superlexa.

FREE SPANISH READER · LEVEL ONE

Amelia Earhart

A true story in easy Spanish, written with words that look like English, so you can read it from day one.

82% of the words in this story are cognates or names you can recognize from English, or one of the 50 little words listed on page 2.

How to read this story

1. Read without stopping. Words like *información* look like English, so trust your guess.
2. A dotted word is explained in the box under its paragraph: first its meaning, then where it comes from. The origin is the link to English that makes it stick.
3. The little grammar words (the, of, and) are listed once, on the next page.

Free to print and share. More stories at superlexa.com

Little words

These short words carry the grammar. They are everywhere, so learn them here and they will not be marked in the story.

el The (masculine singular)

la The (feminine singular); her, it

los The (masculine plural); them

las The (feminine plural); them

lo The (neuter); him, it (direct object)

un A, an; one

una A, one (feminine)

unos Some, a few

de Of; from

del of the / from the

a To, at

al To the / at the (the contraction of a plus el)

en In / on / at

y And

e And, used before words beginning with i- or hi-

o Or

que that / which / than

con With

por for / by / through

para For / in order to

su His / her / its / their / your (formal)

sus His, her, its, their, your (formal plural)

se Himself, herself, itself, themselves; oneself; (impersonal) one, people

le To him, to her, to it, to you (formal)

no No

ni Nor / not even

más more

como As, like

pero but

sin Without

sobre On / about / envelope

entre Between; among

hasta until, up to

desde from / since

donde Where (relative)

este This (demonstrative); also: east

esta This (feminine)

ese That (demonstrative)

esa That (feminine)

esas Those (feminine plural)

aquel That (one), over there

aquella That (feminine, something farther away)

ella She; her (as object of preposition)

ellos They (masculine)

había there was, there were; had (imperfect of haber)

fue Was; went

era Was / used to be (imperfect of ser); also: era, age

es Is

estaba Was

estaban Were

Amelia Earhart

Amelia Earhart nació en 1897 en Atchison, una ciudad pequeña de Kansas. Desde niña tuvo una curiosidad enorme y una energía que nadie podía contener. Las actividades típicas de otras niñas de su generación no le interesaban; prefería la aventura y el riesgo. A los siete años construyó una rampa en el techo del garaje de su familia, inspirada por los pájaros que veía volar, y se lanzó desde allí. El resultado fue un pequeño desastre: cayó con fuerza y se rompió la ropa. Su ánimo, en cambio, quedó intacto. «¡Es como volar!», dijo, con una sonrisa. No podía imaginar que esa palabra iba a definir su vida.

nació (nacer) *he/she was born.* Nacer comes from Latin nasci, "to be born," whose participle natus gives English "native," "nation," and "nature," all things one is born with or into.

pequeña (pequeño) *small (feminine).* Pequeño probably belongs with French petit and Italian piccolo, and so with English "petite," "petty," and the piccolo, the small flute.

niña (niño) *girl.* Niño is the El Niño of the weather reports: Peruvian fishermen named the warm current that arrives around Christmas after El Niño, the Christ child.

tuvo (tener) *had.* Tener comes from Latin tenere, "to hold," the root of English "tenant," "maintain," "obtain," and "lieutenant," from French lieu tenant, "place holder."

nadie *nobody.* Nadie comes from Latin nati, "people born," used in negative sentences like "born people did not do it," which came to mean "nobody did it."

podía (poder) *could; was able to (imperfect of poder).* Poder is the source family of English "power": both continue spoken Latin potere, "to be able," a regularized form of Latin posse, the verb behind "potent" and "possible."

otras (otro) *other.* Otro is the alter of "alter ego," "the other self."

niñas (niño) *girls.*

siete *seven.* Siete, "seven," comes from Latin septem, "seven," the sept- of "September," once the seventh month of the Roman year, and of "septet."

años (año) *years.* Año is the annus of "anno Domini," A.D., "in the year of the Lord."

techo *a roof or ceiling.* Techo comes from Latin tectum, "roof," from tegere, "to cover."

pájaros (pájaro) *birds.* Pájaro comes from Latin passer, "sparrow," the word behind English "passerine," the perching birds, which spoken Latin used for any small bird.

veía *to see.* Ver comes from Latin videre, "to see," whose vidi, "I saw," is in "veni, vidi, vici."

volar *to fly.* Volar is "to fly," from Latin volare, the root of English "volatile," quick to fly off or evaporate.

lanzó (lanzar) *he/she threw, launched.* Lanzar comes from Late Latin lanceare, "to wield a lance," from lancea, "spear," so throwing began as hurling a spear.

allí *there (a specific place, farther from the speaker).* Allí comes from Latin illic, "in that place," from ille, "that," the same word that wore down into el, "the."

pequeño *small.*

cayó (caer) *he/she/it fell.* Caer comes from Latin cadere, "to fall," the verb inside English "cadence," the fall of a voice, "decadent," falling away, "cascade," a waterfall, and "accident," what befalls.

rompió (romper) *broke.* Romper, "to break," comes from Latin rumpere, "to break, to burst," the root of English "rupture," "erupt," "interrupt," and "corrupt."

ropa *clothes.* Ropa is the same word as English "robe," and both are cousins of "rob."

