

STRESS

Stress is the stronger emphasis that is put on one syllable of a word.

I. There are three basic rules for stress in Spanish.

A. If a word ends in a vowel or the consonants n or s, the stress is on the next-to-last syllable.

es·tu·**dian**·te ma·**ña**·na a·**mi**·go **ha**·blan **Car**·los

B. If a word ends in a consonant other than n or s, the stress is on the last syllable.

ha·**blar** Mi·**guel** es·pa·**ñol** Ma·**drid** a·**rroz**

C. If a word does not follow either of the above two rules it must have a written accent on the vowel of the syllable stressed. [Remember, only vowels have accent marks.]

Examples of rule breakers which require an accent mark.

1. Words ending in a vowel or the consonants *n* or *s* which stress the last syllable.

ca·**fé** Pa·na·**má** a·**sí** tam·**bién** in·**glés**

2. Words ending in a consonant other than *n* or *s* which stress the next-to-last syllable.

fá·**cil** lá·**piz** di·**ff**·cil án·**gel** a·**zú**·car

3. Words stressing the third from the last syllable.

mú·si·ca **sá**·ba·do **có**·mi·co **ff**·si·ca **miér**·co·les

II. Non stress-related use of accents. Accent marks are also used in the following instances.

A. On interrogative and exclamatory words.

¿**Quién**? ¿**Cuándo**? ¡**Cómo**!

B. On words that are alike but have different meanings.

sólo (only)	tú (you)	mí (me)	sí (yes)	más (more, most)
solo (alone)	tu (your)	mi (my)	si (if)	mas (but)

C. On the weak vowel (*i* and *u* and sometimes *y*) of a diphthong to separate it from the strong vowel (*a*, *e* and *o*). **Note: Strong vowels never combine.**

Dí·a rí·o pa·ís a·ún tí·o

Práctica. Reviewing the rules for stress, for each of the following words, underline the syllable which is stressed.

- | | | | | |
|--------------|-------------|--------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. can·tan | te·lé·fo·no | re·loj | li·bros | fran·cés |
| 2. fe·liz | co·mer | mí·o | e·xa·men | far·ma·cia |
| 3. Na·vi·dad | bai·la·mos | a·bril | e·xá·me·nes | li·bre·rí·a |

Now, see how well you can pronounce the words.