

"Por" and "Para"

"Por" and "para" have a variety of meanings, and they are often confused because they can each be translated as "for."

Gracias por la información.	Thanks for the information.
Este regalo es para Juan.	This gift is for Juan.

To learn to use "por" and "para" correctly, you need to do two things:

1. Learn the rules for how **por** and **para** are used.
2. Memorize model sentences.

"**Por**" has many uses, and so it is the more problematic of the two.

to express gratitude or apology.

Gracias **por** la ayuda.

Thanks for the help.

for multiplication.

Dos **por** dos son cuatro.

Two times two equals four.

for velocity, frequency and proportion.

Voy al restaurante cinco veces **por** semana.

I go to the restaurant five times per week.

meaning "through," "along," "by" or "in the area of".

Andamos **por** el parque.

We walk through the park.

when talking about exchange, including sales.

Él me dio diez dólares **por** el libro.

He gave me ten dollars for the book.

to mean "on behalf of," or "in favor of,".

No voté **por** nadie.

I didn't vote for anyone.

to express a length of time.

Yo estudié **por**/durante dos horas.

I studied for two hours.

to express an undetermined, or general time, meaning "during".

Se pueden ver las estrellas **por** la noche.

One can see the stars during the night.

for means of communication or transportation.

Prefiero viajar por tren y hablar **por** teléfono.

I prefer to travel by train and speak by phone.

in cases of mistaken identity, or meaning, "to be seen as".

Me tienen **por** loco.

They take me for crazy.

to show the reason for an errand (with ir, venir, pasar, mandar, volver, and preguntar).

Paso **por** ti a las ocho.

I'll come by for you at eight o'clock.

when followed by an infinitive, to express an action that remains to be completed, use por + infinitive.

La cena está **por** cocinar.

Dinner has yet to be cooked.

to express cause or reason.

El hombre murió **por** falta de agua.

The man died for lack of water.

"estar por" means to be in the mood, or inclined to do something.

Estoy **por** tomar café.

I'm in the mood for drinking coffee.

in passive constructions.

El libro fue escrito **por** Octavio Paz.

The book was written by Octavio Paz.

"Por" also appears in many **idiomatic expressions**:

por adelantado	in advance
por ahora	for now
por allí	around there, that way
por amor de Dios	for the love of God
por aquí	around here, this way
por casualidad	by chance
por ciento	percent
por cierto	by the way, certainly
por completo	completely

por dentro	inside
por desgracia	unfortunately
por ejemplo	for example
por eso	therefore
por favor	please
por fin	finally
por lo general	generally, in general
por lo visto	apparently
por medio de	by means of
por lo menos	at least
por lo tanto	consequently
por mi parte	as for me
por ningún lado	nowhere
por otra parte	on the other hand
palabra por palabra	word for word
por primera vez	for the first time
por separado	separately
por supuesto	of course

por suerte	fortunately
por todas partes	everywhere
por todos lados	everywhere
por último	finally

"Para" -- in contrast, has relatively fewer uses.

to indicate destination	
El hombre salió para Madrid.	The man left for Madrid.

to show the use or purpose of a thing	
El vaso es para agua.	The glass is for water.

to mean "in order to" or "for the purpose of"	
Para hacer una paella, primero dore las carnes.	To make a paella, first sauté the meats.

to indicate a recipient

Este regalo es para ti.

This gift is for you.

to express a deadline or specific time

Necesito el vestido para el lunes.

I need the dress by Monday.

to express a contrast from what is expected

Para ser un niño lee muy bien.

For being a child, he reads very well.

"estar para" to express an action that will soon be completed

El tren está para salir.

The train is about to leave.

It is quite important to learn to use these two prepositions correctly, because if you inadvertently substitute one for the other, you might end up saying something altogether different from what you had intended. Study the two

examples	
Juan compró el regalo para María.	Juan bought the gift for Maria. (he bought it to give to her)
Juan compró el regalo por María.	Juan bought the gift for Maria. (Because she could not)

"**Por**" and "**para**" can also be used in questions. "

¿ Por qué?" means "Why?" (for what reason) while "	
¿ Por qué estudias español?	For what reason do you study Spanish?
Possible answer	
Porque es un requisito.	Because it's a requirement.

¿ Para qué?" means "Why?" (for what purpose).	
¿ Para qué estudias español?	For what purpose do you study Spanish?
Possible answer	
Para ser profesor de español.	In order to become a Spanish teacher.

PRACTICE LINKS:

[Mini Test](#) [Basic Quiz](#) [Oral Activity](#) [Kahoot Rules](#) [Grammar Game](#)

[SpanishDict](#) [¿Por o Para?](#) [Tank Game](#) [Battleship](#) [Rags to Riches](#)

[Conjuguemos 1](#) [Conjuguemos 2](#) [Conjuguemos 3](#) [Conjuguemos 4](#)

[Sentence Quizzes](#) [Memrise](#)

PRESENTATIONS

[Complete Theory](#)

[“POR” o “PARA”](#)

[“POR” Expressions](#)