

Spanish Grammar

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August 30, 2020

Contents

1	Subjects and Verbs	2
2	Special, Stem-Changing and Irregular Verbs	4
3	Moods in Spanish	10
4	Tenses	11
4.1	Present	11

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
verbs

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 Conjugation. 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 **vosotros** 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**.]

¹also 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	nosotros 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	nosotros 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	nosotros 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 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 are important to know. These are:

Infinitive	Meaning	yo form	Meaning
decir	to say/tell	yo digo	I tell
hacer	to do	yo hago	I do
poner	to put	yo pongo	I put
salir	to go out/leave	yo salgo	I go out
suponer	to suppose	yo supongo	I suppose
tener	to have	yo tengo	I have
traer	to bring	yo traigo	I bring
venir	to come	yo vengo	I come

Table 2: Irregular verbs.

We call these words the **go-go words** as they 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
words

Irregular Verbs. Some verbs do not follow the rules of the previous section, i.e. there are some irregular verbs 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.

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: The verb querer conjugated.

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

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²<https://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 iero	I want
tú	-es	tú qu ieres	you want
el/ella/usted	-e	el qu iere	he/she/you want(s)
nosotros	-emos	nostros qu eremos	we want
vosotros	-éis	vosotros qu eréis	you want
ellos/ellas/ustedes	-en	ellos qu ieren	they/you want

Table 4: The verb *querer* conjugated.

Here are some common verbs for which **e** become **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 atiando
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 hiel
mentir	to lie	yo miento
negar	to deny	yo niego
nevar	to snow	yo nievo
pensar	to think	yo pienso
perder	to lose	yo pierdo
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	to stumble	yo tropiezo
venir	to come	tú vienes

Table 5: Some common verbs for which the last 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 sueño	I dream
tú	-as	tú sueñas	you dream
el/ella/usted	-a	el sueña	he/she/you dream(s)
nosotros	-amos	nostros sonamos	we dream
vosotros	-áis	vosotros soñáis	you dream
ellos/ellas/ustedes	-an	ellos sueñan	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 huelo	I smell
tú	-es	tú huelas	You smell
el/ella/usted	-e	el huele	he/she/you smell(s)
nosotros	-emos	nostros olemos	we smell
vosotros	-éis	vosotros oléis	you smell
ellos/ellas/ustedes	-en	ellos huelen	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 tuerzo
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 ito	I repeat
tú	-es	tú rep ites	You repeat
el/ella/usted	-e	el rep ite	he/she/you repeat(s)
nosotros	-imos	nostros rep etimos	we repeat
vosotros	-ís	vosotros rep etís	you repeat
ellos/ellas/ustedes	-en	ellos rep iten	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 cons igo
corregir	to correct	yo corri jo
decir	to say/tell	yo dig o
despedir	to fire/to say goodbye/to dismiss	yo desp ido
elegir	to elect	yo el ijo
impedir	to impede/prevent	yo imp ido
medir	to measure	yo mid o
pedir	to ask for	yo pid o
perseguir	to follow/chase	yo pers igo
repetir	to repeat	yo rep ito
reírse	to laugh	yo me r ío
seguir	to follow	yo sig o
servir	to serve	yo sir vo
sonreírse	to smile at	yo me sonr ío (to smile at me)
vestirse	to get dressed	yo me vist o

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 iero	I acquire
tú	-es	tú adqu ieres	You acquire
el/ella/usted	-e	el adqu iere	he/she/you acquire(s)
nosotros	-imos	nosotros adqu irimos	we acquire
vosotros	-ís	vosotros adqu irís	you acquire
ellos/ellas/ustedes	-en	ellos adqu ieren	they/you acquire

Table 11: The verb *adquirir* conjugated.

Subject	ir-Ending	Example (inquirir)	Meaning
yo	-o	yo inqu iero	I inquire
tú	-es	tú inqu ieres	You inquire
el/ella/usted	-e	el inqu iere	he/she/you inquire(s)
nosotros	-imos	nosotros inqu irimos	we inquire
vosotros	-ís	vosotros inqu irís	you inquire
ellos/ellas/ustedes	-en	ellos inqu ieren	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 jue go	I play
tú	-as	tú jue gas	You play
el/ella/usted	-a	el jue ga	he/she/you play(s)
nosotros	-amos	nosotros jue gamos	we play
vosotros	-áis	vosotros jue gáis	you play
ellos/ellas/ustedes	-an	ellos jue gan	they/you play

Table 13: The verb *jugar* conjugated.

3 Moods in Spanish

There exist three **moods** in Spanish³:

- **Indicative mood:** to talk about facts or things that are believed to be true and concrete.

³<https://www.spanishdict.com/guide/subjunctive-vs-indicative-in-spanish>

- **Subjunctive mood:** to talk about desired, doubts, wishes, conjectures, and possibilities.
- **Imperative mood:** for giving commands.

Imperative mode: go-go words turn into ga-ga's!

4 Tenses

There exist present, past and future tenses in Spanish as well:

4.1 Present

- Simple Present Tense:

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
aprobar	to approve	cf., 8
atender	to attend to	cf., 6
atravesar	to cross/go through	cf., 6
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
comprobar	to check/prove	cf., 8
confesar	to confess	cf., 6
conmover	to move	cf., 8
conseguir	to get	cf., 9
contar	to count	cf., 8
corregir	to correct	cf., 9
costar	to cost	cf., 8
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
devolver	to return	cf., 8
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

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
hablar	to speak	cf., 2, 3
hacer	to do	cf., 4
helar	to freeze	cf., 6
impedir	to impede/prevent	cf., 9
inquirir	to inquire	cf., 10
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
preferir	to prefer	cf., 6
probar	to taste, to prove	cf., 8
promover	to promote	cf., 8
querer	to want	cf., 4–6
recoger	to pick up	cf., 4
recomendar	to recommend	cf., 6
recordar	to remember	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
seguir	to follow	cf., 9
sentar	to sit down	cf., 6
sentir	to feel	cf., 6
servir	to serve	cf., 9

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
tronar	to thunder	cf., 8
tropezar	to stumble	cf., 6
venir	to come	cf., 6
vestirse	to get dressed	cf., 9
vivir	to live	cf., 2, 3
volar	to fly	cf., 8