

## Spanish: The Subjunctive

You can navigate to specific sections of this handout by clicking the links below.

[Present Subjunctive](#): pg. 1

[Spelling Changes in the Subjunctive](#): pg. 1

[Subjunctive and Express Wishes and Hope](#): pg. 3

[Subjunctive to Express Doubt](#): pg. 4

[Expressing Feelings, Emotions, and Opinions](#): pg. 5

[The Subjunctive in Adjective Clauses](#): pg. 6

[The Subjunctive in Adverbial Clauses](#): pg. 7

[Imperfect Subjunctive](#): pg. 8

[Present Perfect Subjunctive](#): pg. 9

[Pluperfect Subjunctive](#): pg. 9

[Subjunctive Practice](#): pg. 10

### Present Subjunctive

<b>-AR</b>		<b>-ER/-IR</b>	
<i>yo</i>	-e	<i>yo</i>	-a
<i>tú</i>	-es	<i>tú</i>	-as
<i>él/ella/Ud.</i>	-e	<i>él/ella/Ud.</i>	-a
<i>nosotros</i>	-emos	<i>nosotros</i>	-amos
<i>vosotros</i>	-éis	<i>vosotros</i>	-áis
<i>ellos/ellas/Uds.</i>	-en	<i>ellos/ellas/Uds.</i>	-an

### Spelling Changes in the Subjunctive

- The irregular present subjunctive verbs usually have the same irregularity as the present tense “yo” forms.

**Conocer (to know)**- conozca, conozcas, conozca, conozcamos, conozcáis, conozcan  
**Decir (to say, to tell)**- diga, digas, diga, digamos, digáis, digan  
**Poner (to put, to place)**- ponga, pongas, ponga, pongamos, pongáis, pongan

- However, the following irregular present subjunctive verbs do not have the same irregularity as the present tense “yo” forms:

**Dar (to give, to hand)**- dé, des, dé, demos, deis, den  
**Estar (to be)**- esté, estés, esté, estemos, estéis, estén  
**Ir (to go)**- vaya, vayas, vaya, vayamos, vayáis, vayan  
**Saber (to know, to know how)**- sepa, sepas, sepa, sepamos, sepáis, sepan  
**Ser (to be)**- sea, seas, sea, seamos, seáis, sean

- *Stem-changing -AR and -ER verbs maintain the stem-change in the subjunctive.*

**Entender (to understand)**- entienda, entiendas, entienda, entendamos, entendáis, entiendan  
**Pensar (to think)**- piense, pienses, piense, pensemos, penséis, piensen

- *Stem-changing -IR verbs maintain the same stem-change with an additional change in the nosotros and vosotros forms.*

**Dormir (to sleep)**- duerma, duermas, duerma, durmamos, durmáis, duerman  
**Preferir (to prefer)**- prefiera, prefieras, prefiera, prefiramos, prefiráis, prefieran

## Subjunctive to Express Wishes and Hope

### Verbs of Influence

Esperar que- to hope that  
Insistir en que- to insist that  
Preferir que- to prefer that  
Querer que- to want that  
Aconsejar que- to advise that  
Exigir que- to demand that  
Desear que- to wish that  
Prohibir que- to prohibit that  
Necesitar que- to need that  
Recomendar que- to recommend that

### Impersonal Expressions

Es aconsejable que- it's advisable that  
Es buena/mala idea que- it's a good/bad idea that  
Es bueno/malo que- it's good/bad that  
Es importante que- it's important that  
Es mejor que- it's better that  
Es necesario que- it's necessary that  
Es preciso que- it's necessary that  
Es preferible que- it's preferable that

- When using one of these verbs or impersonal expressions in the main clause of the sentence, the subjunctive must follow in the dependent clause following "que." Remember this format:

