¿Qué hora es? What time is it?

- Time in English is neuter, that is, we say What time is it? It is 1:00. It is 2:30. In Spanish, time is feminine because the word for hour is la hora.

- The verb ser is used to tell time. Since there must be subject-verb agreement, one o'clock would be singular and two o'clock, three o'clock, etc. would be plural. This is different from the English.

  Es la una It is 1:00
  Son las dos It is 2:00
  Son las cinco It is 5:00
  Son las nueve It is 9:00

- To express the half hour in English we say six-thirty or half past six. The quarter hour can be six-fifteen or a quarter past six. Spanish has the same options.

  Son las seis y treinta six-thirty
  Son las seis y media half past six (6:30)
  Son las seis y quince six-fifteen
  Son las seis y cuarto a quarter past six (6:15)

- With the advent of digital watches, we have become more precise.

  Son las ocho y dieciséis It's 8:16
  Son las tres y veintinueve It's 3:29

- In English, 6:40 can be expressed as six-forty or twenty minutes before seven. In Spanish, they would say the equivalent of "it is 7 less twenty (minutes)." The word minutes is usually understood.

  Son las siete menos veinte (minutos) It's 6:40
  Son las diez menos quince or It's 9:45
  Son las diez menos cuarto

- We have other expressions we use with time and so do Spanish speakers.

  Es mediodía * It's noon
  Son a eso de las cuatro It is about 4:00
  Son las ocho y pico It is a little past 8:00
  Son las once en punto It is exactly 11:00 (11:00 on the dot)

  * This is masculine because día is a masculine word even though it ends in a, and we are saying it is the middle of the day. Noche is feminine, hence, medianoche, the middle of the night.

- To express a.m. or p.m., use mañana or tarde.

  Es la una de la mañana. It's 1:00 a.m.
  Son las tres de la tarde. It's 3:00 p.m.