ánimo *spirit, mood, courage; "cheer up!" as an exclamation.* Ánimo is the spirit in English "animated" and "animosity," and in "unanimous," "of one mind."

cambio *change.* Cambio is the noun of cambiar, the same word as English "change," and it is the sign over money exchange counters.

quedó (quedar) *stayed, remained, ended up.* Quedar is English "quiet" turned into a verb: to stay is to come to rest.

dijo (decir) *said.* Decir comes from Latin dicere, "to say," the root of English "dictate," "dictionary," and "verdict," from vere dictum, "truly said."

sonrisa *smile.* Sonrisa, "smile," is son-, "under," plus risa, "laugh": a smile is a laugh held beneath the surface.

palabra *word.* Palabra is the same word as English "parable."

iba (ir) *was going, used to go.* Ir is pieced together from three Latin verbs.

vida *life.* Vida is the vita of "curriculum vitae," "the course of a life," and of "vitamin" and "vital."

Amelia coleccionaba artículos sobre exploradores, científicos e inventores. Guardaba un álbum con las biografías de personas que habían triunfado en profesiones poco comunes. Durante la Primera Guerra Mundial vivió una temporada en Toronto, en Canadá, y trabajó como voluntaria en un hospital militar, con los soldados heridos que volvían de Europa. Allí vio por primera vez a pilotos militares practicando maniobras en el cielo. La imagen se le quedó grabada.

coleccionaba *was collecting.* Coleccionaba is the imperfect of coleccionar, "to collect": coleccionaba sellos, "he used to collect stamps."

habían (haber) *they had.* Haber comes from Latin habere, "to have, to hold," the verb of "habeas corpus," "you shall have the body," the order to bring a prisoner before a judge.

poco *little / few.* Poco comes from Latin paucus, "few, little," the root of English "paucity," a scarcity.

durante *during.* Durante is English "during," and both began as the present participle of a verb meaning "to last," Spanish durar and French durer.

vivió (vivir) *lived.* Vivir is the root of English "vivid," full of life, and "survive," to live beyond.

trabajó (trabajar) *he/she/it worked.* Trabajar is the verb of English "travail," painful toil.

heridos (herido) *wounded (plural).* Herido is the past participle of herir, "to wound": un soldado herido, "a wounded soldier."

volvían (volver) *they were returning.* Volver is the turning in English "revolve," "evolve," and "involve."

vio (ver) *saw.*

vez *time / occasion.* Vez is the "vice" of "vice versa," "the turn reversed," and of "vice president," one who serves in turn for another.

cielo *sky, heaven.* Cielo is Latin caelum, "sky, heaven," which gives English "celestial," heavenly.

grabada (grabar) *recorded, engraved (feminine).* Grabar came from French graver, "to engrave," from Frankish graban, "to dig," which is akin to English "grave," a pit dug for burial, and "engrave."

Terminada la guerra, probó varias profesiones. Estudió medicina un tiempo, trabajó de fotógrafa y hasta operó maquinaria de construcción para ganar un dinero extra. Ninguna de esas ocupaciones la satisfacía. En 1920, en una exhibición aérea en California, subió como pasajera en un aeroplano pequeño. En el instante en que el motor rugió y el aparato se elevó sobre la tierra, lo comprendió: eso era lo suyo. Desde ese día, la aviación dominó su vida.

guerra *war.* Guerra gives English "guerrilla," "little war," a word borrowed from Spanish.

dinero *money.* Dinero comes from Latin denarius, the Roman silver coin, whose name meant "worth ten" (bronze coins).

ninguna (ninguno) *none, not a single one (feminine).* Ninguno is Latin nec unus, "not even one," worn down through Old Spanish neguno.

subió (subir) *he/she went up, climbed.* Subir is the verb behind English "sudden," which first meant something that comes up stealthily.

rugió (rugir) *he/she/it roared.* Rugir is "to roar," from Latin rugire, "to roar, to bellow," said of lions.

eso (ese) *that (neuter demonstrative pronoun).* Ese is the ipso of "ipso facto," "by that very fact."

suyo *his / hers / its / theirs.* Suyo is the stressed form of su, used after a noun or alone: un amigo suyo, "a friend of his," es suyo, "it's his."

