

# Quick Guide to English Grammar

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# Apéndice A

## QuickGuide to English Grammar

For more detailed explanations of these grammar points, consult the Index to find the pages where they are explained fully in the body of the textbook.

**ACTIVE VOICE (La voz activa)** A sentence written in the active voice identifies a subject that performs the action of the verb.

Juan	cantó	la canción.
<i>Juan</i>	<i>sang</i>	<i>the song.</i>
subject	verb	direct object

In the sentence above Juan is the performer of the verb **cantar**.  
(See also Passive voice.)

**ADJECTIVES (Los adjetivos)** are words that modify or describe **nouns** or **pronouns** and agree in **number** and generally in **gender** with the nouns they modify.

Las casas azules son bonitas.  
*The blue houses are pretty.*

Esas mujeres mexicanas son mis amigas nuevas.  
*Those Mexican women are my new friends.*

Plazas es un libro interesante y divertido.  
*Plazas is an interesting and fun book.*

- **Demonstrative adjectives (Los adjetivos demostrativos)** point out persons, places or things relative to the position of the speaker. They always agree in **number** and **gender** with the **noun** they modify. The forms are: **este, esta, estos, estas / ese, esa, esos, esas / aquel, aquella, aquellos, aquellas**. There are also neuter forms that refer to generic ideas or things, and hence have no gender: **esto, eso, aquello**.

Este libro es fácil.

*This book is easy.*

Esos libros son difíciles.

*Those books are hard.*

Aquellos libros son pesados.

*Those books (over there) are boring.*

Demonstratives may also function as **pronouns**, replacing the **noun** but still agreeing with it in **number** and **gender**. **Demonstrative pronouns** carry an accent mark over the syllable that would be naturally stressed anyway:

Me gustan esas blusas verdes.

*I like those green blouses.*

¿Cuáles, éstas?

*Which ones, these?*

No. Me gustan ésas.

*No. I like those.*

- **Stressed possessive adjectives (Los adjetivos posesivos acentuados)** are used for emphasis and follow the noun that they modify. These adjectives may also function as pronouns and always agree in **number** and in **gender**. The forms are: **mío, tuyo, suyo, nuestro, vuestro, suyo**. Unless they are directly preceded by the verb **ser**, stressed possessives must be preceded by the **definite article**.

Ese perro pequeño es **mío**.

*That little dog is mine.*

Dame el **tuyo**; el **nuestro** no funciona.

*Give me yours; ours doesn't work.*

- **Unstressed possessive adjectives (Los adjetivos posesivos no acentuados)** demonstrate ownership and always precede the **noun** that they modify.

La señora Elman es **mi** profesora.

*Mrs. Elman is my professor.*

Debemos llevar **nuestros** libros a clase.

*We should take our books to class.*

**ADVERBS (Los adverbios)** are words that modify **verbs**, **adjectives** or other adverbs and, unlike **adjectives**, do not have **gender** or **number**. Here are examples of different classes of adverbs:

Practicamos **diariamente**.  
Ellos van a salir **pronto**.  
Jennifer está **afuera**.  
No quiero ir **tampoco**.  
Paco habla **demasiado**.

*We practice **daily**.* (adverb of manner)  
*They will leave **soon**.* (adverb of time)  
*Jennifer is **outside**.* (adverb of place)  
*I don't want to go **either**.* (adverb of negation)  
*Paco talks **too much**.* (adverb of quantity)

**AGREEMENT (La concordancia)** refers to the correspondence between parts of speech in terms of **number, gender, and person**. Subjects agree with their verbs; articles and adjectives agree with the nouns they modify, etc.

Todas las lenguas son interesantes.  
Ella es bonita.  
Nosotros somos de España.

*All languages are interesting.* (number)  
*She is pretty.* (gender)  
*We are from Spain.* (person)

**ARTICLES (Los artículos)** precede nouns and indicate whether they are definite or indefinite persons, places or things.

