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# Colloquial Catalan

The Complete Course  
for Beginners

Toni Ibarz and Alexander Ibarz



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# What is *Colloquial Catalan*?

This book is part of the Routledge *Colloquial* series. ‘Colloquial’ is used with its full original meaning of ‘spoken language’ and not with the meaning often favoured by Catalan-speakers of ‘informal’, even ‘vulgar’ language.

*Colloquial Catalan* is a course for absolute beginners which offers the possibility of learning enough spoken Catalan to communicate effectively in real-life situations. The topics included cover daily life, travel, work and leisure, making it suitable for the cultural traveller, those starting a new life in a Catalan-speaking area, and the university student who needs to learn the language in a short period of time.

*Colloquial Catalan* is structured around sequences of life-like dialogues which offer access to the key aspects of the language and the culture of the Catalan-speaking peoples. In this way the language is always presented in a meaningful context. After studying the first few units you will be able to engage in simple communication and gain the respect of local people. The book covers the main aspects of Catalan grammar and develops your listening and speaking skills, together with reading and, to a lesser extent, writing.

## Individual learning and group teaching

*Colloquial Catalan* is designed mainly with the self-learner in mind. It requires no previous language learning experience because the explanations are as straightforward and gradual as possible, and are illustrated with examples. The course offers the basic ingredients of language learning: exposure to the language, clear explanations and opportunities to practise. Therefore, it can be easily adapted to small group and classroom teaching. If used in the classroom, it offers the advantage of freeing the tutor from spending time explaining the language. This is particularly useful when the tutor is

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not an English native speaker, as is often the case, and is not aware of the way some English speakers can be challenged by grammar.

## **The Catalan language**

Catalan is a Romance language with many similarities to other languages in this group, such as Portuguese, Italian or Spanish. Catalan also shares many features with English, which helps make it easy to learn. If you look at some of the texts you should be able to identify quite a few words, even before you start your studies.

There are close to seven million speakers of Catalan in the eastern part of the Iberian Peninsula who have it as their mother tongue, another 4 million understand Catalan and use it passively. It is also spoken in other areas linked to Catalonia by history and geography: Andorra, where it is the official language, Cerdagne and Roussillon, in what is now south-eastern France, and L'Alguer (Alghero), on the island of Sardinia. Catalan is less well known in the English-speaking world than several other European languages with fewer speakers, because the areas where it is spoken do not correspond to the boundaries of a state. It was only relatively recently that interest in the language has become more widespread in anglophone countries. One factor has been the consolidation of Barcelona as a favourite tourist destination, especially since the Olympic Games of 1992.

This course focuses mainly on the Catalan spoken in the area of Barcelona and central eastern Catalonia, a variety sometimes referred to as the central or standard variety, which predominates in the media and education system. Catalan is also spoken in other areas well known to the modern traveller, such as the Balearic Islands and Valencia, where the language has its own distinctive features and its own creative force. Learners whose interest is linked to these areas will still find this book useful. The main features of the language are the same, and you will soon pick up the differences by listening closely to local speakers. Speaking as the locals do is, after all, an important aim of all language learners.

## **How is the course structured?**

The course is divided into 20 units which in turn are divided into dialogues linked by a theme. Most learners may choose to cover

one dialogue during each session of study. Our advice is that you should consider each dialogue as the basic unit of study, because short frequent sessions tend to be the most productive way of approaching language learning.

Units 1–5 are short, and focus on getting used to the sounds of the language, developing good comprehension habits and becoming familiar with the basic grammar. Units 6–10 cover most essential vocabulary and structures for daily tasks, such as talking about the family, going shopping for food and going out. In units 11–20 the level of difficulty increases and more advanced points of grammar are introduced progressively.

## How to work on each dialogue?

The recordings are a fundamental part of this course. Much can be learnt from the written text on its own, but the ability to understand what others are saying is a key aspect of communication and listening to the audio will allow you to imitate native speakers. Here is the recommended procedure to follow with each of the dialogues:

- 1) Read the rubric that precedes the dialogue so that you know the context in which it takes place.
- 2) Resist the temptation to read the written version of the dialogue first. It is much better if first you listen carefully to the audio, just as you would do when someone talks to you or when you hear an announcement, situations in which you don't have any written help.
- 3) Listen to the dialogue at least twice. Try to find out or guess what is going on and what the characters are saying.
- 4) Now look at the written text.
- 5) Check the **Vocabulary** and read the **Culture notes** and the **Language points**.
- 6) When you understand what the text means and you have read the grammar points, you should listen to or read the dialogue again, paying special attention to how things are said and how the language is used.
- 7) Complete the **Exercises** relating to the dialogue or to the whole unit if appropriate.

