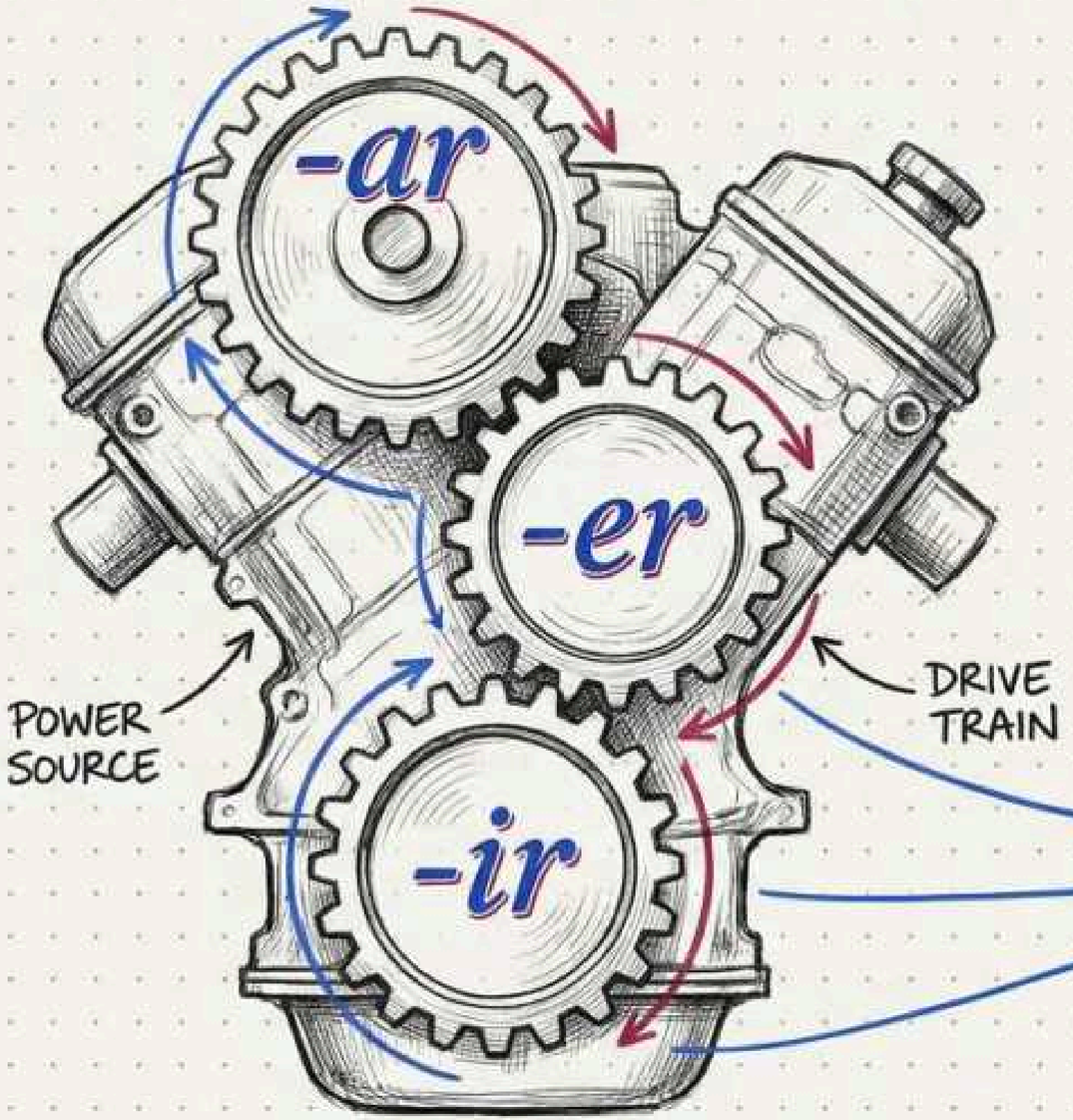
¶ 4.1

Regular Verbs in the Present Tense

- Infinitives and stems
- The –ar, –er, and –ir matrices
- Dropping the pronoun
- Essential vocabulary
- The single present tense
- Negatives, questions, and gustar
- Days, time words, and stem-changers





Verbs are the Engine of Spanish

Spanish verbs are wonderfully systematic. Almost every verb belongs to one of three families.

