

STOP START SPANISH

BOOK 3 / ADVANCED / C1-C2

Okay... maybe study a little.



The Advanced Reading Companion

A little clarity. A lot more story.

Quick grammar help for Stop Learning Spanish.

Start Reading It. Keep it nearby, look up what you need,
and get back to the good part.

NO POP QUIZ. NO GOLD STARS REQUIRED.

Just enough help to keep you reading.

 START HERE

Still here for the story.

A quick reference for the moments when the meaning almost clicks.

At this level, the plot is only part of the pleasure. You are also hearing distance, doubt, understatement and the things a character carefully avoids saying. This pack helps with those details. A short detour is fine. Moving permanently into a grammar chart is probably less fun.

THE 30-SECOND DETOUR

Find the one pattern that is slowing you down. Check the matching page, reread the sentence, then return to the story. You are allowed to leave the rest of the chart alone.

Your very small table of contents

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Print only what you need, or use these clickable links on screen. For vocabulary, check your book's Glosario. For the explanation connected to a story, revisit its Aprendizaje Clave.

IMPERFECT SUBJUNCTIVE / MEANING

A wish in a past story.

A past request, wish or purpose often brings the imperfect subjunctive into the sentence that follows.

The past frame	Example / meaning
quería que / wanted...	Quería que abrieran el taller. She wanted them to open the workshop.
pidió que / asked...	Pidió que no firmaran sin él. He asked them not to sign without him.
para que / so that...	Lo dejó escrito para que lo recordaran. She left it in writing so they would remember it.
antes de que / before...	Marta llegó antes de que abrieran. Marta arrived before they opened.

Quiero que vengan. / Quería que vinieran.

I want them to come. / I wanted them to come. The request shifts into a past viewpoint.

PAST FORM DOES NOT ALWAYS MEAN PAST EVENT

Quisiera hablar con usted. = "I would like to speak with you." **Si tuviera tiempo, iría.** = "If I had time, I would go." An imperfect-subjunctive form can express politeness or an imagined situation now.

Read the relationship: before, wanted, asked, so that. That often tells you more than trying to translate the subjunctive ending on its own.

IMPERFECT SUBJUNCTIVE / FORMS

Two endings. Same doorway.

The -ra and -se forms both appear in subordinate clauses. Recognize either without stopping the scene.

Start with the ellos/ellas preterite form, remove **-ron**, then add an imperfect-subjunctive ending. **Tuvieron → tuvie-** → **tuviera / tuviese**. This also works with irregular preterite stems.

Who?	-ra form / tener	-se form / tener
yo	tuviera	tuviese
tú	tuvieras	tuvieses
él / ella / usted	tuviera	tuviese
nosotros/as	tuviéramos	tuviésemos
vosotros/as	tuvierais	tuvieseis
ellos / ellas / ustedes	tuvieran	tuviesen

Infinitive	They, preterite	They, past subjunctive
abrir	abrieron	abrieran / abriesen
decir	dijeron	dijeran / dijesen
ir / ser	fueron	fueran / fuesen
hacer	hicieron	hicieran / hiciesen

THE ACCENT HELPS YOU SPOT “WE”

Look for **tuviéramos**, **abriéramos**, **dijéramos** or their -se partners: **tuviésemos**, **abriésemos**, **dijésemos**. The accent is part of the form, not an optional flourish.

In these clauses, -ra and -se usually do the same job. Learn polite quisiera as a phrase.

PAST COUNTERFACTUALS

If only we had...

This pattern imagines a different past: a missed chance, a regret or a result that did not happen.

Si hubieran llegado a tiempo, habrían vendido todo.

If they had arrived on time, they would have sold everything.

The common pattern:

si + hubiera/hubiese + participle → habría + participle.

The first half imagines a past condition; the second imagines its result.

Who?	If... / haber	Would have... / haber
yo	hubiera / hubiese	habría
tú	hubieras / hubieses	habrías
él / ella / usted	hubiera / hubiese	habría
nosotros/as	hubiéramos / hubiésemos	habríamos
vosotros/as	hubierais / hubieseis	habríais
ellos / ellas / ustedes	hubieran / hubiesen	habrían

Add an unchanged participle: *tenido, llegado, vendido, hecho, dicho...* **Si hubiera traído más, habríamos ganado más.** = "If I had brought more, we would have earned more."

