

The Present Tense

Now that we have memorized the Spanish pronouns, let's look at verbs. In English, we use different verb forms, depending on who is doing the action. For example:

Bob walks fast.

We both walk fast.

Notice that in the first sentence, the verb has an "s" on the end of it, and in the second, it doesn't. This distinction, albeit very subtle, helps us understand *who is doing the action*. This is even more distinctive and helpful in Spanish, because there is a different ending for each person.

In order to demonstrate this, let's examine the verb "to speak" in both English and Spanish, paired with the pronouns. The pronoun "y'all" is used here, although considered improper by many English speakers, because it implies informality and is the most effective and precise substitute for *vosotros*.

TO SPEAK (pronoun/verb form)				HABLAR (pronoun/verb form)			
I	speak	we	speak	yo	hablo	nosotros, nosotras	hablamos
you	speak	y'all	speak	tú	hablas	vosotros, vosotras	habláis
he, she	speaks	they	speak	él, ella ud.	habla	ellos, ellas uds.	hablan

Notice that in English, all the verb forms are the same except the 3rd person singular—the "he/she" form. So:

I, you, we, you all, they... speak. BUT he, she... speaks.

In Spanish, on the other hand, every pronoun has its own, unique verb form. This is powerful. The ending of each verb form implies who's doing the action, so often we do not even need to use the pronoun at all! For example:

Nosotros hablamos español.
We speak Spanish.

Hablamos español.
(We, implied by the *-amos* ending) speak Spanish.

So, we conclude that a verb is composed of two parts: the root, which conveys the meaning—the action itself—and the ending, which conveys who is doing that action. So, if **HABLAMOS** means "we talk," **HABL** implies "talk" and **AMOS** implies "we".

Although you must use pronouns in English... in Spanish, it is often unnecessary, shrinking the number of words needed to express a complete thought or full sentence. Spanish is a very efficient language!

See if you can determine who is doing the action by looking at the verb endings and the chart above.

Bailar means to dance.
Cantar means to sing.
Comprar means to buy.

Translate <

¿Bailas el tango?
Cantamos mucho.
Compró tacos grandes.

Let's go on to the next big idea. In Spanish, there are three main kinds of verbs: those that end in the letters AR, those that end with ER, and those that end with IR. For example:

bailar
cantar

beber
comer

decidir
vivir

Each kind of verb has its own set of endings, but they all follow a similar pattern, as seen here:

all -AR verbs		all -ER verbs		all -IR verbs	
- o	- amos	- o	- emos	- o	- imos
- as	- áis	- es	- éis	- es	- ís
- a	- an	- e	- en	- e	- en

Quiz

A. Fill in the correct pronouns for each phrase, below.

_____ hablo español.	_____ bebe pepsi.	_____ recibes el dinero.
_____ cantamos "La cucaracha."	_____ comes mucho.	_____ viven en Vancouver.
_____ bailas rápido.	_____ vendéis papel.	_____ decido estudiar.
_____ compran burritos.	_____ comprendes?	_____ servimos tacos.

B. Translate the sentences and add the correct verb forms in Spanish.

Yo [talk] con los amigos.	[<i>hablo</i>]	<i>I talk with friends.</i>
Tú [buy] el carro.	[]
Ella [dances] muy bien.	[]
Nosotros [eat] los frijoles.	[]
Vosotros [decide] mirar la televisión.	[]
Ellos [live] en la casa roja.	[]
Yo [sell] los libros.	[]
Ana y Yo [receive] el paquete.	[]
¿Tú [understand] inglés?	[]
Las chicas [serve] los tacos.	[]
Alejandro y tú [drink] el agua.	[]
Ella [sings] muy bien.	[]