

## Nouns, Articles, Adjectives, and Pronouns

### Nouns and Articles

A noun is a person, place, or thing. In Spanish, all nouns are either masculine or feminine. The definite article (**el, la, los, las**), agrees with its noun in gender and number, as does the indefinite article (**uno, una, unos, unas**).

Most of the time, inclusion of the article in Spanish is the same as it is in English.

El carro rojo cuesta treinta mil dólares.	<i>The red car costs 30,000 dollars.</i>
La comida estaba deliciosa.	<i>The meal was delicious.</i>
Los guantes de cuero son costosos.	<i>The leather gloves are expensive.</i>
Las revistas están en la mesa.	<i>The magazines are on the table.</i>
Una muchacha fue al concierto.	<i>A girl went to the concert.</i>
Un adulto la acompañó.	<i>An adult accompanied her.</i>
Unos músicos tocaron bien.	<i>Some musicians played well.</i>
Unas personas salieron contentas.	<i>Some people left happy.</i>

Similarly, omission of the article in Spanish often corresponds to English usage.

Escuchamos música.	<i>We listen to music.</i>
Escuchamos la música clásica.	<i>We listen to the classical music.</i>
El hombre enfermo toma medicina.	<i>The sick man takes medicine.</i>
Él toma la medicina que el doctor le dio.	<i>He takes the medicine that the doctor gave to him.</i>



### A Word About the Definite Article

Even without many rules, you will be able to use the articles effectively.

## Inclusion and Omission of Articles

Spanish does not translate *a/an* when stating an unmodified profession. If the profession is modified, the indefinite article (**un/una**) becomes necessary.

UNMODIFIED	Juan es pintor.	<i>Juan is a painter.</i>
MODIFIED	Juan es un pintor maravilloso.	<i>Juan is a wonderful painter.</i>
UNMODIFIED	Paula es doctora.	<i>Paula is a doctor.</i>
MODIFIED	Paula es una buena doctora.	<i>Paula is a good doctor.</i>
UNMODIFIED	José es maestro.	<i>Joseph is a teacher.</i>
MODIFIED	José es un mal maestro.	<i>Joseph is a bad teacher.</i>
UNMODIFIED	Eres estudiante.	<i>You are a student.</i>
MODIFIED	Eres una estudiante fantástica.	<i>You are a fantastic student.</i>

The definite article is used with days of the week. The English word *on* is not translated.

Ella salió el martes.	<i>She left on Tuesday.</i>
Ramón va a volver el sábado.	<i>Ramón is going to return on Saturday.</i>
Tenemos clase los jueves.	<i>We have class on Thursdays.</i>

The only time the article is omitted when expressing the day of the week is following a form of **ser**.

Hoy es miércoles.	<i>Today is Wednesday.</i>
¿Qué día es? Hoy es viernes.	<i>What day is it? Today is Friday.</i>

The definite article is used with seasons of the year, even though the English equivalent may not include it.

La primavera es bonita.	<i>Spring is beautiful.</i>
El verano es ideal.	<i>Summer is ideal.</i>
Me encanta viajar en el otoño.	<i>To travel in the autumn enchants me.</i>
No nos gusta esquiar en el invierno.	<i>To ski in the winter is not pleasing to us.</i>

The definite article is used after forms of **gustar** and verbs that are used like **gustar** (for example, **doler**, **encantar**, **fascinar**, **importar**), whether the English translation includes it or not.

Me gustan los vegetales.	<i>Vegetables are pleasing to me.</i>
A Paula le encanta el cine.	<i>Movies are very pleasing to Paula.</i>
A Fernando y a sus amigos les importa la verdad.	<i>The truth is important to Fernando and his friends.</i>

The Spanish definite article never follows a form of **haber**. Nouns, adjectives, and indefinite articles can follow **haber**, but not the definite article (**el**, **la**, **los**, **las**).

Hay una persona aquí.	<i>There is one person here.</i>
Había algunos libros en la mesa, pero ahora no los veo.	<i>There were some books on the table, but now I don't see them.</i>
No hay ningún buen hotel por aquí.	<i>There is not one good hotel around here.</i>
Hay poca gente en la ciudad.	<i>There are few people in the city.</i>
Hubo mucho tráfico ayer.	<i>There was a lot of traffic yesterday.</i>
Había dos fiestas el día de las madres.	<i>There were two parties on Mother's Day.</i>

When the verb **hablar** is followed by the name of a language, the definite article is omitted.

