

Pronunciation – g, gu, ga: Transcript

Context

Hola y Buenos días. So you're making great progress with verbs and adjectives and the rest, but you still think you sound funny when you're speaking Spanish. Not to worry. This is a normal part of the language acquisition evolution. Good pronunciation requires lots of practice and, in particular, a focus on those specific areas where Spanish and English are really different.

In this lesson we're going to focus on the letter **g**.

Information

1. Like most consonants, the Spanish **g** is pronounced similar to the **g** in English. The pronunciation is generally somewhat softer but the difference is slight. When **g** is followed by a consonant or the single vowels **a**, **o**, or **u** it is pronounced like the **g** in “gas”, “go”, “gum” or “grin” in English.

Listen to these words and pay close attention to the pronunciation of the **g**. *Pagar, regresar, colega, bolígrafo, amigo. Repite. Pagar, regresar, colega, bolígrafo, amigo.*

2. When you put **g** in front of an **e** or **i**, it's pronounced the English **h** in “hit” or “help” but with more friction between the back of the tongue and the roof of the mouth.

Listen to these words and pay close attention to the pronunciation of the **g**. *Gente, giro, elegir, ingeniero. Repite. Gente, giro, elegir, ingeniero.*

3. So far so good, right? Pronounce it normally except in front of an **e** or **i** where it gets pronounced like an English **h**. But what if I want to make a **g** sound like a **g** in front of an **e** or **i**? That's easy. All you have to do is add a silent **u** between the **g** and the **e** or **i**.

Listen to these words and pay close attention to the pronunciation of the **g**. *Guerra, seguir, llegue. Repite. Guerra, seguir, llegue.*

4. Now, if you have a **gu** in front of an **a** or **o**, the **u** isn't silent anymore. Instead, it gets pronounced like a **w** and forms a diphthong with the other vowel.

Listen to these words and pay close attention to the pronunciation of the **gu**. *Guapo, antiguo, Antigua, guante. Repite. Guapo, antiguo, Antigua, guante.*

Review

So, you can see that the **g** in Spanish is similar to its counterpart in English. All you have to remember is the following. Pronounce it a little softer than an English **g** except in front of an **e** or **i**, where it gets pronounced it like an English **h**. The combination **gu** sounds like a **gw** in front of an **o** or **a**, but is pronounced like a regular **g** in front of an **e** or **i**. Okay, sounds like you've got it. *Ya lo entiendes todo. Eso es todo.*