

PARA AND POR and THE PASSIVE VOICE

The distinctive usage of the prepositions **por** and **para** is one of the hardest things to learn in the Spanish language and a good way of learning how to use them, is through examples.

Main uses of para – ‘for’

Para expresses purpose, destination, use, advantage, disadvantage. It's also used in time phrases and in some idiomatic expressions meaning ‘considering’.

- a) Purpose: Una mesa **para** dos (A table for two); Este libro es **para** usted (This book is for you)
- b) Destination: El lunes salgo **para** Londres (On Monday I'll leave for London) Salió **para** la oficina (He left for the office)
- c) Use: Un gorro de piel **para** la nieve (A fur hat for the snow)
- d) Advantage: No fumar es bueno **para** la salud (Not smoking is good for your health)
- e) Disadvantage: Dos mil euros es demasiado dinero **para** solo una semana en el hotel (Two thousand euros is too much money for only one week in the hotel)
- f) In time phrases: Estaré listo **para** las siete en punto (I'll be ready for seven o'clock)
- g) ‘Considering’: Es muy alto **para** su edad (He's very tall for his age) Soy demasiado viejo **para** este trabajo (I'm too old for this type of work)

Main uses of por

Por is used to express through, because of, by means of, in support of, per, etc. **Por** is also used in the passive.

- a) Through: Lo supe **por** un amigo (I found out about it through a friend) El ladrón entró **por** la puerta trasera (The thief entered through the back door) He viajado **por** Brasil (I've travelled throughout Brazil)
- b) Because of: Muchas gracias **por** la postal (Many thanks for the postcard) Lo hizo **por** dinero (He did it for money) Hoy **por** ti, mañana **por** mí (Today for you, tomorrow for me)
- c) By means of : El sistema de alarma funciona **por** rayos infrarrojos (The alarm system works by infra-red rays) Se puede pagar **por** carta de crédito (Payment by credit card accepted)
- d) In support of: Voté **por** la libertad (I voted for freedom)
- e) Per: Veinte kilómetros **por** hora (Twenty kilometres (per) an hour), El dos **por** ciento son musulmanes (Two per cent are Moslems)

Por is used in the passive voice to indicate the active agent.

The passive voice is formed using the appropriate tense of the verb to be (ser) and the past participle of the main verb. The past participle agrees in gender and number with the passive subject of the verb to be (ser).

Active: Colón descubrió América – Columbus discovered America

Passive: América **fue descubierta por** Colón – America was discovered by Columbus.

Active: La policía arrestó a tres manifestantes – The police arrested three demonstrators.

Passive: Tres manifestantes **fueron arrestados por** la policía – Three demonstrators were arrested by the police.

Por is also used in idiomatic expressions.

Por la mañana (tarde, noche) – in the morning (evening, night)

Por dos años -- for two years

Por correo (avión, mar) – by mail (air, sea)

Por lo corriente -- usually

Por lo general – in general

Por eso – therefore

Por aquí – this way, around here

Por allí – that way, around there

Por ejemplo – for example

Mañana por la mañana

te espero Juana

en el café.

Las tapas son excelentes,

hay mucho vino e incluso té.
