

Shortcuts to Talk about the Future in Spanish

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What's this about?

In this article, we will review a few conversational shortcuts that will be useful for beginners who want to talk about the future in Spanish without memorizing lots of conjugations.

Although these shortcuts are not 100% strictly perfect in traditional grammar, they are simple and practical language tools beginners can use to talk about the future quickly while avoiding the unnecessary complexity that overwhelms and discourages many students.

We will review a few grammar-related terms, but I assure you it is not the usual “grammar intensive” approach. Bear with me and look at the examples so you can see how easy it is.

The key is focusing on the verbs that are used most frequently, and understanding highly predictable patterns that reduce the amount of memorization required.

These shortcuts focus on quick results and not on speaking perfectly. If you want to speak Spanish quickly to be understood starting today and continue to improve as you practice; then keep reading. You have come to the right place.

If you are just starting, focus on learning these shortcuts for the first person of singular (I – Yo.) Like this, you will learn to express yourself quickly and build on that momentum later.

So, keep an open and playful mind. It’s all about connection, not perfection.

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Let's begin by reviewing a few conversational shortcuts that will make things easier for beginners who want to learn to speak about the past in Spanish quickly.

Shortcut 1 for talking about the future:

- "I am going to + infinitive"

Here is an easy way to talk about the near future that beginners can use to avoid conjugating all verbs in the future tense. By the way, this is used by native speakers in everyday life when they talk about their plans (I use it all the time!)

Here are a few examples:

- I am going to walk – **Yo voy a caminar**
- I am going to think – **Yo voy a pensar**
- I am going to travel to France – **Yo voy a viajar a Francia**

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The shortcut's structure is:

- A personal pronoun (i.e. “Yo”) + The verb “ir” (to go) conjugated in the present tense + “a” + a verb in the infinitive.

Let's take a moment to review the conjugation of “ir” in the present tense:

- I go – Yo voy
- You go – Tú vas
- He / She goes – Él / Ella va
- We go – Nosotros vamos
- You go – Ustedes van
- They go – Ellos van

Here are a few additional examples:

- I am going to run – **Yo voy a correr**
- I am going to cook dinner – **Yo voy a cocinar la cena**
- I am going to talk to Luisa at school – **Yo voy a hablar con Luisa en la escuela**

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Shortcut 2 for talking about the future:

- “I want to + verb in infinitive + a time in the future”

This is a simple way to talk about the future beginners can use from day 1.

The shortcut’s structure is:

- A personal pronoun (i.e. “(Yo)”) + “querer” (to want) conjugated in the present tense + a verb in infinitive + a time in the future (i.e. mañana – tomorrow)

Here are a few examples:

- I want to sleep at night – **Yo quiero dormir en la noche**
- I want to eat pizza tomorrow – **Yo quiero comer pizza mañana**
- I want to talk to her in one hour – **Yo quiero hablar con ella en una hora**

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Let's take a moment to review the conjugation of "querer" in the present tense:

- I want – Yo quiero
- You want – Tú quieres
- He / She wants – Él / Ella quiere
- We want – Nosotros queremos
- You want – Ustedes quieren
- They want – Ellos quieren

Now, let's look at a few more examples:

- I want to buy a new computer tonight – **Yo quiero comprar** una computadora nueva **esta noche**.
- I want to find a new job next week – **Yo quiero encontrar** un trabajo nuevo **en la próxima semana**.
- I want to solve this problem before tomorrow – **Yo quiero solucionar** este problema **antes de mañana**.

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Shortcut 3 for talking about the future:

- “I need to + infinitive + time in the future”

To talk about something that you need to do in the near future, you can use this shortcut to make things easier.

The shortcut’s structure is:

- A Personal pronoun (i.e. “Yo”) + “necesitar” (to need) conjugated in the present tense + a verb in infinitive + a time in the future

Let’s take a moment to review the conjugation of “necesitar” in the present tense:

- I need – Yo necesito
- You need – Tú necesitas
- He / She needs – Él / Ella necesita
- We need – Nosotros necesitamos
- You need – Ustedes necesitan
- They need – Ellos necesitan

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Here are a few examples:

- I need to find Alberto this week – Yo necesito encontrar a Alberto esta semana
- I need to buy a car today – Yo necesito comprar un auto hoy
- I need to eat something in 15 minutes – Yo necesito comer algo en 15 minutos.



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Shortcut 4 for talking about the future:

- “I have to + infinitive + time in the future”

Suppose you want to talk about an obligation or something you need to do in the future. In that case, use the following shortcut as a simple tool to express your ideas.

The shortcut’s structure is:

- A personal pronoun (i.e. “Yo”) + “tener” (to have) conjugated in the present tense + “que” + a verb in infinitive + a time in the future

Let’s take a moment to review the conjugation of “tener” in the present tense:

- I have – Yo tengo
- You have – Tú tienes
- He / She has – Él / Ella tiene
- We have – Nosotros tenemos
- You have – Ustedes tienen
- They have – Ellos tienen

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Here are a few examples:

- I have to sleep well tonight – **Yo tengo que dormir bien esta noche**
- I have to talk to you tomorrow – **Yo tengo que hablar contigo mañana**
- I have to buy a pencil in the morning – Yo tengo que comprar un lápiz nuevo en la mañana



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Shortcut 5 for talking about the future:

- “I am going to + infinitive + time in the future”

The fifth shortcut in this section is a simple and versatile linguistic tool beginners can use to talk about what they will do in the near future.

The shortcut’s structure is:

- A personal pronoun (i.e. “Yo”) + “ir” (to go) conjugated in the present tense + “a” + a verb in infinitive + a time in the future

Let’s take a moment to review the conjugation of “ir” in the present tense:

- I go – Yo voy
- You go – Tú vas
- He / She goes – Él / Ella va
- We go – Nosotros vamos
- You go – Ustedes van
- They go – Ellos van

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Here are a few examples:

- I am going to run at night – **Yo voy a correr en la noche**
- I am going to visit Rome next summer – **Yo voy a visitar Roma el próximo verano**
- I am going to buy a phone next week – **Yo voy a comprar un teléfono la próxima semana**

A quick note about the use of Personal Pronouns:

As you continue learning Spanish, you will realize that native speakers rarely use “yo” before a verb. That is because the conjugation of a verb implies who is performing the action.

If you are just getting started, I strongly recommend you use the pronouns (such as yo, tú, él) before verbs to practice and make it easier for others to understand what you are saying.

As you become more confident and feel that the “yo” is getting “in the way” of your conversation, feel free to drop it. As with athletic training, listen to your body (in this case, your brain) and do what feels natural after practicing many times.

Keep things simple in the beginning. Learn the basics. Start by walking and then move on to running when you feel walking is not fun enough.

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