

The Perfect Tenses

In Spanish, the **perfect tense** is a compound tense, that consists of two parts, the helping verb **haber** and a past participle (main verb). There are several perfect tenses in the indicative mood but we will study only four: the present perfect, pluperfect, future perfect, and conditional perfect.

Formation:

1. Conjugate the helping verb **haber** in the following four perfect tenses (present, past, future, conditional). Hint: the tense of "haber" will determine which perfect tense you will use.

Present "have/has"	Past "had"	Future "will have"	Conditional "would have"
he	había	habré	habría
has	habías	habrás	habrías
ha	había	habrá	habría
hemos	habíamos	habremos	habríamos
habéis	habíais	habréis	habríais
han	habían	habrán	habrían

2. Regular Past Participle:

The regular past participle is formed by taking the infinitive, dropping off the last two letters, and adding – **ado** for **-ar** verbs, or **-ido** for **-er** and **-ir** verbs. The past participle in the perfect tense never changes form. It is invariable, meaning it does not agree in gender or in number; it always ends in **-o**.

ar-verbs	er-verbs	ir-verbs
hablar – hablado (spoken)	comer – comido (eaten)	vivir – vivido (lived)
estudiar – estudiado (studied)	ser – sido (been)	ir – ido (gone)
cantar – cantado (sung)		sufrir – sufrido (suffered)

3. Irregular Past Participle:

A. Of course there are exceptions for the past participle, just like in English. A way to learn these is by usage and memorization. Here is a mnemonic device to help you remember and memorize the irregular past participles: **"c-verdad-mvp-dh"**

cubrir	cubierto	<i>covered</i>
ver	visto	<i>seen</i>
escribir	escrito	<i>written</i>
romper	roto	<i>broken, torn</i>
decir	dicho	<i>said, told</i>
abrir	abierto	<i>opened</i>
devolver	devuelto	<i>returned, given back</i>
morir	muerto	<i>died</i>
volver	vuelto	<i>returned</i>
poner	puesto	<i>put, placed, set</i>

descubrir	descubierto	<i>discovered</i>
hacer	hecho	<i>done, made</i>

B. **Accent mark:** -Er and -Ir verbs whose stems end in a vowel need a written accent mark for pronunciation purposes. Examples:

caer – caído (fallen)	oír – oído (heard)	leer – leído (read)
creer – creído (believed)	reír – reído (laughed)	traer – traído (brought)

Exception: The past participles of verbs that end in -uir (ex. construir) do not have accent marks. Example: huir – huido (fled)

Other important rules to remember:

1. Object pronouns- direct, indirect, reflexive- must precede the verb "haber". They can never be attached to the participle, nor written between haber and the past participle. Ex. Yo le he hablado – I have spoken to her.
2. If the sentence is negative, the "no" comes before the helping verb "haber". It can never come between haber and the past participle. Ex. Yo no he hablado. – I have not spoken.
3. The tense of "haber" determines which perfect tense to use.

<u>Present perfect:</u> Hablar		<u>Pluperfect:</u> Hablar	
What has happened.		What had happened.	
he hablado	<i>I have spoken</i>	había hablado	<i>I had spoken</i>
has hablado	<i>you have spoken</i>	habías hablado	<i>you had spoken</i>
ha hablado	<i>he/she has spoken you have spoken</i>	había hablado	<i>he/she, you had spoken</i>
hemos hablado	<i>we have spoken</i>	habíamos hablado	<i>we had spoken</i>
habéis hablado	<i>you have spoken</i>	habíais hablado	<i>you had spoken</i>
han hablado	<i>they, you have spoken</i>	habían hablado	<i>they, you had spoken</i>

<u>Future perfect:</u> Hablar		<u>Conditional perfect:</u> Hablar	
What will have happened.		What would have happened.	
habré hablado	<i>I will have spoken</i>	habría hablado	<i>I would have spoken</i>
habrás hablado	<i>you will have spoken</i>	habrías hablado	<i>you would have spoken</i>
habrá hablado	<i>he/she, you will have spoken</i>	habría hablado	<i>he/she, you would have spoken</i>
habremos hablado	<i>we will have spoken</i>	habríamos hablado	<i>we would have spoken</i>
habréis hablado	<i>you will have spoken</i>	habrías hablado	<i>you would have spoken</i>
habrán hablado	<i>they, you will have spoken</i>	habrían hablado	<i>they, you would have spoken</i>

