



Spanish Grammar Made Easy: Sentence Structure and Word Order

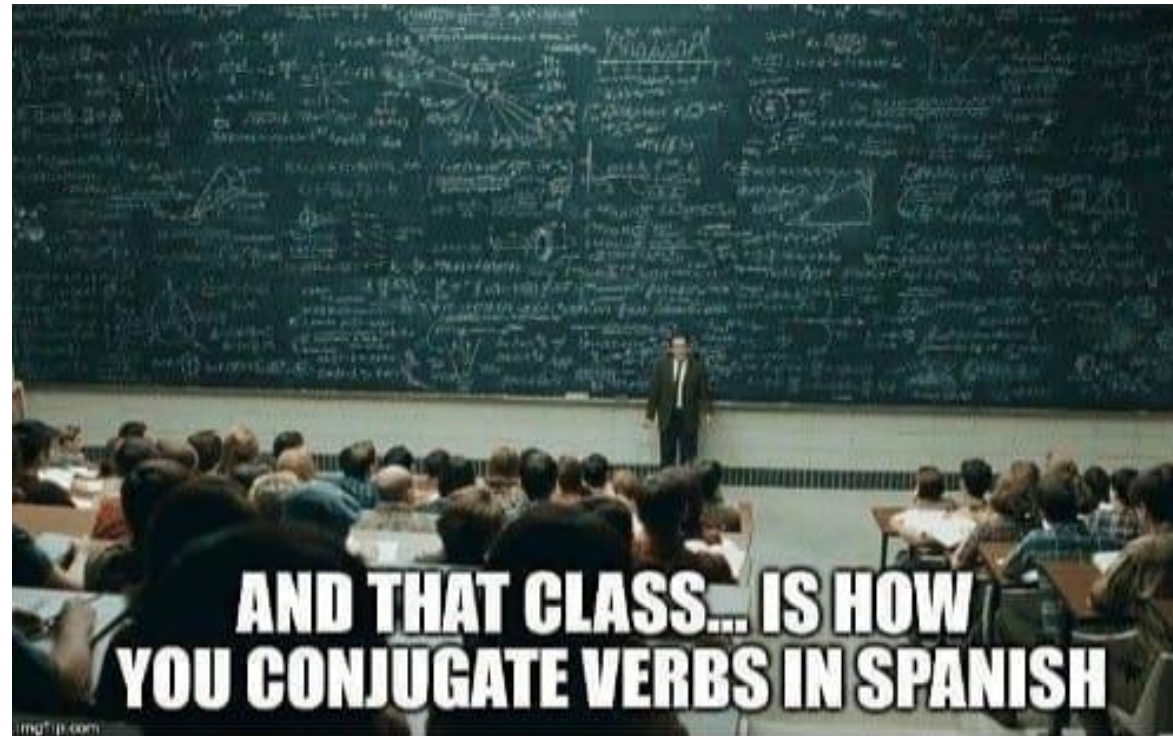
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Housekeeping

- Turn off notifications
- Put your phone on silent or vibrate
- Participate in the class
- Ask questions at the end

What confuses you the most about Spanish grammar?



Agenda

- 7 Basic Rules for Spanish Sentence Structure
- The #1 Mistake to Avoid
- Next Steps
- Q&A

Keep in Mind...

- Informal (spoken) vs. formal (written) language can be different
- There may be more than one correct way to express the same idea (flexibility)

Keep in Mind...

- Grammar can vary by region and personal preference
- Rules are made to be broken
- Don't get obsessed with technical terminology

7 Basic Rules for Spanish Sentence Structure

Rule 1: Start with the English Sentence Structure

Rule 1: Start with English

Many statements in Spanish use the same order as English

- This is my house. *Esta es mi casa.*
- I know that I can do it.

Yo sé que puedo hacerlo.

Rule 1: Start with English

This can even apply to longer statements

- She goes to Starbucks in the morning and buys a coffee with milk and cinnamon.

Ella va a Starbucks en la mañana y compra un café con leche y canela.

