

2.2 Forming questions in Spanish



ANTE TODO

There are three basic ways to ask questions in Spanish. Can you guess what they are by looking at the photos and photo captions on this page?



AYUDA

With a partner, take turns saying out loud the example statements and questions on this page. Your pitch indicates whether you are making a statement or asking a question. Then take turns making up statements of your own and turning them into questions, using all three methods.

- ▶ One way to form a question is to raise the pitch of your voice at the end of a declarative sentence. When writing any question in Spanish, be sure to use an upside-down question mark (¿) at the beginning and a regular question mark (?) at the end of the sentence.

Statement

Ustedes trabajan los sábados.
You work on Saturdays.

Carlota busca un mapa.
Carlota is looking for a map.

Question

¿Ustedes **trabajan** los sábados?
Do you work on Saturdays?

¿Carlota **busca** un mapa?
Is Carlota looking for a map?

- ▶ You can also form a question by inverting the order of the subject and the verb of a declarative statement. The subject may even be placed at the end of the sentence.

Statement

SUBJECT VERB
Ustedes trabajan los sábados.
You work on Saturdays.

SUBJECT VERB
Carlota regresa a las seis.
Carlota returns at six.

Question

VERB SUBJECT
¿**Trabajan ustedes** los sábados?
Do you work on Saturdays?

VERB SUBJECT
¿**Regresa** a las seis **Carlota**?
Does Carlota return at six?

- ▶ Questions can also be formed by adding the tags **¿no?** or **¿verdad?** at the end of a statement.

Statement

Ustedes trabajan los sábados.
You work on Saturdays.

Carlota regresa a las seis.
Carlota returns at six.

Question

Ustedes trabajan los sábados, **¿no?**
You work on Saturdays, don't you?

Carlota regresa a las seis, **¿verdad?**
Carlota returns at six, right?

Question words

Interrogative words

¿Adónde?	Where (to)?	¿De dónde?	From where?
¿Cómo?	How?	¿Dónde?	Where?
¿Cuál?, ¿Cuáles?	Which?; Which one(s)?	¿Por qué?	Why?
¿Cuándo?	When?	¿Qué?	What?; Which?
¿Cuánto/a?	How much?	¿Quién?	Who?
¿Cuántos/as?	How many?	¿Quiénes?	Who (plural)?

- To ask a question that requires more than a *yes* or *no* answer, use an interrogative word.

¿**Cuál** de ellos estudia en la biblioteca?
Which of them studies in the library?

¿**Adónde** caminamos?
Where are we walking (to)?

¿**Cuántos** estudiantes hablan español?
How many students speak Spanish?

¿**Por qué** necesitas hablar con ella?
Why do you need to talk to her?

¿**Dónde** trabaja Ricardo?
Where does Ricardo work?

¿**Quién** enseña la clase de arte?
Who teaches the art class?

¿**Qué** clases tomas?
What classes are you taking?

¿**Cuánta** tarea hay?
How much homework is there?

- When pronouncing this type of question, the pitch of your voice falls at the end of the sentence.

¿**Cómo** llegas a clase?
How do you get to class?

¿**Por qué** necesitas estudiar?
Why do you need to study?

- Notice the difference between **¿por qué?**, which is written as two words and has an accent, and **porque**, which is written as one word without an accent.

¿**Por qué** estudias español?
Why do you study Spanish?

¡**Porque** es divertido!
Because it's fun!

- In Spanish **no** can mean both *no* and *not*. Therefore, when answering a yes/no question in the negative, you need to use **no** twice.

¿Caminan a la universidad?
Do you walk to the university?

No, no caminamos a la universidad.
No, we do not walk to the university.

CONSULTA

You will learn more about the difference between **qué** and **cuál** in **Estructura 9.3**, p. 316.



¡INTÉNTALO!

Make questions out of these statements. Use the intonation method in column 1 and the tag **¿no?** method in column 2.

Statement

- Hablas inglés.
- Trabajamos mañana.
- Ustedes desean bailar.
- Raúl estudia mucho.
- Enseño a las nueve.
- Luz mira la televisión.

Intonation

¿Hablas inglés?

Tag questions

Hablas inglés, ¿no?

recursos

