Spanish Grammar

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Contents

1	Subjects and Verbs	2
2	Special, Stem-Changing and Irregular Verbs	4
3	Pronouns	13
4	Moods in Spanish	13
5	Tenses 5.1 Present 5.2 Future 5.3 Past	14 14 14 14
6	Additional Verbs	14
7	Additional Nouns	14
8	Adjectives	14
9	Adverbs	14
10	Phrases	14

1 Subjects and Verbs

The key in learning an new language is to understand how to use the verbs. Therefore, we concentrate on these. There exist two tracks of verbs in Spanish, those verbs ending in -ar and those ending in -er or -ir. For instance, we have hablar for to speak, and comer for to eat and vivir meaning to live¹.

tracks of

Pronunciation. The pronunciation is easy in Spanish as words are pronounced as they are written but there can only **one single stress** in each word. If there is an apostrophe the corresponding vowel/syllable is stressed, otherwise the second to last syllable is stressed. For instance, we have **hab-lar**, thus **hab** is stressed. In Spanish the leading **h** is not pronounced, thus hablar is pronounced as **ah**-blahr, with the bold part being stressed. Furthermore, the **v** is pronounced as **b**, and **ll** as **j**.

Present Tense Conjungation. To conjugate -ar verbs, remove the -ar ending and add the corresponding ending of the desired subject. For instance with the word hablar (to speak) we get the top part in Table 1.

Note that el is masculine, ella is feminine and usted is formal for you. In case of group of peoples we have ellos for groups of man or mixed groups, ellas for groups consisting only of woman, and ustedes for taking formally to a group. For -er endings, remove the -er ending and add the corresponding subject ending. We use comer (to eat) as example, cf. Table 1.

And very similar to the -er verbs, are the -ir verbs, where only the nosotros and vosotrs endings are different. For vivir (to live) is presented in the bottom part of Table 1.

[MS: Pronouns + in the infinite form the pronoun? is adapted to the word. levantarse. levantarme, yo me levanto.]

 $^{^{1}}$ also see https://www.spanishdict.com/guide/spanish-present-tense-forms

Subject	ar-Ending	Example (hablar)	Meaning
yo	-O	yo hablo	I speak
tú	-as	tú hablas	you (informal) speak
el/ella/usted	-a	el habla	he/she/you (formal) speak(s)
nosotros	-amos	nostros hablamos	we speak
vosotros	-áis	vosotros habláis	you (informal) speak
ellos/ellas/ustedes	-an	ellos hablan	they/they (fem.)/you speak
Subject	er-Ending	Example (comer)	Meaning
yo	-O	yo como	I eat
tú	-es	tú comes	you eat
el/ella/usted	-e	el come	he/she/you eat(s)
nosotros	-emos	nostros comemos	we eat
vosotros	-éis	vosotros coméis	you eat
ellos/ellas/ustedes	-en	ellos comen	they/you eat
Subject	ir-Ending	Example (vivir)	Meaning
yo	-O	yo vivo	I live
tú	-es	tú vives	you live
el/ella/usted	-e	el vive	he/she/you live(s)
nosotros	-imos	nostros vivimos	we live
vosotros	-ís	vosotros vivís	you live
ellos/ellas/ustedes	-en	ellos viven	they/you live

Table 1: Standard rules for the conjugation of verbs to different subjects.

2 Special, Stem-Changing and Irregular Verbs

Special Verbs. First of all there of are a handful special verbs that do not follow the regular pattern in the yo form, though they are easy to remember as they are very common. This of course also means that they important to know. These are:

Infinitive	Meaning	yo form	Meaning
decir	to say/tell	yo di g o	I tell
hacer	to do	yo ha g o	I do
poner	to put	yo pon g o	I put
salir	to go out/leave	yo sal g o	I go out
suponer	to suppose	yo supon \mathbf{g} o	I suppose
tener	to have	yo ten g o	I have
traer	to bring	yo trai \mathbf{g} o	I bring
venir	to come	yo ven \mathbf{g} o	I come

Table 2: Irregular verbs.