## Complementary sections

The **Pronunciation guide** is no substitute for listening carefully to the audio and imitating native speakers, but it may help you with aspects of the sound system and intonation.

The Grammar reference extends and complements some areas of grammar and allows for quick reference, especially of verb endings.

The Language builders have a similar function in relation to vocabulary and basic expressions.

The **Catalan–English glossary** includes most words that appear in the book. The **English–Catalan glossary** includes only words needed to complete the exercises.

The Key to exercises allows you to check your responses.

## Feedback

We would very much welcome any feedback on the experience of using this course and how it may be improved. Please e-mail or write to the authors at Routledge.

## Dictionaries and further reading

You are going to find a bilingual dictionary very useful, particularly in the second half of the course, where not all the words are listed in the glossaries. Of the mid-size and affordable dictionaries we recommend: *Diccionari Oxford Pocket Català per a estudiants d'anglès* (Oxford University Press, second edition, Oxford, 2002), and *Larousse Diccionari Pocket: Català-Anglès, English-Catalan* (Larousse, Barcelona, 2000). The latter includes pronunciation of Catalan words.

The most up-to-date and authoritative Grammar in English is: Max. W. Wheeler, Alan Yates and Nicolau Dolç, *Catalan: A Comprehensive Grammar* (Routledge, London, 1999).

For a modern introduction in English to the culture, history and literature, which is especially strong on *modernisme*: Robert Hughes, *Barcelona* (Harvill, London, 1992). Also highly informative are Colm Tóibín, *Homage to Barcelona* (Picador paperback, London, 2002) and John Payne, *Catalonia: History and Culture* (Five Leaves Publications, Nottingham, 2004).

For an introduction to politics: Montserrat Guibernau, *Catalan Nationalism: Francoism, Transition and Democracy* (Routledge, London, 2004); and Albert Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism: Past and Present* (with an introduction by G. J. Walker, Macmillan, London, 1995).

For gastronomy, read Colman Andrews, *Catalan Cuisine: Europe's Last Great Culinary Secret* (The Harvard Common Press, Boston, 1999).

Finally, the Internet will give you access to an important range of resources that you may find very useful. For example: [www.cercat.com/lincaweb/recurscat](http://www.cercat.com/lincaweb/recurscat) and [www.xtec.es](http://www.xtec.es) (Xarxa Telemàtica Educativa de Catalunya). Judicious use of a search engine should take you to the sites that meet your individual interests and language needs.

# Pronunciation guide

## The alphabet

<b>a</b>	<b>a</b>
<b>b</b>	<b>be (alta)</b>
<b>c</b>	<b>ce</b>
<b>ç</b>	<b>ce trencada</b>
<b>d</b>	<b>de</b>
<b>e</b>	<b>e</b>
<b>f</b>	<b>efa</b>
<b>g</b>	<b>ge</b>
<b>h</b>	<b>hac</b>
<b>i</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>j</b>	<b>jota</b>
<b>k</b>	<b>ca</b>
<b>l</b>	<b>ela</b>
<b>m</b>	<b>ema</b>
<b>n</b>	<b>ena</b>
<b>o</b>	<b>o</b>
<b>p</b>	<b>pe</b>
<b>q</b>	<b>cu</b>
<b>r</b>	<b>erra</b>
<b>s</b>	<b>essa</b>
<b>t</b>	<b>te</b>
<b>u</b>	<b>u</b>
<b>v</b>	<b>ve baixa</b>
<b>w</b>	<b>ve doble</b>
<b>x</b>	<b>ics</b>
<b>y</b>	<b>i grega</b>
<b>z</b>	<b>zeta</b>



## Pronunciation (Audio 1: 2–6)

To achieve good pronunciation there is no substitute for listening to the audio and if possible to native speakers. Try to reproduce the sounds you hear. Below are guidelines to keep in mind. Note that they relate to the pronunciation of ‘central’ Catalan sounds and do not include regional variations.

### Colloquial pronunciation 1: consonants which differ from English

The sounds represented by Catalan consonants are very similar to English. The main difference is that consonants like **b**, **d**, **g**, **p**, **t**, have a softer pronunciation. Other differences are described below.

