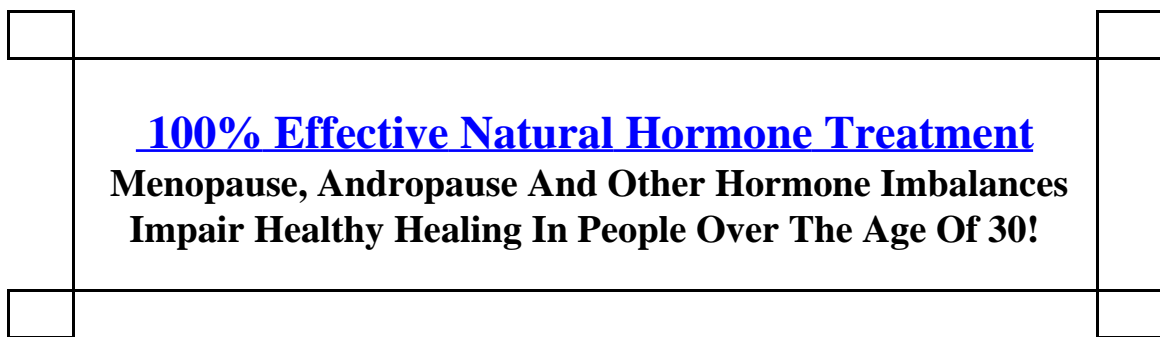


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Spanish Grammar Lesson with the Progressive Verb Tense

By Patrick Jackson

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Spanish Grammar Lesson
The Present Progressive Tense
by Patrick Jackson
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Spanish Grammar Lesson
The Present Progressive Tense

The progressive tense is used to describe actions that are in progress at a specific moment in time (the present). In English, it is the auxiliary verb "to be" and the present participle. In layperson terms, the "present participle" means verbs with "ing" attached to the end of the verb.

The present tense is used much more frequently in English than it is used in Spanish. As in Spanish, we use it to talk about actions that are in progress "now" or "right now." But in English, we also use the present progressive tense to describe habitual actions or to speak in general. For example:

- I am living in the suburbs.
- I am working in the post office.
- I am taking Spanish lessons.

In Spanish, the present tense is used to emphasize that an action is taking place now. But many Spanish grammar books do not indicate that there is another use for the present progressive tense. And that the present progressive tense can be used to stress that an action is continuous.

Spanish Grammar Lesson with the Progressive Verb Tense

I learned this one from trial and error. As embarrassing as it is to admit, a five year old little girl corrected my Spanish grammar. That's how I found out.

The first time it happened it happened with an adult. I was trying to tell an adult that I am learning Spanish. Since the Spanish grammar books taught me that the Spanish present progressive tense is only used to describe actions that are in progress "right now," I did not use the present progressive tense to say that "I am learning Spanish." Because I was not learning Spanish at that specific moment. At that very moment, I was trying to talk to her in Spanish. So I said "Aprendo español." She politely corrected me and said "se dice estoy aprendiendo español".

At the time, I thought that maybe she was wrong and that my textbook was right. So I tried telling my next door neighbor's five year old that "Yo aprendo español" who proudly corrected my Spanish. She told me: you're supposed to say "yo estoy aprendiendo español."

Forming the Present Progressive Tense

In Spanish, we form the present progressive tense by conjugating the verb "estar" with the present participle. You form regular "ar" present participles by dropping the "ar" and adding "ando." And you form regular "er" present participles by dropping the "er" and adding "iendo"

Let's try it.

My grandmother is eating pork chops.
Mi abuelita está comiendo chuletas de cerdo.

The uncle is working.
El tío está trabajando.

The father-in-law is dancing.
El suegro está bailando.

The stepmother is cooking the lobster.
La madrastra está cocinando la langosta.

The grandson is doing nothing.
El nieto no está haciendo nada.

You are washing the windows.
Tú estás limpiando las ventanas.

Now let's try a few on your own. The answers appear at the bottom.