Empezó a tomar lecciones con una instructora pionera, Neta Snook, y aceptó todos los empleos temporales que encontró para pagar su entrenamiento. En 1923 obtuvo su licencia oficial de piloto. Poco después compró su primer aeroplano: un modelo pequeño y ágil, de color amarillo brillante, que ella bautizó «El Canario». Con esa máquina modesta estableció un récord de altitud para mujeres piloto.

empezó (empezar) *began.* Empezar is en plus pieza, "piece": to begin was to break into something whole, as one starts on a loaf by cutting off a piece.

tomar *to take.* Tomar is the everyday Spanish "to take," of unknown origin, shared only with Portuguese.

todos (todo) *all, everyone (masculine plural).* Todo comes from Latin totus, "whole, all," the toto of "in toto," "as a whole," and the source of English "total."

encontró (encontrar) *found, met.* Encontrar is English "encounter," from Latin in- plus contra, "against": to come up against something.

pagar *to pay.* Pagar is English "to pay," and both began as making peace.

entrenamiento *training.* Entrenamiento is entrenar, "to train," plus -miento, "-ing."

después *after / afterward.* Después holds Latin post, "after," the P in "p.m.," post meridiem, "after midday."

compró (comprar) *he/she bought.* Comprar holds the same Latin parare, "to make ready," that is in English "prepare."

amarillo *yellow.* Amarillo is the name of Amarillo, Texas, called after the yellow soil of a nearby creek.

mujeres (mujer) *women.* Mujer comes from Latin mulier, "woman," which also gives Italian moglie, "wife."

En 1928 ocurrió algo que la transformó de piloto talentosa y casi desconocida en celebridad internacional. Un grupo de organizadores buscaba una mujer para viajar como pasajera en un vuelo transatlántico, y la eligieron a ella. La nave, con dos pilotos a los mandos, cruzó el Atlántico sin incidentes graves. De un día para otro, Amelia era famosa en Estados Unidos y en Europa. Los periodistas la comparaban con Charles Lindbergh, y su cara apareció en revistas, periódicos y programas de radio de todo el continente.

algo *something.* Algo comes from Latin aliquod, "something," built from alius, "other," and quod, "what."

casi *almost.* Casi is Latin quasi, "as if, nearly," which English keeps as "quasi-," as in "quasi-official."

desconocida (desconocido) *unknown (feminine).* Desconocido is the Spanish twin of "incognito": both mean "not known."

buscaba (buscar) *I was looking for; he/she was looking for.* Buscar is probably the source of English "busk" and "busker": the street performer goes about seeking a living.

mujer *woman / wife.*

viajar *to travel.* Viajar comes from viaje, "trip," the same word as English "voyage."

vuelo *flight.* Vuelo is the noun of volar, "to fly," from Latin volare, "to fly."

nave *ship, vessel; spacecraft; nave of a church; industrial building.* Nave is the root of English "navy," "naval," and "navigate," from Latin navis, "ship."

dos *two.* Dos comes from Latin duo, "two," which English uses as is for a pair of performers, "a duo," and in "dual" and "duet."

mandos (mando) *controls (of a machine).* Mando is the noun of mandar, "to order," so it means command, and by extension the device that gives orders: el mando a distancia, "the remote control."

otro *other / another.*

periodistas (periodista) *journalists.* Periodista is "one who writes for the periódico," the newspaper, with the ending -ista, English "-ist."

cara (caro) *face; side (of a coin or object); nerve, cheek.* Caro has both senses of English "dear": costly and beloved.

todo *all; everything.*

Pero el papel de pasajera no la satisfacía. Quería cruzar el Atlántico ella sola, a los mandos. En 1932, cinco años después del vuelo de Lindbergh, despegó de Terranova, en Canadá, en un Lockheed Vega, con rumbo a Francia. Durante la noche encontró tormentas violentas, hielo en las alas y problemas mecánicos en los instrumentos y en el sistema de combustible. En un momento crítico, el altímetro dejó de funcionar. Tuvo que calcular la altitud por intuición y experiencia, sin un solo instrumento que la guiara en la oscuridad. Mantuvo el control. Después de casi quince

horas de vuelo sobre agua negra, aterrizó en una zona rural de Irlanda del Norte y sorprendió a un granjero que nunca había visto un aeroplano. Era la primera mujer que cruzaba el Atlántico en solitario, y aquel triunfo la convirtió en una de las figuras más respetadas de la aviación.

papel *paper.* Papel is English "paper": both come from Latin papyrus, from Greek papyros, the reed the ancient world wrote on.

sola (solo) *alone.* Solo is the "solo" of music, which English borrowed from Italian: a part played alone.

cinco *five.* Cinco is the cinco of Cinco de Mayo, "the Fifth of May."

