

# 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](mailto:john@tobreak.com). You can also visit his website: [www.tobreak.com](http://www.tobreak.com).

## Demonstrative Adjectives (and pronouns!)

The term “demonstrative adjective” sounds so foreboding. There are so many syllables in those words, and I remember that when I was a student, I never really knew what this term meant. So, what is it exactly? A demonstrative adjective is simply a word that helps to identify and distinguish a noun from other nouns of the same type. These words often use spatial imagery to place a noun in relationship to other nouns. Demonstrative adjectives generally precede the noun that they modify. The corresponding words in English are: “this,” “these,” “that,” and “those.”

Masculine	Feminine	(English translation)
<b>este</b>	<b>esta</b>	this (close to speaker)
<b>estos</b>	<b>estas</b>	these (close to speaker)
<b>ese</b>	<b>esa</b>	that
<b>esos</b>	<b>esos</b>	those
<b>aquel</b>	<b>aquella</b>	that (way over there)
<b>aquellos</b>	<b>aquellas</b>	those (way over there)

*Aquel, aquella, aquellos* and *aquellas* all help to identify something that is a greater distance away, the farthest distance away of a number of objects, or something quite removed in time from the speaker’s framework

<b>EXAMPLES:</b>	<i>este oso</i>	this bear	<i>esta jirafa</i>	this giraffe
	<i>estos osos</i>	these bears	<i>estas jirafas</i>	these giraffes
	<i>ese oso</i>	that bear	<i>esa jirafa</i>	that giraffe
	<i>esos osos</i>	those bears	<i>esas jirafas</i>	those giraffes
	<i>aquel árbol</i>	that tree	<i>aquella montaña</i>	that mountain
	<i>aquellos árboles</i>	those trees	<i>aquellas montañas</i>	those mountains

Some learners (I was one of them!) have difficulties remembering if “*este*” means “this” or “that” or if “*estos*” means “these” or “those.” The following rhyme may help you to keep these forms straight in your mind:

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**“This” and “these” have “t’s.” (*este/esta* and *estos/estas*)**

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### DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS

Demonstrative adjectives can turn into pronouns simply by adding an accent mark. For example, instead of saying “*esta planta*” (this plant), you could say “*ésta*,” which means “this one.” Similarly, instead of saying “*esos bancos*,” you could say “*ésos*,” meaning “those (ones).” The accent mark here doesn’t affect the pronunciation at all. It’s simply a written signal that this word is now a pronoun and not just a lowly adjective!