Welcome to Lecture 3: Deciphering Ser and Estar

Subject Pronouns (tú, usted, vosotros, ustedes)

The Present Tense of Ser & Estar

Identity, Description, Time, Origin & Material

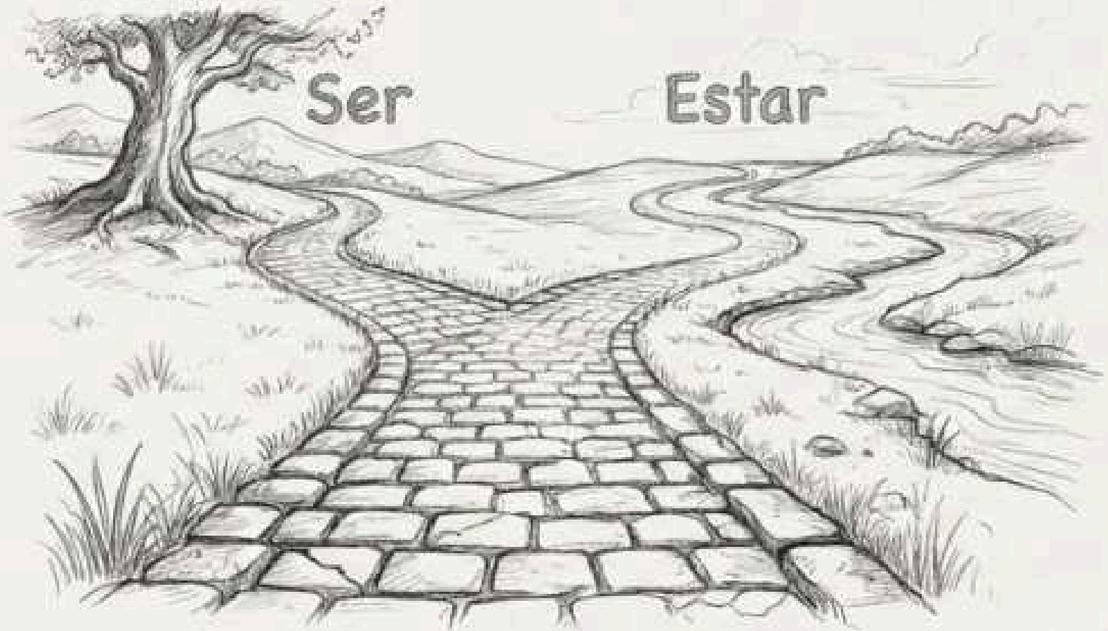
Location, Condition, & Actions in Progress

Chameleon Adjectives, Negatives, & Questions

The Spanish "To Be" Dilemma

1 English Verb ("To Be") = **2** Spanish Verbs (Ser / Estar)

Choosing between them is a characteristic, defining skill in Spanish.



Easier than its reputation suggests.

Requires just a single "rule of thumb" to choose correctly every time.

Establishing the Subject Pronouns

Singular	Plural
yo (I)	nosotros (we)
tú (you informal)	vosotros (you plural informal)
él / ella / usted (he, she, you formal)	ellos / ellas / ustedes (they, you plural)

Native Insight: Written Spanish often leaves these out.
The verb ending already tells you who is speaking.

The Regional Divide: Vosotros vs. Ustedes

ustedes
used for every plural
you, formal or informal





vosotros
used mainly here

Both are correct. Recognize vosotros in texts (included in our tables), but if learning for Latin America, you can safely skip it in your own speech.

Conjugating Ser (Present Tense)

yo soy	nosotros somos
tú eres	vosotros sois
él/ella/usted es	ellos/ellas/ustedes son

Highly Irregular: Must be learned aloud (soy, eres, es, somos, sois, son).

The forms you will use most.

¶ 3.6

Conjugating Estar (Present Tense)

yo estoy	nosotros estamos
tú estás	vosotros estáis
él/ella/usted está	ellos/ellas/ustedes están

Regular in most forms, but four carry critical written accents.

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The Central Rule of Thumb

SER

WHAT

What it is — Identity and Lasting Nature.