Ella habla español, pero no habla inglés.	<i>She speaks Spanish, but she doesn't speak English.</i>
Los portugueses hablan francés y portugués.	<i>The Portuguese speak French and Portuguese.</i>

The definite article is used in front of each noun if there is more than one noun stated, as in a series.

El museo tiene el arte, la escultura y los dibujos.	<i>The museum has art, sculpture, and drawings.</i>
El estudiante tiene el lápiz, la pluma y la computadora en su cuarto.	<i>The student has the pencil, the pen, and the computer in his room.</i>

The definite article is used with the name of subject matter.

Enrique estudia la ley.	<i>Henry studies law.</i>
María escribe la historia de su país.	<i>María writes the history of her country.</i>
Platón enseñó la filosofía.	<i>Plato taught philosophy.</i>
Oscar y Fernanda escriben sobre el periodismo.	<i>Oscar and Fernanda write about journalism.</i>

The definite article is used before a noun in a general statement.

Los cigarrillos son malos.	<i>Cigarettes are bad.</i>
El agua es buena.	<i>Water is good.</i>

The definite article is used before abstract nouns.

La sinceridad es importante.	<i>Sincerity is important.</i>
La honestidad es rara.	<i>Honesty is rare.</i>

The definite article is used to refer to all members of a class.

Los delfines son inteligentes.	<i>Dolphins are intelligent.</i>
Las computadoras son necesarias.	<i>Computers are necessary.</i>
Los bebés duermen mucho.	<i>Babies sleep a lot.</i>

The definite article is used in front of a personal title in Spanish, even when it is not used in the English equivalent.

El señor Muñoz está aquí.	<i>Mr. Muñoz is here.</i>
La profesora Hernández llegó ayer.	<i>Professor Hernández arrived yesterday.</i>
La señorita López cantó anoche.	<i>Ms. López sang last night.</i>

The definite article is omitted before a personal title when the person is being addressed directly.

Hola, señorita López.	<i>Hello, Ms. López.</i>
¿Cómo está Ud., señor Rodríguez?	<i>How are you, Mr. Rodríguez?</i>

**NOTE** The definite article is not used in front of **don/doña** or **Santo/San/Santa**. **Santo** is used only before words beginning with **Do-** or **To-** (**Santo Domingo** and **Santo Tomás**, for example). **Santo** becomes **San** when used before words beginning with any other letters.

Don Juan tiene una mala reputación.	<i>Don Juan has a bad reputation.</i>
Doña Barbara vive en Santo Domingo.	<i>Doña Barbara lives in Santo Domingo.</i>
Santa Clara y Santo Tomás la visitan allá.	<i>Saint Clara and Saint Thomas visit her there.</i>
San Pedro quiere ir a San Juan.	<i>Saint Peter wants to go to San Juan.</i>
Desean ver San Diego, California.	<i>They want to see San Diego, California.</i>

The definite article is used before nouns of measurement, where it carries the meaning *per*.

Pagamos cien dólares la libra.	<i>We pay 100 dollars per pound.</i>
Los bananos cuestan cincuenta centavos el kilo.	<i>The bananas cost 50 cents per kilo.</i>
Ella vendió el perfume a diez dólares la onza.	<i>She sold the perfume at \$10 per ounce.</i>

When two nouns are joined by **de** to form a compound noun, the definite article is omitted before the second noun.

Ella tiene un dolor de cabeza.	<i>She has a headache.</i>
A ella le gusta la casa de vidrio.	<i>She likes the glass house.</i>
María leyó dos libros de historia.	<i>María read two history books.</i>
La novia recibió un anillo de diamantes.	<i>The girlfriend received a diamond ring.</i>

The article is omitted before ordinal numbers in the names of kings, queens, and other rulers.

Carlos V (quinto)	<i>Carlos the fifth</i>
Louis XIV (catorce)	<i>Louis the fourteenth</i>

Before an apposition, which is a noun or noun phrase that is used in the same way and describes the same thing as the noun before it, the definite article is omitted.

Cervantes, <b>escritor</b> , era de España.	<i>Cervantes, the writer, was from Spain.</i>
Hugo Chávez, <b>presidente</b> de Venezuela, fue elegido en 2000.	<i>Hugo Chávez, president of Venezuela, was elected in 2000.</i>

Baryshnikov, **bailarín**, empezó a bailar en Moscú.  
Bogotá, **capital** de Colombia, tiene una población de siete millones de habitantes.

*Baryshnikov, the dancer, began to dance in Moscow.  
Bogotá, capital of Colombia, has a population of seven million inhabitants.*



## Exercise 22.1

**Definite article or not?** Complete the following sentences with the correct definite article where it is necessary. Mark an **X** where no article is needed.