despegó (despegar) *took off.* Despegar is des-, "un-," plus pegar, "to stick": an airplane that despega comes unstuck from the ground.

rumbo *direction, course, bearing.* Rumbo, "course, direction," is probably Latin rhombus, the "rhombus" of geometry, from Greek rhombos, "a spinning top."

noche *night.* Noche comes from Latin nox, noctis, "night," the root of English "nocturnal" and "equinox," when night equals day.

hielo *ice.* Hielo comes from Latin gelu, "frost, ice," the root of English "gel," "jelly," and "congeal," and of Italian gelato.

alas (ala) *wings.* Ala is the wing in English "aisle," once the side wing of a church, and in "aileron," the hinged flap on an aircraft wing, French for "little wing."

combustible *fuel.* Combustible, "fuel," is what is combustible, able to burn.

dejó (dejar) *left, let.* Dejar is the Spanish cousin of English "relax," to let loose.

solo *alone / only.*

mantuvo (mantener) *maintained.* Mantener is English "maintain": both come from Latin manu tenere, "to hold in the hand," English by way of French maintenir.

quince *fifteen.* Quince comes from Latin quindecim, "fifteen," from quinque, "five," and decem, "ten."

agua *water.* Agua is Latin aqua, "water," the "aqua" of English "aquarium," "aquatic," and "aqueduct."

negra (negro) *black (feminine); a black woman; a quarter note (in music).* Negro comes from Latin niger, "black," the root of English "denigrate," to blacken someone's name.

aterrizó *he/she/it landed.* Aterrizó is the preterite of aterrizar, "to land": el avión aterrizó, "the plane landed."

granjero *farmer.* Granjero is granja, "farm," plus -ero, "the one who works it."

nunca *never.* Nunca comes from Latin numquam, "never," built from ne, "not," and umquam, "ever," exactly as English "never" is "not ever."

visto (ver) *seen.*

Los años siguientes trajeron más récords: un vuelo en solitario de Hawái a California, otro de México a Nueva Jersey y muchas distinciones de organizaciones internacionales. Publicó dos libros sobre sus experiencias y se casó con George Putnam, un hombre del mundo de los libros y la publicidad, que organizó buena parte de su carrera pública. Con dinero, contactos en la industria aeronáutica y una reputación sólida, Amelia empezó a planear su proyecto más ambicioso: dar la vuelta al globo por una ruta cercana al ecuador, la distancia más larga posible. Unos 47.000 kilómetros. Ningún aviador lo había completado nunca.

siguientes (siguiente) *following, next.* Siguiente, "next, following," comes from seguir, "to follow," from Latin sequentem, "following," the root of English "sequence" and "subsequent." ¡El siguiente! is "Next!" at a counter, and al día siguiente means "the following day."

trajeron (traer) *they brought.* Traer comes from Latin trahere, "to pull, to draw," whose stem tract- gives English "tractor," "attract," and "extract."

muchas (mucho) *many (feminine).* Mucho comes from Latin multum, "much," the root of English "multiple," "multitude," and "multi-."

libros (libro) *books.* Libro comes from Latin liber, libri, "book," the root of English "library" and of "libretto," the "little book" of an opera's words.

casó (casar) *he/she married.* Casar is built on casa, "house": to marry is to set up house.

hombre *man.* Hombre is the homo of "Homo sapiens," and English has borrowed it whole, as in "a tough hombre."

mundo *world.* Mundo is Latin mundus, "world," the mundi of "sic transit gloria mundi," "so passes the glory of the world," and of a "mappa mundi," a medieval world map.

buena (bueno) *good.* Bueno is the "good" of Buenos Aires, "good airs," and buenos días, "good day."

dar *to give.* Dar comes from Latin dare, "to give," whose participle datum, "a thing given," is English "data" and "date," once the day written on a letter as "given."

vuelta *return / turn.* Vuelta is the noun of volver, "to turn, to return," as in La Vuelta, the great cycling race around Spain.

cercana (cercano) *nearby.* Cercano is cerca, "near," plus the adjective ending -ano, and cerca is the circa of English dates, "circa 1900," "around 1900."

ningún (ninguno) *no, not any.*

Para esa misión eligió un aeroplano bimotor moderno, un Lockheed Electra 10E, modificado con tanques de combustible adicionales e instrumentos de navegación avanzados para la época. Como compañero de vuelo contrató a Fred Noonan, un navegante con mucha experiencia en rutas transoceánicas para las líneas aéreas comerciales. Noonan tenía que calcular la posición exacta del aeroplano con instrumentos astronómicos, señales de radio y cálculos matemáticos, sobre todo en las secciones sin ninguna referencia visual.

