

GUSTAR

Pattern: The verb *Gustar* means “to please.”

Introduction

Spanish has a different way of expressing positive feelings about people and things. In English, the subject of a sentence “likes” something or someone else. In Spanish, that thing or person “pleases” the subject instead.

Gustar Basics

Instead of saying that people like chocolate, for example, you would say that chocolate pleases them. It seems a little backward at first, but they are really two ways of expressing the same idea: people have good feelings about chocolate. Consider the following Spanish sentence:

El chocolate me gusta.

This sentence means “I like chocolate,” but it literally says “Chocolate pleases me.” The subject of the sentence is the chocolate, not I. That is why *gustar* in this case is conjugated as *gusta*, NOT *gusto*.

More *Gustar*

When you understand who the subject of the sentence is, it is clear how the verb *gustar* will be conjugated in most cases. It is almost always conjugated as ***gusta*** (one thing or person) or ***gustan*** (more than one).

The part of the sentence that will change based on who has positive feelings is the object pronoun. Consider this example:

<i>La pizza me gusta.</i>	I like pizza. (Pizza pleases me)
<i>La pizza nos gusta.</i>	We like pizza. (Pizza pleases us)

You have learned to conjugate verbs based on who is performing the action. But as you can see here, the verb form is the same in both sentences. This is because the pizza is actually the subject of the sentence, and we are only receiving the pleasure.

Word Order

That all seems logical when you think about it, but it becomes more difficult when you realize that the word order of these sentences is flexible. It is acceptable to say

<i>La pizza me gusta</i>	I like pizza.
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but it is actually more common to say

<i>Me gusta la pizza</i>	I like pizza.
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Don't let this confuse you! The subject of the sentence is still the pizza. That is why the verb is *gusta*, NOT *gusto*.

Clarifying, Emphasis, and Rarities

Clarification

As discussed in the object pronouns pattern, it is often necessary to clarify who the pronoun represents. For example:

Las rosas le gustan could mean four different things:

he likes roses

she likes roses

you [formal] like roses

it likes roses

To ensure understanding, clarifying phrases are often used with *gustar*, such as:

Las rosas le gustan a usted. You [formal] like roses.

- Note: Clarifying phrases can also be used for emphasis or comparison.

Rarities

While rare, sometimes the verb *gustar* is used as a reflexive verb. For example:

Nos gustamos. We like each other.

Os gustáis. You guys [informal: Spain] like each other.

It can also take the first and second person singular form:

¿Te gusto? Do you like me? (Literally: Do I please you?)

Me gustas. I like you. (Literally: You please me.)

Just remember that you will almost always use the two forms *gusta* and *gustan*.