EVERYDAY ENGLISH MINI SERIES

MAKE or DO?

Stop guessing. Learn the combinations that English speakers actually use.

ENGLISH–SPANISH EDITION | A2–B1

A free eight-page learning sample

By Marshall Appoh • Everyday English Centre

LEARN IT • PRACTISE IT • USE IT

A practical introduction to one of the most common difficulties for Spanish-speaking learners of English.

In this sample you will: recognise useful patterns, avoid common translation traps, practise everyday expressions and check your answers.

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1 Before you begin

Spanish often uses HACER where English chooses MAKE, DO—or a different verb entirely. First, see what you already know.

Diagnostic quiz

Complete with the correct form of MAKE or DO. Do not look at the explanations yet.

1. I need to _____ a decision today.

2. Have you _____ your homework?

3. She _____ a serious mistake yesterday.

4. Could you _____ me a favour?

5. We are _____ good progress.

6. Just _____ your best.

Your score before studying: _____ / 6

The central question

When you see hacer in Spanish, do you automatically translate it as make? If so, this short lesson is for you.

Our goal is not to memorise a perfect rule. There is no perfect rule. Our goal is to recognise the combinations English actually uses.

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2 The useful difference

DO	MAKE
Often describes performing an activity, task or work.	Often describes creating, producing or causing a result.
do your homework — hacer los deberes	make a cake — hacer una tarta
do the housework — hacer las tareas de casa	make a plan — hacer un plan
do the shopping — hacer la compra	make a decision — tomar una decisión
do your best — hacer todo lo posible	make an effort — hacer un esfuerzo

Remember: a guide, not a law

The activity/result distinction helps, but many expressions are fixed combinations. We say do your best and make friends. Learn each expression as a complete unit.

Golden rule: DON'T TRANSLATE HACER. TRANSLATE THE COMPLETE IDEA.

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3 Expressions worth knowing

With DO	With MAKE
do business — hacer negocios	make money — ganar dinero
do research — investigar	make progress — progresar
do someone a favour — hacerle un favor a alguien	make a promise — hacer una promesa
do the washing-up — fregar los platos (UK)	make a complaint — presentar una queja
do exercise — hacer ejercicio	make a difference — marcar la diferencia

Three mini-conversations

A: Have you done your homework? B: Not yet. I'll do it tonight.

A: Have you made a decision? B: Yes, I'm going to take the course.

A: How is your English? B: I'm making progress, but I still make mistakes.

Notice that the verb changes with tense: do → did → done; make → made → made.

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4 The Spanish traps

Sometimes HACER is neither MAKE nor DO. This is one of the most important lessons in the original MAKE manuscript.

Spanish	Natural English
hacer una foto	take a photo
hacer una pregunta	ask a question
hacer una fiesta	have a party
hacer un examen	do / take an exam

Correct these common mistakes

1. I have to make my homework tonight.

2. She did a terrible mistake.

3. Can I make you a question?

4. We made a party on Saturday.

5. He makes exercise three times a week.

6. I need to do a decision.

Tip: Some corrections require a verb other than MAKE or DO.

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5 Put it into practice

A. Complete each sentence with the correct form of MAKE or DO

1. They're _____ plans for the weekend.

2. Who _____ the washing-up in your house?

3. The company _____ a profit last year.

4. I usually _____ the shopping on Saturday.

5. You need to _____ more of an effort.

6. She has _____ a lot of progress.

B. Translate naturally into English

7. Tengo que hacer los deberes.

8. Hemos tomado una decisión.

9. ¿Puedes hacerme un favor?

10. Cometí un error.

Try to recall the whole English expression before checking the key.

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6 Final challenge

Choose the most natural answer. There may be more than one possible wording in real English; select the best answer given.

1. We need to (make / do) a decision.

2. She always (makes / does) her best.

3. He (made / did) a serious mistake.

4. Could I (make / ask) a question?

5. We (made / did) a lot of research.

6. I want to (make / do) progress.

7. She (made / did) an effort.

8. They (made / had) a party.

Reflection

Which three expressions were new to you? Write them down and create one original sentence for each.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

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7 Answer key & next steps

Diagnostic quiz (page 2)

1 make; 2 done; 3 made; 4 do; 5 making; 6 do.

Spanish traps (page 5)

1 do my homework; 2 made a terrible mistake; 3 ask you a question; 4 had a party; 5 does exercise; 6 make a decision.

Practice A (page 6)

1 making; 2 does; 3 made; 4 do; 5 make; 6 made.

Practice B (page 6): model answers

7 I have to do my homework. 8 We have made a decision. / We've made a decision. 9 Can you do me a favour? 10 I made a mistake.

Final challenge (page 7)

1 make; 2 does; 3 made; 4 ask; 5 did; 6 make; 7 made; 8 had.

Keep learning

You have practised some of the most useful MAKE and DO combinations. The planned full workbook will offer more guided practice, real-life contexts, mixed revision and further challenges. This is a pilot sample; the full workbook is not yet on sale.

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