1. Quiero que mi hermano me dé \_\_\_\_\_ libro de \_\_\_\_\_ medicina.
2. Yo soy \_\_\_\_\_ abogado pero no me gusta \_\_\_\_\_ ley.
3. Francamente, yo fumo pero sé que \_\_\_\_\_ cigarrillos son malos para \_\_\_\_\_ salud.
4. ¿Qué quiere hacer \_\_\_\_\_ verano que viene?
5. El gobernador tuvo un accidente y le dolieron mucho \_\_\_\_\_ costillas.
6. ¿Son buenas \_\_\_\_\_ computadoras?
7. Hugo Chávez, \_\_\_\_\_ presidente de Venezuela, le da gasolina a \_\_\_\_\_ gente pobre.
8. A \_\_\_\_\_ familia le encantan \_\_\_\_\_ vacaciones.
9. Sinceramente, el mesero no sabe si \_\_\_\_\_ comida está buena en este restaurante.

## Possessive Adjectives

A possessive adjective agrees in gender and number with the noun it modifies.

### Short-Form Possessive Adjectives

A short-form possessive adjective precedes the noun it modifies.

**mi, mis** *my*

Mi cumpleaños es bueno.  
Mis regalos son malos.

*My birthday is good.  
My gifts are bad.*

**tu, tus** *your* (**tú** form)

Tu jardín tiene muchas flores.	<i>Your garden has many flowers.</i>
Tus hijos siembran las semillas.	<i>Your children sow the seeds.</i>

**su, sus** *your* (**Ud./Uds.** forms), *his, her, their*

Su hermano tiene varias casas.	<i>Your brother has several houses.</i> (also possible: <i>His/Her/Their brother</i> )
Sus amigos lo visitan.	<i>His friends visit him.</i> (also possible: <i>Your/Her/Their friends</i> )

In Spanish, a single form (**su/sus**) expresses the third-person possessive for *your* (**Ud./Uds.** forms), *his, her,* and *their*. This means that **su/sus** can be ambiguous, so the construction noun + **de** + pronoun is often used to clarify the meaning.

El hermano de Ud. tiene varias casas.	<i>Your brother has several houses.</i>
Los amigos de él lo visitan.	<i>His friends visit him.</i>

**nuestro, nuestra, nuestros, nuestras** *our*

Nuestro abuelo es viejo.	<i>Our grandfather is old.</i>
Nuestra abuela es mayor.	<i>Our grandmother is older.</i>
Nuestros hermanos son jóvenes.	<i>Our siblings are young.</i>
Nuestras hijas son menores.	<i>Our daughters are younger.</i>

**vuestro, vuestra, vuestros, vuestras** *your* (**vosotros** form)

Like **vosotros**, this form is used only in Spain. It is explained here so that you will be aware of it, but when you need the word for *your* in Spanish, use **su/sus**.

Vuestro sobrino tiene suficiente dinero.	<i>Your nephew has enough money.</i>
Vuestra sobrina vive en Portugal.	<i>Your niece lives in Portugal.</i>
Vuestros tíos viven en España.	<i>Your uncles and aunts live in Spain.</i>
Vuestras parientes van a viajar a ambos países.	<i>Your (female) relatives are going to travel to both countries.</i>



## Exercise 22.2

Complete the following sentences with the most appropriate possessive adjective from the list below.

**mi, mis, tu, tus, su, sus, nuestro, nuestra, nuestros, nuestras**

1. Soy estudiante: \_\_\_\_\_ libros están en la mesa.
2. Él es un buen profesor; \_\_\_\_\_ cursos son interesantes.
3. Ellos son abogados; \_\_\_\_\_ clientes pueden ser culpables o inocentes.
4. Nuestra amiga es maestra; \_\_\_\_\_ padres enseñan también.
5. Ella es mi suegra; \_\_\_\_\_ casa está en México.
6. El cuñado de Cecilia es carpintero: \_\_\_\_\_ nombre es Manuel.
7. Liliana está en Texas; \_\_\_\_\_ familia vive en Arizona.
8. Vivo con cuatro amigos, un gato y un conejo; \_\_\_\_\_ casa es grande.
9. Somos principiantes; \_\_\_\_\_ tarea es difícil.
10. La hija de Beatriz es doctora; \_\_\_\_\_ hijo es arquitecto.

## Long-Form Possessive Adjectives

Spanish also has a set of long-form possessive adjectives that are used to stress one possessor over another:

*This is **my** car, not **your** car.*

They are used less frequently than the short-form possessive adjectives.

