

# SER vs ESTAR vs TENER = TO BE

The verb “To Be,” which can be either SER or ESTAR or TENER, can be tricky to get right when learning Spanish. There’s a lot of hassles over these verbs and when and how to use them. Let’s observe the differences and notice how to apply them correctly in different situations.

## SER vs ESTAR vs TENER – what is the difference?

Simply put, SER is used to talk about [permanent qualities](#), and ESTAR is used to talk about [temporary states](#) whereas TENER is used [to express age & feelings](#).

In English, you would use the verb “To Be” for both, but in Spanish they have somewhat different meanings.

Grammatical persons (Subject pronouns)

### 1<sup>st</sup> Person:

Yo – I – मैं – நான்

Nosotros – We – हम – நாங்கள் (Masculine crowd & mixed genders)

Nosotras – We – हम – நாங்கள் (Feminine crowd only)

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Person [Informal]:

Tú – You – तू – நீ

Vosotros – You all – तुम – நீங்கள் (Informal, Masculine crowd & mixed gender)

Vosotras – You all – तुम – நீங்கள் (Informal, Feminine crowd only)

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Person [Formal]:

Usted – You – आप – தாம் (formal)

Ustedes – You all – आप – தாங்கள் (Formal, Masculine crowd & mixed gender)

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Person:

Él – He – यह/वह – இவன்/இவர்/அவன்/அவர்

Ellos – They – वे – அவர்கள் (Masculine crowd & mixed genders)

Ella – She – यह/वह – இவள்/இவர்/அவள்/அவர்

Ellas – They – वे – அவர்கள் (Feminine crowd only)

Subject Pronouns	SER	ESTAR	TENER
Yo	soy	estoy	tengo
Tú	eres	estás	tienes
Él/Ella/Usted	es	está	tiene
Nosotros/as	somos	estamos	tenemos
Vosotros/as	sois	estáis	tenéis
Ellos/as/Ustedes	son	están	tienen
	<b>Description</b>	<b>Position</b>	To express
	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Location</b>	1. Age &
	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Action</b>	2. Feelings
	<b>Time factor</b>	<b>Condition</b>	
	<b>Origin</b>	<b>Emotions</b>	
	<b>Relationships/Religion</b>		

### Examples for SER:

#### 1. Description – Descripción

Hai, I am Peter – Hola, Soy Pedro  
India is my country – India es mi país

She is there – Ella es ahí  
That is my car – Ese es mi coche

#### 2. Occupation – Ocupación

What is your profession? I am engineer  
¿Cuál es tu profesión? Soy ingeniero/ra

Who is John? John is journalist.  
¿Quién es Juan? Juan es periodista.

#### 3. Characteristics – Características

She is tall and intelligent – Ella es alta y inteligente  
My garden is big and beautiful – Mi jardín es grande y bonito  
People in Spain are generous – La gente de España son generosas

#### 4. Time factor – Factor tiempo

Today is Sunday – Hoy es domingo

Is today your birthday? - ¿Es hoy tu cumpleaños?

What is the time? It is 4pm - ¿Qué hora es? Son las cuatro de la tarde.

#### 5. Origin – Origen

Her watch is from Japan – Su reloj es de Japón

My ring is made of gold – Mi anillo es hecho de oro

Are they Americans? – ¿Son ellos estadounidenses?

#### 6. Relationship/Religion – Parentesco/Religión

This is my dad and he is my brother – Este es mi papá y él es mi hermano

Is she your sister? No she is my mom - ¿Es ella su hermana? No, es mi mamá.

Muslim – Musulmán/Musulmana | Musulmanes/Musulmanas

Christian – Cristiano/Cristiana | Cristianos/Cristianas

Buddhist – Budista | Budistas (Common to both genders)

Hindu – Hindú | Hindús (Gender neutral with number)

Parsi – Parsí | Parsís (Gender neutral with number)

Sikh – Sij (absolutely neutral)

#### Examples for ESTAR:

##### 1. Position – Posición

The pen is on the table – El bolígrafo está sobre la mesa

The child is behind the curtain – La niña está detrás de la cortina

She is in my heart – Ella está en mi corazón

##### 2. Location – Ubicación

Where are you? I am near Gazebo – ¿Dónde estás? Estoy cerca de Gazebo

Where is Madrid? It is in Spain - ¿Dónde está Madrid? Está en España

Is there a bank nearby? Yes, it is next to the church there.

¿Hay un banco por aquí? Sí, está al lado de la iglesia allí.

### 3. Action – Acción

We are waiting on the main road – Estamos esperando en la calle principal  
The children are playing in the park – Los niños están jugando en el parque  
I am swimming in the beach – Estoy nadando en la playa

### 4. Condition – Condición

How is the milk? It is spoiled – ¿A cómo está la leche? Está estropeada  
Wow! The biriyani is hot to serve - ¡Guau! La paella está caliente para server  
Hello friends! How are you? ¡Hola amigos! ¿Cómo están ustedes?

### 5. Emotion – Emoción

She is in bad mood – Ella está de mal humor  
My friends are happy – Mis amigas están alegres  
I am nervous to attend this competition – Estoy nervioso por asistir este concurso.

