

# Subjunctive Verbs in dependent (noun) clauses

## Overview

The subjunctive is used in the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of a 2-clause sentence that satisfies these requirements (the first clause uses the indicative or imperative mood).

1. There are 2 persons (change of subject) and 2 actions.
2. The two clauses are connected with a conjunction (usually “que”)
3. The first clause triggers the subjunctive in the second clause by using a *subjunctive indicator* (*WEDDING*)
  - a. Wish or will
  - b. Emotion
  - c. Doubt
  - d. Denial
  - e. Impersonal Expressions
  - f. Negation
  - g. General Expressions (ojalá, tal vez, etc.)

Yo creo que voy a escribir una carta a María. (indicative)

Muchas personas dudan que Pablo esté diciendo la verdad. (subjunctive)

## Formation

The basic rule with conjugation is that you reverse endings: For verbs ending in -ar, the normal “-er” (e, es, e, emos, éis, en) endings are used. For verbs ending in -er or -ir, the normal “-ar” (a, as, a, amos, áis, an) endings are used.

Please note the following exceptions:

1. For verbs that have an *irregular-yo form* in the present tense, the new endings are added onto the irregular stem:

verb	irregular yo form	Subjunctive forms:
tener:	yo tengo	tenga, tengas, tenga, tengamos, tengáis, tengan
venir:	yo vengo	venga, vengas, venga, vengamos, vengáis, vengan
salir:	yo salgo	salga, salgas, salga, salgamos, salgáis, salgan
decir	yo digo	diga, digas, diga, digamos, digáis, digan

Other verbs that follow this pattern (with the yo-subjunctive form) include:

hacer (haga)	oír (oiga)	poner (ponga)	traer(traiga)
conducir (conduzca)	traducir (traduzca)	conocer (conozca)	

2. For stem-changing verbs, the stem-change occurs just as it does in the present-tense, with the new subjunctive endings.

pensar: **piense, pienses, piense, pensemos, penséis, piensen**  
 dormir: **duerma, duermas, duerma, durmamos, durmáis, duerman**  
 servir: **sirva, sirvas, sirva, sirvamos, sirváis, sirvan**

3. There are some verbs which will require spelling changes to maintain the sound (gar, car, zar, etc.) Be careful with the letters g, c, qu, z, and j.

sacar: saque, saques, etc.                      jugar: juegue, juegues, etc.  
 empezar: empiece, etc.                      fingir: finja, finjas, etc.

4. The following verbs have irregular forms in the subjunctive:

ser: sea, seas, sea, seamos, seáis, sean  
 ir: vaya, vayas, vaya, vayamos, vayáis, vayan  
 estar: esté, estés, esté, estemos, estéis, estén  
 saber: sepa, sepas, sepa, sepamos, sepáis, sepan  
 dar: dé, des, dé, demos, deis, den

### Formation of the past (imperfect) subjunctive

The formation of the past subjunctive is even easier than the present. First of all, you need to find the 3<sup>rd</sup>-person plural (ellos/ellas form) of the verb in the preterit tense. Remove “ron” from this form and add the “cheerleading” endings (Remember, “RON” is a lousy name for a cheerleader).

ra        ‘ramos (needs accent on letter prior to the “r”  
 ras        rais  
 ra        ran

Following this rule, there are no irregulars in this form.

estudiar: estudiara, estudiaras, estudiara, estudiáramos, estudiarais, estudiaran  
 vivir: viviera, vivieras, viviera, viviéramos, vivierais, vivieran  
 tener: tuviera, tuvieras, tuviera, tuviéramos, tuvierais, tuvieran  
 ir: fuera, fueras, fuera, fuéramos, fuerais, fueran  
 haber (past perfect subjunctive): hubiera, hubieras, hubiera, hubiéramos, hubierais, hubieran

### When to use the past or the present subjunctive:

If the main clause of the sentence is in this tense (and all other indicators point to the subjunctive)...	Use this subjunctive
present, future, simple future, command, present perfect, future perfect	Present subjunctive or present perfect subjunctive*
preterit, imperfect, conditional, past perfect, conditional perfect	Imperfect subjunctive or past perfect subjunctive*

\*Use perfect subjunctives to express prior actions within a tense (crossing two time periods).

