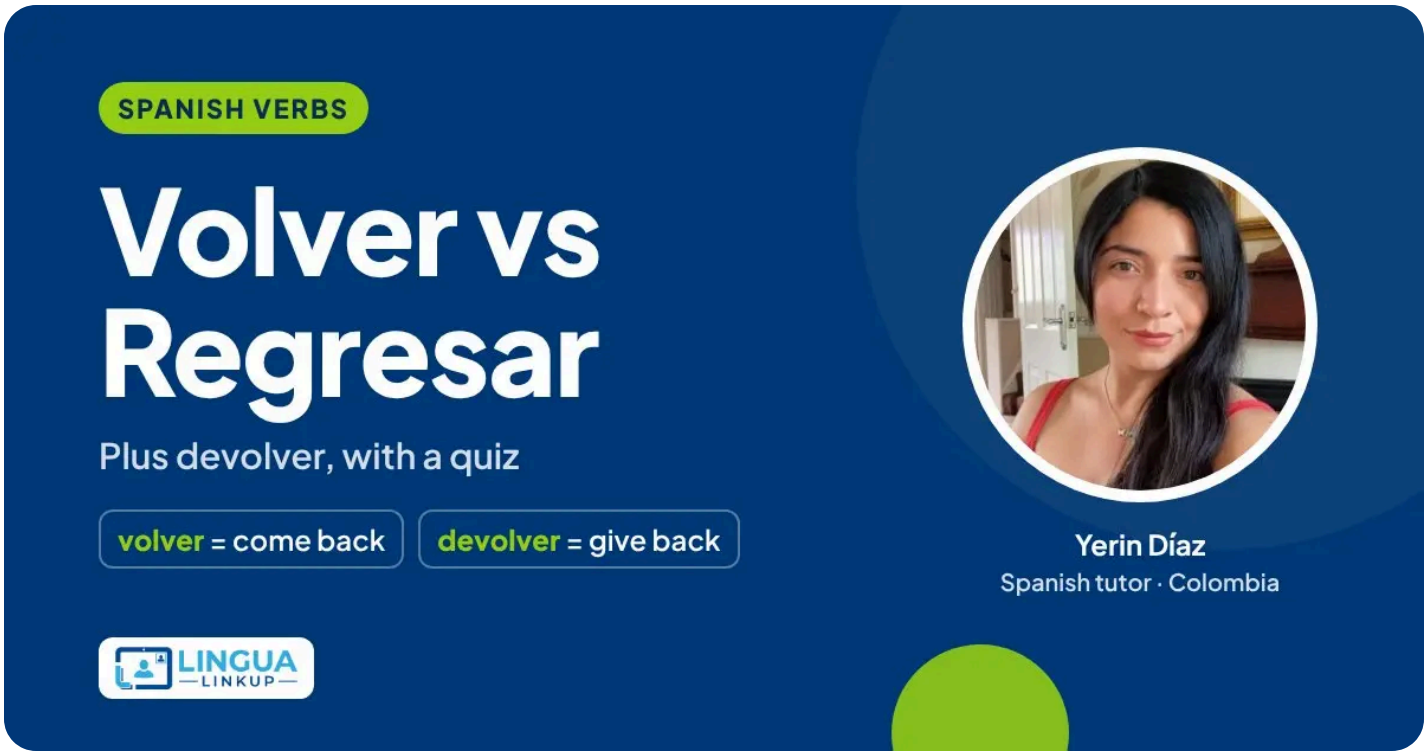
Volver vs Regresar vs Devolver: How to Say Return in Spanish

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Quick answer: "To return" in Spanish depends on what's returning. When **you** come or go back somewhere, use **volver** or **regresar**: *Vuelvo / Regreso a las cinco* – "I'll be back at five." When you give **something** back, use **devolver**: *Tengo que devolver el libro* – "I have to return the book."

These three verbs all translate as "return," but they aren't interchangeable. This guide explains the difference, gives conjugation charts, covers bonus uses like *volver a* (to do again) and *volverse* (to become), and ends with a quiz.