- b/v** After a vowel: softer than English, with only slight contact between the lips; **autobús**, **avió**, **habitual**. [b]
- ce/ci/ç** Always pronounced like /s/ in *city*; **cervesa**, **àcid**, **plaça**, **Barça**. [s]
- d** 1) Between vowels and after r: like the /th/ in *the* or *that*; **vida**, **Gaudí**, **perdó**. [ð]  
2) At the end of a word: Like the /t/ in *flat* or *hot* but softer; **líquid**, **fred**, **verd**. [t]
- ge/gi/je** Like /s/ in *measure* and *vision* or /g/ in *general*; **jardí**, **projectió**, **general**. [z] [dʒ]
- h** Always silent, not pronounced; **home**, **hotel**, **història**.
- l-l** Represents a reinforced /l/ sound; **intel·ligent**, **novel·la**. [ll]
- r** 1) In initial position and after l, m, n, s: rolled with the tip of tongue against the hard palate; **Rambla**, **Roma**. [rr]  
2) In intermediate positions: pronounced with a single contact of tongue against palate; **Miró**, **Girona**, **Costa Brava**. [r]  
3) In final position: it is silent, not pronounced. This is the case with infinitives and many nouns; **estudiar**, **professor**, **parador**.

- s** Between vowels: pronounced like /z/ in *lazy*, *nose* or *does*; **casa**, **música**, **rosa**. [z]
- t** 1) In most positions the pronunciation is like *take* or *cost*, with the tip of tongue against the top teeth; **Tarragona**, **costar**. [t]  
 2) In a final position after /l/, /n/, or in the group /rts/ it is not pronounced; **molt**, **dependent**, **dimarts**
- x** 1) At the beginning of a word: it is pronounced like the /sh/ of English *shus*; **xocolata**, **Xina**, **xoriço**. [ʃ]  
 2) In other positions: the pronunciation is similar to English in *exotic* or *fix*; **exòtic**, **fixar**, **èxit**. [ks] [gz]

## Colloquial pronunciation 2: word stress

On hearing Catalan words you will note that part of the word carries the main stress. For example: **Barcelona**, pronounced **Bar-ce-LO-na**, and **universitat** pronounced **u-ni-ver-si-TAT**. Words of one syllable are stressed with the exception of articles, some pronouns and some prepositions. As always the best advice is to listen carefully and imitate what you hear.

However, when you come across a word in writing, except in some good dictionaries which tell you where the stress is, you can only know where to place the stress by following 3 simple rules that apply to most words.

1. Stress falls on the next-to-last syllable of words ending in either:
 

a single vowel	(e.g. <b>TarraGO</b> na, <b>PAL</b> ma, <b>AnDOR</b> ra)
vowel + s	( <b>cerVE</b> ses, <b>CAS</b> es, <b>RAM</b> bles)
<b>-en</b> , <b>-in</b>	( <b>viSI</b> ten)
2. Words ending in a consonant usually carry the stress on the final syllable (e.g. **restaurANT**, **vocAL**, **consonANT**, **hoTEL**, **visiTAr**).
3. Where neither 1 or 2 apply, stress is indicated with a written accent mark on the syllable which carries it (i.e. **MÚ**sica, **teLÈ**fon, **americÀ**, **anglÈ**s).



## Colloquial pronunciation 3: vowel sounds

Catalan vowel sounds are generally shorter and sharper than in English

### *Unstressed and stressed i and u*

- i** Like the **i** sound in **teach** (**peach**, **marine**, **seen**) but shorter and sharper; **pizza**, **pintura**, **difícil**. [i]
- u** Similar to the **u** in **pull** (**put**, **full**, **bull**); **ridícul**, **número**, **furiós**. [u]

### *Unstressed a, e and o*

- a/e** Both unstressed **a** and unstressed **e** represent a relaxed neutral sound similar to **father**, **sugar**, **infant**, **annoy**.  
Examples are: **hola**, **Girona**, **Sagrada Familia**, **pare**, **mare**. [ə]
- o** Unstressed **o** is the same sound as the letter **u**; **Montserrat**, **oral**, **al·legoria**. [u]

### *Stressed a, e and o*

- a** Between the /a/ sounds in English **cat** (but more open) and **card**; **Sagrada**, **visitar**, **àlgebra**. [á]
- e** Open **e** is like the /e/ in English **sell** (**get**, **bed**, **air**); **café**, **terra**, **telèfon**, **comitè**. [é]  
  
