75 Spanish Locuciones

Frases hechas que no se traducen palabra por palabra

525 example sentences — 7 for every locución
Roots, literal translations & connections • Mexican Spanish
English translations included

Hablar es practicar. Pick a locución, use it in a sentence out loud, then check it against the examples.

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How to use this workbook

Each locución comes with **7 examples** that mix up the tenses and formats — present, past, future, conditional, subjunctive, questions and negatives. Say each one out loud before you read the English. Under each locución, the shaded box gives you the **roots** (what the words are made of, and their Latin roots and English cousins), the **literal** word-for-word build, and **connections** to other locuciones and words you already know — so you lock it in by understanding it, not by memorizing it. The literal translation in each box is the memory hook: once you see that *echar una mano* is literally 'to throw a hand', the meaning sticks.

A speaking drill: cover the examples, read a locución, and build a sentence with it yourself in Spanish. Then uncover and compare. One chapter a day is plenty — repetition beats cramming.

Quick reference — all locuciones

01	echar de menos	to miss someone
02	dar miedo	to scare, be scary
03	dar risa	to make someone laugh
04	dar vergüenza	to embarrass
05	dar pena	to make one feel sorry / be a pity
06	estar en las nubes	to have one's head in the clouds
07	estar hecho polvo	to be exhausted, wiped out
08	estar de buen humor	to be in a good mood
09	estar de mal humor	to be in a bad mood
10	estar harto de	to be fed up with
11	morirse de risa	to die laughing
12	no tener ni idea	to have no idea
13	no ver la hora de	to can't wait for
14	dar igual	to not matter, be all the same
15	tomar en cuenta	to take into account
16	tener en mente	to have/bear in mind
17	hacer caso	to pay attention, take notice
18	tomar en serio	to take seriously
19	tomar nota	to take note
20	no tener pies ni cabeza	to make no sense
21	ir al grano	to get to the point
22	estar al tanto	to be up to date, in the know
23	dar con	to find, come across, hit upon
24	hacer de cuenta	to pretend, imagine
25	tener sentido	to make sense
26	ponerse las pilas	to get one's act together, buckle down
27	salir adelante	to get ahead, pull through
28	echar una mano	to lend a hand
29	echar un vistazo	to take a quick look
30	echar a perder	to ruin, spoil
31	hacer un esfuerzo	to make an effort
32	poner en práctica	to put into practice
33	llevar a cabo	to carry out
34	sacar adelante	to get something done, pull it through
35	no dar abasto	to not be able to keep up
36	meter la pata	to put one's foot in it, screw up
37	ponerse en marcha	to get going, get started
38	tomar una decisión	to make a decision
39	tomar el pelo	to pull someone's leg, tease
40	llevarse bien	to get along well
41	llevarse mal	to get along badly
42	pasarlo bien	to have a good time
43	pasarlo mal	to have a bad time
44	dar las gracias	to thank, give thanks
45	dar un paseo	to take a walk/stroll
46	hacer las paces	to make peace, patch things up
47	ponerse en contacto	to get in touch
48	no decir ni pío	to not say a word, not utter a peep
49	estar de acuerdo	to agree
50	ponerse de acuerdo	to come to an agreement
51	estar a punto de	to be about to
52	tener suerte	to be lucky
53	por si acaso	just in case
54	por fin	finally, at last
55	de vez en cuando	from time to time, now and then
56	de todos modos	anyway, in any case
57	a lo mejor	maybe, perhaps

58	a tiempo	on time
59	al principio	at first, in the beginning
60	al parecer	apparently, it seems
61	por lo general	generally, as a rule
62	por lo menos	at least
63	por supuesto	of course
64	estar en forma	to be in shape, fit
65	ponerse en forma	to get in shape
66	no pegar ojo	to not sleep a wink
67	quedarse dormido	to fall asleep
68	tener sueño	to be sleepy
69	tener hambre	to be hungry
70	tener frío	to be cold
71	tener cuidado	to be careful
72	tener paciencia	to be patient
73	echar una siesta	to take a nap
74	estar hecho una sopa	to be soaked through
75	tener buena pinta	to look good/healthy, to look promising

Chapter 1

Feelings & reactions

Locuciones 1–13

01 · echar de menos

to miss someone

Raíz: Picture someone being thrown out of your life. Echar comes from Latin iactare, to throw — the same root behind English eject and jet. Menos is Latin minus, our minus and minor. The phrase says the person was thrown away from your side until they became 'less' — and that missing weight is what you feel.
Literal: To throw someone away from you, so they're missing.
Conecta: Backward-looking twin of no ver la hora de (#13), which longs forward instead of back; echar pops up again in echar una siesta (#73).

1. Echo de menos a mi mamá cuando estoy de viaje. *(I miss my mom when I'm traveling.)*
2. ¿Echas de menos Puebla cuando estás en Canadá? *(Do you miss Puebla when you're in Canada?)*
3. Mis hijos echaron de menos a Joni durante las vacaciones. *(My kids missed Joni during the holidays.)*
4. No echo de menos el tráfico de la ciudad para nada. *(I don't miss city traffic at all.)*
5. Echaría de menos el café de la mañana si me mudara. *(I would miss my morning coffee if I moved away.)*
6. Angie echaba de menos a su familia cuando vivía lejos. *(Angie used to miss her family when she lived far away.)*
7. Ojalá no eches de menos tu casa mientras estamos en México. *(I hope you don't miss home while we're in Mexico.)*

02 · dar miedo

to scare, be scary

Raíz: Spanish hands fear over like a gift. Dar comes from Latin dare, to give — the root of donate and data. Miedo is Latin metus, fear. So the scary thing 'gives' you the fear, which is why the verb agrees with the thing doing the scaring, not with you.
Literal: To give fear.
Conecta: Head of the dar-feelings family with dar risa (#3), dar vergüenza (#4) and dar pena (#5); dar igual (#14) uses the same giving verb differently.

