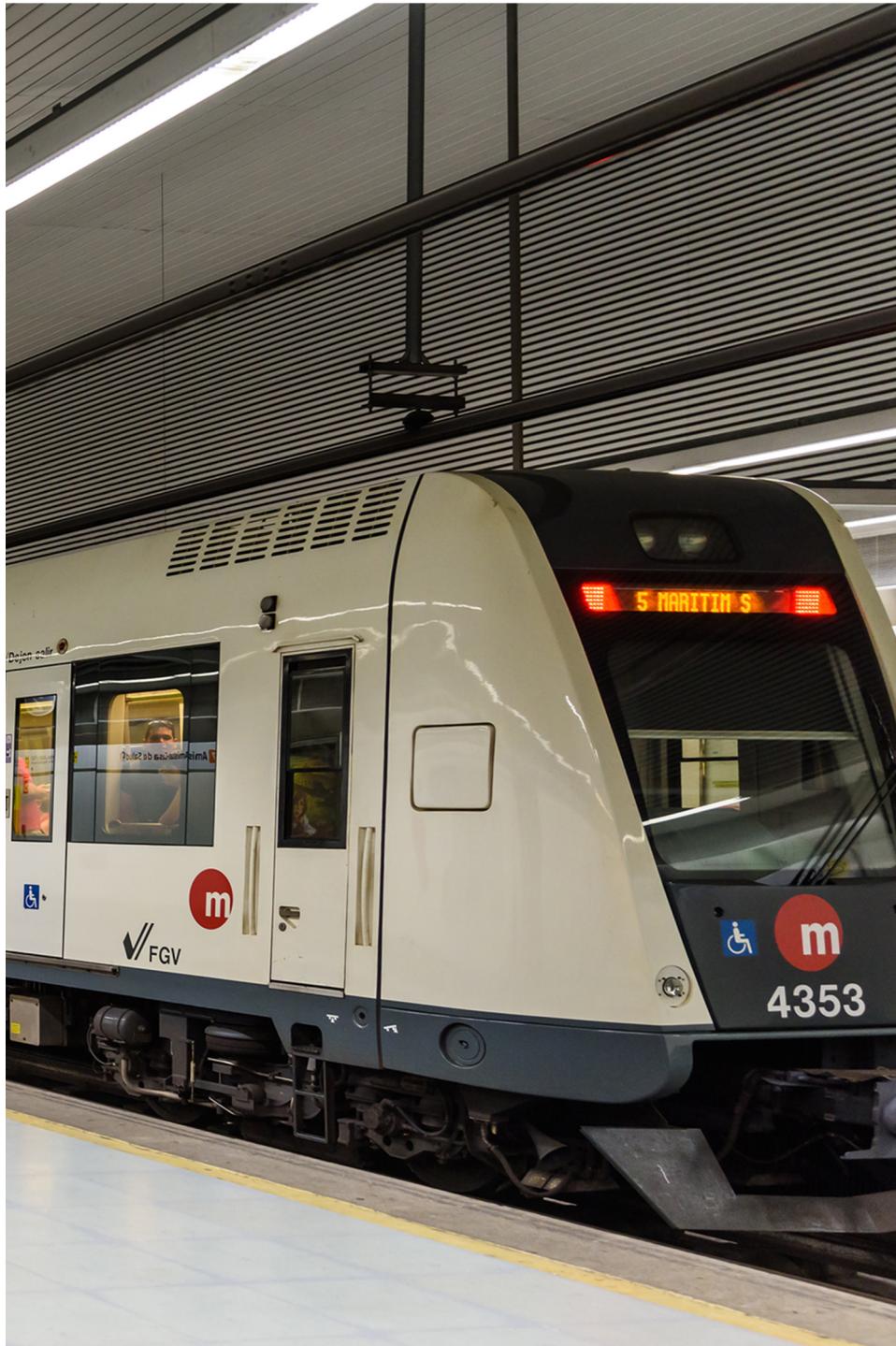


Introduction to Spanish



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About this free course

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Introduction

In this short course you will learn how to talk about your work and your working day. You will learn vocabulary for different professions, say what your job is, and how you go to work.

