

B1 Spanish Grammar Essentials

Core Grammar Topics, Short Explanations & Practical Examples

Level: B1

Grammar Summary

Peninsular Spanish Focus

B1 Grammar Quick Reference: This document covers fundamental B1-level Spanish structures, focusing on past tenses contrast, expressing feelings and opinions, future and conditional forms, and introductory subjunctive structures.

TOPIC 01

1. El pretérito imperfecto (comía / hablaba)

Used to describe ongoing past states, habits, routines, backgrounds, and weather conditions in the past without emphasizing their start or end.

Cuando era niño, vivía en un pueblo pequeño y jugaba mucho en la calle.

(When I was a child, I lived in a small town and played a lot in the street.)

TOPIC 02

2. Contrast: Pretérito indefinido vs. Pretérito imperfecto

The **imperfecto** sets the background scene or ongoing action, while the **indefinido** expresses specific, completed events that interrupt or take place within that background.

Caminaba por el parque cuando, de repente, empezó a llover.

(I was walking through the park when suddenly it started to rain.)

TOPIC 03

3. El pretérito pluscuamperfecto (había comido)

Expresses an action completed prior to another past action or reference point. Formed with **había, habías, había, habíamos, habíais, habían** + past participle.

Cuando llegué a la estación, el tren ya había salido.

(When I arrived at the station, the train had already left.)

TOPIC 04

4. Presente de subjuntivo: Forms and expression of desires/wishes

Formed by taking the *yo* form of the present indicative and swapping vowel endings (-ar → -e, -er/-ir → -a). Used after structures expressing wishes or desires with a change of subject (*Quiero que...*, *Ojalá...*).

Quiero que vengas a mi fiesta de cumpleaños este sábado.

(I want you to come to my birthday party this Saturday.)

TOPIC 05

5. Subjunctive vs. Indicative with feelings and opinions

Verbs of feeling (*me alegra que*, *me molesta que*) and negative value judgements / opinions (*no creo que*, *es importante que*) trigger the **subjunctive** when subjects differ.

No creo que sea una buena idea salir con esta lluvia.

(I don't think it is a good idea to go out with this rain.)

TOPIC 06

6. Futuro simple (hablaré, comerás) & expressing probability

Used to make predictions, talk about future plans, or express hypothesis and probability in the present moment (*¿Qué hora será?*).

El año que viene me mudaré a Madrid para trabajar.

(Next year I will move to Madrid to work.)

TOPIC 07

7. Condicional simple (hablaría, comería) for polite requests & advice

Used to give advice (*Yo que tú...* / *Yo en tu lugar...*), express hypothetical desires, or make polite requests.

Yo en tu lugar hablaría directamente con el director.

(In your place, I would speak directly with the director.)

TOPIC 08

8. Common verbal periphrases (llegar a, dejar de, volver a, seguir + gerundio)

Combinations of conjugated auxiliary verbs + infinitive or gerund that express nuance: **dejar de** (stop doing), **volver a** (re-do), **seguir + gerundio** (continue doing).

He dejado de fumar y sigo haciendo deporte todas las semanas.

(I have stopped smoking and I keep doing sports every week.)

TOPIC 09

9. Relative clauses: *que, donde, quien, el/la que, lo que*

Used to link ideas and describe antecedents without repeating nouns. **Lo que** refers to an abstract idea or entire clause.

Esa es la cafetería donde nos conocimos hace dos años.

(That is the café where we met two years ago.)

TOPIC 10

10. Impersonal and passive 'se' (Se habla, Se vende)

Used when the agent performing the action is general, unknown, or irrelevant (e.g., rules, customs, announcements).

En España se cena bastante tarde en comparación con otros países.

(In Spain people eat dinner quite late compared to other countries.)

TOPIC 11

11. Discourse connectors (como, aunque, por lo tanto, así que)

Used to structure oral and written text. **Como** introduces cause at the beginning of a sentence; **aunque** introduces concession; **así que** introduces result.

Como no tenía dinero, me quedé en casa, aunque mis amigos salieron.

(Since I had no money, I stayed at home, although my friends went out.)