**DIVISION OF WORDS INTO SYLLABLES**

It is good to know how to divide a word into syllables (not only in Spanish, but also in English) because it helps you to pronounce the word correctly and to spell it correctly. The general rules to follow when dividing Spanish words into syllables are:

1. A syllable **must** contain a vowel.

2. A syllable **may** contain only one vowel and no consonants.

3. If you are dealing with **single separate consonants**, each consonant remains with the vowel that follows it.

**m**u / **ch**o *(mucho)*, **c**a / **b**a / **ll**o *(caballo)*, **p**e / **rr**o *(perro)*

Notice that the consonants **ch**, **ll** and **rr** are considered as one consonant sound and are not separated.

4. If you are dealing with **two consonants that come together** (other than ch, ll or rr as stated above), the two consonants are separated. The first remains with the preceding syllable and the second remains with the following syllable when they are split.

he**r** / **m**a / no *(hermano)*, a**t** / **l**as *(atlas)*, te**r** / **c**er *(tercer)*

But if the second of the two consonants that come together is **l** or **r**, do not separate them.

ha / **bl**o *(hablo)*, a / **pr**en / do *(aprendo)*, li / **br**o *(libro)*

5. If you are dealing with **three consonants that come together**, the first two remain with the preceding vowel and the third consonant remains with the vowel that follows it.

i**ns** / **t**i / tu / to *(instituto)*

But if the third of the three consonants is **l** or **r** do not separate that third consonant from the second. It remains with the second consonant.

co**m** / **pr**en / der *(comprender)*, sa**s** / **tr**e *(sastre)*, sa**l** / **dr**é *(saldré)*

6. **Two vowels that are together** are generally separated if they are strong vowels. The strong vowels are **a**, **e**, **o**.

**a** / **e** / ro / pla / no *(aeroplano)*, **o** / **a** / sis *(oasis)*, r**e** / **a** / li / dad *(realidad)*

But if you are dealing with a weak vowel (**i**, **u**) it ordinarily remains in the same syllable with its neighboring vowel, especially if that other vowel is a strong vowel.

tr**ei**n / ta *(treinta)*, ru / b**io** *(rubio)*, h**ue** / vo *(huevo)*

***NOTE: U and i are weak. All the rest are strong.***

7. If a **vowel contains a written accent mark**, it becomes strong enough to remain in its own syllable.

Ma / r**í** / a *(María)*, re / **ú**  / ne *(reúne)*, d**í** / a *(día)*

8. The letter **y** is considered a consonant when a vowel follows it. Keep it with the vowel that follows it.

a / **y**er *(ayer)*, a / **y**u / dar *(ayudar)*

**RULES OF STRESS [SYLLABLE EMPHASIS] IN SPANISH**

**1. Words ending in a vowel, n or s are stressed on the next to the last syllable of the word.**

**2. Words ending in a consonant other than n or s are stressed on the last syllable of the word.**

**3. All exceptions to the above two rules have a written accent mark to indicate stress.**

*[Memorizing these three rules will be immensely helpful in being able to pronounce any Spanish word accurately. They also help you know when an accent mark is needed.]*

NOTE: Most words in Spanish, including verb forms, end in a vowel, n or s.