Closed **e** is like the **e** sound in **neighbour** or **rain** (without the **i** sound); **accés**, **congrés**, **prudent**. [é]
- o** Open **o** is like in the English **logic** (**obvious**, **omnivore**, **opera**); **home**, **dona**, **òpera**, **lògica**. [ɔ]  
  
Closed **o** is like the English in **author** or **order**; **Barcelona**, **estómac**, **autor**. [ó]

### Four considerations in relation to Catalan vowels:

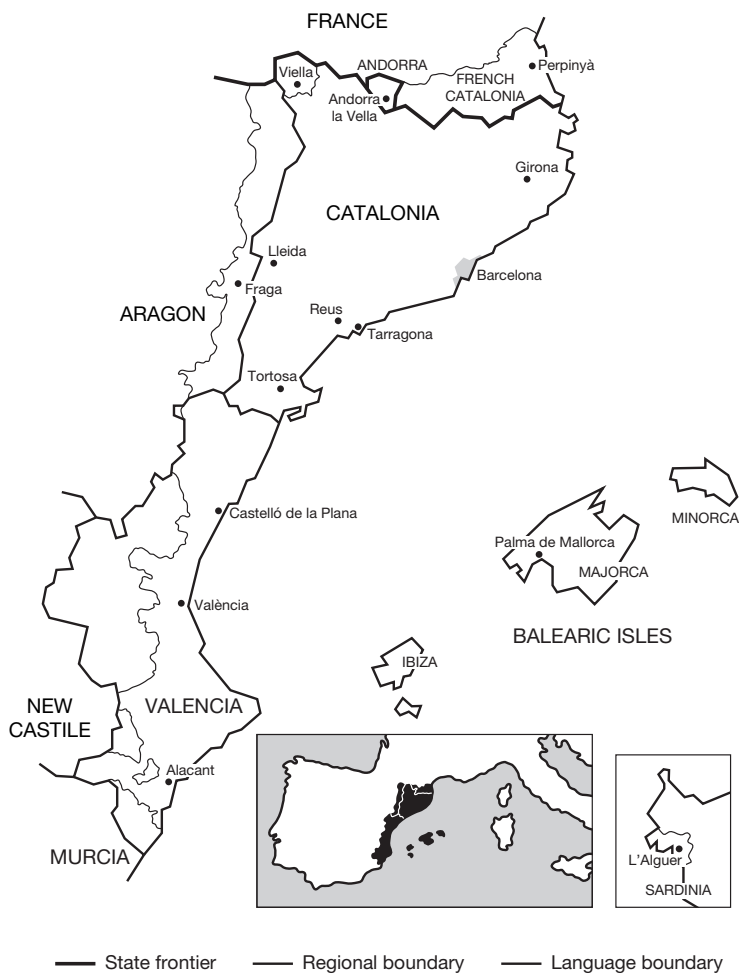
- 1 By looking at the examples you will notice that Catalan uses both the *grave* or *open* ( ` ) and the *acute* or *close* ( ´ ) written accents. A graphic accent mark is used only in words that do not follow rules 1 and 2 of word stress (see above). The grave accent is used for open stressed vowels and the acute for close stressed vowels. Stressed **a** is always ‘open’ and is written with the grave accent **à** and **i** and **u** are always ‘close’ written when appropriate as **í** and **ú**, as in the examples in the chart above.
- 2 As seen on the previous page, **e** and **o** can be sometimes ‘open’ and sometimes ‘close’. When **e** and **o** have an accent it is easy to know whether the sounds are ‘open’ (**è,ò**) or ‘close’ (**é,ó**). However, if there is no written accent it is difficult to know unless we hear someone pronouncing the word or we pay close attention to the audio. Do not worry about this point. It does not normally interfere with comprehension and you will gradually master it. Take into account that there are some regional variations in the pronunciation of open/close vowels which allow for adaptability between listeners and speakers. However, when writing, all users adopt the conventions outlined here.
- 3 Many words have two vowel sounds next to each other (diphthongs). In most cases they are pronounced as separate sounds, for example: **oasi, client**. However, if the second sound is ‘i’ or ‘u’ the /i/ sound changes to the sound of the English /y/ in *day* (for example: **espai, Lleida**) and the /u/ sound changes to the sound of the English /w/ in *now*. For example: **autobús, Gaudí, Salou, euro, ciutat**.
- 4 When a word finishes in a vowel and the next word starts also with a vowel (above all unstressed **e** and **a**), they are usually run together (word liaison). For example: **una amiga meva va a Anglaterra a estudiar**. This is an important feature for two reasons: 1) Once you have mastered it, your speech will sound much more natural; and 2) In the early stages of contact with the language, the running of words together can be a challenge to the untrained ear.

