

Subjunctive: uncertainty

Spanish · British English › Spanish

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The Subjunctive Mood (Subjuntivo) for Expressing Doubt, Negation, and Possibility

In Spanish, to talk about uncertainty, doubt, possibility, or negation, we often use the **Subjunctive mood**. This is different from the Indicative mood, which we use for facts and certain events. The Subjunctive typically appears in subordinate clauses when the main clause expresses something that isn't certain.

Expression of Doubt/Negation/Possibility + **que** + Subject (different from the main clause) + **Verb in Subjunctive**

How do we form the **Present Subjunctive**? For regular verbs, the rule is quite straightforward: for verbs ending in **-AR**, we use endings that typically start with **-e**, and for verbs ending in **-ER** and **-IR**, we use endings that typically start with **-a**. Remember, you usually start by removing the infinitive ending and then adding the correct Subjunctive ending.

Pronoun	HABLAR (-AR)	COMER (-ER)	VIVIR (-IR)
yo	hable	coma	viva
tú	hables	comas	vivas
él/ella/usted	hable	coma	viva
nosotros/as	hablemos	comamos	vivamos
vosotros/as	habléis	comáis	viváis
ellos/ellas/ustedes	hablen	coman	vivan

Of course, there are also irregular verbs, such as **ser (sea)**, **estar (esté)**, **ir (vaya)**, **saber (sepa)**, **tener (tenga)**, **hacer (haga)**, **poder (pueda)**, **dar (dé)**, which have their own special Subjunctive forms. These are definitely worth memorising!

- Expressions of Doubt (Duda):
- Dudo que (I doubt that), No creo que (I don't think that), No pienso que (I don't believe that), No estoy seguro/a de que (I'm not sure that), No es cierto que (It's not true that), No es verdad que (It's not true that), Negar que (To deny that)
- Expressions of Possibility (Posibilidad):
- Es posible que (It's possible that), Es probable que (It's probable that), Puede que (It might be that), Quizás / Tal vez (Perhaps / Maybe)

Dudo que ella hable español muy bien.
I doubt that she speaks Spanish very well.

Es posible que llueva mañana.
It's possible that it will rain tomorrow.

No creo que él venga a la fiesta.

I don't think he will come to the party.

Watch out! Expressions like **creer que** (to believe that), **pensar que** (to think that), and **estar seguro/a de que** (to be sure that) use the Indicative mood when they are affirmative (expressing certainty). However, they switch to the **Subjunctive** when they are negative (expressing doubt or negation). For example, **Creo que es verdad** (I believe it's true), but **No creo que sea verdad** (I don't believe it's true).

Top Tip! When you use **Quizás** or **Tal vez** at the beginning of a sentence, you'll almost always use the **Subjunctive**. While you *can* use the Indicative if you want to emphasise that something is very probable, for B1 level, stick to the Subjunctive! If in doubt, Subjunctive is your best mate!

No creo que tenga razón.

~~**No creo que tiene razón.**~~

After the negation "No creo que", we use the Subjunctive mood (tenga) because we are expressing doubt.

The Subjunctive mood is absolutely key to expressing nuance in Spanish. Practise it regularly, and you'll quickly see progress in expressing your thoughts with greater precision and confidence!

Part 1 – Choose the correct word

Circle the option that correctly fills each gap.

1. Tal vez _____ sol mañana.

Maybe it will be sunny tomorrow.

- A) haga B) sea C) hizo D) hagan

2. Tal vez el vuelo _____.

Perhaps the flight will be delayed.

- A) se retrasen B) se retrasaba C) se retrasó D) se retrase

3. No creo que _____ bien la situación.

I don't think you explain the situation well.

- A) explicaste B) explicarás C) explicas D) expliques

4. No creo que _____ bien hoy.

I don't think they'll play well today.

- A) jugarán B) jueguen C) jugaron D) juegan

5. No creo que _____ a tiempo.

I don't think they'll finish on time.

- A) terminen B) terminan C) terminarán D) terminaron

6. Dudo que _____ los regalos.

I doubt they will bring the presents.

- A) traigan B) traen C) traerán D) trajeron

7. No creo que él _____ lo mismo.

I don't think he feels the same.

- A) sienta B) sintió C) sentirá D) siente

8. A lo mejor la comida _____ deliciosa.

Maybe the food is delicious.

- A) sea B) era C) fue D) es

Part 2 – Fill in the gap

Write the missing word or phrase on the line.

1. Dudo que ellos _____ participar.
I doubt they want to participate.
2. Negamos que _____ siempre.
We deny that they always win.
3. No estoy seguro de que _____ una carta.
I'm not sure they are writing a letter.
4. Es posible que _____ el autobús.
They might miss the bus.
5. No es cierto que _____ la mesa.
It's not true that they are setting the table.
6. No es verdad que _____ todos los días.
It's not true that he works every day.

Part 3 – Translate

Write each word in Spanish on the line.

1. to call › _____
2. to listen › _____
3. to prefer › _____
4. to close › _____
5. to pay › _____
6. to think › _____

Part 4 – Match the pairs

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

Term	Translation
1. cambiar	A to change
2. ir	B to comprehend
3. saber	C to know
4. entender	D perhaps
5. quizá	E to work
6. estudiar	F to be
7. estar	G to study
8. trabajar	H to go

Answer Key

Part 1 — Choose the correct word

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1. A) haga | 5. A) terminen |
| 2. D) se retrase | 6. A) traigan |
| 3. D) expliques | 7. A) sienta |
| 4. B) jueguen | 8. D) es |

Part 2 — Fill in the gap

- | | |
|-------------|------------|
| 1. quieran | 4. pierdan |
| 2. ganen | 5. pongan |
| 3. escriban | 6. trabaje |

Part 3 — Translate

- | | |
|-------------|-----------|
| 1. llamar | 4. cerrar |
| 2. escuchar | 5. pagar |
| 3. preferir | 6. pensar |

Part 4 — Match the pairs

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. A (to change) | 5. D (perhaps) |
| 2. H (to go) | 6. G (to study) |
| 3. C (to know) | 7. F (to be) |
| 4. B (to comprehend) | 8. E (to work) |