We call these words the **go-go words** as the end in -go. Additionally to these words other words ending in -poner fall into the same category. There is one more word that is different, but not a go-go word: haber (to have). As **tener** it also means **to have**, but it is used when talking about the past. We will investigate this in detail later.

go-go

Spelling Changes. Some verbs do not follow the rules of the previous section, i.e. there is a spelling change in the yo form ².

- Verbs ending in -guir the yo form ends in go. The yo form ends in go, e.g. extinguir (to extinguish) is yo extingo.
- Verbs ending in -ger or -gir, the g in the yo form changes to a j. For instance dirigir (to direct) we get 'yo dirijo' for 'I direct'.

Here are some common verbs that use these two rules:

Infinitive	Meaning	yo form
extinguir	to extinguish	extingo
dirigir	to direct	dirijo
escoger	to choose	escojo
exigir	to demand	exijo
recoger	to pick up	recojo

Table 3: Verbs with -guir, -ger and -gir ending have different yo forms.

²https://www.spanishdict.com/guide/spanish-present-tense-forms

Vowel Changes. In the present tense some verbs undergo a vowel change in the last vowel of the stem of the verb, when it is *stressed*. Recall that without accent the second to last syllable is stressed and always only one syllable of each word is stressed in Spanish. There can be following changes.

1. e becomes ie. For instance the word querer (to want) conjugates as follows:

Subject	er-Ending	Example (querer)	Meaning
yo	-O	yo qu ie ro	I want
tú	-es	tú qu ie res	you want
el/ella/usted	-e	el qu ie re	he/she/you want(s)
nosotros	-emos	nostros queremos	we want
vosotros	-éis	vosotros queréis	you want
ellos/ellas/ustedes	-en	ellos qu ie ren	they/you want

Table 4: The verb querer conjugated.

Here are some common verbs for which \mathbf{e} become \mathbf{ie} , note that these follow the same pattern as querer in Table 4:

Verb	Meaning	Example
acertar	to hit/guess	yo acierto
atender	to attend to	yo atiendo
atravesar	to cross/go through	yo atravieso
calentar	to warm	yo caliento
cerrar	to close	yo cierro
comenzar	to begin	yo comienzo
confesar	to confess	yo confieso
defender	to defend	yo defiendo
descender	to descend	yo desciendo
despertarse	to wake up	yo me despierto
divertirse	to have fun	yo me divierto
empezar	to begin	yo empiezo
encender	to light/turn on	yo enciendo
encerrar	to $enclose/lock$	yo encierro
entender	to understand	yo entiendo
fregar	to scrub/wash	yo friego
gobernar	to govern/rule	yo gobierno
helar	to freeze	yo hielo
mentir	to lie	yo miento
negar	negar to deny	
nevar	to snow	yo nievo
pensar	to think	yo pienso
perder	to lose	yo piedo
preferir	to prefer	yo prefiero
querer	to want	yo quiero
recomendar	to recommend	yo recomiendo
remendar	to mend/patch	yo remiendo
sentar(se)	to sit down	yo me siento
sentir	to feel	yo siento
sugerir	to suggest	yo sugiero
tener	to have	tú tienes
tropezar	tropezar to stumble	
venir	to come	tú vienes

Table 5: Some common verbs for which the last ${\bf e}$ in the stem becomes ie when conjugated.

2. o becomes ue. For example the word soñar (to dream) conjugates as follows:

Subject	ar-Ending	Example (soñar)	Meaning
yo	-O	yo s ue ño	I dream
tú	-as	tú s ue ñas	you dream
el/ella/usted	-a	el s ue ña	he/she/you dream(s)
nosotros	-amos	nostros sonamos	we dream
vosotros	-áis	vosotros soñáis	you dream
ellos/ellas/ustedes	-an	ellos s ue ñan	they/you dream

Table 6: The verb sonar conjugated.

Another one is the word oler (to smell), for which also an h is added at the beginning when the first letter of the word is changed:

Subject	er-Ending	Example (oler)	Meaning
yo	-O	yo hue lo	I smell
tú	-es	tú hue les	You smell
el/ella/usted	-e	el hue le	he/she/you smell(s)
nosotros	-emos	nostros olemos	we smell
vosotros	-éis	vosotros oléis	you smell
ellos/ellas/ustedes	-en	ellos hue len	they/you smell

Table 7: The verb oler conjugated.