S <sub>1</sub> V <sub>1</sub> que S <sub>2</sub> V <sub>2</sub>
---

- Ella quiere que yo **haga** la cama.  
S<sub>1</sub> V<sub>1</sub> que S<sub>2</sub> V<sub>2</sub>
- Tu madre quiere que tú **saques** la basura.  
S<sub>1</sub> V<sub>1</sub> que S<sub>2</sub> V<sub>2</sub>
- Notice that after the impersonal expressions, the infinitive of the verb is used when no subject is addressed, but the subjunctive is used when the expression is directed towards a specific subject.
  - Es necesario **estudiar** para sacar buenas notas. (no specific subject addressed)
  - Es necesario que ustedes **estudien** para sacar buenas notas. (specific subject)
- After the verbs of influence, the infinitive of the verb is used when no specific subject is addressed, but the subjunctive is used when the verb is directed towards a specific subject.
  - El profesor prohíbe **dormir** durante la clase. (no specific subject addressed)
  - El profesor prohíbe que nosotros **durmamos** durante la clase. (specific subject)

## Subjunctive to Express Doubt

### Expressions of Doubt

**Dudar que-** *to doubt that*  
**Es dudoso que-** *it is doubtful that*  
**Es improbable que-** *it's unlikely that*  
**Es incierto que-** *it's uncertain that*  
**Es posible que-** *it's possible that*  
**No creer que-** *to not believe that*  
**No es cierto que-** *it's not certain that*  
**No estar seguro de que-** *to not be sure that*  
**No pensar que-** *to not think that*  
**Negar que-** *to deny that*  
**No es verdad que-** *it's not true that*  
**No es cierto que-** *it's not certain that*  
**No es evidente que-** *it's not evident that*  
**No es obvio que-** *it's not obvious that*

### Expressions of Certainty

**No dudar que-** *to not doubt that*  
**Estar seguro de que-** *to be certain that*  
**Creer que-** *to think that*  
**No negar que-** *to not deny that*  
**Es verdad que-** *it's true that*  
**Es obvio que-** *it's obvious that*  
**Es cierto que-** *it's certain that*  
**Es seguro que-** *it's certain that*  
**Es evidente que-** *it's evident that*  
**No cabe duda de que-** *there is no doubt that*  
**Está claro que-** *it's clear that*

- *When using the expressions of **doubt** in the main clause, use the subjunctive in the dependent clause.*
  - No creo que **haya** comida suficiente para todos.
  - Es imposible que ese candidato **gane** la elección.
- *The expressions **tal vez** and **quizá(s)** mean “perhaps” so they normally require the subjunctive. Notice that these expressions do not require the “que” construction that is normally used in the subjunctive.*
  - Tal vez tú **tengas** la gripe.
  - Quizás los estudiantes **lleguen** a tiempo.
- *However, when using the expressions of **certainty** in the main clause, use the indicative in the dependent clause instead of the subjunctive.*
  - Es verdad que los pasajeros **deben** llegar temprano al aeropuerto.
  - Es obvio que Elena no **está** de buen humor.

## Expressing Feelings, Emotions, and Opinions

### Verbs of Emotions

<p><b>Alegrarse de que-</b> <i>to be glad that</i>  <b>Molestar que-</b> <i>to be bothered that</i>  <b>Sentir que-</b> <i>to be sorry that</i>  <b>Temer que-</b> <i>to fear that</i>  <b>Tener miedo de que-</b> <i>to be afraid that</i>  <b>Lamentar que-</b> <i>to lament, to be sorry that</i>  <b>Encantar que-</b> <i>to delight, to love that</i>  <b>Esperar que-</b> <i>to hope that</i>  <b>Estar contento de que-</b> <i>to be glad that</i>  <b>Estar triste de que-</b> <i>to be sad that</i>  <b>Gustar que-</b> <i>to like that</i>  <b>Alegrarle que-</b> <i>to be glad that</i>  <b>Darle pena que-</b> <i>to feel sorry that</i>  <b>Molestarle que-</b> <i>to be bothered that</i>  <b>Sorprenderle que-</b> <i>to be surprised that</i></p>	<p><b>Es bueno/malo que-</b> <i>it's good/bad that</i>  <b>Es fantástico que-</b> <i>it's fantastic that</i>  <b>Es terrible que-</b> <i>it's terrible that</i>  <b>Es importante que-</b> <i>it's important that</i>  <b>Es lamentable que-</b> <i>it's regrettable that</i>  <b>Es maravilloso que-</b> <i>it's marvelous that</i>  <b>Es mejor que-</b> <i>it's better that</i>  <b>Es necesario que-</b> <i>it's necessary that</i>  <b>Ojalá que-</b> <i>I hope that</i>  <b>Es una lástima que-</b> <i>it's a shame that</i>  <b>Es una pena que-</b> <i>it's a shame that</i>  <b>Es triste que-</b> <i>it's sad that</i>  <b>Es horrible que-</b> <i>it's horrible that</i>  <b>Es raro que-</b> <i>it's strange that</i>  <b>Es una vergüenza que-</b> <i>it's a shame that</i></p>
---	--

