

Gustar and Verbs Like Gustar

(Los Verbos como “Gustar”)

The verb **gustar** does not literally mean “to like.” Instead, it means **“to be pleasing to,”** which is why sentences with *gustar* follow a different structure than English. Rather than saying “I like the book,” Spanish expresses the idea as **“The book pleases me.”**

Me gusta el libro.

Many other common [Spanish verbs](#) follow this same pattern. Understanding how *gustar* works makes it easier to use these similar structures accurately and naturally.

The [verb gustar](#) doesn’t literally mean “to like” — it means **“to be pleasing to.”** That’s why sentences with *gustar* use a **different structure** from English.

Instead of saying “I like the book,” Spanish says **“The book pleases me.”**

Me gusta el libro.

1) The Logic of “Gustar”

English

Spanish (literal translation)

I like the book.

Me gusta el libro. → “The book pleases me.”

We like the movies. *Nos gustan las películas.* → “The movies please us.”

So, the **thing liked** is the **subject**, and the **person who likes** is the **indirect object** (who receives the pleasure).

Formula:

[Indirect object pronoun](#) + **gustar (conjugated)** + **subject**

2) Indirect Object Pronouns

These pronouns show **to whom** something is pleasing (who likes it):

Pronoun Meaning		Example
me	to me	<i>Me gusta el café.</i> → I like coffee.
te	to you	<i>¿Te gusta bailar?</i> → Do you like to dance?
le	to him / her / you (formal)	<i>Le gusta el fútbol.</i> → He/She likes soccer.
nos	to us	<i>Nos gustan los perros.</i> → We like dogs.
os	to you all (Spain)	<i>¿Os gusta la pizza?</i> → Do you all like pizza?
les	to them / you all	<i>Les gusta el arte.</i> → They like art.

Clarifying phrases like *a mí, a ti, a él*, etc., can be added for emphasis or clarity:

- *A mí me gusta el café.* → I (really) like coffee.
- *A Juan le gusta el fútbol.* → Juan likes soccer.
- *A ellos les gustan los museos.* → They like museums.

3) Conjugating *Gustar*

Gustar is conjugated according to the **thing liked**, not the person.

Subject (thing liked) Verb form Example

Singular noun / verb	gusta	<i>Me gusta el libro. / Me gusta leer.</i>
Plural noun	gustan	<i>Me gustan los libros.</i>

Examples:

- *Me gusta la música.* → I like music.
- *Me gustan los deportes.* → I like sports.
- *Te gusta bailar.* → You like to dance.
- *Nos gustan las películas cómicas.* → We like funny movies.

When using verbs (infinitives) after *gustar*, always use **gusta (singular)**:

- *Me gusta correr.* → I like to run.
- *Nos gusta viajar y aprender idiomas.* → We like to travel and [learn languages](#).

4) Common Expressions with *Gustar*

Expression	Meaning	Example
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Me gusta... I like... *Me gusta el helado.*
¿Te gusta...? Do you like...? *¿Te gusta el cine?*
No me gusta... I don't like... *No me gusta el café.*
A mí también. Me too. *Me gusta el tenis. — A mí también.*
A mí tampoco. Me neither. *No me gusta estudiar. — A mí tampoco.*

5) Verbs Like *Gustar*

Many verbs follow the same structure as *gustar* — they use **indirect object pronouns** and are conjugated based on the **thing** or **action** that affects the person.

Verb	Meaning	Example
encantar	to love (something)	<i>Me encanta el chocolate.</i> → I love chocolate.
interesar	to interest	<i>Nos interesa la historia.</i> → History interests us.
importar	to matter / to be important	<i>¿Te importa si voy?</i> → Does it matter to you if I go?
fascinar	to fascinate	<i>A ella le fascinan los planetas.</i> → She's fascinated by planets.
aburrir	to bore	<i>A ellos les aburre el museo.</i> → The museum bores them.
molestar	to bother / annoy	<i>Me molesta el ruido.</i> → The noise bothers me.
doler (o → ue)	to hurt	<i>Me duele la cabeza.</i> → My head hurts.
faltar	to lack / be missing	<i>Nos falta dinero.</i> → We're missing money.
quedar	to fit / to have left	<i>Me queda bien la camisa.</i> → The shirt fits me well. / <i>Nos quedan dos días.</i> → We have two days left.
parecer	to seem / appear	<i>Me parece interesante.</i> → It seems interesting to me.
chocar	to dislike / annoy	<i>Me chocan los insectos.</i> → I can't stand insects.
caer bien/mal	to (not) get along with someone	<i>Me cae bien tu amigo.</i> → I like your friend.