mucha (mucho) *much, a lot of.*

tenía (tener) *I/he/she/you had (was having).*

El primer intento terminó mal. En marzo de 1937, en Hawái, el aeroplano sufrió un accidente durante el despegue y quedó con daños extensos que exigieron reparaciones costosas. Amelia no se desanimó: organizó un segundo intento, esta vez en la dirección contraria, de oeste a este. El primero de junio de 1937 salió de Miami con Fred Noonan. Era el comienzo de su última aventura.

mal (malo) *badly; bad (the short form of malo, used before masculine singular nouns); also a noun meaning "evil, harm, illness.".* Malo comes from Latin malus, "bad," the root of English "malice," "malaria," Italian mala aria, "bad air," and the prefix "mal-," as in "malfunction."

despegue *takeoff, of an aircraft or rocket; also liftoff, launch.* Despegue is the noun of despegar, "to take off," which is des-, "un-," plus pegar, "to stick": a takeoff is the moment a plane comes unstuck from the ground.

exigieron (exigir) *they demanded.* Exigir is the verb "to exact," as in exacting a payment or a promise.

desanimó *he/she discouraged.* Desanimó is "he or she discouraged," the preterite of desanimar: la noticia lo desanimó, "the news discouraged him."

oeste *west.* Oeste is English "west," borrowed into Spanish from French ouest, which took it from Old English.

salió (salir) *left, went out.* Salir, "to leave, to go out," comes from Latin salire, "to leap," so going out began as jumping out.

comienzo *beginning, start.* Comienzo, from comenzar, "to begin," is a cousin of English "commence," which came through French commencer.

La ruta era global: Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Surinam y Brasil, desde donde cruzaron el Atlántico hacia África. Después Senegal y otros territorios africanos, entre ellos Sudán y Etiopía; luego Arabia Saudita, Pakistán, India, Birmania, Tailandia, Singapur, Indonesia y, por fin, Australia. En cada escala, los mecánicos revisaban el aeroplano y los técnicos comprobaban los instrumentos. Amelia descansaba un poco antes de continuar. Transmitía informes por radio y por telégrafo, y los periódicos publicaban noticias diarias sobre su progreso. El público seguía la expedición con fascinación, y ella se transformó en un símbolo de la exploración humana: calor tropical, tormentas monzónicas, terreno hostil, y aquella mujer continuaba.

puerto *port, harbor; mountain pass.* Puerto is English "port," the puerto of Puerto Rico, "rich port," and Puerto Vallarta.

hacia *toward.* Hacia, "toward," began as Old Spanish faz a, "face to": to go hacia a place is to go the way one's face is turned.

otros (otro) *other (masculine plural).*

luego *then, next; later, afterward (desde luego = of course).* Luego comes from Latin loco, "in the place," the same form as in "in loco parentis," "in the place of a parent."

fin *end.* Fin, "end," is the "fin" printed at the end of old films.

cada *each, every.* Cada comes from Greek kata, "down, one by one," which Late Latin borrowed in phrases like cata die, "day by day."

comprobaban *they were verifying, checking.* Comprobaban is the imperfect of comprobar, "to check, to verify": comprobaban los datos, "they were checking the data."

descansaba (descansar) *was resting.* Descansar is des-, "un-," plus cansar, "to tire," so to rest is to un-tire.

antes *before.* Antes is ante, "before," with an adverb -s, and ante is the a of a.m.: ante meridiem, "before midday."

seguía (seguir) *he/she was following.* Seguir means "to follow" and "to keep on," and comes from Latin sequi, "to follow," the root of English "sequel," "sequence," and "consequence."

El 29 de junio de 1937, después de casi un mes de viaje, Amelia y Noonan llegaron a Lae, en Nueva Guinea. Habían completado unos 35.000 de los 47.000 kilómetros. Faltaba la sección más difícil: cruzar el Pacífico, con una escala crítica en una isla diminuta llamada Howland, de apenas dos kilómetros de longitud, perdida en la inmensidad azul.

mes *month.* Mes comes from Latin mensis, "month," which gives English "menstrual" and "semester," from sex menses, "six months."

viaje *trip / journey.* Viaje is the same word as English "voyage."

llegaron (llegar) *they arrived.* Llegar began as a sailor's word.

faltaba (faltar) *was lacking, missing.* Faltar, "to be missing," is the verb of falta, "lack," the same word as English "fault."

llamada *call; knock; footnote mark.* Llamada, "a call," is the feminine participle of llamar, "to call," used as a noun: hacer una llamada, "to make a call."

apenas *barely / hardly.* Apenas is a penas, "with pains": what is barely done is done with difficulty.

perdida (perdido) *lost.* Perdido is the past participle of perder, "to lose," as in objetos perdidos, "lost and found."

azul *blue.* Azul is English "azure," and both name the blue of lapis lazuli.

