

22

Word Formations

¿Cuánto sabe usted?

How Much Do You Know Already?



1. What's an **autorzuelo**?
2. How do you change a cup into a tiny cup in Spanish?
3. Turn the adjective **triste** into a verb form.
4. What noun is derived from the verb **gastar**?
5. What verb is derived from the noun **vaso**?

Diminutives and Augmentatives

Forming Diminutives

Formación de diminutivos

There are two important groups of words in Spanish that are created by adding a suffix to a noun—the diminutives and the augmentatives. The diminutive suffix **-ito** implies endearment or a decrease in size, though it may also be used sarcastically. Note how the ending denotes both gender and number:

el libro (book) → **el librito** (small book)

la mesa (table) → **la mesita** (small table)

mi hermano (brother) → **mi hermanito** (my dear, little, and/or younger brother)

mi hermana (sister) → **mi hermanita** (my dear, little, and/or younger sister)

mis hermanitos (my dear/little/younger brothers or sisters)

Some words change in spelling when the suffix is added. These include any proper names:

- **g** → **gu** **amigo** → **amiguito** **Miguel** → **Miguelito**
(friend → dear friend)
- **c** → **qu** **hueco** → **huequito** **Paco** → **Paquito**
(hole → little hole)
- **z** → **c** **lápiz** → **lapicito** **Luz** → **Lucita**
(pencil → little pencil)

If the noun ends in **-n**, **-r**, or has more than one syllable and ends in **-e**, then the suffix **-cito/-cita** is added instead of **-ito/-ita**:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| la sartén (pan) | → | la sartencita (small pan) |
| el borrador (eraser) | → | el borradorcito (small eraser) |
| el dulce (sweet) | → | el dulcecito (small sweet) |

The suffix **-ecito/-ecita** is also added to two-syllable nouns ending in **-o** or **-a** that have **ie** or **ue** in the first syllable. Notice how the **-o** or **-a** is dropped first:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| las piernas (legs) | → | las piernecitas (short or thin legs) |
| la pierna (leg) | → | la piernecita (little leg) |
| la tienda (store) | → | la tiendecita (little store) |

The suffixes **-zuelo/-zuela** and **-illo/-illa** are considered other diminutive endings in Spanish, but they generally express disgust or sarcasm:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| la falda (skirt) | → | la faldilla (cheap skirt) |
| el actor (actor) | → | el actorzuelo (lousy actor) |
| la casa (house) | → | la casilla (insignificant house) |

Sometimes, Spanish uses the diminutive form with adjectives and adverbs:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| solo (alone) | → | solito (all alone) |
| chica (small) | → | chiquita (very small) |
| verde (green) | → | verdecito (greenish) |
| poco (small amount) | → | poquito (very small amount) |
| cerca (close) | → | cerquita (very close) |
| ahora (now) | → | ahorita (right now) |

TIP

A few diminutive forms are actually separate words in Spanish:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| el bolso (handbag) | → | el bolsillo (pocket) |
| la mano (hand) | → | la manecilla (clock hand) |
| la cabra (goat) | → | la cabrilla (kind of fish) |



LA PRÁCTICA 1

Use diminutives as you translate these English phrases into Spanish:

1. very soon **prontito** _____
2. poor little thing _____
3. pocket _____
4. granny _____
5. tiny garden _____
6. sweet Carlos _____
7. dear owner _____
8. small body _____
9. a little early _____
10. frail little doctor _____
11. puppy _____
12. small party _____
13. tiny voice _____
14. reddish _____
15. small light _____

Forming Augmentatives

Formación de aumentativos

Most nouns form augmentations in Spanish by adding **-ón** or **-ona**. These suffixes normally imply an increase in size, but may also be used in sarcasm:

la jarra (jar)	→	el jarrón (big jar)
la maleta (suitcase)	→	el maletón (giant suitcase)
la mujer (woman)	→	la mujerona (large woman)
la soltera (single woman)	→	la solterona (old maid)
la nariz (nose)	→	el narizón (big-nosed)
el grito (shout)	→	el gritón (loud-mouth)

In fact, **-ón** and **-ona** are often added to the stems of verbs to form adjectives. Notice how most of these words describe a person in a negative way:

- llorar** (to cry) → **llorón** (one who cries too much)
Nanita es muy llorona. (Nanita is a big crybaby.)
- quejarse** (to complain) → **quejón** (one who complains a lot)
Ellos son quejones. (They are big complainers.)
- preguntar** (to ask) → **preguntón** (one who asks too many questions)
Tú eras preguntona. (You were too inquisitive.)

