

Speed up your Spanish: **20 “Secret”** **Language Patterns**

**Learn These Spanish Patterns to Unmask the
Meanings of Words Faster.**



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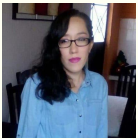
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Introduction / Introducción

Are you ready to learn the secret patterns of Spanish words?! I named these the “secret” patterns in quotes because they’re not actually secret... they’re simply hiding in plain sight and very few Spanish resources talk about them.

But the fact of the matter is this: if you can learn these patterns and recognize them in vocabulary you already know, then you will start to make connections that take many learners a lot longer to understand naturally. As a result, you’ll be able to start deciphering the meanings of new words faster and with less effort when you recognize these patterns.

Once you’ve gone through the pages below, you’ll see that, just as is the case with English words, the structure of words can tell you a lot about them.



¡Disfrútalo!

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1. Des-

In Spanish, *des-* is a **prefix** that implies negation or conveys the opposite idea of a certain word. It's usually applied with verbs and adjectives. This corresponds to the English prefixes 'dis-' and 'un-'.

Spanish	English
<u>Des</u> peinar	To dishevel / To mess someone's hair
<u>Des</u> hacer	To undo / To destroy
<u>Des</u> conocido/a	Unknown
<u>Des</u> interesado/a	Disinterested / Uninterested / Selfless
<u>Des</u> aparecer	To disappear
<u>Des</u> pertar	To wake up
<u>Des</u> truir	To destroy
<u>Des</u> cansar	To rest
<u>Des</u> poblado	Abandoned / Deserted
<u>Des</u> pegar	To unglue / To remove / To take off

Take *despeinado* and *despoblado* as examples. The opposite of 'despeinar' is 'peinar' (to comb your hair), while 'despoblado' is the antonym of 'poblado' (populated).

2. Re-

The prefix *re-* implies **repetition** when placed in front of an infinitive verb. This prefix and its meaning matches the English prefix 're-', which also implies repetition.

Spanish	English
<u>Re</u> escribir	To rewrite
<u>Re</u> estructurar	To restructure
<u>Re</u> conocer	To recognize
<u>Re</u> construir	To rebuild
<u>Re</u> utilizar	To reuse
<u>Re</u> botar	To bounce / To rebound
<u>Re</u> capacitar	To reconsider
<u>Re</u> encontrarse	To meet again / To rencounter
<u>Re</u> enviar	To resend
<u>Re</u> iniciar	To restart / To start over

3. -mente

Spanish words that end in *-mente* are called adverbs of manner. They're the equivalent of English words that end with '-ly'.

Spanish	English
Afortunadamente	Fortunately / Luckily
Básicamente	Basically
Felizmente	Happily
Fisicamente	Physically
Generalmente	Generally / Normally
Igualmente	Equally
Rápidamente	Quickly
Recientemente	Recently
Simplemente	Simply
Últimamente	Lately / Recently

4. -ión

-ión is a common Spanish suffix for nouns that express **action** and **effect**. These nouns match English words that finish on '-ion'.

Spanish	English
Acci <u>ón</u>	Action
Celebraci <u>ón</u>	Celebration
Correcci <u>ón</u>	Correction
Distracci <u>ón</u>	Distraction
Emoci <u>ón</u>	Emotion
Imaginaci <u>ón</u>	Imagination
Intensi <u>ón</u>	Intention
Opci <u>ón</u>	Option
Situaci <u>ón</u>	Situation
Vacaci <u>ón</u>	Vacation

Notice that all of the Spanish words have an accent on the letter 'ó'.

5. -ría

Spanish nouns that end with the suffix *-ría* refer to **names of stores** whose products or services come from a person's trade.

