

Spanish Stem-Changing Verbs

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The "Boot" Pattern - stem changes in all forms except nosotros/vosotros

Some Spanish verbs change their stem vowel when conjugated. The pattern forms an "L" or boot shape:

yo, tú, él/ella, ellos change, while **nosotros/vosotros** keep the original vowel. The highlighted cells below show where changes occur.

e → ie

PENSAR (to think)			
yo	pienso	nosotros	pensamos
tú	piensas	vosotros	pensáis
él/ella	piensa	ellos	piensan

o → ue

PODER (to be able)			
yo	puedo	nosotros	podemos
tú	puedes	vosotros	podéis
él/ella	puede	ellos	pueden

e → i

PEDIR (to ask for)			
yo	pido	nosotros	pedimos
tú	pides	vosotros	pedís
él/ella	pide	ellos	piden

Other Common Verbs

querer	to want
empezar	to begin
entender	to understand
preferir	to prefer
cerrar	to close
perder	to lose

dormir	to sleep
volver	to return
encontrar	to find
contar	to count/tell
recordar	to remember
morir	to die

servir	to serve
repetir	to repeat
seguir	to follow
vestirse	to get dressed
reír	to laugh
conseguir	to get/obtain

Special Cases & Notes

- u → ue:** jugar (to play) is the only verb with this change: juego, juegas, juega, jugamos, jugáis, juegan
- e → i:** Only applies to -IR verbs. These also change in preterite (él/ellos) and present participle (gerund).
- Double:** Some -IR verbs (preferir, sentir, mentir) use e → ie in present, but e → i in preterite & gerund.

Examples in Context

Quiero ir al cine.	I want to go to the movies.	Siempre pido lo mismo.	I always order the same thing.
¿Puedes ayudarme?	Can you help me?	Él duerme ocho horas.	He sleeps eight hours.

Useful Resources

- Stem-Changing Verbs Guide
spanishgrammar.co.uk/stem-changing-verbs
- Present Tense Conjugations
spanishgrammar.co.uk/regular-verbs-present-tense
- Irregular Verbs
spanishgrammar.co.uk/irregular-verbs-present-tense