

ir, venir, seguir, continuar, andar and *llevar* may also be followed by the gerund to indicate the idea of duration. (See also *The gerund*, section G11)

G14 The subjunctive

The subjunctive mood, which expresses uncertainty and unreality (see beginning of verb section for 'mood'), is used in four tenses: present, perfect, imperfect and pluperfect.

G14.1 Present subjunctive

The present tense of regular verbs in the subjunctive is formed by adding the endings highlighted below to the stem of the verb:

	-ar verbs	-er verbs	-ir verbs
yo	hable	coma	viva
tú	hables	comas	vivas
él/ella/usted	hable	coma	viva
nosotros/as	hablemos	comamos	vivamos
vosotros/as	habléis	comáis	viváis
ellos/ellas/ustedes	hablen	coman	vivan

Note

For most irregular verbs, the present subjunctive is formed by removing *o* from the end of the first person singular of the present indicative and adding the endings for regular verbs. For example:

- *hacer*: *haga, hagas, haga, hagamos, hagáis, hagan*
- *poner*: *ponga, pongas, ponga* etc.

The following verbs are exceptions to the above rule *dar* (*dé, des* etc.), *estar* (*esté, estés* etc.), *haber* (*haya, hayas* etc.), *ir* (*vaya, vayas* etc.), *saber* (*sepa, sepas* etc.) and *ser* (*sea, seas* etc.).

A number of otherwise regular verbs change their spelling in the present subjunctive, e.g.:

- *llegar*: *llegue, llegues* etc.
- *coger*: *coja, cojas* etc.
- *pedir*: *pida, pidas, pida* etc.

(See also *Spelling changes in verbs*, section G19)

G14.2 Perfect subjunctive

The perfect subjunctive is formed from the present subjunctive of *haber* plus the past participle:

	-ar verbs	-er verbs	-ir verbs
yo	haya hablado	haya comido	haya vivido
tú	hayas hablado	hayas comido	hayas vivido
él/ella/usted	haya hablado	haya comido	haya vivido
nosotros/as	hayamos hablado	hayamos comido	hayamos vivido
vosotros/as	hayáis hablado	hayáis comido	hayáis vivido
ellos/ellas/ustedes	hayan hablado	hayan comido	hayan vivido

G14.3 Imperfect subjunctive

The imperfect subjunctive is formed by adding the endings below after removing the ending of the third person plural of the preterite tense:

	-ar verbs	-er verbs	-ir verbs
yo	hablara/ase	comiera/ese	viviera/ese
tú	hablaras/ases	comieras/eses	vivieras/eses
él/ella/usted	hablara/ase	comiera/ese	viviera/ese
nosotros/as	habláramos/ásemos	comiéramos/ésemos	viviéramos/ésemos
vosotros/as	hablarais/aseis	comierais/eseis	vivierais/eseis
ellos/ellas/ustedes	hablaran/asen	comieran/esen	vivieran/esen

Note

There are alternative endings for the imperfect subjunctive, *-ara/-ase* and *-era/-ese* etc., which are interchangeable.

Irregular verbs also follow the above rule:

- *tener*: *tuviera/ese, tuvieras/eses, tuviera/ese, tuviéramos/ésemos, tuvierais/eseis, tuvieran/esen*.
- *hacer*: *hiciera/ese* etc.
- *poner*: *pusiera/ese* etc.

The verbs *ser, decir, traer*, and verbs ending in *-ucir* (*traducir, producir* etc.) add *-era/ese* etc. to the stem of the preterite tense for these verbs: *fuera/ese, dijera/ese, tradujera/ese* etc.

The imperfect subjunctive is frequently used for two types of conditions: those that are **unlikely to be fulfilled** and those that are **contrary to fact**. (See *Conditional sentences*, section G16)

G14.4 Pluperfect subjunctive

The pluperfect subjunctive is formed from the imperfect subjunctive of *haber* plus the past participle:

	-ar verbs	-er verbs	-ir verbs
yo	hubiera hablado	hubiera comido	hubiera vivido
tú	hubieras hablado	hubieras comido	hubieras vivido
él/ella/usted	hubiera hablado	hubiera comido	hubiera vivido
nosotros/as	hubiéramos hablado	hubiéramos comido	hubiéramos vivido
vosotros/as	hubierais hablado	hubierais comido	hubierais vivido
ellos/ellas/ustedes	hubieran hablado	hubieran comido	hubieran vivido

As well as *hubiera* etc. the form *hubiese* etc. can be used to form this tense.

Note that the pluperfect subjunctive is frequently used in conditional sentences that are contrary to fact. (See *Conditional sentences, section G16*)

G14.5 Uses of the subjunctive

The subjunctive is used in three main ways: in subordinate clauses, in main clauses and in conditional sentences. (See *Conditional sentences, section G16*)

The subjunctive in subordinate clauses

These clauses frequently begin with *que* and communicate meanings that are often subtly differentiated from those of the indicative mood.

The subjunctive must be used after verbs and expressions indicating:

- possibility, probability and doubt: *es posible/probable que, puede que, dudar que* etc.

(Receptive use at AS, productive use at A-level)

Puede (ser) que no lleguen hasta la noche.

