Spanish Seed Phrases: Do Accents and ñ Matter?

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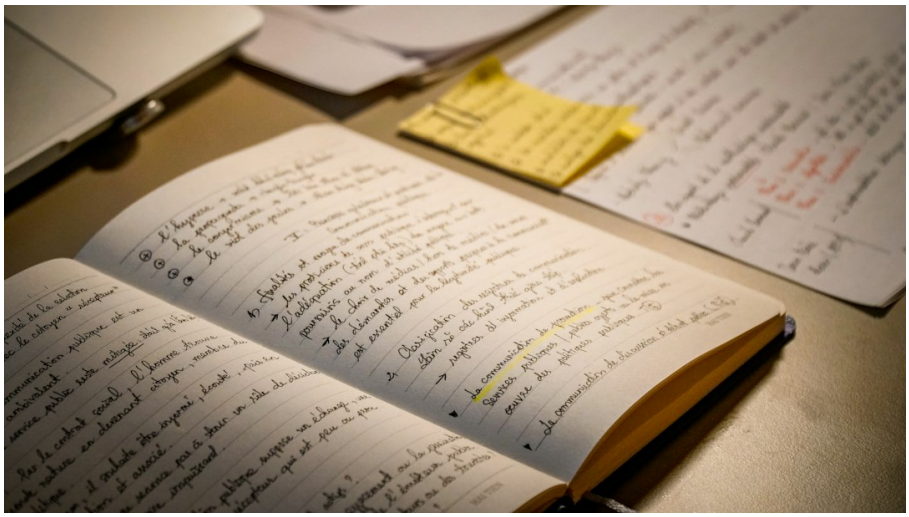


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Spanish BIP39 words can be identified without accents, but exact accented spelling matters for reliable backups and seed derivation.

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A Spanish BIP39 recovery phrase may be recognized without typing its accents, but its exact spelling still matters when deriving the wallet seed. The Spanish wordlist contains entries with accented vowels and ñ. Its documented lookup convention allows software to identify words from unaccented input; that convenience does not make accented and unaccented text interchangeable in the seed calculation. ([raw.githubusercontent.com](https://raw.githubusercontent.com/bitcoin/bips/master/bip-0039/spanish.txt))

Which Spanish words contain accents or ñ?

The official Spanish BIP39 list contains 2,048 entries, including entries carrying an accent or ñ. These spellings belong to the defined wordlist and should be copied faithfully into a backup. ([raw.githubusercontent.com](https://raw.githubusercontent.com/bitcoin/bips/master/bip-0039/spanish.txt))

Although ñ is a separate letter in Spanish, the Spanish wordlist's sorting and lookup convention removes diacritical marks when identifying an entry, so ñ can be matched as n. Accented vowels are similarly matched to their plain equivalents. This is a specific lookup convention for the wordlist, rather than a general rule about Spanish spelling. ([raw.githubusercontent.com](https://raw.githubusercontent.com/bitcoin/bips/master/bip-0039/bip-0039-wordlists.md))

For your backup, preserve the full words, their order, and every accent and tilde shown by the wallet. Label the record “BIP39 Spanish” so a future recovery does not depend on someone recognizing the language or guessing the mnemonic standard.

Four letters identify each word without accents

The Spanish BIP39 wordlist is designed so that the first four letters, after diacritical marks are disregarded, uniquely identify each word. For words shorter than four letters, use the complete word. The Spanish wordlist documentation describes this property, which allows recovery interfaces to offer completion without requiring a Spanish keyboard. ([raw.githubusercontent.com](https://raw.githubusercontent.com/bitcoin/bips/master/bip-0039/bip-0039-wordlists.md))

The important distinction is between identifying an entry and supplying the complete mnemonic to the seed derivation function. A recovery interface can match an unaccented prefix, select the corresponding official word, and restore its full spelling before proceeding. That is an implementation step; typing a recognizable prefix does not itself perform it. ([raw.githubusercontent.com](https://raw.githubusercontent.com/bitcoin/bips/master/bip-0039/bip-0039-wordlists.md))

When using autocomplete, check the selected word before advancing. Do not assume that every application accepts abbreviations, restores accents, or supports the Spanish list simply because it advertises BIP39 recovery. Confirm those capabilities in its documentation and recovery interface.

Why exact accented spelling still matters

BIP39 derives a seed from the mnemonic text using PBKDF2-HMAC-SHA512 with `2048` iterations and a `64-byte` output. The mnemonic is encoded as UTF-8 after Unicode `NFKD` normalization. The salt contains the literal string `mnemonic` followed by the optional passphrase, also normalized with NFKD. The actual text therefore participates in the calculation. ([raw.githubusercontent.com](https://raw.githubusercontent.com/bitcoin/bips/master/bip-0039.mediawiki))

NFKD does not remove Spanish accents. It decomposes an accented character into its base letter and combining mark. For example, á becomes `U+0061` followed by `U+0301`; ñ becomes `U+006E` followed by `U+0303`. The marks remain present. Precomposed and decomposed spellings normalize consistently, while deleting a mark changes the normalized text. ([unicode.org](https://unicode.org/reports/tr15/))

Consequently, software that passes an accent-stripped sentence directly into the derivation function calculates a different seed from software that first reconstructs the official spelling. A strict validator may instead reject the altered words before derivation. Neither outcome should be confused with successful recovery through accent-insensitive word selection. ([raw.githubusercontent.com](https://raw.githubusercontent.com/bitcoin/bips/master/bip-0039.mediawiki))

Keeping the exact spelling avoids making your backup depend on a particular interface's correction behavior. It also preserves more information for a future recovery involving unfamiliar software, a different keyboard, or another person following your instructions.