## Colloquial pronunciation 4: single sounds represented by two letters (digraphs)

Note that digraphs represent one sound. So, for example, **caixa** is pronounced /casha/, the **i** before the **x**, in this case, represents the sound /sh/ (as opposed to the sound /x/ in **èxit** /egsit/).

- qu**      1) **que, qui**: is pronounced like /k/ in *cat, kick, chemical, or curtain*; **que, quilòmetre, orquestra**. [k]  
2) **qua, quo, què, quí**: represents /qu/ in English *quick, quota, quality, or question*; **quota, qualitat, qüestió**. [kw]
- gu**      1) **gue, gui**: the same sound a /gu/ in *guide, guitar, gate, or gold*; **guerra, guitarra**. [g]  
2) **gua, guo, güe, güi**: /wa/ in *water or ambiguity*; **aigua, ambigüïtat**. [gw]
- ll**      Sounds like /l/ and /y/ together pronounced like *lli* in *million*; **llibertat, lluna, llengua**. [lj]
- ll**      Represents a reinforced /l/ sound; **intel·ligent, novel·la**. [ll]
- ny**      Sounds like /n/ and /y/ together as in *onion*; **Catalunya, Espanya**. [ɲ]
- rr**      Is a rolled sound, pronounced like Catalan /r/ in initial position; **Andorra, Mediterrani**. [rr]
- ss**      Like /s/ in initial position, the same as *Picasso, pass* or *classic* in English; **Picasso, passar, clàssic**. [s]
- ix**      After a vowel **-ix** is pronounced like /sh/ in *shush*; **Caixa, Eixample**. [ʃ]
- tx/-ig**      Sounds like /tch/ in English as in *match* or *catch*; **cotxe, sandvitx, maig, desig**. [tʃ]





**Where Catalan is spoken**

# 1 Benvinguda i benvingut!

Welcome!

**In this unit you will learn about:**

- Meeting and greeting people
- The present tense of **ser** 'to be'
- Subject pronouns: 'I', 'you', 'he', 'she', etc.
- Personal articles
- **Tu** and **vostè**
- The gender of nouns and adjectives

Welcome (**benvinguda** or **benvingut**) to our Catalan course! Our journey begins, like so many, at the airport, a typical place for meetings and greetings. At first you will be dealing with familiar situations and you may be able to make out the gist of the conversations in the opening dialogues, and perhaps even identify some words.

Throughout the course, we strongly recommend that you listen to the audio before looking at the text of the dialogue. In this way you will soon be able to cope with real situations in which Catalan is used. In such situations you will be talking to people without any written support, so start as you mean to finish!



## Dialogue 1 (Audio 1: 7)

*Rachel and Sara meet for the first time at Barcelona airport. Sara tries to find out if she is talking to the right person and welcomes Rachel to Barcelona.*

- **Listen carefully to the audio twice and see how much you can recognise.**

PUBLIC ADDRESS	La companyia Air Litoral anuncia l'arribada
SYSTEM	del vol AL673, procedent de París.
SARA	Perdona, ets la Rachel?
RACHEL	Sí, sóc la Rachel Woodhouse.
SARA	Hola, jo sóc la Sara Font.
RACHEL	Encantada.
SARA	Igualment. Benvinguda a Barcelona.
RACHEL	Gràcies.

## Vocabulary

<b>l'arribada</b> (f.)	arrival
<b>del vol</b>	of the flight
<b>hola</b>	hello
<b>perdona</b>	excuse me
<b>ets</b>	are you
<b>sí</b>	yes
<b>sóc</b>	I am
<b>encantat, -da</b>	delighted/pleased to meet you
<b>igualment</b>	so am I/equally
<b>benvingut, -da</b>	welcome
<b>a</b>	to
<b>gràcies</b>	thank you

From now on, to help focus on comprehension whilst you listen to the audio, dialogues will often be preceded by questions or other activities. In most cases the answers can be checked when you look at the written version of the dialogue. The language points belonging to this dialogue will be explained after the next dialogue; now go straight on to Dialogue 2.