THE THREE CONJUGATIONS

3 Families = 1 Pattern Each

→ Learn 3 Sets of Endings = Speak about thousands of actions

Anatomy of the Infinitive

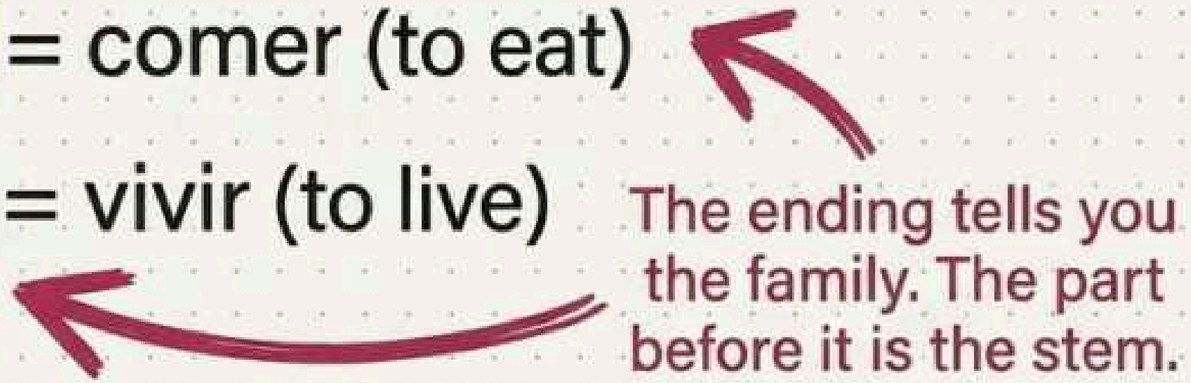
[Infinitive] = [Meaning to do something]

[Stem] + [Ending] = [Infinitive]

[habl] (Stem) + [ar (Ending)] = hablar (to speak)

[com] (Stem) + [er (Ending)] = comer (to eat)

[viv] (Stem) + [ir (Ending)] = vivir (to live)



¶ 4.4

The -ar Conjugation Matrix

hablar (to speak) → habl- + [Ending] = Present Tense

yo hab**lo**	nosotros hab**lamos**
tú hab**las**	vosotros hab**láis**
él/ella hab**la**	ellos/ellas hab**lan**

Say them aloud
with the pronouns.

The **-er** Matrix & The First-Person Rule

com**er** (to eat) → com- + [Ending]

hablo

yo com**o**	nosotros com**emos**
tú com**es**	vosotros com**éis**
él/ella com**e**	ellos/ellas com**en**

The **First-Person Rule**: The **yo** form always ends in '**o**' across all three families. This one fact makes the first-person form easy to remember.

¶ 4.6

The -ir Matrix (The Overlap)

vivir (to live) → viv- + [Ending]
vivir (to live) → viv- + [Ending]

Singular	Plural
yo vivo	nosotros vivimos
tú vives	vosotros vivís
él/ella vive	ellos/ellas viven

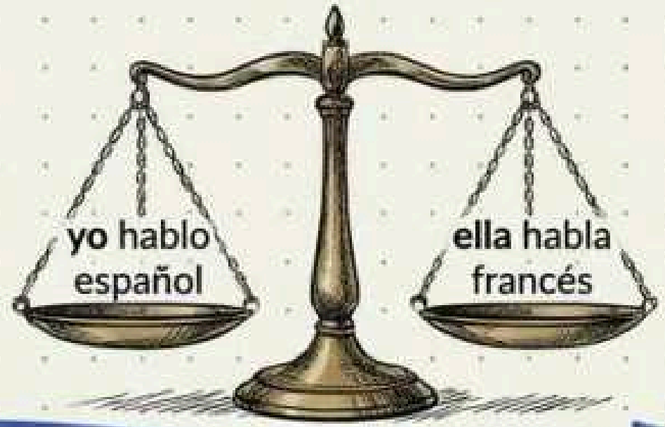
-er and -ir are identical except for nosotros and vosotros.
You really only need to learn one new set!

¶ 4.7

Dropping the Subject

~~yo~~ hablo español = hablo español

Because the ending perfectly identifies the person,
the subject pronoun is usually dropped.
English requires pronouns; Spanish implies them.



Keep the pronoun only for emphasis or contrast.

