



GOING TO SCHOOL IN MEXICO

Here's a peek
at the top
of page 4.

From 1917 until 1992, Mexican law required that all children attend school at least through the sixth grade. In 1992, that law was changed, however, and currently all children are required to attend school through the ninth grade. Undoubtedly, you have encountered some confusing moments when students come to your school who have had some or all of their education in Mexico. How often have you had questions about their school system? Whether it's how to read report cards, grade placement, or their vaccination record, you are certainly not alone. Let's start by exploring a little about the education system of the country of Mexico.

MEXICO'S SCHOOL CALENDAR

Mexico's Department of Education is referred to in English as the Ministry of Public Education, and in Spanish as **Secretaria de Educación Pública, (SEP)**. **SEP** dictates the school calendar for all public schools throughout the country. The school year consists of 200 days and begins around the third week of August and ends around the first week of July. A two-week vacation occurs beginning the last week of December and runs through the first week of January. There is also a two-week vacation at the end of March. Depending on when Easter falls, schools are closed the week prior to Easter Sunday. There typically are a few days off in November, February and May in order to celebrate holidays.

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THE FINAL STEP

The third and final step of your workbook begins on the next page. These are your translated comments. With everything that you have learned throughout your workbook, you will now understand why some of the comments are written as they are. Of course, you will also have questions about why a particular comment is written as is. What a wonderful learning opportunity! Perhaps your curiosity will lead you to your school's Spanish teacher, or one of your students, to help you understand.



As mentioned on the previous page, Spanish addresses an individual differently than when addressing more than one person. For this reason, accompanying verbs change form depending on the subject. As you have also learned, adjectives change too, depending on whom you are addressing. In summary, here is a sample of your comments. To one parent:

I hope that you will be involved with our PTA .

Espero que usted estará involucrado/a con nuestra Asociación de Padres y Maestros.

That same comment, however to BOTH parents looks like this:

I hope that you will be involved with our PTA.

Espero que ustedes estarán involucrados con nuestra Asociación de Padres y Maestros.

In order to supply you with both options, (your choice), both translations are provided like this:

I hope that you will be involved with our PTA.

Espero que usted(es) estará(n) involucrado(s) con nuestra Asociación de Padres y Maestros.

COGNATE NOUNS

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Take a look at these nouns:


alcohol	animal	atlas	auto	banana	bus
control	chocolate	doctor	debate	diabetes	drama
fax	golf	hotel	idea	Internet	jeans
pasta	patio	perfume	piano	pizza	plan
radio	taxi	tornado	trauma	tuberculosis	

These words are both English AND Spanish! They are just a few of many cognate words. What's the best way to learn them? Interestingly enough, some English/Spanish cognate words can be categorized because they follow a particular pattern. Take a look at Group #1.



MANY ENGLISH NOUNS THAT END IN -OR ARE THE SAME IN SPANISH:

color	director	doctor	error	exterior	factor
favor	honor	horror	humor	interior	instructor
motor	protector	rumor	supervisor	tumor	vigor

In the list above, underline the five nouns that identify people. 

Did you find:

director doctor instructor protector supervisor

These five words all identify people. Why is it important to mention this? Good question! Unlike English, Spanish is gender specific. For example, in English if we say, "My supervisor is very nice," the supervisor may be a male or a female. In Spanish, the form of the word itself indicates the gender of the person.

director	↪	directora (* see note below)	doctor	↪	doctora
instructor	↪	instructora (** see note below)	supervisor	↪	supervisora

IMPORTANT NOTE: * In addition to meaning 'director' in Spanish, this is also the word for PRINCIPAL. If Principal White is a male, he will sign his name **Director White**, but if Principal White is a female, she will sign HER name **Directora White**.



** While **instructor** is a cognate word, **maestro** and **maestra** are used much more commonly to express 'teacher,' especially in the lower grades. Are you familiar with the word **profesor**? This word is more closely related to the English professor at college or the university. The feminine form of **profesor** is **profesora**.

Grammar Rule - Most nouns that refer to a person and end in **-or**
add **-a** to the end in order to form the feminine counterpart:

Exception: actor ↪ actriz