

Estar / Ser

Ser tells what anything is, and estar tells where it is.

Estar

To express location or position

El libro esta en la mesa, The book is on the table.

Juan esta en el campo, John is in the country

To express a temporary or variable condition or state

Juan esta' enfermo, John is sick.

La ventana esta' abierta, The window is open.

To express a state of health

Juan esta bien, John is well.

Maria esta mala, Maria is ill.

To form the progressive tenses

Juan esta estudiando, John is studying.

Ser

To identify a person or an object.

El edificio es un templo, The building is a temple.

Es Juan, Es ella. It is John, it is she.

**To express inherent qualities or characteristics
(appearance, character, size, color, material, state of being)**

Maria es bonita, Maria is pretty.

Maria es buena, Maria is good.

La casa es grande, The house is large.

La casa es blanca, The house is white.

Su traje es de seda, Her dress is of silk.

Juan es rico, John is rich.

Carlos es pobre, Carlos is poor.

Maria es joven, Maria is young.

Su abuela es vieja, Her grandfather is old.

To express nationality, occupation, origin

Juan es espanol, John is Spanish.

Es carpintero, He is a carpenter.

Juan es de Espana, John is from Spain.

To tell time

Que' hora es ? What time is it ?

Son las tres. It is three o'clock.

To express ownership

Los libros son de Juan, The books are John's.

In impersonal expressions

Es necesario, It is necessary.

Es posible, It is possible

To express the passive voice (used with a past participle)

El telefono fue inventado por Bell, The telephone was invented by Bell

Las islas fueron descubiertas por Colon, The islands were discovered by Columbus.