- Long-form possessive adjectives are placed after the noun, and they agree in gender and number with the noun they modify. All have four forms that indicate both gender and number.
- Long-form possessive adjectives are used to emphasize the possessor, and they are the equivalent of the English *of mine, of yours, of his, of hers, of theirs, of ours*.
- Long-form possessive adjectives are used in direct address and exclamations: ¡**Dios mío!** for example.



**mío, mía, míos, mías** *my, of mine*

Tu carro es viejo. El carro <b>mío</b> es nuevo.	<i>Your car is old. <b>My</b> car is new.</i>
Tu casa es azul. La casa <b>mía</b> es blanca.	<i>Your house is blue. <b>My</b> house is white.</i>
Queridos amigos <b>míos</b> , ¿cómo están Uds.?	<i>Dear friends <b>of mine</b>, how are you?</i>

**tuyo, tuya, tuyos, tuyas** *your (tú form), of yours*

No me gusta mi apartamento.	<i>I don't like my apartment.</i>
Prefiero el apartamento <b>tuyo</b> .	<i>I prefer <b>your</b> apartment.</i>
Mis plumas no tienen tinta.	<i>My pens have no ink.</i>
¿Me puedes prestar las plumas <b>tuyas</b> ?	<i>Can you lend me <b>your</b> pens?</i>

**suyo, suya, suyos, suyas** *your (Ud./Uds. forms), of yours; his, of his; her, of hers; their, of theirs*

Tomás y Helena están aquí.	<i>Thomas and Helen are here.</i>
Necesito el carro <b>suyo</b> .	<i>I need his car.</i> (also possible: <i>her/their car</i> )
¿El carro de él o el carro de ella?	<i>His car or her car?</i>

Remember that in Spanish there is only one form for the third-person possessive adjective. This means that **suyo/suya/suyos/suyas** can be ambiguous. The construction noun + **de** + pronoun or noun is used to clarify the meaning.

Sara y José escriben cuentos.	<i>Sara and Joe write short stories.</i>
Los artículos de ella son aburridos, pero los artículos <b>suyos</b> son interesantes.	<i>Her articles are boring, but <b>his</b> articles are interesting.</i>
A Ana le agrada David.	<i>Ana likes David.</i>
Ana es una amiga <b>suya</b> .	<i>Ana is a friend <b>of his</b>.</i>
A David le agrada Ana.	<i>David likes Ana.</i>
David es un amigo <b>suyo</b> .	<i>David is a friend <b>of hers</b>.</i>
Las ideas <b>suyas</b> son estupendas.	<i>The ideas of <b>yours/his/her/theirs</b> are great.</i>
¿Las ideas de quiénes?	<i>The ideas of whom?</i>
Las ideas de Uds.	<i>Your ideas.</i>

**nuestro, nuestra, nuestros, nuestras** *our, of ours*

Ud. tiene una familia grande.	<i>You have a big family.</i>
La familia <b>nuestra</b> es pequeña.	<b>Our</b> family is small.
Los parientes de Enrique viven en Ecuador.	<i>Henry's relatives live in Ecuador.</i>
Los parientes <b>nuestros</b> viven en Inglaterra.	<b>Our</b> relatives live in England.

**vuestro, vuestra, vuestros, vuestras** *your (vosotros form), of yours*

Mis amigos son de los Estados Unidos.	<i>My friends are from the United States.</i>
Los amigos <b>vuestros</b> son de España.	<b>Your</b> friends are from Spain.
Mis primas viven en California.	<i>My cousins live in California.</i>
Las primas <b>vuestras</b> viven en Madrid.	<b>Your</b> cousins live in Madrid.

Long-form possessive adjectives can also occur with the indefinite article—**un, uno, una, unos, unas**.

Un estudiante <b>suyo</b> recibe buenas notas.	<i>A student <b>of yours</b> receives good marks.</i>
El maestro explica una idea <b>nuestra</b> .	<i>The teacher explains an idea <b>of ours</b>.</i>
Unos amigos <b>míos</b> van de vacaciones.	<i>Some friends <b>of mine</b> are going on vacation.</i>
Unas amigas <b>tuyas</b> prefieren trabajar.	<i>Some friends <b>of yours</b> prefer to work.</i>

**Exercise 22.3**

Complete the following sentences with the correct possessive adjective, according to the cue in parentheses.

- Querido amigo \_\_\_\_\_, ¿vienes a visitarme? (*of mine*)
- El libro \_\_\_\_\_ es más pesado que el libro \_\_\_\_\_. (*yours/mine*)
- Tus zapatos son viejos; los zapatos \_\_\_\_\_ son costosos y nuevos. (*of hers*)