1. Esa película de terror me da miedo. *(That horror movie scares me.)*
2. ¿Te dan miedo las tormentas de noche? *(Do nighttime storms scare you?)*
3. El perro del vecino le daba miedo a mi hija. *(The neighbor's dog used to scare my daughter.)*
4. No me da miedo manejar de noche en la carretera. *(Driving at night on the highway doesn't scare me.)*
5. La casa abandonada daba miedo a los niños del barrio. *(The abandoned house scared the neighborhood kids.)*
6. Te va a dar miedo cuando veas lo oscuro que está el camino. *(It'll scare you when you see how dark the road is.)*
7. Ojalá esa historia no les dé miedo a los niños. *(I hope that story doesn't scare the kids.)*

03 · dar risa

to make someone laugh

Raíz: Same giving trick as dar miedo, but with laughter. Dar is Latin dare, to give — donate and data share the root. Risa comes from Latin ridere, to laugh, the root behind ridicule and risible. Something 'gives' you laughter, so the verb follows the thing, not you.
Literal: To give laughter.
Conecta: Laughing cousin of dar miedo (#2) and morirse de risa (#11), the stronger, dying-of-laughter version; both share the ridere root.

1. Sus chistes siempre me dan risa. *(His jokes always make me laugh.)*
2. ¿Te da risa cuando tu papá baila en las fiestas? *(Does it make you laugh when your dad dances at parties?)*
3. La cara que puso el bebé nos dio mucha risa. *(The face the baby made really made us laugh.)*
4. No me da risa que se burlen de los demás. *(It doesn't make me laugh when people mock others.)*
5. Ese video te va a dar mucha risa, te lo prometo. *(That video is going to make you laugh a lot, I promise.)*
6. A mi abuela le daba risa vernos jugar en el jardín. *(It used to make my grandma laugh to watch us play in the garden.)*
7. Espero que este cuento les dé risa a los niños. *(I hope this story makes the kids laugh.)*

04 · dar vergüenza

to embarrass

Raíz: Embarrassment arrives like a delivery. Dar is Latin dare, to give — donate and data. Vergüenza comes from Latin verecundia, shame and modesty. The situation 'gives' you the shame, so the verb agrees with the situation, not with you.
Literal: To give shame.
Conecta: Shame sister of dar miedo (#2) and dar pena (#5); dar pena can also mean embarrassment, so check the context before choosing between them.

1. Me da vergüenza cantar en público. *(I'm embarrassed to sing in public.)*
2. ¿Te da vergüenza pedir ayuda en la tienda? *(Are you embarrassed to ask for help in the store?)*
3. A William le dio vergüenza hablar frente a toda la clase. *(William was embarrassed to speak in front of the whole class.)*
4. No me da vergüenza decir que no entiendo. *(I'm not embarrassed to say I don't understand.)*
5. Le daba vergüenza llegar tarde a la reunión. *(He was embarrassed about arriving late to the meeting.)*
6. Te va a dar vergüenza cuando veas la foto que subí. *(You'll be embarrassed when you see the photo I posted.)*
7. Ojalá no te dé vergüenza practicar español conmigo. *(I hope you're not embarrassed to practice Spanish with me.)*

05 · dar pena

to make one feel sorry / be a pity

Raíz: Pity works the same way: something hands you pain. Dar is Latin dare, to give — donate and data. Pena is Latin poena, punishment and pain, the root of English pain and penalty. The sad thing 'gives' you the pain, so the verb follows it.
Literal: To give pain — to give sorrow.
Conecta: Pity cousin of dar miedo (#2) and dar vergüenza (#4); qué pena also works alone as 'what a pity', like the standalone use in dar igual (#14).

1. Me da pena que no puedas venir a la fiesta. *(I'm sorry you can't come to the party.)*
2. ¿Te da pena el perrito que está solo en la calle? *(Do you feel sorry for the little dog alone on the street?)*
3. Qué pena que se cancelara el concierto ayer. *(What a pity the concert was cancelled yesterday.)*
4. No me da pena decirle que no a ese plan. *(I don't feel bad about saying no to that plan.)*
5. Le daba pena ver a su abuelo tan enfermo. *(It made him sad to see his grandfather so sick.)*
6. Te va a dar pena cuando sepas lo que le pasó. *(You'll feel sorry for him when you hear what happened to him.)*
7. Es una pena que no probáramos el mole en Puebla. *(It's a shame we didn't try the mole in Puebla.)*

06 · estar en las nubes

to have one's head in the clouds

Raíz: Picture someone standing up in the clouds, miles above the conversation. Estar comes from Latin stare, to stand — the root of state and station. Nube is Latin nubes, cloud. To stand among the clouds is to be mentally far away, lost in thought.
Literal: To be standing in the clouds.
Conecta: Daydreaming opposite of estar al tanto (#22), being in the know; it pairs with hacer caso (#17), since a cloud-walker isn't paying attention.

1. Hoy estoy en las nubes, no puedo concentrarme. *(Today my head is in the clouds; I can't concentrate.)*
2. ¿Estás en las nubes o me estás escuchando? *(Are you daydreaming, or are you listening to me?)*
3. Mi hijo estuvo en las nubes toda la mañana en la escuela. *(My son had his head in the clouds all morning at school.)*
4. No estoy en las nubes, solo estoy pensando en el viaje. *(I'm not daydreaming, I'm just thinking about the trip.)*
5. Ella andaba en las nubes cuando le dieron la buena noticia. *(She was walking on air when they gave her the good news.)*
6. Si sigues en las nubes, vas a perder el autobús. *(If you keep daydreaming, you're going to miss the bus.)*
7. Ojalá no estés en las nubes durante el examen. *(I hope you're not daydreaming during the exam.)*

07 · estar hecho polvo

to be exhausted, wiped out

Raíz: Imagine being ground down to nothing. Hecho comes from Latin factus, made or done — the root of fact and factory. Polvo is Latin pulvis, dust, behind pulverize and powder. Estar is Latin stare, to stand. Made into dust means worn down to nothing — pure exhaustion.
Literal: To be made dust.
Conecta: Exhaustion twin of estar hecho una sopa (#74), soaked through; the hecho also appears in ponerse en forma (#65), the road back from being polvo.