This course is an extract from the L106 Introduction to Spanish Studies (beginners) course. Whether you are a complete beginner or have some knowledge of Spanish you could give it a go and we hope that you enjoy the course!

The course comprises 4 hours of interactive activities, explanations, and tips about language learning.

It's a good idea to keep notes, either on paper in a notebook or on your preferred digital device, of the points you want to remember, such as key vocabulary, grammar rules, or expressions. There's also a quiz at the end of the course for you to practise what you've learnt.

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- talk about what you do for a living
- explain how you go to work
- conjugate some common regular and irregular verbs in the present tense.

This course is an extract from the [L106 Introduction to Spanish Studies \(beginners\)](#) course. Enjoy!

1 Professions

In this section you will learn vocabulary for different professions (*profesiones*, also called *oficios*), and their gender.

In this activity you will look at several professions and learn how to refer to men and women who have the same profession.



From left to right: Mónica Ojeda, escritora; Claudia Llosa, directora; Eduardo Galeano, escritor

In this activity you will look at several professions and learn how to refer to men and women who have the same profession.

Paso A

To begin by attuning your ear to Spanish, listen to **Audio 1**, a song about professions. Do not try to understand it, just focus on the rhythm of the language. The following traditional professions are mentioned: *botellero* 'bottle seller', *carpintero* 'carpenter' and *panadero* 'baker'.

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 1

Paso B

Here is a list of famous people from the Spanish-speaking world. Read who they are, and then complete the table with the correct word for each profession. The first one has been done for you.

Mónica Ojeda, escritora ecuatoriana
Claudia Llosa, directora de cine peruana
Eduardo Galeano, escritor y periodista uruguayo
Guillermo del Toro, director de cine mexicano
Sofía Vergara, actriz colombiana
Luis Fonsi, cantante portorriqueño
Marta Gómez, cantante colombiana
Álvaro Morte, actor español

Male

Female

singer cantante

Provide your answer...

writer

Provide your answer...

Provide your answer...

director

Provide your answer...

Provide your answer...

actor

Provide your answer...

Provide your answer...

Answer

	Male	Female
singer	cantante	cantante
writer	escritor	escritora
director	director	directora
actor	actor	actriz

Paso C

Complete the table with the missing masculine and feminine forms of Spanish words for people in these professions. You may want to look up words you don't know in the dictionary.

Male	Female
el pintor	la pintora
el secretario	Provide your answer...
el recepcionista	Provide your answer...
Provide your answer...	la estudiante
Provide your answer...	la camarera
Provide your answer...	la repartidora

Answer

Male	Female
el pintor	la pintora
el secretario	la secretaria
el recepcionista	la recepcionista
el estudiante	la estudiante
el camarero	la camarera
el repartidor	la repartidora

Language 1: Gender of professions

Most nouns denoting professional activities have the usual gender markings: *-o* for male and *-a* for female. A few follow other patterns or use the same word for both genders.

Ending	Masculine	Feminine	
-o for masculine -a for feminine	el diputado	la diputada	<i>member of parliament</i>
consonant for masculine, consonant + -a for feminine	el profesor el bailarín	la profesora la bailarina	<i>teacher dancer</i>
-ante -ente -ista	el estudiante el gerente el artista	la estudiante la gerente la artista	<i>student manager artist</i>

You will see that the endings in the last row (*-ante*, *-ente* and *-ista*) are the same for masculine and feminine. Note also that the masculine ending *-ín* has an accent mark while the feminine does not (*bailarín/bailarina*).

Note that many words for professions end in *-ero/-era* (as in *camarero/camarera*) and *-or/-ora* (as in *profesor/profesora*).

It is always advisable to check the gender of nouns in the dictionary.

To finish this section, watch this short Video 1 about verbs and verb forms in Spanish and define the following terms. It doesn't have to be a formal definition, just an explanation in your own words.

1. verb stem
2. verb ending
3. to conjugate

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 1



1. verb stem

Definition:

Provide your answer...

Answer

The **verb stem** is the part of the verb that is common to all verb forms, the part that is left when the endings are removed, e.g., *habl-*.

