

Teacher's Guide

Module: The Alphabet in Spanish

This Spanish [module](#) contains a teacher's guide and three student activities. It also contains pronunciation guides in audio and video form so students can learn the module's vocabulary. In the module, students learn about Spanish words related to the alphabet, vowels, and consonants. Then, they complete activities to check their understanding.

The student activities are aligned to the PBS curriculum hierarchy for Spanish, and each activity was designed to be used independently. However, you can use them together, integrating all the resources provided for each activity. The following table shows how the activities are aligned:

Activity	Curriculum Hierarchy
Sounds and Symbols of the Spanish Language / Los sonidos y los símbolos del idioma español	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Spanish <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grammar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sounds and Symbols of the Spanish Language
The Spanish Alphabet – Consonants / El alfabeto en español – Las consonantes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Spanish <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grammar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sounds and Symbols of the Spanish Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Alphabet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consonants
The Spanish Alphabet – Vowels / El alfabeto en español – Las vocales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Spanish <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grammar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sounds and Symbols of the Spanish Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Alphabet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vowels

Sounds and Symbols of the Spanish Language / Los sonidos y los símbolos del idioma español

1. Make sure your students have enough knowledge to practice the following **Spanish concepts** before they complete the activity.

Spanish language uses the same letters (**las letras**) as English, called Latin script. Most of the letters of the Spanish alphabet (**el alfabeto**) are similar to the ones in English, except that Spanish has one more letter: “ñ,” as in the word “piñata.” Therefore, while the English alphabet has 26 letters, the Spanish alphabet has 27.

Spanish also has a few sounds written as digraphs (**los dígrafos**). That means, these sounds are written by combining two letters. For example, ch (as in “Chile”), ll (as in “llave” [key]), and rr (as in “perro” [dog]).

The consonant (**la consonante**) “j” is written the same way in both languages, but the pronunciation is different. For example, “Joe” in English versus “José” in Spanish. And the “h” does not sound at all in Spanish although it has a soft sound in English.

Both alphabets have five vowels (**las vocales**). However, in Spanish, each vowel corresponds to one sound, while in English, we have long and short vowels.

Spanish also has a written accent (**la tilde**), which is used only on vowels in some words. The accent helps speakers know which syllable should be pronounced with more emphasis, like “ratón” (mouse). Although the “tilde” is not part of the alphabet, it is an integral part of the written language, and it is needed to differentiate between words. For example, “papa” (potato) is not the same as “papá” (dad). “Esta” (this) is not the same as “está” (is).

There are many words that are written almost the same way in Spanish and English, and their pronunciation is very similar as well. Let’s see some examples:

área	animal	cafetería	cereal
chocolate	dragón	formal	hotel
original	radio	tornado	televisión
Anna	Hugo	Sarah	Abraham

2. Guide your students to **listen to the vocabulary** for this activity. Select [audio](#) to hear the words pronounced or [video](#) for an audio-visual pronunciation guide. Use the image provided as needed.

- **la letra** (letter)
- **el alfabeto** (alphabet)
- **el dígrafo** (digraphs)
- **la consonante** (consonant)
- **la vocal** (vowel)
- **la tilde** (accent)
- **área** (area)
- **animal** (animal)
- **cafetería** (cafeteria)
- **cereal** (cereal)



- **chocolate** (chocolate)
- **dragón** (dragon)
- **formal** (formal)
- **hotel** (hotel)
- **original** (original)
- **radio** (radio)
- **tornado** (tornado)
- **televisión** (television)
- **Anna** (anna)
- **Hugo** (Hugo)
- **Sarah** (Sarah)
- **Abraham** (Abraham)



Detail of tile letters in a ceramics shop in Triana. | Krista Rossow | National Geographic | Getty Images

3. Use the [video](#) “Si a la Cultura: Español al Día | Cambios en el Abecedario” as a part of the activity.

Show the video as an extension of the lesson to heritage or more advanced learners.

4. Guide your students to complete the following **activity**. Sample answers are provided below.

Read the following short passage to review information you learned today.

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Spanish also has a few sounds written as digraphs (**los dígrafos**). That means, these sounds are written by combining two letters. For example, ch (as in “Chile”), ll (as in “llave” [key]), and rr (as in “perro” [dog]).

