

Spanish Verb Conjugation - The Basics

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Dated: Jan 21, 2010

The importance of understanding Spanish verb conjugation cannot be underestimated. Having an excellent knowledge of basic Spanish verb formation will provide a solid foundation for future studies.

Spanish verb forms are, on the whole quite regimented and easy to learn. There are really three verb types you need to know; regular, irregular and reflexive verbs; and each verb, irrespective of verb type, will have one of these three endings; -ar, -er and -ir.

All Spanish verb forms WITHOUT exception will belong to one of either -ar, -er or -ir groups, but it is with the regular verbs we will start.

Regular Spanish Verbs Forms:

The regular group of verbs is by far the biggest of the three groups of verb types with the verbs that end with -ar the largest. All regular verbs follow the same pattern as laid out by the grammatical rules governing regular Spanish verbs, and they are;

When the stem of the verb is referred to it generally means, especially with regular verbs, the verb minus it's ending, for example the stem of hablar (to speak) would be habl-.

(we will use the regular -ar verb hablar for this example)

In this example of the present tense conjugation of hablar, a regular -ar verb; you can see that the stem is used with every pronoun but the endings are different; this makes Spanish, what is lovingly called, a prodrop language; which means that in most cases the pronoun can be dropped as the verb ending will be enough to show who is performing the task.

Obviously, there will be times of ambiguity and when this is the case the pronoun is usually used.

Yo habl-o I speak

Tú habl-as You speak

Él/ Ella/ Usted habl-a He/ She/ It speaks (also you speak [singular polite]when Usted is used)

Nosotros habl-amos We speak

Vosotros habl-áis You speak

Ellos/ Ellas/ Ustedes habl-an They/ You speak ([plural polite]when Ustedes is used)

This example only shows the present tense for a regular -ar verb; but all the other tenses have their specific patterns of formation too, the main thing to remember is that all verbs that are designated regular will follow these patterns; the same can be said for -er and -ir verbs; although their endings differ from those of -ar verbs.