- **Definite articles (Los artículos definidos)** refer to particular members of a group and are the equivalent of *the* in English. The definite articles are: **el, la, los, las**.

El hombre guapo es mi padre.  
Las mujeres de esta clase son inteligentes.

*The handsome man is my father.*  
*The women in this class are intelligent.*

- **Indefinite articles (Los artículos indefinidos)** refer to any unspecified member(s) of a group and are the equivalent of *a(n)* and *some*. The indefinite articles are: **un, una, unos, unas**.

Un hombre vino a nuestra casa anoche.  
Unas niñas jugaban en el parque.

*A man came to our house last night.*  
*Some girls were playing in the park.*

**CLAUSES (Las cláusulas)** are subject and verb combinations; for a sentence to be complete it must have at least one main clause.

- **Main clauses (Independent clauses) (Las cláusulas principales)** communicate a complete idea or thought.

Mi hermana va al hospital.

*My sister goes to the hospital.*

- **Subordinate clauses (Dependent clauses) (las cláusulas subordinadas)** depend upon a main clause for their meaning to be complete.

Mi hermana va al hospital  
*My sister goes to the hospital*  
main clause

con tal que no llueva.  
*provided that it's not raining.*  
subordinate clause

In the sentence above, *provided that it's not raining* is not a complete idea without the information supplied by the main clause.

**COMMANDS (Los mandatos) (See Imperatives.)**

**COMPARISONS (Las formas comparativas)** are statements that describe one person, place or thing relative to another in terms of quantity, quality, or manner.

- **Comparisons of equality (Las formas comparativas de igualdad)** demonstrate an equal share of a quantity or degree of a particular characteristic. These statements use a form of **tan(to)(ta)(s)** and **como**.

Ella tiene **tanto** dinero **como** Elena.  
Fernando trabaja **tanto** **como** Felipe.  
Jim baila **tan** bien **como** Anne.

*She has **as much** money **as** Elena.*  
*Fernando works **as much** **as** Felipe.*  
*Jim dances **as well** **as** Anne.*

- **Comparisons of inequality (Las formas comparativas de desigualdad)** indicate a difference in quantity, quality or manner between the compared subjects. These statements use **más/menos... que** or comparative adjectives such as **mejor/peor, mayor/menor**.

España tiene **más** playas **que** México.  
Tú hablas español **mejor** **que** yo.

*Spain has **more** beaches **than** Mexico.*  
*You speak Spanish **better** **than** I.*

(See also Superlatives.)

**CONJUGATIONS (Las conjugaciones)** represent the inflected form of the verb as it is used with a particular **subject** or **person**.

**IMPERFECT (el imperfecto)** The imperfect tense is used to make statements about the past when the speaker wants to convey the idea of 1) habitual or repeated action, 2) two actions in progress simultaneously, or 3) an event that was in progress when another action interrupted. The imperfect tense is also used to emphasize the ongoing nature of the middle of the event, as opposed to its beginning or end. Age and clock time are always expressed using the imperfect.

Cuando María era joven, ella **cantaba** en el coro.  
*When María was young, she used to sing in the choir.*

Aquel día **llovía** mucho y el cielo **estaba** oscuro.  
*That day it was raining a lot and the sky was dark.*

Juan **dormía** cuando sonó el teléfono.  
*Juan was sleeping when the phone rang.*

(See also Preterite.)

**IMPERSONAL EXPRESSIONS (Las expresiones impersonales)** are statements that contain the impersonal subjects of *it* or *one*.

Es necesario estudiar. *It is necessary to study.*  
Se necesita estudiar. *One needs to study.*

(See also Passive.)

**INDEFINITE WORDS (Las palabras indefinidas)** are articles, adjectives, nouns or pronouns that refer to unspecified members of a group.

Un hombre vino. *A man came. (indefinite article)*  
Alguien vino. *Someone came. (indefinite noun)*  
Algunas personas vinieron. *Some people came. (indefinite adjective)*  
Algunas vinieron. *Some came. (indefinite pronoun)*

(See also Articles.)