2. verb ending

Definition:

Provide your answer...

Answer

The **verb ending** is the part of the verb added to the stem that designates the person and number ('number' means whether singular or plural), e.g. *-o*, *-as*, *-a*.

3. to conjugate

Definition:

Provide your answer...

Answer

To conjugate a verb is to create the adequate verb form according to the person and number.

Language 2: Present tense of verbs ending in -ar

The majority of verbs in Spanish end in **-ar**, like *hablar* ('to speak'). This group of verbs is called the first conjugation. There are also verbs that end in **-er** or **-ir**. These belong to the second and the third conjugations respectively.

To conjugate a verb in Spanish, you need to start with the infinitive. This is the form of the verb that you find in the lists of words in a dictionary. In English, the infinitive is preceded by 'to', for example 'to speak'; in Spanish, the infinitive has a particular ending (**-ar**, **-er** or **-ir**).

Remove the **-ar**, **-er** or **-ir** ending from the infinitive. What is left is called the stem, which does not change in the vast majority of Spanish verbs. The stem serves as the base to which we add endings; there is a different ending for each person.

Here are the endings in the singular for all regular verbs ending in **-ar**.

HABL-AR

(yo)	hablo	Hablo japonés.	<i>I speak Japanese.</i>
(tú)	hablas	Hablas gallego.	<i>You (informal) speak Galician.</i>
(usted)	habla	Usted habla galés.	<i>You (formal) speak Welsh.</i>
(él/ella)	habla	Juan habla griego.	<i>John speaks Greek.</i>

You will have noticed that the verb form for *usted* ('you-formal') takes the same ending as the third person. This happens with all verbs and in all tenses. From now on you will find the *usted* form in the verb tables listed together with the third person (i.e. 'he/she').

2 Understanding professions

In this section you will learn how to say what you do for a living and how to conjugate the singular forms of the verbs ending in -ar, -er, and -ir in the present tense.



In this activity you will practise your listening skills.

Paso A

You can use the regular verb *trabajar* ('to work') to ask and say what someone does for a living.

Trabajar follows the same pattern as *hablar*.

trabajar

(yo)	trabajo
(tú)	trabajas
(usted)	trabaja
(él/ella)	trabaja

Complete the questions below with the correct form of the verb.

1. ¿En qué _____ (trabajar, usted)?

Provide your answer...

Answer

¿En qué trabaja?

2. ¿Trabajas o _____ (estudiar, tú)?

Provide your answer...

Answer

¿Trabajas o estudias?

Paso B

Listen to **Audio 2** and select from the list below what jobs and professions the different people say they do.

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 2

- ama de casa (housewife)
- barrendero/a (road sweeper)
- catedrático/a de universidad (university professor)
- estudiante (student)
- jubilado/a (retired person)
- parado/a (unemployed)
- pensionista (pensioner)
- profesor/a de música (music teacher)
- sacerdote (priest)
- taxista (taxi driver)

Language 3: Saying what you do for a living

To ask what someone does for a living, you can use the following expressions.

¿Cuál es tu profesión? (tú) / **¿Cuál** es su profesión? (usted)

What's your occupation?

¿En qué trabajas? (tú) / **¿En qué** trabaja? (usted)

What do you do?

¿Estudias o trabajas? (tú) / **Estudia o trabaja?** (usted)

Are you studying or (are you) working? / Do you study or (do you) work?

To give information about what you do, where you work and for whom, you can use the following expressions.

- **ser + occupation**

Soy enfermero.

I'm a nurse.

Soy cajera.

I'm a checkout assistant.

Note that in Spanish you don't use the indefinite article *un/una* before the profession.

- **trabajar + en + place/institution**

Trabajo **en** una empresa de construcción.

I work in/for a construction company.

Trabajo **en** un parking.

I work in a car park.

Trabajo **en** el Instituto Cervantes.

I work at the Cervantes Institute.

- **trabajar + para + person**

Trabajo **para** un dentista.

I work for a dentist.

Trabajo **para** una familia con tres niños.

I work for a family with three children.

- **trabajar + desde + casa**

Trabajo **desde** casa.

