UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER

SPANISH WRITING TIPS

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WHY IS IT DIFFICULT?

WRITING IN ANY LANGUAGE HAS ITS CHALLENGES

Different languages have grammar rules, spelling changes, special pronunciations, the list goes on. This presentation is to help out with those issues you may have for a student new to writing in Spanish or a more advanced writing student who may need a brief review.
WHAT TOPICS WILL BE COVERED?

Conjugation of verbs

Common Irregular Verbs

Word Choice

Sentence Structure

Feminine vs. Masculine

“por vs. para” & “ser vs. estar”
CONJUGATION OF VERBS

The conjugation of verbs in your writing reflect who the words you write refer to and the interpretation of your work, so it is important to conjugate verbs correctly to make sure your writing makes sense to the reader of the text.

There are 3 types of verb conjugation endings in the Spanish language:

- ar, -er, -ir

Depending on the verb tense you are trying to use, you will need to change the endings of the verbs to reflect the time period. There are several types of verb tenses such as present, imperfect, preterite, future, conditional, etc.

Below are examples of the conjugations of three verbs with the endings -ar, -er, and -ir.

### beber: drink

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present Indicative:</th>
<th>Imperfect:</th>
<th>Preterite:</th>
<th>Future:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yo bebo</td>
<td>yo bebí</td>
<td>yo bebiste</td>
<td>yo beber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tú bebes</td>
<td>tú bebiste</td>
<td>tú bebiste</td>
<td>tú beber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>él/usted bebe</td>
<td>él/usted bebí</td>
<td>él/usted bebiste</td>
<td>él/usted beber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nosotros bebemos</td>
<td>nosotros bebímos</td>
<td>nosotros bebímos</td>
<td>nosotros bebermos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vosotros bebéis</td>
<td>vosotros bebíes</td>
<td>vosotros bebíes</td>
<td>vosotros beberás</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ellos/ustedes beben</td>
<td>ellos/ustedes bebían</td>
<td>ellos/ustedes bebían</td>
<td>ellos/ustedes beberán</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### vivir: be alive, live

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present Indicative:</th>
<th>Imperfect:</th>
<th>Preterite:</th>
<th>Future:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yo vivo</td>
<td>yo viví</td>
<td>yo viviste</td>
<td>yo vive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tú vivas</td>
<td>tú vivís</td>
<td>tú viviste</td>
<td>tú vive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>él/usted vive</td>
<td>él/usted vivís</td>
<td>él/usted viviste</td>
<td>él/usted vive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nosotros vivimos</td>
<td>nosotros vivímos</td>
<td>nosotros vivímos</td>
<td>nosotros vive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vosotros vivís</td>
<td>vosotros vivíes</td>
<td>vosotros vivíes</td>
<td>vosotros vive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ellos/ustedes vivan</td>
<td>ellos/ustedes vivían</td>
<td>ellos/ustedes vivían</td>
<td>ellos/ustedes vive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### chocar: collide, impinge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present Indicative:</th>
<th>Imperfect:</th>
<th>Preterite:</th>
<th>Future:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yo choque</td>
<td>yo choqueó</td>
<td>yo choqueaste</td>
<td>yo choque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tú chocas</td>
<td>tú choqueás</td>
<td>tú choqueaste</td>
<td>tú choque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>él/usted choque</td>
<td>él/usted choqueó</td>
<td>él/usted choqueaste</td>
<td>él/usted choque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nosotros chocamos</td>
<td>nosotros choqueamos</td>
<td>nosotros choqueaste</td>
<td>nosotros choque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vosotros choquen</td>
<td>vosotros choqueén</td>
<td>vosotros choqueaste</td>
<td>vosotros choque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ellos/ustedes choquen</td>
<td>ellos/ustedes choquen</td>
<td>ellos/ustedes choqueaste</td>
<td>ellos/ustedes choque</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://www.conjugation.org/
COMMON IRREGULAR VERBS

In the Spanish language there are several irregular verbs that do not follow the basic conjugations that you reviewed in the previous slide. It is important to conjugate these verbs correctly to interpret the correct meanings of words in the writing or the audience can be confused or sentences misinterpreted.

There are many verbs considered irregular in the Spanish language. They are sometimes referred to as stem changers. This means these verbs have special spelling rules when they are conjugated that do not follow the standard spelling rules.