Spanish	English
Carnicer <u>ía</u>	Butcher's shop
Cremer <u>ía</u>	Dairy shop / Creamery
Ferreter <u>ía</u>	Hardware store
Muebler <u>ía</u>	Furniture store
Panader <u>ía</u>	Bakery
Paqueter <u>ía</u>	Parcel/Courier service store Haberdashery
Pasteler <u>ía</u>	Patisserie / Pastry shop / Cake shop
Peluquer <u>ía</u>	Hair salon
Rosticer <u>ía</u>	Rotisserie
Zapater <u>ía</u>	Shoe store

6. -dad

Many Spanish nouns that refer to abstract concepts end in *-dad*. These Spanish words are the equivalent of English abstract nouns that end with *-ty*.

Spanish	English
Actividad	Activity
Adversidad	Adversity
Ciudad	City
Felicidad	Prosperity / Happiness
Habilidad	Ability / Skill
Identidad	Identity
Felicidad	Prosperity / Happiness
Mensualidad	Monthly payment
Realidad	Reality
Seguridad	Safety / Security

Note: Many Spanish words ending in *-dad* may not always have an English equivalent that ends with *'-ty'*. For example, *felicidad* and *habilidad*.

7. Patterns for professions or occupations in Spanish

Common suffixes that are used to talk about professions and occupations in Spanish include:

-or: these professions in Spanish are very similar to their English counterparts. Of course, there are some exceptions.

- Actor - *Actor*
- Autor - *Author*
- Contador - *Accountant*
- Diseñador - *Designer*
- Doctor - *Doctor*
- Inspector - *Inspector*
- Escritor - *Writer*

-logo / -loga: is a suffix that refers to specialists. It's the equivalent of the English suffix '-ist'.

- Biólogo - *Biologist*
- Cardiólogo - *Cardiologist*
- Neurólogo - *Neurologist*
- Psicólogo - *Psychologist*

-ero / -era: refers to professional trades. It's the equivalent of most English professions that end with '-er'.

- Bombero - *Firefighter*
- Carpintero - *Carpenter*
- Enfermera - *Nurse*
- Ingeniero - *Engineer*
- Mesero - *Waiter*
- Niñera - *Babysitter*
- Plomero - *Plumber*

-ista: is the Spanish equivalent of occupations that end with '-ist'.

- Activista - *Activist*
- Dentista - *Dentist*
- Periodista - *Journalist*

-nte: this suffix is the Spanish counterpart of many occupations and roles in English that end with '-ent'.

- Agente - *Agent*
- Cantante - *Singer*
- Cliente - *Client*
- Comerciante - *Merchant*
- Estudiante - *Student*

Note: Spanish professions ending in *-nte* are neuter nouns, meaning that they're not affected by gender. The feminine of *actor* is 'actriz'.

8. -iva/o

-ive is the suffix for many English adjectives and some nouns. In Spanish, such words end with *-ivo* or *-ive*, depending on their gender.

Spanish	English
Activo/a	Active
Adjetivo	Adjective
Attractivo/a	Attractive
Cursiva	Cursive
Efectivo/a	Effective
Intuitivo/a	Intuitive
Nativo/a	Native
Negativo/a	Negative
Objetivo	Objective
Relativo	Relative

Note: There might be some exceptions to this rule, such as *expensive* which means 'caro' in Spanish.

9. -cia

English nouns that end with ‘-cy’ or ‘-ce’ are usually equivalent to Spanish words that end with ‘-cia’.

Spanish	English
Ci <u>encia</u>	Science
Cod <u>icia</u>	Avarice / Greed
Coher <u>encia</u>	Coherence
Dilig <u>encia</u>	Diligence
Emerg <u>encia</u>	Emergency
Frecu <u>encia</u>	Frequency
Import <u>ancia</u>	Importance
Intelig <u>encia</u>	Intelligence
Pres <u>encia</u>	Presence
Secu <u>encia</u>	Sequency

All of these nouns are feminine.

10. -ble

Words that end in -ble in English and Spanish are adjectives. And oftentimes, a word that has this English ending will be the same in Spanish if not very similar. Just make sure to change your pronunciation.

