

Ser vs. Estar

Ser and *Estar* both mean “to be.” How do we know when to use them?

SER

1. With dates, days, seasons, time or events.

Examples:

Hoy es el quince de marzo. → Today is March fifteenth.

El concierto es el sábado. → The concert is on Saturday.

Es la una y cuarto de la tarde. → It's 1:15 in the afternoon.

Ya es el invierno. → It's already winter.

SER

2. To describe a person's or object's inherent physical characteristics or personality. Other important characteristics could be origin, profession or nationality.

SER

Examples:

Yo soy muy alto. → I am very tall.

Tú eres un científico innovador. → You are an innovative scientist.

Somos muy felices. → We are very happy. (We are naturally happy people)

Ella es italiana. → She is Italian.

Vosotros sois de España. → You (plural) are from Spain.

Felipe es doctor. → Philip is a doctor.

Carmen y Laura son hermanas. → Carmen and Laura are sisters.

ESTAR

1. With physical location.

Examples:

¿Dónde están nuestros amigos? → Where are our friends?

El pueblo está en el norte. → The town is in the North.

Yo estoy en casa ahora. → I'm at home now.

ESTAR

2. To describe states of being, such as moods, feelings, temporary changes in appearance or physical condition, and civil states (married or divorced).

Examples:

¿Estás casado tú? → Are you married?

Yo estoy gordo. → I am fat. (I wasn't always, but am right now)

Estamos bien. → We're fine. (We feel fine in this moment)

Gabriel está enojado. → Gabriel is angry. (His current emotional state)

Ellos están confundidos. → They are confused. (Their current mental state)

ESTAR

3. To describe an action currently in progress (we will go more in depth with this later).

Example:

Estoy corriendo. → I am running.

- Notice how adjectives change depending on whether they go with *Ser* or *Estar*.