SPANISH VERB – TENER CONJUGATION

Conjugation of the Verb Tener

One of the most important and frequently used verbs in Spanish is the verb **Tener**. It is one of those must-learn verbs in order to be able to communicate a variety of things in this language.

We have created this series of blogs of the most used irregular verbs so that you can understand their use and how to conjugate them correctly. Each irregular verb should be treated individually because each verb follows a particular irregularity in its conjugation. But don't worry! For each blog, we have included all the most common conjugations in all moods and tenses, as well as plenty of real-life example sentences to see the verb used in context.

In this blog, we will first take a look at the meaning and different uses of the verb Tener; secondly, we will learn all the most used conjugations in different moods and tenses; and, finally, we will train ourselves with a little practice exercise at the end of this article. Sit comfortably, take a deep breath, and let's jump right in!

When should we use Tener?

Most of the time, Tener can be translated as the English verb "to have". However, there are some important exceptions when Tener cannot be directly translated as "to have". Let's take a look at different situations when we should use the verb Tener:

To indicate possession or ownership (of tangible or intangible things):

- Mi hermana **tiene** un coche plateado. **(My sister has a silver car)**.
- ¿**Tienes** dinero? **(Do you have money?)**
- ¡**Tengo** una idea! **(I've got an idea!)**

To ask for something:

- ¿**Tienes** 50 centavos? **(Do you have 50 cents (to spare)?)**.
- ¿**Tienes** cinco minutos? **(Can I have five minutes of your time?).**

To talk about family and personal relationships:

- No **tengo** hermanos, soy hijo único. **(I have no siblings; I am an only child)**.
- Mi hermano **tiene** novia. **(My brother has a girlfriend)**.

To talk about age :

- ¿Cuántos años **tienes**? **(How old are you?)**.
- Yo **tengo** veintiocho años. **(I am twenty-eight years old)**.

This last use of Tener can be a little tricky for English speakers, since we would rather use the verb "to be" to talk about our ages: I am x years old. However, in Spanish you can think of it as the number of years that you have accumulated so far in your life, rather than a state of being. Like saying "I have x years accumulated": **Yo tengo x años.**

To describe people, places, or objects:

- Brisa **tiene** el cabello rizado. **(Brisa has curly hair).**
- El edificio **tiene** cinco pisos. **(The building has five floors)**.

To express some temporary physical and emotional states:

- **Tengo** hambre. **(I'm hungry).**
- Valeria **tiene** fiebre. **(Valeria has a fever)**.
- ¡No **tengo** miedo de intentarlo! **(I'm not afraid to try!).**

Here again, for some phrases in English, we would use the verb to be rather than to have. You can think of it as if you were saying "right now I have this issue or condition". In Spanish, we would always use the verb Tener to express all these temporary states.

To express "to have to do something":

- **Tienes** que esforzarte más. **(You have to try harder)**.
- ¡No **tiene** que preocuparse! **(You don't have to worry!)**.

For this use of Tener the structure that we will follow is: **Subject** (often implied) + **conjugated form of Tener** + **que** + **action**. We use this structure to give advice or to give somebody an indication of how to do something.

Verbals of Tener

Verbals can function as nouns, adjectives or adverbs in a sentence. They don't need to be conjugated, meaning that their form will always look the same. For the verb Tener, we have two common forms:

Infinitive Form:

The infinitive form is considered as the basic form of a verb, this is also the form of a verb to look for in a dictionary. Normally, you'll need a conjugated form of another verb to use Tener in its infinitive form inside a sentence. For example:

- Me gustaría **tener** una casa enfrente de la playa. **(I would like to have a house in front of the beach).**

Here, we're using Tener with the conditional form of the verb Gustar. Notice that in English, we also use the infinitive "to have" for this sentence.

Gerund Form:

Gerund helps us to express a process in its development. For the verb Tener, we use the ending -iendo. Here, "Teniendo" works as a noun in the sentence. For example:

- **Teniendo** dinero, todo es más fácil. (Having money, everything is easier).

Conjugation time!

Let's take a look at the most common conjugations of the verb Tener.

Indicative Mood:

Most common mood to conjugate verbs.