El 2 de julio de 1937, a las diez de la mañana, hora local, despegaron de Lae rumbo a Howland: unos 4.000 kilómetros sobre agua abierta, sin una sola referencia visual en toda la ruta. El plan dependía de dos cosas: la navegación precisa de Noonan y la comunicación constante con el Itasca, un barco de la Guardia Costera estadounidense posicionado cerca de Howland para transmitir señales de radio y guiarlos hasta el destino.

diez *ten.* Diez comes from Latin decem, "ten," the root of English "decimal" and "December," once the tenth month of the Roman year.

mañana *morning; tomorrow.* Mañana is the "mañana" of English, an easygoing "tomorrow, sometime later."

despegaron *they took off (aircraft).* Despegaron is the preterite of despegar, "to take off": los aviones despegaron, "the planes took off."

abierta (abierto) *open (feminine).* Abierto comes from Latin apertus, "opened," the word behind English "aperture," an opening.

toda (todo) *all, the whole of (feminine).*

cosas (cosa) *things.* Cosa is the cosa of Cosa Nostra, Italian for "our thing."

barco *boat / ship.* Barco grew out of barca, "small boat," the word inside English "embark" and "bark," an old name for a sailing ship.

estadounidense *american; of or from the United States.* Estadounidense is built on Estados Unidos, "United States," with -ense, "from," the ending of canadiense, "Canadian," and costarricense, "Costa Rican."

cerca *near / fence.* Cerca is the circa of English dates, as in "circa 1900," "around 1900."

Las primeras horas pasaron sin complicaciones. El aeroplano avanzaba sobre el océano bajo un cielo con estrellas. Noonan calculaba la posición con un sextante y observaba las estrellas por una pequeña ventana de la cabina; Amelia mantenía el motor a una velocidad constante para conservar el combustible. Con el amanecer, sin embargo, empezaron los problemas. Las nubes cubrían el horizonte, la visibilidad se redujo y vientos impredecibles alteraban los cálculos de

Noonan y empujaban el aeroplano fuera de su ruta sin que ellos lo notaran. Había además un problema técnico grave: la radio de Amelia no operaba en la misma frecuencia que el equipo del Itasca. La comunicación era fragmentada y frustrante para los dos lados.

primeras (primero) *first (feminine plural).* Primero comes from Latin primarius, "of the first rank," from primus, "first," the source of English "primary" and "prime."

bajo (bajar) *under / low / short.* Bajar is to go down, the verb of bajo, "low."

ventana *window.* Ventana is an opening for the wind, from Latin ventus, "wind," as in English "ventilate."

amanecer *to dawn; also used as a noun for daybreak, sunrise.* Amanecer holds the same Latin mane, "in the morning," that gives mañana, "morning, tomorrow."

embargo *embargo (only in the phrase sin embargo, "however, nevertheless").* Sin embargo is "without hindrance," and so "nevertheless."

empezaron (empezar) *they began.*

nubes (nube) *clouds.* Nube comes from Latin nubes, "cloud."

cubrían (cubrir) *were covering.* Cubrir is English "cover."

vientos (viento) *winds.* Viento is the wind in English "ventilate," to let air blow through, and "vent," an opening for air.

empujaban (empujar) *they were pushing.* Empujar and English "push" come from the same Latin verb, pulsare, "to beat, to push," which reached English through French pousser.

fuera (ser) *outside, out; away (from home); also "were" (imperfect subjunctive of ser and ir).* Ser, "to be," carries Latin esse, "to be," the root of English "essence": Spanish es, "is," is Latin est, and soy, "I am," goes back to sum.

además *besides / in addition.* Además is a plus demás, "the rest," so "on top of the rest": besides.

misma (mismo) *same (feminine).* Mismo comes from Vulgar Latin metipsimus, "the very self," built on ipse, "self," the ipso of "ipso facto," "by the fact itself."

lados (lado) *sides.* Lado comes from Latin latus, "side, flank," the root of English "lateral," "bilateral," and "collateral."

A las 6:14 de la mañana, Amelia transmitió un mensaje: estaban cerca del destino, pero no podían localizar el barco entre las nubes. Los operadores del Itasca respondieron una y otra vez con señales potentes. Ella no parecía recibirlas. Cada hora que pasaba aumentaba la tensión a bordo del barco. El combustible, mientras tanto, disminuía.

podían (poder) *they could, were able to.*

otra (otro) *another, other (feminine).*

parecía (parecer) *seemed, was seeming.* Parecer is a cousin of English "appear": both come from Latin parere, "to come into view."

bordo *the board or side of a ship, as in "a bordo," aboard.* Bordo is English "board" in its ship sense, and a bordo is "aboard."

mientras *while, meanwhile.* Mientras holds the same Latin as English "interim," "meanwhile."

tanto *so much; as much.* Tanto comes from Latin tantus, "so great, so much," which English keeps in "tantamount," at root "amounting to as much."

