but also with communicative exercises that will enable you to confidently express greetings and salutations, numbers, days of the week, months of the year, seasons, dates, and time for speaking and writing in Spanish.

# *Expressing Greetings and Salutations*

The Spanish language clearly recognizes and requires that you use different levels of formality depending on whom you're addressing. You certainly wouldn't speak or write to a stranger, teacher, business acquaintance, customer, boss, or any person in a position of authority in the same way as you would to a family member, friend, or child. It's not just your tone of voice that matters; it's the words you use that make the difference. And in today's rapidly changing world, being inclusive and respectful of others is of paramount importance.

Use the following formal phrases when you want to meet and greet a stranger, someone you don't know very well, someone in a position of authority, or someone to whom you should show respect.

<b>Buenos días.</b>	<i>Hello. Good morning.</i>
<b>Buenas tardes.</b>	<i>Good afternoon.</i>
<b>Buenas noches</b>	<i>Good evening.</i>
<b>Señor</b>	<i>Mister, sir.</i>
<b>Señorita</b>	<i>Miss, young woman.</i>
<b>Señora</b>	<i>Mrs. (or older unmarried woman)</i>
<b>Me llamo ...</b>	<i>My name is ...</i>
<b>¿Cómo se llama?</b>	<i>What is your name?</i>
<b>¿Cómo está?</b>	<i>How are you?</i>
<b>Muy bien.</b>	<i>Very well.</i>
<b>Así así.</b>	<i>So-so.</i>
<b>Regular.</b>	<i>Fair.</i>
<b>Mucho gusto.</b>	<i>Nice to meet you.</i>

<b>Es un placer.</b>	<i>It's a pleasure.</i>
<b>El gusto es mío.</b>	<i>The pleasure is mine.</i>
<b>Adiós.</b>	<i>Goodbye.</i>
<b>Hasta luego.</b>	<i>See you later.</i>
<b>Hasta mañana.</b>	<i>See you tomorrow.</i>

Use the following informal phrases when you want to meet and greet a single friend, relative, child, and, of course, your beloved pet.

<b>¡Hola!</b>	<i>Hi.</i>
<b>Me llamo ...</b>	<i>My name is ...</i>
<b>¿Cómo te llamas?</b>	<i>What's your name?</i>
<b>¿Cómo estás?</b>	<i>How are you?</i>
<b>¿Cómo te va?</b>	<i>How's it going?</i>
<b>¿Qué tal?</b>	<i>How are things?</i>
<b>¿Qué pasa?</b>	<i>What's going on?</i>
<b>¿Qué hay de nuevo?</b>	<i>What's new?</i>
<b>Nada de particular.</b>	<i>Nothing much.</i>
<b>Nos vemos.</b>	<i>See you later.</i>
<b>Hasta (muy) pronto.</b>	<i>See you (very) soon.</i>
<b>Hasta la vista.</b>	<i>Till the next time.</i>
<b>Que te vaya bien.</b>	<i>Have a good day.</i>
<b>Que tengas un buen día.</b>	<i>Have a good day.</i>
<b>Adiós./Chau.</b>	<i>Bye.</i>



**PRACTICE** Should you be formal or more informal? Express what you would say to the people in the following circumstances. Sometimes, more than one response may be correct.



**Q. You are walking home from school and meet a friend you haven't seen in a while. You greet this friend by saying ...**

---

**A. ¿Cómo te va? or ¿Qué tal? or ¿Qué pasa? or ¿Qué hay de nuevo?** These particular friendly questions (all four of them) inquire about what your friend has been up to lately.

Now try the following, remembering to be polite or casual depending on whom you're addressing.

---

**1** There's a new student in your class whom you want to get to know better. But first you have to find out more information, such as the person's name. You would ask ...

---

**2** A new neighbor has moved in across the street. When you see him leaving for work in the morning, you would greet him by saying ...

---

**3** You just came back from a long day away from home and your dog comes to greet you at the door. You would respond to her by saying ...

---

**4** You are the new person on a job and you want to introduce yourself to your coworkers. You would say ...

---

**5** You have an afternoon appointment at the doctor. When you enter the office, you would say ...

---

- 6** Recently, life has been pretty boring. When a friend asks you what's new, you would answer ...
- 
- 7** It's the end of the workday and you see your boss, Mr. López, as you are leaving. As you walk out the door, you would say ...
- 
- 8** Your friend has been sneezing and coughing. You would say ...
- 
- 9** After meeting a new colleague and exchanging initial pleasantries, you would say ...
- 
- 10** You want to express to a certain friend that you are looking forward to seeing them again soon. You would say ...
- 

## ***Referring to Others Using Subject Pronouns***

A pronoun is a part of speech used in place of a noun. Subject pronouns are followed by the verb expressing the main action in the sentence. (See [Chapter 6](#) for more on verb conjugation.)

In English, you use subject pronouns all the time in place of, or to avoid, repeating subject nouns. It's much simpler to write, "They left," rather than "Mr. Anthony Bolavolunta and Miss Cleopatra Johnson left." The subject pronouns *I*, *you*, *he*, *she*, *we*, and *they* enable you to write clear, concise sentences. Subject nouns and

pronouns alike are followed by the appropriate forms of the verbs expressing particular actions.



