

# Spanish A2

## — What to Study

Level: **A2 (Waystage)** · Language: **Spanish** · Audience: **Learners**

A2 is where Spanish gains a past. At A1 you could describe your life as it is right now; at A2 you can tell someone what happened yesterday, what you used to do as a child, and what you are going to do next weekend. That single addition — time — roughly triples what you can talk about.

The Common European Framework describes A2 as being able to understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance: basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment. You can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a direct exchange of information on familiar matters, and describe in simple terms aspects of your background, immediate environment and matters of immediate need.

The defining A2 skill is narration. Everything below builds toward it.

## Grammar to master

**The past tenses.** This is the centre of gravity of the whole level, and the place where most learners stall. Learn them one at a time, then contrast them deliberately.

- *Pretérito indefinido* for completed actions: *ayer comí paella*. Get the regular endings solid, then the high-frequency irregulars — *ser/ir, estar, tener, hacer, poder, decir, venir*.
- *Pretérito perfecto* for past events connected to the present: *hoy he trabajado mucho*. Formed with *haber* plus the participle. Note that its use is much more common in Spain than in most of Latin America, so what sounds natural depends on where you are learning.
- *Pretérito imperfecto* for description, habit and background: *cuando era pequeño, vivía en Busan*. Only three irregular verbs — *ser, ir, ver* — which makes it the friendliest tense in Spanish.
- The contrast between *indefinido* and *imperfecto*. This is the real work of A2. The rule is not about how long ago something happened; it is about whether you are advancing the story or setting the scene.

**Talking about the future.**

- *ir a* plus infinitive for plans: *voy a estudiar*. This is the everyday future and should come first.
- The simple future tense, at least for recognition and for common irregulars such as *tendré* and *habrá*.

**Object pronouns.** The second major structural hurdle after *ser/estar*.

- Direct object pronouns: *lo, la, los, las*
- Indirect object pronouns: *le, les*, and the shift of *le* to *se* before *lo/la*
- Placement: before the conjugated verb, or attached to an infinitive or gerund

- Combining both in one sentence: *te lo doy*

### Other structures.

- *estar* plus gerund for actions in progress: *estoy comiendo*
- Affirmative and negative commands for *tú* and *usted*, at least for instructions and advice
- Comparatives and superlatives: *más... que*, *menos... que*, *tan... como*, *el más*
- *por* and *para* in their most common contrasts
- Simple subordination with *que*, *porque*, *cuando*, *si*
- *ya*, *todavía*, *aún*, and other markers that interact with the perfect
- Impersonal *se*: *aquí se habla español*

## Vocabulary areas

Target roughly 1,500 to 2,000 usable words. At this level, systematically collecting the vocabulary of a topic before you need it pays off more than incidental reading.

- Travel: booking, accommodation, airports and stations, problems on a trip
- Health: the body, symptoms, the pharmacy, a doctor's appointment
- Shopping: sizes, materials, exchanges and complaints
- Work and study: job roles, workplaces, schedules, applications
- The home and neighbourhood in more detail, including furniture and services
- Free time, sport, film, music, and expressing opinions about them
- Technology and everyday digital life
- Food beyond the basics: recipes, ingredients, dietary restrictions
- Biography: life events, dates, stages of life
- Weather and climate in more detail
- Feelings and simple personality description

## What you should be able to do

- Tell the story of your weekend, your last holiday or your school years
- Describe what you used to do and how things have changed
- Make and change plans, and explain why
- Handle a hotel booking, a pharmacy visit or a return at a shop
- Give simple instructions and advice
- Compare two people, places or options

- Understand short, clear announcements, messages and personal emails
- Write a personal email or message narrating recent events
- Sustain a routine conversation with a cooperative speaker without constantly breaking down

## Common difficulties

**Indefinido versus imperfecto.** The most persistent problem at this level, and the one that most reliably reveals a learner's true level. English does not force this choice, so there is no shortcut through translation. Practise with real narrative — retell a film plot, describe a childhood day — rather than with isolated gap-fill exercises.

**Por and para.** Both become "for", and the standard lists of uses are long and easy to forget. Learn them through fixed collocations you meet in context, not by memorising the list.

**Object pronoun placement.** Learners routinely get the pronoun right and the position wrong. Drill the attached forms — *dámelo, voy a dártelo* — separately.

**Regional variation in the perfect.** If you learn in Spain and travel to Argentina, or the reverse, the tense that sounded correct will suddenly sound off. This is variation, not error. Know both.

**Plateau risk.** A2 is where many learners stop improving, because A2 Spanish is already enough to get by as a tourist. Getting to B1 requires deliberately talking about things you do not yet have the words for.

## How to know you are ready for B1

You are ready when you can narrate a past event for a minute or two without stopping to assemble each verb, and when choosing between *indefinido* and *imperfecto* happens without conscious deliberation more often than not. If narration still requires rehearsal, stay at A2 — B1 assumes this is automatic and builds the subjunctive on top of it.

## Next step

Move on to the Spanish B1 guide, which introduces the subjunctive and the shift from reporting facts to expressing attitudes toward them.

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*Written by LinguaXchange. Aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) A2 descriptors. For the official Spanish A2 examination syllabus, see UNED's published prueba libre syllabus.*