

Hablando de gramática

por Señor Conner

Señor Conner is the author of the popular language series *BREAKING THE SPANISH BARRIER*. Each month he will feature a grammatical topic of interest to our readers. Do you have ideas of topics you would like to see covered? E-mail Señor Conner at john@tobreak.com. You can also visit his website: www.tobreak.com.

I Have Your Number!

Cardinal Numbers. Ordinal Numbers. I must admit I never used to be able to remember which was which! Cardinal numbers, of course, are 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. Ordinal numbers are 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc. Ordinal numbers tell the order. That's how I finally remembered. Here are these numbers in Spanish:

Cardinal: *uno, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco, seis, siete, ocho, nueve, diez, etc.*

Ordinal: *primero, segundo, tercero, cuarto, quinto, sexto, séptimo, octavo, noveno, décimo, etc.*

Here are twelve important things to know about these cardinal and ordinal numbers:

1) The cardinal numbers 16-19 and 21-29 can be written as either one word or as three in Spanish. Modern preference seems to be writing them as one word.

16	<i>dieciséis (diez y seis, etc.)</i>	21	<i>veintiuno (veinte y uno, etc.)</i>	26	<i>veintiséis</i>
17	<i>diecisiete</i>	22	<i>veintidós</i>	27	<i>veintisiete</i>
18	<i>dieciocho</i>	23	<i>veintitrés</i>	28	<i>veintiocho</i>
19	<i>diecinueve</i>	24	<i>veinticuatro</i>	29	<i>veintinueve</i>
		25	<i>veinticinco</i>		

2) The word “*ciento*” is shortened to “*cien*” before any noun (*cien libros, cien tarjetas*) and before any larger number (*cien mil, cien millones, etc.*).

3) The word “*y*” is only found between groups of tens and ones (e.g., *sesenta y ocho*). “One hundred and one” would be expressed in Spanish by “*ciento uno*.”

4) When describing a feminine noun, the numerals 200-900 change to agree with that noun (*doscientas, trescientas, etc.*) 321 potatoes = *trescientas veintiuna patatas*. But: 451 books = *cuatrocientos cincuenta y un libros*.

5) If you have a million of something, you must place the preposition “*de*” between “*millón*” and a subsequent noun: *un millón de dólares*.

6) The words “*primero*” and “*tercero*” lose their “*o*” before a masculine, singular noun (e.g., *el primer libro, el tercer capítulo*). Other ordinal numbers keep the “*o*” (*el octavo período, el décimo alumno*).

7) All ordinal numbers change the final “*o*” to “*a*” before a singular feminine noun (*la primera clase, la quinta fila*).

Speaking of Grammar

8) Ordinal numbers are often abbreviated: 1^o, 1^a, 2^o, 2^a, 3^o, 3^a, etc.

9) Use cardinal numbers for dates: *el veintinueve de agosto, el doce de julio de mil novecientos treinta*. It is also possible (and very common!) to use the ordinal word “primero” for the first day of the week. *Hoy es el primero (uno) de febrero*.

10) You can use either a cardinal or ordinal number to identify a chapter, lesson, street, etc.:

el primer ejercicio = *el ejercicio uno*
la tercera parte = *la parte tres*
el séptimo párrafo = *el párrafo siete*

11) In a title, use ordinal numbers from one to ten. After that, use cardinal numbers.

Felipe IV (cuarto) aparece en muchos cuadros de Velázquez.

Philip the Fourth appears in many of Velázquez’s paintings.

Miguel Santos XII (doce) vive en nuestro barrio.

Miguel Santos the Twelfth lives in our neighborhood.

12) If you have both a cardinal and an ordinal number in the same sentence, put the cardinal number first and the ordinal second. In English, we do the opposite!

Las seis primeras palabras de Don Quijote son: “En un lugar de la Mancha ...”

The first six words of Don Quijote are “In a place in La Mancha ...”

Las dos primeras canciones de Luis Fonsi fueron éxitos.

The first two songs of Luis Fonsi were hits.

PRUEBA DE REPASO

Try translating the following, using cardinal and ordinal numbers wisely!

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| a) 202 | f) the first four lessons |
| b) 67 | g) 101 enchiladas |
| c) a million questions | h) Henry VIII |
| d) the third example | i) the seventh chair |
| e) 100,321 chairs | j) August 29, 2001 |

Answers: a) doscientos dos b) sesenta y siete c) un millón de preguntas d) el tercer ejemplo (el ejemplo tres) e) cien mil trescientas veintinueve sillas f) las cuatro primeras lecciones g) ciento una enchiladas h) Enrique VIII (Octavo) i) la séptima silla j) el veintinueve de agosto de dos mil uno