

Spanish Accents

Languages

Where the stress falls by default, and why a written accent appears.

Stress falls on the second-to-last syllable if the word ends in a vowel, n or s. Otherwise it falls on the last.

vowel, n or s → penultimate · any other consonant → final

casa, hablan, lunes

They already follow the rule.

no accent needed

papel, ciudad, feliz

End in other consonants, stressed on the last syllable.

no accent needed

café, canción, árbol

Each one breaks the default, so the accent says where to go.

accent required

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✗ **Treating accents as decoration or as a pronunciation hint**

✓ **An accent marks an exception to the two rules above**

It also separates identical words: él (he) vs el (the), sí (yes) vs si (if), tú (you) vs tu (your).

Any word stressed on the third-from-last syllable always carries an accent. No exceptions.