

Reference 1.2: Verb: “ser”

Verbs: Most people describe verbs as “actions”. However, linguistically, this definition can come up with a lot of exceptions. When we are studying languages in depth or studying a foreign language, we want as few exceptions as possible, although this is not always avoidable. The linguistic definition of a verb is a word that can take tense.

Infinitives: In Spanish, an infinitive is a verb that ends in “AR”, “ER” or “IR”. Infinitives do not have a tense on their own. They translate to “to _____” or “_____ing”.

Example:

- hablar- to talk, speaking
- comer- to eat, eating
- vivir- to live, living

Infinitives are the only type of verb that can be found in a Spanish to English dictionary. Verb conjugations must be found in a Spanish verb book, which will not be necessary for the course until Spanish 2.

Conjugation: In Spanish, we conjugate verbs with their subject pronouns. This used to exist in Middle and Old English forms; however, we do not conjugate in Modern English with one exception. Conjugation means changing the verb endings or the entire verb to describe who is perform the action (aspect) and the specific circumstances (tense).

Example:

- There is one exception to conjugation that still exists in English. This is third person singular format. In English, we add the letter “s” or “es” to the endings of verbs in this aspect.
 - I speak, you speak, he speaks
 - I eat, you eat, she eats
 - I live, you live, one lives

In Middle English, verb conjugation did exist. In fact, it would probably be a little easier for someone that spoke Middle English to learn Spanish conjugation, because this idea was already known, here is an example that you probably have heard, but never have used.

Example:

- In Middle English, the singular 2nd person aspect was not “you”; rather, it was “thou”. It is not a coincidence that the word “thou” looks like “tú” in Spanish. The conjugation for second person singular in Middle English was adding “eth” to the ending.
 - I speak, thou speaketh, he speaks.

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- Notice that the endings are all different for each subject (I, you, and he). This is what conjugation used to look like in our language. Although you do not speak Middle English, you probably have heard the form of “thou” in several movies or read it in some classical literature.

Regular Verbs: When we refer to regular verbs, it means that the conjugation endings have a pattern that fit the verb.

Irregular Verbs: When we refer to irregular verbs, it means that the conjugation does not follow a simple pattern. When a verb is irregular, we must memorize each form.

Verb: “ser”: The verb “ser” is our first verb in Spanish. It is an irregular verb, which means we have to study the verb conjugations. We study this irregular verb first because it is the most commonly used verb in the language; in fact, most verbs that are used quite often have become irregular verbs. This is because of slang and dialect changes and this type of thing happens in all languages, even English.

The verb “ser” means “to be” in English. The verb “to be” is actually irregular in the English language, which means that we don’t just change the ending; we actually have completely different forms. Below you will see a T-Chart of the English verb “to be” and the Spanish verb “ser”.

to be	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1st Person	am	are
2nd Person	are	are
3rd Person	is	are

ser	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1st Person	soy	somos
2nd Person	eres	sois
3rd Person	es	son

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In Spanish, the verb “ser” is an “ER” verb. We know this because “ser” ends in the letters “ER”. When “ER” verbs are regular, we generally drop the “ER” and add the endings below

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1st Person	O	EMOS
2nd Person	ES	ÉIS
3rd Person	E	EN

If “ser” were regular, (which it is not) it would be conjugated like this:

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1st Person	so	semos
2nd Person	ses	séis
3rd Person	se	sen

This is the same in English. If the verb “to be” were regular in English, it would be conjugated like this according to our rules.

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1st Person	be	be
2nd Person	be	be
3rd Person	bes	be

Therefore, if the verb “to be” were regular. We would say things like this.

INCORRECT

We be ready.

I be short for my age.

He bes old.

CORRECT

We are ready.

I am short for my age.

He is old.

