

Subjunctive Mood – Transcript

Context

Hola y buenos días. You remember when you turned thirteen and it seemed like everyone was all of a sudden telling you to stop moping and to stop being so moody? You probably couldn't figure out what they were talking about because whatever was going on seemed pretty normal to you.

Well, moods don't just happen to people. It's a little-known fact that they also happen to verbs. "Verbs?" you ask? That's right – verbs. All verbs have moods and in this lesson we're going to introduce you to one of those moods – the subjunctive.

Information

1. First, let's talk about the difference between tenses and moods. Until now, you have been studying tenses, that is, when actions take place. After all, that's what tense means – time. So, you've learned about present actions with the present tense, and past actions with the preterite and imperfect tenses.
2. A mood, on the other hand, reflects how the speaker feels about an action. Until now, you've been studying tenses and, more important, you have been studying tenses in the indicative mood. The indicative is our most common mood and we use it for factual information, objective statements, and when we want to express certainty.
3. The subjunctive is a mood that, in general, expresses feelings of doubt, uncertainty, and subjectivity about actions.
4. An interesting thing is that, while the subjunctive is extremely common in Spanish, it sees little usage in English. Many believe this demonstrates fundamental differences between the Hispanic and Anglo-Saxon cultures. The former has a more flexible concept and understanding of reality and what is possible, while the latter prides itself on being highly objective and "fact-based."
5. English does use the subjunctive some, however, and here are a couple of examples of its use:
 - a. I insist that you be still.
 - b. The teacher recommends that he study for the exam.
6. Now, once you realize that the indicative mood is used for facts and certainty and that the subjunctive mood is used for uncertainty and subjective thoughts, it gets pretty simple.

- a. So, when I say *Estoy seguro que va a llover* (I'm sure it's going to rain), it is a statement of certainty and belief that requires the indicative.
 - b. But, what if I'm not certain? What if I doubt it's going to rain and I want to express that uncertainty? Well, as you have probably guessed, if I want to express that kind of uncertainty I get to use the subjunctive. For example, I can say *Dudo que vaya a llover*. Notice that the subjunctive comes with its own set of verb forms.
7. Okay, so the subjunctive is a mood that is used to express doubt, uncertainty, or subjectivity in actions. Keeping that in mind, tell me whether or not I should use the subjunctive when I express the following actions in Spanish.
- a. There is no doubt that John studies in the library.
 - b. I want John to study in the library.
 - c. John goes to the library.
 - d. I don't believe John is going to the library.
8. Get the idea? Good,

Review – Things to Remember

So, what you want to remember is that tenses tell us when an action takes place and moods tell us how the speaker feels about an action. Up until now, you've been working with the indicative tense and it expresses objectivity and certainty about actions. Now you're starting to learn a new mood – the subjunctive. The subjunctive deals with feelings of uncertainty, doubt, and subjectivity when it comes to actions. Each of the moods can be expressed in multiple tenses or times and each mood has its own separate verb endings for the different tenses.