By adding the augmentative suffix **-ote** or **-ota** to a noun, one implies a stronger, more negative meaning to the concept of increased size:

- los ojos** (eyes) → **los ojotes** (giant, ugly eyes)
la camisa (shirt) → **la camisota** (huge, repulsive shirt)

The suffix **-ucho** or **-ucha** also suggests some form of ugliness in Spanish, but without the size:

- carro** (car) → **carrucho** (old, beat-up car)
casa (house) → **casucha** (shabby, run-down house)

TIP

Several words ending in the same letters as the augmentative suffixes have unique meanings and do not necessarily indicate ugliness or an increase in size:

el ratón	mouse	el islote	islet
el guapote	handsome man	el callejón	alley
el sillón	armchair		



LA PRÁCTICA 2

First identify the original nouns, adjectives, or adverbs within these augmentatives, and then translate them into English:

- orejona oreja big-eared female
- zapatote _____
- preguntón _____
- malazo _____

5. cuartucho _____
6. contestón _____
7. grandote _____
8. tarjetota _____
9. flacucho _____
10. gordaza _____

Other Word Formations

Forming Nouns from Verbs

Formación de sustantivos basados en verbos

Several nouns are derived from the past participle of the verb. Notice how the **-ar** endings change to **-ada**, while the **-er** and **-ir** endings change to **-ido**:

oír (to hear)	→	el oído (ear)
comer (to eat)	→	la comida (food)
entrar (to enter)	→	la entrada (entrance)
subir (to climb)	→	la subida (climb)
llegar (to arrive)	→	la llegada (arrival)
salir (to leave)	→	la salida (exit)
mirar (to look)	→	la mirada (look)

Some nouns are derived from **-ar** verbs that change their endings to **-o** or **-a**. Notice that a few nouns include the irregular stem changes:

trabajar (to work)	→	el trabajo (job)
esperar (to wait)	→	la espera (waiting)
gastar (to spend)	→	el gasto (expense)
ayudar (to help)	→	la ayuda (help)
dudar (to doubt)	→	la duda (doubt)
charlar (to chat)	→	la charla (chat)
caminar (to walk)	→	el camino (road)
besar (to kiss)	→	el beso (kiss)
cocinar (to cook)	→	la cocina (kitchen)

Other nouns actually change to forms of their irregular base verbs:

volar (to fly)	→	el vuelo (flight)
comenzar (to begin)	→	el comienzo (beginning)
decir (to say)	→	el dicho (saying)
volver (to return)	→	la vuelta (return)
caer (to fall)	→	la caída (fall)

Several nouns ending in **-ción** are derived from **-ar** verbs. Remember that words ending in **-tion** in English generally end in **-ción** in Spanish:

investigation	investigar	→	investigación
operation	operar	→	operación
separation	separar	→	separación
complication	complicar	→	complicación
preparation	preparar	→	preparación

Spanish nouns ending in **-amiento** are derived from **-ar** verbs, and verbs ending in **-imiento** are derived from **-er** and **-ir** verbs:

aflojar (to loosen)	→	aflojamiento (slackening)
conocer (to know)	→	conocimiento (knowledge)
agotar (to exhaust)	→	agotamiento (exhaustion)

Similarly, nouns ending in **-ancia** are derived from **-ar** verbs, while nouns ending in **-encia** are derived from **-er** and **-ir** verbs. Note the similarities between the English and Spanish noun forms:

tolerance	tolerar	→	tolerancia
appearance	aparecer	→	apariencia
preference	preferir	→	preferencia
importance	importar	→	importancia
vigilance	vigilar	→	vigilancia

TIP

Many nouns in Spanish do not fit a normal pattern, and must be memorized separately:

el transporte	transportation
el aviso	announcement
la asistencia	attendance



LA PRÁCTICA 3

Create a noun from the verbs provided. Use the English translation:

- | | | |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| 1. amar | loved one | <u>el amo</u> |
| 2. alinear | alignment | _____ |
| 3. contar | bill | _____ |
| 4. rezar | prayer | _____ |
| 5. anular | annulment | _____ |
| 6. coincidir | coincidence | _____ |
| 7. crecer | growth | _____ |
| 8. competir | competition | _____ |
| 9. asistir | attendance | _____ |
| 10. abrazar | hug | _____ |