Below again you can find common verbs with this vowel change.

Verb	Meaning	Example
absolver	to absolve	yo absuelo
acordarse (de)	to agree on/remember	yo me acuerdo de
almorzar	to have lunch	yo almuerzo
aprobar	to approve	yo apruebo
cocer	to boil/bake	yo cueco
colgar	to hang (up)	yo cuelgo
conmover	to move	yo conmuevo
contar	to count	yo cuento
costar	to cost	yo cuesto
demoler	to demolish	yo demuelo
demostrar	to demonstrate/prove	yo demuestro
devolver	to return	yo devuelvo
disolver	to dissolve	yo disuelvo
doler	to hurt	yo duelo
dormir	to sleep	yo duermo
encontrar	to find	yo encuentro
envolver	to wrap	yo envuelvo
llover	to rain	yo lluevo
moler	to grind	yo muelo
morder	to bite	yo muerdo
morir	to die	yo muero
mostrar	to show	yo muestro
mover	to move	yo muevo
oler	to smell	yo huelo
poder	to be able to	yo puedo
probar	to taste, to prove	yo pruebo
promover	to promote	yo promuevo
recordar	to remember	yo recuerdo
remover	to remove	yo remuevo
resolver	to resolve	yo resuelvo
retorcer	to twist	yo retuerto [MS: why -to?]
revolver	to mix/shake	yo revuelvo
rogar	to beg	yo ruego
soler	to be accustomed to	yo suelo (means: I usually)
sonar	to sound	yo sueno
soñar	to dream	yo sueño
torcer	to twist	yo tuerco
tronar	to thunder	yo trueno
volar	to fly	yo vuelo

Table 8: Some common verbs for which the o in the stem becomes ue when conjugated.

Again for all of these and the following vowel changes prefixes count as well. For instance the words comprobar (to check/prove), descontar (to deduct/exclude) and descolgar (to take down) undergo a vowel change as well.

3. e becomes i. As an example we use repetir (to repeat).

Subject	ir-Ending	Example (repetir)	Meaning
yo	- O	yo rep i to	I repeat
tú	-es	tú rep i tes	You repeat
el/ella/usted	-e	el rep i te	he/she/you repeat(s)
nosotros	-imos	nostros repetimos	we repeat
vosotros	-ís	vosotros repetís	you repeat
ellos/ellas/ustedes	-en	ellos rep i ten	they/you repeat

Table 9: The verb repetir conjugated.

There are only a few common words with that scheme:

Verb	Meaning	Example
conseguir	to get	yo consigo
corregir	to correct	yo corrijo
decir	to say/tell	yo digo
$\operatorname{despedir}$	to fire/to say goodbye/to dismiss	yo despido
elegir	to elect	yo elijo
impedir	to impede/prevent	yo impido
medir	to measure	yo mido
pedir	to ask for	yo pido
perseguir	to follow/chase	yo persigo
repetir	to repeat	yo repito
reírse	to laugh	yo me río
seguir	to follow	yo sigo
servir	to serve	yo sirvo
sonreírse	to smile at	yo me sonrío (to smile at me)
vestirse	to get dressed	yo me visto

Table 10: Some common verbs for which e becomes i in the stem when conjugated.

4. i becomes ie. There exist only two commonly used verbs with this vocal change: adquirir (to acquire) and inquirir (to inquire).

Subject	ir-Ending	Example (adquirir)	Meaning
yo	-O	yo adqu ie ro	I acquire
tú	-es	tú adqu ie res	You acquire
el/ella/usted	-e	el adqu ie re	he/she/you acquire(s)
nosotros	-imos	nostros adquirimos	we acquire
vosotros	-ís	vosotros adquirís	you acquire
ellos/ellas/ustedes	-en	ellos adqu ie ren	they/you acquire

Table 11: The verb adquirir conjugated.

