

# "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 <b>por</b> la información.	Thanks for the information.
Este regalo es <b>para</b> 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 <b>por</b> la ayuda.	Thanks for the help.
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**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:

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

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

<b>por suerte</b>	fortunately
<b>por todas partes</b>	everywhere
<b>por todos lados</b>	everywhere
<b>por último</b>	finally

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

**to indicate destination**

El hombre salió <b>para</b> Madrid.	The man left for Madrid.
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**to show the use or purpose of a thing**

El vaso es <b>para</b> agua.	The glass is for water.
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**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.
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**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 <b>para</b> María.	Juan bought the gift for Maria. (he bought it to give to her)
Juan compró el regalo <b>por</b> 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.

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