

Crazy Common Verbs #1: *Haber*

One of the most common verbs in Spanish is *haber*. It has three main uses:

As an auxiliary verb to form compound tenses: When used in this way, *haber* is the equivalent of the English auxiliary verb "to have" (which is much different than the English "to have" when it means "to possess"). *Haber* is used in a variety of tenses to form what are known as the perfect tenses because they refer to actions that have been or will be completed. As in English, the perfect tenses are formed by following a form of *haber* (it is conjugated irregularly) with a past participle.

He comprado un coche. (I have bought a car.)

¿Has estudiado? (Have you studied?)

Han salido. (They have left.)

Habr  salido. (She will have left.)

Habr a hablado. (I would have spoken.)

In English, it is very common to insert an adverb or other word between the two parts of a compound verb, such as in the sentence "he has always gone." But in Spanish (except perhaps in poetry), the two verb parts aren't separated.

As a beginner, you don't need to learn all the tenses using *haber* now, but you should be able to recognize *haber* when it is used. You should also be aware that while the perfect tenses in Spanish and English are quite similar in form and usage, they aren't always used in exactly the same way.

To mean "there is" or "there are": One peculiarity of *haber* is that it has a unique conjugated form, *hay* (pronounced basically the same as the English "eye") that means "there is" or "there are."

Hay una silla en la cocina. (There is one chair in the kitchen.)

Hay dos sillas en la cocina. (There are two chairs in the kitchen.)

Note that in the above examples, the English "there" isn't referring to location, but to mere existence. (The most common word for "there" in terms of location is *all *.)

Hay una silla all . (There is a chair there.)

Haber can be used in this way in tenses other than the present, although not as commonly.

In various idioms: *Haber* can be used in a number of idioms, which are phrases that have a meaning apart from the meanings of the words in them. The one you'll run into most often as a beginner is *haber que*, which means "to be necessary" when followed by an infinitive. When used this way in the present tense, the *hay* form of *haber* is used.

Hay que saltar. (It is necessary to jump.)

Hay que conocerlo para comprenderlo.
(It is necessary to know him in order to understand him.)

Habr  que salir a las dos. (It will be necessary to leave at 2 o'clock.)

Conjugation in the present tense:

<i>yo</i> (I)	he	I have
<i>t�</i> (you familiar)	has	you have
<i>usted</i> (you formal), <i>�l</i> (he), <i>ella</i> (she)	ha (sometimes hay)	you have, he has, she has
<i>nosotros, nosotras</i> (we)	hemos	we have
<i>ustedes</i> (you formal), <i>ellos, ellas</i> (they)	han (sometimes hay)	you have, they have