1. Estoy hecho polvo después de trabajar todo el día. *(I'm wiped out after working all day.)*
2. ¿Estás hecho polvo o quieres salir a caminar? *(Are you exhausted, or do you want to go for a walk?)*
3. Los niños llegaron hechos polvo del campamento. *(The kids came home exhausted from camp.)*
4. No estoy hecho polvo, solo necesito un café. *(I'm not wiped out, I just need a coffee.)*
5. Ayer estaba hecha polvo después de la mudanza. *(Yesterday she was exhausted after the move.)*
6. Vas a estar hecho polvo si no duermes esta noche. *(You're going to be wiped out if you don't sleep tonight.)*
7. Estaría hecho polvo si corriera un maratón. *(I'd be wiped out if I ran a marathon.)*

08 · estar de buen humor

to be in a good mood

Raíz: Old medicine believed your mood was a body fluid, and the phrase still says so. Humor is Latin humor, fluid and mood — the root of English humor and humid. Buen is Latin bonus, good. So you're 'of good fluid' — your inner weather is fair.
Literal: To be of good humor — in a good mood.
Conecta: Mood pair with estar de mal humor (#9), its exact opposite; humor also colors estar harto de (#10), since fed-up people rarely stay buen humor.

1. Hoy estoy de buen humor porque dormí muy bien. *(Today I'm in a good mood because I slept really well.)*
2. ¿Estás de buen humor para ir al mercado conmigo? *(Are you in a good mood to go to the market with me?)*
3. Mi jefe estuvo de buen humor toda la semana. *(My boss was in a good mood all week.)*
4. No estoy de buen humor hoy, mejor hablamos mañana. *(I'm not in a good mood today; let's talk tomorrow instead.)*
5. Ella estaba de buen humor después de recibir la buena noticia. *(She was in a good mood after getting the good news.)*
6. Vas a estar de buen humor cuando veas el regalo. *(You'll be in a good mood when you see the gift.)*
7. Ojalá estés de buen humor para la cena de Navidad. *(I hope you're in a good mood for Christmas dinner.)*

09 · estar de mal humor

to be in a bad mood

Raíz: Same old medicine, foul weather. Humor is Latin humor, fluid and mood — English humor and humid. Mal is Latin malus, bad, behind malice and malfunction. Bad fluid, bad mood: your inner weather has turned.
Literal: To be of bad humor — in a bad mood.
Conecta: Mood pair with estar de buen humor (#8), its exact opposite; a mal-humor day often ends in estar harto de (#10), fed up with everything.

1. Estoy de mal humor porque no dormí nada anoche. *(I'm in a bad mood because I didn't sleep at all last night.)*
2. ¿Por qué estás de mal humor esta mañana? *(Why are you in a bad mood this morning?)*
3. Mi hermano estuvo de mal humor todo el viaje. *(My brother was in a bad mood the whole trip.)*
4. No estoy de mal humor, solo estoy cansado. *(I'm not in a bad mood, I'm just tired.)*
5. Ella estaba de mal humor cuando llegó del trabajo. *(She was in a bad mood when she got home from work.)*
6. Si no comes, vas a estar de mal humor toda la tarde. *(If you don't eat, you'll be in a bad mood all afternoon.)*
7. Estaría de mal humor si perdiera mi vuelo. *(I'd be in a bad mood if I missed my flight.)*

10 · estar harto de

to be fed up with

Raíz: Think of being stuffed after a huge meal — one more bite and you'll burst. Harto comes from Latin fartus, stuffed or filled, the root of farce, which originally meant stuffing. Estar is Latin stare, to stand. Stuffed full of something, you can't take any more of it.
Literal: To be stuffed full of something.
Conecta: Fed-up cousin of estar de mal humor (#9); the stuffed-full image also fits no dar abasto (#35), when work keeps piling past your limit.

1. Estoy harto de esperar en esta fila. *(I'm fed up with waiting in this line.)*
2. ¿Estás harto de escuchar la misma canción? *(Are you fed up with hearing the same song?)*
3. Mis papás estaban hartos del ruido de la construcción. *(My parents were fed up with the construction noise.)*
4. No estoy harto de mi trabajo, solo necesito vacaciones. *(I'm not fed up with my job, I just need a vacation.)*
5. Ella estaba harta de que nadie la escuchara. *(She was fed up with nobody listening to her.)*
6. Vas a estar harto del tráfico si manejas a esa hora. *(You'll be fed up with the traffic if you drive at that hour.)*
7. Estaría harto de comer lo mismo todos los días. *(I'd be fed up with eating the same thing every day.)*

11 · morirse de risa

to die laughing

Raíz: Laughing so hard you can't breathe — the phrase just takes it literally. Morirse comes from morir, Latin mori, to die, the root of mortal and mortuary. Risa is Latin ridere, to laugh, behind ridicule. To die 'of' laughter is to laugh until your body gives out.
Literal: To die of laughter.
Conecta: Stronger version of dar risa (#3), which only gives laughter; the morir root also sits behind estar hecho polvo (#7), another body-at-its-limit phrase.