**INDICATIVE (El indicativo)** The indicative is a mood, rather than a tense. The indicative is used to express ideas that are considered factual or certain and, therefore, not subject to speculation, doubt, or negation.

Josefina es española.  
(present indicative) *Josefina is Spanish.*

(See also Mood.)

**INDIRECT OBJECTS (Los objetos indirectos)** are the indirect recipients of an action in a sentence and answer the questions *To whom?* or *For whom?* In Spanish it is common to include an indirect object pronoun along with the indirect object.

Yo le di el libro a Sofía.  
Sofía les guardó el libro para sus padres. *I gave the book to Sofía.*  
*Sofía kept the book for her parents.*

(See also Direct objects and pronouns.)

**INFINITIVES (Los infinitivos)** are verb forms that are uninflected or not conjugated according to a specific person. In English, infinitives are preceded by *to*: *to talk, to eat, to live*. Infinitives in Spanish end in **-ar (hablar)**, **-er (comer)**, and **-ir (vivir)**.

**INTERROGATIVES (Las formas interrogativas)** are used to pose questions and carry accent marks to distinguish them from other uses. Basic interrogative words include: **quién(es)**, **qué**, **cómo**, **cuánto(a)(s)**, **cuándo**, **por qué**, **dónde**.

¿Qué quieres? *What do you want?*  
¿Cuándo llegó ella? *When did she arrive?*  
¿De dónde eres? *Where are you from?*

(See also Exclamatives.)

**MOOD (El modo)** is like the word *mode*, meaning *manner* or *way*. It indicates the way in which the speaker views an action, or his/her attitude toward the action. Besides the **imperative mood**, which is simply giving commands, you learn two basic moods in Spanish: the **subjunctive** and the **indicative**. Basically, the subjunctive mood commu-

Yo **bailo** los sábados.  
Tú **bailas** los sábados.  
Ella **baila** los sábados.  
Nosotros **bailamos** los sábados.  
Vosotros **bailáis** los sábados.  
Ellos **bailan** los sábados.

*I dance on Saturdays.* (1st-person singular)  
*You dance on Saturdays.* (2nd-person singular)  
*She dances on Saturdays.* (3rd-person singular)  
*We dance on Saturdays.* (1st-person plural)  
*You dance on Saturdays.* (2nd-person plural)  
*They dance on Saturdays.* (3rd-person plural)

**CONJUNCTIONS (Las conjunciones)** are linking words that join two independent clauses together.

Fuimos al centro y mis amigos compraron muchas cosas.  
*We went downtown and my friends bought a lot of things.*

Yo quiero ir a la fiesta, **pero** tengo que estudiar.  
*I want to go to the party, but I have to study.*

**CONTRACTIONS (Las contracciones)** in Spanish are limited to preposition/article combinations, such as **de + el = del** and **a + el = al**, or preposition/pronoun combinations such as **con + mí = conmigo** and **con + ti = contigo**.

**DIRECT OBJECTS (Los objetos directos)** in sentences are the direct recipients of the action of the verb. Direct objects answer the questions *What?* or *Whom?*

¿Qué hizo?

Ella hizo **la tarea**.

Y luego llamó a **su amiga**.

*What did she do?*

*She did her homework.*

*And then called her friend.*

(See also Pronoun, Indirect object, Personal a.)

**EXCLAMATIVE WORDS (Las palabras exclamativas)** communicate surprise or strong emotion. Like interrogative words, exclamatives also carry accents.

¡Qué sorpresa!

¡Cómo canta Miguel!

*What a surprise!*

*How well Miguel sings!*

(See also Interrogatives.)

**GENDER (El género)** is a grammatical feature of Romance languages that classifies words as either masculine or feminine. The gender of the word is sometimes used to distinguish meaning (**la papa = the potato**, but **el Papa = the Pope**; **la policía = the police force**, but **el policía = the policeman**). It is important to memorize the gender of nouns when you learn the nouns.