ESTAR

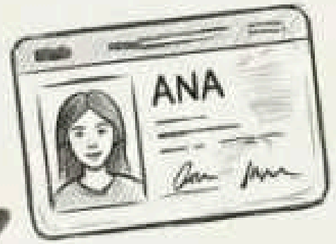
HOW / WHERE

How or where it is at the moment — Condition and Location.

Ser is about what a thing is.
Estar is about how it is at the moment.

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Using Ser: Identity, Occupation, and Origin



Soy Ana (I am Ana), él es mi hermano (he is my brother).

SER

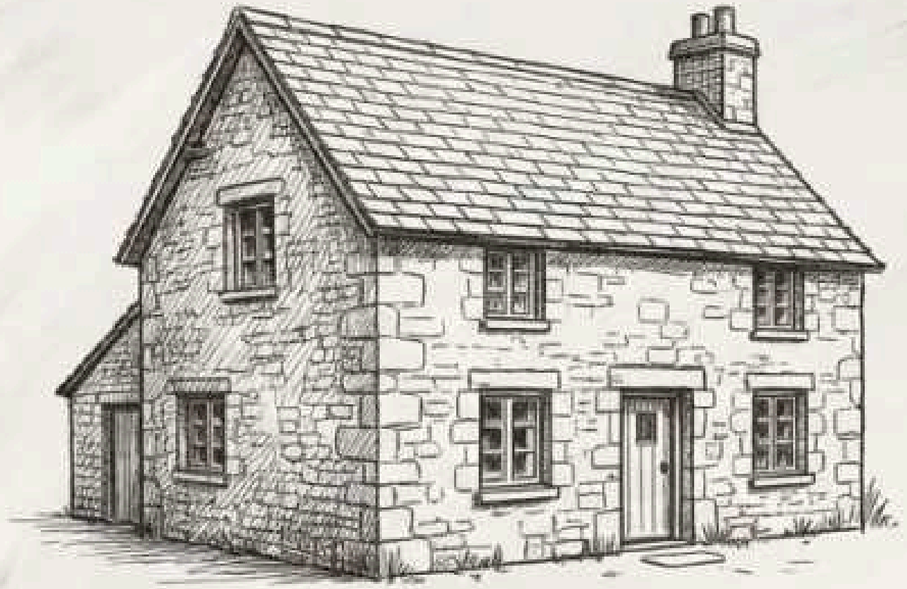


Ella es profesora.



Somos de México.
¿De dónde eres?

Using Ser: Lasting Descriptions and Time



La casa es grande

Mi amigo es simpático



Es la una

son las tres

hoy es lunes

Using Ser: Material and Ownership



La mesa es de madera
(the table is made of wood).



El libro es de Luis
(the book is Luis's).

Identity, nature, or origin of a thing is not expected to change from minute to minute.

Using Estar: Location



Estoy en casa (I am at home)

Madrid está en España
(Madrid is in Spain)

For location, always use Estar. This holds even for things that never move, such as cities and mountains.

*EXCEPTION: Events use Ser. (e.g., *la fiesta es en mi casa* = the party is at my house).

Using Estar: Temporary Conditions and Feelings





Feelings/States:

- Estoy cansado (I am tired)
- ella está contenta (she is happy)
- estamos listos (we are ready)

Health/Condition:

- ¿Cómo estás? (asks how you are at the moment)

↳ Connects back to Lecture 1: This temporary focus is exactly why the greeting from Lecture 1 uses *estar* and not *ser*.

Using Estar: Actions in Progress

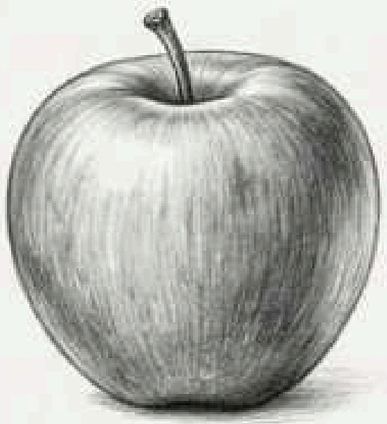
Estar + Gerund (-ing) = Happening Now



Estar is the verb of the present moment and condition throughout.
(Note: gerund construction will be covered deeply in Lecture 4).

