

Tener Conjugation



Free Spanish Lesson and Exercises

One of the most essential verbs in Spanish is *tener*, or “to have.” This word will get you through numerous situations, from asking a question to sharing your age to saying you need to leave. Just because this verb is extremely common doesn’t mean that it follows the regular Spanish conjugation rules. The *tener* conjugation has several irregularities, but nothing too complicated! Today, we will take a look at all the moods and tenses of *tener* and then put all that information into practice with some great exercises. ¡Vamos a conjugar!

A Quick Review of *Tener*

As you may know, there are two verbs that mean “to have” in Spanish: *tener* and *haber*. *Haber* is usually used as a helping verb (for example: I **have** studied), while the usage of *tener* is more extensive. Here are some common ways to use *tener* in Spanish.

- When you physically have an object.
 - Do you have the document?
 - *¿Tienes el documento?*
 - We have 5 cats.
 - *Tenemos 5 gatos.*
- When you have something abstract.
 - I have a hunch.
 - *Yo tengo un presentimiento.*
 - They have an idea.
 - *Ellos tienen una idea.*
- To say “to be” in certain situations.
 - I am 30 years old.
 - *Yo tengo 30 años.*
 - She is very cold.
 - *Ella tiene mucho frío.*
- In compound verb phrases expressing that you “have to do” something.
 - Sorry, I have to leave.
 - *Lo siento, tengo que irme.*
 - We have to finish the book soon.
 - *Tenemos que terminar el libro pronto.*

Tener Conjugation

Now that you know **when** to use *tener*, it's time to look at **how** to use the *tener* conjugations.

The Complete Guide to the *Tener* Conjugation

The *tener* conjugations are irregular in every tense except one. However, there are two main patterns to look out for that will help you memorize the irregular conjugations: adding a “g” to create a base of *teng-* and changing the “en” to a “uv” to create the base *tuv-*. Look for each of these patterns in the following conjugations!

Tener Conjugation: Indicative Mood

Of the five different tenses of the indicative mood, only one has a regular *tener* conjugation - the imperfect. If you would like to learn more about what regular conjugations look like or other irregular verbs that are conjugated in a similar way as *tener*, click on the links.

	Present simple	Past Simple	Past Imperfect	Conditional	Future Simple
Yo	tengo	tuve	tenía	tendría	tendré
Tú	tienes	tuviste	tenías	tendrías	tendrás
Usted	tiene	tuvo	tenía	tendría	tendrá
Él, ella	tiene	tuvo	tenía	tendría	tendrá
Nosotros	tenemos	tuvimos	teníamos	tendríamos	tendremos
Ustedes	tienen	tuvieron	tenían	tendrían	tendrán
Ellos, ellas	tienen	tuvieron	tenían	tendrían	tendrán

Stem-Changing

In the present simple tense, the *tener* conjugations follow the pattern of a stem-changing verb. That is to say that the main vowel changes from an “e” to an “ie” in the second and third person forms. The *nosotros* form is conjugated regularly, as is the rule for stem-changing verbs, but the *yo* form is irregular as a “g” is added to the base (this is the first time you’ll see the “g” pattern in the *tener* conjugation!)

Tener Conjugation

Past Simple

The past simple *tener* conjugation is the perfect example of the “uv” pattern. Every form has the *tuv-* base, and the endings are regular except for the *yo*, *usted*, and *él/ella* conjugations. Instead of the regular *-í* ending for the *yo* form, add just an “e” with no accent. For the third person singular conjugations, instead of the regular *-ió*, just add an “o,” again with no accent mark.

Conditional and Future

These *tener* conjugations are irregular in the same way: add a “d” to the base to make *tend-*. Apart from that additional letter in all forms, the endings are regular.

Tener Conjugation: [Subjunctive Mood](#)

Do you remember our two main patterns of the *tener* conjugation? Both of them come into play in these two tenses.