¶ 4.8

The -ar Vocabulary Ledger

Most new verbs you meet will belong to this family. Know it best.

hablar (to speak)	escuchar (to listen)
trabajar (to work)	mirar (to watch) 
estudiar (to study)	comprar (to buy)
caminar (to walk)	necesitar (to need)
cocinar (to cook) 	bailar (to dance) 

-er & -ir Verbs (The Flashcard Method)

¶ 4.9

-er Verbs:
comer (eat), beber (drink), leer (read), aprender (learn), correr (run), comprender (understand).

-ir Verbs:
vivir (live), escribir (write), abrir (open), recibir (receive), decidir (decide).

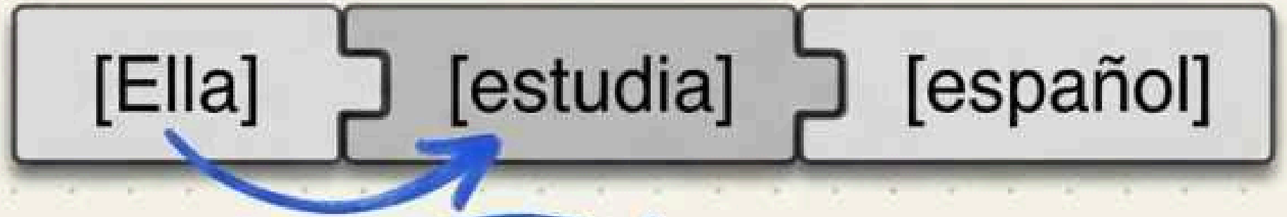


Sentence Building Blocks

¶ 4.10



(I work at a school)



(She studies Spanish)



(We eat pizza on Fridays)



(My parents live in Madrid)

Verb matches subject. Subject can seamlessly follow the verb.

The Efficiency of the Single Present Tense

¶ 4.11

Hablo = I speak AND Hablo = I am speaking

Como = I eat AND Como = I am eating

Spanish uses one present tense to do the work of two in English. Context decides which.



DO NOT use helper words like estoy hablando unless you must stress that the action is happening exactly right now.

Mechanics of Negatives and Questions

¶ 4.12

Negatives

No + [Verb]

No hablo francés. (*I do not speak French*).

~~do/does~~

No helper verb needed.

Question Formula 1 - Pitch

[Sentence] + ↗ (Voice raise)

¿Hablas inglés? (*Do you speak English?*)

Question Formula 2 - Inversion

¿ + [Verb] + [Subject] + ?

¿Trabaja ella aquí? (*Does she work here?*)

The Essential Question Words

¶ 4.13



All question words carry written accents.

¿Por qué?
(Why)
→ Two words, accented.

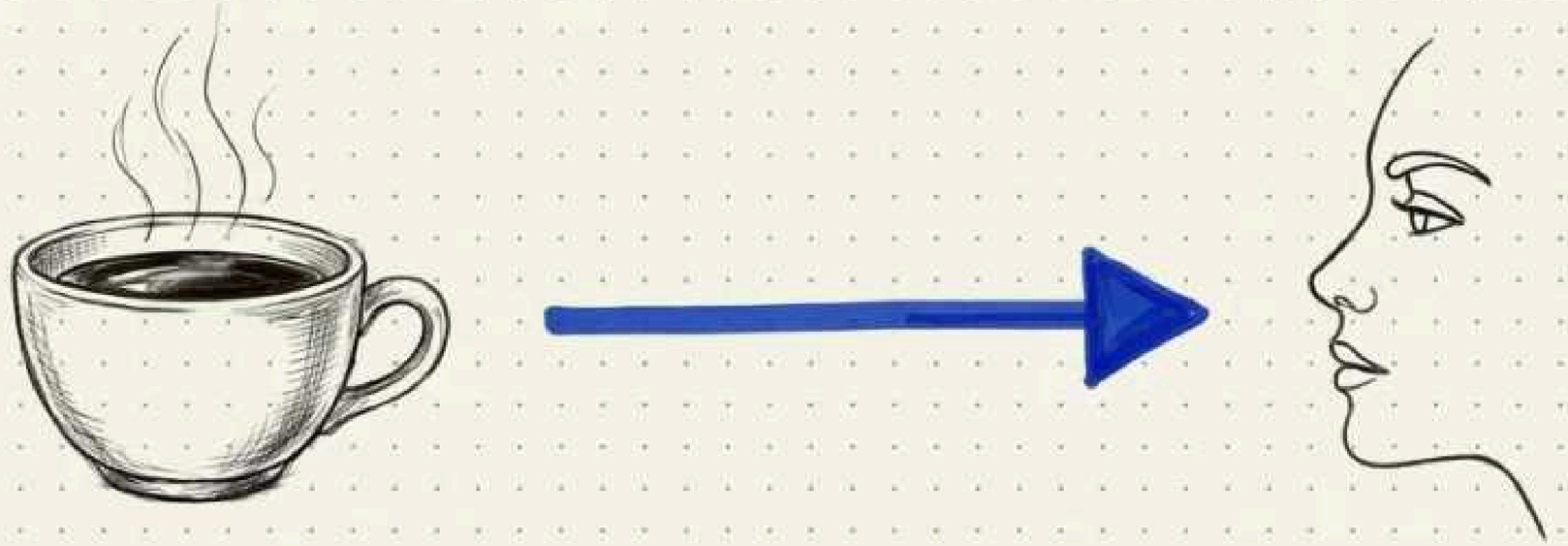
porque
(Because)
→ One word, unaccented.