Subject	ir-Ending	Example (inquirir)	Meaning
yo tú	-0	yo inqu ie ro tú inqu ie res	I inquire You inquire
el/ella/usted	-es -e	el inqu ie re	he/she/you inquire(s)
nosotros vosotros	-imos -ís	nostros inquirimos vosotros inquirís	we inquire you inquire
ellos/ellas/ustedes	-en	ellos inqu ie ren	they/you inquire

Table 12: The verb inquirir conjugated.

5. **u becomes ue.** Finally for this vowel change, there is only one commonly used verb: jugar (to play).

Subject	ar-Ending	Example (jugar)	Meaning
yo	-O	yo j ue go	I play
tú	-as	tú j ue gas	You play
el/ella/usted	-a	el j ue ga	he/she/you play(s)
nosotros	-amos	nostros jugamos	we play
vosotros	-áis	vosotros jugáis	you play
ellos/ellas/ustedes	-an	ellos j ue gan	they/you play

Table 13: The verb jugar conjugated.

Irregular Verbs. Finally there are some common verbs with irregular yo forms³, otherwise they follow the standard patterns of the -ar tack and the -er/-ir track (in the so far discussed present tense):

³https://www.spanishdict.com/guide/spanish-present-tense-forms

Infinitive	Meaning	yo form
caber	to fit	quepo
caer	to fall	caigo
conocer	to know	conozco
dar	to give	doy
hacer	to $do/make$	hago
poner	to put	pongo
saber	to know	sé
salir	to leave/to go out	salgo
traducir	to translate	$\operatorname{traduzco}$
traer	to bring	traigo
valer	to be worth	valgo
ver	to see	veo

Table 14: Verbs with irregular yo forms.

Furthermore there are four of the most common verbs that are irregular. These are ser (to be), estar (to be), ir (to go) and haber (to have). The corresponding conjugations are^4 :

 $[\]overline{\ ^4 https://www.spanishdict.com/guide/spanish-irregular-present-tense}$

Subject	Conjungation of ser	Meaning
yo	yo soy	I am
tú	tú eres	you are
el/ella/usted	el es	he/she is,you are
nosotros	nostros somos	we are
vosotros	vosotros sois	you are
ellos/ellas/ustedes	ellos son	they/you are
Subject	Conjungation of estar	Meaning
yo	yo estoy	I am
tú	tú estás	you are
	el está	
el/ella/usted nosotros	nostros estamos	he/she is, you are
		we are
vosotros	vosotros estáis	you are
ellos/ellas/ustedes	ellos están	they/you are
Subject	Conjungation of ir	Meaning
yo	yo voy	I go
tú	tú vas	you go
el/ella/usted	el va	he/she/you go(s)
nosotros	nostros vamos	we go
vosotros	vosotros vais	you go
ellos/ellas/ustedes	ellos van	they/you go
1 1		0,0
Subject	Conjungation of haber	Meaning
yo	yo he	I have
tú	tú has	you have
el/ella/usted	el hay, usted ha	he/she has, you have
nosotros	nostros hemos	we have
vosotros	vosotros habéis	you have
ellos/ellas/ustedes	ellos han	they/you have
	CIIOD IIWII	onoj/jou navo

Table 15: Very common irregular verbs.

3 Pronouns

In the positive infinite form pronouns are attached in the opposite order as in English to the word. For instance,

4 Moods in Spanish

There exist three **moods** in Spanish⁵:

1. **Imperative mood:** for giving commands. Remember that we have two tracks of verbs, the -ar track and the -ir/-er track. However, the informal commands are built differently. We start with them. Furthermore, in the imperative mode the go-go words turn into ga-ga's! For instance digo (I tell/I say) becomes diga (Tell! or Say!).

Imperative Mood, i.e. Commands

• Positive (Affirmative) informal commands on the -ar track: Use the present tense and drop the -s ending. For instance with the words comprar (to buy), aprender (to learn) and escribir (to write) we have following.

Verb	Present tense	Tú command	Example	Meaning
comprar	tu compras	compra	Compra la camiseta!	Buy the T-shirt!
aprender	tu aprendes	aprende	Aprende español!	Learn Spanish!
escribir	tu escribes	escribe	Escribe el ensayo!	Write the essay!

