

SYLLABICATION IN SPANISH

RATIONALE

The division of words in Spanish differs from that of English. Knowing how to divide a Spanish word will help you to pronounce even a new word correctly.

What is a syllable?

A syllable is a basic unit of sound and can be a single vowel or a combination of one or more consonants and one or more vowels.

Some simple rules for dividing Spanish words:

A. If one consonant is between vowels, that consonant marks the beginning of a syllable. The stressed syllable is underlined in the examples below.

A-ni-ta ta-co A-ri-zo-na ma-ta-dor

Practice, using vocabulary from Paso A:

di-ga bo-ni-ta ba-jo fa-mo-so mo-re-no bi-go-te

Notice that each word ends with a vowel, has no written accent, and is therefore stressed on the next to the last syllable. Similarly, words ending with the consonants **N** or **S** have this stress pattern. Words ending with other consonants are stressed on the final syllable. If a word has a written accent, always stress the syllable containing the accent. An accent in Spanish is placed over the strong vowel, never over a consonant.

jo-ven mu-cha-chas e-xa-men pan-ta-lo-nes co-lo-res sa-lu-dos
co-rran ca-mi-nen

B. If two (2) consonants are between vowels, the syllable is formed by splitting the consonants if they would be difficult to pronounce at the beginning of a syllable. Combinations such as **bl**, **br**, **cl**, **cr**, **gl**, **gr**, **pl**, **pr**, **tr** remain together. Ch, ll, and rr are letters of the alphabet and are never separated. S + a consonant never begins a syllable. The s always goes with the previous syllable.

a-bra can-ten es-cri-ban es-cu-che sal-te gra-cias ca-lle
can-sa-do del-ga-do gor-do cas-ta-ño blan-co cri-mi-nal

C. A single vowel can form a syllable: o-jos a-zu-les a-ma-ri-llo

E-le-na A-na A-li-cia
a-na-ran-ja-do a-diós a-bri-go i-gual-men-te

