

Teaching notes

This resource is designed to revise when to use the subjunctive. It also gives a brief overview of how to form the subjunctive with reference to verb tables and a suggested website for students to check the subjunctive of irregular verbs. A handout version of the slides is provided on pp.4-6. The worksheet translation tasks on pp.2-3 can then be completed.

Answers

Ex A

1. (✓) I want to leave before he comes back
2. (✗) He likes to swim but he prefers to eat.
3. (✓) I don't like it that you come here alone.
4. (✗) You must remember that it is not always possible.
5. (✓) Whoever it may be, I don't have any money!
6. (✗) He seems to be charming.
7. (✓) He is demanding that we pay immediately.
8. (✓) I am coming with you provided that I can drive.
9. (✗) She is happy to have her own bedroom.
10. (✓) Whether she pays or not, I'm not going.

Ex B

1. J'ai trois frères, et ils ne viennent pas. (ind.)
2. Bien qu'il soit en forme, il ne peut pas danser. (subj.)
3. Je suis contente d'être là. (ind.)
4. Il est important, et le travail doit être fini. (ind.)
5. Avant que nous partions, achetez à boire. (subj.)
6. Je pense que nous allons ce soir. (ind.)
7. Où que tu ailles, je te suivrai. (subj.)
8. J'aime que tu voyages seul. (subj.)
9. Le docteur ordonne que tu te reposes ce soir. (subj.)
10. Quoi que je fasse, ils me critiquent (subj.)

Worksheet

A. Decide if the following sentences contain a subjunctive (✓) or not (✗). Translate them into English.

1. Je veux partir avant qu'il rentre.

.....

2. Il aime nager mais il préfère manger.

.....

3. Je n'aime pas que tu viennes ici tout seul.

.....

4. Il faut se souvenir que cela n'est pas toujours possible.

.....

5. Qui que ce soit, je n'ai pas d'argent!

.....

6. Il semble être charmant.

.....

7. Il exige que nous payions immédiatement.

.....

8. Je viens avec vous pourvu que je puisse conduire.

.....

9. Elle est contente d'avoir sa propre chambre.

.....

10. Qu'elle paye ou non, je n'y vais pas.

.....

When to use the subjunctive

B. Translate the following sentences. Decide if they require the subjunctive and if so use a verb table or website to check the correct form of any irregular verbs.

1. I have three brothers, and they are not coming.

.....

2. Although he is fit, he cannot dance.

.....

3. I am very happy to be here.

.....

4. He is important and the work must be done.

.....

5. Before we leave, buy a drink.

.....

6. I think that we are going this evening.

.....

7. Wherever you go, I'll follow.

.....

8. I like that you travel alone.

.....

9. The doctor orders that you rest this evening.

.....

10. Whatever I do they criticise me.

.....

Handout

When to use the subjunctive

The subjunctive is not a tense but a mood!
In fact, the subjunctive can be used in several tenses but here we shall concentrate on the present. It is used to express:

- what is thought/felt to be the case
- how certain actions or situations are considered to be (certain/uncertain, possible/probable, possible/impossible etc.)

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Subjunctive or indicative?

If something is known for sure to be reality = **indicative**.
If the chance of the action becoming a reality is over 70% = **indicative**.
If the chance of the action becoming a reality is under 70% = **subjunctive**.

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Subjunctive or indicative?

Je suis certain qu'il a le talent nécessaire pour réussir.
100% chance of becoming a reality =

indicative

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Subjunctive or indicative?

Il est probable qu'il a le talent nécessaire pour réussir.
75% chance of becoming a reality =

indicative

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Subjunctive or indicative?

Il est possible qu'il ait le talent nécessaire pour réussir.
50% chance of becoming a reality =

subjunctive

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How to form the subjunctive

Regular verbs:

1. take the *ils* form of the present tense of the verb
2. drop the *-ent* ending to form the stem
3. add the subjunctive endings *-e, -es, -e, -ions, -iez, -ent*

e.g. *ils deviennent* > *devienn-* > *je devienne.*

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How to form the subjunctive

Irregular verbs

Use a verb table or [website](#) to look up the subjunctive forms for the following verbs:

Être, avoir, faire, aller, pouvoir, savoir, vouloir, valoir, falloir

Do you notice any patterns?

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When to use the subjunctive

The verb that requires conjugation usually appears in a subordinate clause (the second part of a sentence) and is very often preceded by *que*.

It is used in a broad range of situations, and widely used in spoken and written French.

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When to use the subjunctive

After certain conjunctions with *que*

- Conceding something: *bien que / quoique* (although)
- Indicating an aim: *afin que* (so that), *pour que* (in order that)
- Time phrases: *avant que* (before), *jusqu'à ce que* (until)
- Conditions: *à moins que* (unless), *pourvu que* (provided that), *à condition que* (on condition that)

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When to use the subjunctive

A will, wish or necessity

Vouloir, ordonner, exiger, souhaiter, désirer, suggérer, proposer, conseiller + que

Il voudrait que tu restes avec toi.

- **He would like you to stay with him.**

Je suggère qu'il aille aussitôt que possible.

- **I suggest that he leaves as soon as possible.**

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When to use the subjunctive

A doubt or fear

Douter, avoir peur, craindre + que

Je doute qu'il ait raison.

- **I doubt that he's right.**

J'ai peur qu'elle soit trop timide.

- **I'm afraid that she might be too shy.**

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When to use the subjunctive

Emotions or opinions

Adorer, aimer, préférer, détester + que

Je préfère qu'il soit moins difficile.

- **I'd rather that he were less difficult.**

J'adore qu'elle ne soit pas orgueilleuse.

- **I love that she's not proud.**

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When to use the subjunctive

Regret or happiness

Regretter, être désolé, être content + que

Ils regrettent qu'ils ne soient pas là pour la fête.

- They are sorry that they are not there for the party.

Moi, je suis contente qu'elle ait un petit ami.

- I'm happy that she has a boyfriend.

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When to use the subjunctive

Certain impersonal expressions

Il faut, il vaut, il semble, il est important + que

Il faut que tu sois plus sage!

- You must be better behaved.

Il vaut mieux qu'on reste ensemble.

- It would be better if we stuck together.

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When to use the subjunctive

Sentence starter with que

qui que, quel que, quoi que, où que, que

Quoi que soit le prix, je viens!

- Whatever the cost, I'm coming!

Que je finisse ou pas, je suis heureux que je l'ai essayé.

- Whether I finish it or not, I'm happy that I tried it.

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