	Present	Preterite	Imperfect	Conditional	Future
Yo	tengo	tuve	tenía	tendría	tendré
Tú	tienes	tuviste	tenías	tendrías	tendrás

	Present	Preterite	Imperfect	Conditional	Future
Él/Ella/Usted	tiene	tuvo	tenía	tendría	tendrá
Nosotros	tenemos	tuvimos	teníamos	tendríamos	tendremos
Ellos/Ellas/Ustedes	tienen	tuvieron	tenían	tendrían	tendrán

Examples:

- Miriam **tiene** muchos amigos. **(Miriam has many friends)**.
- ¡**Tienes** mucha suerte! **(You are very lucky!)**.
- **Tuve** un percance en el camino, por eso llegué tarde. **(I had a mishap on the way, that's why I'm late)**.

Subjunctive Mood:

Used to express a wish or a desire.

	Present	Imperfect	Future
Yo	tenga	tuviera, tuviese	tuviere
Tú	tengas	tuvieras, tuvieses	tuvieres
Él/Ella/Usted	tenga	tuviera, tuviese	tuviere
Nosotros	tengamos	tuviéramos, tuviésemos	tuviéremos
Ellos/Ellas/Ustedes	tengan	tuvieran, tuviesen	tuvieren

Examples:

- Es importante que **tengas** tus datos personales actualizados. **(It is important that you keep your personal info up to date)**.
- ¡Si tan sólo **tuviera** todo el dinero del mundo! **(If only I had all the money in the world!)**.

Imperative Mood:

Used when you want to give orders or commands. Please notice that in the Imperative

Mood, we cannot conjugate it with the personal pronouns Yo, Él/Ella, Ellos/Ellas.

	Affirmative	Negative
Yo	-	-
Tú	ten	no tengas
Usted	tenga	no tenga
Nosotros	tengamos	no tengamos
Ustedes	tengan	no tengan

Examples:

- **Ten**, esto es para ti. **(Here, this is for you)**.
- ¡No tenga pena! **(Used in some countries in Latin America to say: "It's okay!", "No problem!")**.

We also use the Imperative mood of Tener when we want to say things like "Ten cuidado" (Be careful), "Ten paciencia" (Be patient). You can understand this as if we were saying "You have to have caution" or "You have to have patience".

Tener – Quiz/Worksheet

Complete the following sentences with the correct form of the verb Tener.

1. Mariana _____ los ojos verdes. (Marina has green eyes).

2. _____ gripe. No podré ir a la fiesta. (I have a cold. I can't go to the party).

3. _____ mucho calor. Voy a prender el ventilador. (It's very hot. I'm going to turn on the fan).

4. ¡_____ cuidado! El piso está muy resbaloso. (Be careful! The floor is very slippery.)

5. ¡Espero que _____ mucho éxito en tu entrevista de trabajo! (I hope you have a lot of

success in your job interview!).

6. _____, este es tu regalo de cumpleaños. ¡Felicidades! (Here, this is your birthday gift. Congratulations!).

7. Si _____ interés en ella, invítala a salir algún día. (If you're interested in her, ask her out someday).

8. _____ pereza el día de hoy, ¡no quiero hacer nada! (I feel lazy today, I don't want to do anything!).

9. Cuando mi mamá era joven, ella _____ el cabello muy largo. (When my mom was young, she had very long hair).

10. Si eres disciplinado, _____ mucho éxito en la vida. (If you're disciplined, you will be very successful in life).

*Answers to the exercise:

1. Mariana **tiene** los ojos verdes.

2. **Tengo** gripe. No podré ir a la fiesta.

3. **Tengo** mucho calor. Voy a prender el ventilador.

4. ¡**Ten** cuidado! El piso está muy resbaloso.

5. ¡Espero que **tengas** mucho éxito en tu entrevista de trabajo!

6. **Ten**, este es tu regalo de cumpleaños. ¡Felicidades!

7. Si **tienes** interés en ella, invítala a salir algún día.

8. **Tengo** pereza el día de hoy, ¡no quiero hacer nada!

9. Cuando mi mamá era joven, ella **tenía** el cabello muy largo.

10. Si eres disciplinado, **tendrás** mucho éxito en la vida.

Hey there. Welcome.

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

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Before we finish!

That’s it for today regarding the verb Tener! “Si aún tienes preguntas” (If you still have more questions), don’t hesitate to book a lesson with one of our Spanish tutors! They will help you to understand everything better with detailed explanations and real-life examples from native speakers. Until then, see you next time!