The consonant (**la consonante**) “j” is written the same way in both

languages, but the pronunciation is different. For example, “Joe” in English versus “José” in Spanish. And the “h” does not sound at all in Spanish although it has a soft sound in English.

Both alphabets have five vowels (**las vocales**). However, in Spanish, each vowel corresponds to one sound, while in English, we have long and short vowels.

Spanish also has a written accent (**la tilde**), which is used only on vowels in some words. The accent helps speakers know which syllable should be pronounced with more emphasis, like “ratón” (mouse). Although the “tilde” is not part of the alphabet, it is an integral part of the written language, and it is needed to differentiate between words. For example, “papa” (potato) is not the same as “papá” (dad). “Esta” (this) is not the same as “está” (is).

There are many words that are written the same way in Spanish and English, and their pronunciation is very similar as well. Let’s see some examples:

área	animal	cafetería	cereal
chocolate	dragón	formal	hotel
original	radio	tornado	televisión
Anna	Hugo	Sarah	Abraham

Select the correct answer for each question below.



1. Spanish and English have exactly the same number of letters.

Answer (letter): (b)

a. True

b. False

2. The tilde is a written accent used on vowels in some words in Spanish.

Answer (letter): (a)

a. True

b. False

3. There are letters and words that are written the same in English and Spanish, but are pronounced differently.

Answer (letter): (a)

a. True

b. False



The Spanish Alphabet – Consonants / El alfabeto en español – Las consonants

1. Make sure your students have enough knowledge to practice the following **Spanish concepts** before they complete the activity.

Spanish and English have very similar consonants, but there are some differences that we will learn today. The Spanish alphabet has 22 consonants, which is one more than the English alphabet has. The “ñ,” as in the words “**piñata**” and “**muñeca**” (doll), is the extra consonant in Spanish.

Also, some of the consonants are pronounced differently. Let’s see some examples:

- “j” is written the same way in English and Spanish, but the pronunciation is different: “jump” in English versus “**jabón**” (soap) and “**caja**” (box) in Spanish.
- “h” has no sound at all in Spanish, but it has a soft sound in English: “hat” in English versus “**helado**” (ice cream) and “**cohete**” (rocket) in Spanish.
- Spanish also has a few sounds written as digraphs. That means these sounds are written by combining two letters: ch (as in “**chocolate**” [chocolate] and “**techo**” [roof]), ll (as in “**lluvia**” [rain] and “**gallina**” [hen]) and rr (as in “**carro**” [car] and “**torre**” [tower]).
- In Spanish, the letter “q” is always followed by a “u” and then an “e” or an “i” to produce the sound /ke/ or /ki/: **queso** (cheese) and **bosque** (forest); **quince** (fifteen) and **esquina** (corner).

2. Guide your students to **listen to the vocabulary** for this activity. Select [audio](#) to hear the words pronounced or [video](#) for an audio-visual pronunciation guide. Use the images in the activity section below as needed.

- **la piñata** (piñata)
- **la muñeca** (doll)
- **el jabón** (soap)
- **la caja** (box)
- **el helado** (ice cream)
- **el cohete** (rocket)
- **el techo** (roof)
- **la lluvia** (rain)
- **la gallina** (hen)
- **el carro** (car)
- **la torre** (tower)
- **queso** (cheese)
- **bosque** (forest)
- **quince** (fifteen)
- **esquina** (corner)

3. Use the [video](#) “Si a la Cultura: Español al Día | Cambios en el Abecedario” as part of this activity.

Show the video as an extension of the lesson to heritage or more advanced learners.

4. Guide your students to complete the following **activity**. Sample answers are provided below.

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Spanish and English have very similar consonants, but there are some differences that we will learn today. The Spanish alphabet has 22 consonants, which is one more than the English alphabet has. The “ñ,” as in the words “**piñata**” and “**muñeca**” (doll), is the extra consonant in Spanish.