1. Me muero de risa cada vez que cuenta ese chiste. *(I die laughing every time he tells that joke.)*
2. ¿Te mueres de risa con los videos de ese comediante? *(Do you die laughing at that comedian's videos?)*
3. Nos morimos de risa en la cena de anoche. *(We died laughing at dinner last night.)*
4. No me morí de risa, pero la historia sí fue graciosa. *(I didn't die laughing, but the story was funny.)*
5. Ellos se morían de risa viendo las fotos viejas. *(They were dying laughing looking at the old photos.)*
6. Te vas a morir de risa cuando veas lo que hizo el perro. *(You're going to die laughing when you see what the dog did.)*
7. Me moriría de risa si ganara ese concurso. *(I'd die laughing if I won that contest.)*

12 · no tener ni idea

to have no idea

Raíz: You hold not even the shape of it. Tener is Latin tenere, to hold — the root of tenacious and contain. Idea comes from Greek idea, a form or pattern — our idea and ideal. Ni means not even. So you hold nothing, not even a faint outline.
Literal: To have not even an idea.
Conecta: Not-knowing twin of no tener pies ni cabeza (#20), which is about nonsense, not ignorance; contrast tener sentido (#25), when an idea finally clicks.

1. No tengo ni idea de dónde dejé las llaves. *(I have no idea where I left the keys.)*
2. ¿No tienes ni idea de lo que pasó anoche? *(Do you have no idea what happened last night?)*
3. Mis hijos no tenían ni idea de la sorpresa. *(My kids had no idea about the surprise.)*
4. Ella no tiene ni idea de cuánto la quiero. *(She has no idea how much I love her.)*
5. No teníamos ni idea de que el restaurante estaba cerrado. *(We had no idea the restaurant was closed.)*
6. No vas a tener ni idea de lo que te espera. *(You're going to have no idea what's waiting for you.)*
7. No tendría ni idea de cómo llegar sin el mapa. *(I wouldn't have any idea how to get there without the map.)*

13 · no ver la hora de

to can't wait for

Raíz: You can't see the hour coming, so you ache for it. Ver is Latin videre, to see — video and vision share the root. Hora is Latin hora, hour and time — our hour. The phrase says the moment you want is still out of sight, and the waiting is the feeling.
Literal: To not see the hour of something — to long for it.
Conecta: Longing twin of echar de menos (#1), which misses what is gone; the ver root returns in echar un vistazo (#29), a quick look.

1. No veo la hora de que lleguen las vacaciones. *(I can't wait for the holidays to arrive.)*
2. ¿No ves la hora de ver a tu familia en Puebla? *(Can't you wait to see your family in Puebla?)*
3. Los niños no veían la hora de abrir sus regalos. *(The kids couldn't wait to open their presents.)*
4. No veo la hora de probar el mole poblano. *(I can't wait to try the mole poblano.)*
5. Ella no veía la hora de terminar el curso. *(She couldn't wait to finish the course.)*
6. No vas a ver la hora de que empiece el concierto. *(You won't be able to wait for the concert to start.)*
7. No vería la hora de volver si el viaje fuera tan bueno. *(I couldn't wait to go back if the trip were that good.)*

Chapter 2

Thinking & understanding

Locuciones 14–25

14 · dar igual

to not matter, be all the same

Raíz: It 'gives equal' either way, so nothing tips the scale. Dar is Latin dare, to give — donate and data. Igual is Latin aequalis, equal and level, the root of equal and equate. No choice weighs more than the other, so you genuinely don't mind.
Literal: To give equal — it makes no difference.
Conecta: Indifference cousin of the dar-feelings set (#2–#5), but here dar gives equality, not emotion; it pairs with tomar una decisión (#38) when equal options force a choice.

1. Me da igual si vamos hoy o mañana. *(It doesn't matter to me whether we go today or tomorrow.)*
2. ¿Te da igual comer en casa o salir? *(Is it all the same to you whether we eat at home or go out?)*
3. A mi mamá le daba igual el color del vestido. *(My mom didn't care about the color of the dress.)*
4. No me da igual lo que piensen de mí. *(It does matter to me what they think of me.)*
5. Les daba igual perder o ganar, solo querían jugar. *(They didn't care whether they lost or won; they just wanted to play.)*
6. Te va a dar igual cuando veas las dos opciones. *(It won't matter to you once you see the two options.)*
7. Me daría igual si no hubiera tanta gente. *(It wouldn't matter to me if there weren't so many people.)*

15 · tomar en cuenta

to take into account

Raíz: Think of keeping a running tally. Tomar is a verb of uncertain origin, so parts only: to take, to pick up. Cuenta comes from Latin computare, to count and reckon — the root of count and compute. To take something 'into the reckoning' is to let it count in your decision.
Literal: To take something into the count.
Conecta: Thinking partner of tener en mente (#16) and tomar nota (#19); all three keep facts handy, and tomar en serio (#18) decides how much weight they get.

1. Toma en cuenta el clima antes de salir de viaje. *(Take the weather into account before you head out on your trip.)*
2. ¿Tomaste en cuenta los horarios de la clínica? *(Did you take the clinic's hours into account?)*
3. Debemos tomar en cuenta el presupuesto de la familia. *(We should take the family budget into account.)*
4. No tomé en cuenta que era día festivo. *(I didn't take into account that it was a holiday.)*
5. Ella tomaba en cuenta la opinión de todos. *(She used to take everyone's opinion into account.)*
6. Vamos a tomar en cuenta tu sugerencia para el menú. *(We're going to take your suggestion for the menu into account.)*
7. Tomaría en cuenta la distancia si viviera tan lejos. *(I'd take the distance into account if I lived that far away.)*

16 · tener en mente

to have/bear in mind

Raíz: To hold something in your mind like keeping it in your hand. Tener is Latin tenere, to hold — tenacious and contain. Mente is Latin mens, mind — the root of mental and mention. To hold something 'in the mind' is to keep it present, right where you can reach it.
Literal: To have something in mind.
Conecta: Memory cousin of tomar en cuenta (#15) and tomar nota (#19); mente also drives hacer de cuenta (#24), where the mind invents instead of remembers.

