

## Overview

Spanish students often worry about three subjects: the subjunctive, when to use *ser* or *estar* and when to use *por* or *para*. In many cases both *por* and *para* can mean "for" in English and cause quite a bit of confusion for non-native Spanish speakers. In fact, they both came from the same Latin word "pro" which also means "for." In Spanish, both *por* and *para* take on the responsibilities of not only "for," but also by, on, through, because of, in exchange for, in order to, and several other prepositions.

**Basically, "por" is used to express movement through time or space. This can be:**

**- A physical transition such as traveling**

- Viajé por Francia y España. (I traveled through France and Spain.)

**- An exchange of objects**

- Pagaré \$3 por este sandwich. (I will pay \$3 in exchange for this sandwich.)

**- A duration of time**

- Tengo que trabajar por ocho horas hoy. (I need to work for eight hours today.)

**There are also many expressions that are used with *por* and *para*. Some of the most common are:**

**Expressions that use**

**Para**

**estar para** *to be about to*

*down,  
downward*

**para adelante** *forward*

**para detrás** *backward*

**para entones** *by that time*

**para esa época** *by that time*

**para otra vez** *for another occasion*

**para que** *so that, in order that*

**¿para qué?** *why? for what purpose?*

**para siempre** *forever*

**para variar** *just for a change*

**ser tal para cual** *to be two of a kind*

**- A motivation/reason for doing something**

- Por su amor a los niños, quiere ser pediatra. (Because of her love for children, she wants to be a pediatrician.)

**And "para" is generally used to convey destinations or end points. These can be:**

**- Physical locations**

- Salgo para Chile mañana. (I leave for Chile tomorrow.)

**- People (recipients)**

- Este regalo es para Adela. (This gift is for Adela.)

**- Deadlines**

- Necesito la presentación para el viernes. (I need the presentation by/on Friday.)

**- Goals**

- Trabaja mucho para ganar más dinero. (He works a lot in order to earn more money.)

## Expressions that use Por

<b>por los pelos</b>	<i>Barely</i>	<b>por lo menos</b>	<i>At least</i>
<b>día por día</b>	<i>Day by day</i>	<b>por lo mismo</b>	<i>For that very reason</i>
<b>estar por</b>	<i>To be in the mood to</i>	<b>por lo que a mí me toca</b>	<i>As far as I'm concerned</i>
<b>palabra por palabra</b>	<i>Word for word</i>	<b>por lo que he oido</b>	<i>Judging by what I've heard</i>
<b>por adelantado</b>	<i>In advance</i>	<b>por lo tanto</b>	<i>Therefore</i>
<b>por ahí, allí</b>	<i>Around there</i>	<b>por lo visto</b>	<i>Apparently</i>
<b>por ahora</b>	<i>For now</i>	<b>por malo que sea...</b>	<i>However bad it is...</i>
<b>por amor de Dios</b>	<i>For the love of God</i>	<b>por medio de</b>	<i>By means of</i>
<b>por aquí</b>	<i>This way</i>	<b>por mi parte</b>	<i>For my part</i>
<b>por casualidad</b>	<i>By chance</i>	<b>por motivo de</b>	<i>On account of</i>
<b>por ciento</b>	<i>Percent</i>	<b>por ningún lado</b>	<i>Nowhere</i>
<b>por cierto</b>	<i>Certainly</i>	<b>por orden</b>	<i>In order</i>
<b>por completo</b>	<i>completely</i>	<b>por otra parte</b>	<i>On the other hand</i>
<b>por correo</b>	<i>By mail/post</i>	<b>por poco</b>	<i>Almost</i>
<b>por dentro</b>	<i>Inside</i>	<b>por primera/última vez</b>	<i>For the first/last time</i>
<b>por desgracia</b>	<i>Unfortunately</i>	<b>¿por qué?</b>	<i>Why? For what reason?</i>
<b>¡por Dios!</b>	<i>Oh my God! / For heaven's sake!</i>	<b>por separado</b>	<i>Separately</i>
<b>por ejemplo</b>	<i>For example</i>	<b>por si acaso</b>	<i>Just in case</i>
<b>por escrito</b>	<i>In writing</i>	<b>por su propio mano</b>	<i>By one's own hand</i>
<b>por eso</b>	<i>Therefore/That's why</i>	<b>por suerte</b>	<i>Fortunately</i>
<b>por favor</b>	<i>Please</i>	<b>por supuesto</b>	<i>Of course</i>
<b>por fin</b>	<i>Finally</i>	<b>por teléfono</b>	<i>On the phone, by phone</i>
<b>por la mañana/la tarde/la noche</b>	<i>In the morning/afternoon/evening</i>	<b>por todas partes</b>	<i>Everywhere</i>
<b>por las buenas o por las malas</b>	<i>Whether you like it or not</i>	<b>por todos lados</b>	<i>On all sides</i>
<b>por lo común</b>	<i>Usually</i>	<b>por último</b>	<i>Finally</i>
<b>por lo demás</b>	<i>Furthermore</i>	<b>por una parte</b>	<i>On the one hand</i>
<b>por lo general</b>	<i>Generally/In general</i>	<b>por un lado, por otro</b>	<i>On one hand, on the other hand</i>