

Lesson 6. Mastering the verbs 1

The Simple Present Tense

Verbs are the bricks of the house, without them you have no house.

IMPORTANT: Do not think that because, perhaps, you are an upper intermediate student you don't need to go over some of the beginners' verb tenses like the Simple Present Tense. In fact, most students -even the upper intermediate ones- need to smooth out many rough edges such as mispronunciation or the wrong use of tenses in order to become advanced.

I cannot emphasise enough the importance of knowing the verbs well. The simple truth is that if you don't master the verbs, you'll never speak English fluently. That's why this course dedicates several lessons to learning a technique that will allow you to learn them once and for all.

Perhaps, you have spent years of your life trying to memorise long lists of verbs that you later mispronounce, or just completely forget, when speaking. You know just how frustrating this experience can be.

The problem is very deep-rooted, as you have probably been learning them by reading and thus ignoring their sound and the context in which they are used.

To correct these mispronunciations can be very hard because you'll start experiencing a conflict between the sound you have learnt in Spanish and the new sound you are now going to try to learn in your head.

To win the battle in this lesson -and in the following ones-you must:

1. **Learn the verbs in sentences within the context of a story.** This is a much more natural and a less boring way of learning them than memorising long lists of verbs.
2. **Listen and repeat them until they sound completely familiar to you.** Remember that "familiar" means that you can use them correctly without hesitating just as you don't hesitate when you use the verbs in Spanish.

In the previous lesson when we were doing active reading, we took a look at some new vocabulary and structures.

Now, we are going to do something similar using chapter 3. However, this time we will only concentrate on the verbs on the Present Tense.

I have tried this method for years with my own students and I know that it can work miracles when people take it seriously. So, in order for this method to work, I will ask you to listen to and repeat the sentences with the verbs you're learning until you become exhausted. At the same time, try visualising the situations and feelings that the characters in the story experience. This will make the learning process much more fun.

The Simple Present Tense

To become fluent in English you don't need to know all the details of the verb tenses, you just need to learn to use them properly and have a general idea about when and how to use them.

To guide you through this learning process, I will give you a short explanation on the Simple Present Tense that you can use as a reference guide.

Simple Present Tense verb “to be”

- **Affirmative:** Subject + am/is/are + object. Example: She is pretty.
 - **Negative:** Subject + am/is/are + **not** +object. Example: I'm not angry
 - **Question:** Am/is/are + subject + object? Example: Are they home?
 - **Negative question:** Am/is/are + **not** +subject Example: Aren't you happy?
 - **Answers:** Yes + subject + am/is/are- No + subject + am not/isn't/aren't
- Example verb “to be” in the audiobook, question: Who is Dorian Gray?

Use: to describe status or characteristics of something or someone.

Simple Present Tense- Other verbs.

- **Affirmative:** Subject + main verb (third person: he, she, it adds an -s or -es) + object. Examples: I work here. She workS there
- **Negative:** Subject + do/does + not + verb in the infinitive + object. Examples: I don't work here. She doesn't work here. **Notice:** “Does” is used in negative statements in the third person (he, she, it).
- **Question:** Do/does + subject + v. in the infinitive + object? Examples: Do you work here? Does she work here? **Notice:** “Does” is used for questions in the third person (he, she, it).
- **Negative questions:** Do/does + **not** + v. in the infinitive + object? Examples: Don't you work here? Doesn't she work here?
- **Answer:** Yes + subject + do/does- No + subject + do/does Examples: Yes, I do- Yes, she does. No, I don't. No, she doesn't

Warning: Do NOT answer repeating the main verb.

Compare: Do you work here? Yes, I do. CORRECT- Yes, I work. INCORRECT.

Use: to talk about habitual actions, permanent situations and natural facts.

Examples:

- I work every day- She comes here on Mondays. Habitual actions
- They live in Rome- Permanent situation
- Water boils at a hundred degrees Celsius. Natural fact

Example “Simple Present Tense” audiobook: Only the people who pay their bills need money.

Go to chapter 3 of your audiobook and listen to it at least two times. Next, read it trying to spot the present tense of the verb “to be” and the other verbs

I have highlighted the present tense of the verb to be **in green** and the present tense of the other verbs **in yellow**.

Chapter 3

Who **is** Dorian Gray?

"Only the people who pay their bills need money"

At twelve-thirty the following day, Lord Henry Wotton went to visit his uncle, the old, great and rather brusque bachelor. Some people said he was selfish because they never got anything out of him. Really he was generous and fed the people who entertained him.

When Lord Henry entered the room, he found his uncle sitting, smoking a cigarette and grumbling about something The Times had published.

"What are you doing here so early, Harry? I thought that dandies didn't get up until two o'clock and didn't appear in public until five.

"I want something from you, uncle."

"Money, I imagine."

"I don't want money. Only the people that pay their bills need money, uncle George and I never pay my bills. What I want is information about Dorian Gray."

"Dorian Gray? Who is he?" Asked the old man.

"He is the grandson of Lord Kelso and son of Lady Margaret Devereux."

