

Telling Time Notes

Telling time in Spanish is easy, when you take it step by step. Let's get started!

To ask "What time is it?", we say **¿Qué hora es?** (literally "what hour is it?")

To answer we might respond with a variety of answers. Look at the examples:

Es la una.	It's one o'clock
Es la una y media	It's 1:30
Son las dos y diez	it's 2:10
Son las tres menos diez	It's 10 'till three
Es mediodía.	It's noon
Es medianoche.	It's midnight.

In Spanish "**Ser**" is used to express time. Use "**es**" for one o'clock, noon, and midnight. Use "**son**" for any other time.

Es la una.	It's one o'clock
Es mediodía.	It's noon
Es medianoche.	It's midnight.
Son las cinco.	It's five o'clock
Son las once.	It's eleven o'clock.
Son las nueve.	It's nine 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. (it's 1:05)
Son las tres y doce.	It's twelve minutes past three. (It's 3:12)

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

Es la una menos cinco.	It's five minutes till one. (12:55)
Son las tres menos doce.	It's twelve minutes till three. (2:48)

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

Es la una y media .	It's half past one or 1:30.
Son las dos y cuarto .	It's quarter past two or 2:15.
Son las tres menos cuarto .	It's quarter till three or 2:45.

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 .

So, a formula for time might look like this:

(Es/son) + (la/las) + (hour) + (y/menos) + (minutes) + (time of day)