Give the noun form of each verb and then translate it into English:

- | | | |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| 11. pagar | <u>el pago</u> | <u>payment</u> |
| 12. cargar | _____ | _____ |
| 13. abrazar | _____ | _____ |
| 14. aumentar | _____ | _____ |
| 15. entregar | _____ | _____ |
| 16. tragar | _____ | _____ |
| 17. practicar | _____ | _____ |
| 18. regresar | _____ | _____ |
| 19. espantar | _____ | _____ |
| 20. fracasar | _____ | _____ |

More Ways to Form Nouns

Otros modos de formar sustantivos

In Spanish, nouns are often formed by simply adding suffixes to other nouns. For example, by adding **-astro** or **-astra** to the names for one's relatives, the members of a step-family are created:

hijo (son)	→	hij astro (stepson)
madre (mother)	→	madr astra (stepmother)
hermano (brother)	→	herman astro (stepbrother)

To associate a person with a specific noun, many words simply drop their final vowel and add the suffix **-ero** or **-era**:

el viaje (trip)	→	el viajero (traveler)
el mensaje (message)	→	la mensajera (messenger)
la marina (navy)	→	el marinero (sailor)
el chocolate (chocolate)	→	el chocolatero (one who loves chocolate)
el reloj (clock)	→	el relojero (clockmaker)

Words ending in **-ero** and **-era** often refer to occupations or professions in Spanish. By replacing the suffix with **-ería**, one can identify his or her respective place of employment:

carpintero (carpenter)	→	carpintería (woodshop)
panadero (baker)	→	panadería (bakery)
joyero (jeweler)	→	joyería (jewelry store)

The suffix **-ero** or **-era** also indicates a container for the item designated by the noun:

la leche (milk)	→	la lechera (milk pitcher)
la sal (salt)	→	el salero (salt shaker)
la flor (flower)	→	el florero (flower vase)

When added to a noun, the suffixes **-ada** and **-azo** often indicate a hit or strike by the object designated by the noun:

la pata (paw)	→	la patada (kick)
el serrucho (saw)	→	la serruchada (cut with a saw)
el puñal (dagger)	→	la puñalada (stab)
la cabeza (head)	→	el cabezazo (head butt)
la flecha (arrow)	→	el flechazo (blow by an arrow)
la bala (bullet)	→	el balazo (gun shot)

The suffix **-ada** or **-ado** also indicates the full amount that the object designated by the noun is able to hold:

la boca (mouth)	→	el bocado (mouthful)
el camión (truck)	→	la camionada (truckful)
el puño (fist)	→	el puñado (fistful)
la cuchara (spoon)	→	la cucharada (spoonful)

Although it is not heard often, the suffix **-ada** can be used to describe the regular actions of the person designated by the noun:

el muchacho (kid)	→	la muchachada (kid's prank)
el tonto (silly person)	→	la tontada (action of a silly person)
el bufón (clown)	→	la bufonada (clownish behavior)

Spanish has several other suffixes that are used to create nouns with special meanings:

-al	la manzana (apple)	→	el manzanal (apple tree)
	la pera (pear)	→	el peral (pear tree)
-anza	enseñar (to teach)	→	la enseñanza (teaching)
	matar (to kill)	→	la matanza (killing)
-dura	morder (to bite)	→	la mordedura (bite)
	picar (to sting)	→	la picadura (sting)
-eza	natural (natural)	→	la naturaleza (nature)
	bello (beautiful)	→	la belleza (beauty)
-ense	Canadá (Canada)	→	canadiense (Canadian)
	Costa Rica (Costa Rica)	→	costarricense (Costa Rican)



LA PRÁCTICA 4

Fill in the blanks with new nouns formed from the words in bold:

1. Al _____ le gusta el **pastel**.
2. El **té** está en la _____.
3. Le dió una _____ con el **cuchillo**.
4. El _____ trabaja en una **cárcel**.
5. Te dí un _____ con el **codo**.