### Impersonal Expressions

- *When using verbs or impersonal expressions of emotion in the main clause, use the subjunctive in the dependent clause after “que.”*
  - Espero que tú no me **mientas**.
  - Es terrible que su hija **tenga** un cuarto desordenado.
- *When the verb **gustar** is used in the main clause, it must be in the singular form no matter what the subject is. Other verbs that function similarly to gustar are **alegrarle, darle pena, molestarle, and sorprenderle**.*
  - **Nos alegra** que los gatitos **estén** sanos.
  - ¿**Te molesta** que yo **fume** en casa?

## The Subjunctive in Adjective Clauses

- *An adjective clause modifies a noun in the main clause and is usually introduced by “que.” The subjunctive is used in the adjective clause when referring to a person, place, or thing whose existence is unknown or in question.*
  - ¿Sabes un libro de texto que **contenga** más práctica con el subjuntivo?
  - Quiero ir a un restaurante que **sierva** comida tailandesa.
- *The subjunctive is also used when emphatically describing something that does not exist according to the speaker.*
  - No hay ninguna persona que **hable** cinco idiomas.
  - No puedo encontrar nadie que **quiera** ayudarme.
- *On the other hand, when the adjective clause describes something that is known to exist, then do not use the subjunctive, but the indicative.*
  - Hay muchos hoteles en esta ciudad que **tienen** las piscinas.
  - ¿Dónde está la dependiente que me **ayudó** la semana pasada?
- *Use the personal **a** when the verb refers to a person that is known to exist and follow it with the indicative in the dependent clause. But when the verb refers to a person whose existence is unknown, do not use the personal **a** and follow it with the subjunctive in the dependent clause.*
  - Prefiero a la peluquera que mi amiga me **recomienda**.
  - Busco una persona que **dé** las lecciones del violín.
- *Some times, you can use either the subjunctive or the indicative depending on how certain you are about the issue.*
  - ¿Hay alguien que **puede** prestarme dinero?  
(not certain but assumes there may be someone who can loan money)
  - ¿Hay alguien que **pueda** prestarme dinero?  
(not certain but doubts there is someone who can loan money)

## The Subjunctive in Adverbial Clauses

### Adverbial Conjunctions Expressing Pending Actions

<b>con tal (de) que-</b> <i>provided that</i>	<b>antes (de) que-</b> <i>before</i>	<b>a menos que-</b> <i>unless</i>
<b>para que-</b> <i>so that</i>	<b>sin que-</b> <i>without</i>	

- *When using these adverbial conjunctions in the dependent clause, use the subjunctive since they describe pending/hypothetical actions that may not occur.*
  - Voy a la biblioteca con tal de que mi esposo **pueda** cuidar a los niños.
  - Llámame antes de que Juan **salga** de tu casa.

### Adverbial Conjunctions Expressing Future Events

<b>aunque-</b> <i>although, even though, even if</i>	<b>en cuanto-</b> <i>as soon as</i>	<b>como-</b> <i>as, how, however</i>
<b>hasta que-</b> <i>until</i>	<b>cuando-</b> <i>when</i>	<b>mientras-</b> <i>while</i>
<b>después de que-</b> <i>after</i>	<b>según-</b> <i>according to, as</i>	<b>donde-</b> <i>where, wherever</i>
<b>tan pronto como-</b> <i>as soon as</i>		