## Dialogue 2 (Audio 1: 8)

*Two travellers, senyora Mata and Rosa Garcia, are met by a hotel representative (**representant**), senyor Massip, who mistakes senyora Mata for Rosa Garcia. As in Dialogue 1, listen to this dialogue twice before looking at the text.*

- **What's the name of the hotel?**

REPRESENTANT	Hola, bon dia. Vostè és la senyora Garcia?
SENYORA MATA	No, la senyora Garcia és ella, jo sóc la senyora Mata. I vostè qui és?
REPRESENTANT	Jo sóc el senyor Massip de l'Hotel Central.
SENYORA MATA	Molt de gust.
REPRESENTANT	Encantat.
SENYORA MATA	Rosa, el senyor Massip de l'Hotel Central.
ROSA GARCIA	Encantada.
REPRESENTANT	Molt de gust.

## Vocabulary

<b>bon dia</b>	good day, good morning
<b>la senyora</b>	Mrs
<b>qui</b>	who
<b>el senyor</b>	Mr
<b>de</b>	of, from
<b>l'hotel (m.)</b>	hotel
<b>molt de gust</b>	a great pleasure/ pleased to meet you



## Language points

### The verb *ser* 'to be' 1

The verb **ser** 'to be' takes the following forms for the present tense:

<i>Singular</i>	<b>(jo)</b>	<b>sóc</b>	I am
	<b>(tu)</b>	<b>ets</b>	you are (familiar)
	<b>(vostè/ell/ella)</b>	<b>és</b>	you are (formal), he/she is
<i>Plural</i>	<b>(nosaltres)</b>	<b>som</b>	we are
	<b>(vosaltres)</b>	<b>sou</b>	you are (familiar)
	<b>(vostès/ells/elles)</b>	<b>són</b>	you are (formal), they are

The subject pronoun, shown here in brackets, is generally used only for emphasis, as in the first exchanges in our dialogue, when questions of identity are so important. Otherwise, the form of the verb



itself is sufficient to indicate person ('I', 'you', 'she', etc.) and number (singular or plural). Normally, **senyora Mata** would introduce herself by saying simply: **sóc la senyora Mata**.

## ***The article 1: the personal article***

You will have observed how in Dialogue 1 the names of Sara and Rachel are preceded by **la**. This is called the 'personal article' and is used before first names. The masculine form is **el**: **sóc el Jordi** (= I'm Jordi); **ets el Martin?** (= are you Martin?). **El** and **la** are also used in front of **senyor** and **senyora**. Example: **vostè és la senyora Massip?**

Note that when you are addressing a person without using the verb 'to be', no article is used, as when **Sra. Mata** in the dialogue says to her friend: **Rosa . . .** Similarly, if she were using her friend's title and surname, to attract her attention she would say: **senyora Garcia, el senyor Massip de l'Hotel Central**.

## ***Tu and vostè 1***

Dialogues 1 and 2 illustrate the contrast between a context in which the familiar (**tu**) form of address is appropriate (the speakers are on first-name terms) and a more formal one where **vostè** is the proper convention. Note that **vostè** uses the third person of the verb, the same as 'he'/'she'.

## ***Nouns 1***

Nouns in Catalan, in common with the other Romance languages, are either masculine or feminine, and have a singular and plural form. In our vocabulary lists the gender of the noun is indicated by the preceding masculine or feminine article (= the): **el** or **la**. In a few cases the noun will be followed by (m.) or (f.) to indicate if it is masculine or feminine. In this respect dictionaries are very useful, as they not only tell you the meaning of words, but also give you other information. Consider the entry: **felicitat n.f. happiness**. The abbreviation *n.f.* tells you that the word is a feminine noun – and *n.m.* that it is a masculine noun. It is worthwhile spending a few minutes reading the introduction to your dictionary to learn how to get the most out of it.

## Adjectives 1

Another important point brought out in these first two dialogues is how the word **encantada** is used by women and **encantat** by men. This is because it is an adjective and adjectives in Catalan always agree with the noun to which they refer. If the noun is masculine the adjective will be masculine, if the noun is feminine the adjective is feminine. This means that adjectives have two forms. In our vocabulary lists we give the masculine singular form first, with an indication of the feminine singular form: **encantat**, **-ada** (= **encantada**). **Benvinguda** and **benvingut** referring to you, female and male readers, and **benvinguda** in Dialogue 1, referring to Rachel, are further examples of the use of the two adjective endings.

### Exercise 1

Fill in the gaps with the personal articles **el** or **la** or leave a blank space as appropriate. We use sentences 1 and 2 as examples:

*Example 1:* Vostè és \_\_\_\_ senyor Woodhouse?

*Answer:* **el**.

*Example 2:* Hola, \_\_\_\_ senyora Roger, benvinguda a Barcelona.