Chameleon Adjectives: The Verb Changes the Reality

SER (Lasting)	ESTAR (Passing)
Él es aburrido (He is boring)	**Él está aburrido** (He is bored)
Ella es lista (She is clever)	**Ella está lista** (She is ready)
La manzana es verde (The apple is green)	**La manzana está verde** (The apple is unripe)





The Rule of Thumb in Practice: A Short Test



La sopa ____ caliente (The soup is hot).

Heat is a present condition.
Use Estar -> está.



Mi madre ____ doctora (My mother is a doctor).

Profession is identity.
Use Ser -> es.

The question is always the same: is this what it is, or how it is right now?

Syntactic Modifiers: Negatives and Questions

Negatives:

No + [Verb] = Negative

No soy profesor (I am not a teacher).
No estoy cansado (I am not tired).



Questions:

The upside-down ¿ must start every question.

Two methods to form them:

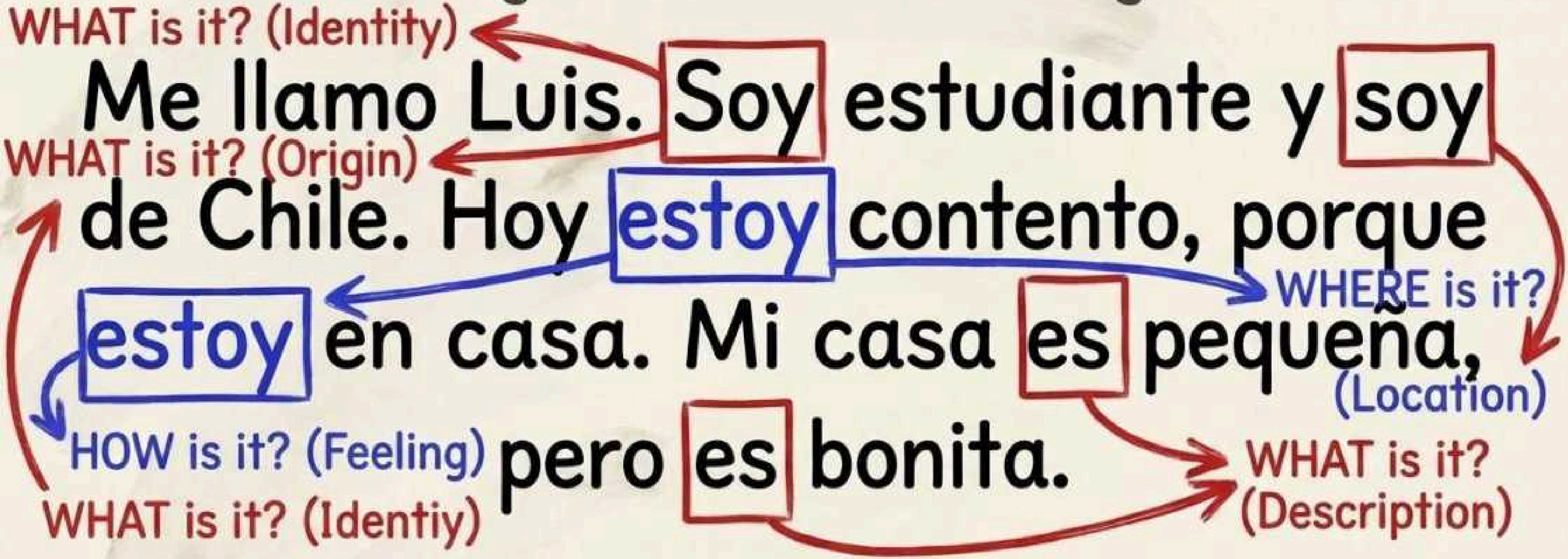
1. Raise your voice:
   ¿Eres estudiante?
2. Subject after verb:
   ¿Es ella española?

Bringing It Together: Luis's World

Me llamo Luis. Soy estudiante y soy de Chile. Hoy estoy contento, porque estoy en casa. Mi casa es pequeña, pero es bonita.

