

# Ser vs Estar

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When to use each Spanish verb "to be"

**Memory Aid:** **SER = DOCTOR**

Description, Occupation, Characteristic, Time, Origin, Relationship

**ESTAR = PLACE**

Position, Location, Action (progressive), Condition, Emotion

*Tip: SER = permanent/inherent traits. ESTAR = temporary states/locations.*

## 1. When to Use SER

**Identity** **Soy María.**

I am María.

**Origin** **Somos de España.**

We are from Spain.

**Profession** **Ella es doctora.**

She is a doctor.

**Characteristics** **El libro es interesante.**

The book is interesting.

**Time/Date** **Son las tres.**

It is three o'clock.

**Relationships** **Él es mi hermano.**

He is my brother.

## Common Expressions

**SER**

**es decir**

that is to say

**o sea**

in other words

**sea como sea**

be that as it may

**es que...**

the thing is...

**ser capaz de**

to be capable of

**a no ser que**

unless

**érase una vez**

once upon a time

**ESTAR**

**estar de acuerdo**

to agree

**estar a punto de**

to be about to

**estar harto de**

to be fed up with

**estar de buen humor**

to be in a good mood

**estar de vacaciones**

to be on holiday

**estar en las nubes**

to daydream

**estar por**

to be in favour of

## 2. When to Use ESTAR

**Location** **Madrid está en España.**

Madrid is in Spain.

**Emotions** **Estoy feliz.**

I am happy (right now).

**Conditions** **La puerta está abierta.**

The door is open.

**Progressive** **Estoy comiendo.**

I am eating.

**Temporary States** **El café está frío.**

The coffee is cold.

**Results** **El trabajo está hecho.**

The work is done.

## 3. Useful Resources

- Ser vs Estar Guide**

[spanishgrammar.co.uk/ser-vs-estar](http://spanishgrammar.co.uk/ser-vs-estar)

- Ser vs Estar Basics**

[spanishgrammar.co.uk/ser-vs-estar-basics](http://spanishgrammar.co.uk/ser-vs-estar-basics)

- Adjectives That Change Meaning**

[spanishgrammar.co.uk/ser-estar-adjectives-change-meaning](http://spanishgrammar.co.uk/ser-estar-adjectives-change-meaning)

- Practice Exercises**

[spanishgrammar.co.uk/practice-ser-estar](http://spanishgrammar.co.uk/practice-ser-estar)