

LESSON NOTES

Newbie #23

Can you speak Spanish?

CONTENTS

Dialogue - Formal Spanish

Main

English

Dialogue - Informal Spanish

Main

English

Vocabulary

Sample sentences

Grammar

Cultural insight

#23

DIALOGUE - FORMAL SPANISH

MAIN

1. GUILLERMO : ¿Usted puede hablar en español?
2. JUANA : Sí. Yo puedo hablar un poco del español.
3. GUILLERMO : Usted habla bien en español.
4. JUANA : Hablo bien, pero un poco no más.

ENGLISH

1. GUILLERMO : Can you speak Spanish, Ma'am?
2. JUANA : Yes. I can speak a bit of Spanish.
3. GUILLERMO : Ma'am, you speak Spanish well.
4. JUANA : I speak well, but just a bit.

DIALOGUE - INFORMAL SPANISH

MAIN

1. GUILLERMO : ¿Tú puedes hablar en español?
2. JUANA : Sí. Yo puedo hablar un poco del español.
3. GUILLERMO : Hablas bien en español.
4. JUANA : Hablo bien, pero un poco no más.

ENGLISH

1. GUILLERMO : Can you speak Spanish?
2. JUANA : Yes. I can speak a bit of Spanish.
3. GUILLERMO : You speak Spanish well.
4. JUANA : I speak well, but just a bit.

VOCABULARY

Spanish	English	Class	Gender
poder	to be able, can	verb	
hablar	to speak, to talk	verb	
el español	the Spanish one, the Spaniard, the Spanish language	noun	masculine
poco, -a	a bit, a little, rarely, few	adjective, adverb, pronoun	
no más	just, not more	adverbial phrase	

SAMPLE SENTENCES

¿Puedes decirme por qué no me llamaste? "Can you tell me why you didn't call me?"	Yo puedo hablar en español. "I can speak in Spanish."
Hablamos sobre la historia en mi clase. "We talk about history in my class."	Aquí se habla español. "Spanish is spoken here."
Ella sabe un poco de inglés. "She knows a little English."	Quieren sopa no más. "They just want soup."

GRAMMAR

In this lesson we discuss the verb "poder" (to be able, can). This verb is associated with expression of potential and ability. For example, when we say "hablo" it translates to "I speak". On the other hand, we can say "yo puedo hablar" which translates to "I can speak". We are expressing that the action, "speaking", can happen.

This verb can be used in conjunction with any other verb to convey potential or ability: "puedes dormir" (you can sleep), "puedo comer" (I can eat), "pueden escuchar" (they can listen), "Ella puede cocinar" (She can cook), "nosotros podemos correr" (we can run), etc.

The stem of the verb "poder" (to be able, can) is "P-O-D". However, it is important to note that this is a stem-changing verb. This means that the stem of the verb changes when we conjugate it. In the Present Tense, the vowel "O" of the stem changes to "UE" for all the forms except "nosotros" (we) and "vosotros" (you all). *Look over the table below to learn how we conjugate the verb "poder" (to be able, can) in the Present Indicative:*

yo puedo (I can)	nosotros podemos (we can)
tú puedes (you can)	vosotros podéis (you all can)
él puede (he can)	ellos pueden (they can)
ella puede (she can)	ellas pueden (they can *feminine)
usted puede (you can *formal)	ustedes pueden (you all can)

Before we finish, let's take a look at one more phrase that is commonly used: "puede ser". This translates to "it could be". When someone suggests a possibility, "puede ser" is a common response that expresses potential. For example, check out this dialog:

Jose: ¿Crees que estoy enfermo? (Do ya' think I am sick?)

Alejandro: Sí pues, puede ser. (Well yeah, it could be)

CULTURAL INSIGHT

When we think about Spain and Latin America, we tend to think that Spanish is the only language spoken there. But this is not true. The languages of Spain other than Spanish include Aragonese, Asturian, Basque, Caló, Catalan-Valencian-Balear, Extremaduran, Fala, Galician, Gascon, Quinqui. In Latin America, languages other than Spanish include Portuguese, French, Quechua, Aymara, Guarani, Miskito, Sumo, Rami, Nahautl, Yaruru, Itonama, among many others. Throughout Latin America, there are over 172 languages other than Spanish! Nevertheless, Spanish has a very high currency throughout all of Latin America and Spain, and thus, anyone going to either of these places will do fine with Spanish.