

Rules for Stress

In Spanish, words are spelled just like they sound. In order to take advantage of this simple and nearly perfect system of spelling, one must first know the rules for stress - that is, how to know which syllable is pronounced the strongest.

Natural Stress Rules

Rule 1:

Words ending in a vowel; n or s are stressed on the 2nd to last syllable.

casa	libro	madre	lunes
ca - sa	li - bro	ma - dre	lu - nes

Rule 2:

Words ending in a consonant (not including *n* and *s*) are stressed on the last syllable.

beber	papel	verdad
be - ber	pa - pel	ver - dad

a, e, i, o, u, n, s...
second-to-last syllable
gets the "stress-ay"

When a word ends in a
different consonant,
then you stress it
at the **end!!**

Rule 3: To accent or not to accent!

Words that do not follow Rule 1 or 2 must have a written accent mark over the stressed vowel.

periódico	miércoles	lápiz
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Written accents are also used to differentiate between words that are pronounced the same but have different meanings or grammatical uses:

si - if	mi - my	el - the	tu - your
sí - yes	mí - me	él - he	tú - you

¡OjO! There are additional formal rules for written accents, but for our purposes in 7th grade Spanish, we will focus on learning these.

Try not to think of these rules as burdensome. Rather, view them as your friends.

They allow you to pronounce any Spanish word correctly.