**GERUNDS (Los gerundios)** are the Spanish equivalent of the *-ing* verb form in English. Regular gerunds are created by replacing the infinitive endings (*-ar, -er/-ir*) with *-ando* or *-iendo*. Gerunds are often used with the verb **estar** to form the present progressive tense. The present progressive tense places emphasis on the continuing or progressive nature of an action.

Miguel está **cantando** en la ducha.

*Miguel is singing in the shower.*

(See also Present participle.)

**IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS (Las frases idiomáticas)** are phrases in Spanish that do not have a literal English equivalent.

Hace mucho frío.

*It is very cold. (Literally, It makes a lot of cold.)*

**IMPERATIVES (Los imperativos)** represent the mood used to express requests or commands. It is more direct than the subjunctive mood. Imperatives are commonly called commands and fall into two categories: affirmative and negative. Spanish speakers must also choose between using formal commands and informal commands based upon whether one is addressed as **usted** (formal) or **tú** (informal).

**Habla** conmigo.

**No me hables.**

**Hable** con la policía.

**No hable** con la policía.

**Hablen** con la policía.

**No hablen** con la policía

**Talk** to me. (informal, affirmative)

**Don't talk** to me. (informal, negative)

**Talk** to the police. (formal, singular, affirmative)

**Don't talk** to the police. (formal, singular, negative)

**Talk** to the police. (formal, plural, affirmative)

**Don't talk** to the police. (formal, plural, negative)

(See also Mood.)

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nicates an attitude of uncertainty or negation toward the action, while the indicative indicates that the action is certain or factual. Within each of these moods there are many tenses. Hence you have the present indicative and the present subjunctive, the present perfect indicative and the present perfect subjunctive, etc.

- **Indicative mood (El indicativo)** implies that what is stated or questioned is regarded as true.

Yo **quiero** ir a la fiesta.  
**Quieres** ir conmigo?

*I want to go to the party.*  
*Do you want to go with me?*

- **Subjunctive mood (El subjuntivo)** indicates a recommendation, a statement of doubt or negation, or a hypothetical situation.

Yo recomiendo que tú **vayas** a la fiesta.  
 Dudo que **vayas** a la fiesta.  
 No creo que **vayas** a la fiesta.  
 Si **fueras** a la fiesta, te divertirías.

*I recommend that you go to the party.*  
*I doubt that you'll go to the party.*  
*I don't believe that you'll go to the party.*  
*If you were to go to the party, you would have a good time.*

- **Imperative mood (El imperativo)** is used to make a command or request.

¡**Ven** conmigo a la fiesta!

*Come with me to the party!*

(See also Indicative, Imperative, and Subjunctive.)

**NEGATION (La negación)** takes place when a negative word, such as **no**, is placed before an affirmative sentence. In Spanish, double negatives are common.

Yolando va a cantar esta noche.  
 Yolando **no** va a cantar esta noche.  
 Ramón quiere algo.  
 Ramón **no** quiere **nada**.

*Yolando will sing tonight. (affirmative)*  
*Yolanda will not sing tonight. (negative)*  
*Ramón wants something. (affirmative)*  
*Ramón doesn't want anything. (negative)*

**NOUNS (Los sustantivos)** are persons, places, things or ideas. Names of people, countries, and cities are proper nouns and are capitalized.

Alberto  
 el pueblo  
 el diccionario

*Albert (person)*  
*town (place)*  
*dictionary (thing)*

**ORTHOGRAPHY (La ortografía)** refers to the spelling of a word or anything related to spelling such as accentuation.

**PASSIVE VOICE (La voz pasiva)**, as compared to **active voice (la voz activa)**, places emphasis on the action itself rather than the agent of the action (the person or thing that is indirectly responsible for committing the action). The passive **se** is used when there is no apparent agent of the action.

Luis vende los coches.  
 Los coches **son vendidos** por Luis.  
 Se **venden** los coches.