I work from home.

To explain what your occupation involves, you will often need a verb that describes the action, followed by a noun.

Soy barrendera. **Barro** la calle.

I'm a road sweeper. I sweep the street.

Soy camionero. **Transporto** fruta.

I'm a lorry driver. I transport fruit.

Soy repartidora de pizza. **Reparto** pizzas.

I'm a pizza delivery person. I deliver pizzas.

To say that you are not working, you can use the following expressions.

Estoy en paro. (Spain).

I'm unemployed.

Estoy parado/a. (Spain).

I'm unemployed.

Estoy desempleado/a. (LAm).

I'm unemployed.

Estoy / Soy jubilado/a.

I'm retired.

No trabajo.

I don't work.

Paso C

Now practise talking about the professions you have learned in this activity. Listen to **Audio 3** and respond according to the prompt. The last dialogue has been left open so that you can give your own information. (You can always make it up if you wish.)

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 3

Vocabulario

la clínica *clinic, hospital*

3 Saying what you do - practice



Can you see the name for 'firefighters' in mirror writing on the front of the fire engine? It is BOMBEROS.

As well as saying what you do and where you work / who you work for, you might want to give some details about the activities that you carry out as part of your job. In this activity you will learn how to say a little about what a job entails.

Paso A

Write full sentences in the first person (*yo*) using *ser* and *trabajar* to state what your job is and where you work. Follow the example (*ejemplo*) below.

Ejemplo:

profesora / escuela

→ **Soy profesora. Trabajo en una escuela.**

Vocabulario

el/la dependiente *shop assistant*

la fábrica *factory*

1. camarero / cafetería

Provide your answer...

Answer

Soy camarero. Trabajo en una cafetería.

2. gerente / banco

Provide your answer...

Answer

Soy gerente. Trabajo en un banco.

3. dependiente / supermercado

Provide your answer...

Answer

Soy dependiente. Trabajo en un supermercado.

4. psicóloga / clínica infantil

Provide your answer...

Answer

Soy psicóloga. Trabajo en una clínica infantil.

5. administrativo / oficina

Provide your answer...

Answer

Soy administrativo. Trabajo en una oficina.

6. electricista / fábrica

Provide your answer...

Answer

Soy electricista. Trabajo en una fábrica.

Paso B

Now read out the sentences from Paso A aloud to practise the forms and then listen to **Audio 4**, which contains these sentences, and repeat again, trying to imitate the sound of the Spanish as closely as you can.

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 4

1. Soy camarero. Trabajo en una cafetería.
2. Soy gerente. Trabajo en un banco.

3. Soy dependiente. Trabajo en un supermercado.
4. Soy psicóloga. Trabajo en una clínica infantil.
5. Soy administrativo. Trabajo en una oficina.
6. Soy electricista. Trabajo en una fábrica.

Skills: Selecting vocabulary that is useful for you personally

You will come across many new words throughout the module. Some of them will appear very frequently and others maybe only once. Although most of the vocabulary presented in the module consists of words or expressions that are frequently used in Spanish or are useful for the topics covered, some words may be more useful to you personally than others. Once you have got past an initial level of words that are always going to be useful, you can think about prioritising learning the words or expressions that you think you will use more frequently in Spanish or those that you often use in your own language. For example, if you have a particular hobby, you will want to know words that allow you to talk about it in Spanish.

Paso C

Read the occupations listed below, then listen to **Audio 5** and complete the sentences you hear with the speakers' occupations from the following list. Not all of them appear in the recording. Use the appropriate gender (as said by the speaker).

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 5

psicólogo/-a • secretario/-a • escritor/-a • panadero/-a • vendedor/-a • profesor/-a • taxista • artista • cantante • ama de casa

Paso D

Match each word in the first column with a word from the second and third columns, linking each occupation with a related activity, as in the example, and type it in the table. Try to guess the meaning of the words in each column or check them in the dictionary. At present you are working with just the vocabulary.

