

Cognates

Cognados

English - Spanish

Cognates help make Spanish one of the easiest languages for English speakers to master.

Spanish cognates are words that sound the same (or almost the same) in English *and* have the same meaning in both languages.

Memorizing Spanish cognates is the fastest way to expand your vocabulary!

Here, we'll share some of the easiest and most helpful cognates in Spanish to boost your conversational skills.

By studying cognate patterns, you can tap into thousands of Spanish vocabulary words that you already know.

Here are some of the most common types of cognate patterns.

Spanish Cognates Without Spelling Changes

The easiest Spanish cognates to recognize are exactly the same in English.

However, the Spanish pronunciation of the word is usually slightly different than what you're used to.

Some examples are:

metro, hospital, idea, escape, lava, visa, sociable, inevitable, funeral, original, cereal, horrible, and motor.

Spanish Cognates that Add an *-ar* or *-ir*

In Spanish, verbs end in *-ar*, *-er*, or *-ir*, and each follows its own conjugation rules.

Many verb cognates exist by simply adding *-ar* or *-ir* to the English version of the word.

Some examples are:

adopt – *adoptar*, calm – *calmar*, control – *controlar*, limit – *limitar*, invert – *invertir*, and insist – *insistir*.

Spanish Cognates that Change *-tion* to *-ción*

The common English suffix *-tion* is used to form noun versions of verbs. It commonly expresses the state or action of the verb.

Luckily for Spanish learners, the rule is consistent in Spanish nouns as well but with the ending *-ción*.

Some examples are:

action – *acción*, celebration – *celebración*, condition – *condición*, nation – *nación*, and fiction – *ficción*.

Spanish Cognates that Add an –o

This type of cognate is so common that many Spanish learners will try adding an –o to any English word when they don't know the Spanish version. Sometimes it works, although this isn't always the case.

Some examples are:

academic – académico, alcoholic – alcohólico, domestic – doméstico, organic – orgánico, and panic – pánico.

There are many more cognates in Spanish, as well as patterns, other than the ones listed above. Taking the time to study cognate patterns will increase your vocabulary tenfold. However, be aware of false cognates! These are words that appear to be the same in two languages, but actually have very different meanings.

For example, *embarazada* means “pregnant” in Spanish, but it's often confused with “embarrassed” in English because they appear to be similar.

Here are some general rules you can use to understand how English and Spanish cognates relate:

- ity* in English becomes –*idad* in Spanish (ie. difficulty = *dificultad*)
- ous* in English becomes –*oso* in Spanish (ie. curious = *curioso*)
- ance* in English becomes –*ancia* in Spanish (ie. ambulance = *ambulancia*)

Getting Around



airport/aeropuerto



bank/banco



bar/bar



car/carro



distance/distancia



explore/explorar



gas/gas



hotel/hotel



island/isla



map/mapa



mountain/montaña



north/norte



ocean/océano



office/oficina



park/parque



restaurant/
restaurante



station/estación



train/tren



theater/teatro



university/
universidad



Emergencies



accident/**accidente**



crime/**crimen**



doctor/**doctor**



emergency/
emergencia



hospital/
hospital



medical/
médico



medicine/
medicina



police/
policía



urgent/
urgente



Chatting with Spanish Speakers



absolutely/
absolutamente

allergic/
alérgico



coffee/**café**



cost/**costo**



day/**día**



dollar/**dólar**



excellent/**excelente**



family/**familia**

fantastic/
fantástico

favorite/
favorito

interesting/
interesante



language/
lenguaje



menu/**menú**



minute/**minuto**



music/**música**



nature/**naturaleza**



necessary/
necesario

X

no/**no**

123

number/**número**



opinion/**opinión**



or/**o**



pardon/
perdón



past/
pasado

perfect/
perfecto



person/**persona**

popular/
popular

possible/
posible



price/**precio**

problem/
problema

regular/
regular

repeat/
repetir

return/
retorno



second/**segundo**



service/**servicio**

situation/
situación



social/**social**

special/
especial

sport/
deporte

state/**estado**

story/
historia



tea/**té**



telephone/**teléfono**

temperature/
temperatura

terrible/
terrible

use/
usar

visit/
visitar