

Introduction to the Future Tense

Spanish for Beginners

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The conjugation of the future indicative tense in Spanish is easiest of all the conjugations. It is the same for all three types of verbs (-ar, -er and -ir), and the ending is attached to the infinitive instead of a verb stem. Furthermore, there are few verbs that are irregular in the future tense, and those that are are still recognizable.

The following list shows the future tense endings using the example of *hablar* (to speak). The endings are in boldface:

- *yo hablaré* (I will speak)
 - *tú hablarás* (you will speak)
 - *el, ella, usted hablará* (he, she, you will speak)
 - *nosotros, nosotras hablaremos* (we will speak)
 - *vosotros, vosotras hablaréis* (you will speak)
 - *ellos, ellas, ustedes hablarán* (they, you will speak)
- Note how the same conjugation is used for an -ir verb:
- *yo dormiré* (I will sleep)
 - *tú dormirás* (you will sleep)
 - *el, ella, usted dormirá* (he, she, you will sleep)
 - *nosotros, nosotras dormiremos* (we will sleep)
 - *vosotros, vosotras dormireis* (you will sleep)
 - *ellos, ellas, ustedes dormirán* (they, you will sleep)

Most of the verbs that are irregular in the future tense modify the stem but leave the endings the same as above. For example, the future tense conjugation of *decir* is *diré, dirás, dirá, diremos, diréis, dirán*. There aren't a lot of verbs that are irregular in the future, as even some verbs that are highly irregular (such as *ir* and *ser*) stay regular for the future tense. Among the most common irregular verbs and the stems used are *caber* (*cabr-*), *haber* (*habr-*), *hacer* (*har-*), *poner* (*pondr-*), *poder* (*podr-*), *salir* (*saldr-*), *tener* (*tendr-*), *valer* (*valdr-*) and *venir* (*vendr-*).

Uses of the future tense

While the conjugation (except for the few irregular verbs) is easy, what can be confusing is the uses of the future tense. As its name implies, the future tense is often used in discussing things that will happen. As in the above examples, the future tense frequently becomes the equivalent of the English "will" followed by the verb. *Tendré tres hijos*, I will have three children. *Nadará mañana*, she will swim tomorrow.

The future tense of Spanish also has two other common uses:

The "suppositional future" — The future tense can be used to indicate likelihood or probability. The translation will depend on the context; in question form, it can indicate uncertainty. *Serán las nueve*, it's probably 9 o'clock. *Tendrás hambre*, you must be hungry. *¿Qué horas serán?* I wonder what time it is. *Estará enferma*, she's most likely sick.

Emphatic command — As in English, the future tense can be used to indicate an intense demand. *Comerás la espinaca*, you WILL eat the spinach. *Saldrás a las nueve*, you WILL leave at 9.