Spanish	English
Admir <u>able</u>	Admirable / Loable
Amig <u>able</u>	Amiable
Confia <u>ble</u>	Reliable
Flexi <u>ble</u>	Flexible
Increí <u>ble</u>	Incredible
Nob <u>le</u>	Noble
Posi <u>ble</u>	Possible
Responsa <u>ble</u>	Responsible
Trata <u>ble</u>	Treatable
Visi <u>ble</u>	Visible

11. -miento

Many Spanish nouns that come from verbs have the ending *-miento*. Oftentimes, their English equivalents end with *-ing*, *-ce* or *-tion*.

Spanish	English
Adiestram <u>iento</u>	Training
Asentim <u>iento</u>	Nodding
Calentam <u>iento</u>	Warming
Entendim <u>iento</u>	Understanding
Lanzam <u>iento</u>	Launching
Rendim <u>iento</u>	Performance
Sentim <u>iento</u>	Feeling
Señalam <u>iento</u>	Signaling / Pointing
Sufrim <u>iento</u>	Suffering
Vencim <u>iento</u>	Expiration

12. -al

Words that end with '-al' in English are the same in Spanish, you only need to change your pronunciation.

Spanish	English
Accidental	Accidental
Animal	Animal
Brutal	Brutal
Casual	Casual
Federal	Federal
Local	Local
Material	Material
Normal	Normal
Personal	Personal
Social	Social

13. -or

Nouns that end with -or in Spanish are often identical in English.

Spanish	English
Color	Color
Doctor	Doctor
Error	Error
Favor	Favor
Honor	Honor
Mayor	Major / Mayor
Labor	Labor
Receptor	Receptor
Supervisor	Supervisor
Tumor	Tumor

Many of these nouns can be related to profession or occupation as we've already seen in #7. Additionally, words that end with -or in Spanish can be nouns or adjectives.

14. English words that end in '-c'

A good amount of English adjectives and nouns end with the letter -c. Many of these can be transformed into Spanish by simply adding an -o or an -a to the word (depending on whether it's masculine or feminine).

Spanish	English
Aeróbico/a	Aerobic
Básico/a	Basic
Cómico/a	Comic
Diplomático/a	Diplomatic
Histórico/a	Historic
Mágico/a	Magic
Político/a	Politic
Sarcástico/a	Sarcastic
Público/a	Public
Trágico/o	Tragic

Note: According to Spanish accent rules, most of these words must have an accent mark.

15. Suffixes to magnify words

In Spanish, there are certain augmentative suffixes that you add to nouns to create adjectives and magnify the thing you're talking about. To put it simply, these suffixes are another way of saying 'big'.

These suffixes are:

- -ote
- -ón
- -azo

With nouns that refer to actions, the suffix -ón implies that such actions took place suddenly.

Spanish	English
Apagón	Power outage
Casonón / Casota	Big house
Fortachón	Strong
Golpazo	Whack
Mujerón	Great woman / Big lady
Narizón / Narizota	Big nose
Ojón / Ojotes / Ojazos	Big eyes
Panzón / Panzota	Paunchy
Portazo	Slam
Tipazo	Great guy

Note: Since they're adjectives, these suffixes must agree in gender and number with the noun.

16. Suffixes for diminutives

Spanish diminutives help you:

- Express that something is small
- Show affection and endearment
- Downplay things

To do this, you need to add the suffix *-ito* or *-ita* to a noun or adjective.

Spanish	English
Cabec <u>ita</u>	Small head
Carr <u>ito</u>	Small car
Cas <u>ita</u>	Small house
Chaparr <u>ita</u>	Shorty / Honey
Ded <u>ito</u>	Little finger
Flaqu <u>ito</u>	Skinny / Honey
Gord <u>ito</u>	Chubby / Honey
Perr <u>ito</u>	Puppy / Doggy
Señor <u>ita</u>	Miss
Tont <u>ita</u>	Silly

Note: Although in English using words like ‘chubby’ or ‘skinny’ to talk to people may be offensive, the Spanish diminutive smoothens the impact and meaning of these words. In fact, *gordito* and *flaquito* are common pet names in Spanish.