- *Use the subjunctive after these adverbial conjunctions when the main clause expresses a future action that has not yet occurred.*
  - Ella va a mirar la película cuando su novio **llegue** a casa.
  - Él quiere trabajar en cuanto **se gradúe**.
- *Use the indicative with these adverbial conjunctions when they describe something that has taken place, is taking place, or usually takes place.*
  - Yo leo un libro todos los días en cuanto **termino** mi tarea.
  - La maestra da un examen después de que **terminamos** cada capítulo.
- *Use the subjunctive with **como, donde, según, and aunque** when they refer to something that is not regarded as fact. But when they refer to something definite, use the indicative.*
  - Cocina la paella según **dice** la receta.  
*Cook the paella according to what the recipe says.*
  - Cocina la paella según **diga** la receta.  
*Cook the paella according to whatever the recipe says.*

## Imperfect Subjunctive

To form the imperfect subjunctive, start with the *ellos/ellas/Uds.* form of the preterit, drop the **-on** ending, and add the following endings:

	<b>HABLAR</b> (hablar <del>on</del> )	<b>COMER</b> (comier <del>on</del> )	<b>VIVIR</b> (vivier <del>on</del> )	<b>ESTAR</b> (estuvier <del>on</del> )
<i>yo</i>	hablara	comiera	viviera	estuviera
<i>tú</i>	hablaras	comieras	vivieras	estuvieras
<i>él/ella/Ud.</i>	hablara	comiera	viviera	estuviera
<i>nosotros</i>	habláramos	comiéramos	viviéramos	estuviéramos
<i>vosotros</i>	hablarais	comierais	vivierais	estuvierais
<i>ellos/ellas/Uds.</i>	hablaran	comieran	vivieran	estuvieran

- Use the imperfect subjunctive in the dependent clause when the verb in the main clause is in the past tense and the verb in the dependent clause refers to a past action or state.
  - Dudábamos que ella **quisiera** asistir a la fiesta.  
*We doubted that she wanted to attend the party.*
  - Era triste que los bomberos **se murieran** en el incendio.  
*It was sad that the firefighters died in the fire.*
- Use the imperfect subjunctive after **como si** (as if, as though). In this case, the verb in the main clause can be either present or past.
  - El niño come como si **estuviera** muriendo de hambre.  
*The boy eats as if he were dying of hunger.*
  - El perro se escondía como si **tuviera** miedo de algo.  
*The dog hid as if he were scared of something.*
- Use the imperfect subjunctive in an **if-clause** since it describes something that is hypothetical. Notice that the conditional tense is used in the main clause.
  - Si salieras temprano, llegarías a casa antes de las cinco.  
*If you were to leave early, you would get home before five.*
  - Si limpiáramos nuestra casa más, no tendríamos tantas cucarachas.  
*If we were to clean our house more, we wouldn't have so many roaches.*

## Present Perfect Subjunctive

The present perfect subjunctive is formed by using the present subjunctive form of the verb **haber** + a past participle.

<i>yo</i>	<b>haya</b>		
<i>tú</i>	<b>hayas</b>		-ado (-AR verbs)
<i>él/ella/Ud.</i>	<b>haya</b>	+	
<i>nosotros</i>	<b>hayamos</b>		-ido (-ER/-IR verbs)
<i>vosotros</i>	<b>hayáis</b>		
<i>ellos/ellas/Uds.</i>	<b>hayan</b>		

- Use the present perfect subjunctive in the dependent clause when expressing feelings or emotions about something that has already occurred.
  - Me sorprende que los Estados Unidos **hayan mandado** medicamentos a ese país.  
*I am surprised that the United States has sent medicines to that country.*
  - Espero que María **haya traído** la receta.  
*I hope that María has brought the recipe.*

## Pluperfect Subjunctive

<i>yo</i>	<b>hubiera</b>		
<i>tú</i>	<b>hubieras</b>		-ado (-AR verbs)
<i>él/ella/Ud.</i>	<b>hubiera</b>	+	
<i>nosotros</i>	<b>hubiéramos</b>		-ido (-ER/-IR verbs)
<i>vosotros</i>	<b>hubierais</b>		
<i>ellos/ellas/Uds.</i>	<b>hubieran</b>		

- Use the pluperfect subjunctive to correspond to the English words **might have, would have, or had + past participle** in constructions which normally require the subjunctive.
  - Tenía miedo que tú **hubieras perdido** tu pasaporte.  
*I was afraid that you had/would have lost your passport.*
  - Nos molestó que la tienda **hubiera cerrado** antes de las nueve.  
*It bothered us that the store had closed before nine.*

