



Easy Ways to Tell Time in Spanish

Welcome to a new session of Learning Spanish for Beginners Podcast.

In this session, we will review vocabulary and phrases you can use to tell time in Spanish.

This is an essential skill for beginners because it will help you manage your schedule, ask for the time, and understand appointments.

By the way, this episode will focus on the Spanish spoken in Mexico, which you can use to communicate with Spanish speakers worldwide.

Let's get started!

Basic Vocabulary

Before we start telling the time, let's review some essential words:

- Hora – Hour
- Minuto – Minute
- Segundo – Second
- Reloj – Clock/Watch
- Mediodía – Noon
- Medianoche – Midnight
- La mañana – Morning
- La tarde – Afternoon
- La noche – Evening/Night



How to Ask for the Time

If you want to know the time, here are two common ways to ask:

- ¿Qué hora es?
- What time is it?
- ¿Qué hora es?

- ¿Me puedes decir que hora es por favor?
- Can you tell me what time it is please?
- ¿Me puedes decir que hora es por favor?

You'll likely hear the response starting with "Es la..." or "Son las..." depending on the time.

That comes next...



Telling the Time in Spanish

To tell the time in Spanish, you use the verb *ser* (to be) and follow this structure:

For 1:00, use “*Es la...*” which translates as “it is...” because it’s singular:

- *Es la una.*
- It’s one o’clock.
- *Es la una.*

For all other hours, use “*Son las...*” because they’re plural, and it translates as “it’s the” as well:

Here are a few examples:

- *Son las dos.*
- It’s two o’clock.
- *Son las dos.*

- *Son las cinco.*
- It’s five o’clock.
- *Son las cinco.*



Minutes Past the Hour

An easy way to add minutes to the hour, is to use the conjunction “y” which translates as “and” in Spanish.

Here are a few examples:

- Es la una y cinco.
- It's 1:05.
- Es la una y cinco.

- Son las dos y diez.
- It's 2:10.
- Son las dos y diez.

- Son las tres y quince.
- It's 3:15.
- Son las tres y quince.

- Son las cuatro y treinta.
- It's 4:30.
- Son las cuatro y treinta.

- Son las cinco y cuarenta y cinco.
- It's 5:45.
- Son las cinco y cuarenta y cinco.

- Son las seis y cincuenta.
- It's 6:50.
- Son las seis y cincuenta.



Common Variations:

There are a few optional variations you can use for commonly used times if you want to sound more conversational.

Minutes Past the Hour:

For fifteen minutes past the hour, you can use the phrase “y cuarto” to convey the idea of “and a quarter.”

Here’s an example:

- Son las tres y cuarto.
- It’s 3:15.
- Son las tres y cuarto.

For half past the hour, you can use the phrase “y media” which translates as “and half.”

Here’s an example:

- Son las cuatro y media.
- It’s 4:30.
- Son las cuatro y media.



Minutes to the Hour:

To express minutes before the next hour, you can use the word “menos” which translates as “minus” in Spanish.

Here are a few examples with the most common cases:

- Son las cinco menos diez.
- It's 4:50.
- Son las cinco menos diez.

- Son las seis menos cuarto.
- It's 5:45.
- Son las seis menos cuarto.



Talking about Specific Times of Day

Now, let's talk about a few common words and phrases you can use to talk about specific times of the day.

You can specify the time of day using phrases like these:

- de la mañana – in the morning
- de la tarde – in the afternoon
- de la noche – in the evening

Here are a few common examples:

- Son las nueve de la mañana.
- It's 9:00 in the morning.
- Son las nueve de la mañana.

- Son las tres de la tarde.
- It's 3:00 in the afternoon.
- Son las tres de la tarde.

- Son las ocho de la noche.
- It's 8:00 in the evening.
- Son las ocho de la noche.

For midnight and noon, you can use these phrases:

- Es medianoche.
- It's midnight.
- Es medianoche.

- Es mediodía.
- It's noon.
- Es mediodía.



Common Phrases About Time

Here are a few additional phrases you can use to talk about time in every day life:

- ¿A qué hora...?
- At what time...?
- ¿A qué hora...?

Here's an example:

- ¿A qué hora es la reunión?
- What time is the meeting?
- ¿A qué hora es la reunión?

Es temprano.

It's early.

Es temprano.

Es tarde.

It's late.

Es tarde.

Llegas a tiempo.

You're on time.

Llegas a tiempo.

Estás atrasado / atrasada.

You're late.

Estás atrasado / atrasada.



Practice Time!

Let's practice some examples together.

I'll say the time in English, and you try to say it in Spanish before I give you the answer.

3:15

.
. .
. .

Son las tres y cuarto.

7:30

.
. .
. .

Son las siete y media.

11:45

.
. .
. .

Son las doce menos cuarto / Son las once cuarenta y cinco

1:00 in the afternoon

.
. .
. .

Es la una de la tarde.



Cultural Tip

In Spanish-speaking countries, people often use the 24-hour clock for formal settings like work schedules, travel, and TV programming.

For example:

“Las 14:00 horas” is the equivalent of “Son las dos de la tarde.”

“Las 20:30 horas” is the equivalent of “Las ocho y media de la noche.”

Being familiar with both systems will help you navigate different situations.



Challenge:

Your challenge for today is to ask someone for the time in Spanish and try to understand their response.

Don't be shy; practice makes perfect!

That's all for today's episode. Remember, consistency is key when learning a new language. Keep practicing, and soon you'll be a pro at telling time in Spanish.

If you would like to learn Spanish faster by learning the 100 most common words in spoken Spanish, you can visit: SpanishforYourJob.com/commonwords

That's all for today's session.

See you next time! / ¡Hast ala próxima!

YOUR NOTES:

Want more good stuff?

- Are you a **beginner** who wants to **speak basic conversational Spanish quickly**? Try this: [15 Minute Spanish Crash Course for Beginners](#)