MEANING OF THE WORD "QUE" IN SPANISH – DEFINITIVE GUIDE

A definitive guide on how to use this short, yet multiple-meaning, word effectively. You've probably seen this word used countless times in the Spanish language... But, have you ever wondered about its multiple uses and meanings? **"Que"** can be directly translated as the English word **"what"**, but this is just one out of many other meanings of it. On many other occasions, Que can have a hugely different use!

This blog post will look at different situations when we need to use Que to convey a precise meaning. We will use Que in real-life sentences with its English translation. And you definitely should stick to the end of this post, where we will do a practice exercise to put everything we have learned into practice! So, without further delay, let's jump right in!

¿Qué es "Que"? (What is Que?)

As we mentioned before, Que normally will be translated as "what" in English. This is the first definition that will pop out when using translation Apps or even when looking at a dictionary.

From the grammar point of view, Que is considered a relative pronoun, meaning that it is used as an introduction to a clause that provides information about a noun. For example: **La persona que vi ayer.** (The person that I saw yesterday).

In this sentence, the clause **"que vi ayer"** gives us more information about the noun "La persona". Thanks to the use of Que, we can identify which person I am talking about.

Que also works as a conjunction to connect phrases and clauses. For example: **Me gustaría que vinieras.** (I would like you to come).

In this example, *Que* helps us to use the verb *"Me gustaría"* in conjunction with *"vinieras".*

Having said that, it is important to know that the use of Que can drastically change depending on whether it has an accent mark or not, and also whether it is used in conjunction with a verb or an adjective.

Let's take a look at two different versions of Que, the one with the accent mark and the one without it.

The difference between Que and Qué

It is quite surprising to see that just a simple accent mark can play such an important role in the meaning of a word. **Que** is a perfect example of this.

The first thing that you should remember is that there is **Que** without an accent and **Qué** with the accent. Let's first take a look at Que (without the accent).

How to use Que

As a Pronoun and Relative Clause

This is the first scenario that we mentioned at the beginning of this article. Que helps us to provide additional information about who or what we are talking about. It helps us to determine more precisely the person or object we are mentioning. In English, we use words like "who", "which" or "that" to do this.

For example:

- *Ella es la mujer **que** vino ayer.* (She is the woman who came here yesterday).
- *Las personas **que** viven enfrente son muy ruidosas.* (The people who live opposite are very noisy).
- *Ese es el autobús **que** va hacia el aeropuerto.* (That's the bus that goes to the airport).

To make Comparisons

Que can be the equivalent of the English words "than" or "to" for this scenario.

For example:

- *Yo soy más alto **que** mi hermano.* (I am taller than my brother).
- *Me gusta más este **que** ese.* (I like this one better than that one).
- *Prefiero el rock **que** el pop.* (I prefer rock to pop).

To express a "Must Do"

When you need to express something someone must do, we will use **Que** in conjunction with the verb **Tener**. So **"tener que"** translates as "has/have to do something".

For example:

- *Tengo **que** decirte algo muy importante.* (I have to tell you something very important).
- *Tienes **que** hacer tu tarea.* (You have to do your homework).

To express Cause and Consequence

Que helps us to connect two phrases in a sentence, to express the cause and consequence of a fact. In English, we would use words like "so" or "that" for this kind of sentence.

- *Estaba tan cansado **que** me quedé dormido viendo la película.* (I was so tired that I fell asleep watching the movie).
- *Estábamos tan apresurados, **que** mejor tomamos un taxi.* (We were in such a hurry, so we better took a taxi).

For Reported Speech:

To talk about something someone else said, we will use **Que** after the verbs *Decir* or *Pedir*.

For Example:

- *Paola dice **que** se siente mal.* (Paola says that she's not feeling well).
- *¿Qué haces aquí? Dijiste **que** ibas a ir al cine.* (What are you doing here? You said you were going to the cinema).
- *Mi mamá me pidió **que** comprara un kilo de arroz.* (My mom asked me to buy 2lb of rice).

To express the Subjunctive Mood

The word **Que** is one of the subjunctive mood's best friends, meaning that for the majority of the sentences in this mood, we will need to use Que.

As you may know, or probably heard, the subjunctive mood helps us to express for main things:

- Wishes/Desires
- Probability
- Feelings
- Opinions and thoughts

We will always use Que for all these situations mentioned above. Let's take a look at the first one:

Expressing Wishes or Desires

To express something you wish or desire in Spanish, you will normally begin the phrase with **"Espero que…", "Ojalá que…", "Quiero que…"**, or just simply with **"Que…".**
Examples:

- ***¡Que** tengas un buen día!* (Have a nice day!).

- *¡Ojalá **que** mañana no llueva!* (Let's hope it doesn't rain tomorrow).

- *Quiero **que** vengas a mi fiesta de cumpleaños.* (I want you to come to my birthday party).

Expressing Probability

Que also helps us to talk about situations that are likely to happen or not, or to talk about something we believe might be real.
Examples:

- *Puede ser **que** Martín no venga a clase el día de hoy. No se siente muy bien.* (Martin may not come to class today. He doesn't feel very well).

- *Es probable **que** mi hermano pueda reparar tu computadora. Él estudió Informática.* (My brother can probably fix your computer. He studied Computer

Science).

