



Términos y reglas gramaticales esenciales

Términos gramaticales^[1]:

- **Sustantivo (noun):** A **noun** is essentially a label for places, things, events, ideas, concepts and so on. Like English, nouns in Spanish may be categorized as **common** or **proper**, **count** or **mass**, **singular** or **plural**. Unlike English, Spanish nouns are also categorized as either **masculine** or **feminine**. Ejemplos: la/una **clase**, la/una **computadora**, el/un **texto**, el/un **escritorio**, la **paz**, la **esperanza**, el/un **voto**, unos/los **niños**, unas/las **presentaciones**, etc.
- **Artículo (article):** An **article** qualifies or **determines** the meaning of a noun by expressing such concepts as quantity or definiteness [if something is specific [definite article: **el, la, las, los**] or not [indefinite article: **un, una, unas, unos**]]. Articles always agree in gender and number with the nouns they modify (see examples above).
- **Adjetivo (adjective):** An **adjective** is a word that describes a noun or pronoun [e.g., **él, nosotros**, etc.]. The major differences between adjectives in Spanish and English concern agreement and placement. In Spanish, an adjective is usually placed after the noun it modifies, and must agree in gender and number with the noun. Ejemplos: la/una **clase interesante**, la/una **computadora rápida**, el/un **texto efectivo**, el/un **escritorio nuevo**, la **paz inalcanzable**, la **esperanza**, el/un **voto importante**, unos/los **niños simpáticos**, unas/las **presentaciones excelentes**, etc.
- **Verbo (verb):** A **verb** may be defined as the **action** word of the sentence. That is, verbs state what the subject does or what his/her feelings/emotions/personal characteristics are. Ejemplos: **ser, estar, correr, comer, estudiar**, etc.
- **Preposición (preposition):** A **preposition** is a word used to establish relationships between nouns, between nouns and verbs, and between different parts of a sentence. Prepositions usually have spatial or temporal meanings (e.g., **debajo, entre, enfrente de, sobre, por, para**, etc.). Prepositions are **invariable**, that is, they have one form with the exception of **a** and **de** which contract with the definite article **el** (al, del).

Translating prepositions is notoriously tricky. Never assume that Spanish will use the same preposition as English to express a particular meaning. In fact, there are many cases where one language requires a preposition where the other does not. In general, it is best to treat prepositions as vocabulary items requiring memorization.

- **Participio pasado (past participle):** The **past participle** is formed by adding **-ado** to the stem of **-ar** verbs and **-ido** to the stem of **-er** and **-ir** verbs.

The past participle in Spanish has two main functions:

- 1) To form compound tenses, such as present perfect and pluperfect in both the indicative [e.g., **he ido, había ido**] and subjunctive [e.g., **haya ido, hubiera ido**] moods. When forming a compound tense, the participle is combined with the verb **haber**.
 - 2) As an adjective. When used as an adjective, the participle agrees in number and gender with the noun it qualifies (e.g., Las tiendas están **abiertas** hasta las cinco de la tarde.).
- **Ejemplo:** “**Vivimos** [verbo] **en** [preposición] **tiempos** [sustantivo] **sin** [preposición] **precedentes** [sustantivo] **de** [preposición] **grandes** [adjetivo] **avances** [sustantivo] **digitales** [adjetivo] e **innovación** [sustantivo]. **La** [artículo definido] **tecnología** [sustantivo] **cambia** [verbo] **en** [preposición] **el** [artículo definido] **mundo** [sustantivo] y **nos** [pronombre] **conecta** [verbo] **de** [preposición] **formas** [sustantivo] **imprevistas** [adjetivo].” (Atribución: *Un llamado para educar y preparar a los estudiantes del siglo XXI*. Por Pedagogía, Tecnología educativa, bajo licencia CC BY 4.0.)

Verbos

I. Modo indicativo (Indicative mood): Mood is a grammatical category distinguishing verb tenses. There are three moods in Spanish: **indicative**, **subjunctive**, and **imperative**. All of these moods, except the imperative, may be conjugated in different tenses. Each of these moods has a different function.

The **indicative mood** is the most common and is used to **relate facts and objective statements** (e.g., La clase de escritura empieza a las nueve cuarenta y cinco los martes y jueves).

Tiempos de verbo en el indicativo:

- **El presente simple (present simple):** The **present simple** indicates an action that is either recurring, habitual, or a general truth, a so-called eternal verity (e.g., Todos los días **tomo** café en el desayuno.). This tense is also used to express the future (e.g., Mañana **escribo** el reporte y te lo **mando**).
- **El presente progresivo (present progressive):** The **present progressive** indicates an action that is in progress in the present (e.g., **Estoy escribiendo** un handout para mis estudiantes sobre gramática.). The emphasis is on the continuous nature of the action.
- **El presente perfecto (present perfect):** The present perfect is used 1) when talking about a past action that happened in a time period close to the speaker/writer's present and 2) when, in the sentence, there is a time expression that refers to an ongoing or not completed time period (e.g., **Este año he viajado** dos veces a Oregon). Some time expressions that usually are accompanied by the present perfect are: hoy, esta mañana, esta semana, este año, este mes, ya, todavía, alguna vez, etc.
- **El pretérito (preterit):** The **preterit** is one of the two simple indicative past tenses in Spanish. It is used for completed actions in the past (e.g., Ayer **enseñé** mi clase de gramática en la tarde.)
- **El imperfecto (imperfect):** The **imperfect** is one of the two simple indicative past tenses in Spanish. It is used for ongoing or recurrent actions in the past. It is also used for descriptions, states of being, and for providing background information about the past (e.g., Cuando **era** niña, **llovía** mucho en Rosario y **me encantaba** jugar bajo la lluvia.).