All these verbs use **me, te, le, nos, os, les** and usually have only **two conjugations** — singular (third person singular) and plural (third person plural).

6) Clarifying “A” Phrases

Because *le* and *les* can mean “to him,” “to her,” or “to them,” Spanish often adds clarification:

Spanish

A Juan le gusta el béisbol.

A ella le gustan los gatos.

A ustedes les gusta bailar.

A mis padres les encanta viajar.

English

Juan likes baseball.

She likes cats.

You all like to dance.

My parents love to travel.

Structure:

A + person + indirect object [pronoun + verb + subject](#)

7) Word Order and Emphasis

Word order in *gustar*-type sentences can vary slightly, but the meaning stays the same.

Sentence

Me gusta el cine.

El cine me gusta.

A mí me gusta el cine.

Translation

I like the movies.

I like the movies. (emphasis on *el cine*)

I like the movies. (emphasized: *me*)

A mí and *a ti* are often added for emphasis or contrast:

- *A mí me gusta el chocolate, pero a ti no.*

8) Using *Gustar*-Type Verbs in Other Tenses

Tense

Preterite

Example

Me gustó la película. / Me gustaron las películas.

Translation

I liked the movie(s).

Imperfect	<i>Me gustaba el fútbol.</i>	I used to like soccer.
Future	<i>Me gustará viajar.</i>	I will like to travel.
Conditional	<i>Me gustaría ir contigo.</i>	I would like to go with you.
Present Perfect	<i>Me ha gustado la comida.</i>	I have liked the food.

Me gustaría... is extremely common for **polite requests** or **soft suggestions**:

- *Me gustaría un café, por favor.* → I'd like a coffee, please.
- *¿Te gustaría ir al cine?* → Would you like to go to the movies?

9) Practice: Fill in the Blanks

Complete each sentence with the correct form of the verb in parentheses.

1. A mí me _____ (gustar) el helado.
2. A ellos les _____ (encantar) los deportes.
3. ¿Te _____ (interesar) la historia?
4. Nos _____ (molestar) el ruido.
5. A mi madre le _____ (faltar) tiempo.
6. Me _____ (doler) los pies.

Answers:

1. gusta
2. encantan
3. interesa
4. molesta
5. falta
6. duelen

10) Practice: Translate

1. I love [Spanish music](#).
2. The movie bores me.
3. My head hurts.
4. We like to travel.
5. Does it matter to you?
6. They are fascinated by animals.

Answers:

1. Me encanta la música española.
2. Me aburre la película.
3. Me duele la cabeza.
4. Nos gusta viajar.
5. ¿Te importa?
6. Les fascinan los animales.

11) Common Pitfalls & Fixes

Wrong	Correct	Why
<i>Yo gusto el chocolate.</i>	<i>Me gusta el chocolate.</i>	Subject = what pleases, not who likes.
<i>Me gustan bailar.</i>	<i>Me gusta bailar.</i>	Infinitive is singular → <i>gusta</i> .
<i>Le gustan a Juan el fútbol.</i>	<i>A Juan le gusta el fútbol.</i>	Keep “a Juan” at the start for clarity.
<i>Me encantan leer.</i>	<i>Me encanta leer.</i>	Infinitives take singular form.
<i>Nos gusta las películas.</i>	<i>Nos gustan las películas.</i>	Plural subject → <i>gustan</i> .

12) Quick Reference Chart

Concept	Rule / Formula	Example
Structure	I.O. pronoun + verb + subject	<i>Me gusta el chocolate.</i>
Pronouns	me, te, le, nos, os, les	<i>Nos gustan los libros.</i>
Singular subject	<i>gusta</i>	<i>Te gusta la clase.</i>
Plural subject	<i>gustan</i>	<i>Te gustan las clases.</i>
Clarifiers	A + name / pronoun	<i>A Ana le gusta leer.</i>
Other verbs	encantar, interesar, molestar, doler, faltar, parecer, importar	<i>Nos interesa el arte.</i>