

## PRIMEROS PASOS AL PRESENTE DEL SUBJUNTIVO

Up until now, most of the verbs you've learned have been in what's called the **indicative mood**—think of it more as a “mode” than a mood: *el modo indicativo*. Verbs in the indicative deal with *facts and certainties, things we believe to be true, and actions that are real or definite*. You're stating facts when you say, “*Mi amigo tiene ojos marrones,*” “*El comedor está al lado de la cocina,*” and “*¡La maestra piensa que soy un estudiante increíble!*” These are all facts that you can point to. (Get it? *indicative* = *index* finger = *pointing at something real*.)

### El presente del subjuntivo

Now imagine something that *might* happen but isn't real yet. That's the subjunctive. The **subjunctive mood** is for expressing:

- Wishes and hopes: *Espero que mis abuelos me **visiten** este verano.*
  - Your grandparents might visit, or they might not.
- Possibilities that may or may not happen: *Es posible que **saque** una A en el examen final.*
  - You might do well, and you might not: the future is unpredictable.
- Things you want but don't have yet: *Quiero una amiga que **tenga** mucha paciencia.*
  - You have an idea about what you want in a friend in terms of patience, but will your friend have the degree of patience you're looking for? Uncertain!
- And other situations, but let's stick to basics for now.

### When to Use the Subjunctive

The subjunctive typically appears in these situations:

1. After expressions of **wanting** (querer que...)
2. After expressions of **hoping** (esperar que...)
3. After expressions of **doubting** (dudar que...)
4. After expressions of **emotion** (alegrarse de que...)
5. When describing something that **doesn't exist yet** (Busco un amigo que...)

Many verbs and expressions, like *querer*, *esperar*, and *es probable* are “triggers” for the subjunctive in dependent clauses (the part of the sentence that often comes after “que”).

### Compare these sentences:

- “Mi amigo **estudia** conmigo” - **INDICATIVE** - This is happening now.
- “Necesito un amigo que **estudie** conmigo” - **SUBJUNCTIVE** - This hasn't happened yet, and it's not clear who that friend will be.

Notice how “estudie” is in the subjunctive form because the friend who studies with you isn't known to you yet—it's a wish.

### How to Form the Subjunctive: *In most cases...*

1. Start with the "yo" form of the present indicative, like *juego, puedo, digo, comparto*, etc.
2. Drop the "-o" to find the stem. (!)
3. Add the OPPOSITE regular present-tense endings:
  - For -AR verbs: add the regular -ER/-IR present tense endings  
**-e, -es, -e, -emos, -éis, -en**
  - For -ER/-IR verbs: add the regular -AR present tense endings  
**-a, -as, -a, -amos, -áis, -an**

### For example:

- My teacher wants me to always speak in Spanish.
  - → **hablar**: yo form is *hablo*, then take off the -o ending to find the stem [*habl-*] and then just add the opposite endings:  
*Mi profe quiere que (yo) siempre hable español.*
- My aunt insists that I eat more.
  - → **comer** (to eat): *como* → take off the -o → *com-* and add the opposite endings:  
*Mi tía insiste en que (yo) coma más.*
- *Esperamos que nuestro equipo **gane** el partido.*
  - We don't know if our team will win, so we use the subjunctive.
- *Mi mamá quiere que mis hermanos y yo **escojamos** ropa menos cara.*
  - We love nice clothes but Mom wants us to choose something cheaper → subjunctive
- *Mi maestra espera que nos **vaya** bien este fin de semana.*
  - The good outcome is uncertain, so → subjunctive

### Irregulars (sigh)

Good news! Most stem-changers like *poder* and *jugar* follow the yo- rule: ...*que yo pueda...*

More good news! Most verbs that don't normally end in -o in the yo form, like *saber (sé)*, *ir (voy)*, and *ser (soy)* have *irregular stems*, but the *endings* are completely regular:

- **haber**: *haya, hayas, ...*
- **ir**: *vaya, vayas...*
- **saber**: *sepa, sepa...*
- **ser**: *sea, seas...*

Some forms of **dar** and **estar** carry an accent mark to differentiate themselves from other homonyms:

- **dar**: *dé, des, dé, demos, deis, den*
- **estar**: *esté, estés, esté, estemos, estéis, estén*

Stem-changing **-ir verbs** like *pedir* and *dormir* work as you would expect except for a stem change in the *nosotros* and *vosotros* forms where e→i and o→u:

...que pida, pidas, pida, pidamos, pidáis, pidan

...que duerma, duermas, duerma, durmamos, durmáis, duerman

(In other words, if you learned “boot verb” rules, they don’t apply here).

**Spelling changes:** Sometimes endings will force spelling changes. In writing, these preserve the sound of the stem (remember, the stem carries the meaning of the verb) but you won’t *hear* any difference. For example, *sacar*: yo saco → que yo **saque**; *llegar*: llego → que yo **llegue**; *empezar*: empiezo → que yo **empiece**; *conocer*: que yo **conozco**

- Generally speaking, when you add an ending with the vowels *-e()* or *-i()*, pay attention to any changes those additions will force on consonants, as in the examples above.

**Para resumir en breve:**

- **Indicative** = Reality (what IS)
- **Subjunctive** = Possibility (what MIGHT BE)