

S P A N I S H
BASIC COURSE
SUPPLEMENT

Module 10
Grammar Notes

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DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE
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PREFACE

These grammar notes have been designed to be used by students in the Spanish Basic Course 01LA28 Defense Language Institute.

The purpose of these notes is to provide the student with explanations necessary to guide him in understanding the grammatical forms, structures, and principles of Spanish as they are presented to him through the materials in the classroom.

These grammar notes do not pretend to cover every aspect of the language or answer all questions. They do provide, however, a basic framework and statement of grammatical principles, which the instructor may clarify, illustrate, expand, supplement, and apply as needed.

The notes are closely correlated with the lessons - Frame by Frame - so that the student can find what he needs, but no more than he needs, at that particular moment, in preparation for a Frame of instruction. The purpose of this design is twofold: to introduce the grammar in a graduated sequence, and to avoid overloading the student with information that may prove to be unnecessary at any given stage of instruction. Thus, as grammatical themes are progressively developed, they are tied into related, previously-treated material (by selective back-referencing), so that general principles can be formulated gradually. The motivated student can always read ahead, and for this purpose some forward-referencing has been incorporated as an optional feature.

Each grammatical point focuses - as much as possible and where most applicable - on two aspects: form and function. Form defines the way the lexical or grammatical element (word, verbal form, gender marker, word order, etc.) manifests itself in the language, i.e., what it looks like. Function describes anything that relates to how (why, when, where, etc.) it is used. The distinction is occasionally hard to draw.

Examples have been generally limited to where they are needed to illustrate a point. Enough examples exist in the text (e.g., Dialogs, Manipulation Exercises) for most purposes. An attempt has been made to use only known vocabulary in these examples, particularly that related to the lesson.

These notes are based on the assumption that the student understands most of the basic grammatical terms, such as "verb", "noun", "adjective", "subject", "indirect object", "tense", "gender", "plural", etc. - so that these terms are not explained here. Where it has been felt that a term is sufficiently

unfamiliar, or important enough in terms of understanding the grammatical principles involved, brief explanations are given (e.g., "stem", "clause", "passive", etc.).

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BASIC COURSE SUPPLEMENT

GRAMMAR NOTES

MODULE 10

NOTE

In cross-referencing and page indexing, the numbers stand for lesson, Frame and grammatical note section number (#), respectively: L. 1-1-2 = Lesson 1, Frame 1, #2.

For those Frames that have reviews of specific grammatical points, a note has been included (following new grammatical notes, if any) referring the student to the section or sections in the Grammar Notes where the point is treated.

1. Estar, "to be", PRESENT TENSE.

FORM:

Singular	Plural
estoy - I am	estamos - we are
está { <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - you are - he - she - it } is	están { <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - you - they } are

FUNCTION:

This verb is one of the equivalents of the English verb "to be." One of its uses is to express a temporary condition, e.g., state of health:

¿Cómo está Ud.?
How are you?

Estoy bien, gracias.
I am fine, thank you.

2. SUBJECT PRONOUNS.

FORM:

Singular	Plural
yo - I	nosotros - we (masc.)
	nosotras - we (fem.)
usted - you	ustedes - you
él - he	ellos - they (masc.)
ella - she	ellas - they (fem.)

1-1-2

FUNCTION:

a. Since the verb in Spanish specifies the person and number of the subject to a much greater degree than in English, these pronouns are used much less than their English equivalents.

¿Cómo está el capitán?
How is the captain?

(Él) está bien.
He is fine.

This is particularly true of yo, although it may be used for emphasis or contrast.

¿Cómo está Ud.?
How are you?

Estoy bien, gracias.
I'm fine, thanks.

¿Cómo están Uds.?
How are you (pl.)?

Yo estoy bien; él está regular.
I am fine; he is so-so.

b. Usted is the formal form of "you," which will be contrasted with its familiar counterpart later (L. 21-1-1). It may be seen abbreviated as Ud. or Vd., but is still pronounced as the full word.

c. Él and ella are most often used to clarify or emphasize the subject.

d. In Spanish there is no equivalent subject pronoun form for "it" (or "they," when referring to things).

e. Nosotros is used for two or more males or mixed company (male and female). Nosotras refers to an all female group.

f. Ustedes (abbreviated as Uds. or Vds.) is used to address two or more people.

g. Ellos and ellas are the plural counterparts of él and ella. Ellos is used for two or more males or mixed company.

3. GENDERS OF NOUNS/DEFINITE ARTICLES.

FORM:

el* profesor	-	the teacher(male)
la profesora	-	the teacher(female)
la biblioteca	-	the library
el libro	-	the book

*The subject pronoun él, "he" (#2, above), is written with an accent mark to distinguish it from the definite article el, "the".

a. El profesor and la profesora are examples of what we might call "logical" gender, i.e., obviously masculine or obviously feminine.

b. There is no obvious reason why "library" in Spanish should be feminine and "book" masculine, but they are. Fortunately, the general rule you can apply is that nouns ending in -o are masculine and in -a are feminine. Words that end in -dad, -tad, -tud, -ción, -sión, -ie and -umbre

1-1-4

are feminine; those that end in -or are masculine. Exceptions and ambiguities will be indicated in Lesson Vocabulary Lists by including the definite article, e.g., día (el) "day," clase (la) "class." Nouns ending in other consonants or vowels will be likewise marked. Gender of these nouns will just have to be learned.

FUNCTION:

The definite article is used when talking about somebody with rank or title, but not when talking to somebody.

Buenos días, señor Pérez.
Good day, Mr. Perez.

¿Cómo está el señor Pérez?
How is Mr. Pérez?

4. SINGULAR/PLURAL

FORM:

Singular		Plural	
el profesor	- the teacher	los profesores	- the teachers
la biblioteca	- the library	las bibliotecas	- the libraries
el libro	- the book	los libros	- the books
la clase	- the class	las clases	- the classes

a. Generally, nouns ending in unstressed vowels add -s to form the plural, and those ending in consonants (as well as most ending in a stressed vowel other than e) add -es.

b. The plural forms of the definite article are los (masc.) and las (fem.).

5. QUESTION PATTERNS.*

FORM:

- a. ¿Cómo está él?
How is he?
- b. ¿Está bien ella?
Is she well?
- c. Capitán, ¿cómo está Ud.?
Captain, how are you?

Note that written questions begin the question portion of the sentence with the symbol ¿.

Questions are normally formulated by reversing the order of the verb and subject, much as it is done in English. Note that in sentence b. the subject comes after the adverb bien.

*Question patterns and other features of stress and intonation are extensively treated in Phonology Unit 1, Module 1, Workbook, pp. 10-19.

1. Tener, "to have", PRESENT TENSE.

FORM:

Singular		Plural	
(yo)	tengo	(nosotros)	tenemos
(Ud.)	} tiene	(Uds.)	} tienen
(él)		(ellos)	
(ella)		(ellas)	

FUNCTION:

The verb tener functions in the sense of "to have, to hold, to own, to possess." Note the following examples:

- a. Tengo clase.
I have class.
- b. Él tiene cerveza.
He has beer.
- c. Tenemos automóvil.
We have an automobile.

Note that in sentence c. above, Spanish does not have an indefinite article corresponding to the English "an." (cf. L.2-3-1).

2. QUESTIONS.

FORM:

¿Tiene Ud. clase?
Do you have class?

¿Tienen pluma ellos?
Do they have a pen?

Spanish does not have the equivalent of "do" in question patterns.

3. INTERROGATIVES quién, quiénes.

FORM:

- a. ¿Quién tiene fósforos?
Who has matches?

Yo tengo.
I have.

- b. ¿Quiénes tienen diccionarios?
Who (of you) (pl.) have dictionaries?

Nosotros tenemos.
We have.

FUNCTION:

Notice that this question word has a singular form and a plural form, and that the use of each anticipates a singular or plural response, respectively.

4. AFFIRMATION/NEGATION.

FORM:

- a. No tenemos clase.
We don't have class.

- b. ¿Quién no tiene libro?
Who doesn't have a book?

In Spanish, a negative sentence is formed by placing the word no before the verb.

In negative sentences, as in questions (#2, above), Spanish does not have the equivalent of "do."

1. USE OF estar FOR LOCATION.

FORM:

¿Dónde está el profesor?
Where is the teacher?

Está en la biblioteca.
He is in the library.

FUNCTION:

In addition to being used to express a temporary condition, estar is used to express location.

2. "It" AND "they" IN SPANISH.

FORM:

- a. ¿Dónde está la biblioteca? - Está allí.
Where is the library? - It is there.
- b. ¿Dónde están los diccionarios? - Están en la biblioteca.
Where are the dictionaries? - They are in the library.

FUNCTION:

Although there are no equivalent subject pronouns in Spanish for "it" and "they" (when referring to things), it is usually clear from the context what the subject of the sentence is.

3. PREPOSITION de.

FORM:

- a. Él está a la derecha de la puerta.
He is to the right of the door.
- b. Estamos detrás de la casa.
We are behind the house.
- c. El parque está enfrente de la casa.
The park is opposite the house.

FUNCTION:

In sentence a., de is translated as "of," but in b. and c. detrás de and enfrente de translate simply as "behind" and "opposite," respectively.

4. CONTRACTIONS al AND del.

FORM:

Está delante de la puerta.
(It) is to the side of the hospital.

Está delante del hospital.
(It) is in front of the hospital.

Está a la derecha del hospital.
(It) is to the right of the hospital.

Está al lado del hospital.
(It) is to the side of the hospital.

Note that de + el contract to del in written and in spoken Spanish but de la does not. Likewise, a + el contract to al where a la does not. However, the pronoun él and the capitalized article El will not contract.

1-3-5

5. WORD ORDER IN YES/NO QUESTIONS.

FORM:

¿Está el profesor en la biblioteca?
Is the teacher in the library?

¿Está en la biblioteca el profesor?
Is the teacher in the library?

Note the word order of Spanish yes/no questions is more flexible than in English.

1. Ser, "to be", PRESENT TENSE.

FORM:

Singular	Plural
(yo) soy	(nosotros) somos
(Ud.) } (él) } (ella) } es	(Uds.) } (ellos) } son (ellas) }

FUNCTION:

Ser is used to identify or classify the subject; for example, to give one's name, rank, profession, etc.

Such sentences fit the formula $X = Y$, e.g.:

- a. Ud. = el sargento Brown: ¿Es Ud. el sargento Brown?
you = Sergeant Brown : Are you Sergeant Brown?
- b. ellos = profesores : Ellos son profesores.
they = teachers : They are teachers.
- c. quién = él : ¿Quién es él?
who = he : Who is he?
- d. yo = piloto : Yo soy piloto.
I = pilot : I am a pilot.

Note that in sentence d. above, Spanish does not have an indefinite article corresponding to the English "a."

2. POSSESSION.A. Preposition de to Indicate Possession.

- a. Él es el capitán de la compañía C.
He is the captain of Company C.

2-1-2

- b. La secretaria del doctor Buendía está aquí.
Doctor Buendia's secretary is here.
- c. Juan tiene el libro de Carlos.
Juan has Carlos' book (the book that belongs to C.).

FUNCTION:

The preposition de is used to indicate possession, and corresponds to the English "of" (sentence a.), or "'s" ("-s'") (sentences b., c.); or the construction "that belongs to."

B. Ser de to Indicate Possession.

FORM:

- a. ¿De quién es el libro?
Whose book is it?
- b. Es del profesor.
It's the teacher's.
It belongs to the teacher.
- c. ¿De quiénes son las grabadoras?
Whose tape recorders are they?
- d. Son de las señoras.
They are the ladies'.
They belong to the ladies.

FUNCTION:

- a. The verb ser plus the preposition de is used to express ownership, using the construction "X is of Y," whereas in English this is normally expressed by "X is Y's" or "X belongs to Y" (sentences b., d.).
- b. ¿De quién? and ¿de quiénes? are the singular and plural equivalents of "whose?" (sentences a., c.).

C. Possessive Adjectives (Short Forms).

FORM:

If Object Possessed Is		
Singular	Plural	
mi	mis	my
su	sus	your, his, her, its, their
nuestro (masc.) nuestra (fem.)	nuestros (m.) nuestras (f.)	our

Possessive adjectives in Spanish agree in number with the object possessed. These forms (called "short")* always precede the noun:

Yo tengo grabadora. Mi grabadora está aquí.
I have a tape recorder. My tape recorder is here.

Él tiene primos. Sus primos no están aquí.
He has cousins. His cousins aren't here.

¿Tiene Ud. hijos? ¿Dónde están sus hijos?
Do you have children? Where are your children?

In the case of "our," the possessive adjective also agrees in gender with the following noun.

a. Nosotros tenemos casa. Nuestra casa está en San Francisco.

We have a house. Our house is in San Francisco.

b. Nosotras tenemos cigarrillos. Nuestros cigarrillos están en la mesa.

We (fem.) have cigarettes. Our cigarettes are on the table.

*Long forms will be introduced later (L. 13-2-1).

Note that the possessive adjective agrees with the possessed noun and not with the possessor (a. and b. above).

D. Use of the Construction de + Subject Pronoun.

FORM:

- a. ¿Dónde está su grabadora?
Where is your (his, her, their) tape recorder?
- b. ¿Dónde está la grabadora de él?*
Where is his tape recorder?
- c. ¿Dónde está la grabadora de nosotros?
Where is our tape recorder?

FUNCTION:

a. Su(s) does not specify the owner precisely, and can be translated as "your," "his," "her," or "their." This ambiguity can be resolved by using the construction de + subject pronoun to indicate the owner. Note that in b. the definite article la replaces the possessive adjective su.

b. The construction de nosotros can be used optionally in place of nuestro(a)(s) (sentence c.). There is no corresponding construction in Spanish for the first person singular mi(s).

*Remember that de + él does not contract (L. 1-3-4).

1. Ser vs. estar.

FORM:

- a. Él está bien.
He is fine.
- b. Él está triste.
He is sad.
- c.(1) Él está en clase. (2) La clase es aquí.
He is in class. The class is (takes place) here.
- d. Él es capitán.
He is a captain.
- e. El libro es de mi amigo.
The book is my friend's (belongs to my friend).

FUNCTION:

These sentences illustrate some of the basic differences between ser and estar:

a. Estar is used with an adverb (sentence a.) or an adjective (sentence b.) to describe the subject's temporary state or condition: e.g., health (bien), state of mind (triste), etc.

It is also used with a location expression to give the subject's location (sentence c.(1)): e.g. en clase.

b. Ser is used in predicate noun constructions to identify or classify the subject (sentence d.): e.g., by rank (capitán), title, profession, etc.

It is also used with the preposition de to indicate ownership (sentence e.).

In the case of event nouns (class(activity), party, etc.), ser is used for location (sentence c.(2)).

2. NOUN/ADJECTIVE AGREEMENT

FORM:

	Column 1	Column 2
<u>El</u> doctor <u>está</u>	- ocupado <u>o</u>	- triste <u>o</u>
<u>La</u> señora <u>está</u>	- cansada <u>a</u>	- alegre <u>a</u>
<u>Los</u> alumnos <u>están</u>	- preocupados <u>os</u>	- alegres <u>os</u>
<u>Las</u> señoritas <u>están</u>	- contentas <u>as</u>	- tristes <u>as</u>

Adjectives in Spanish which agree in both gender and number with the noun they modify (Column 1) are listed (in dictionaries, vocabulary lists, etc.) under their masculine singular forms, ending in -o. All other adjectives are invariable with respect to gender, but still must agree in number (Column 2).

1. INDEFINITE ARTICLES.

FORM:

Singular	Plural
<u>un</u> libro - <u>a</u> book	<u>unos</u> libros - some books
<u>una</u> pluma - <u>a</u> pen	<u>unas</u> plumas - some pens

FUNCTION:

a. The indefinite article in Spanish is often omitted where an English speaker would expect to find it. For example, it is not generally used with an unmodified predicate noun indicating rank, profession, etc.

Juan es doctor.
Juan is a doctor.

b. It is also generally omitted before unmodified objects of tener (including expressions of discomfort), except to contrast one kind of object with another or to specify that there is only one object as opposed to two or more.

(1) ¿Tiene Ud. auto?
Do you have a car? (Any car as means of transportation)

No tengo auto.
I don't have a car. (Any car)

(2) ¿Tiene Ud. un auto?
Do you have a car? (As opposed to other means of transportation)

¿Qué tiene Ud.? - Tengo un auto.
What do you have? - I have a car. (As opposed to some other kind of object)

(3) ¿Tiene Ud. un auto?
Do you have one car? (As opposed to two or more)

(4) Tengo fiebre.
I have a fever.

c. The indefinite article is generally used with nouns modified by an adjective.

Él es un doctor muy bueno.
He is a very good doctor.

Ellos son unos doctores muy buenos.
They are (some) very good doctors.

Tengo un auto muy bueno.
I have a very good car.

Tengo unos autos muy buenos.
I have (some) very good cars.

Tengo una fiebre terrible.
I have a terrible fever.

2. USE OF THE PREPOSITION de WITH MODIFYING NOUNS.

FORM:

a. Tengo dolor de cabeza.
I have a headache.

b. Él es profesor de español.
He is a Spanish teacher.

c. ¿Su número de teléfono?
Your telephone number? (cf. L. 3-1-1)

FUNCTION:

In English a noun may modify another noun as in the construction "an X Y": e.g., "a headache," "a Spanish teacher," "a telephone number," etc. In Spanish, this modification is normally expressed by the inverted construction "a Y of X,"

using the preposition de: e.g., un dolor de cabeza, un profesor de español, un número de teléfono, etc. (sentences a.-c.).

Note that in sentence a. the whole expression dolor de cabeza can itself be considered as an unmodified noun, accounting for the omission of the indefinite article in Spanish.

3. POSITION OF ADJECTIVES.

FORM:

- a. Tengo un dolor de cabeza terrible.
I have a terrible headache.
- b. Ella es una buena secretaria.
She is a good secretary.
- c. Él es un doctor muy bueno.
He is a very good doctor.
- d. Él es un buen doctor.
He is a good doctor.

FUNCTION:

Adjectives in Spanish usually follow the noun they modify (sentence a.), particularly if the adjective is itself modified by an adverb (sentence c.). Bueno is one of those adjectives that can precede (sentence b.) or follow the noun (sentence c.): when it precedes, the singular masculine form bueno is shortened to buen (sentence d.).

2-3-4

4. IDIOMATIC USE OF tener.

FORM:

Tengo calor/frío.

I am hot/cold.

(Literally: I have heat/cold.)

FUNCTION:

Note that in the sentence above the verb tengo translates as "I am" and not "I have."

1. NUMBER uno.

FORM:

- a. ¿Tiene dos rifles? - No, tengo uno.
Do you have two rifles? - No, I have one.
- b. Tengo un rifle, una granada y dos pistolas.
I have one rifle, one grenade and two pistols.

Unlike the other numbers (dos, tres, cuatro, etc.) whose form doesn't change, uno is shortened to un when followed by a noun, and becomes una when referring to a feminine object (sentence b.).

FUNCTION:

Note that these alternate forms (un, una) coincide with those of the indefinite article, and may be translated as "a(n)" or "one," depending on what is being expressed.

Tienen un tanque.
They have one tank.
They have a tank.

2. USE OF ser WITH MARITAL STATUS.

FORM:

No soy casada. Soy soltera.
I'm not married. I'm single.

FUNCTION:

In addition to identifying persons by rank, title, or profession, ser is used to identify them by marital status.

1. Ser de TO INDICATE ORIGIN (BIRTHPLACE).

FORM:

- a. ¿De dónde es Ud.?
Where are you from?
- b. Soy de los Estados Unidos.
I'm from the United States.

Note, as in a. above, that in Spanish, prepositions (e.g., de) must precede the question words, while in English they can come at the end of the sentence.

FUNCTION:

The verb ser with the preposition de is used to indicate place of birth (city, state, country, etc.).