17. Verbs in Spanish

All infinitive verbs in Spanish have three distinctive endings *-ar*, *-er*, and *-ir*.

Spanish	English
Cant <u>a</u> r	To sing
Decid <u>i</u> r	To decide
Habl <u>a</u> r	To speak / to talk
Hac <u>e</u> r	To do / to make
Gust <u>a</u> r	To like
Pod <u>e</u> r	Can
Quer <u>e</u> r	To want
Ser	To be
Ten <u>e</u> r	To have
Viv <u>i</u> r	To live

Most Spanish words that end with *-ar*, *-er*, and *-ir* are highly likely to be verbs in their infinitive forms. However, there are some exceptions such as *mujer*, *cáncer*, and *altar*. The key is to determine whether the word describes an action (verb) or refers to a concept or person (noun).

18. Spanish pronominal verbs

-arse, -erse, and -irse are the endings for pronominal verbs in Spanish. If you have to conjugate a verb with 'se' attached to its root, you need to use reflexive verbs.

Spanish	English
Afeitarse	To shave
Bañarse	To shower
Casarse	To get married
Cepillarse	To brush
Despedirse	To say goodbye
Dormirse	To fall asleep
Irse	To leave
Ponerse	To put on
Quitarse	To take off
Vestirse	To get dressed

Many pronominal verbs are reflexive, meaning that you are performing an action on yourself (such as *cepillarse*). However, not all pronominal verbs are reflexive. In those cases, the reflexive pronoun helps us keep a specific meaning for that verb (*despedirse* = to say goodbye vs. *despedir* = to fire).

Yo **me** baño.
I shower.

Tú **te** cepillas los dientes.
You brush your teeth.

Ellos **se** van a las ocho.
They leave at eight.

19. -ER and -IR verbs share the same endings

To conjugate regular and stem-changing verbs in Spanish, you must use conjugation endings. These endings vary depending on the tense and subject. However, regular *-er* and *-ir* verbs **share** almost all **the same** endings.

	Present	Preterite	Imperfect	Future	Conditional
Yo	-o	-í	-ía	-é	-ía
Tú	-es	-íste	-ías	-ás	-ías
Él / Ella / Ud	-e	-ió	-ía	-á	-ía
Nosotros	-emos / -imos	-imos	-íamos	-emos	-íamos
Vosotros	-éis / -ís	-isteis	-íais	-éis	-íais
Ellos / Ustedes	-en	-ieron	-ían	-án	-ían

Note: The only exception to this pattern is the present tense with the subjects *nosotros* and *vosotros*. In this tense, *-emos* and *-éis* are the conjugations for *-ER*, while *-imos* and *-ís* are for *-IR* verbs, respectively.

20. Forming adjectives from verbs

-ado and -ido are suffixes that allow you to form Spanish adjectives from a verb. These words are the equivalent of English adjectives that end with 'ed'. Beware that some irregular adjectives may not use these endings.

Spanish	English
Aburr <u>ido</u>	Bored
Acab <u>ado</u>	Finished / Completed
Bañ <u>ado</u>	Showered
Cans <u>ado</u>	Tired
Com <u>ido</u>	Eaten
Destru <u>ido</u>	Destroyed
Dorm <u>ido</u>	Slept
Quer <u>ido</u>	Wanted
Beb <u>ido</u>	Drunk
Viv <u>ido</u>	Lived

Words that come from a verb and end with -ado and -ido are known **past participles**. Like in English, Spanish past participles are also used to form compound tenses.

Example: *he tenido un mal día* - I have had a bad day.

Note: A few Spanish nouns end with -ado. These nouns may refer to titles, places or job positions.

- Papado - Papacy
- Ducado - Duchy
- Obispado - Bishopric
- Estado - State
- Mercado - Market