Expressing Feelings

To talk about something you like or dislike, surprise, or something that puts you in some emotional state, you will use **Que** + **a subjunctive form of a verb**.
Examples:

- *Me alegra **que** estés bien.* (I'm glad you're fine).
- *Me sorprende **que** hayas faltado sin avisar.* (I'm surprised you didn't come without saying anything).
- *A mis papás les preocupa **que** yo me desvele todas las noches.* (My parents are worried that I stay up until late every night).
- *Me molesta **que** no colabores.* (It bothers me that you don't cooperate).

Expressing Opinions and Thoughts

We will often use **Que** when it comes to giving our opinion and feelings about certain situations: **Me parece bien/mal que..., es lógico que**...
For example:

- *Me parece bien **que** intentes comer más saludable.* (I think it's good that you try to eat healthier).
- *Me parece mal **que** hayas hecho eso.* (I think it's bad that you've done that).
- *Me parece una locura **que** tenga que levantarme a las cinco de la mañana en domingo.* (It seems crazy to me that I have to get up at five in the morning on a Sunday).

- *Los vecinos de Jorge son muy ruidosos, es lógico **que** quiera mudarse a otra casa.* (Jorge's neighbors are very noisy, it makes sense that he wants to move to another house).

  We also use **Que** + **subjunctive** with negative sentences when giving our thoughts or opinions.
  For example:

- *No creo **que** vaya a llover el día de hoy.* (I don't think it will rain today).

- *No pienso **que** sea una mala decisión.* (I don't think it's a bad decision).

How to use Qué:

Hey there. Welcome.

I'm Javier Lee - and I wrote this article.

Stuck on this topic? Hire me for just 1 hour to start mastering it. Pass a test, improve basic vocabulary or improve your conversational level in Spanish.

Book a 1 Hour Lesson With Me



The good news is that **Qué** with an accent has fewer uses than Que without the accent. The direct translation of Qué can be the words "what" or "which". Therefore, Qué helps us to ask a question, it is an interrogative pronoun.

For example:

- ***¿Qué** es eso?* (What is that?).

- ***¿Qué** estás haciendo?* (What are you doing?).

- ***¿Qué** sabor te gusta más, la vainilla o el chocolate?* (Which flavor do you prefer, vanilla or chocolate?).

Now, **Qué** can also be used with an exclamation point in a sentence to express different feelings like surprise, anger, happiness, and so on. In English, we would use the words "how", "what", or "such" in these kinds of sentences. Let's see:

- ***¡Qué** alegría!* (What a joy!)

- ***¡Qué** lástima!* (Such a pity!)

- ***¡Qué** asco!* (How disgusting!)

- ***¡Qué** guapo!* (How handsome!)

Reminder: Remember that in Spanish, we also use an interrogative or exclamation point at the beginning of a sentence: ¿/¡

Fun Fact

Did you know that there are some occasions when we can use Que and Qué together in a sentence? Sometimes Spanish speakers will ask: "¿Que qué?". This question can be used to express surprise about what we've just heard. It could be the English equivalent of "Say what?". Interesting, huh?

Word Que – Final Quiz/Worksheet

Translate these sentences into Spanish using the word **Que:**

1. The woman that I love lives in Buenos Aires.
2. He's the guy that forgot his umbrella yesterday.
3. When I was a child, I used to say that I was more handsome than my brother.
4. Traveling by plane is more expensive than traveling by bus.

5. You have to exercise at least twice a week.
6. I wanted to go there so much that I got up very early.
7. Emily said she could speak some Spanish.
8. Have fun! (You)
9. Let's hope there's not a lot of traffic on the way.
10. It is likely to snow tomorrow.
11. I am worried that Juan is not answering my messages.
12. I'm excited that next week we're going on a trip!
13. It seems normal to me that Susan speaks Spanish so well. She lived in Peru for four years.
14. What time is it?
15. What a surprise!

Answers to the exercise:

1. La mujer **que** yo amo vive en Buenos Aires.

2. Él es el chico **que** olvidó su paraguas el día de ayer.

3. Cuando era niño, yo decía **que** yo era más guapo que mi hermano.

4. Viajar en avión es más costoso **que** viajar en autobús.

5. Tienes **que** hacer ejercicio al menos dos veces por semana.

6. Tenía tantas ganas de ir ahí, **que** me levanté muy temprano.

7. Emily dijo **que** podía hablar algo de español.

8. ¡**Que** te diviertas!

9. Esperemos **que** no haya mucho tráfico en el camino.

10. Es probable **que** nieve mañana.

11. Me preocupa **que** Juan no conteste mis mensajes.

12. ¡Me emociona **que** la próxima semana salgamos de viaje

13. Me parece normal **que** Susan hable tan bien español. Vivió en Perú por cuatro años

14. ¿**Qué** hora es?

15. ¡**Qué** sorpresa!

Final words

¿Qué significa Que? I think now we can answer this question more confidently, or at least with a deeper understanding. We hope this blog post helped you to improve your Spanish level, and that you can use it as a reference when in doubt about the word Que.

Don't forget to book a lesson with one of our native Spanish tutors! We will be more than happy to help you with any questions you may have on your learning path. So, for now, **¡que les vaya bien!**