A las 7:42 llegó el mensaje decisivo: volaban en una línea de posición determinada, buscaban la isla sin resultado y el combustible se estaba agotando. Según los operadores de radio que la escucharon aquella mañana, su voz mantenía un tono calmado, casi profesional. Fue la última comunicación clara del aeroplano.

llegó (llegar) *arrived.*

volaban (volar) *they were flying, used to fly.*

buscaban (buscar) *were looking for, were searching.*

agotando (agotar) *running out, using up.* Agotar is a plus gota, "drop": to drain something to the last drop.

según *according to.* Según, "according to," comes from Latin secundum, "following, in line with," from sequi, "to follow": what goes según something follows it.

escucharon *listened.* Escucharon is "they listened," the preterite of escuchar: escucharon la radio, "they listened to the radio."

voz *voice.* Voz is the voice in English "vocal," "vowel," and "advocate," someone called to speak for another.

Después vino el silencio. El Itasca continuó transmitiendo durante horas, esperando una respuesta, una señal mínima. No llegó nada. El aeroplano de Amelia Earhart y Fred Noonan había desaparecido sobre el Pacífico.

esperando (esperar) *waiting, hoping.* Esperar means both "to hope" and "to wait," from Latin sperare, "to hope."

nada *nothing.* Nada comes from Latin (res) nata, "a thing born," used in sentences like "not a thing born," which wore down to mean "nothing."

La Marina y la Guardia Costera de Estados Unidos organizaron la operación de búsqueda más extensa y costosa de la época: barcos, aeroplanos y miles de personas durante semanas, sobre un área de océano comparable a un continente pequeño. Examinaron islas, atolones y secciones enormes de agua abierta. No encontraron nada: ni restos del aeroplano, ni señales de los dos aviadores, ni evidencia de su destino final.

búsqueda *search, quest.* Búsqueda is the noun of buscar, "to look for," made with the ending -da as llegada, "arrival," is made from llegar.

barcos (barco) *boats, ships.*

miles (mil) *thousands.* Mil is Latin mille, "thousand," the root of English "million," "millennium," and "mile": the Roman mile was mille passus, "a thousand paces."

semanas (semana) *weeks.* Semana, "week," comes from Latin septimana, "a set of seven," from septem, "seven," the root of "September," once the seventh month of the Roman year.

encontraron (encontrar) *they found.*

La desaparición se convirtió en uno de los misterios más comentados del siglo veinte. Con las décadas surgieron teorías. Algunos investigadores proponían que el aeroplano simplemente cayó al mar al agotarse el combustible. Otros sugerían que Amelia y Noonan lograron un aterrizaje de emergencia en una isla remota y sobrevivieron un tiempo como náufragos. Las versiones más extravagantes hablaban de capturas militares extranjeras o de misiones secretas de espionaje. Expediciones modernas, con tecnología submarina avanzada, continúan explorando el fondo del Pacífico en busca de fragmentos del aeroplano. Hasta hoy, el misterio no tiene solución.

uno *one.* Uno is Latin unus, "one," as in "e pluribus unum," "out of many, one."

siglo *century.* Siglo is "century," from Latin saeculum, "a generation, an age," the root of English "secular."

veinte *twenty.* Veinte comes from Latin viginti, "twenty," "two tens."

algunos (alguno) *some.* Alguno joins two Latin words, aliquis, "someone," and unus, "one," so it is "some one."

mar *sea.* Mar is Latin mare, "sea," the root of English "marine," "maritime," and "submarine."

agotarse *to run out, become exhausted.* Agotarse is agotar, "to use up," with the reflexive se: las entradas pueden agotarse, "the tickets may sell out."

lograron *they achieved, managed to.* Lograron is "they achieved" or "they managed," the preterite of lograr: lograron escapar, "they managed to escape."

aterrizaje *landing (of an aircraft).* Aterrizaje is the noun of aterrizar, "to land," with -aje, "-age": a coming down to tierra, "land."

náufragos (náufrago) *castaways.* Náufrago is a person whose ship has been broken: it comes from Latin naufragus, "shipwrecked," from navis, "ship," as in "navy," and frangere, "to break," as in "fracture" and "fragile."

hablaban (hablar) *they were speaking.* Hablar, "to speak," comes from Latin fabulari, "to chat, to tell stories," from fabula, "story," the source of English "fable" and "fabulous."

extranjeras (extranjero) *foreign (feminine plural).* Extranjero is the Spanish twin of English "stranger."

