

Hopes, wishes and desires are some of the most natural reasons to use the Spanish subjunctive. When you want something to happen but it is not certain, Spanish speakers often use verbs like **esperar**, **desear**, **querer** or expressions like **ojalá** followed by the subjunctive.

Why the subjunctive for hopes and wishes?

The subjunctive signals uncertainty, desire or subjective feelings. When you say “I hope that...” you are expressing a wish about a situation that may or may not happen. In Spanish that mood is usually expressed with the present subjunctive after verbs and expressions of hoping, wanting and wishing.

Common patterns

- **Esperar que + subjunctive** — Espero que *vaya* bien.
- **Querer / Desear / Preferir que + subjunctive** — Quiero que *vengas* mañana.
- **Ojalá + subjunctive** — Ojalá *haya* paz.

Examples with translations

Below are practical sentences you can use. Each Spanish sentence uses the subjunctive when appropriate, with an English translation.

- Espero que **haya** paz en el mundo. — I hope there is peace in the world.
- Espero que no **haya** guerra. — I hope there is no war.
- Espero que **se levanten** las restricciones de confinamiento. — I hope the lockdown restrictions are lifted.
- Espero que **pueda** viajar. — I hope I can travel.
- Espero que la pandemia **termine**. — I hope the pandemic ends.
- Espero que mis estudiantes **tengan** un buen año. — I hope my students have a good year.
- Espero que **pueda** ser más activo físicamente. — I hope I can be more physically active.
- Espero que mi familia **esté** sana. — I hope my family is healthy.
- Espero que yo **esté** sano/a. — I hope I am healthy.
- Espero que **aprenda** más a poner las cosas en orden. — I hope I learn more

about putting things in order.

- Espero que este año **sea** inolvidable para el mundo en el futuro. — I hope this year ends up being unforgettable for the world.
- Espero que el mundo **viva** en paz. — I hope the world lives in peace.
- Espero que el medio ambiente **esté** seguro y que no **haya** contaminación. — I hope the environment is safe and there is no pollution.
- Quiero que mis estudiantes **experimenten** muchas cosas interesantes en la vida. — I want my students to experience many interesting things in life.
- Quiero que **hablen** bien español. — I want them to speak Spanish well.
- Quiero que **tengan** un buen futuro. — I want them to have good futures.
- Quiero que **viajen** mucho. — I want them to travel a lot.
- Quiero que **conozcan** a muchas personas de muchas culturas. — I want them to meet many people from many cultures.
- Quiero que **vivan** vidas muy felices. — I want them to live very happy lives.

How to form the present subjunctive (quick guide)

Form the present subjunctive from the first person singular (yo) of the present indicative:

1. Take the yo form: hablar — yo hablo.
2. Drop the final -o: habl-.
3. Add the opposite endings:
 - -ar verbs: e, es, e, emos, éis, en → hablar: hable, hables, hable, hablemos, habléis, hablen.
 - -er and -ir verbs: a, as, a, amos, áis, an → comer: coma, comas, coma, comamos, comáis, coman. vivir: viva, vivas, viva, vivamos, viváis, vivan.

Watch for common irregulars in the subjunctive. Some frequent ones:

- ser → **sea**, seas, sea, seamos, seáis, sean
- estar → **esté**, estés, esté, estemos, estéis, estén
- haber → **haya** (used impersonal: haya paz)
- ir → **vaya**, vayas, vaya, vayamos, vayáis, vayan
- saber → **sepa**, sepas, sepa, sepamos, sepáis, sepan
- dar → **dé**, des, dé, demos, deis, den

Useful verbs and expressions that trigger the subjunctive

- **Esperar que** — to hope that
- **Desear que** — to wish that
- **Querer que** — to want that
- **Preferir que** — to prefer that
- **Necesitar que** — to need that
- **Ojalá** — I hope / I wish (often without que)

Practice tasks

Complete these exercises to practise the subjunctive in hopes and wishes. Try each one before checking the answers.

Exercise 1 — Translate into Spanish using the subjunctive

1. I hope there is no more pollution.
2. I hope my students speak Spanish well.
3. I want them to travel a lot.
4. I hope I can be more physically active.
5. Ojalá there is peace in the world.

Exercise 2 — Fill in the blanks with the correct present subjunctive form

1. Espero que mi familia _____ (estar) sana.
2. Quiero que mis estudiantes _____ (tener) un buen año.
3. Espero que la pandemia _____ (terminar) pronto.
4. Espero que no _____ (haber) guerra.
5. Quiero que ellos _____ (conocer) muchas culturas.

Exercise 3 — Create

Write three hopes for yourself and three wishes for a friend. Use verbs like *esperar*, *desear* or *querer* and include *que* plus the subjunctive.

Answer key

Exercise 1 — Translations

1. Espero que no **haya** más contaminación.
2. Espero que mis estudiantes **hablen** bien español.
3. Quiero que **viajen** mucho.
4. Espero que **pueda** ser más activo físicamente. (or Espero poder ser más activo/a físicamente.)
5. Ojalá **haya** paz en el mundo.

Exercise 2 — Fill in the blanks

1. esté
2. tengan
3. termine
4. haya
5. conozcan

Notes on Exercise 3

There are many correct answers. Check that each sentence uses a verb of wishing or wanting and that the clause after que contains a subjunctive verb that agrees with the subject.

Practice regularly. Short, daily sentences expressing your hopes help build instinctive use of the subjunctive.

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