

4.2

Stem-changing verbs: e:ie, o:ue



ANTE TODO

Stem-changing verbs deviate from the normal pattern of regular verbs. Note the spelling changes to the stem in the conjugations below.

CONSULTA

To review the present tense of regular -ar verbs, see Estructura 2.1, p. 50.

...

To review the present tense of regular -er and -ir verbs, see Estructura 3.3, p. 96.



▶ In many verbs, such as **empezar** (*to begin*), the stem vowel changes from **e** to **ie**. Note that the **nosotros/as** and **vosotros/as** forms don't have a stem change.

The verb **empezar** (e:ie) (*to begin*)

Singular forms

yo	empiezo
tú	empiezas
Ud./él/ella	empieza

Plural forms

nosotros/as	empezamos
vosotros/as	empiezaís
Uds./ellos/ellas	empiezan

Los chicos empiezan a hablar de su visita al cenote.



Ellos vuelven a comer en el restaurante.

▶ In many other verbs, such as **volver** (*to return*), the stem vowel changes from **o** to **ue**. The **nosotros/as** and **vosotros/as** forms have no stem change.

The verb **volver** (o:ue) (*to return*)

Singular forms

yo	vuelvo
tú	vuelves
Ud./él/ella	vuelve

Plural forms

nosotros/as	volvemos
vosotros/as	volvéis
Uds./ellos/ellas	vuelven

▶ To help you identify stem-changing verbs, they will appear as follows throughout the text:

empezar (e:ie), volver (o:ue)

Common stem-changing verbs

e:ie

cerrar	to close
comenzar (a + inf.)	to begin
empezar (a + inf.)	to begin
entender	to understand
pensar	to think
perder	to lose; to miss
preferir (+ inf.)	to prefer
querer (+ inf.)	to want; to love

o:ue

almorzar	to have lunch
contar	to count; to tell
dormir	to sleep
encontrar	to find
mostrar	to show
poder (+ inf.)	to be able to; can
recordar	to remember
volver	to return

¡LENGUA VIVA!

The verb *perder* can mean *to lose* or *to miss*, in the sense of "to miss a train."

Siempre pierdo mis llaves.

I always lose my keys.

Es importante no perder el autobús.

It's important not to miss the bus.

- **Jugar** (to play a sport or a game) is the only Spanish verb that has a **u:ue** stem change. **Jugar** is followed by **a** + [definite article] when the name of a sport or game is mentioned.

Ella juega al tenis y al golf.



Los chicos juegan al fútbol.



- **Comenzar** and **empezar** require the preposition **a** when they are followed by an infinitive.

Comienzan a jugar a las siete.
They begin playing at seven.

Ana **empieza a** escribir una postal.
Ana is starting to write a postcard.

- **Pensar** + [infinitive] means *to plan* or *to intend to do something*. **Pensar en** means *to think about someone or something*.

¿**Piensan** ir al gimnasio?
Are you planning to go to the gym?

¿**En qué piensas**?
What are you thinking about?

- SO ¡INTÉNTALO! Provide the present tense forms of these verbs.

cerrar (e:ie)

1. Ustedes cierran.
2. Tú _____.
3. Nosotras _____.
4. Mi hermano _____.
5. Yo _____.
6. Usted _____.
7. Los chicos _____.
8. Ella _____.

dormir (o:ue)

1. Mi abuela no duerme.
2. Yo no _____.
3. Tú no _____.
4. Mis hijos no _____.
5. Usted no _____.
6. Nosotros no _____.
7. Él no _____.
8. Ustedes no _____.

RECURSOS

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