

Adverbial clauses

An adverbial clause is a group of words that acts as an adverb (modifying a verb) and is introduced by a connecting word (called a conjunction). The adverbial clause shows time, manner, purpose or intention, condition, or restriction of an action.

The indicative in time clauses

Some common conjunctions that introduce time clauses are:

cuando	<i>when</i>	hasta que	<i>until</i>
después (de) que	<i>after</i>	mientras	<i>while</i>
en cuanto	<i>as soon as</i>	tan pronto como	<i>as soon as</i>

The indicative is used after these conjunctions if the action has taken place or is stated as a routine.

Cuando terminé el trabajo, volví a casa.

When I finished the job, I returned home.

En cuanto llegaron a la playa, Elena y Marta almorzaron.

As soon as they arrived at the beach, Elena and Marta ate lunch.

Cuando Cristóbal visita a sus abuelos, lo llevan al museo.

When Cristobal visits his grandparents, they take him to the museum.

In the examples above, all of the actions have either taken place or routinely take place: I finished the work, Elena and Marta arrived at the beach and Cristobal's grandparents routinely take him to the museum when he visits them.

The subjunctive in time clauses

The subjunctive is used after the following conjunctions (note that these are the same conjunctions covered in the previous section) when the action of the adverbial clause has *not* been completed at the time indicated by the main clause (it is to take place at an indefinite future time and is, therefore, uncertain).

cuando	<i>when</i>	hasta que	<i>until</i>
después (de) que	<i>after</i>	mientras	<i>while</i>
en cuanto	<i>as soon as</i>	tan pronto como	<i>as soon as</i>

Cuando termine el trabajo, volveré a casa.

When I finish the job, I will return home.

En cuanto lleguen a la playa, Elena y Marta almorzarán.

As soon as they get to the beach, Elena y Marta will have lunch.

Cuando Cristóbal visite a sus abuelos, lo llevarán al museo.

When Cristobal visits his grandparents, they will take him to the museum.

In the examples above, none of the actions have taken place: I have not finished the work, Elena and Marta have not arrived at the beach, and Cristobal has not gotten to his grandparents' house.

Antes (de) que (before) is another conjunction that introduces time clauses. It is different from the other conjunctions you have learned in that it *always* requires the subjunctive. Notice that the action it introduces is always in the future in relation to the action of the main verb.

Joaquín siempre prepara la cena antes de que Elena llegue a casa.

Joaquín always prepares dinner before Elena gets home.

Josefina terminó su proyecto antes de que su jefe regresara.

Josefina finished her project before her boss returned.

Remember that when there is no change in subject, *antes de* is always followed by the infinitive.

Josefina siempre termina su proyecto antes de almorzar.

Josefina always finishes her project before having (she has) lunch.

Summary: the indicative and subjunctive in time clauses

In summary...

1. *antes de que* is always followed by the subjunctive.
2. all the conjunctions listed on pages 404 and 405 can be used with either the indicative or the subjunctive mood. They are followed by the subjunctive when they introduce an action that may take place at an indefinite future time (and is therefore uncertain). They are followed by the indicative when the action is stated as a fact either because it has already taken place or because it is habitual or routine.

Look carefully at the following examples:

Llamo a Sonia cuando ella llega. (*habit* → *indicative*)

I call Sonia when she arrives.

Llamé a Sonia cuando ella llegó. (*statement of fact* → *indicative*)

I called Sonia when she arrived.

Llamaré a Sonia cuando llegue. (*possible future action* → *subjunctive*)

I will call Sonia when she arrives.

Can you translate the expressions in parentheses into Spanish?

Siempre esperamos _____
(*until the bus arrives*)

Ayer esperamos _____
(*until the bus arrived*)

Esperaremos _____
(*until the bus arrives*)

You would translate the above expressions as follows:

Siempre esperamos hasta que llega el autobús.

Ayer esperamos hasta que llegó el autobús.

Esperaremos hasta que llegue el autobús.

The subjunctive to express the purpose or intention of an action

The subjunctive is used in clauses that express the purpose or intention of an action. Common conjunctions that introduce clauses that express the purpose or intention of an action are:

a fin de que *in order that* de manera que *so as, so that*
para que *in order that* de modo que *so as, so that*

The subjunctive is always used with *a fin de que* and *para que* because these conjunctions, by their nature, cannot introduce a statement of fact.

La profesora explica para que (a fin de que) comprendamos.