How to back up and restore Spanish words

1. Copy every complete word exactly as displayed, including accents and ñ, and retain the original sequence.
2. Compare the finished backup with the wallet display word by word. Check small marks separately from the base letters.
3. Record the language and standard alongside the words. Keep any optional BIP39 passphrase clearly distinguished from the numbered mnemonic words.
4. Use the wallet's documented backup verification procedure. Avoid entering a live phrase into a website to test its spelling.
5. During restoration, select Spanish where required. If plain keyboard input triggers word suggestions, confirm that each selected entry matches your backup.
6. If your existing backup omits accents, reconstruct the full spellings using a trusted offline copy of the official Spanish list before relying on literal text import.

For a new backup, prefer complete accented words over four-letter abbreviations. If a metal format only accommodates prefixes, document its expansion procedure and preserve a separate exact-spelling record securely. Treat prefixes as sensitive recovery material: the uniqueness property makes them sufficient to reconstruct the words. ([raw.githubusercontent.com](https://raw.githubusercontent.com/bitcoin/bips/master/bip-0039/bip-0039-wordlists.md))

FAQ

Can I recover without a Spanish keyboard?

Yes, through an interface that maps unaccented input to official Spanish entries. Confirm the selected words before continuing. ([raw.githubusercontent.com](https://raw.githubusercontent.com/bitcoin/bips/master/bip-0039/bip-0039-wordlists.md))

Is an unaccented backup automatically unusable?

No. The wordlist's identification convention can allow the software to reconstruct the official spellings. Restore those spellings before seed derivation, and verify that the resulting mnemonic passes the wallet's checksum and recovery checks. ([raw.githubusercontent.com](https://raw.githubusercontent.com/bitcoin/bips/master/bip-0039/bip-0039-wordlists.md))

Can I also remove accents from my BIP39 passphrase?

You can enter any passphrase you choose, but removing accents changes its normalized input and produces a different seed. The passphrase is separate text and has no Spanish wordlist reconstruction rule. ([raw.githubusercontent.com](https://raw.githubusercontent.com/bitcoin/bips/master/bip-0039.mediawiki))

Sources

- BIP39: Mnemonic code for generating deterministic keys (github.com)
- BIP39 Wordlists: Spanish special considerations (github.com)
- Official BIP39 Spanish wordlist (github.com)

> Continue reading on bip39-phrase.com: How to Store a Seed Phrase: Paper, Steel and Safe Locations
> More on this topic: Seed Phrases

Sample sequences of BIP39 words

Randomly generated sequences of words from the BIP39 English wordlist. None of them passes the BIP39 checksum, so no wallet will accept them: they show the format only. Never store funds with a phrase you found in a document.

Example 1

1 physical	2 bulb	3 pony	4 head
5 affair	6 taxi	7 avocado	8 dog
9 tuition	10 reject	11 creek	12 afford

Example 2

1 where	2 custom	3 kind	4 van
5 tiny	6 lemon	7 curtain	8 chef
9 must	10 powder	11 index	12 donkey

Example 3

1 diet	2 brave	3 cart	4 oxygen
5 clean	6 roast	7 guard	8 security
9 crystal	10 truck	11 limb	12 fame

Example 4

1 glare	2 sugar	3 enforce	4 cabin
5 best	6 autumn	7 buffalo	8 coin
9 marriage	10 kind	11 home	12 aspect

Example 5			
1 shallow	2 goose	3 flash	4 couple
5 lock	6 swift	7 shoot	8 hunt
9 doll	10 evil	11 toy	12 canvas

Example 6			
1 ritual	2 tide	3 bid	4 title
5 give	6 horse	7 risk	8 endless
9 vendor	10 click	11 rubber	12 suspect

Example 7			
1 tattoo	2 sport	3 broccoli	4 measure
5 audit	6 border	7 parrot	8 shuffle
9 can	10 pizza	11 garlic	12 room

Reading a BIP39 phrase

Every word stands for an 11-bit number: its position in the 2048-word list, counted from 0. Here is Example 1 decoded word by word. Each word links to its page on bip39-phrase.com, where the list is numbered from 1.

#	Word	Index (0-2047)	Word no.	11 bits
1	physical	1311	1312	10100011111
2	bulb	239	240	00011101111
3	pony	1343	1344	10100111111
4	head	848	849	01101010000
5	affair	34	35	00000100010
6	taxi	1779	1780	11011110011
7	avocado	127	128	00001111111
8	dog	516	517	01000000100
9	tuition	1873	1874	11101010001
10	reject	1447	1448	10110100111
11	creek	409	410	00110011001
12	afford	35	36	00000100011

The 12 words carry 132 bits: 128 bits of entropy followed by a 4-bit checksum. The checksum must equal the first 4 bits of the SHA-256 hash of the entropy.

```
Entropy (hex): a3e3be9fb50045bcc3fa04ea369ccc82
```

This sequence ends in the checksum bits 0011, but SHA-256 of its entropy starts with 1100, so wallets reject it as an invalid phrase. That is the point of the checksum: about 15 of every 16 random or mistyped sequences fail it.

See also

- NFKD Normalization in BIP39 · November 1, 2026
- How to Stamp Seed Words into a Steel Plate · November 3, 2026
- Laminating a Paper Seed Backup: Help or Harm? · November 2, 2026
- Diceware Lists and BIP39 Words: Different Jobs · October 30, 2026

Educational document. The example sequences are random and fail the BIP39 checksum: they are not wallets and must never hold funds. Security notes: bip39-phrase.com/security/