"Grandson of Kelso!" The old man repeated. Yes, I knew his mother very well. She was a beautiful young woman. She drove men mad, but she escaped with a young chap with no money. They killed him in a duel a few months after the wedding. A very ugly matter. The girl died a year later. He left a son, yes. If he looks like his mother he should be very handsome.

"He is very handsome" said Lord Henry.

"His grandfather and his mother had money. He will have inherited it."

"I don't know. I suppose so. He hasn't come of age yet. You say that his mother was very beautiful?"

"One of the loveliest creatures I have seen, Harry. She could have chosen any man, but she was a romantic."

"Where are you eating today, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's house. Mr Gray will also be there."

Lord Henry said goodbye and left his uncle's house. As he walked he thought about the extraordinary story of Dorian Gray's mother.

When he entered his **Aunt Agatha's house**, the servant told him that lunch had already started. He left his hat and entered the dining room.

"Late as usual, Harry" exclaimed his aunt.

He invented an excuse, sat down and looked around to see the guests. Dorian gestured to him shyly from the other end of the table and blushed.

"Of course, Harry, I am very angry with you" exclaimed Lady Agatha. "Why don't you want Dorian Gray to play at a charity concert?"

"Because I want him to play for me" said Lord Henry, who looked at Dorian Gray and saw the sparkle in his eyes.

"Those poor people need it" protested Lady Agatha.

"I am capable of sympathising with anything except suffering" said Lord Henry. It's too ugly. We should be interested in colour, in beauty and in the joy of living.

"It pleases me to hear you say that" said the Duchess of Harley, who was sitting in front. "I always feel very guilty when I come to visit your dear aunt. The poor don't interest me."

Now I can look at you in the face without blushing. Ah! I would like to know how to become young again" she exclaimed.

Lord Henry thought for a few seconds.

"Do you remember a past mistake, Duchess? He asked, looking at her from the other side of the table.

"Many" she exclaimed.

"Well, commit them again. To become young again, one must repeat the same madness.

"I will do it!" Exclaimed the duchess.

"A dangerous theory!" Said another of the guests.

"Yes" said Lord Henry. "It's one of life's great secrets. Most people discover too late that the only thing we don't lament are our mistakes."

The guests laughed. He felt Dorian Gray's eyes staring at him. This cheered him. It was brilliant, fantastic, irresponsible. Dorian Gray seemed enchanted. When he finished his speech, Lord Henry laughed and stood up.

"I'm going to the park" he said.

As he was going out of the door, Dorian Gray touched him on the arm.

"Let me go with you" he murmured.

"I thought you had promised Basil that you would go to the studio? Replied Lord Henry.

"I prefer to go with you. Do you promise you will talk the whole time? Nobody talks as well as you."

"Ah! I have talked a lot today" said Lord Henry, smiling. Now I want to look at life. If

you want you can come and look at it with me."

Listen and repeat the following sentences until you memorise them.

Spanish	English	Phonetics	Approximate Pronunciation
¿Quién es Dorian Gray?	Who is Dorian Gray?	hu: z 'dô:iən greɪ	Hu iss dórian gréi?
Solo las personas que pagan sus facturas necesitan dinero	Only the people who pay their bills need money.	'əʊnlɪ ðə 'pi:pl̩, hu: peɪ ðeə bɪlz ni:d̩ 'mʌni	Óunli de pípol hu péi der bilss nid máni
Quiero algo de ti.	I want something from you, uncle	'aɪ wɔnt 'sʌmθ̩ iŋ frəm ju 'ʌŋkl̩	Ái wuánt sámzing from iu ánkel
Dinero, imagino	Money, I imagine	'mʌni 'aɪ ɪ 'mædʒɪn	Máni, ái ímachin
No quiero dinero	I don't want money	'aɪ dəʊnt wɔnt 'mʌni	Ái dóunt wuánt máni
Nunca pago mis facturas	I never pay my bills	'aɪ 'nevə peɪ maɪ bɪlz	Ái néver péi mái bilss
Lo que quiero es información sobre el señor Dorian Gray	What I want is information about Dorian Gray	'wɔt 'aɪ wɔnt s ɪnfə'meɪʃn, ə'baʊt 'dô:iən greɪ	Wuát ái wuánt iss infórmeishon ábaut dórian gréi
¿Quién es?	Who is he?	hu: z hi	Hu is hi?
Es el nieto de Lord Kelso	He is the grandson of Lord Kelso	hi z ðə 'grænsʌn əv lɔ:d̩ 'kelsəʊ	Hi iss dé grándson of lord kélsó
Es muy guapo	He is very handsome	hi z 'veri 'hænsəm	Hí iss véri hándsom
No lo sé	I don't know.	'aɪ dəʊnt nəʊ	Ái dóunt nóu
Supongo que sí	I suppose so	'aɪ sə 'pəʊz 'səʊ	Ái supóuss sóu
Dices que	You say that	ju 'seɪ ðæt	Iu séi dat
Llegas tarde como de costumbre	(*)Late as usual	leɪt əz 'ju:zʊəl	Léit ass íuchual
Estoy muy enfadada contigo	I'm very angry with you	aɪm 'veri 'æŋgri wɪð ju	Aim véri ángri wiz iu
¿Por qué no quieres que Dorian Gray toque en un concierto benéfico?	Why don't you want Dorian Gray to play at a charity concert?	wɑɪ dəʊnt ju wɔnt 'dô:iən greɪ tə pleɪ ət ə 'tʃærɪti kən'sɛ:t	Wuái dóuntchú wuánt dórian gréi tú pléi át a cháriti konsért?
Porque quiero que toque para mí	Because I want him to play for me	bɪ 'kɒz 'aɪ wɔnt ɪm tə pleɪ fə mi:	Bíkoss ái wuánt him tú pléi for mi
Esa pobre gente lo necesita	Those poor people need it	ðəʊz pʊə 'pi:pl̩, ni:d̩ ɪt	Dóuss puur pípol nidit
Soy capaz de simpatizar con cualquier cosa menos con el sufrimiento	I am capable of sympathising with anything except suffering	'aɪ əm 'keɪpəbl̩, əv 'sɪmpəθ aɪzɪŋ wɪð 'eniθ iŋ ɪk'sept 'sʌfərɪŋ	Ái am kéipebo of símpázaissing wuiz énizing eksépt sáfering
Es demasiado feo	It's too ugly.	ɪts tu: 'ʌgli	Its tu ágli
Me agrada oírle a	It pleases me to hear	ɪt 'pli:zɪz mi: tə hɪə	It plíssiss mi tu hir iu