1. Ten en mente que la tienda cierra a las seis. *(Bear in mind that the store closes at six.)*
2. ¿Tienes en mente algún regalo para tu mamá? *(Do you have a gift in mind for your mom?)*
3. Teníamos en mente viajar a Puebla en diciembre. *(We had it in mind to travel to Puebla in December.)*
4. No tengo en mente ningún plan para el fin de semana. *(I don't have any plans in mind for the weekend.)*
5. Ella tenía en mente estudiar medicina desde niña. *(She had it in mind to study medicine since she was a child.)*
6. Tendré en mente tu consejo cuando hable con el jefe. *(I'll keep your advice in mind when I talk to the boss.)*
7. Tendría en mente esa fecha si fuera tan importante. *(I'd keep that date in mind if it were that important.)*

17 · hacer caso

to pay attention, take notice

Raíz: To 'make case' of something is to treat it as a real event worth your attention. Hacer is Latin facere, to make or do — the root of factory and fashion. Caso is Latin casus, a falling, an event, a case — English case and casual. If it counts as a case, it counts.
Literal: To make case of something — to pay attention to it.
Conecta: Attention twin of estar al tanto (#22); the opposite is estar en las nubes (#6), and no hacer caso invites meter la pata (#36).

1. Haz caso a tu mamá y ponte el suéter. *(Listen to your mom and put on your sweater.)*
2. ¿Me haces caso o tengo que repetirlo? *(Are you paying attention to me, or do I have to repeat it?)*
3. Los niños no hicieron caso al maestro ayer. *(The kids didn't pay attention to the teacher yesterday.)*
4. No le hagas caso a ese rumor, no es verdad. *(Don't pay attention to that rumor; it isn't true.)*
5. Ella hacía caso a todos los consejos de su abuela. *(She used to heed all her grandmother's advice.)*
6. Vas a hacer caso cuando veas las consecuencias. *(You'll pay attention when you see the consequences.)*
7. Haría caso al doctor si me lo dijera dos veces. *(I'd listen to the doctor if he told me twice.)*

18 · tomar en serio

to take seriously

Raíz: To take something 'in seriousness' is to treat it as weighty. Tomar is of uncertain origin, parts only: to take, to pick up. Serio is Latin serius, serious and earnest — our serious. You pick the thing up and feel how heavy it is before you answer.
Literal: To take something in seriousness.
Conecta: Gravity partner of tomar en cuenta (#15), which weighs facts, and tomar nota (#19), which records them; the opposite mood is dar risa (#3), laughing it off.

1. Toma en serio los consejos del doctor. *(Take the doctor's advice seriously.)*
2. ¿Tomas en serio tu estudio de español? *(Do you take your Spanish study seriously?)*
3. Nadie tomó en serio la advertencia del clima. *(Nobody took the weather warning seriously.)*
4. No tomes en serio lo que dice cuando está enojado. *(Don't take seriously what he says when he's angry.)*
5. Ella tomaba en serio cada promesa que hacía. *(She took every promise she made seriously.)*
6. Vamos a tomar en serio este proyecto desde hoy. *(We're going to take this project seriously starting today.)*
7. Tomaría en serio esa oferta si fuera real. *(I'd take that offer seriously if it were real.)*

19 · tomar nota

to take note

Raíz: To take a mark is to write the fact down before it escapes. Tomar is of uncertain origin, parts only: to take, to pick up. Nota is Latin nota, a mark or note — English note and notable. The mark stays on the paper even when your memory won't.
Literal: To take a note.
Conecta: Recording cousin of tomar en cuenta (#15) and tener en mente (#16); nota is the written version of mente, and it feeds ir al grano (#21) later.

1. Toma nota de los horarios del museo. *(Take note of the museum's hours.)*
2. ¿Tomaste nota de lo que dijo el maestro? *(Did you take note of what the teacher said?)*
3. Tomamos nota de todas las sugerencias de los pacientes. *(We took note of all the patients' suggestions.)*
4. No tomé nota de la dirección del hotel. *(I didn't take note of the hotel's address.)*
5. Ella tomaba nota de cada gasto del viaje. *(She used to note down every expense from the trip.)*
6. Voy a tomar nota de esa receta de mole. *(I'm going to take note of that mole recipe.)*
7. Tomaría nota de todo si tuviera mi cuaderno. *(I'd take note of everything if I had my notebook.)*

20 · no tener pies ni cabeza

to make no sense

Raíz: No feet, no head — a creature with no shape at all. Tener is Latin tenere, to hold. Pies is Latin pedes, feet — the root of pedal. Cabeza is Latin caput, head — capital and captain. A story or idea with neither feet nor head can't stand up or make sense.
Literal: To have neither feet nor head.
Conecta: Nonsense twin of no tener ni idea (#12), which is ignorance, not incoherence; when it clicks, you reach tener sentido (#25), the opposite.

1. Esa historia no tiene pies ni cabeza. *(That story makes no sense at all.)*
2. ¿No te parece que este plan no tiene pies ni cabeza? *(Don't you think this plan makes no sense?)*
3. El cuento que escribió mi hijo no tenía pies ni cabeza. *(The story my son wrote made no sense.)*
4. Su excusa no tiene pies ni cabeza, nadie le creyó. *(His excuse makes no sense; nobody believed him.)*
5. La película no tenía pies ni cabeza al final. *(The movie made no sense by the end.)*
6. Ese horario no va a tener pies ni cabeza si lo cambian. *(That schedule won't make any sense if they change it.)*
7. No tendría pies ni cabeza hacerlo sin permiso. *(It wouldn't make any sense to do it without permission.)*

21 · ir al grano

to get to the point

Raíz: Go straight to the seed and skip the husk. Ir is Latin ire, to go — the root of exit and itinerary. Grano is Latin granum, grain and seed — English grain and granary. The kernel is the point; everything around it is just husk.
Literal: To go to the grain — to get to the point.
Conecta: Directness partner of estar al tanto (#22), which needs the kernel fast; the opposite is no tener pies ni cabeza (#20), wandering with no shape at all.