*Answer:* blank, no personal article is needed when addressing a person directly.

- 1 Vostè és \_\_\_\_ senyor Woodhouse?
- 2 Hola, \_\_\_\_ senyora Roger, benvinguda a Barcelona.
- 3 Vostè és \_\_\_\_ senyora Font?
- 4 Sóc \_\_\_\_ James.
- 5 És \_\_\_\_ senyor Borràs?
- 6 Ets \_\_\_\_ Joana?
- 7 No, sóc \_\_\_\_ Laura.
- 8 Sóc \_\_\_\_ senyor Bosquets i \_\_\_\_ senyora Petersen.
- 9 \_\_\_\_ Senyora Miró, benvinguda a Castelló.
- 10 Hola, \_\_\_\_ Jordi, benvingut a Palma.



### Exercise 2 (Audio 1: 9)

Listen to the audio and decide whether the sentences are formal (using **vostè**) or informal (using **tu**). Number 1 has been done for you.

	<i>Formal</i>	<i>Informal</i>
1	✓	
2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____
4	_____	_____
5	_____	_____
6	_____	_____
7	_____	_____



### **Exercise 3 (Audio 1: 10)**

Which form of the verb 'to be' do you hear on the audio? Number 1 has been done for you.

- 1 **sóc**
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_

### **Exercise 4**

Respond to each question using the appropriate form of 'to be' from the box and the article **el** or **la**. The first two have been done for you.

**sóc és som són**

<i>Question</i>	<i>Answer</i>
1 Qui ets? (Maria)	1 Sóc la Maria.
2 Qui sou? (família Woodhouse)	2 Som la família Woodhouse.
3 Qui ets? (Marta)	3 _____
4 Qui és ell? (Joan)	4 _____
5 Qui són? (Maria i Pere)	5 _____
6 Qui sou? (família Grau)	6 _____
7 Qui és vostè? (senyor Sugranyes)	7 _____
8 Qui ets? (John)	8 _____

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**Exercise 5**

Fill in the gaps in this variation of Dialogue 2 with the appropriate form of **el/la, senyor/senyora, encantat/encantada**. For example: Vostè és el senyor Viola?

- SENYORA BONET    Hola, bon dia. Vostè és \_\_\_\_\_ senyor Viola?  
SENYOR CASALS    No, el senyor Viola és ell, jo sóc el \_\_\_\_\_ Casals.  
SENYORA BONET    Jo sóc \_\_\_\_\_ senyora Bonet de l'Hotel Central.  
SENYOR CASALS    Molt de gust.  
SENYORA BONET    \_\_\_\_\_  
SENYOR CASALS    Senyor Viola, la \_\_\_\_\_ Bonet de l'Hotel Central.  
SENYOR VIOLA    \_\_\_\_\_  
SENYORA BONET    Molt de gust.

Remember: you can check your answers in the Key to exercises.

# 2 Com es diu?

What is your name?

**In this unit you will learn about:**

- Giving personal information
- Numbers 1–10
- Irregular present tenses
- The verb **tenir** 'to have'
- Questions and intonation
- Names of languages and adjectives of nationality



## Dialogue 1 (Audio 1: 11)

*At the lost property office, Elena is asked by an employee (empleat) for her personal details.*

- **Before you look at the text, listen to the recording. See if you can:**

**1 identify Elena's surnames**

**2 recognise two or more digits of her telephone number**

EMPLEAT	Com es diu?
ELENA	Em dic Elena Pérez.
EMPLEAT	I el segon cognom?
ELENA	Arnavat.
EMPLEAT	Elena Pérez i Arnavat. On viu?
ELENA	Visc a Girona. Al carrer Nord, número 7.
EMPLEAT	Té telèfon?
ELENA	Sí, és el 9-7-2, 2-4-7-8-8-2.
EMPLEAT	Moltes gràcies.

## Vocabulary

<b>empleat, -ada</b> (m./f.)	employee
<b>com es diu (vostè)?</b>	what are you called?
<b>em dic . . .</b>	I'm called . . .
<b>on</b>	where
<b>on viu (vostè)?</b>	where do you live?
<b>visc a</b>	I live in
<b>el carrer</b>	street
<b>el número</b>	number
<b>té telèfon?</b>	do you have a telephone (number)?
<b>molt, -a</b>	many

## Culture notes

### Surnames

All Catalans have two family names (**cognoms**: usually the father's surname first and the mother's surname second) often linked with **i** (= and) and given together when appropriate. In this case Elena's first surname (**el primer cognom**) is Pérez and her second one (**el segon cognom**) is Arnavat. In many situations, however, you will hear only the first surname being used.