	Present	Past
Yo	tenga	tuviera
Tú	tengas	tuvieras
Usted	tenga	tuviera
Él, ella	tenga	tuviera
Nosotros	tengamos	tuviéramos
Ustedes	tengan	tuvieran
Ellos, ellas	tengan	tuvieran

Subjunctive Changes

In each of these tenses, the base verb changes according to the two patterns previously mentioned. Apart from those stem changes that occur in every form, the endings are regular.

It is important to note that there are two other tenses of the subjunctive mood (another past tense form and a future conjugation). However, the future subjunctive is hardly ever used, and the past form given above is much more common than the other one.

Tener Conjugation: Imperative Mood

Tener Conjugation

	<u>Affirmative</u>	<u>Negative</u>
Tú	ten	No tengas
Usted	tenga	No tenga
Ustedes	tengan	No tengan

Irregularities

Each imperative form is again irregular. However, every form (except the affirmative *tú*) uses the base *teng-* which we've seen in numerous other tenses. For the affirmative *tú* form, it is completely irregular by only using the base *ten*.

Compound *Tener* Conjugations

In addition to the above tenses, there are just as many compound *tener* conjugations. The difference with these forms is that there are only two forms of *tener* used; the helping verbs are the ones that change with the pronouns. The two compound verbs are:

1. Conjugation of *haber* + past participle of *tener*
 - a. The past participle of *tener* is **tenido**.
 2. Conjugation of *estar* + gerund form of *tener*
 - a. The gerund form of *tener* is **teniendo**.
- Ella no ha **tenido** tiempo para terminar.
 - Ellos han **tenido** la misma maestra por 3 años.
 - ¿Estás **teniendo** una reacción adversa a la medicina?
 - Mi esposa y yo estamos **teniendo** algunos problemas.

Common Verb Phrase with *Tener*

One of the most common ways to use *tener* in Spanish is as a verb phrase to express necessity.

Conjugation of *tener* + *que* + infinitive verb

Tengo que llamarlo otra vez.
I have to call him again.

Tenemos que buscar la computadora.

Tener Conjugation

We have to look for the computer.

*Ella **tiene que** trabajar ahora.*

She has to work now.

Exercises with the *Tener* Conjugation

Now that we have reviewed the complete *tener* conjugation, it's time to practice with them! Be sure to check your responses with the answer key below. Happy conjugating!

1. Identify the tense and pronoun of each *tener* conjugation.

- a. Tuviste
- b. Tengamos
- c. Ten
- d. Tienes
- e. Tendría
- f. Tenga
- g. Tendrán
- h. Teníamos
- i. No tengan
- j. Tuvieras

2. Conjugate *tener* in the tense given.

- a. *Nosotros* - past subjunctive
- b. *Ellos* - future
- c. *Yo* - present simple
- d. *Ustedes* - imperfect
- e. *Tú* - past simple
- f. *Él* - present subjunctive
- g. *Usted* - imperative, negative
- h. *Ella* - conditional
- i. *Tú* - imperative, affirmative
- j. *Ellas* - past simple

3. Find and correct the error in the *tener* conjugation.

- a. Ella tene una pregunta.
- b. ¡Tenemos irnos ya!