1. Ve al grano, por favor, no tenemos mucho tiempo. *(Get to the point, please; we don't have much time.)*
2. ¿Puedes ir al grano y decirme qué pasó? *(Can you get to the point and tell me what happened?)*
3. El doctor fue al grano y nos explicó el tratamiento. *(The doctor got straight to the point and explained the treatment to us.)*
4. No voy a ir al grano hasta que entiendas el contexto. *(I'm not going to get to the point until you understand the context.)*
5. Ella siempre iba al grano en las reuniones. *(She always got straight to the point in meetings.)*
6. Vamos a ir al grano en la próxima llamada. *(We're going to get to the point on the next call.)*
7. Iría al grano si no fuera tan complicado. *(I'd get to the point if it weren't so complicated.)*

22 · estar al tanto

to be up to date, in the know

Raíz: To stand level with everything happening, like standing on the same step as the news. Estar is Latin stare, to stand — state and station. Tanto is Latin tantus, so much, so great — the root of tantamount. To stand 'at so much' is to be right up with it all.
Literal: To be up with it — to be in the know.
Conecta: In-the-know opposite of estar en las nubes (#6); it pairs with hacer caso (#17), since paying attention is how you stay al tanto.

1. Estoy al tanto de los cambios en la clínica. *(I'm up to date on the changes at the clinic.)*
2. ¿Estás al tanto de lo que pasó en Puebla? *(Are you up to date on what happened in Puebla?)*
3. Mis papás estuvieron al tanto de todo el viaje. *(My parents were in the know about the whole trip.)*
4. No estoy al tanto de las noticias de hoy. *(I'm not up to date on today's news.)*
5. Ella estaba al tanto de cada detalle del proyecto. *(She was on top of every detail of the project.)*
6. Vas a estar al tanto si lees el correo cada mañana. *(You'll stay in the loop if you read your email every morning.)*
7. Estaría al tanto si alguien me avisara a tiempo. *(I'd be up to date if someone let me know in time.)*

23 · dar con

to find, come across, hit upon

Raíz: Literally 'to give with' — but the idiom means to bump into something, as if the find were handed to you. Dar is Latin dare, to give — donate and data. Con means with. The luck of the encounter is the point: you didn't hunt it down, it was given to you.
Literal: To give with — to come upon, to find.
Conecta: Finding cousin of echar un vistazo (#29), the look that often precedes the find; contrast no tener ni idea (#12), when you haven't dado con anything yet.

1. Por fin di con las llaves debajo del sofá. *(I finally found the keys under the sofa.)*
2. ¿Diste con el restaurante que buscabas? *(Did you find the restaurant you were looking for?)*
3. Dimos con una panadería buenísima en Puebla. *(We came across a wonderful bakery in Puebla.)*
4. No doy con la solución a este problema. *(I can't find the solution to this problem.)*
5. Ella dio con el libro que quería en el mercado. *(She found the book she wanted at the market.)*
6. Vas a dar con la calle si sigues derecho. *(You'll find the street if you keep going straight.)*
7. Daría con la respuesta si tuviera más tiempo. *(I'd hit upon the answer if I had more time.)*

24 · hacer de cuenta

to pretend, imagine

Raíz: To 'make of count' is to reckon something as if it were so. Hacer is Latin facere, to make or do — factory. Cuenta is Latin computare, to count and reckon — count and compute. You run the numbers in your head on a made-up total and act as if the sum were real.
Literal: To make as if — to pretend.
Conecta: Pretend partner of tener en mente (#16), since both live in the mind; the opposite move is tomar en serio (#18), treating the real thing as real.

1. Haz de cuenta que estamos en la playa. *(Imagine we're at the beach.)*
2. ¿Haces de cuenta que no me viste? *(Are you pretending you didn't see me?)*
3. Los niños hicieron de cuenta que eran piratas. *(The kids pretended they were pirates.)*
4. No hagas de cuenta que no pasó nada. *(Don't pretend nothing happened.)*
5. Ella hacía de cuenta que era la dueña de la tienda. *(She used to pretend she owned the store.)*
6. Vamos a hacer de cuenta que ya estamos de vacaciones. *(Let's pretend we're already on vacation.)*
7. Haría de cuenta que no escuché nada. *(I'd pretend I heard nothing.)*

25 · tener sentido

to make sense

Raíz: To hold sense is for a thing to carry meaning you can feel. Tener is Latin tenere, to hold — tenacious and contain. Sentido is Latin sensus, from sentire, to feel and perceive — the root of sense and sentiment. The sense isn't just logic; it's something you can feel in your gut.
Literal: To have sense — to make sense.
Conecta: Sense-making opposite of no tener pies ni cabeza (#20); it closes the loop opened by no tener ni idea (#12), when the unknown finally makes sense.

1. Tiene sentido estudiar un poco cada día. *(It makes sense to study a little every day.)*
2. ¿Tiene sentido salir tan temprano? *(Does it make sense to leave so early?)*
3. Su consejo tuvo mucho sentido para mí. *(His advice made a lot of sense to me.)*
4. No tiene sentido discutir por algo tan pequeño. *(It makes no sense to argue over something so small.)*
5. La idea tenía sentido cuando la explicó bien. *(The idea made sense once she explained it properly.)*
6. Va a tener sentido cuando veas el resultado. *(It'll make sense when you see the result.)*
7. Tendría sentido esperar hasta mañana. *(It would make sense to wait until tomorrow.)*

Chapter 3

Effort & getting things done

Locuciones 26–38

26 · ponerse las pilas

to get one's act together, buckle down

Raíz: Put the batteries in yourself. Ponerse is poner, Latin ponere, to put or place — the root of position, with -se meaning oneself. Pila means battery, from Latin pila, a pillar or stack — Volta's first battery was literally a pile of stacked discs. No charge, no motion.
Literal: To put the batteries in oneself — to get going.
Conecta: The get-going cousin of ponerse en marcha (#37); the opposite of no dar abasto (#35) is finally ponerse las pilas. It pairs with the starter Creo que... when you admit it's time.