Here are a few irregular verbs: ser, haber, estar, tener, haver, poder, decir, ir, ver, dar, saber, querer, llegar, poner, parecer, creer, seguir, encontrar, venir, pensar, salir, volver, conocer, sentir, contar, empezar, buscar, escribir, perder, producir, entender, pedir, recordar, aparecer, conseguir, comenzar, servir, sacar, mantener, leer, caer, abrir, oír, convertir, etc.

Below is a link that can be of help with identifying other irregular verbs:
http://www.linguasorb.com/spanish/verbs/irregular-verbs/2

This link provides a list of irregular verbs and access to the conjugations of those verbs correctly.
**WORD CHOICE**

Word choice differentiates and can sometimes be confusing to figure out which noun or verb to use in a second language. Some words have complete opposite definitions, so it is important to be 100% sure of the right verb/noun/word choice. Below are some resources to do so.

To find direct translations from English to Spanish, this link leads to Word Reference which will give accurate options and examples of word usage to select the right translation word.

Wordreference.com

This link below is a Spanish dictionary to type in any Spanish word and receive its definition in Spanish:

http://dle.rae.es/?w=diccionario&origen=REDLE

This resource provides the option to identify any Spanish errors by inserting the sentence you have written and alerting you to any errors found:

http://spanishchecker.com/

**It is always best to consult with your course instructor or writing center tutor for serious error concerns.**
SENTENCE STRUCTURE

The sentence structure changes somewhat in Spanish, but still has the same elements any English sentence would require such as a verb and subject and can also contain elements such as adverbs. The word arrangement or order is where the changes are seen.

The sentence structure can vary somewhat from language to language. There are a few tricks when it comes to Spanish to be grammatically correct. (In some cases there is flexibility, but the following are just some helping tips)

Each sentence needs a subject and a verb.

Adjectives come after the noun in Spanish.

Adverbs do the same thing in Spanish as they do in English.

To say the opposite or negative of a sentence, place “no” in front of the verb being used.

Source: http://www.fluentu.com/spanish/blog/learn-basic-spanish-sentences/
FEMININE OR MASCULINE

There are feminine and masculine words in the Spanish language and it is important when writing to identify words correctly when using adverbs and articles.

When including adverbs or articles in a sentence, the gender associated with the noun is important. The noun will either be feminine or masculine. There are no gender neutral words in the Spanish language.

Here is an example of using the feminine noun "la manzana" (apple) and using a feminine adverb to describe it:
La manzana es roja. (The apple is red.)

Below is a link to a pdf that can be helpful identifying if a noun is feminine or masculine:
http://spanport.umn.edu/assets/pdf/editrules.pdf

Source: http://spanport.umn.edu/assets/pdf/editrules.pdf
http://www.spanishdict.com/topics/show/1
POR VS PARA / SER VS ESTAR

When writing it can be hard to figure out when it's appropriate to use por/para or ser/estar. This slide it to help in the decision of when to use each one. If you are having issues figuring out when its correct to choose each one consult with an instructor or a writing consultant.

Use "ser" for:

1. Description
   - descriptions of a person, occupation, religion, or relationship
2. Origin
   - origin of a person or thing
3. Time
   - days, dates, hours

Use "estar" for:

1. Locations
   - physical position or posture
2. Conditions
   - physical, mental or emotional state

Basically, "por" is used to express movement through time or space. This can be:
- A physical transition such as traveling
  Viajé por Francia y España. (I traveled through France and Spain.)
- An exchange of objects
  Pagaré $3 por este sandwich. (I will pay $3 in exchange for this sandwich.)
- A duration of time
  Tengo que trabajar por ocho horas hoy. (I need to work for eight hours today.)
- A motivation/reason for doing something
  Por su amor a los niños, quiere ser pediatra. (Because of her love for children, she wants to be a pediatrician.)

And "para" is generally used to convey destinations or end points. These can be:
- Physical locations
  Salgo para Chile mañana. (I leave for Chile tomorrow.)
- People (recipients)
  Este regalo es para Adela. (This gift is for Adela.)
- Deadlines
  Necesito la presentación para el viernes. (I need the presentation by/on Friday.)
- Goals
  Trabaja mucho para ganar más dinero. (He works a lot in order to earn more money.)

Source: http://www.spanishdict.com/topics/show/10
http://www.spanishdict.com/topics/show/41
COME AND SEE US TODAY!

If you have more questions or writing concerns, big or small, please come in to see us today or make an appointment!

Follow this link to make an appointment:
https://ecu.myconline.com

Having issues online? Give us a call at 252.328.2820