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- 1.The nephew is selling cars.
- 2.The daughter–in–law is writing a letter.
- 3.The sister–in–law is receiving a lot of gifts.
- 4.The grandchildren are playing.
- 5.The cousin is buying a tie.

Answers:

- 1.El sobrino está vendiendo carros.
- 2.La nuera está escribiendo una carta.
- 3.La cuñada está recibiendo muchos regalos.
- 4.Los nietos están jugando.
- 5.El primo está comprando una corbata.

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Learning Spanish Grammar and the verb "Gustar"

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Learning Spanish Grammar and the
Verb "Gustar"

If there's one verb that gave me a lot of trouble when I first started learning Spanish grammar that verb was

"gustar." Many of the Spanish lessons and Spanish classes that I took in order to learn Spanish only confused me even more about the use of "gustar." "Gustar" means "to be pleasing to" or "to find pleasant." But in many instances, Spanish speakers use it the same way that we use the verb "to like."

For example, in Spanish you don't literally say: "I like the dog."

In Spanish you would say:

"Me gusta el perro".

That literally means "the dog is pleasing to me."

Actually, it means "it pleases me the dog."

It may sound strange to your English–hearing ears.

But you will get used to it. Let's try it.

I like the house.

Me gusta la casa.

I don't like the car.

No me gusta el carro.

You like the table.

Te gusta la mesa.

He likes the screen/monitor.

Le gusta la pantalla.

We like the bridge.

Nos gusta el puente.

They like to lie.
Les gusta mentir.

If you want to say "I like the dogs," a couple of changes have to take place. Can you guess what those changes are? Of course dog ("perro") must now become plural ("perros"). But the article ("el") must also become plural ("los"). And the verb must change from third person singular ("gusta") to third person plural ("gustan").

Let's try it:

I like the dogs.
Me gustan los perros.

You like the lakes
Te gustan los lagos.

She likes the streams
Le gustan los arroyos.

We like the rivers.
Nos gustan los ríos.

They like the waterfalls.
Les gustan las cataratas.

The following is the manner that we add clarity or emphasis, or mention the name of the person or persons that the object is pleasing to.

A Carlos le gusta nadar.
Carlos likes to swim.

A mí me gusta la playa.
I like the beach.

A ti te gusta la orilla del mar.
You like the seashore.

The boys like the forest.
A los chicos les gusta el bosque.

They like the pool.
A ellos les gusta la piscina.

Spanish Grammar Lesson with the Progressive Verb Tense

There are quite a few verbs in Spanish that follow the same construction as the verb "gustar."

Here are just a few.

Importar (to be important to)

Interesar (to be interesting to)

Faltar (to be lacking to)

Molestar (to bother or to annoy – note that this word does not mean to "molest")

Encantar (to like)

I have also been confused about when to use "gustar."

Despite what the textbooks say, you can use "gustar"

to indicate that you like someone as

in "being physically attracted to someone."

For example,

Tú me gustas.

I like you.

Me gusta Carmen.

I like Carmen.

But if you want to say that you like someone as in "I get along well with (name)," there's a different way to say it.

Me cae bien Carmen.

I like Carmen or I get along well with Carmen. Literally, it means "Carmen falls well on me."

No me cae bien María.

I don't like María or I don't get along well with María.

No me caes bien tú, Or, Tú no me caes bien.

I don't get along well with you.

Let's do a few exercises with "gustar." Translate the following sentences adding emphasis on the person or persons that the object is pleasing to. The answers appear below.

1. I like the cats.

2. You like the wedding. (Add emphasis to "you" using the

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familiar form of "you.")

3. Joseph likes the building.
4. We like the shirts.
5. All of you like the insects. (Add emphasis to "all of you")

Answers:

1. A mí me gustan los gatos.
2. A ti te gusta la boda.
3. A José le gusta el edificio.
4. A nosotros nos gustan las camisas.
5. A ustedes les gustan los insectos.

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