fondo *bottom / fund / background.* Fondo, "bottom," comes from Latin fundus, "bottom, base, estate," the root of English "fund," "foundation," and "profound," from the depths.

busca (buscar) *a search.*

hoy *today.* Hoy comes from Latin hodie, "today," a squeezed form of hoc die, "on this day."

tiene (tener) *has.*

Words from this story

Every explained word, by its dictionary form. Cover the right side and test yourself.

abierto Open
además Besides / in addition
agotar To exhaust, use up, run out of, deplete
agotarse To run out, become exhausted
agua Water
ala wing; also the brim of a hat, or a flank in sports or the military
algo Something
alguno Some / any
allí There (a specific place, farther from the speaker)
amanecer to dawn; also used as a noun for daybreak, sunrise
amarillo yellow
ánimo spirit, mood, courage; "cheer up!" as an exclamation
año Year
antes Before
apenas Barely / hardly
aterrizaje Landing (of an aircraft)
aterrizó He/she/it landed
azul Blue
bajar To go down / to lower
barco Boat / ship
bordo The board or side of a ship, as in "a bordo," aboard
bueno Good
buscar To look for, to search
búsqueda Search, quest
cada Each, every
caer To fall
cambio Change
caro Expensive; dear
casar To marry
casi Almost
cerca Near / fence
cercano Nearby, close
cielo Sky, heaven
cinco Five
coleccionaba Was collecting
combustible Fuel
comienzo Beginning, start
comprar To buy
comprobaban They were verifying, checking
cosa thing
cubrir To cover
dar to give
decir to say / to tell
dejar to leave / to let, allow
desanimó He/she discouraged
descansar to rest
desconocido Unknown; a stranger
despegar To take off (an airplane); to detach, to peel off, to unstick
despegaron They took off (aircraft)
despegue Takeoff, of an aircraft or rocket; also liftoff, launch
después after / afterward
diez ten
dinero Money
dos Two
durante During
embargo Embargo (only in the phrase sin embargo, "however, nevertheless")
empezar To begin / to start
empujar To push
encontrar To find / to meet
entrenamiento Training
escucharon Listened
ese That (demonstrative)
esperar To hope / to wait / to expect
estadounidense American; of or from the United States
exigir To demand, to require
extranjero Foreigner; foreign
faltar to be lacking, to be missing
fin end
fondo bottom / fund / background
grabar To record; to engrave
granjero Farmer
guerra War
haber To have (as an auxiliary); there to be
hablar to speak
hacia toward
herido wounded, injured
hielo Ice
hombre man
hoy today
ir To go
lado side
lanzar to throw, to launch
libro book
llamada Call; knock; footnote mark
llegar to arrive
lograron They achieved, managed to

luego then, next; later, afterward (desde luego = of course)
malo bad
mañana morning; tomorrow
mando Control; command; remote control
mantener to maintain, to keep, to support
mar sea
mes month
mientras while, meanwhile
mil thousand
mismo same; self, -self, as in yo mismo, "I myself."
mucho A lot / much
mujer Woman / wife
mundo World
nacer To be born
nada Nothing
nadie Nobody
náufrago Shipwrecked person, castaway
nave Ship, vessel; spacecraft; nave of a church; industrial building
negro Black
ninguno None / not any
niño Boy / child
noche Night
nube cloud
nunca Never
oeste West
otro Other / another
pagar To pay
pájaro bird; (colloquial) a sly or shady character
palabra Word
papel Paper
parecer To seem / to appear
pequeño small
perdido lost
periodista Journalist, reporter
poco little / few
poder to be able to / power
primero first
puerto port, harbor; mountain pass
quedar to stay / to remain / to be left / to agree to meet
quince fifteen
romper To break
ropa Clothes
rugir To roar, to bellow; to rumble
rumbo Direction, course, bearing
salir To leave / to go out
seguir To follow / to continue
según According to
semana Week
ser To be
siete Seven
siglo Century
siguiente Following / next
solo Alone / only
sonrisa Smile
subir To go up / to climb
suyo His / hers / its / theirs
tanto So much; as much
techo A roof or ceiling
tener To have
todo All; everything
tomar To take
trabajar To work
traer To bring
uno One
veinte Twenty
ventana Window
ver To see
vez Time / occasion
viajar To travel
viaje Trip / journey
vida Life
viento Wind
vivir To live
volar To fly
volver To return
voz Voice
vuelo Flight
vuelta Return / turn

Keep reading in the Superlexa app

More true stories in Spanish and French, written with words you already know.

Tap any word to see its meaning and where it comes from, so new words stick without flashcards.

superlexa.com/app

More free story PDFs: **superlexa.com/spanish-stories-for-beginners-pdf**