### Telephone area codes

All telephone numbers are preceded by the area code (**el codi territorial**) which must be used no matter where the call is made from. The area codes of the regions in Spain where Catalan is spoken are:

<b>Alacant</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>Barcelona</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Castelló</b>	<b>964</b>
<b>Girona</b>	<b>972</b>
<b>Illes Balears</b>	<b>971</b>
<b>Lleida</b>	<b>973</b>
<b>Tarragona</b>	<b>977</b>
<b>València</b>	<b>96</b>

Note that the article is used when giving a telephone number. Example: **té telèfon? Si és el . . .**

## Language points



### **Numbers 1–10** (Audio 1: 12)

<b>0 zero</b>	<b>3 tres</b>	<b>6 sis</b>	<b>9 nou</b>
<b>1 u (un, una)</b>	<b>4 quatre</b>	<b>7 set</b>	<b>10 deu</b>
<b>2 dos (dues)</b>	<b>5 cinc</b>	<b>8 vuit</b>	



You can listen to these numbers on the audio and practise for yourself. Numbers up to 100 are in Unit 4.

## **U (un, una), dos/dues**

**U** is used when number ‘one’ is on its own, as in telephone numbers. **Un** is used with masculine nouns (**un senyor**) and **una** before feminine ones (**una senyora**). When used in this way it is known as the *indefinite article* (= a/an, ‘a man’, ‘a woman’).

Number ‘two’ also has a masculine and feminine form: **dos senyors**, **dues senyores**, but you will also hear **dos** used by some speakers for the feminine in colloquial language.

These two points apply to all the numbers ending in 1 or 2. Numbers 3–10 do not have a separate form for the feminine.

## **Irregular verbs 1**

The verb **dir** means ‘to say’, ‘to tell’ and ‘to call’. It is used as the standard way of saying what your name is/what you are called. In the dialogue we hear how to say your name, by saying **em dic ...** (= I call myself → I am called) and how to ask someone else what their name is in a formal way, by saying: **com es diu (vostè)?** (= What are you called?).

The forms **viu**, **visc** are part of the verb **viure** (= to live) and **té** is from **tenir** (= to have). Like **ser** in Unit 1, these two verbs are *irregular*. There is a list of irregular verbs in the Grammar reference at the end of the book that you may find useful later on in the course.

Most verbs in Catalan are regular in that they follow a ‘regular’ pattern in the ‘I’, ‘you’, ‘he’/‘she’, etc., set of forms. These patterns are referred to as *conjugations*. The ways in which such verbs are *conjugated* will be explained gradually as you progress. Irregular

verbs tend to be the ones most commonly used and the first ones to appear when colloquial everyday speech is being used.

## ***The article 2: the definite article***

The words **el** and **la** are also definite articles (= the). Their use is similar to that of 'the' in English but there are some differences, such as the use of **el** before telephone numbers. The article is also used with street names, but as in English, not with towns. Therefore, when considering the sentence **visc a Girona, al carrer Nord, número 7** (= I live in Girona at 7 North Street), **a**, which means both 'in' and 'on', appears alone in **visc a Girona**, but as **al** (the combination of **a** + **el** = **al**) in **al carrer Nord**.

You have probably observed another characteristic of the article. If a singular noun begins with a vowel sound, both **el** and **la** are written as **l'**, for example: **l'hotel**, which is masculine, and **l'aigua** (= water), which is feminine. As indicated earlier, this is shown in vocabulary lists with an (m.) or an (f.). Remember that the letter 'h' is silent and therefore **l'hotel** is a word that begins with a vowel sound.

The corresponding plural articles are **els** (masculine) and **les** (feminine): **els senyors, les senyores**.

## ***Saying 'thank you'***

**Gràcies** was used earlier. Now you can say 'thank you very much' = **moltes gràcies**. Note that the spontaneous response to 'thank you' is **de res**, literally 'for nothing', that is: 'don't mention it' or 'that's all right'. There is less of a tendency to say **gràcies** in Catalan than 'thank you' in English. But when **gràcies** is used, it is much more common to hear **de res** in Catalan than it would be to hear 'don't mention it' in English.



### ***Exercise 1 (Audio 1: 13)***

Listen to the audio and write down the six telephone numbers that you will hear. The first one has been done for you.

1 9-7-7 3-2-4-0-2-7

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_