

Unit 7

Special Orthographic Features

Spanish has a special symbol, the **diéresis** (English, *diaeresis*), consisting of two small dots which appear over the letter **u**—hence **ü**. Its meaning is that the **u** is to be pronounced in the combinations **güe**, **güi**, where it is normally silent and serves only to signal that the **g** is “hard.” Say these words that have **gue**, **gui** combinations without the **diéresis**:

Say:	guerra	war
	guerrilla	guerrilla
	guía	guide
	guitarra	guitar

Now say these words, which have these combinations with **diéresis**; pronounce it like an English *w*.

Say:	vergüenza	shame
	sinvergüenza	rascal
	cigüeña	stork
	agüero	omen
	averigüe	find out (command)
	lingüista	linguist

The Letter **q**

This letter always occurs in the combination **qu**. It is pronounced as English *k*, but without the aspiration. Avoid the English pronunciation of **qu** as *kw*. Contrast: English *quit*; Spanish *guitar*.

Say:	que	that
	quien	who(m)
	quince	fifteen
	aquel	that