SPANISH VERB – PODER CONJUGATIONS

Querer es poder (see the meaning of this at the bottom of the article).

The Spanish verb Poder can have 2 meanings. One as a verb, that is what we will see here, and the other as a noun. We use "*poder*" as a verb to refer to abilities or permission different from the English language. In English, we use "To can" to talk about abilities but use "May" to talk about permission. In Spanish, we can say *(¿puedo ir al baño?*) and can also say (*puedo volar*), if you see there is no change as in English that we would say "*May I go to the restroom?"* Or *"I can fly"*.

As a noun, "*poder*" means power; it is used to talk mainly about political power; however, it is also used to talk about sources of energy or to talk about those special abilities we see in fiction movies. For example: *(El presidente concentra todo el poder), (Superman tiene el poder de volar), (El poder de los autos es la gasolina)*.

In this post, we will just focus on **the use of ''poder'' as a verb.**

Before you continue reading, take this account:

- Poder is a very irregular verb, be careful!
- Do not forget poder can have 2 meanings; can/may and power.
- We use ''poder'' to ask for permissions.
- We use ''poder'' to talk about natural or trained abilities.

Let's learn together!! As Poder is an essential verb to have in your vocabulary!

These are some examples of phrases in the **indicative mode** of this important verb...

- Yo puedo caminar.
- Pudiste ver la película
- Usted no podía ir al cine.
- Nosotros podremos hacer el trabajo
- Ustedes podrían mirar la televisión.

Subject	Present	Perfect Preterit (past)	Imperfect preterit (past)	Future simple	Conditional

Subject	Present	Perfect Preterit (past)	Imperfect preterit (past)	Future simple	Conditional
Yo (I)	Puedo	Pude	Podía	Podré	Podría
Tú (you	Puedes	Pudiste	Podías	Podrás	Podrías
Él (he)/ella (she) /usted (you: formal)	Puede	Pudo	Podía	Podrá	Podría
Nosotros (we)	Podemos	Pudimos	Podíamos	Podremos	Podríamos
Ustedes (you: plural)/ellos (They: mas.) /ellas (They: fem.)	Pueden	Pudieron	Podían	Podrán	Podrían

Analyze the previous chart and let's review some examples.

We use the **present tense** to talk about certain abilities we have. It is also used when we want to ask for permission from someone who has more authority than us. For example, *(¿Puedo ir al baño?) (May I go to the restroom.)* this is a common expression used by students when they want to ask their teachers for permission. Another example could be *(Puedo correr más rápido que tú.) (I can run faster than you)*. In this case, we use "poder" to express an ability that maybe is better than one of another person.

Perfect preterit tense is usually used to talk about actions that we could develop in a specific moment in the past. For example: With *(Pude pasar el examen.)* the subject expressed that he was able to pass an exam, but it is not a permanent ability.

We use **imperfect preterit** to express abilities we used to have in past periods of time. For example: *(Antes del accidente, ella podía ver.) (Before the accident, she could see.)* This phrase would be said about a blind person, who had the ability to see before a certain accident.

We use the **future simple** to communicate abilities that we think we will be able to achieve in the future. For example: *(Podremos hablar español perfectamente.) (We will be able to speak Spanish perfectly.)*. In this case, we are saying that in the future we will

acquire the ability to speak Spanish.

We use the **simple conditional tense** to express abilities that hypothetically we would have if certain conditions were given. For example: *(Si ustedes hablaran español, podrían viajar a muchos países.)* (*If you spoke Spanish, you would be able to travel to different countries.*). In this case, we are talking about a hypothetical situation that would happen if someone had a certain ability.

Subject	Compounded perfect preterit (Present perfect)	pluperfect (past perfect)	Perfect future	Perfect Conditional
Yo (I)	He podido	Había podido	Habrá podido	Habría podido
Tú (you)	Has podido	Habías podido	Habrás podido	Habrías podido
Él (he)/ella (she) /usted (you: formal)	Ha podido	Había podido	Habrá podido	Habría podido
Nosotros (we)	Hemos podido	Habíamos podido	Habremos podido	Habríamos podido
Ustedes (you: plural)/ellos (They: mas.) /ellas (They: fem.)	Han podido	Habían podido	Habrán podido	Habrían podido

As you already know, **perfect tenses** also exist and "poder" is not the exception. We build them using the past participle of the verb, in this case; podido…

Let's see!