*Luis sells the cars. (active voice)*  
*The cars are sold by Luis. (passive voice)*  
*The cars are sold. (passive voice)*

(See also Active voice.)

**PAST PARTICIPLES (El participio pasado)** are verb forms used in compound tenses such as the **present perfect**. Regular past participles are formed by dropping the **-ar** or **-er/-ir** from the **infinitive** and adding **-ado** or **-ido**. Past participles are the equivalent of verbs ending in **-ed** in English. They may also be used as **adjectives**, in which case they agree in **number** and **gender** with their nouns. Irregular past participles include: **escrito, roto, dicho, hecho, puesto, vuelto, muerto, cubierto**.

Marta ha **subido** la montaña.  
 Hemos **hablado** mucho por teléfono.  
 La novela **publicada** en 1995 es su mejor novela.

*Marta has climbed the mountain.*  
*We have talked a lot on the phone.*  
*The novel published in 1995 is her best novel.*

**PERFECT TENSES (Los tiempos perfectos)** communicate the idea that an action has taken place before now (present perfect) or before a moment in the past (past perfect). The perfect tenses are compound tenses consisting of the verb **haber** plus the **past participle** of a second verb.

Yo **he comido**.  
 Antes de la fiesta, yo **había comido**.  
 Yo espero que **hayas comido**.

*I have eaten. (present perfect indicative)*  
*Before the party I had eaten. (past perfect indicative)*  
*I hope that you have eaten. (present perfect subjunctive)*

Yo esperaba que **hubieras comido**.

*I hoped that you had eaten. (past perfect subjunctive)*



**PERSON (La persona)** refers to changes in the subject pronouns that indicate if one is speaking (first person), if one is spoken to (second person), or if one is spoken about (third person).

Yo hablo.	<i>I speak.</i> (1st-person singular)
Tú hablas.	<i>You speak.</i> (2nd-person singular)
Ud./Él/Ella habla.	<i>You/He/She speak.</i> (3rd-person singular)
Nosotros(as) hablamos.	<i>We speak.</i> (1st-person plural)
Vosotros(as) habláis.	<i>You speak.</i> (2nd-person plural)
Uds./Ellos/Ellas hablan.	<i>They speak.</i> (3rd-person plural)

**PREPOSITIONS (Las preposiciones)** are linking words indicating spatial or temporal relations between two words.

Ella nadaba en la piscina.	<i>She was swimming in the pool.</i>
Yo llamé antes de las nueve.	<i>I called before nine o'clock.</i>
El libro es para ti.	<i>The book is for you.</i>
Voy a la oficina.	<i>I'm going to the office.</i>
Jorge es de Paraguay.	<i>Jorge is from Paraguay.</i>

**PRESENT PARTICIPLE (See Gerunds.)**

**PRETERITE (El pretérito)** The preterite tense, as compared to the **imperfect tense**, is used to talk about past events with specific emphasis on the beginning or the end of the action, or emphasis on the completed nature of the action as a whole.

Anoche yo **empecé** a estudiar a las once y **terminé** a la una.  
*Last night I began to study at eleven o'clock and finished at one o'clock.*

Esta mañana me desperté a las siete, **desayuné**, me duché y vine al campus para las ocho.  
*This morning I woke up at seven, I ate breakfast, I showered, and I came to campus by eight.*

**PERSONAL A (La a personal)** The personal **a** refers to the placement of the preposition **a** before the name of a person when that person is the **direct object** of the sentence.