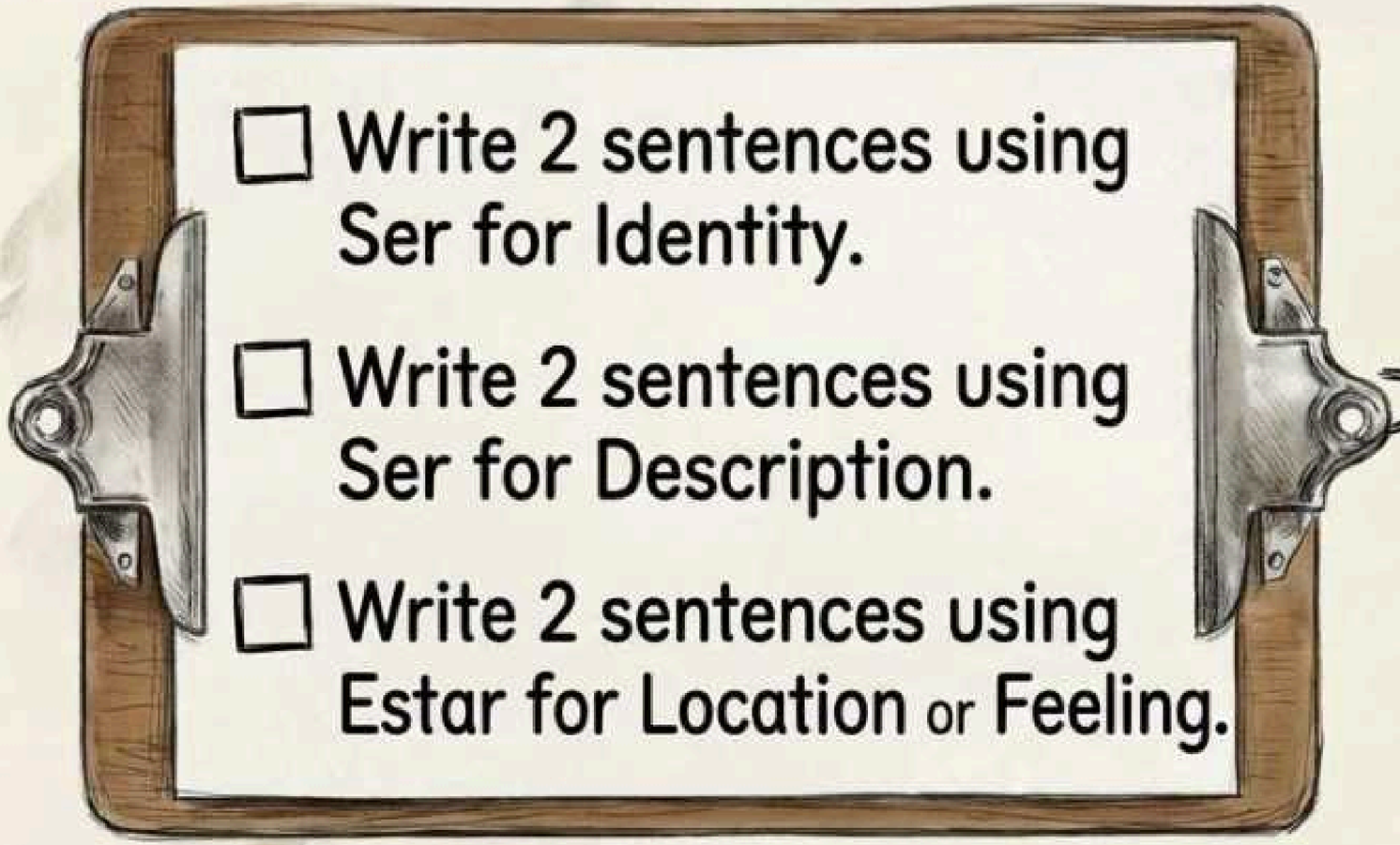
Translation: My name is Luis, I am a student from Chile, today I am happy because I am at home, and my house is small but pretty.

Pattern Recognition: Deconstructing the Proof



If you hesitate, ask the question. With practice, the choice becomes automatic, just as it is for native speakers.

Practice: Building the Pattern



1. Read them aloud.
2. Change each one into a question.
3. Change each one into a negative sentence.

This takes ten minutes and builds the pattern more firmly than reading the rules again.

Looking Ahead

Coming in Lecture 4:

- Meeting the three families of regular verbs.
- Learning to speak fully in the present tense.
- Mastering the art of conjugation.