

Coffee Break **Spanish**

Season 1, Lesson 1

Lesson notes



CoffeeBreak
Spanish

Hola, ¿qué tal?

Welcome to this first lesson of Coffee Break Spanish. In this lesson we'll learn how to say "hello" and "goodbye", and we'll also learn one way to say "how are you?", and how to answer this question.



Lesson notes

Saying hello

The first word we're going to learn is probably one of the most important words in any language:

hola

hello

Hola means "hello". It can be used at any time of the day, and although it's not very formal, it can be used with people you know and people you don't know.

Asking “how are you?” and replying

To ask someone how they are, use:

¿qué tal?

how are you?

Although you may want to concentrate on spoken language, we feel it’s important to consider how words and phrases are written too. In the phrase above there are two things we’d like to point out. Firstly, when you write a question in Spanish, you must begin the question part of the sentence with an upside-down question mark: ¿

The question then ends with a normal question mark. This is used throughout the Spanish-speaking world.

Secondly, like many languages other than English, Spanish uses accents. Unlike French the accents don’t actually change the sound of the word. Instead they’re used most of the time to differentiate between two words which are written the same but mean different things. It’s also important to know that all Spanish question words carry an accent, and we’ll be seeing this in future lessons.

So, getting back to **¿qué tal?** - the phrase means “how are you”. It’s quite informal, and could also be translated as “how’s it going?” or “how are things?” You may also have heard the question **¿cómo estás?** or **¿cómo está?** Both these questions mean “how are you?” but they are a bit more complicated as the question changes depending on who you are asking! For the moment we’ll stick with **¿qué tal?**

There are lots of possibilities for answering the question **¿qué tal?** Let’s look at some of these now:

bien

well

The most straightforward answer to **¿qué tal?** is **bien**. It means “well”, or “good”. You can also add:

gracias

thank you

Now combine both of these words to give **bien, gracias**, meaning “well, thank you”. Let’s put these into a short conversation.



Conversation 1

Mark: Hola, ¿qué tal?
Kara: Bien, gracias. ¿Qué tal?
Mark: Bien, gracias.

Here are some other possible answers:

muy bien

very well

fatal

awful

estupendo

great, brilliant

fenomenal

great, brilliant

If you're asked **¿qué tal?** and you give your answer, you can ask the other person how they are feeling by repeating the question. Alternatively, you can say:

¿y tú?

and you?

In answer to **¿y tú?** you can start with:

yo

I (: as far as I'm concerned)

Look at this example to help you get to grips with this idea.



Conversation 2

Mark: ¿Qué tal?
Kara: Bien, ¿y tú?
Mark: Yo, muy bien.

In this situation, Mark says "as far as I'm concerned, I'm very well", or "Me? I'm very well."

Putting it all together

Let's put everything we've learned together in a conversation. You should try practising this conversation and substituting the other words you've learned in today's lesson.



Conversation 3

Mark: Hola, Kara.
Kara: Hola, Mark. ¿Qué tal?
Mark: Fenomenal. ¿Y tú?
Kara: Yo, muy bien.

Translation:

Mark: Hi, Kara.
Kara: Hello, Mark. How are you?
Mark: Great. What about you?
Kara: Me? I'm well.

Lesson 1 Review

In each edition of Coffee Break Spanish we cover the basic language you need to communicate. However we also provide some additional vocabulary to help you increase your range of expression. For the full list of vocabulary for this lesson, including the bonus words and phrases, see below.

hola

hello

¿qué tal?

how are you?

bien

well

gracias

thank you

muy bien

very well

fatal

awful

estupendo

great, brilliant

fenomenal

great, brilliant

¿y tú?

and you?, what about you?

yo

I (:as far as I'm concerned)



Bonus Vocabulary

¿qué hay?

how's it going?

genial

great

así así

so so

regular

not so great

¿qué pasa?

what's up?

sin novedades

nothing new

no me puedo quejar

I can't complain



Head over to <http://coffeebreakspanish.com> to find out how you can join in and practise your Spanish with the Coffee Break Spanish learning community.

Coffee Break Spanish™

<http://coffeebreakspanish.com>

©Copyright Radio Lingua Ltd 2016