The teacher explains so that we will understand. (we may or may not understand)

Remember that when there is no change in subject, the preposition *para* is followed by the infinitive.

Nosotros escuchamos a la profesora para comprender.

We listen to the teacher in order to understand.

De modo que and *de manera que* can be followed by the indicative or the subjunctive. When *de modo que* and *de manera que* express a purpose or intention, they are similar in meaning to *para que* and *a fin de que* and are also followed by the subjunctive.

Hablen Uds. en voz alta de manera (modo) que yo los oiga.

Talk in a loud voice so that I can hear you. (in spite of your efforts I may not hear you)

However, when *de modo que* and *de manera que* express the result of an action, they are better translated as *so* and are followed by the indicative.

Andrés y Ana hablaron en voz alta de modo (manera) que todos pudimos oírlos.

Andrés and Ana talked in a loud voice so (the result was) that we all managed to hear them.

The use of the subjunctive to express a proviso or restriction

Certain conjunctions introduce clauses that establish a proviso or restriction of an action. Since they cannot introduce a statement of fact, these conjunctions are always followed by the subjunctive. Some of the more common ones are:

a menos que *unless* sin que *without*
con tal (de) que *provided that* en caso de que *in case*

No iré al baile a menos que vayas conmigo.

I will not go to the dance unless you go with me.

Pedro nunca sale sin que su madre le dé un beso.

Pedro never goes out without his mother giving him a kiss.

Remember that the infinitive is used after the preposition *sin* when there is no change of subject.

Me quedé sin ir al baile.

I was left without going to the dance.

Summary: The uses of the indicative and the subjunctive in adverbial clauses

Here is a summary of the uses of the indicative and the subjunctive in adverbial clauses introduced by a conjunction. You will need to take careful note of this information.

1. Adverbs followed by the indicative or the subjunctive depending on context:

Adverb	Mood and Context
cuando después de que en cuanto hasta que mientras tan pronto como	<div> <div> </div> <div> </div> </div>
de manera que de modo que	<div> <div> </div> <div> </div> </div>

2. Adverbs always followed by the subjunctive:

Adverb	Context	Mood
antes de que	(to express a possible future action)	+ subjunctive
a fin de que	(to express a purpose or intention)	
para que		
a menos que	(to express a proviso or restriction)	
con tal que		
sin que		
en caso de que		

-quiera compounds

There is a group of indefinite relative expressions that are formed by adding *-quiera* to a relative pronoun or adverb. These are:

adondequiera	<i>wherever</i>	cuandoquiera	<i>whenever</i>
comoquiera	<i>however</i>	dondequiera	<i>wherever</i>
cualquier(a) + noun	<i>whatever + noun</i>	quienquiera	<i>whoever</i>
cualquiera	<i>whatever</i>		

The subjunctive is used with these words when uncertainty is implied.

Comoquiera que *vayas*, Elena irá.

However you (may) go (be it by car, plane, etc.), Elena will go.

Juan acepta cualquier coche que le den.

Juan accepts whatever (any) car they (may) give him (be it a Volkswagen, Ford, Peugeot, etc.).

The indicative is used with these words when referring to something known.

Felipe siempre se sienta dondequiera que yo me siento en la clase.

Felipe always sits wherever I sit in class.

Adondequiera que iban mis padres, mis hermanos iban.

Wherever my parents went, my brothers used to go.

The subjunctive vs. the indicative with *aunque*

The subjunctive is used with *aunque* (even if) when expressing doubt or uncertainty about an event or situation, or when an action is yet to happen.

Aunque tenga tiempo libre, no lo pasaré con él.

Even if I have free time (I'm not sure I will), I will not spend it with him.

The indicative is used with *aunque* (even though, although) when an event or situation is presented as factual.

Aunque tengo tiempo libre, no lo pasaré con él.

Although (it is a fact that) I have free time, I will not spend it with him.

The subjunctive with *tal vez* and *quizás*

The subjunctive is used with the adverbs *tal vez* and *quizás* (perhaps) when expressing uncertainty.

Tal vez (Quizás) sus padres le hayan comprado un coche de último modelo.

Perhaps her parents bought her a late model car. (but I doubt it)

When a high degree of probability is implied, the indicative may be used with the adverbs *tal vez* and *quizás* (perhaps).

Tal vez (Quizás) le compraron un coche de segunda mano.

Perhaps they bought her a used car. (it's likely)