NOW VS. AN ALTERNATIVE PAST

Si tuviera tiempo, iría. = "If I had time, I would go."

Si hubiera tenido tiempo, habría ido. = "If I had had time, I would have gone." The second looks back at an opportunity that has passed.

Another valid result: Si lo hubiera sabido, hubiera ido can mean "If I had known, I would have gone." *Hubiera* can replace *habría* in the result of this past counterfactual pattern.

CONCESSIONS / MOOD

Even so. Even if.

A concession acknowledges an obstacle, then says the main point still stands.

The speaker's view	Example / meaning
Presenting a fact / indicative	Aunque llueve, abrimos. Although it is raining, we are opening.
Leaving it hypothetical / subjunctive	Aunque llueva, abriremos. Even if it rains, we will open.
Setting a fact aside / subjunctive	Aunque sea caro, lo compraré. Even if it is expensive, I will buy it. The cost may already be known; it is not decisive.

SUBJUNCTIVE CAN MEAN “THAT DOES NOT CHANGE MY POINT”

Do not reduce aunque + subjunctive to “the speaker does not know.” The speaker may know perfectly well and simply treat the information as irrelevant to the result. Check the surrounding conversation.

Other useful connectors	Example / meaning
a pesar de que / despite the fact that	A pesar de que hace frío, hay cola. Despite the cold, there is a line.
si bien / although, while	Si bien es tarde, la terraza sigue abierta. Although it is late, the terrace is still open.
por mucho que / no matter how much	Por mucho que insista, no firmaremos. No matter how much he insists, we will not sign.

REGISTER / POLITE DISTANCE

Polite has a purpose.

A character's wording can create distance, show respect, avoid pressure or make a request easier to accept.

Tool	Example / what it does
usted + third-person forms	¿Puede ayudarme? Can you help me? A formal singular "you."
quisiera / I would like	Quisiera solicitar una reunión. I would like to request a meeting.
me gustaría / I would like	Me gustaría hablar del horario. I would like to discuss the schedule.
si fuera posible / if possible	Si fuera posible, agradecería su respuesta. If possible, I would appreciate your reply.

Dígame la verdad. / ¿Podría decirme la verdad?

Tell me the truth. / Could you tell me the truth? Both can address usted; the second gives the request more breathing room.

FORMAL DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY MEAN GENTLE

Usted marks a form of address; it does not guarantee warmth. A command can still be abrupt. Listen to the sentence, the relationship and the scene together.

Useful letter openings: Estimada directora: / Estimado director: ("Dear director"). **Le escribo para...** ("I am writing to you to...") states the purpose plainly. Politeness does not require three paragraphs before getting to the point.

VOSEO / ARGENTINA

You, with a local accent.

In Argentina, *vos* is an ordinary familiar singular “you.” It is a regional pattern, not a mistake to fix.

With tú	With vos / Argentina	English
tú hablas	vos hablás	you speak
tú comes	vos comés	you eat
tú vives	vos vivís	you live
tú eres	vos sos	you are
tú tienes	vos tenés	you have
tú puedes	vos podés	you can
tú sabes	vos sabés	you know

A familiar command	Meaning
Decime la verdad.	Tell me the truth.
Pedí un cambio de turno.	Ask for a shift change.
Vení un momento.	Come here for a moment.

VOS STILL GOES WITH TE AND TU

Vos te llevaste tu libro. = “You took your book with you.” The subject is *vos*, but the object/reflexive pronoun is *te* and the possessive is *tu*. After a preposition, you may see **con vos** (“with you”).

These examples follow common Argentine usage. Other countries have their own voseo patterns. In a story, *vos* can help you hear a character’s roots or the familiarity between speakers.

ADVANCED REPORTED SPEECH

The message behind the words.

A report can preserve a statement, pass on a request or summarize an explanation. The reporting verb tells you which.