Maybe they won't get here until tonight.

Es probable que algunos alumnos reaccionen mal a ciertos profesores.

It's likely that some pupils react badly to certain teachers.

- 'emotion': *querer que* (to wish, want that), *esperar que* (to hope that), *[me] gusta que* (to like), *alegrarse de que* (to be pleased that), *temer que* (to fear that) etc. (Receptive use at AS, productive use at A-level)

Espero que te recuperes pronto.

I hope that you get better soon.

Paco quiere que sus padres lo dejen ir a la festividad.

Paco wants his parents to let him go to the festival.

- influence, commanding: *hacer que* (to make someone do something), *obligar que* (to make, force), *conseguir que* (to succeed in doing), *evitar que* (to avoid), *impedir*

que (to prevent), *decir que* (to tell someone to do something) and *insistir que* (to insist) etc. (Receptive use at AS, productive use at A-level)

Consiguió que le dejaran entrar.

He got them to let him in.

Los agentes protegían la fuente para evitar que alguien se subiese a ella.

The police protected the fountain to prevent anyone climbing up it.

- judgement: *es importante que* (it is important that), *sería mejor que* (it would be better to) etc.

Sería mejor que vinieras conmigo.

It would be better for you to come with me.

No me parece correcto que los jóvenes se emborrachen los fines de semana.

It doesn't seem right to me that young people get drunk at the weekend.

- necessity: *es necesario que* (it is necessary to), *hace falta que* (it is necessary to) etc.

Hace falta que devuelvan los DVDs en seguida.

They have to return the DVDs straight away.

No es necesario que nadie sepa lo que pasó.

It's not necessary for anyone to know what happened.

- permission and prohibition: *dejar que* (to let), *permitir* (to allow), *prohibir* (to forbid) etc.

Le prohibieron que saliera después de las 10 de la noche.

They forbade him to go out after 10.00 p.m.

- concession: *sin que* (without), *aunque* (although) (Productive use at AS); *a menos que* (unless), *a no ser que* (unless), *a pesar de que* (despite) etc. (Receptive use at AS, productive use at A-level)

No podremos abrir la puerta a menos que encontremos la llave.

We won't be able to open the door unless we find the key.

Entró en la casa por la ventana sin que nadie lo supiera.

He got into the house through the window without anyone knowing.

- condition: *con tal que* (provided that), *a condición de que* (on condition that) etc.

Puedes coger el diccionario con tal que me lo devuelvas mañana.

You can take the dictionary provided you give it back to me tomorrow.

- requesting: *pedir* (to ask for, to beg), *rogar* (to beg, plead) etc.

Le pedí que me diera la dirección de su amiga.

I asked her to give me her friend's address.

The subjunctive must also be used in the following circumstances:



- after verbs of thinking such as *creer* (to think, believe), *pensar* (to think), *considerar* (to consider), *parecer* (to seem) when used in the negative. [Receptive use at AS, productive use at A-level.]

No pienso que la función del móvil cambie mucho en el futuro.

I don't think that that the role of mobiles will change much in future.

No cree que merezca la pena gastar energía en los alumnos problemáticos.

He doesn't think it is worth wasting energy on problem pupils.

- *el (hecho) de que* (the fact that) is normally followed by the subjunctive in statements of emotion or judgement

Me molesta mucho el que me interrumpen cuando estoy trabajando.

It really annoys me to be interrupted when I'm working (literally: the fact that people interrupt me).

- after *no es que*, *no (es) porque*

Le di dinero, pero no porque me lo pidiera.

I gave him money, but not because he asked for it.

No es que fuera mala; se separó porque no la quería.

It's not that she was a bad person; he separated because he didn't love her.

- after conjunctions of time, e.g. *cuando* (when), *en cuanto* (as soon as), *mientras* (while), *hasta que* (until), *antes de que* (before), used with a future meaning

No podré descansar hasta que sepa adónde se ha ido.

I won't be able to rest until I know where she has gone.

Al empezar la clase tengo que hacer de portera, hasta que estén todos.

At the beginning of the class I have to be a doorkeeper until they are all in.

- after conjunctions of purpose, e.g. *para que* (so/in order that), *a fin de que* (so/in order that), *de modo/manera que* (so/in such a way that)

Te escribo a fin de que/para que te des cuenta de mi dilema.

I am writing to you so that you are aware of my dilemma.

Debemos hacer una revisión de la caldera para que funcione bien.

We must service the boiler so that it works properly.

- after *como si*:

Me miró como si estuviera loco.

He looked at me as if I were mad.

- after an 'indefinite antecedent'

The subjunctive is used in subordinate clauses when the identity of the 'antecedent', i.e. a person or thing mentioned previously, is unknown. When the identity

of the 'antecedent' is known, the indicative is used. [Receptive use at AS, productive use at A-level]

Buscamos un colegio que tenga buenas instalaciones deportivas.

We're looking for a school that has good sports facilities.

No conozco a nadie que vaya a la fiesta.

I don't know anyone who is going to the party.

Llévanos a un sitio donde estemos a gusto.

