

## El Abecedario

### **A (ah)**

Close to “ah.” This sound does not exist exactly in English, but a close approximation can be found by saying “my” and omitting the last “ee” sound.

### **B (beh/beh grande)**

After a pause or the letters *l*, *m* or *n*, it sounds much like an English b. However, in all other cases, the lips do not even touch, producing a more whisper like sound – linguistically, there is no distinction in sound between the letters *b* and *v*.

### **C (ceh)**

Sounds like *k* in most cases. Before *e* or *i*, it sounds like an s (or th (*thick*) in many parts of Spain).

### **D (deh)**

After a pause or the letters *l*, *m*, or *n*, it sounds much like an English d except you should place your tongue to your upper teeth instead of the roof of your mouth. However, in all other cases, the tongue touches nothing, creating a whispery th sound like “the”.

### **E (eh)**

Close to “eh.” This sound does not exist exactly in English, but sounds much like the *a* in *mate*.

### **F (effe)**

Sounds like the *f* in English.

### **G (ge)**

After a pause, or the letters *l*, *m* or *n*, it sounds much like an English g. Before *e* or *i*, it sounds like a harsh h (much like the Spanish *j*).

### **H(hache)**

In general, this sound is silent. However, words with foreign spelling and no Spanish equivalent, the breathy aspiration is maintained: Hawái, Hollywood, etc.

### **I (i)**

Close to “ee”, but short. Before vowels *a*, *e* and *o*, it forms a *y* sound.

### **J (jota)**

Close to the English h sound, but it varies from country to country. In some places, the sound is very harsh in the back of the throat (like you are trying to spit something up). It never sounds like the English J.

### **K (kah)**

Uncommon in Spanish, but sounds much like the English k with less breath

### **L (ele)**

Close to the English l, but with the tongue raised closer to the roof of the mouth rather than dipped down

### **M (eme)**

Just like the English m.

### **N (ene)**

Just like the English n.

## El Abecedario

### **Ñ (eñe)**

A completely separate letter from the n, it sounds much like the *ni* combination in onion or the *ny* combination in canyon.

### **O (oh)**

Close to “*oh*” as in so, but shorter.

### **P (peh)**

Close to the English, but with less breath aspirated

### **Q (koo)**

Always followed by the letter *u*, it makes the same sound as the letter *k*

### **R (ere)**

Similar to the *d* sound in *caddy* in most cases. When following a *pause* or the letters *l*, *n* or *s* or in the combination *rr*, it has a **trilled sound**.

\* To trill the *rr*, try to say *brr*, but instead of using your lips, use your tongue. When you exhale, the tongue should be raised and widened so it touches the upper teeth.

### **S (ese)**

Just like the English *s*.

### **T (te)**

Softer than the English *t*, the tongue touches the teeth and there is no explosion of breath after moving the tongue away.

### **U (u)**

Close to the “*oo*” in food, but shorter.

### **V (beh/ubeh/beh chica)**

Much like the Spanish *b* where the lips do not touch and there is less aspiration – linguistically, there is no distinction in sound between the letters *b* and *v*.

### **W (doble beh/doble u)**

Not native to Spanish, but with the same pronunciation as the English *w*.

### **X (equis)**

Between vowels and at the end of a word, it sounds like the English *ks*. At the beginning of a word, it sounds like the letter *s*.

### **Y (y griega)**

Most of the time, it sounds like the English *y* in *yes*. At the end of a word, it functions as a vowel and sounds like the letter *i*.

### **Z (zeta)**

Mostly pronounced like the English *s*, but can sound like the *th* in thin in many parts of Spain.