Página que explica muy bien el uso del pretérito e imperfecto cuando contamos una historia:

<https://grammar.spanishintexas.org/verbs/narration/>

- **El pluscuamperfecto (pluperfect):** The **pluperfect** is formed with:

the auxiliary **haber** in the [imperfect](#) + [past participle of the verb](#)

hablar to speak	
yo había hablado	nosotros/as habíamos hablado
tú habías hablado	
él/ella/usted había hablado	ellos/as/ustedes habían hablado

In past narration, the pluperfect is used to express an **action which precedes another past action** or moment. In other words, the action in the pluperfect is prior to another past action or moment. In English, the pluperfect is formed using **had + past participle** (e.g., Cuando **llegamos** (Acción 2: pretérito) al cine, ya **había empezado** (Acción 1: pluscuamperfecto) la película.).

- **El futuro (future):** In general, the future tenses in Spanish and in English are used similarly to talk about future actions and events. The Spanish future tense is generally translated into English with the modal auxiliary **will**. In

Spanish the future tense can be formed in two different ways: the **simple future** (or **synthetic future** [e.g., En el año 2020 **habrá** elecciones en los Estados Unidos.]) and the **periphrastic future** (*ir + a + infinitive* [e.g., Mañana **voy a decorar** la casa para Halloween.]). The periphrastic future is the most common in Spanish.

II. Modo subjuntivo (subjunctive mood): The **subjunctive mood** is used more commonly in Spanish than in English. It is used to express hypotheses/probability [e.g., *Es posible que llueva* esta noche.] and feelings (subjective thoughts) [e.g., *Me encanta que mis hijos coman* fruta.]. Also, it can be used to give suggestions/advice [e.g., *Te sugiero que estudies* para el examen.] or commands [e.g., El jefe siempre les *exige que lleguen* a tiempo.]. Página útil: <https://grammar.spanishintexas.org/verbs/subjunctive/>

Tiempos de verbo en el subjuntivo

- **El presente (present):** The **present** (or present simple) is the most basic tense in the subjunctive mood. It is used to express subjective ideas in the present [e.g., *Es triste que los océanos estén* tan contaminados.] or probability with a view to the future [e.g., *Es posible que haga* más frío mañana]. Página útil: <https://grammar.spanishintexas.org/verbs/subjunctive-present/>
- **El presente perfecto (present perfect):** The **present perfect subjunctive** is normally used in dependent clauses that describe an action which **precedes** the action of the main clause. The present perfect subjunctive is introduced by the same kinds of clauses that introduce the present subjunctive. Página útil: <https://grammar.spanishintexas.org/verbs/subjunctive-present-perfect/>

Difference with present simple subjunctive: The present simple indicates a simultaneous action or a future action. Compare:

Present simple: *Espero que pueda* ir al supermercado mañana.
 Present perfect: *Espero que Pat ya haya ido* al supermercado.
 (The *ya* tells me that my point of reference is a past action; that is, I'm hypothesizing about something that might have already happened, but I'm using the subjunctive because I'm not sure it has happened.)

The present perfect subjunctive (**presente perfecto subjuntivo**) is formed with:

*the present subjunctive of the auxiliary verb **haber** + the past participle of the main verb.*

hablar to speak	
yo haya hablado	nosotros/as hayamos hablado
tú hayas hablado	
él/ella/usted haya hablado	ellos/as/ustedes hayan hablado

- **El imperfecto (imperfect):** The **past or imperfect subjunctive** is usually introduced by the same kinds of clauses that introduce the present subjunctive. The past subjunctive indicates a simultaneous action or a future action in relation to a main clause in the past tense (i.e., In hypothesizing in the past about a past simultaneous or future action—e.g., *Ayer esperaba que Carlos terminara* el reporte a tiempo, pero no lo hizo.) Página útil: <https://grammar.spanishintexas.org/verbs/subjunctive-past/>
- **El pluscuamperfecto (pluperfect):** The **pluperfect subjunctive** is normally used in dependent clauses that describe an action which precedes the action of a main clause in the past tense (e.g., *Ayer esperaba que Pat hubiera ido* al supermercado antes de llegar a casa, pero no fue.]. Página útil: <https://grammar.spanishintexas.org/verbs/subjunctive-pluperfect/>

Difference with the past subjunctive: The past (or imperfect) subjunctive indicates a simultaneous action or a future action in relation to a main clause in the past tense.

^[1] Source for all information: Spanish Grammar in Context (<https://grammar.spanishintexas.org/>), licensed under CC BY-NC-SA.