Take us to a place where we can be comfortable. [We do not know the precise place we'll end up in.]

But

Los seis individuos que resultaron detenidos en la manifestación...

The six individuals who were arrested in the demonstration... [The indicative is used here because the identity of the individuals is known.]

This construction is often found in set expressions like *pase lo que pase* (whatever happens).

- in the expressions of concession *por muy + adjective que*, *por mucho + noun que* (however [much]) (A-level only):

Por muy listo que sea Fernando, no va a encontrar la solución.

However clever Fernando may be, he won't find the solution.

Por mucho frío que haga, voy a salir esta noche.

However cold it is, I'm going out tonight.

Some expressions which are used to make *value judgements* may be followed by either the infinitive or the subjunctive. These expressions are usually impersonal:

- *a mí me parece bien/mal* it seems good/bad to me
- *es importante* it is important
- *es imprescindible* it is essential
- *es necesario* it is necessary
- *es normal* it is normal
- *hace falta* it is necessary
- *más vale* it is better
- *sería mejor* it would be better
- *vale la pena* it is worthwhile

Es imprescindible saber quién controla los medios de comunicación.

It's essential to know who controls the media.

*No me parece bien que revistas como *Hola* tengan tanta influencia.*

It doesn't seem right to me that magazines like *Hola* have so much influence.

Es importante no olvidarte/que no te olvides de la cita mañana.

It's important that you don't forget the appointment tomorrow.

The subjunctive in main clauses

The subjunctive is found in main clauses after words and expressions which denote uncertainty or strong wishes:

- *que...* used for a command or strong wish

¡Que lo pases bien! Have a good time!

- words meaning 'perhaps', e.g. *quizá(s)*, *tal vez*

Quizás eche de menos a sus padres.

Perhaps he's missing his parents.

Tal vez vuelva mañana.

Perhaps he'll come back tomorrow.

- *ojalá* (if only, I wish) used to express a strong wish or hope

¡Ojalá hubiera aprobado el examen!

I wish I'd passed the exam!

Dicen que mi hermana Laura ha dejado las drogas de diseño.

¡Ojalá fuera cierto!

They say that my sister Laura has given up designer drugs.
I wish it was true!

Se ha enamorado otra vez... ¡Ojalá le dure!

He's fallen in love again... I hope it lasts!

G15 The imperative

The imperative mood is used for giving commands and making requests. These can be either affirmative: *¡Mira!* (Look!) or negative: *¡No mires!* (Don't look!). In Spanish you have to choose between familiar and formal modes of address, (*tú/vosotros* and *usted/ustedes*).

Although the use of the informal imperative, *tú* and *vosotros*, is becoming increasingly common in semi-formal situations in Spain, in certain contexts the formal *usted/ustedes* imperative should be used: when addressing people in authority, those who are older than yourself or those who you do not know (as when writing a job application or being interviewed). It is also used in shops when addressing staff, shop owners, and in restaurants.

G15.1 Tú commands

To form the affirmative familiar imperative in the singular remove the last letter from the second person singular of the present indicative:

¡Cállate! Be quiet!

¡Come las verduras sin quejarte!

Eat your greens without complaining!

Si no te quedas dormida en 15 minutos, levántate y haz algo.

If you aren't asleep in 15 minutes, get up and do something.

Sube rápidamente. Go up quickly.

Note that nine verbs have irregular *tú* forms in the imperative, as follows:

- *decir* to say *di*
- *hacer* to do, make *haz*

- *ir* to go *ve*
- *oír* to hear *oye*
- *poner* to put *pon*
- *salir* to go out *sal*
- *ser* to be *sé*
- *tener* to have *ten*
- *venir* to come *ven*

To form the negative *tú* imperative, *no* is placed before the second person singular of the present subjunctive:

¡No hables tan bajo! Don't speak so quietly!

¡No me digas! Don't tell me!/You don't say!

No rompas la rutina ni en los fines de semana ni en vacaciones.

Don't change your routine at weekends or when on holiday.

G15.2 Vosotros commands (Spain)

To form the affirmative familiar imperative in the plural replace the final *-r* of the infinitive with *-d*:

¡Comed! Eat (up)!

Chicos, ¡venid mañana a las 8! Come tomorrow at 8, boys!

To form the negative *vosotros* imperative, *no* is placed before the second person plural of the present subjunctive:

No habléis con ella. Don't speak to her.

No os levantéis temprano. Don't get up early.

G15.3 Usted(es) commands

To form *usted(es)* commands, affirmative and negative, singular and plural, use the third person form of the present subjunctive:

Póngame tres kilos de naranjas.

I'd like three kilos of oranges.

Tomen la primera a la derecha para el restaurante Andaluz.

Take the first on the right for the Andaluz restaurant.

No se preocupe. Don't worry.

No le(s) importe que digan que no.

Don't let it bother you if they say no.

G15.4 The position of object pronouns

Object pronouns are added to the end of affirmative commands:

¡Cómometelo! Eat it (up)!

Dígame lo que quiera. Tell me what you want.

In negative commands pronouns precede the verb:

¡No me hables así! Don't speak to me like that!

¡No os acostéis! Don't go to bed!