

The Letter r

Spanish **r** has two pronunciations, called the **tap** and the **trill**. For the first, simply tap the tip of your tongue against the **alveolar ridge** (the "gum ridge" just above your upper front teeth). The sound, which expresses every "non-initial" occurrence of Spanish **r**, is almost identical to the *tt* of Midwestern English *better* or *letter*.

Say:	pero	but
	caro,-a	dear, expensive
	hablar	to talk
	comer	to eat
	gris	gray
	triste	sad

The **trill**, used to express initial Spanish **r**, is like the tap, except that it is multiple. Just place the tip of your tongue on the alveolar ridge as you did for the **r** sound of the previous words, and let it vibrate strongly. Always trill the **r** when it is the first letter of a word. The sound is like that often made by children "playing cars."

Say:	ratón	mouse
	rata	rat
	reloj	watch, clock
	río	river
	resultado	result
	ropa	clothing

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Now that you have practiced the trilled **r** at the beginning of words, you are ready for the **rr**, which has exactly the same sound, but is written as a double **r**. Always trill it.

Say:	perro	dog
	carro	car
	correcto,-a	correct
	horrible	horrible
	zorro	fox
	ferrocarril	railroad

Contrast the **r** and the **rr** in the following words. Take care not to trill the tapped **r**, for doing so will change the meaning of the word.

Say:	pero	but	perro	dog
	caro	expensive	carro	car
	cero	zero	cerro	hill

Now, to really test your skill, say these words; each has both an **r** and an **rr**.

raro,-a	rare
repasar	to review
romper	to tear, to break
carrera	race (competition)
correr	to run
carretera	highway