1. Tienes que ponerte las pilas si quieres pasar el examen de español. *(You need to buckle down if you want to pass the Spanish exam.)*
2. Me puse las pilas en enero y por fin terminé el curso. *(I got my act together in January and finally finished the course.)*
3. ¿Cuándo te vas a poner las pilas con la mudanza? *(When are you going to get going on the move?)*
4. El equipo se puso las pilas y entregó el proyecto a tiempo. *(The team buckled down and delivered the project on time.)*
5. Si no nos ponemos las pilas, no llegamos a Puebla antes de Navidad. *(If we don't get our act together, we won't get to Puebla before Christmas.)*
6. Mi hijo se pondría las pilas si dejara el celular un rato. *(My son would buckle down if he put his phone away for a while.)*
7. No te pongas las pilas solo el día antes del examen. *(Don't leave buckling down until the day before the exam.)*

27 · salir adelante

to get ahead, pull through

Raíz: To leap out ahead. Salir is Latin salire, to leap and go out — English sally. Adelante is a + delante, from Latin de + in + ante, before — the root of ante-. Picture leaping out of a tight spot and landing in front of it.
Literal: To go out forward — to get ahead, to pull through.
Conecta: Intransitive twin of sacar adelante (#34): you salir adelante, but you sacar a project adelante. It follows hacer un esfuerzo (#31).

1. Con esfuerzo y paciencia, vamos a salir adelante. *(With effort and patience, we're going to pull through.)*
2. Mi abuela salió adelante sola con cinco hijos. *(My grandmother got ahead on her own with five children.)*
3. ¿Cómo saliste adelante después de cerrar la clínica un mes? *(How did you pull through after closing the clinic for a month?)*
4. No salimos adelante solo con buenas intenciones; hay que trabajar. *(We don't get ahead on good intentions alone; we have to work.)*
5. Ella saldrá adelante porque nunca se rinde. *(She'll pull through because she never gives up.)*
6. Cuando perdí el trabajo, mis amigos me ayudaron a salir adelante. *(When I lost my job, my friends helped me pull through.)*
7. Ojalá salgamos adelante con las cuentas de este mes. *(I hope we pull through with this month's bills.)*

28 · echar una mano

to lend a hand

Raíz: The most famous throw in Spanish. Echar is Latin iactare, to throw — the root of eject. Mano is Latin manus, hand — manual. Here echar is the all-purpose 'throw in' verb: you throw a hand into someone else's work, and suddenly it's lighter.
Literal: To throw in a hand — to lend a hand.
Conecta: Helping-verb family with echar un vistazo (#29) and echar a perder (#30) — same echar, three jobs. The kind thing to do when someone no da abasto (#35), and close to the starter ¿Te puedo ayudar?

1. ¿Me echas una mano con estas cajas? *(Can you lend me a hand with these boxes?)*
2. Le eché una mano a mi vecina con el mercado. *(I lent my neighbor a hand with the groceries.)*
3. Siempre nos echamos una mano en la clínica. *(We always lend each other a hand at the clinic.)*
4. No me echó una mano nadie cuando me mudé. *(Nobody lent me a hand when I moved.)*
5. Si me echas una mano, terminamos antes de las seis. *(If you lend me a hand, we'll finish before six.)*
6. Le echaría una mano, pero hoy no tengo tiempo. *(I'd lend him a hand, but I don't have time today.)*
7. ¿Les echarías una mano a tus papás este fin de semana? *(Would you lend your parents a hand this weekend?)*

29 · echar un vistazo

to take a quick look

Raíz: To throw a quick look — one swift glance, then done. Echar is Latin iactare, to throw — eject. Vistazo is a quick glance, from vista, sight, from ver, Latin videre, to see — video. The -azo ending adds a single swift action, like a flick.
Literal: To throw a quick look — to take a peek.
Conecta: Shares echar with echar una mano (#28) and echar a perder (#30). A vistazo is lighter than tomar nota (#19) — you look, you don't write — and fits the starter Déjame ver...

1. Échale un vistazo a este mensaje antes de enviarlo. *(Take a quick look at this message before you send it.)*
2. Le eché un vistazo al menú y pedí mole. *(I took a quick look at the menu and ordered mole.)*
3. ¿Le echaste un vistazo a la lista del mercado? *(Did you take a quick look at the shopping list?)*
4. Cuando llegamos, echamos un vistazo al hotel y nos gustó. *(When we arrived, we took a quick look at the hotel and liked it.)*
5. No le eches un vistazo nada más; léelo bien. *(Don't just glance at it; read it carefully.)*
6. Mañana le echaré un vistazo a los precios del vuelo. *(Tomorrow I'll take a quick look at the flight prices.)*
7. El doctor le echó un vistazo a la radiografía y sonrió. *(The doctor took a quick look at the X-ray and smiled.)*

30 · echar a perder

to ruin, spoil

Raíz: Same throwing verb, opposite result. Echar is Latin iactare, to throw — eject. Perder is Latin perdere, to lose and destroy — the root of perdition. A perder means 'to the point of losing': the ruin is the destination you throw something toward.
Literal: To throw something to loss — to ruin it.
Conecta: The dark twin of echar una mano (#28) — same echar, opposite result. The classic risk when you meter la pata (#36), and the reason to tomar en serio (#18) the instructions first.

