

Glossary of grammatical terms

Adjective A word which provides more information about a noun: *His/her house is very big*
Su casa es muy **grande**. *It's a real pity* Es una **verdadera** lástima.

Adverb A word used to provide more information about a verb, an adjective or another adverb: *He/she treated me badly* Me trató **duramente**. *It was extremely difficult* Fue **extremadamente** difícil. *They behaved incredibly well* Se comportaron **increíblemente** bien.

Article There are two types of articles: **definite** and **indefinite**. Definite articles in Spanish are **el, la, los, las** *the* in English. Indefinite articles are **un, una** *a, an* in English: **the boy** **el** chico; **a magazine** **una** revista.

Clause A group of words within a sentence which has its own verb. A **main clause** functions on its own; a **subordinate clause** is dependent on another clause. In *I'll tell her when she arrives* Se lo diré cuando llegue, 'I'll tell her' 'Se lo diré', the main clause, can function on its own; 'when she arrives' 'cuando llegue', the subordinate clause, is dependent on the main clause.

Conjunction A word like *and* **y**, or *or*, **o**, but **pero**, which joins words or groups of words.

Definite article See **Article**.

Demonstrative Words like **este, esta** *this*, **esos, esas** *those*, are called demonstratives: **this** book **este** libro; **those** ideas **esas** ideas.

Direct object See **Object**.

Finite verb A verb form such as the one in *They work hard* **Trabajan mucho**, is said to be **finite** because it indicates **tense, person** and **number**. Gerunds, infinitives and past participles are non-finite verb forms.

Gender In Spanish, all nouns are either masculine or feminine. For example, **el** colegio **the** school, is masculine, while **la** universidad **the** university, is feminine. Nouns referring to male people are masculine and those referring to female people are feminine.

Gerund Refers to the forms of the verb ending in **-ando** and **-iendo**, e.g. **hablando, comiendo, viviendo**. Some of its uses correspond to those of the verb form ending in **-ing** in English, e.g. *She is eating* Está **comiendo**.

Imperative See **Mood**.

Indefinite article See **Article**.

Indicative See **Mood**.

Indirect object See **Object**.

Infinitive The basic form of the verb, as found in the dictionary. In Spanish, infinitives end in **-ar, -er** and **-ir**, e.g. *hablar to speak, comer to eat, vivir to live*.

Irregular verb A verb which does not behave according to a set pattern.

Modal verb An auxiliary verb which is used with another verb to convey a certain mood or intention, e.g. *We must do it* **Debemos** hacerlo (obligation); *We can't help you* No **podemos** ayudarte (possibility). Among modal verbs in Spanish we find **poder** *to be able to*, **can**, **deber** *must*, **tener que** *to have to*.

Mood Refers to the forms verbs can take depending on how these are used. There are three moods of the verb: **indicative**, normally associated with statements of fact, e.g. *They are coming tomorrow* **Vienen** mañana; **imperative**, used for commands, directions and instructions, e.g. *Come here!* ¡**Ven** aquí!; and **subjunctive**, normally associated with doubt, possibility, wishes, etc., e.g. *I don't think they'll come* No creo que **vengan**. See **Subjunctive mood**.

Noun A word like *table* **mesa**, *cat* **gato**, *kindness* **bondad**.

Number Used to indicate whether something is **singular** or **plural**, e.g. *the hotel* **el hotel** is singular, *the hotels* **los hoteles** is plural.

Object In the sentence *I gave him the keys* **Le di las llaves**, the phrase **the keys**, which undergoes the action of the verb in a direct way, is said to be the direct object, while **him**, the recipient of the giving, is the indirect object. An object can be a noun or noun phrase, e.g. *the keys*, or a pronoun, e.g. *him*.

Passive and active A sentence such as *The police caught the thief* **La policía atrapó al ladrón**, containing a subject (*the police*) carrying out the action expressed by the verb, is said to be an **active** sentence. In *The thief was caught by the police* **El ladrón fue atrapado por la policía**, the object of the active sentence (*the thief*), undergoing the action expressed by the verb, becomes the subject, and the agent carrying out the action (*the police*) is introduced by the preposition *by*, **por** in Spanish. This type of sentence is called **passive**.

Personal pronoun As the name suggests, personal pronouns refer to persons, e.g. *I* **yo**, *he* **él**, *she* **ella**, *we* **nosotros**, *him* **lo**, **le**, *us* **nos**. See **Pronoun**.

Possessive A word like *my* **mi**, *mine* **mío**, *her* **su**, *hers* **suyo**.

Preposition A word such as *to* **a**, *in* **en**, *between* **entre**, which provides information such as direction, location, time.

Pronoun A word that stands in place of a noun or noun phrase which has already been mentioned, e.g. *My brother is a teacher.* **He** is a teacher. *Mi hermano es profesor.* **Él** es profesor. *This hotel is much better.* **This one** is much better. *Este hotel es mucho mejor.* **Este** es mucho mejor. *My bedroom is small.* **Hers** is big. *Mi habitación es pequeña.* **La suya** es grande.

Reflexive pronoun A word such as *myself* **me**; *yourself* **te**, **se**; *ourselves* **nos**.

Reflexive verb When the subject and the object of a verb are one and the same, the verb is said to be reflexive, e.g. *I hurt myself* **Me herí**. *We hid ourselves* **Nos ocultamos**.

Relative clause A group of words which refers back to something previously mentioned in the sentence, a noun or a pronoun, known as the **antecedent**. See also **Relative pronoun**.

Relative pronoun A word like **que** *who*, *whom*, *that*, *which*, **el/la cual** *that*, *whom*, *which*, **cuyo** *whose*, which introduces a relative clause. See **Relative clause**.

Subject In a sentence such as *My wife prepared a delicious meal* **Mi mujer** preparó una comida deliciosa, **my wife**, the person performing the action denoted by the verb, is the subject of the sentence. A subject can be a single word or a group of words.

Subjunctive mood The subjunctive mood is used very rarely in modern English, but there are remnants of it in sentences such as the following: *I insist that he **come*** Insisto que **venga**. *I wish he **were** here* Ojalá **estuviera** aquí. Spanish uses the subjunctive much more frequently than English.

Subordinate clause See *Clause*.

Tense Changes in the verb which indicate aspects of time are referred to as tenses, for example, present tense, future tense, preterite tense. In *He **works** in a bank* **Trabaja** en un banco, the verb is in the present tense. In *He **worked** there for a long time* **Trabajó** allí durante mucho tiempo, the verb is in the preterite tense.

Verb A verb is a word such as *to speak* **hablar**, *to exist* **existir**, *to feel* **sentir**, which can denote actions, states, sensations, etc.

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