

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #1

Introducing Yourself in Mexican Spanish

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FORMAL SPANISH

1. ALEJANDRO: Hola, soy Alejandro.
2. JORGE: Hola, soy Jorge.
3. ALEJANDRO: Mucho gusto.
4. JORGE: Mucho gusto.

ENGLISH

1. ALEJANDRO: Hello! I am Alejandro.
2. JORGE: Hello! I am Jorge.
3. ALEJANDRO: It's a pleasure to meet you. (Literally, "much pleasure")
4. JORGE: It's a pleasure to meet you too. (Literally, "much pleasure for me too")

VOCABULARY

Spanish	English	Class	Gender
soy	I am	verb	n/a
hola	hello	interjection	
Mucho gusto.	It's a pleasure to meet you.	phrase	

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Soy de los Estados Unidos. "I am from the United States."	La gente está diciendo "hola". "The people are saying, 'Hello.'"
¡Hola Paola, mucho gusto! "Hi Paola, it's a pleasure to meet you!"	

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

Hola

Hola is a word that we can substitute for more time-specific expressions such as *buenos días* ("good morning"), *buenas tardes* ("good afternoon"), or *buenas noches* ("good evening" or "good night"). However, in business situations, it is common to use simple and formal expressions. Another option is *¿Qué tal?* ("How is it going?").

Soy

We use *soy* in its abbreviated form without the first person article *yo*. Normally, when using the verb "to be," the article is not needed unless we want to emphasize "I" in opposition to "her" or "him."

For Example:

1. *Ella es Alicia, yo soy Alejandro.*
"She is Alicia, I am Alejandro."

Mucho gusto translates literally as "much pleasure" and is the most commonly used way to greet someone for the first time. Another expression is *encantado* ("delighted").

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is the Conjugation of the Verb *Ser*.

Hola. soy Alejandro

"Hello, I'm Alejandro."

As in English, Spanish verbs have different conjugations. In this case, the verb *ser* ("to be") changes to *yo soy* in the first person, *tú eres* in the second person, and *usted es* in the formal second person. For now, we only need to study these three. It is also possible to substitute the first *hola* with *mucho gusto*: *Mucho gusto, soy Alejandro* or *Mucho gusto, me llamo Alejandro* ("Nice to meet you, my name is Alejandro."). It is not necessary to say *Yo soy Alejandro* because the article *Yo* is already implied in the first person conjugation of the verb *soy*.

Gender-Sensitive Words

Sometimes we can use optional expressions instead of or in addition to *mucho gusto*, as in, for example, *encantado* ("delighted to meet you"). In contrast to *mucho gusto*, *encantad(o)* is gender sensitive, so one must say *encantada* if the speaker is a woman and *encantado* if it is a man, regardless of gender of the person we are speaking to.

For Example:

1. *Soy Alejandro. Encantado.*
"I am Alejandro. Delighted to meet you."
2. *Soy Alicia. Encantada.*
"I am Alicia. Delighted to meet you."

Examples from This Dialogue

1. *Soy Alejandro. Mucho gusto.*
"I am Alejandro. Nice to meet you."
2. *Soy Jorge. Encantado.*
"I am Jorge. I'm delighted to meet you."

Language Tip: Pronouncing *Hola*

Note that when we are pronouncing *hola*, the *-h* at the beginning is silent. So the word *hola* sounds just like [ola]. The rule also applies to any other words that start with *-h*, such as *haber* or *hacer*, which we will go over later on in this series.

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Choose the Right Mexican Greeting

When greeting someone in Mexico, whether in a formal or casual situation, it is important to look at the person in the eyes and shake hands when it is a man and kiss (once) on the cheek if it is a woman (right or left cheek). Hand shaking and kissing in Mexico happen at every new encounter and not only on the first meeting. However, in some formal business encounters, women too are greeted only with a handshake.