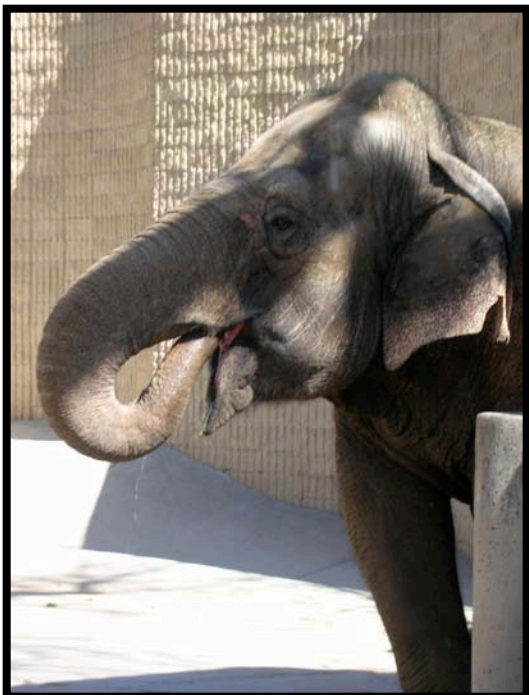


Eating an Elephant:

I tell my students that learning Spanish is not rocket science. The concepts are relatively simple. What makes it so hard is the amount of memorization it requires. I have them to think about all the words they know in English. I then say, “Those are the words you now need to learn in Spanish.”

At this point, I give the kids another illustration. I ask them how they would go about eating an elephant (not that I condone eating elephants). Could they swallow it whole? No! They would have to cut it up into parts and eat those parts bite-by-bite. (Note: The more detailed and gross I get, the more they enjoy . . . and remember . . . this part of the message.) Trying to “swallow” huge chunks of Spanish prior to a test just won’t work. It’s too much to remember. Plus, they need to have memorized the information so well that they know it when they see it; they recognize it when they hear it; and, they can come up with it when they want to speak it. That kind of memorization requires small “bites”. I recommend that the kids dedicate 15 to 20 quality minutes a day, for at least five days a week, studying Spanish. (See *AGENDA* in the *HOME FRONT* folder for a study sheet that has really helped hold my kids accountable for studying.) Being that they are willing to make that commitment, we’re ready to jump in.

Spanish in a Nutshell:

I warn the students that I am about to give them a tremendous amount of information. I do not expect them to “get” every detail. It’s like putting together a puzzle. You start by laying out all the pieces and studying the box top; but, you don’t expect yourself to finish in a day. I’m not going to test them . . . yet. They simply need to get a general idea of how the parts of Spanish work. (Hand out the *APUNTES* sheet from the *GRAMÁTICA* section.) I sum Spanish grammar up as follows:

**Sustantivos---**

- Spanish nouns are either feminine or masculine.
- They are either singular or plural.

Example: el lápiz / la pluma---los lápices / las plumas

Adjetivos---

- Adjectives usually come after the noun.
- They must agree with the noun (feminine/masculine, singular/plural).

Example: el gato negro / los gatos negros

Adverbios---

- Spanish adverbs work more-or-less like English adverbs.

Example: Corrí rápidamente.

Pronombres---

- We will tackle Spanish pronouns little-by-little, starting with subject pronouns.

Verbos---

- Spanish infinitives end in -AR, -ER, and -IR. (Note: You will need to explain what an infinitive is.)
- They are either regular (follow the rules) or irregular (don’t follow the rules).
- The end of a Spanish verb contains the subject and tense.

Example:

hablas, hablé, hablará / comes, comí, comerá /
vives, viví, vivirá