Ejemplo:

el barrendero barrer la calle

el barrendero	escribir	la página web
---------------	----------	---------------

el pianista	entregar	libros
el repartidor	editar	el piano
el escritor	aprender	el vocabulario
el estudiante	barrer	pizzas
el diseñador gráfico	tocar	la calle

el barrendero

Provide your answer...

Provide your answer...

el pianista

Provide your answer...

Provide your answer...

el repartidor

Provide your answer...

Provide your answer...

el escritor

Provide your answer...

Provide your answer...

el estudiante

Provide your answer...

Provide your answer...

el diseñador gráfico

Provide your answer...

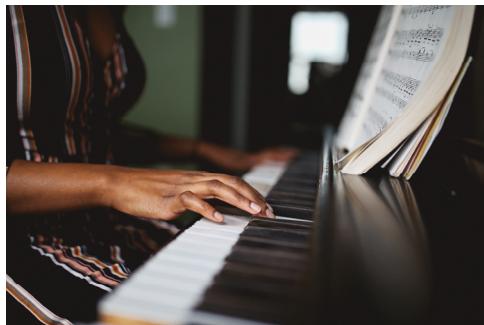
Provide your answer...

Answer

Here is the table with the words in the right order.

el barrendero	barrer	la calle
el pianista	tocar	el piano
el repartidor	entregar	pizzas
el escritor	escribir	libros
el estudiante	aprender	el vocabulario
el diseñador gráfico	editar	la página web

4 Verbs for jobs



In this activity you will learn more verbs you can use to describe jobs, so that you can say more about the activities you carry out.

Paso A

Now put the verbs from the previous activity into the correct form and write full sentences describing these occupations. Check the language note first if you need to.

Ejemplo:

El barrendero **barre** la calle.

el barrendero	barrer	la calle
el escritor	escribir	libros
el repartidor	entregar	pizzas
el estudiante	aprender	el vocabulario
el pianista	tocar	el piano
el diseñador gráfico	editar	la página web

Provide your answer...

Answer

1. El barrendero **barre** la calle.
2. El escritor **escribe** libros.
3. El repartidor **entrega** pizzas.
4. El estudiante **aprende** el vocabulario.
5. El pianista **toca** el piano
6. El diseñador gráfico **edita** la página web.

Language 5: Present tense of verbs ending in **-er** and **-ir**

To form the present tense of verbs ending in **-er** and **-ir**, you need to do the same as you did with **-ar** verbs: remove the **-er** or **-ir** ending, then add the different endings for each person to the stem (the part that is left).

Here are the endings for the singular of the regular verbs *aprender* and *vivir*. Note that the endings in singular are the same for both.

Verbs are grouped into 'conjugations' according to their different types: **-ar** verbs belong to the first conjugation, verbs ending in **-er** belong to the second conjugation, and verbs ending in **-ir** belong to the third conjugation.

aprender

(yo)	aprendo	Aprendo japonés.	<i>I learn Japanese.</i>
(tú)	aprendes	Aprendes gallego.	<i>You learn Galician.</i>
(usted)	aprende	Aprende galés.	<i>You learn Welsh.</i>
(él/ella)	aprende	Aprende galés.	<i>He/She learns Welsh.</i>

vivir

(yo)	vivo	Vivo en San José.	<i>I live in San José.</i>
(tú)	vives	Vives en Managua.	<i>You live in Managua.</i>
(usted)	vive	Vive en Jaén.	<i>You live in Jaén.</i>
(él/ella)	vive	Vive en Jaén.	<i>He/She lives in Jaén.</i>

Paso B

Now look at your sentences from Paso A, change them into the feminine and read them out aloud. Use the feminine form of each profession. Then listen to **Audio 6** below to check your answers.

1. El barrendero barre la calle.

Provide your answer...

2. El escritor escribe libros.

Provide your answer...

3. El repartidor entrega pizzas.

Provide your answer...

4. El estudiante aprende el vocabulario.

Provide your answer...

5. El pianista toca el piano

Provide your answer...

6. El diseñador gráfico edita la página web.

Provide your answer...

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 6

Paso C

Write the correct forms of the verb *vivir* in each dialogue.

1. ¿Dónde _____ usted?

(yo) _____ en Londres.

Provide your answer...

