Coffee Break **Spanish**

Season 2, Lesson 1

Lesson notes

¿Qué haces durante el fin de semana?
Learning about the present tense

Coffee Break Spanish notes guide you through the content of each lesson. In this week's notes we'll be covering regular verbs in the present tense within the context of what you do at the weekend.

📄 **Lesson notes**

¿Qué haces?

In this lesson Mark began by asking the question:

¿qué haces durante el fin de semana?

You'll remember the phrases **hace sol** and **hace buen tiempo** from our discussion of weather. **Hace** comes from the verb **hacer**, meaning "to do" or "to make". **¿Qué haces?** then means "what do you do…". The full question means "What do you do during the weekend?"

One example answer given was the phrase "I work in a restaurant": in Spanish, **trabajo en un restaurante**. While it's obviously important to be able to say "I work", it's time now to learn how to talk about other people.

In English we say "I work", "you work", but the word "work" changes when we're talking about "he" or "she": it becomes "works". Something similar happens in Spanish, but there are six different forms in Spanish to learn for each verb. This may appear challenging initially, but you shouldn't let it worry you. Once you're familiar with the patterns it will all make perfect sense.

In this lesson we're learning how to conjugate verbs. This means that we'll learn verbs in a pattern made up of six forms. Have a look at the table below which will help you identify the order and the pattern of each part.

Singular	Plural
I	we
you (singular, informal)	you (plural, informal)*
he, she, it, you (singular, formal)	they you (plural, formal)

In different grammar books, each part of the verb is referred to in a different way. Sometimes they're numbered 1-6, and in other texts they're referred to as "1st person singular", "2nd person plural", etc.

Singular	Plural
1 or 1st person singular	4 or 1st person plural
2 or 2nd person singular	5 or 2nd person plural
3 or 3rd person singular	6 or 3rd person plural

We've been looking at the word "work(s)" in English. Let's now take the verb **trabajar**, meaning "to work" and put it into a grid like the one used above. We'll provide this here in a Spanish version and and English version to make it very clear what each part refers to.

TRABAJAR (to work) - PRESENT	
trabajo	trabajamos
trabajas	trabajáis*
trabaja	trabajan

TO WORK	
I work	we work
you work	you work (informal, plural)*
he works she works it works you work (formal, singular)	they work you work (formal, plural)

*The 5th part of the verb (2nd person plural) is used mostly in Spain in informal situations when speaking to a group of people. In most Latin American countries you'll find that even form informal situations the 6th part (3rd person plural) is used. It is useful, however, to recognise the 2nd person plural form as it is widely used in Spain and some other parts of the Spanish-speaking world.

While learning six parts of a verb may appear quite complicated, as soon as you learn the patterns, other verbs work very similarly. Like many languages, Spanish has "regular" and "irregular" verbs. The regular verbs work exactly the same way as each other. They come in three varieties: verbs whose infinitives end in -**ar** , verbs ending in -**er** and verbs ending in -**ir**. We'll stick with -**ar** verbs here. Let's look at another example of a "regular -ar" verb: **bailar**, meaning "to dance". Here's the full conjugation:

BAILAR (to dance)	
bailo	bailamos
bailas	bailáis
baila	bailan

So, using this example, "we dance" would be translated as **bailamos**, and "he dances" as **baila**.

How do you know who's doing what?!

You may be asking yourself: "If **baila** means 'he dances', 'she dances', 'it dances' and sometimes even 'you dance', how on earth can you tell who is dancing?" Normally the

context will help you out, but you can use the pronouns to be 100% clear. Here are the pronouns based on our table above:

SUBJECT PRONOUNS	
I: *yo*	we: *nosotros/as*
you: *tú*	you (plural): *vosotros/as*
he: *él* she: *ella* you (formal): *usted*	they: *ellos/as* you (formal): *ustedes*

Things should start making more sense now! Do you remember when you learned **¿cómo estás?** and **¿cómo está usted?** When you use the word **estás**, there's only one person you could be referring to: you (singular, informal). However, with **está**, it could be "he", "she", or "you". The word **usted** is used to clear up any misunderstanding.

Please note that you do not need to use these pronouns. They tend only to be used where there is any doubt. Consider again our word in English "work". If we didn't use pronouns then we'd have no idea who is working! It could be "I", "you" (singular), "we", "you" (plural), "they"... The fact that Spanish words have different endings for each person makes it really easy to know who is doing what.

Let's consider one final example of a regular -**ar** verb: **hablar**, meaning "to speak".

HABLAR (to speak)	
hablo	hablamos
hablas	habláis
habla	hablan

Translating the present tense

The word **hablas** in Spanish means "you speak". It also, however, means "you are speaking", "are you speaking?" "do you speak" and "you do speak"! The correct version in English depends on the context. In Spanish it's just that one versatile little word! There is, in fact, another form which you can use for "I am speaking" but we'll come to that in future episodes.

↻ Lesson 2-01 Review

Test yourself

By now you should be getting the hang of this! Let's put it to the test! Below you'll find a test to see how much you understand of this whole concept. Answers are overleaf. You'll need the following vocabulary to help you:

hablar

to speak

charlar

to chat

used more in Spain

platicar

to chat

used more in Latin America

viajar

to travel

trabajar

to work

bailar

to dance

cantar

to sing

estudiar

to study

Translate the following Spanish phrases into English:

1. hablo español

2. viajamos a España

3. trabajan en el restaurante

4. estudiamos francés

5. cantan en español

6. ¿bailas con Enrique?

7. Carlos platica con Ana

8. ¿estudiáis inglés en la universidad?

9. trabajas en una tienda

10. usted canta una canción

Translate the following English verb forms into Spanish:

11. you sing (singular, informal)

12. we are dancing

13. they study English

14. you are chatting (singular, formal) 15. he travels to Spain

16. do you speak Spanish? (plural, informal) 17. are we singing?

18. do you dance? (plural, informal)

19. she works

20. you speak English (plural, formal)

Answer Key

1. I speak Spanish / I am speaking Spanish / I do speak Spanish, etc.

2. We travel to Spain / we are travelling to Spain / we do travel to Spain, etc.

3. they work in the restaurant / they are working...

4. we study French / we are studying...

5. they sing in Spanish OR you (plural, formal) sing in Spanish

6. are you dancing with Enrique? / do you dance with Enrique?

7. Carlos chats with Ana / Carlos is chatting with Ana

8. do you (plural, informal) study English at (the) university?

9. you work in a shop / you are working…

10. you (singular, formal) sing a song

11. cantas

12. bailamos

13. estudian inglés

14. (usted) charla / platica

15. viaja a España

16. ¿habláis espanol? OR in Latin America: ¿hablan espanõl?

17. ¿cantamos?

18. ¿bailáis?

19. trabaja

20. hablan inglés

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