Rule 1: Start with English

This is the easiest rule of thumb because we're already used to it

When in doubt, use a literal translation from English

Rule 2: The Subject Isn't Necessary

The **subject** usually isn't needed because of **verb conjugation** and **context**

- **Yo** estoy aquí. *I am here.*
- Estoy aquí. *I am here.*
- **Tú** fuiste a la fiesta. *You went to the party.*
- Fuiste a la fiesta. *You went to the party*

Rule 2: The Subject Isn't Necessary

Applies to questions also...

- ¿Quién es **ella**? *Who is she?*
- ¿Quién es? *Who is she?*

Rule 2: The Subject Isn't Necessary

The subject is only needed to add **clarity** or **emphasis** to a statement.

Está aquí could refer to multiple subjects:

- Usted **está aquí** *You are here*
- Ella **está aquí** *She is here*
- El libro **está aquí** *The book is here*

Rule 3: Use the Same Word Order for Questions and Statements

In English the word order has to change, but not in Spanish:

Saben cómo llegar a Miami.

They know how to get to Miami.

¿Saben cómo llegar a Miami?

Do they know how to get to Miami?

Rule 4: Subject Placement Is Flexible

Which one of these is the correct way to say “*Lisa is downtown*” in Spanish?

- A) Lisa está en el centro.
- B) Está en el centro Lisa.
- C) En el centro está Lisa.

Rule 4: Subject Placement Is Flexible

Trick question: All 3 are grammatically correct in Spanish

A) Lisa está en el centro. *Lisa is downtown.*

B) Está en el centro Lisa. *Is downtown Lisa.*

C) En el centro está Lisa. *Downtown is Lisa.*

Rule 4: Subject Placement Is Flexible

For **questions**, which has the correct word order?

- A) ¿Habla usted inglés?
- B) ¿Habla inglés usted?
- C) ¿Usted habla inglés?

Rule 4: Subject Placement Is Flexible

All of these questions are grammatically correct, with one caveat*

A) ¿Habla usted inglés?

B) ¿Habla inglés usted?

C) ¿Usted habla inglés? ¿En serio? **disbelief*

Rule 5: Adjectives Go After the Noun

Las caras lindas de mi gente negra.

The pretty faces of my black people.

Literal translation: The faces pretties of my people black.

Rule 6: When Using It/Them, Think Yoda

It or them, goes before the verb

- It (lo, la)
- Them (las, los)

Note: These are called *direct object pronouns*



Rule 6: When Using It/Them, Think Yoda

I see them

Las veo.

Literal: Them I see.

If you add the subject, it would be:

Yo las veo.

Literal: I them I see. (redundant)

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Rule 7: Negatives Go First

Negative words go before the verb

Leo muchos libros. > **No** leo muchos libros.

I read many books. > I don't read many books.

Nunca leo libros, los escucho.

I never read books, I listen to them.

The #1 Mistake to Avoid

Put Verbs Right After Question Words

Que, Cuando, Cuanto, Donde, etc.

¿**Qué** **significa** eso?

What does that mean?

Literal: What means that?

Put Verbs Right After Question Words

¿**Cuánto** **cuesta** la computadora?

~~¿Cuanto la computadora cuesta?~~

How much does the computer cost?

Literal: How much costs the computer.

Put Verbs Right After Question Words

¿**Con quién** quieres ir?

~~¿Quieres ir con quién?~~

Who do **you** want to go **with**?

Literal: With whom do you want to go?

Review: 7 Basic Rules for Spanish Sentence Structure

- Rule 1: Start with the English Sentence Structure
- Rule 2: The Subject Isn't Necessary
- Rule 3: You Can Use the Same Word Order for Questions and Statements
- Rule 4: Subject Placement Is Flexible

Review: 7 Basic Rules for Spanish Sentence Structure

- Rule 5: Adjectives Generally Go After the Noun
- Rule 6: When using It or Them, Talk Like Yoda
- Rule 7: Negatives go first