Answer

¿Dónde **vive** usted?

(yo) **Vivo** en Londres.

2. ¿Tú _____ en Inglaterra, no?

No, (yo) _____ en Escocia.

Provide your answer...

Answer

¿Tú **vives** en Inglaterra, no?

No, (yo) **vivo** en Escocia.

3. Alberto _____ en Barcelona.

No, Alberto _____ en Alicante.

Provide your answer...

Answer

Alberto **vive** en Barcelona.

No, Alberto **vive** en Alicante.

Paso D

Listen to **Audio 7** and decide whether you hear the first person (yo) or third person (él/ella/usted) of the verbs.

Audio content is not available in this format.

**Audio 7**

1. vive
 - él/ella/usted
 - yo
2. escribo
 - él/ella/usted
 - yo
3. barre
 - él/ella/usted
 - yo
4. abro
 - él/ella/usted
 - yo
5. aprende
 - él/ella/usted
 - yo

6. escribe
 - él/ella/usted
 - yo
7. vivo
 - él/ella/usted
 - yo

Paso E

The pronunciation of word-final *e* in Spanish is very different from that in English (where it is often not pronounced at all or is pronounced long). Now focus on this sound only. Make sure you pronounce it clearly but at the same time make it short. Listen to **Audio 8** and repeat.

Audio content is not available in this format.



Audio 8

5 En chiva or en guagua. Regional variations in vocabulary



Bolombolo, Colombia: traditional rural bus called chiva

There are several different words for 'bus' used by speakers of Spanish from different countries: for example, *autobús* and *colectivo*. This is called regional variations in vocabulary. Here you will learn more about these variations.

Paso A

Read the text and, using the information about regional variations in words, fill in the gaps in the sentences with one of these choices:

autobús • *camión* • *colectivo* • *guagua* • *micro* • *ómnibus*

Ejemplo:

En Cuba, Ricardo va al trabajo en *guagua*.

As with American and British English, you may find that the same thing is referred to by different words in different places. Usually these do not create great communication problems, though sometimes they may be the source of humorous confusions. For example, in Spain the word *saco* means 'sack', but in many Latin American countries it is also the most a common word for 'jacket'. When you use your dictionary, you will find that regional variations are often given.

Transport is a subject in which terms certainly vary between places. For example, a bus is *el autobús* in Spain, *la micro* in Chile, *el colectivo* in Argentina and Venezuela, *el ómnibus* in Uruguay, *la guagua* in Cuba and the Canary Islands and *el camión* in México. However, whichever word you use, you will probably be understood in most places.

1. En Chile, Saulo va a la universidad en ____.

Provide your answer...

Answer

En Chile, Saulo va a la universidad en **micro**.

2. En Argentina, Pedro va a la biblioteca en _____.

Provide your answer...

Answer

En Argentina, Pedro va a la biblioteca en **colectivo**.

3. En España, Juan va al trabajo en _____.

Provide your answer...

Answer

En España, Juan va al trabajo en **autobús**.

Paso B

Look up the following words in the dictionary and list them in the table according to where they are used. (Some have more than one meaning; for this step, choose the meaning that refers to transport.)

la taquilla • la parada • el carro • el paradero • el coche • la boletería • el auto

	España	Chile
bus	el autobús	la micro
ticket office	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
car	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
bus stop	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>

Answer

	España	Chile
bus	el autobús	la micro

ticket office	la taquilla	la boletería
car	el coche	el carro, el auto
bus stop	la parada	el paradero

Bear in mind that some of these terms may be used in several countries or regions.

6 Using your dictionary

There are many uses you can make of a dictionary. In this activity you will learn how to look up words you don't understand, and how to find an appropriate translation, examples of the usage of words, and pronunciation.

Paso A

Watch **Video 2** and decide whether the following statements are true or false.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 2

L106 Spanish Studies



USING YOUR DICTIONARY



1. You can find information about the gender of nouns in a dictionary.

- True
- False

2. You can find the translation of whole sentences in a dictionary.

- True

Many larger dictionaries have full sentences as examples. Many examples, however, consist of phrases/incomplete sentences.