usted decir eso	you say that	ju 'seɪ ðæt	sei dat
Siempre me siento muy culpable	I always feel very guilty	'aɪ 'ɔ:lweɪz fi:l 'veri 'gʊlti	Ái ólwueiss fil vérí guílti
Cuando vengo a visitar a su querida tía	When I come to visit your dear aunt	wen 'aɪ kám tə 'vɪzɪt jə dɪər ɑ:nt	Wuén ái kám tu víssit iór dir ant
No me interesan los pobres	The poor don't interest me.	ðə pʊə dəvnt 'ɪntrəst mi:	De puur dóunt ínterest mi
¿Recuerda algún error del pasado Duquesa?	Do you remember a past mistake, Duchess?	də ju rɪ 'membər ə pa:st mɪ 'steɪk 'dʌtʃɪs	Du iu rímember a past místeik, dáches?
Una teoría peligrosa	(*)A dangerous theory	ə 'deɪndʒərəs 'θ ɪəri	A déincheras zíori
Es uno de los grandes secretos de la vida	It's one of life's great secrets	ɪts wʌn əv láifs 'greɪt 'si:krits	Its wuán of láifs gréit síkríts
La mayoría de la gente descubre demasiado tarde que	Most people discover too late that	məʊst 'pi:pl dɪ 'skʌvər tu: leɪt ðæt	Móus pípol dis'kover tu léit dat
Que lo única que nunca lamentamos son nuestros errores	The only thing we don't lament are our mistakes.	ði 'əvnli 'θ ɪŋ wi dəvnt lə'ment ə 'auə mɪ 'steɪks	Di óunli zing wuí dóunt lamént ar auer mistéiks
Prefiero ir con usted	I prefer to go with you	'aɪ pri:fɪs: tə gəʊ wið ju	Ái pre'fer tu góu wuiz iú
¿Me promete que hablará todo el tiempo?	Do you promise you will talk the whole time?	də ju 'prəmɪs ju wl 'tɔ:k ðə həʊl 'taɪm	Du iu prómis it wuíll tok de hol táim?
Nadie habla tan bien como usted	Nobody talks as well as you.	'nəʊbədi tɔ:ks əz wel əz ju	Nóbadi toks ass wuél ass iu
Ahora quiero mirar la vida.	Now I want to look at life	nəʊ 'aɪ wənt tə lʊk ət láif	Náu ái wuánt tu luk at láif

(*) Even though the verb “to be” is omitted, both sentences express ideas in the simple present tense. **You are** late –and **It's** a dangerous theory.

To sum up:

About learning the verbs

- To start mastering the verbs, we'll begin by learning the Simple Present Tense within the context of a story.
- You must listen and repeat them until they sound completely familiar to you.

About the Simple Present Tense

- The Simple Present Tense of the “verb to be” is used to describe the status or characteristics of something or someone.

- The Simple Present Tense of the other verbs is used to talk about habitual actions, permanent situations and natural facts.
- Try not to forget the **-S** or **-ES** when talking in the Simple Present Tense third person (he, she, it). She work**S**- Incorrect: ~~she work~~
- Try not to forget the “Does” when making the negative or asking questions in the Simple Present tense third person (he, she it)- She DOESN’T work here. She ~~don’t~~ work here. INCORRECT. DOES she work here? ~~Do~~ she work here? INCORRECT

Homework

1. Go back to chapter 1 and 2 of your audiobook and try to spot the Simple Present Tense of the verb “to be” and of other verbs. Think about the structures and, particularly, the difference between the Simple Present Tense of the verb “to be” and the other verbs (uses of “s”- and “es” and does with the third person he, she and it).
2. Repeat the sentences of chapter 1 and 2 that are in the Simple Present Tense aloud. Try to memorise them.