

The **subjunctive mood** is used to express **wishes, emotions, doubts, uncertainty, recommendations, or hypothetical situations** — anything **not yet real or confirmed**.

Unlike the **indicative** (used for facts), the **subjunctive** expresses what **someone wants, hopes, or feels** should happen.

1) The Subjunctive Mood vs. the Indicative Mood

Mood	Used For	Example
Indicative	Facts, certainty, what <i>is</i>	<i>Yo sé que ella está aquí.</i> → I know that she is here.
Subjunctive	Doubt, emotion, desire, what <i>may be</i>	<i>Dudo que ella esté aquí.</i> → I doubt that she is here.

Think:

- Indicative = reality
- Subjunctive = possibility

2) The Basic Structure

Most [subjunctive sentences have two clauses](#) joined by “**que**”:

Main clause (indicative) + que + Dependent clause (subjunctive)

Examples:

- *Quiero que tú vengas.* → I want you to come.
- *Es importante que estudies.* → It's important that you study.
- *Dudo que él tenga dinero.* → I doubt that he has money.

The verb in the first clause **triggers** the use of the subjunctive in the second.

3) How to Form the Present Subjunctive

The subjunctive uses the **opposite endings** rule — similar to negative tú commands.

Formation Steps

1 Start with the **yo** form of the present tense.

2 Drop the **-o**.

3 Add the **opposite endings**:

Verb Type Endings

-AR e, es, e, emos, éis, en

-ER / -IR a, as, a, amos, áis, an

Examples

-AR Verb: hablar

Person	Form
yo	hable
tú	hables
él/ella/Ud.	hable
nosotros	hablemos
vosotros	habléis
ellos/ellas/Uds.	hablen

Espero que hables con ella. → I hope you talk to her.

-ER Verb: comer

Person	Form
yo	coma
tú	comas
él/ella/Ud.	coma
nosotros	comamos
vosotros	comáis
ellos/ellas/Uds.	coman

Es bueno que comas verduras. → It's good that you eat vegetables.

-IR Verb: vivir

Person	Form
yo	viva
tú	vivas
él/ella/Ud.	viva
nosotros	vivamos
vosotros	viváis
ellos/ellas/Uds.	vivan

Quiero que vivas feliz. → I want you to live happily.

4) Stem-Changing Verbs

Stem changes in the **subjunctive** work just like in the **present indicative**, with one rule:

- **-AR and -ER verbs:** stem changes occur in all forms *except nosotros and vosotros*.
- **-IR verbs:** stem changes occur in **all forms**, but in nosotros/vosotros, the stem change **is shortened**.

Examples

Infinitive	Subjunctive Root	Example
pensar (e → ie)	piense	<i>Espero que pienses bien.</i>
volver (o → ue)	vuelva	<i>Dudo que vuelva hoy.</i>
dormir (o → ue / u)	duerma / durmamos	<i>Es posible que durmamos aquí.</i>
pedir (e → i)	pida / pidamos	<i>Quiero que pidamos comida.</i>
sentir (e → ie / i)	sienta / sintamos	<i>Espero que sintamos alegría.</i>

5) Irregular Yo Forms

If a verb has an **irregular yo form** in the present tense, that irregularity **carries into all subjunctive forms**.

Infinitive Yo Form Subjunctive Stem Example

tener	tengo	teng-	<i>Espero que tengas suerte.</i>
salir	salgo	salg-	<i>Dudo que salga temprano.</i>
venir	vengo	veng-	<i>Ojalá que vengas.</i>
decir	digo	dig-	<i>Quiero que digas la verdad.</i>
hacer	hago	hag-	<i>Es necesario que hagas la tarea.</i>
oír	oigo	oig-	<i>Dudo que oigas bien.</i>
poner	pongo	pong-	<i>No creo que pongan música.</i>
traer	traigo	traig-	<i>Espero que traigan postre.</i>

6) Irregular Subjunctive Verbs

Some verbs are **completely irregular** in the subjunctive:

Infinitive	Subjunctive Forms	English
ser	sea, seas, sea, seamos, seáis, sean	to be
ir	vaya, vayas, vaya, vayamos, vayáis, vayan	to go
saber	sepa, sepas, sepa, sepamos, sepáis, sepan	to know
estar	esté, estés, esté, estemos, estéis, estén	to be
dar	dé, des, dé, demos, deis, den	to give
haber	haya (only one form commonly used)	there is / are (subjunctive form)

Examples:

- *Dudo que sea cierto.* → I doubt that it's true.
- *Ojalá que vayas conmigo.* → Hopefully you go with me.
- *Es bueno que estemos aquí.* → It's good that we're here.
- *No creo que haya tiempo.* → I don't think there is time.

7) When to Use the Subjunctive: W.E.I.R.D.O.