*There is an alternative way to form the past subjunctive which is often used in literatura. Usage and meaning are exactly the same. For the other form, drop “ron” and add: se, ses, se, ‘semos, seis, sen as in “tuviese, tuvieses, tuviese, tuviésemos, tuvieseis, tuviesen”*

Mi profesor quiere que haga la tarea.

Mi profesor espera que haya hecho la tarea.

Mi mamá quería que yo hiciera (hiciese) la tarea.

Ella dudaba que yo hubiera (hubiese) hecho la tarea.

Sería bueno si vinieras (vinieses) más tarde.

### Subjunctive indicators:

1. **Will or wish.** Use the subjunctive after a verb or expression that refers to an attempt to influence someone's behavior or attitude, either in commands, demands, recommendations or suggestions.

El profesor desea que **aprendamos** el subjuntivo hoy.

Es importante que **hable** muy fuerte en la presencia del abuelo.

Mi madre sugiere que **deje** mi hábito de fumar.

Roberto quiere que **vayamos** a un restaurante para la próxima clase.

The following verbs and expressions express influence:

aconsejar	mandar	decir	pedir
dejar	permitir	desear	preferir
esperar	prohibir	exigir	querer
recomendar	insistir	rogar	sugerir

When a fact is stated, the indicative should be used. (no influence)

Pablo dice que la clase **empieza** a las siete y media. (states a fact)

El profesor insiste que la librería **tiene** el libro requerido. (reports a fact)

2. **Emotions in Noun Clauses.** When verbs are used that evoke an emotional or subjective response, the subjunctive is used in the dependent clause.

Es triste que no **conozcas** a mi Padre.

Siento que no **me entiendas** muy bien.

Verbs of emotion:

alegrar(se)	quejarse	gustar	sentir
lamentar	sorprender	molestar	entristecer(se)

3. **Impersonal expressions** which express opinion, feeling, personal views or prejudices are also followed by subjunctive.

Es +	agradable	extraño	normal
	bueno	increíble	raro
	curioso	lamentable	una lástima

deplorable  
estupendo

malo  
natural

vergonzoso

4. **Doubt, disbelief, denial, negation vs. certainty and belief**

- a. Always use subjunctive when the speaker expresses doubt, denial, uncertainty or disbelief.

Dudo que **podamos** aprender el español en dos semanas.

No es seguro que **vayamos** a ganar el partido de fútbol americano hoy.

- b. When expressions of certainty or belief are expressed, the indicative should be used.

Estoy seguro que **vamos** a ganar hoy.

Creo que lo que me **dice** es la verdad.

Belief vs. disbelief. The following expressions indicate belief (indicative) or doubt (subjunctive).

**Indicative (belief/certainty)**

creer  
no dudar  
estar seguro  
no negar  
pensar  
es claro  
es cierto  
es evidente  
es indudable  
es seguro  
es verdad

**Subjunctive**

**(disbelief/doubt/denial/negation)**

no creer  
dudar  
no estar seguro  
negar  
no pensar  
no es claro  
no es cierto  
no es evidente  
no es indudable  
no es seguro  
no es verdad

5. General expressions:

- a. Subjunctive may be used in sentences with a subject and a verb that stand alone. Such sentences express desire or hope (also in sentences where **espero** or a like verb is implied).

Que te **mejores**.

¡**Viva** Chile!

- b. Subjunctive is also used after Ojalá (I hope).

Ojalá (que) **termine** mi tarea este año.

- c. Use the subjunctive to emphasize doubt in independent clauses after **probablemente, a lo mejor, quizá(s)** and **tal vez**.

Probablemente **escriba** sobre la primera guerra mundial.

Tal vez **vayamos** a Disneyland este año.