#### Examples for TENER:

#### 1. To express age – Para expresar la edad

How old are you? I am fifteen years old  
¿Cuántos años tienes tú? Yo tengo quince años

How old is your child? She is three years old  
¿Cuántos años tiene su niña? Ella tiene tres años

This church is a century old – Esta iglesia tiene un siglo de antigüedad

#### 2. To express feelings – Para expresar sensibilidades

That man is hungry and he feels cold – Ese hombre tiene hambre y tiene frío  
Are you thirsty? No, I am not thirsty - ¿Es usted tiene sed? No, no tengo sed  
I am always careful to drive the motorcycle in highway  
Tengo siempre cuidado de conducir la motocicleta en autopista.

Tener calor – To feel hot

Tener frío – To feel cold

Tener hambre – To be hungry

Tener sed – To be thirsty

Tener miedo – To be scared

Tener cuidado – To be careful

Tener razón – To be right

Tener ganas de – To feel like

Tener sueño – To feel sleepy

Tener prisa – To be in a hurry

# Verbos conjugativos regulares

## What is a Verb?

Verbs are words that express the action that the subject executes, or the state or process in which it is. Therefore, they always agree with the subject in PERSON (First, Second & Third) and NUMBER (Singular & Plural).

## Forms of the verb:

Verbs have two types namely, impersonal and personal types.

The impersonal forms of the verb are the non-conjugated forms such as:

Infinitive (–ar, –er, –ir)

Gerund (–ando, –iendo) &

Participle (–ado, –ido).

## The personal forms of the verb:

These are the conjugated forms in a particular tense and particular mood. A verb in personal form agrees in person and number with the subject of the sentence.

## The verbal mode:

In Spanish there are basically three verbal modes namely,

Indicative – deals with factual information,

Subjunctive – deals with hypothetical belief,

Imperative – deals with command or order

These modes provide information about the speaker's attitude to what he is saying.

As we have seen the verbs are divided into three groups AR | ER | IR each one of which presents different sets of endings when it comes to conjugating them. What distinguishes the three verb groups is the termination that can be observed in their infinitive form, as shown below:

HABL-AR | COM-ER | VIV-IR

To conjugate Spanish verbs, the infinitive terminations drop and the present tense endings are added to the verbal stems:

Subject pronouns	ar	er	ir
Yo	o	o	o
Tú	as	es	es
Él/Ella/Usted	a	e	e
Nosotros/as	amos	emos	imos
Vosotros/as	áis	éis	ís
Ellos/as/Ustedes	an	en	en

Subject pronouns	Hablar	Comer	Vivir
Yo	hablo	Como	Vivo
Tú	hablas	Comes	Vives
Él/Ella/Usted	habla	Come	Vive
Nosotros/as	hablamos	Comemos	Vivimos
Vosotros/as	habláis	Coméis	Vivís
Ellos/as/Ustedes	hablan	Comen	Viven

### Los verbos acabados en en –ar:

Aumentar – To increase	Bailar – To dance	Crear – To create
Abrazar – To embrace	Bajar – To decrease	Cortar – To cut; short
Acabar – To finish	Buscar – To search	Dejar – To leave
Aceptar – To accept	Cambiar – To change	Enseñar – To teach
Agarrar – To hold/To clench	Caminar – To walk	Entregar – to deliver
Ahorrar – To save	Cantar – To sing	Enviar – To send
Alimentar – To feed	Cargar – To charge	Escalar – To scale
Alzar – To lift	Cazar – To hunt	Escuchar – To listen
Andar – To walk	Cerrar – To close	Esperar – To hope
Anunciar – To announce	Citar – To quote	Esperar – To wait
Arrancar – To pull	Cocinar – To cook	Llenar – To fill
Arreglar – To repair	Comparar – To compare	Mandar – To order
Asar – To roast	Comprar – To purchase	Manejar – To manage
Ayudar – To help	Completar – To complete	

Descargar – To discharge	Parar – To stop	Pasear – To pass
Descargar – To download	Pasar – To pass; happen	Necesitar – To need
Empujar – To push	Preguntar – To question	Tocar – To touch
Engañar – To cheat	Preparar – To prepare	Prestar – To lend
Endurar – To endure	Recargar – To recharge	Regalar – To gift
Guardar – To safeguard	Saltar – To jump	Fumar – To smoke
Hablar – To speak; talk	Soltar – To drop	Practicar – To practice
Hallar – To find; seek	Trabajar – To work	Nadar – To swim
Imaginar – To imagine	Tomar – To take	
Informar – To inform	Usar – To use	
Intentar – To intent	Viajar – To travel	

### **Los verbos acabados en –er:**

Aprender – To learn  
 Beber – To drink  
 Caber – To fit  
 Ceder – To yield  
 Creer – To believe  
 Comer – To eat  
 Comprender – To comprehend  
 Coser – To stitch  
 Correr – To run  
 Deber – To must  
 Esconder – To hide  
 Leer – To read  
 Meter – To put; To score  
 Prometer – To promise  
 Romper – To break  
 Temer – To fear  
 Toser – To cough  
 Traer – To bring  
 Vender – To sell  
 Ver – To see

### **Los verbos acabados en –ir:**

Abrir – To open  
 Asistir – To attend; Assist  
 Competir – To compete  
 Cubrir – To cover  
 Descubrir – To discover  
 Escribir – To write  
 Discutir – To dispute  
 Subir – To climb  
 Recibir – To receive  
 Acudir – To U turn  
 Definir – To define  
 Dividir – To divide  
 Unir – To unite; join  
 Cumplir – To fulfill  
 Pulir – To polish  
 Presumir – To presume  
 Imprimir – To imprint  
 Vivir – To live