Pronoun placement. The pronouns have to be attached to the verb as it is a positive command and often an accent is used:

Verb	Tu form	Pronouns	Example	Meaning
traer	traes	lo (it)	Traelo.	Bring it.
traer	traes	me (me), lo (it)	Tráemelo.	Bring it to me.
decir	dices	lo (it)	Dígalo. (or dilo)	Say it.
decir	dices	se (him/her), lo (it)	Dígaselo.	Say it to her.
comprar	compras	se (him/her), lo (it)	Cómpraselo.	Buy it for him.
poner	pones	los (them)	Ponte los	Put on your
			zapatos ¡Póntelos!	shoes. Put them on!

• Negative informal commands on the -ar track: For the negative informal commands, go to the stem word, take the present tense form and switch tracks. That is words ending in -ar become -er and vice versa and of course use a negative word no (not) or nunca(never):

 $^{^5 \}mathrm{https://www.spanishdict.com/guide/subjunctive-vs-indicative-in-spanish}$

Verb	Present tense	Tú command	Example	Meaning
comprar	tu compr a s	no compr e s	No compres la camiseta!	Don't buy!
aprender	tu aprend \mathbf{e} s	no aprend a s	No aprendas español!	Don't learn!
escribir	tu escrib e s	no escrib \mathbf{a} s	Nunca escribas el ensayo!	Never write!

- Formal commands:
- Nosotros commands
- Indirect commands
- Informal commands on the -ir/-er track: Use the present tense and drop the -r ending
- 2. **Indicative mood:** to talk about facts or things that are believed to be true and concrete.
- 3. **Subjunctive mood:** to talk about desired, doubts, wishes, conjectures, and possibilities.

5 Tenses

There exist present, past and future tenses in Spanish:

- 5.1 Present
- 5.2 Future
- 5.3 Past
 - Simple Present Tense:
- 6 Additional Verbs
- 7 Additional Nouns
- 8 Adjectives
- 9 Adverbs
- 10 Phrases

$\overline{\mathbf{Verbs}}$

absolver	to absolve	cf., 8
acertar	to hit/guess	cf., 6
acordarse de	to agree on/remember	cf., 8
adquirir	to acquire	cf., 10
almorzar	to have lunch	cf., 8
aprender	to learn	cf., 13
aprobar	to approve	cf., 8
atender	to attend to	cf., 6
atravesar	to cross/go through	cf., 6
caber	to fit	cf., 11
caer	to fall	cf., 11
calentar	to warm	cf., 6
cerrar	to close	cf., 6
cocer	to boil/bake	cf., 8
colgar	to hang (up)	cf., 8
comenzar	to begin	cf., 6
comer	to eat	cf., 2, 3
comprar	to buy	cf., 13
comprobar	to check/prove	cf., 8
confesar	to confess	cf., 6
conmover	to move	cf., 8
conocer	to know	cf., 11
conseguir	to get	cf., 9
contar	to count	cf., 8
corregir	to correct	cf., 9
costar	to cost	cf., 8
dar	to give	cf., 11
decir	to say/tell	cf., 9
defender	to defend	cf., 6
demoler	to demolish	cf., 8
demostrar	to demonstrate/prove	cf., 8
descender	to descend	cf., 6
descolgar	to take down	cf., 8
descontar	to deduct/exclude	cf., 8
despedir	to fire/to say goodbye/to dismiss	cf., 9
despertarse	to wake up	cf., 6
despertar	to wake up	cf., 14
devolver	to return	cf., 8
direct	to direct	cf., 4
dirigir	to direct	cf., 4
disolver	to dissolve	cf., 8
divertirse	to have fun	cf., 6
doler	to hurt	cf., 8
dormir	to sleep	cf., 8
	-	,