Voy a llamar a María. *I'm going to call María.*

**PRONOUNS (Los pronombres)** are words that substitute for **nouns** in a sentence.

Yo quiero éste.	<i>I want this one.</i> (demonstrative—points out a specific person, place or thing)
¿Quién es tu amigo?	<i>Who is your friend?</i> (interrogative—used to ask questions)
Yo voy a llamarla.	<i>I'm going to call her.</i> (direct object—replaces the direct object of the sentence)
Ella va a darle el reloj.	<i>She is going to give him the watch.</i> (indirect object—replaces the indirect object of the sentence)
Juan se baña por la mañana.	<i>Juan bathes himself in the morning.</i> (reflexive—used with reflexive verbs to show that the agent of the action is also the recipient)
Es la mujer que conozco.	<i>She is the woman that I know.</i> (relative—used to introduce a clause that describes a noun)
Nosotros somos listos.	<i>We are clever.</i> (subject—replaces the noun that performs the action or state of a verb)

**SUBJECTS (Los sujetos)** are the persons, places or things that perform the action or state of being of a verb. The **conjugated verb** always agrees with its subject.

Carlos siempre baila solo.	<i>Carlos always dances alone.</i>
Colorado y California son mis estados preferidos.	<i>Colorado and California are my favorite states.</i>
La cafetera produce el café.	<i>The coffee pot makes the coffee.</i>

(See also Active voice.)

**SUBJUNCTIVE (El subjuntivo)** The subjunctive mood is used to express speculative, doubtful, or hypothetical situations. It also communicates a degree of subjectivity or influence of the main clause over the subordinate clause.

No creo que **tengas** razón.  
Si yo **fuera** el jefe, pagaría más a mis empleados.  
Quiero que **estudies** más.

*I don't think that **you're** right.*  
*If I **were** the boss, I would pay my employees more.*  
*I want **you** to **study** more.*

(See also Mood, Indicative.)

**SUPERLATIVE STATEMENTS (Las frases superlativas)** are formed by adjectives or adverbs to make comparisons among three or more members of a group. To form superlatives, add a definite article (**el, la, los, las**) before the comparative form.

Juan es **el más alto** de los tres.  
Este coche es **el más rápido** de todos.

*Juan is **the tallest** of the three.*  
*This car is **the fastest** of them all.*

(See also Comparisons.)

**TENSES (Los tiempos)** refer to the manner in which time is expressed through the **verb** of a sentence.

Yo estudio.  
Yo estoy estudiando.  
Yo he estudiado.  
Yo había estudiado.  
Yo estudié.  
Yo estudiaba.  
Yo estudiaré

*I study.* (present tense)  
*I am studying.* (present progressive)  
*I have studied.* (present perfect)  
*I had studied.* (past perfect)  
*I studied.* (preterite tense)  
*I was studying.* (imperfect tense)  
*I will study.* (future tense)

**VERBS (Los verbos)** are the words in a sentence that communicate an action or state of being.

Helen es mi amiga y ella **lee** muchas novelas.  
*Helen is my friend and she **reads** a lot of novels.*

**Auxiliary verbs (Los verbos auxiliares)** or helping verbs are verbs such as **estar** and **haber** used to form the present progressive and the present perfect, respectively.

Estamos estudiando mucho para el examen mañana.  
*We **are** studying a lot for the exam tomorrow.*

Helen **ha** trabajado mucho en este proyecto.  
*Helen **has** worked a lot on this project.*

**Reflexive verbs (Los verbos reflexivos)** use reflexive **pronouns** to indicate that the person initiating the action is also the recipient of the action.

Yo **me** afeito por la mañana. *I **shave** (**myself**) in the morning.*

**Stem-changing verbs (Los verbos con cambios de raíz)** undergo a change in the main part of the verb when conjugated. To find the stem, drop the **-ar, -er,** or **-ir** from the **infinitive: dorm-, empez-, ped-.** There are three types of stem-changing verbs: **o** to **ue**, **e** to **ie** and **e** to **i**.

dormir: Yo **duermo** en el parque.  
empezar: Ella siempre **empieza** su trabajo temprano.  
pedir: ¿Por qué **no pides** ayuda?

*I **sleep** in the park. (**o** to **ue**)*  
*She **always** starts her work early. (**e** to **ie**)*  
*Why **don't** you ask for help? (**e** to **i**)*