

# Telling Time

The verb *ser* is used to express the time of day. Use *es* when referring to “one o’clock” and use *son* when referring to all other hours.

Es la una ..... It’s one o’clock.  
Son las dos..... It’s two o’clock.

The feminine article (*la, las*) is used before the hour because it refers to “la hora.”

Es la una ..... It’s one o’clock.  
Son las dos..... It’s two o’clock.

Minutes can be added to the hour using the word *y* (and).

Es la una y cinco..... It’s five minutes past one.  
Son las tres y doce ..... It’s twelve minutes past three.

Minutes can be subtracted from the hour using the word *menos* (less).

Es la una menos cinco ..... It’s five minutes till one.  
Son las tres menos doce..... It’s twelve minutes till three.

You can also use the words *media* (half) and *cuarto* (quarter).

Es la una y media ..... It’s half past one.  
Son las dos y cuarto ..... It’s quarter past two.  
Son las tres menos cuarto. .... It’s quarter till three.

To say something occurs at a specific time, use the formula *a + la(s) + time*.

La fiesta empieza a las nueve ..... The party begins at nine o’clock.  
El banco abre a las ocho y media..... The bank opens at half past eight.

To differentiate between a.m. and p.m. use the expressions *de la mañana, de la tarde* and *de la noche*.

Son las dos de la tarde ..... It’s two in the afternoon.  
Son las dos de la mañana..... It’s two in the morning.  
Son las diez de la noche ..... It’s ten in the evening.

When no specific time is mentioned, use the expressions *por la mañana, por la tarde, por la noche*.

Siempre leo el periódico por las mañanas ..... I always read the newspaper in the morning.

Here are a number of useful time expressions:

por la mañana..... in the morning (no specific time)  
de la mañana ..... in the morning (specific time)  
por la tarde ..... in the afternoon (no specific time)  
de la tarde ..... in the afternoon (specific time)  
por la noche..... in the evening or night (no specific time)  
de la noche ..... in the evening or night (specific time)  
la mañana..... morning  
el mañana..... morrow, future  
mañana por la mañana ..... tomorrow morning

pasado mañana .....	the day after tomorrow
ayer .....	yesterday
anoche.....	last night
la noche anterior, anteanoche .....	the night before last
el lunes que viene .....	next Monday
la semana que viene.....	next week
el año que viene.....	next year
el lunes pasado .....	last Monday
la semana pasada.....	last week
el año pasado .....	last year
al mediodía .....	at noon
a la medianoche.....	at midnight
alrededor de .....	around
de día .....	days
durante el día.....	during the day
a tiempo .....	on time
en punto.....	exactly, on-the-dot
tarde.....	late
temprano.....	early

## La Hora (The Time)

Telling time in Spanish is much different than telling time in English

1. To designate an hour other than 1 a.m. or 1p.m., use the plural form “son las” followed by the hour. The formula for this is: **son las (it is) +hour+ y (and) + minutes**. If you are noting the half hour, use the word “media” instead of the number of minutes.

*Example:* It is 7:00.

*Spanish:* **Son las** siete.

*Example:* It is 2:30.

*Spanish:* Son las dos y media.

2. For the 1:00 hour, use the singular verb form “es la,” instead of using the plural verb “son las.”

*Example:* It is 1:20.

*Spanish:* **Es la** una y veinte.

3. To note that the time is after the half hour on the clock, you must go to the next hour and then subtract however many minutes from that time.

*Example:* It is 8:40.

*Spanish:* Son las **nueve menos veinte**.

- You are going to the next hour, which is 9:00 and subtracting twenty minutes to make it 8:40.

4. To indicate a.m. or p.m., use the phrases “de la noche” (at night), “de la tarde” (in the afternoon, or “de la mañana (in the morning).

*Example:* It is 8:30 p.m.

*Spanish:* Son las ocho y media **de la noche**.