

Spanish For Gringos Lesson 3 Numbers 120 2026 10 06

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Maya: Welcome back to Spanish for Gringos, the Spanish course for English speakers traveling to Latin America. I'm Maya, and this is lesson three, all about numbers from one to twenty. If you can count to twenty in Spanish, you can ask prices, count your change, and tell a taxi driver exactly how many suitcases you are dragging around.

Devon: Hola, amigos! I'm Devon, and numbers are the fastest win in any language. Learn twenty little words today, and tomorrow you're haggling at a market in Oaxaca like you were born there.

Maya: Let's start with one through ten. Repeat after me, nice and slow. Uno. That means one. Say it "oo-noh". That first "oo" is long, like the sound in the word "moon".

Devon: Dos. That means two. Say it "dohs". Keep it short and snappy, and hiss that final "s" just a little.

Maya: Tres. That means three. Say it "trehs". Give the "r" one quick tap against the roof of your mouth, like a tiny drum beat. Not a growl, just a tap.

Devon: Cuatro. That means four. Say it "kwah-troh". The stress lands on "troh", like you're starting to say the word "trouble".

Maya: Cinco. That means five. Say it "seen-koh". Now remember, in Latin America the "c" before an "i" always sounds like an "s", never like a "th". So "seen-koh", clean and simple.

Devon: Seis. That means six. Say it "says". Just like the English word "says". Easiest one on the list.

Maya: Siete. That means seven. Say it "see-EH-teh". Three bouncy little beats, and the stress lands in the middle.

Devon: Ocho. That means eight. Say it "OH-choh". The "ch" sounds exactly like it does in English, and you stress that first syllable hard.

Maya: Nueve. That means nine. Say it "noo-EH-veh". In Latin America the "v" is soft, almost like a "b", so that last syllable comes out gentle, not buzzy.

Devon: Diez. That means ten. Say it "dee-EHS". It rhymes with "yeast", only it starts with a "d".

Maya: You just counted to ten, so give yourself a high five. Now eleven through fifteen are five words of their own. Once. That means eleven. Say it "OHN-seh". The "o" is big and round, like the "o" in the word "phone".

Devon: Doce. That means twelve. Say it "DOH-seh". Same rhythm, same confidence.

Maya: Trece. That means thirteen. Say it "TREH-seh". And there's that "c" before an "e" again, sounding like an "s" at the end.

Devon: Catorce. That means fourteen. Say it "kah-TOR-seh". Stress the "tor" and finish soft with "seh".

Maya: Quince. That means fifteen. Say it "KEEN-seh". It starts just like the English

notice how the "ocho" keeps its big stress.

Maya: Diecinueve. That means nineteen. Say it "dee-eh-see-noo-EH-veh". Ten plus nine. Once you hear the pattern, you can never unhear it, and that is the whole point.

Devon: And twenty is just one word to memorize. Veinte. Say it "VAYN-teh". No pattern, no tricks, just a friendly little word.

Maya: Time for our demo. I'm a hungry gringo at a fruit stand in Antigua, Guatemala, and Devon is the vendor.

Devon: Buenos días. ¿QuØ le doy?

Maya: Hola. Quiero naranjas, por favor. Quince naranjas.

Devon: Quince naranjas, muy bien. Son veinte pesos.

Maya: Veinte pesos. Perfecto. Gracias.

Devon: De nada. ¡Buen día!

Maya: Let me translate what just happened. Devon asked what he could get for me. I said I want oranges, fifteen oranges, please. He said fifteen oranges, very good, that's twenty pesos. And I said perfect, thank you. We borrowed the word "quiero", which means "I want". You'll master ordering phrases in lesson five, but you already sound great using it.

Devon: Quick cultural note. In a lot of Latin American markets, prices sound wild until you know the currency. In Mexico, price tags use the dollar sign, so twenty dollars on a tag usually means twenty pesos. Always ask "pesos o dólares" if a price sounds insane, because sometimes it is insane, and sometimes it's just pesos. And when a vendor tells you "son veinte pesos", that number is the whole bill, not the price per orange. So fifteen oranges for twenty pesos, total. Bargain.

Maya: Time for our recap drill. Repeat after me. Ten. Diez. Fifteen. Quince. Twenty. Veinte.

Devon: One more time, a little faster. Diez, quince, veinte.

Maya: Beautiful work. Next lesson, we take these numbers to the market for real, with prices, money, and how to ask how much something costs. Until then, count everything you see. Your hotel room, your tacos, your mosquito bites. ¡Nos vemos!