**TIP**

You don't use Spanish subject pronouns as frequently as their English counterparts, because a Spanish verb ending generally indicates the subject. You use Spanish subject pronouns, therefore, mainly to be polite, to emphasize or stress the subject, or to be perfectly clear as to who (or what) is acting as the subject of the sentence.

## ***Meeting the subject pronouns***

Just like in English, Spanish subject pronouns have a person (first, second, or third) and a number (singular or plural), as you can see in [Table 1-1](#).

**Table 1-1 Spanish Subject Pronouns**

<i><b>Person</b></i>	<i><b>Singular</b></i>	<i><b>Meaning</b></i>	<i><b>Plural</b></i>	<i><b>Meaning</b></i>
1st person	<b>yo</b>	<i>I</i>	<b>nosotros (nosotras)</b>	<i>we</i>
2nd person informal (familiar)	<b>tú</b>	<i>you</i>	<b>vosotros (vosotras)</b>	<i>you</i>
2nd person formal (polite)	<b>usted (Ud.)</b>	<i>you</i>	<b>ustedes (Uds.)</b>	<i>you</i>
3rd person	<b>él</b>	<i>he</i>	<b>ellos</b>	<i>they</i>
	<b>ella</b>	<i>she</i>	<b>ellas</b>	<i>they</i>



**WARNING**

You don't express the English pronoun *it* as a subject in Spanish; it can be understood from the meaning of the sentence:

**¿Qué es?** (*What is it?*)

**Es una herramienta.** (*It's a tool.*)

Unlike the English subject pronoun *I*, which is always capitalized, the Spanish pronoun **yo** is capitalized only at the beginning of a sentence. You always write the abbreviations **Ud.** and **Uds.** with capital letters, even though you write the English equivalent *you* with a lowercase letter, unless it appears at the beginning of a sentence. When **usted** and **ustedes** aren't abbreviated, they're capitalized only at the beginning of a sentence. Here are some examples:

**Yo me voy.** (*I'm leaving.*)

**Eduardo y yo salimos.** (*Edward and I are going out.*)

**¿Busca Ud. (usted) algo?** (*Are you looking for something?*)

**¿Uds. (Ustedes) necesitan ayuda?** (*Do you need help?*)

## ***Applying subject pronouns***

The use of certain subject pronouns can be confusing because two different Spanish pronouns may have the same English meaning. Other Spanish subject pronouns are used either primarily in Spain or in Latin America. Finally, some Spanish subject pronouns refer only to females while others refer to males or to a mixed group of males and females. The following section helps you select the correct subject pronoun for all circumstances in all parts of the Spanish-speaking world.

### ***Tú versus Ud.***

You use the informal (familiar) subject pronoun **tú** to address one friend, relative, child, or pet, because it is the informal, singular form of *you*. You use **tú** to express

*you* when you enjoy a close relationship with a person, when you are in a familiar or informal situation, or when you are speaking to a pet:

**Tú eres mi mejor amigo.** (*You're my best friend.*)

You use **Ud.** to show respect to an older person or when speaking to a stranger or someone you don't know well, because **Ud.** is the formal, singular form of *you*. You may also use **Ud.** when you want to get to know the person better:

**¿Es Ud. español?** (*Are you Spanish?*)

### ***Vosotros (Vosotras) versus Uds.***

**Vosotros** and **vosotras** are informal (familiar) plural subject pronouns expressing *you*. The **vosotros** (**vosotras**) form is used primarily in Spain to address more than one friend, relative, child, or pet — the informal, plural form of *you*. You use **vosotros** when speaking to a group of males or to a combined group of males and females. You use **vosotras** only when speaking to a group of females. You use **vosotros** (**vosotras**) only in Spain when speaking to a group of people in a familiar or informal situation.

**¿Vosotros me comprendéis?** (*Do you understand me?*)

**Uds.** is a plural subject pronoun that also expresses *you*. **Uds.** is used throughout the Spanish-speaking world to show respect to more than one older person or when speaking to multiple strangers or people you don't know well. **Uds.** is the formal, plural form of *you* (but is also used as the informal plural) and is used instead of **vosotros** (**vosotras**) in Latin American countries. You're

playing it safe if you use **Uds.** when speaking to a group of people:

**Uds. son muy simpáticos.** (*You are very nice.*)

### ***Él versus ella***

**Él** refers to one male person (*he*); **ella** (*she*) refers to one female person:

**Él toca la guitarra mientras ella baila.** (*He plays the guitar while she dances.*)

### ***Ellos versus ellas***

**Ellos** (*they*) refers to more than one male or to a combined group of males and females, no matter the number of each gender present. **Ellas** refers to a group of females only:

**Juan y Jorge (Ellos) escuchan.** (*Juan and Jorge [They] listen.*)

**Luz y Susana (Ellas) escuchan.** (*Luz and Susana [They] listen.*)

**Juan y Luz (Ellos) escuchan.** (*Juan and Luz [They] listen.*)

**El niño y mil niñas (Ellos) escuchan.** (*The boy and 1,000 girls [They] listen.*)

### ***Nosotros (Nosotras)***

When you're talking about someone else and yourself at the same time, you must use the *we* form (**nosotros/nosotras**) of the verb. **Nosotros** refers to more than one male or to a combined group of males and females, no matter the number of each gender present. **Nosotras** refers to a group of females only: