

Speak Spanish Now for Law Offices

A Customized Learning Approach for Legal Professionals

Brian K. Jones



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Preface: A Customized Learning Approach to Language

The purpose of this text is to assist those in the legal profession with effective, immediate communication with Spanish-speaking persons. Therefore, this book's approach is to teach straightforward, oral communication that requires the learner to verbally produce while minimally relying on listening skills. It is primarily intended as one-way communication and does not require the learning of grammar or the development of written communiqué. However, certain anticipated responses have been included for you. Upon successfully learning the phrases from the text, the learner will be able to manage situations they commonly encounter on a daily basis, give instructions and make requests, ascertain personal information and interact with Spanish-speaking persons in a culturally appropriate manner.

Using This Text

This text has been designed to promote communication in Spanish for legal professionals, with its principal focus on the functions of paralegals/legal assistants. However, other legal professionals such as attorneys and legal secretaries, just to name a few, will find this text practical. Since not all sections of the text may be specific to your job duties, the text allows you to pick and choose what you will learn and concentrate on those areas that are most beneficial to you and your respective job duties. The pages have been perforated so you can easily remove sections you will not use in order to customize the book or make the most used pages more portable.

In learning the words and phrases in this text, you will be concentrating on oral communication. You will only write in Spanish if you wish prepare note cards to be used during an activity unless it is a requirement of your curriculum. Grammatical explanations are not necessary for any of the information you will be learning. Your instructor will lead you through a variety of oral exercises that will help you internalize these phrases and their meanings. The accompanying CD will enable you to listen to the phrases and practice their pronunciation. Your instructor may also choose to provide you with strategies that will make the CD more beneficial to you as a study aid. The CD may be used in class but is also highly recommended as an independent study aid.

The chapters have been broken down into sections and designated titles to help you manage the selection of the material you will choose to learn and/or utilize in the preparation of scripts (meaning, preparing ahead of time a guide or *script* of the discourse to be used when speaking with a Spanish-speaker in order to facilitate communication). However, make sure to peruse the text in its entirety for miscellaneous phrases you may find beneficial in your interactions with Spanish-speaking persons. Feel free to integrate phrases from multiple sections and/or chapters in order to customize the information you will need to convey to and/or obtain from the other person. It is highly suggested that you reference *Chapter 1—Getting Started* and *Chapter 2—Collecting Basic Personal Information in Person and by Phone* frequently, as these two chapters contain phrases you will mostly likely use on a regular basis when preparing scripts to be used with Spanish speakers. Throughout all chapters, the phrases and expressions follow a logical order for their delivery. However, there is no prescribed sequence you must follow when preparing scripts. How you decide to utilize and combine the phrases and expressions will be based solely on your own practical needs.

Immediately before each set of phrases, you will find a section titled **BEFORE YOU BEGIN**. These sections present pertinent information that will enable the learner to better understand the cultural differences between the Hispanic and Anglo cultures and thus manage a situation more effectively. Current statistics and important relevant information that focus on the Hispanic population have been included.

After the presentation of the last phrase in each chapter, you will find a **NOTES** section has been included which provides additional information about vocabulary used in the phrases for that chapter as well as guidelines for how to correctly manipulate certain phrases when addressing males, females, individuals and groups, etc.

Each chapter then concludes with written and oral activities that correspond to the material in order to provide comprehensive practice of the phrases and expressions you are studying. These activities may be utilized in variety of ways—homework assignments, in-class pair and/or group work (in addition to the activities provided in the instructor’s activities manual), review, etc. Answers are not provided for the written and oral activities as these are based directly on the phrases and vocabulary found in the respective chapter. Consult the appropriate chapter(s) when correcting your work. Remember that some activities may encompass multiple chapters.

Pronunciation

The purpose of the **pronunciation patterns** found directly above each Spanish phrase is to immediately generate proper or nearly proper pronunciation. By following these easy guidelines, communication becomes instantaneous. The words and sounds used in the **pronunciation patterns** are based on those used in English, so you will say what you see. Practice exercises to aid you in interpreting the **pronunciation patterns** and to prepare you for making those sounds correctly follow these brief explanations. Be sure to follow them in the designated order.

Instructions for Reading the Pronunciation Patterns

1. The separation of words has been indicated by one or more spaces.

ex. **boo[^]ay-nohs dee-ahs.** (two-word phrase)
Buenos días.

2. The separation of syllables has been indicated by a *hyphen*.

ex. **boo[^]ay-nohs dee-ahs.** (each word has two syllables)
Buenos días.

3. Syllables written in *bolded letters* are emphasized when spoken.

ex. **boo[^]ay-nohs dee-ahs.** (emphasis on **boo[^]ay** and **dee**)
Buenos días.

4. Syllables written in *letters not bolded* are not emphasized.

ex. **boo[^]ay-nohs dee-ahs.** (no emphasis on *-nohs* and *-ahs*)
Buenos días.

5. The *upward pointing arrow*, or the ([^]) sign, indicates a combination of sounds to be pronounced as one (1) syllable (one sound).

ex. **boo[^]ay-nohs dee-ahs.** (**boo[^]ay** is one sound)
Buenos días.

6. The *double r* you will see indicates a rolled or trilled “r” sound.

ex. *r-ray-goo-lahr.* (*rr* of *r-ray* is rolled/trilled)
Regular.

The double r, or “rr” in Spanish, is represented by “rr” in the pronunciation key. Do the best you can to imitate the sound but do not get frustrated, as long as you are making the effort you will be understood. Keep practicing and it will come with time. Likewise, anyone who has any prior knowledge of Spanish pronunciation may know that the *Spanish v* is often pronounced as a *soft English b*, although some dialects of spoken Spanish do pronounce the *Spanish v* the same as the *English v*. However, for the sake of consistency and simplicity, the *Spanish v* has been represented as the *letter b* in the pronunciation patterns throughout the text and may be pronounced as such. Additionally, the *Spanish t*, often sounds like the combination *th* or a soft letter *d* in spoken Spanish. Since our purpose here is to promote comprehensible communication without creating frustrating guidelines for exact pronunciation, the letter *t* is simply represented as the letter itself in the pronunciation guide and may be pronounced as such.

Introduction Exercise

With a partner or as a group, randomly select phrases from the text, analyze them and identify each of the above elements from the **pronunciation patterns** explanations. Do not practice pronunciation yet. Just become familiar with how to interpret the **pronunciation patterns**. You must practice the following pronunciation exercises thoroughly before attempting to read the pronunciation patterns for the phrases in this text!

Getting Started

Just like any other muscle in your body that is not accustomed to certain motions and movements, the tongue and mouth are no different. These exercises will help you warm up these muscles and form the correct positions with your mouth and tongue to produce relatively authentic Spanish pronunciation from the very beginning.

Pronunciation Exercise 1

This oral exercise is to help you become used to the basic sounds you will use and see throughout this text, all of which are based on the five basic vowel sounds of the Spanish alphabet—A, E, I, O, U. Though they are the same five vowels found in English, their sounds are rather different. In order to facilitate their production, in practicing this exercise, say exactly what you see as you would in English. Start by saying the words and sounds, going column by column (in sequence according to numbers). Do this as a class, then small groups, next in pairs, and finally individually. Remember, the sounds **bolded** in the first column should be applied to the combinations you will practice in each column that follows. These bolded sounds are the actual sounds of the corresponding Spanish vowel.

Spanish Vowel	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9
A	hah	ah	bah	kah	lah	mah	sah	tah	yah
E	day	ay	bay	kay	lay	may	say	tay	yay
I	see	ee	bee	kee	lee	mee	see	tee	yee
O	oh	oh	boh	koh	loh	moh	soh	toh	yoh
U	food	oo	boo	koo	loo	moo	soo	too	yoo

Pronunciation Exercise 2

The second practice exercise builds upon the previous one by introducing you to sound combinations you will use and see throughout the text. Practice these in the same manner as the first set. Remember to make letters linked with the upward pointing arrow (^) one syllable (one sound).

#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
<i>tah</i>	<i>boo^ay</i>	<i>tree</i>	<i>ahr</i>	<i>nahs</i>	<i>tahr</i>
<i>chah</i>	<i>tay</i>	<i>kree</i>	<i>ayr</i>	<i>nays</i>	<i>tayr</i>
<i>grah</i>	<i>poo^ay</i>	<i>moo^ee</i>	<i>eer</i>	<i>nees</i>	<i>teer</i>
<i>blah</i>	<i>tray</i>	<i>ghee*</i>	<i>ohr</i>	<i>nohs</i>	<i>tohr</i>
<i>trah</i>	<i>goo^ay</i>	<i>flee</i>	<i>oor</i>	<i>noos</i>	<i>toor</i>

* this g is like the letter g in the word *get* followed by the *ee* sound.

Pronunciation Exercise 3

Starting with column 1, make sure to emphasize the bolded letters according to the pronunciation key. Once again, remember to make letters linked with the upward pointing arrow (^) one syllable (one sound).

#1	#2	#3	#4
<i>gah</i> - <i>nahs</i>	<i>ah</i> - <i>sayr</i>	<i>tee</i> ^ <i>ay</i> - <i>nay</i>	<i>nah</i> - <i>see</i> - <i>mee</i> ^ <i>ayn</i> - <i>toh</i>
<i>dohn</i> - <i>day</i>	<i>ays</i> - <i>pahn</i> - <i>yohl</i>	<i>kee</i> ^ <i>ay</i> - <i>rayn</i>	<i>sah</i> - <i>rahm</i> - <i>pee</i> ^ <i>ohn</i>
<i>pah</i> - <i>gahn</i>	<i>rrays</i> - <i>pee</i> - <i>rahr</i>	<i>kee</i> - <i>see</i> ^ <i>ay</i> - <i>rah</i>	<i>dee</i> ^ <i>ah</i> - <i>bay</i> - <i>tays</i>
<i>ahn</i> - <i>yoh</i>	<i>door</i> - <i>meer</i>	<i>ees</i> - <i>toh</i> - <i>ree</i> ^ <i>ah</i>	<i>ee</i> - <i>payr</i> - <i>tayn</i> - <i>see</i> ^ <i>ohn</i>
<i>koo</i> ^ <i>ahn</i> - <i>toh</i>	<i>r</i> <i>ray</i> - <i>say</i> - <i>tahr</i>	<i>see</i> ^ <i>ayn</i> - <i>toh</i>	<i>see</i> - <i>ghee</i> ^ <i>ayn</i> - <i>tay</i>

* this g is like the letter g in the word *get* followed by the *ee* sound.

Pronunciation Exercise 4

Look through the text paying attention only to the pronunciation key and practice random examples as a class, then in pairs.