## Subjunctive Practice

**Exercise A.** *Fill in the blank with the present form of subjunctive using the verb in brackets (\*\*not all sentences will require the subjunctive).*

1. Es importante que Uds. \_\_\_\_\_ [saber] el vocabulario.
2. No creo que el libro de texto \_\_\_\_\_ [explicar] bien el subjuntivo.
3. Tememos que nuestros rivales \_\_\_\_\_ [salir] mejor que nosotros en la competición.
4. Es cierto que el subjuntivo \_\_\_\_\_ [ser] difícil.
5. No dudo que Uds. \_\_\_\_\_ [tener] muchos exámenes.
6. ¿Qué prefiere Ud. que yo \_\_\_\_\_ [leer]?
7. ¡No quiero que \_\_\_\_\_ [ir - tú] sin mí!
8. ¡Qué bueno que ella \_\_\_\_\_ [buscar] oportunidades de practicar el español!
9. Dudamos que él \_\_\_\_\_ [poder] haberlo hecho.
10. Le aconsejo que \_\_\_\_\_ [olvidar] el asunto.
11. Es cierto que me \_\_\_\_\_ [doler] mucho.
12. La Armada insiste en que \_\_\_\_\_ [vestirse - nosotros] así.
13. Espero que \_\_\_\_\_ [estar - tú] conmigo siempre.
14. Pero no es verdad que nunca \_\_\_\_\_ [hacer] frío en México.
15. Espero que \_\_\_\_\_ [mejorarse - tú] pronto.

**Exercise B.** *Fill in the blank with the correct form of the subjunctive (may be in any form of the subjunctive and not all sentences will require the subjunctive).*

1. Hágame el favor de llamarme cuando Ud. \_\_\_\_\_ [terminar].
2. Tú y yo \_\_\_\_\_ (divertirse) si \_\_\_\_\_ [ir] al gimnasio.
3. Los dejamos en paz a menos que Uds. \_\_\_\_\_ [hacer] demasiado ruido.
4. Mi amiga siempre me llama cuando \_\_\_\_\_ [volver] a casa.
5. El profesor quiere que \_\_\_\_\_ [llegar - nosotros] antes de que \_\_\_\_\_ [comenzar] la clase.
6. Julia tenía alergias y por eso usaba un jabón que no \_\_\_\_\_ [tener] perfume.
7. El reportero no encontró nada que \_\_\_\_\_ [explicar] la causa del incendio.
8. Yo tenía ganas de comer en un restaurante que \_\_\_\_\_ [servir] churros.
9. Encontramos al chófer que \_\_\_\_\_ [conocer] las calles bien.
10. Ellos no \_\_\_\_\_ [poder] tener una barbacoa si \_\_\_\_\_ [llover].
11. Si Juan \_\_\_\_\_ [encontrar] una botella la \_\_\_\_\_ [reciclar].
12. No te cases con Pedro a menos que lo \_\_\_\_\_ [querer] locamente.
13. Cuando Ud. \_\_\_\_\_ (venir) a visitarme anoche, ya estaba dormida.
14. Van a divorciarse a menos que \_\_\_\_\_ [resolver] sus problemas.
15. El bebé dejará de llorar en cuanto \_\_\_\_\_ [ver] a su madre.

## Answers

### Exercise A

1. sepan
2. explique
3. salgan
4. es
5. tienen
6. lea
7. vayas
8. busque
9. pueda
10. olvide
11. duele
12. nos vistamos
13. estés
14. haga
15. te mejores

### Exercise B

1. termine
2. nos divertiríamos, fuéramos
3. hagan
4. vuelve
5. lleguemos, comience
6. tenía
7. explicara
8. sirviera
9. conocía
10. podrían, lloviera
11. encontrara, reciclaría
12. quieras
13. vino
14. resuelvan
15. vea

*These exercises were obtained from [http://www.usna.edu/LangStudy/spanish\\_subjunctive.html](http://www.usna.edu/LangStudy/spanish_subjunctive.html) and [http://www.colby.edu/~bknelson/exercises/subj\\_imp.html](http://www.colby.edu/~bknelson/exercises/subj_imp.html).*