- False

3. You can find the pronunciation of words in some dictionaries.

- True
- False

Paso B

Look up *plaza* and *¡Hasta luego!* in the dictionary and complete the columns with the relevant information. The first one, *café*, has been done for you as an example of what to do.

	<i>café</i>	<i>plaza</i>	<i>¡Hasta luego!</i>
Translation(s) of each sense/meaning	1. coffee 2. café or cafeteria	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
Examples and related expressions	un café con leche <i>a white coffee</i> un café solo <i>a black coffee</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
Other information	SUSTANTIVO, <i>el</i> → masculine noun Plural: <i>los cafés</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>

Answer

	<i>café</i>	<i>plaza</i>	<i>¡Hasta luego!</i>
Translation(s) of each sense/meaning	1. coffee 2. café or cafeteria	1. square 2. market place 3. job, post 4. (parking) place	See you!
Examples and related expressions	un café con leche <i>a white coffee</i> un café solo <i>a black coffee</i>	<i>la plaza mayor</i> the main square <i>una plaza de toros</i> a bullring	<i>¡Hasta el viernes!</i> See you on Friday!
Other information	SUSTANTIVO, <i>el</i> → masculine noun Plural: <i>los cafés</i>	SUSTANTIVO, <i>la</i> → feminine noun	Could be found under both headwords: <i>hasta</i> and <i>luego</i> .

7 Quiz

Question 1

Write the correct form of the verb *trabajar* to complete the sentence: trabajas – trabaja – trabajo

*Roberto **works** in an office.*

Roberto ... en una oficina.

Answer

Roberto **trabaja** en una oficina.

Question 2

Choose the correct form of the verb *trabajar* to complete the sentence: trabajas – trabaja – trabajo

*I don't **work**, but Mercedes **works** at the University of Salamanca.*

Yo no ... , pero Mercedes ... en la Universidad de Salamanca.

Answer

trabajas – trabaja – **trabajo**; trabajas – **trabaja** – trabajo

Yo no **trabajo**, pero Mercedes **trabaja** en la Universidad de Salamanca.

Question 3

You want to say that you are a student. How would you say it? Choose the correct answer.

- a) Soy jubilada
- b) Trabajo de dentista
- c) Soy estudiante

Question 4

Decide whether the statement is true or false.

The masculine form of 'profesora' is 'profesoro'.

- True
- False

Question 5

Decide whether the statement is true or false.

All professions or occupations ending in -ista have the same form for feminine and masculine, such as la periodista or el periodista.

- True
- False

Question 6

Choose the correct answer for the following question: '¿Dónde trabajas?'

- a) Es dentista
- b) En un supermercado
- c) No estoy jubilada

Question 7

Choose the correct question for the following answer: 'No trabajo, estoy desempleado'.

- a) ¿Cómo te llamas?
- b) ¿De dónde es usted?
- c) ¿En qué trabajas?

Question 8

Choose the appropriate verb to complete the sentence.

Soy barrendera. ...la calle.

- a) trabajo
- b) barro
- c) vivo

Question 9

Complete the following sentence with the appropriate verb.

Soy estudiante y ...a la escuela en autobús.

trabajo – voy – vivo

Provide your answer...

Answer

*Soy estudiante y **voy** a la escuela en autobús.*

Question 10

There are several words used in the Hispanic world to refer to a 'bus'. Which of the following words are **not** appropriate?

- guagua
- tren
- autobús
- micro
- tranvía
- colectivo

- omnibús
- camión

Question 11

Complete the following sentence with the appropriate conjugation on the verbs in the 'yo' form.

(Ser)... médico y (trabajar)...en un hospital. (Ir)...al trabajo en coche.

Provide your answer...

Answer

Soy médico y **trabajo** en un hospital. **Voy** al trabajo en coche.

Conclusion

We hope you enjoyed this short taster course. You should now have some understanding about the present tense verb forms in Spanish and how to say what you do for a living. Now that you have learned about the richness of regional expressions, you may wish to progress your learning further by following The Open University's beginners' Spanish module (30 credits): [L106: Introduction to Spanish studies \(beginners\)](#).

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