Tener Conjugation

- c. Lo tendremos para mañana, te lo prometo.
 - d. ¿Has tenido tiempo para terminar el proyecto?
 - e. Ella tuvo un muy mal día.
 - f. Tendía cuatro años cuando mi hermanito nació.
 - g. Tengan paciencia, por favor.
 - h. Si tuviera un millón de dólares, compraría una casa nueva.
 - i. Yo tengo algunas preguntas para el nuevo jefe.
 - j. ¿Quieres que tengamos la fiesta en nuestra casa?
4. State whether the following is *verdadero* or *falso*.
- a. *Tener* is a mostly regular verb.
 - b. There are two main patterns that *tener* follows in irregular conjugations.
 - c. *Teniendo* is the gerund form of *tener*.
 - d. *Tener* is often followed by the word *de* to form a verb phrase.
 - e. The one regular *tener* conjugation is the imperfect tense.
 - f. *Tenido* is the past participle of *tener*.
 - g. There are only two subjunctive tenses.
 - h. *Tener* can be paired with *haber* and *ser* to form a compound verb.
 - i. There are two verbs in Spanish that mean “to have.”
 - j. *Tener* can never be translated as “to be.”
5. Fill in the blank with the correct form of *tener*.
- a. Ellos _____ 19 años cuando se graduaron. (imperfect)
 - b. Ella _____ que salir temprano ayer. (past simple)
 - c. ¡ _____ miedo! (*ustedes* - imperative, negative)
 - d. Nosotros _____ una habitación en alquiler. (present simple)
 - e. Espero que usted _____ todo el dinero. (present subjunctive)
 - f. Hemos _____ hambre por horas. (past participle)
 - g. _____ que llenar un formulario. (*tú* - conditional)
 - h. Disculpe, ¿ _____ un lapicero que me preste? (*usted* - present simple)
 - i. Ella está _____ dificultades con la nueva tecnología. (gerund)
 - j. ¿Qué harían si _____ tiempo ilimitado? (past subjunctive)
6. Translate the following sentences to English.
- a. ¿Tienes lo que te pedí?
 - b. Tengo que decirte algo.
 - c. Teníamos conejos como mascotas cuando éramos niños.
 - d. Si tuviera más tiempo, estudiaría más español.
 - e. ¡Ten el mío! Ya no lo necesito.
 - f. Ella tendrá la respuesta muy pronto.

Tener Conjugation

- g. Espero que tengas más tiempo libre.
- h. Él está teniendo problemas con su carro.
- i. ¿Tuvieron una fiesta ayer?
- j. No he tenido tiempo para trabajar en eso.

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Answer Key

Exercise 1) a: *Tú* - past simple, b: *nosotros* - present subjunctive, c: *tú* - imperative, affirmative, d: *tú* - present simple, e: *yo, usted, él, or ella* - conditional, f: *usted* - imperative, affirmative OR *yo, usted, él, or ella* - present subjunctive, g: *ustedes, ellos* - future, h: *nosotros* - imperfect, i: *ustedes, ellos* - imperative, negative, j: *tú* - past subjunctive

Exercise 2) a: *tuviéramos*, b: *tendrán*, c: *tengo*, d: *tenían*, e: *tuviste*, f: *tenga*, g: *no tenga*, h: *tendría*, i: *ten*, j: *tuvieron*

Exercise 3) a: Ella **tiene** una pregunta, b: ¡**Tenemos que** irnos ya! c: Lo **tendremos** para mañana, te lo prometo, d: ¿Has **tenido** tiempo para terminar el proyecto? e: Ella **tuvo** un muy mal día, f: **Tenía** cuatro años cuando mi hermanito nació, g: **Tengan** paciencia, por favor, h: Si **tuviera** un millón de dólares, compraría una casa nueva, i: Yo **tengo** algunas preguntas para el nuevo jefe, j: ¿Quieres que **tengamos** la fiesta en nuestra casa?

Exercise 4) a: *falso* - it is a mostly irregular verb, b: *verdadero*, c: *falso* - it is *teniendo*, d: *falso* - it is often followed by *que*, e: *verdadero*, f: *verdadero*, g: *falso* - there are four, but two are not commonly used, h: *falso* - it can be paired with *haber* and *estar*, i: *verdadero*, j: *falso* - it can be translated as "to be" in several situations, such as with age, hunger, and heat.

Exercise 5) a: *tenían*, b: *tuvo*, c: *No tengan*, d: *tenemos*, e: *tenga*, f: *tenido*, g: *Tendrían*, h: *tiene*, i: *teniendo*, j: *tuvieran*

Exercise 6) a: Do you have what I asked for? b: I have to tell you something, c: We had rabbits for pets when we were kids, d: If I had more time, I would study more Spanish, e: Have mine! I don't need it anymore, f: She will have the answer very soon, g: I hope you have more free time, h: He is having problems with his car, i: Did they have a party yesterday? J: I haven't had time to work on that.