To return in Spanish: the short version

Verb	Meaning	Example
volver	to come/go back (a person)	*Volvimos de Cancún ayer.* – We got back from Cancún yesterday.
regresar	to come/go back (a person)	*¿Cuándo regresas?* – When are you coming back?
devolver	to give back / return (an object)	*Devuélveme mi teléfono.* – Give me back my phone.
volver a + infinitive	to do something again	*Vuelve a intentarlo.* – Try it again.
volverse	to become	*Se volvió famoso.* – He became famous.

Volver vs regresar

When a **person** (or animal, or vehicle) goes back somewhere, *volver* and *regresar* mean the same thing:

- *Vuelvo a casa a las seis.* = *Regreso a casa a las seis.* – I get home at six.

The difference is mostly regional:

- **Latin America** (especially Mexico): *regresar* is very common.
- **Spain:** *volver* is the default.

Either one will be understood everywhere. *Volver* is more versatile, though, because it has extra meanings (below) that *regresar* doesn't.

Devolver: to give something back

When an **object** goes back to its owner or to a store, use **devolver**:

- *Quiero devolver estos zapatos.* – I want to return these shoes.
- *¿Me devuelves el cargador?* – Can you give me back the charger?
- *Te devuelvo la llamada.* – I'll call you back.

Using *volver* here is a very common learner mistake: × *Quiero volver los zapatos* → ✓ *Quiero devolver los zapatos*.

Note: in parts of Latin America, *devolver* is also an informal way to say "to throw up."

Volver conjugation (stem change o → ue)

Pronoun	Present	Preterite	Present perfect
yo	vuelvo	volví	he vuelto
tú	vuelves	volviste	has vuelto
él / ella / usted	vuelve	volvió	ha vuelto
nosotros	volvemos	volvimos	hemos vuelto
vosotros	volvéis	volvisteis	habéis vuelto
ellos / ustedes	vuelven	volvieron	han vuelto

Irregular past participle: **vuelto** (not × *volvido*). Present progressive: *estoy volviendo*. All tenses: volver conjugation guide.

Devolver conjugation

Devolver works exactly like volver: *devuelvo, devuelves, devuelve, devolvemos, devolvéis, devuelven*. Preterite: *devolví, devolviste, devolvió…* Past participle: **devuelto**.

Regresar conjugation (regular)

Pronoun	Present	Preterite
yo	regreso	regresé
tú	regresas	regresaste
él / ella / usted	regresa	regresó
nosotros	regresamos	regresamos
vosotros	regresáis	regresasteis
ellos / ustedes	regresan	regresaron

Regresar is a regular -ar verb. Review the pattern in AR, ER, IR verbs.

Bonus: volver a + infinitive = to do again

- *No vuelvas a hacer eso.* – Don't do that again.
- *Volví a ver la película.* – I watched the movie again.
- *¿Puedes volver a explicarlo?* – Can you explain it again?

Bonus: volverse = to become

Use volverse for big or lasting changes in personality or state:

- *Se volvió loco.* – He went crazy.
- *Mi hijo se ha vuelto muy responsable.* – My son has become very responsible.

For quick, temporary changes, use *ponerse* instead (*se puso nervioso*). See ponerse vs vestirse vs poner.

Quick quiz: volver, regresar or devolver?

1. Tengo que _____ los libros a la biblioteca.
2. Mis padres _____ de vacaciones mañana.
3. ¿Me _____ (tú) el dinero que te presté?
4. Ella nunca _____ a llamarme. (past)
5. Nosotros _____ a casa tarde anoche.

▶ **Show answers**

More verb pairs

Keep going with traer vs llevar, recordar vs acordarse and acabar vs terminar.

Frequently asked questions

How do you say “to return” in Spanish?

For people coming back: volver or regresar . For giving something back: devolver .

What is the difference between volver and regresar?

For coming back, there’s no real difference. Regresar is more common in Latin America and volver in Spain. Only volver can mean “to do again” (volver a) or “to become” (volverse).

What is the preterite of volver?

volví, volviste, volvió, volvimos, volvisteis, volvieron . There’s no stem change in the preterite.

What is the past participle of volver?

Vuelto : He vuelto – I have returned.

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