elegir	to elect	cf., 9
empezar	to begin	cf., 6
encender	to light/turn on	cf., 6
encerrar	to enclose/lock	cf., 6
encontrar	to find	cf., 8
entender	to understand	cf., 6
envolver	to wrap	cf., 8
escoger	to choose	cf., 4
escribir	to write	cf., 13
exigir	to demand	cf., 4
extinguir	to extinguish	cf., 4
fregar	to scrub/wash	cf., 6
gobernar	to govern/rule	cf., 6
haber	to have	cf., 4, 11
hablar	to speak	cf., 2, 3
hacer	to do	cf., 4
hacer	to do/make	cf., 11
helar	to freeze	cf., 6
impedir	to impede/prevent	cf., 9
inquirir	to inquire	cf., 10
ir	to go	cf., 11
jugar	to play	cf., 10
llover	to rain	cf., 8
medir	to measure	cf., 9
mentir	to lie	cf., 6
moler	to grind	cf., 8
morder	to bite	cf., 8
morir	to die	cf., 8
mostrar	to show	cf., 8
mover	to move	cf., 8
negar	to deny	cf., 6
nevar	to snow	cf., 6
oler	to smell	cf., 7, 8
pedir	to ask for	cf., 9
pensar	to think	cf., 6
perder	to lose	cf., 6
perseguir	to follow/chase	cf., 9
poder	to be able to	cf., 8
poner	to put	cf., 11
preferir	to prefer	cf., 6
probar	to taste, to prove	cf., 8
promover	to promote	cf., 8
querer	to promote to want	cf., 5, 6
recoger	to pick up	cf., 4
recomendar	to pick up to recommend	cf., 4
recordar	to remember	•
ICCOIUAI	on temeningi	cf., 8

remendar	to mend/patch	cf., 6
remover	to remove	cf., 8
repetir	to repeat	cf., 9
resolver	to resolve	cf., 8
retorcer	to twist	
		cf., 8
revolver	to mix/shake	cf., 8
reírse	to laugh	cf., 9
rogar	to beg	cf., 8
saber	to know	cf., 11
salir	to leave/to go out	cf., 11
seguir	to follow	cf., 9
sentar	to sit down	cf., 6
sentir	to feel	cf., 6
servir	to serve	cf., 9
ser	to be	cf., 11
soler	to be accustomed to	cf., 8
sonar	to dream	cf., 7
sonar	to sound	cf., 8
sonreírse	to smile at	cf., 9
soñar	to dream	cf., 8
sugerir	to suggest	cf., 6
tener	to have	cf., 6
torcer	to twist	cf., 8
traducir	to translate	cf., 11
traer	to bring	cf., 11, 13
tronar	to thunder	cf., 8
tropezar	to stumble	cf., 6
valer	to be worth	cf., 11
venir	to come	cf., 6
ver	to see	cf., 11
vestirse	to get dressed	cf., 9
vivir	to live	cf., 2, 3
volar		
voiai	to fly	cf., 8

Nouns

el ensayo	the essay	cf., 13
el ojo	the eye	cf., 14
la diferencia	the difference	cf., 14
la oreja	the ear	cf., 14
la voz	the voice	cf., 14

Adjectives

amarga bitter cf., 14

Adverbs

probablemente	probably	cf., 14
probable	probably	cf., 14

Pronouns

los	them	cf., 13
lo	it	cf., 13
me	me	cf., 13
se	him/her	cf., 13

Phrases

Es como	it is like	cf., 14
Me encanta tu forma de ser	I love the way you are	cf., 14
No pidas perdón	Do not say sorry	cf., 14
No se explicarlo.	I don't know how to explain.	cf., 14
Ya se verá	We will see	cf., 14
buenas noches	good night	cf., 14
encontes me entiendes	Then you understand me	cf., 14
for example	por ejemplo	cf., 14
hasta mañana	See you tomorrow (lit: until tomorro	w) cf.,
14		
justo como pense	just as I thought	$cf.,\ 14$
no pasa nada	no problem	cf., 14
no sé qué pasará más adelante	I don't know what will happen later	cf., 14
o si no	or otherwise (lit: or if not)	cf., 14
pues	well	cf., 14
quiero averiguar	I want to find out	cf., 14
una forma de aprender	one way of learning	$cf.,\ 14$
¿en serio?	really?	$cf.,\ 14$