Use the **subjunctive** when the main clause expresses one of these six categories:

Letter Category	Examples
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W	Wishes / Wants	<i>Quiero que vengas.</i> (I want you to come.)
E	Emotions	<i>Me alegra que estés aquí.</i> (I'm glad you're here.)
I	Impersonal expressions	<i>Es importante que estudien.</i> (It's important that they study.)
R	Requests / Recommendations	<i>Te recomiendo que leas este libro.</i> (I recommend that you read this book.)
D	Doubt / Denial	<i>Dudo que tenga dinero.</i> (I doubt he has money.)
O	Ojalá (hopefully)	<i>Ojalá que haga sol.</i> (Hopefully it's sunny.)

If the action in the dependent clause is uncertain, desired, or emotional → use the subjunctive.

8) When NOT to Use the Subjunctive

Use the **indicative** if:

- The first clause expresses **certainty or belief**.
- The action **is real or already happened**.

Examples:

- *Creo que ella viene.* → I believe she's coming. (**indicative**)
- *Sé que él tiene razón.* → I know he's right. (**indicative**)
- *No dudo que es verdad.* → I don't doubt it's true. (**indicative**)

Don't use the subjunctive after verbs of certainty like *creer, saber, estar seguro, es cierto, es verdad* unless they're **negated**.

9) Common Subjunctive Trigger Expressions

Wishes / Desires

- *querer que* → to want that
- *desear que* → to wish that
- *esperar que* → to hope that
- *preferir que* → to prefer that

- insistir en que → to insist that

Emotions

- alegrarse de que → to be happy that
- temer que → to fear that
- sentir que → to feel / be sorry that
- sorprenderse de que → to be surprised that
- gustar que → to like that

Doubt / Denial

- dudar que → to doubt that
- no creer que → to not believe that
- no pensar que → to not think that
- negar que → to deny that

Impersonal Expressions

- es importante que
- es posible que
- es mejor que
- es necesario que
- es probable que

10) Subjunctive with Expressions of Emotion

When expressing how you **feel** about another's action or situation, use the subjunctive after *que*.

Examples:

- *Me alegra que estés bien.* → I'm happy that you're well.
- *Temo que no lleguen a tiempo.* → I fear they won't arrive on time.
- *Siento que no puedas venir.* → I'm sorry you can't come.

11) Practice: Complete with the Subjunctive

1. Quiero que tú _____ (venir) conmigo.

2. Es importante que nosotros _____ (estudiar).
3. Dudo que ellos _____ (tener) dinero.
4. Ojalá que _____ (hacer) sol mañana.
5. No creo que ella _____ (saber) la respuesta.
6. Me alegra que tú _____ (estar) aquí.

Answers:

1. vengas
2. estudiemos
3. tengan
4. haga
5. sepa
6. estés

12) Practice: Choose Indicative or Subjunctive

1. Sé que Juan _____ (venir) hoy.
2. Dudo que Juan _____ (venir) hoy.
3. Es cierto que nosotros _____ (tener) tiempo.
4. Es posible que nosotros _____ (tener) tiempo.
5. Creo que tú _____ (ser) honesto.
6. No creo que tú _____ (ser) honesto.

Answers:

1. viene (indicative)
2. venga (subjunctive)
3. tenemos (indicative)
4. tengamos (subjunctive)
5. eres (indicative)
6. seas (subjunctive)

13) Subjunctive with “Ojalá”

Ojalá (from Arabic *inshallah*, “if God wills”) always takes the subjunctive — even if there’s no *que*.

Examples:

- *Ojalá que llueva mañana.* → Hopefully it rains tomorrow.
- *Ojalá ganemos el partido.* → Hopefully we win the game.
- *Ojalá tengas suerte.* → Hopefully you're lucky.

14) Common Pitfalls & Fixes

Wrong	Correct	Why
<i>Quiero tú vas.</i>	<i>Quiero que tú vayas.</i>	Subjunctive clause needs “que.”
<i>Es cierto que venga.</i>	<i>Es cierto que viene.</i>	Certainty → indicative.
<i>No creo que es verdad.</i>	<i>No creo que sea verdad.</i>	Negated belief → subjunctive.
<i>Espero que estás bien.</i>	<i>Espero que estés bien.</i>	Hope → subjunctive.

15) Summary Chart

Use	Formula	Example
Wishes / Wants	<i>Querer que + subjunctive</i>	<i>Quiero que estudies.</i>
Emotion	<i>Me alegra que + subjunctive</i>	<i>Me alegra que vengas.</i>
Impersonal Expression	<i>Es importante que + subjunctive</i>	<i>Es importante que hables.</i>
Request / Recommendation	<i>Recomendar que + subjunctive</i>	<i>Recomiendo que comas bien.</i>
Doubt / Denial	<i>Dudar que + subjunctive</i>	<i>Dudo que tenga tiempo.</i>
Ojalá	<i>Ojalá (que) + subjunctive</i>	<i>Ojalá que haga sol.</i>

Why the Subjunctive Matters

The **present subjunctive** adds richness and precision to communication — allowing you to:

- Express **emotions, opinions, and uncertainty**
- Make **recommendations and requests**
- Use **more natural and authentic Spanish**
- Understand **native-level speech and writing**

It's one of the most powerful ways to move from **basic communication** to **expressive fluency**.

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