

Ser vs Estar

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.

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
- **Ser vs Estar Basics**
spanishgrammar.co.uk/ser-vs-estar-basics
- **Adjectives That Change Meaning**
spanishgrammar.co.uk/ser-estar-adjectives-change-meaning
- **Practice Exercises**
spanishgrammar.co.uk/practice-ser-estar

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