We use the compounded **perfect preterit** to express an ability we have had since a certain time, but we currently keep it. For example: *(Hemos podido enfrentar el invierno desde 1999.) (We have been able to face the Winter since 1999.).*

We use the **pluperfect** to express a certain ability we had in the past before developing the action we are telling someone: *(Cuando llegué, ya había podido entrar.) (When I arrived, he had already been able to get in.)*.

We use the **perfect future** to express an ability or goal we are certain we will achieve. For example: cuando termine el año, ya habré podido graduarme (by the time the year is over, I will have been able to graduate) In this case, we use it to say that when something is done, we will have achieved a goal.

We use **perfect conditional** to express hypothetical situations where we think maybe we could have done something extraordinary. For example *(Si hubieras tenido tu celular, habrías podido ayudar.) (If you had had your cell phone, you would have been able to help.)*. In this case, we are saying that if someone had done certain action, he would have been able to do something.).

Let's go through the subjunctive mode:

Subject	Present	Imperfect preterit	pluperfect	Perfect preterit
Yo (I)	Pueda	Pudiera	Hubiera podido	Haya podido
Tú (you)	Puedas	Pudieras	Hubieras podido	Hayas podido
Él (he)/ella (she) /usted (you: formal)	Pueda	Pudiera	Hubiera podido	Haya podido
Nosotros (we)	Podamos	Pudiéramos	Hubiéramos podido	Hayamos podido
Ustedes (you: plural)/ellos (They: mas.) /ellas (They: fem.)	Puedan	Pudieran	Hubieran podido	Hayan podido

Subjunctive is usually used to express wishes, wants and hopes. And it is typically introduced by the words: <<que, ojalá, espero (que), si..., cuando>>.

We use **present tense** when we want to express our wish for someone to have an ability or chance. For example: *(Espero que puedas viajar esta noche.) (I hope you can travel this night).*

When we talk about a hypothetical possibility which has a consequence; usually used with perfect conditional, we use **imperfect preterit**: *(Si pudiera recordar la contraseña, ya lo habría hecho.) (If I could remember the password, I would have already done it.)*

The **pluperfect** is used to express a hypothetical situation about something it could have been done, but it was not done: *(Hubiéramos podido llegar a tiempo si no hubiéramos perdido nuestras llaves.) (We could have been able to arrive on time if we hadn't lost our keys.).*

When we want to anticipate something will be achieved, and we would like something to be done in that moment, we use **perfect preterit**: *(Serás libre cuando hayas podido probar tu Inocencia. (You will be free when you have been able to prove your innocence.).*

Although the **imperative mode** exists with this verb, we do not use the imperative in real language because we cannot make someone have an ability they don't have.

Spanish Verb Poder – Quiz/Worksheet

1. Yo _____ correr. (indicative: present)

2. Nosotros _____ _____ podido hacer esto durante años. (indicative: present perfect)

3. Ellas _____ graduarse (indicative: perfect preterit)

4. Melissa _____ salir cuando termine sus tareas. (indicative: future simple)

5. Jhonny y Fernando _____ correr antes de su accidente. (Indicative: imperfect preterite)

6. Cuando tú _____ me dices. (subjuntive: present)

7. Ojalá Adriana _____ ver esto (subjuntive: imperfect preterit)

8. Si no hubieras llegado tarde, _____ _____ ganar un premio. (subjuntive: pluperfect)

9. Cuando (nosotros) _____ _____ entender el mensaje, te diremos. (subjuntive: imperfect preterit)

10. Espero que (nosotros) _____ viajar el próximo viernes. (subjuntive: present)

Answers:

Hey there. Welcome.

I'm Julio Cesar Martinez - and I wrote this article.

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1. Puedo

2. Hemos podido

3. Pudieron

4. Podrá

5. Podían

6. Puedas

7. Pudiera

8. Hubieras podido

9. Hayamos podido

10. Podamos

Meaning of the Phrase at the Top:

“Querer es poder” is a common phrase that is used as a motivational quote and means that if we really wish something, we’ll be able to achieve it.