Ser and estar

Spanish · British English › Spanish

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The Verb "Ser": Identity, Origin, and Profession

Hello! Today we're diving into one of the most important verbs in Spanish: **ser**. It means 'to be' in English. We use it to describe things that are permanent or unchanging, such as identity, origin, or profession.

Subject + SER (conjugated form) + Description

The verb **ser** is crucial for introducing yourself and others. It will help you describe:

- Identity (who you are): *Yo soy María.* (I am María.)
- Origin (where you're from): *Ella es de España.* (She is from Spain.)
- Profession (what you do): *Soy estudiante.* (I am a student.)

Let's see how **ser** is conjugated in the present tense:

Pronoun	Ser (form)	English Equivalent
Yo	soy	I am
Tú	eres	You (informal singular) are
Él/Ella/Usted	es	He/She/You (formal singular) is/are
Nosotros/Nosotras	somos	We are
Vosotros/Vosotras	sois	You (informal plural, Spain) are
Ellos/Ellas/Ustedes	son	They/You (formal plural) are

Yo soy Juan.
I am Juan.

Ella es de México.
She is from Mexico.

Nosotros somos profesores.
We are teachers.

Watch out! In Spanish, there are two verbs for 'to be': **ser** and **estar**. The verb **ser** (our topic today) is used for PERMANENT characteristics. **Estar** is for temporary states. Don't worry, for now, we're just focusing on **ser**!

Remember the acronym IPO!
Identity (who you are?)
Origin (where you're from?)
Profession (what you do?)

Now that you know the conjugation and main uses of the verb **ser**, you're ready to practise! Buena suerte! (Good luck!)

The Verb 'Estar': Location and Temporary States

In Spanish, there are two verbs that both mean 'to be': ser and estar. Today, we're focusing on **estar**, which is used for temporary things: locations, conditions, and how someone feels. Think of it as 'to be' in a particular moment.

- Location (Position): **Where something or someone is.** E.g., *Estoy en casa.* (I am at home.)
- Condition: **How something is at a particular moment** (e.g., open, closed, clean, dirty, broken). E.g., *La puerta está abierta.* (The door is open.)
- Feelings (Emotion): **How we feel** (e.g., happy, sad, tired, ill). E.g., *Estoy cansado.* (I am tired.)

Subject + **estar (conjugated)** + location / condition / adjective

Pronoun	Estar
yo	estoy
tú	estás
él/ella/usted	está
nosotros/nosotras	estamos
vosotros/vosotras	estáis
ellos/ellas/ustedes	están

El libro está en la mesa.
The book is on the table.

La puerta está abierta.
The door is open.

Yo estoy cansado.
I am tired.

A simple way to remember **estar**: We use it when we're talking about **WHERE** something or someone is, or **HOW** something or someone feels/is at a particular moment. Think: *WHERE AM I? HOW AM I FEELING?*

Remember, **ser** describes permanent characteristics (e.g., nationality, profession, appearance), while **estar** is for temporary states and locations. Don't say: ~~Soy~~ cansado, but **Estoy** cansado!

Practise these forms, and you'll quickly master using **estar**! Good luck!

Part 1 — Choose the correct word

Circle the option that correctly fills each gap.

1. Vosotras _____ contentas.
   You are happy.
   A) estáis B) estamos C) están D) sois

2. ¿Vosotros _____ los nuevos?
   Are you the new ones?
   A) somos B) son C) sois D) estáis

3. Hoy tú _____ muy contento.
   You are very happy today.
   A) estoy B) está C) eres D) estás

4. Mi habitación _____ ordenada.
   My room is tidy.
   A) es B) están C) está D) estoy

5. Nosotros _____ ocupados.
   We are busy.
   A) somos B) estamos C) estáis D) están

6. Nosotros _____ amigos desde niños.
   We have been friends since childhood.
   A) es B) somos C) son D) sois

7. ¿Dónde _____ mis gafas?
   Where are my glasses?
   A) son B) está C) están D) estamos

8. Tú _____ una persona feliz.
   You are a happy person.
   A) es B) eres C) estás D) soy

Part 2 — Fill in the gap

Write the missing word or phrase on the line.

1. Yo _____ estudiante de español.
   I am a Spanish student.

2. Mis hermanos _____ altos, como mi padre.
   My brothers are tall, like my dad.

3. Nosotras _____ profesoras.
   We are teachers.

4. Él _____ camarero.
   He is a waiter.

5. Yo _____ listo para salir.
   I am ready to go.

6. Vosotros _____ altos, como vuestro padre.
   You are tall, like your dad.

Part 3 — Translate

Write each word in Spanish on the line.

1. is (who) › _____

2. they are (who) › _____

3. we are (who) › _____

4. they are (where, how) › _____

5. is (where, how) › _____

6. to be › _____

Part 4 — Match the pairs

Write the letter of the matching translation next to each term.

	Term		Translation
1.	soy	A	to be
2.	somos	B	I am (who)
3.	estáis	C	you are (where, pl.)
4.	es	D	they are (where, how)
5.	estás	E	you are (where, how)
6.	ser	F	we are (who)
7.	está	G	is (who)
8.	están	H	is (where, how)

Answer Key

Part 1 — Choose the correct word

1. A) estáis
2. C) sois
3. D) estás
4. C) está
5. B) estamos
6. B) somos
7. C) están
8. B) eres

Part 2 — Fill in the gap

1. soy
2. son
3. somos
4. es
5. estoy
6. sois

Part 3 — Translate

1. es
2. son
3. somos
4. están
5. está
6. ser

Part 4 — Match the pairs

1. B (I am (who))
2. F (we are (who))
3. C (you are (where, pl.))
4. G (is (who))
5. E (you are (where, how))
6. A (to be)
7. H (is (where, how))
8. D (they are (where, how))