What is being reported?	Example / meaning
Statement / indicative	Dijo que estaba mejor. She said she was feeling better. This reports her claim; it does not prove it.
Request / subjunctive	Pidió que descansara. She asked him to rest. This passes on a request.
Advice / subjunctive	Recomendó que volviera el lunes. She recommended that he return on Monday.
A future seen from the past	Dijo que volvería al día siguiente. She said she would return the next day.

“Descansa.” → Le dijo que descansara.

“Rest.” → She told him to rest. Decir can introduce an instruction as well as a statement.

MOOD DOES NOT GIVE YOU A TRUTH SCORE

Indicative can report a claim the narrator doubts. Subjunctive can report a sincere request. Ask what speech act is being relayed: an assertion, an order, a wish or advice?

Keep the time and place straight: in a later report, ayer may become el día anterior, mañana may become al día siguiente, and aquí may become allí. Shift them when the reporting viewpoint changes.

Summarize faithfully: trim repetition, but keep the original speaker and the strength of the claim. A suggestion and a promise are different messages.

PASSIVE / IMPERSONAL

Who did it? Does it matter?

Spanish can put an action or its result first, leaving the person behind it unnamed.

Pattern	Example / what to notice
Passive with se	Se aprueba el acta. The minutes are approved. Acta is singular: aprueba.
Passive with se, plural	Se aprueban las propuestas. The proposals are approved. Propuestas is plural: aprueban.
Impersonal se	Se trabaja hasta tarde. People work until late. There is no grammatical subject; the verb is singular.
Impersonal se with a person	Se convocó a los vecinos. The neighbors were called to the meeting. With a + people, this impersonal verb stays singular.

El acta fue firmada por la presidenta.

The minutes were signed by the chair. Ser + participle puts the document first and can name the person responsible with por.

THE PARTICIPLE MATCHES IN A SER PASSIVE

El acuerdo fue aprobado. / Las propuestas fueron aprobadas.

The agreement was approved. / The proposals were approved.

Unlike after haber, the participle agrees with the passive subject.

A passive can leave the agent out too: **El acuerdo fue aprobado.** Naming an agent is possible, not compulsory. In meeting notes, the decision may matter more than the individual actor.

HYPOTHESES / NEXT STEPS

A proposal is not a decision.

A careful speaker distinguishes what is agreed, what is possible and what would follow from a condition.

Wording	Example / what it signals
si + present indicative	Si se aprueba, se publicará mañana. If it is approved, it will be published tomorrow. A live condition, not a completed approval.
habría que + infinitive	Habría que avisarle al portero. We would need to let the caretaker know. A tentative necessity.
se podría + infinitive	Se podría votar otra vez el viernes. Another vote could be held on Friday. A possibility.
si + past subjunctive	Si se aprobara, se publicaría mañana. If it were approved, it would be published tomorrow. An imagined outcome.

DO NOT PROMOTE “COULD” TO “WILL”

Se podría votar proposes a possible vote. **Se votará** says a vote will take place. The wording can be doing real work in a meeting, letter or argument.

Fue aprobado por unanimidad.

It was approved unanimously. Por unanimidad tells you how the decision was reached, not the name of an agent.

A useful reading question: did this happen, has it been agreed, or is someone proposing it? Tense, mood and words such as *podría* help you keep those apart.

READING RESCUE

Follow the meaning.

The grammar can help you hear the story more clearly. It does not need to become the story.

01 / Find the viewpoint

Who is speaking, and from what point in time? A past form may belong to a past request or an imagined present. Check pages 3-5.

02 / Hear the relationship

Is the character conceding a point, softening a request or speaking with familiar vos? Wording carries the social meaning. Check pages 6-8.

03 / Separate claim from outcome

Is this a report, a completed decision or a proposed next step? Do not turn a claim into proof or a possibility into a promise. Check pages 9-11.

PUT IT BACK IN THE SCENE

Aunque el plan sea caro, se podría aprobar si hubiera apoyo.

Even if the plan is expensive, it could be approved if there were support.

The cost is set aside as an obstacle. Approval is only a possibility. Support is an imagined condition. The sentence has not approved anything yet.

Close the guide. Open the story.

That is plenty of studying for now.