6. No hay **sal** en el _____.
 7. El **payaso** hizo una _____.
 8. Me tiró la **piedra** y me cayó una _____ en la cabeza.
 9. El _____ trabajará en la **cocina**.
 10. La **sopa** está en la _____.
 11. Tiró una _____ con la **pala**.
 12. El **libro** está en el _____.
 13. La _____ no tenía ese **mueble**.
 14. Me dió una _____ con la **palma**.
 15. Él es mi **padre** y él es mi _____.
-

Forming Verbs from Nouns and Adjectives

Formación de verbos basados en sustantivos y adjetivos

Several verbs in Spanish can be formed by adding a suffix or prefix to a noun or adjective. The following nouns are transformed into verbs by adding an **-ar** ending and the prefix **en-**:

el ladrillo (brick)	→	enladrillar (to pave with bricks)
el vaso (glass container)	→	envasar (to bottle)
la máscara (mask)	→	enmascarar (to mask)
el yeso (plaster)	→	enyesar (to plaster)
la harina (flour)	→	enharinar (to flour)

Other verbs are created simply by adding the suffix **-ear** to a noun:

la gota (drop)	→	gotear (to drip)
el paso (step)	→	pasear (to stroll)
el golpe (punch)	→	golpear (to punch)

The following adjectives are transformed into verbs by adding an **-ar** ending and the prefix **a-**:

barato (inexpensive)	→	abaratar (to lower the price)
llano (flat)	→	allanar (to flatten)
blando (soft)	→	ablandar (to soften)
flojo (loose)	→	aflojar (to loosen)
largo (long)	→	alargar (to lengthen)

Other adjectives are transformed into verbs simply by adding **-ecer** to their stems:

húmedo (<i>moist</i>)	→	humedecer (<i>to moisten</i>)
oscuro (<i>dark</i>)	→	oscurecer (<i>to darken</i>)
lánguido (<i>listless</i>)	→	languidecer (<i>to languish</i>)

By adding the prefix **en-** and the suffix **-ecer** to some adjectives, still more verbs can be created:

duro (<i>hard</i>)	→	en	dur	ecer	(<i>to harden</i>)
triste (<i>sad</i>)	→	en	trist	ecer	(<i>to sadden</i>)
negro (<i>black</i>)	→	en	negr	ecer	(<i>to blacken</i>)

The prefix **em-** replaces **en-** when the adjective begins with **b** or **p**:

pobre (<i>poor</i>)	→	em	pobr	ecer	(<i>to impoverish</i>)
bello (<i>beautiful</i>)	→	em	bell	ecer	(<i>to make beautiful</i>)

Most suffixes and prefixes in Spanish combine or build upon one another to create new words:

la frente (*front*) → **enfrentar** (*to confront*) → **el enfrentamiento** (*confrontation*)

la riqueza (*richness*) → **enriquecer** (*to enrich*) → **enriquecido** (*enriched*)

el sordo (*deaf person*) → **ensordecer** (*to deafen*) → **ensordecedor** (*deafening*)

Bear in mind that Spanish has a variety of prefixes that change the meanings of words when they are attached:

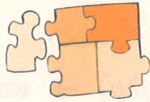
des (<i>not</i>)	desafortunadamente (<i>unfortunately</i>)
entre (<i>between</i>)	entrecruzar (<i>to interweave</i>)
ante (<i>before</i>)	anteayer (<i>the day before yesterday</i>)



LA PRÁCTICA 5

Change the following nouns and adjectives to their verb forms:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1. la tecla (<i>key</i>) | teclear | (to type) |
| 2. duro (<i>hard</i>) | _____ | (to harden) |
| 3. rojo (<i>red</i>) | _____ | (to redden) |
| 4. la batalla (<i>battle</i>) | _____ | (to battle) |
| 5. el papel (<i>paper</i>) | _____ | (to wrap in paper) |
| 6. el gancho (<i>hook</i>) | _____ | (to hook up) |
| 7. dulce (<i>sweet</i>) | _____ | (to sweeten) |
| 8. la capucha (<i>hood</i>) | _____ | (to put on a hood) |
| 9. grande (<i>large</i>) | _____ | (to enlarge) |
| 10. el párpado (<i>eyelid</i>) | _____ | (to blink) |



EL REPASO

Identify the following parts of speech, and then use them in a sentence:

- | | | |
|----------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. interesante | adjective | La película fue interesante. |
| 2. para | _____ | _____ |
| 3. nunca | _____ | _____ |
| 4. verde | _____ | _____ |
| 5. ellos | _____ | _____ |
| 6. el pasajero | _____ | _____ |
| 7. cuyo | _____ | _____ |
| 8. aquellos | _____ | _____ |
| 9. ti | _____ | _____ |
| 10. cubana | _____ | _____ |