¿Por qué estudias? → Porque me gusta.

¶ 4.14

The Reverse Logic of Gustar

Gustar does not mean to like. It mens to be pleasing.



[El café] —(pleases)→ [me]. = Me gusta el café.

Singular vs Plural Rule:
Me gusta (for a singular thing)
Me gustan (for plural things) → Me gustan los libros.

Negative Rule:
Add no at the very front → No me gusta la sopa.

The Calendar

¶ 4.15



Syntax Rules

- ☒ Masculine
- ☑ NOT capitalized

el lunes (on Monday) /
los lunes (on Mondays)

→ Trabajo los lunes y los martes.

Stem-Changing Verbs (The Boot Boundary)

¶ 4.16

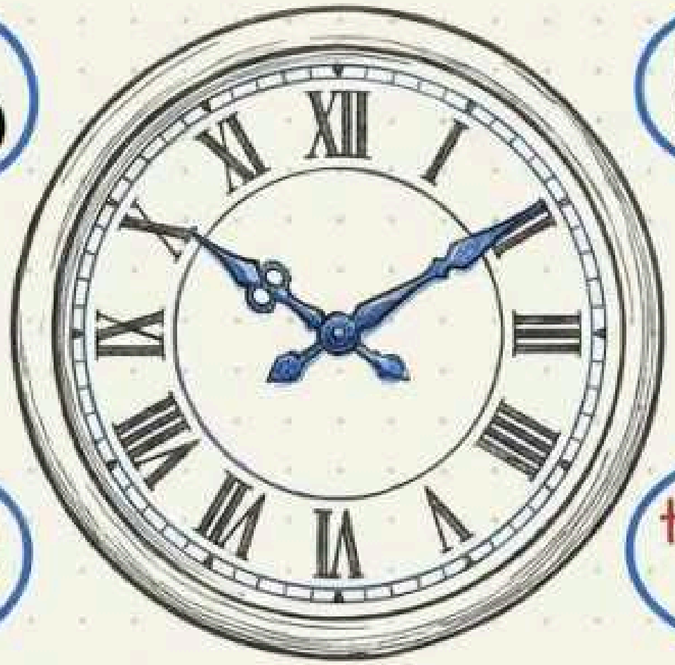
pienso	pensamos
piensas	pensáis
piensa	piensan

Some verbs change the vowel in the stem inside the 'boot' area. The outer area (nosotros/vosotros) stays pure.

You don't need to master these yet—just be aware they exist.
The pattern of the regular endings still perfectly holds!

Modular Time Expressions

¶ 4.17



Hoy (today)

nunca (never)

mañana (tomorrow)

a veces (sometimes)

siempre (always)

todos los días (every day)

[Siempre] + [estudio] = [estudio] + [siempre]

Siempre estudio por la mañana.
Nunca bebo café.

Time expressions fit almost anywhere in the sentence.

Synthesis: Ana's Model Paragraph

¶ 4.18

Me llamo Ana y vivo en Madrid. Trabajo en una escuela y estudio inglés los martes. Mis amigos comen en un restaurante los viernes. Escribo cartas, leo libros y escucho música todos los días.

