

THE SPEAK CLEARLY METHOD

FREE PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

English Pronunciation for Spanish Speakers

para hispanohablantes · built around your first language

/θ/ TH

B vs V

es- start

vowels

z & sh

the R

You don't have to lose your accent.

You have to be understood.

by Evangeline Smith & Miriam Smith · authors of Speak Clearly

THE PRACTICAL ENGLISH SERIES

English Pronunciation for Spanish Speakers

A Speak Clearly Method guide

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Companion to "Speak Clearly: A Practical Guide to English Pronunciation."

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Built for Spanish speakers

Your accent isn't random — it's Spanish, a clear and musical language, showing through in English. Because Spanish follows consistent rules, the places it shapes your English are predictable. And predictable means fixable.

This guide skips the sounds you already handle well and goes straight to the handful that most affect whether English listeners understand you the first time.

The promise

This is not about erasing your accent or sounding American. Only about 1 in 4 English speakers learned it as a first language — you're the majority, not the exception. We keep your accent and fix only what gets in the way of being understood.

How to use it

Read the strengths on the next page first, then work through the fix cards one at a time. Say everything OUT LOUD — into your phone's recorder or a mirror. A sound only counts when it survives outside the page.

Sounds you already own

Spanish gives you a real head start. Several English sounds that trip up other learners are ones you've made your whole life. Trust them.

ch → CH

Your ch in mucho, chico is exactly English "ch" in cheese, watch, teacher.

Clear vowels

Your five vowels are crisp and consistent — a strong, clear foundation to build on.

ñ → 'ny'

Your ñ in niño, español is close to the 'ny' in canyon, onion.

Most consonants

p, t, k, m, n, l, f, s, d, g — you already make all of these clearly.

Start from these. When a new English sound feels hard, remember how many you already make perfectly.

Fix cards · 1 of 3

iɪ

/ɪ iː/

Ship vs Sheep

SPANISH HABIT Spanish has one 'i', so short "ship" and long "sheep" sound identical to the ear.

THE FIX Short /ɪ/: relaxed and quick. Long /iː/: spread your lips like a smile and hold it a beat longer.

ship/sheep

live/leave

fill/feel

b v

/b v/

B vs V

SPANISH HABIT In Spanish, b and v sound the same, so "berry/very" and "bat/vat" merge into one.

THE FIX For V, rest your top teeth on your bottom lip and buzz. For B, start with your lips together.

berry/very

bat/vat

boat/vote

TH

/θ ð/

The TH sound

SPANISH HABIT Most Spanish varieties have no TH, so "think" becomes "sink/tink" and "this" becomes "dis."

THE FIX Tongue tip between your teeth, then push air. (Castilian speakers — you already have it in 'cielo'!)

think

three

this

mother

Fix cards · 2 of 3

es-

clusters

Don't add 'e'

SPANISH HABIT

Spanish words don't start s+consonant (escuela, España), so an 'e' sneaks in: "school"→"eschool."

THE FIX

Start directly on the s — no 'e' before it. Hiss the s, then slide straight into the next sound.

school

Spain

student

start

Z S

/z/

Z is a buzz

SPANISH HABIT

Spanish s is always /s/, so "zoo" becomes "soo" and "eyes" becomes "ice."

THE FIX

For z, keep your voice buzzing — hand on throat. s = just air; z = a buzz you can feel.

zoo

eyes

buzz

is

sh

/ʃ/

SH vs CH

SPANISH HABIT

Spanish has no 'sh', so "she" becomes "che" and "ship" becomes "chip."

THE FIX

For sh, hold a long, smooth hiss with no 't' at the start. ch = t+sh; sh = just the hiss.

she

ship

wash

Fix cards · 3 of 3

-s -d

endings

Keep the endings

SPANISH HABIT

Spanish has few final consonants, so ‘-ed’ and ‘-s’ get dropped and clusters simplify.

THE FIX

Say the whole ending crisply: askED, dogS, helpED — don’t let the last sound fall off.

asked

dogs

helped

first

R

/r/

The English R

SPANISH HABIT

The Spanish r is a tap or trill. The English r touches nothing — a rolled r sounds foreign.

THE FIX

Curl your tongue up and back and let it FLOAT — no contact anywhere. Round your lips slightly.

red

right

car

around

PRACTISE

Your 7-day plan

Ten minutes a day. Record yourself on day 1 and day 7 — hearing your own progress is the most motivating thing you'll do.

DAY
1

B vs V

Teeth-on-lip for V. Drill berry/very, bat/vat. Record 3 sentences — keep them.

DAY
2

Ship / sheep

The smile test in the mirror. Drill ship/sheep, live/leave, fill/feel.

DAY
3

es- clusters

No 'e' before s: school, Spain, student, start. Say each 10×, starting on the s.

DAY
4

TH

Tongue between teeth: think, three, this. Slow and clear.

DAY
5

Z & SH

Buzz the z (zoo, eyes); hiss the sh (she, ship). Hand on throat for z.

DAY
6

Endings & R

Crisp endings (asked, dogs); float the r (red, right).

DAY
7

Together

Re-record your day-1 sentences. Compare. Pick your hardest sound to keep polishing.

WHEN YOU'VE GOT THESE

Ready for all 22 sounds?

This guide covers the sounds Spanish speakers most need. Speak Clearly — the full book — covers all 22 sounds and speech patterns, with minimal pairs and tongue twisters for every one, guides for six first languages, and a complete 30-day plan.

Speak Clearly

A Practical Guide to English Pronunciation

All 22 sounds, first-language guides, self-assessment and a 30-day plan.

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**Speak clearly.
Speak as yourself.**

Habla como eres.

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