

Spanish Letters

1/16/18

You will want to
remember a few
special details about
some Spanish letters

“C”

In Spanish, the letter “c” changes pronunciation depending on where it’s placed:

Before “a, o, u” the “c” in Spanish is pronounced like a hard sound in the English “cake” or “kite”

Spanish examples: carro, casa, camino, acústico

Before “e, i” the “c” in Spanish is pronounced like a soft sound in the English “cider” or “silk”

Spanish examples: cielo, cereza, cita

“g”

In Spanish, the letter “g” changes pronunciation depending on where it’s placed:

Before “a, o, u” the “g” in Spanish is pronounced like a hard sound in the English “golf” or “gate”

Spanish examples: gato, gorro, goma, gusano

Before “e, i” the “g” in Spanish is pronounced like a soft sound in the English “hop” or “heel”

Spanish examples: gemelo, girasol, gitano

“z”

In Spanish, the letter “z” is pronounced just like the “s” in the English “soap” or “sit”

In written Spanish, the “z” only comes before “a, o, u.”

Examples: cazar, zanahoria, zumo, zorro

Due to this rule, whenever trying to make the English “s” sound before an “i” or “e”, we must write it as an “s” or “c”.

Examples: siesta, cielo, cicatrices, sello, veraces

“b, d, g”

The letters “b, d, g” change pronunciation slightly when found between vowels.

For example, the “b” in “bota” is pronounced just like the “b” in boot. The sound is made by pressing the lips together before releasing a burst of air.

However, the “b” in “sábana” is created in the same way, but without bringing the lips completely together

Other examples: cada, mago, haba

“gue, güe”

We learned that “g” before an “e” or “i” makes a soft sound like in “house.”

If we must have an “e” or “i” follow the “g”, but want to retain the hard sound, like in “gold”, we have to insert a “u” between the “g” and “e/i.” The “u” is silent.

Examples: guerra, guión

However, if you have this situation, but want the “u” to have a sound, then you use the following letter: “ü” → pingüino

“gue, güe”

The “ü” is called dieresis

With words like “guapo” or “antiguo,” you will not need to insert a “ü” because that is only necessary when you need the “u” to be pronounced before “e” or “i”