Action Prompt

1. Read aloud twice.
2. Rewrite about yourself.
3. Ensure your verb endings perfectly align with your new subjects.

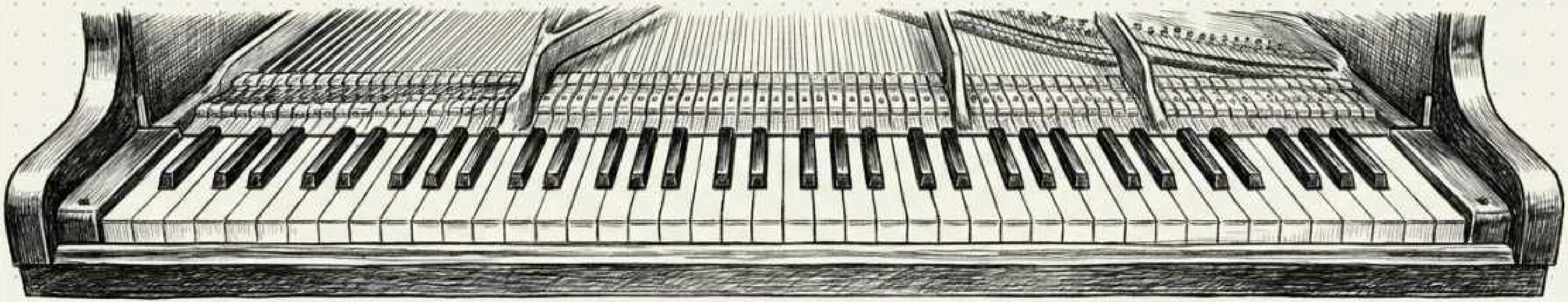
¶ 4.19

Conjugation is a Physical Skill

Conjugating verbs is like practicing scales on a piano. It improves through short, frequent, spoken repetition—not long, silent study.

The 5-Minute Drill Matrix

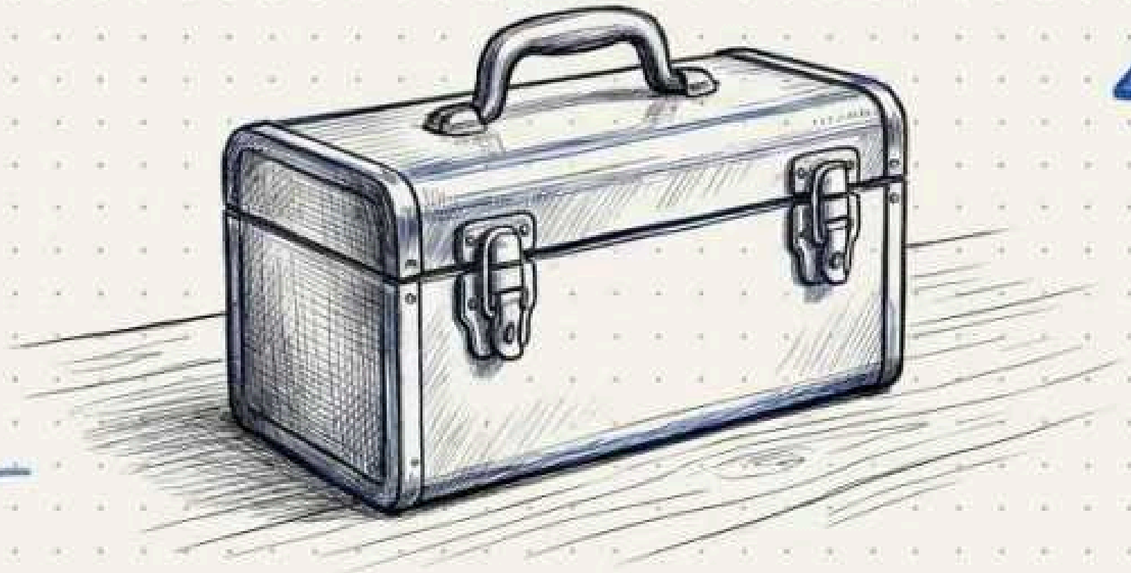
- Pick 5 verbs (one from each family + two choices).
- Conjugate each aloud in all 6 forms.
- Write 1 sentence for each.
- Read aloud.



¶ 4.20

Looking Ahead: The Basic Toolkit

You now possess the engine of the Spanish language.
In Lecture 5, we will open the toolbox.



- Four irregular verbs that nobody can do without.
- A basic toolkit of everyday conversational phrases.