

SPANISH SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD

What is the subjunctive mood?

In addition to tenses, like past, present, and future, Spanish verbs also reflect moods, most importantly indicative and subjunctive. The indicative mood is used to discuss actions, events, objective facts, and things that are believed to be true. The subjunctive mood is used to discuss subjective matters.

How do I conjugate verbs in the subjunctive mood?

When conjugating verbs in the present subjunctive form, use the “Yo, Drop, Switch” method:

1. Conjugate the verb in the present indicative “yo” form
2. Drop the letter “o” off of the “yo” form conjugation
3. Switch the endings.
 - a. If the verb ends in “-ar”, use the following endings:

yo	-e
tú	-es
él/ella/usted	-e
nosotros	-emos
vosotros	-éis
ellos/ellas/ustedes	-en

- b. If the verb ends in “-er” or “-ir”, use the following endings:

yo	-a
tú:	-as
él/ella/usted	-a
nosotros:	-amos
vosotros	-áis
ellos/ellas/ustedes	-an

Example of how to conjugate the verb “hablar” in the present subjunctive form using the “Yo, Drop, Switch” method:

1. Yo: hablo
2. Drop: habl-
3. Switch: hable

Why is it important to conjugate in the “yo” form first?

Some verbs have irregular “yo” form conjugations, which is why it is imperative to conjugate in the “yo” form before changing the ending of the verb. Some examples of these types of verbs are:

tener (yo tengo)	conocer (yo conozco)
poner (yo pongo)	hacer (yo hago)

So, when these verbs are conjugated in the present subjunctive, they take on the same irregularities. For example, the verb “tener” would be conjugated in the present subjunctive in the following way:

yo tenga	nosotros tengamos
tú tengas	vosotros tengáis
él/ella/usted tenga	ellos/ellas/ustedes tengan

What are the irregular subjunctive verbs?

To remember which verbs are irregular in the subjunctive tense, use the acronym DISHES:

- D**ar (dé, des, dé, demos, deis, den)
- I**r (vaya, vayas, vaya, vayamos, vayáis, vayan)
- S**er (sea, seas, sea, seamos, seáis, sean)
- H**aber (haya, hayas, haya, hayamos, hayáis, hayan)
- E**star (esté, estés, esté, estemos, estéis, estén)
- S**aber (sepa, sepas, sepa, sepamos, sepáis, sepan)

How do I know when to use the subjunctive mood?

The subjunctive mood is triggered when the speaker uses any of the situations listed in the acronym WEIRDO:

- W**ishes/desires/imperative statements
- E**motions
- I**mpersonal statements
- R**ecommendations
- D**oubt/disbelief/denial
- O**jalá

Example phrases from each WEIRDO category

W: quiero que él..., deseo que tú..., necesito que ella...

E: me gusta que... me molesta que..., me sorprende que...

I: es importante que..., es evidente que..., es probable que...

R: recomiendo que..., sugiero que... insisto en que...

D: dudo que..., niego que..., no creo que...

O: Ojalá que..., Ojalá...*

*Note: Ojalá can be used with or without the word “que”. Both usages are correct.

How do I use the subjunctive in a sentence?

Sentences that use the subjunctive mood can be broken up into 3 parts: the main/independent clause, the conjunction (que), and the dependent clause.

EXAMPLE SENTENCE 1:

Es importante que estudies para el examen.

In this example sentence, “es importante” is the main/independent clause. It belongs to the “impersonal statements” category of WEIRDO. “Que” is the conjunction, and “estudies para el examen” is the dependent clause.

It is important to note that the verb in the main/independent clause will ALWAYS be in the indicative mood.

EXAMPLE SENTENCE 2:

Mis padres quieren que mi hermana lave los platos.

This example sentence shows that the subjunctive is used to express a change in the sentence’s subject. The subject of the main clause is “mis padres”, and the subject of the dependent clause is “mi hermana”. The subjunctive mood is used to convey subject 1’s wish for subject 2 to complete an action.