Also, some of the consonants are pronounced differently. Let’s see some examples:




- “j” is written the same way in English and Spanish, but the pronunciation is different: “jump” in English versus “**jabón**” (soap) and “**caja**” (box) in Spanish.
- “h” has no sound at all in Spanish, but it has a soft sound in English: “hat” in English versus “**helado**” (ice cream) and “**cohete**” (rocket) in Spanish.
- Spanish also has a few sounds written as digraphs. That means these sounds are written by combining two letters: ch (as in “**chocolate**” [chocolate] and “**techo**” [roof]), ll (as in “**lluvia**” [rain] and “**gallina**” [hen]) and rr (as in “**carro**” [car] and “**torre**” [tower]).
- In Spanish, the letter “q” is always followed by a “u” and then an “e” or an “i” to produce the sound /ke/ or /ki/: **queso** (cheese) and **bosque** (forest); **quince** (fifteen) and **esquina** (corner).



Look at the images below, numbered 1–6. Using the Word Bank, write the correct word in Spanish for each number.

Word Bank		
la gallina	la torre	el queso
el helado	la caja	la muñeca






1	2	3
 <p><i>Low Angle View Of Tower Against Clouds Juned Mansuri / EyeEm EyeEm Getty Images</i></p>	 <p><i>Child's doll Dave King Dorling Kindersley RF Getty Images</i></p>	 <p><i>Chicken in garden Krystal South Moment Getty Images</i></p>
(la torre)	(la muñeca)	(la gallina)

4	5	6
 <p><i>Variety of cheeses Angel Rodriguez Photodisc Getty Images</i></p>	 <p><i>Strawberry Ice Cream Cone DNY59 E+ Getty Images</i></p>	 <p><i>Wooden crate with 'Fragile' and 'Do not get wet' symbols on road Arthur S. Aubry Digital Vision Getty Images</i></p>
(el queso)	(el helado)	(la caja)

The Spanish Alphabet – Vowels / El alfabeto en español – Las vocales

1. Make sure your students have enough knowledge to practice the following **Spanish concepts** before they complete the activity.

The Spanish language has five vowels:

A	E	I	O	U
avión	escorpión	imán	olas	uvas
 <i>Airplane Jet Cartoon</i> KeithBishop Digital Vision Vectors Getty Images	 <i>Red scorpion</i> alb1001 Digital Vision Vectors Getty Images	 <i>Attraction</i> mstay Digital Vision Vectors Getty Images	 <i>Big wave, Pacific Ocean</i> Martin Ruegner Photographer's Choice RF Getty Images	 <i>Grapes of the vines</i> dondesigns Digital Vision Vectors Getty Images
Sounds like “a” in arctic.	Sounds like “e” in elephant.	Sounds like “e” in eat.	Sounds like “o” in ordinary.	Sounds like “u” in tuba.

In many Spanish words, such as the following, vowels can be found together as diphthongs:

- **el avión** (airplane)
- **el escorpión** (scorpion)
- **el imán** (magnet)
- **las olas** (waves)
- **las uvas** (grapes)
- **el cielo** (sky)
- **el baile** (dance)
- **la jaula** (cage)
- **el ruido** (noise)
- **la rueda** (wheel)
- **el piano** (piano)

There is one special word in Spanish that includes all five vowels:

- **el murciélago** (bat)

2. Guide your students to **listen to the vocabulary** for this activity. Select [audio](#) to hear the words pronounced or [video](#) for an audio-visual pronunciation guide. Use the image provided as needed.

- el avión (airplane)
- el escorpión (scorpion)
- el imán (magnet)
- las olas (waves)
- las uvas (grapes)
- el cielo (sky)

- el baile (dance)
- la jaula (cage)
- el ruido (noise)
- la rueda (wheel)
- el piano (piano)
- el murciélago (bat)



Blocks | CSA Images/Snapstock | CSA Images | Getty Images

3. Guide your students to complete the following **activity**. Sample answers are provided below.

Complete the following two-column chart.

Listen to the audio for today's activity again, and then separate the words in the **Word Bank** into two columns: in the first column, write the words that begin with a vowel, and in the second column, write the words that end with a vowel.

Word Bank			
uvas	rueda	avión	baile
jaula	piano	imán	escorpión

TWO-COLUMN CHART	
Words That Begin or End with Vowels	
Begins with Vowel	Ends with Vowel
(uvas)	(rueda)
(escorpión)	(piano)
(avión)	(baile)
(imán)	(jaula)