1. No eches a perder la sorpresa; no le digas nada a mamá. *(Don't spoil the surprise; don't tell Mom anything.)*
2. La lluvia echó a perder nuestro paseo por el centro. *(The rain ruined our walk downtown.)*
3. ¿Echaste a perder la comida con tanta sal? *(Did you ruin the food with so much salt?)*
4. Si dejas la leche fuera, se echa a perder. *(If you leave the milk out, it goes bad.)*
5. El tráfico echó a perder mis planes de llegar temprano. *(The traffic ruined my plans to arrive early.)*
6. No quiero echar a perder la fiesta con malas noticias. *(I don't want to spoil the party with bad news.)*
7. Ellos echarían a perder el proyecto si no revisan los datos. *(They would ruin the project if they don't check the data.)*

31 · hacer un esfuerzo

to make an effort

Raíz: A strong push outward. Hacer is Latin facere, to do and make — factory. Esfuerzo is ex-, out and up, plus fortis, strong — the root of fort and effort. The noun itself is the push: you make strength and send it outward.
Literal: To make an effort.
Conecta: The fuel for salir adelante (#27) and poner en práctica (#32); without it you end up no dando abasto (#35). It echoes the starter Hay que echarle ganas — same push, different words.

1. Haz un esfuerzo y termina la tarea hoy. *(Make an effort and finish the homework today.)*
2. Hice un esfuerzo por hablar solo en español en Puebla. *(I made an effort to speak only Spanish in Puebla.)*
3. ¿Hiciste un esfuerzo para llegar a tiempo? *(Did you make an effort to arrive on time?)*
4. Tenemos que hacer un esfuerzo para ahorrar este año. *(We have to make an effort to save this year.)*
5. Ella no hizo ningún esfuerzo por disculparse. *(She made no effort at all to apologize.)*
6. Haré un esfuerzo por no llegar tarde mañana. *(I'll make an effort not to be late tomorrow.)*
7. Si hicieran un esfuerzo, entenderían mejor el tema. *(If they made an effort, they'd understand the topic better.)*

32 · poner en práctica

to put into practice

Raíz: Out of the notebook and into action. Poner is Latin ponere, to put — position. Práctica is Greek praktike, the doing, the action — our practice. En práctica means 'into action', the opposite of theory sitting on paper.
Literal: To put into practice.
Conecta: What follows hacer un esfuerzo (#31) and precedes llevar a cabo (#33): study, practice, then carry out. It pairs with tomar en cuenta (#15) — you practice what you noted.

1. Puse en práctica lo que aprendí en el curso de español. *(I put into practice what I learned in the Spanish course.)*
2. ¿Pusiste en práctica el consejo del doctor? *(Did you put the doctor's advice into practice?)*
3. Tenemos que poner en práctica el plan esta semana. *(We have to put the plan into practice this week.)*
4. No basta con estudiar; hay que ponerlo en práctica. *(Studying isn't enough; you have to put it into practice.)*
5. Ella pondrá en práctica la técnica nueva con sus pacientes. *(She'll put the new technique into practice with her patients.)*
6. Cuando viajo, pongo en práctica mi español con la gente. *(When I travel, I put my Spanish into practice with people.)*
7. Si pusieras en práctica lo que sabes, hablarías mejor. *(If you put what you know into practice, you'd speak better.)*

33 · llevar a cabo

to carry out

Raíz: Carry it all the way to the end — to the head of the line. Llevar is Latin levare, to lift and carry — the root of lever. Cabo means end, from Latin caput, head — capital. A cabo is 'to the head': finishing means carrying the thing to its head, its end.
Literal: To carry something to the end — to carry it out.
Conecta: The finish line after poner en práctica (#32); a plan you llevar a cabo is a project you sacar adelante (#34).

1. Llevamos a cabo el proyecto en tres meses. *(We carried out the project in three months.)*
2. ¿Llevaron a cabo la reunión sin mí? *(Did they carry out the meeting without me?)*
3. El comité llevará a cabo una encuesta en la clínica. *(The committee will carry out a survey at the clinic.)*
4. No pudimos llevar a cabo el plan por falta de dinero. *(We couldn't carry out the plan for lack of money.)*
5. Ella llevó a cabo la investigación con mucho cuidado. *(She carried out the research very carefully.)*
6. Si llevas a cabo tu idea, te apoyo. *(If you carry out your idea, I'll support you.)*
7. Espero que lleven a cabo los cambios antes de diciembre. *(I hope they carry out the changes before December.)*

34 · sacar adelante

to get something done, pull it through

Raíz: To pull something out and forward. Sacar is of uncertain origin, parts only: to take out, to pull out. Adelante is a + delante, from Latin de + in + ante, before — ante-. You grab the project and haul it ahead of where it was stuck.
Literal: To pull something out forward — to push a project through.
Conecta: The transitive twin of salir adelante (#27): you sacar a project adelante, you salir adelante yourself. It needs hacer un esfuerzo (#31) and often echar una mano (#28) from others.

1. Sacamos adelante la clínica con mucho trabajo. *(We pulled the clinic through with a lot of hard work.)*
2. Mi mamá sacó adelante a la familia sola. *(My mom pulled the family through on her own.)*
3. ¿Cómo sacaste adelante el proyecto con tan poco tiempo? *(How did you pull the project through with so little time?)*
4. No sacó adelante el negocio y tuvo que cerrarlo. *(He couldn't pull the business through and had to close it.)*
5. Con ayuda de todos, sacaremos adelante la fiesta. *(With everyone's help, we'll pull the party off.)*
6. Ella sacaría adelante cualquier trabajo que le den. *(She would pull through any job they gave her.)*
7. Ojalá saquemos adelante las ventas este mes. *(I hope we pull the sales through this month.)*

35 · no dar abasto

to not be able to keep up

Raíz: You can't give enough supply to meet the demand. Dar is Latin dare, to give — donate. No dar means not to give, not to reach. Abasto is of uncertain origin, parts only: supply, enough stock to meet demand. The orders keep coming and your shelf is empty.
Literal: To not give enough supply — to be unable to keep up.
Conecta: The cry for help that calls for echar una mano (#28); the opposite of ponerse las pilas (#26) paying off. Close to estar hecho polvo (#7).

1. No doy abasto con tantos pacientes esta semana. *(I can't keep up with so many patients this week.)*
2. La clínica no daba abasto en diciembre. *(The clinic couldn't keep up in December.)*
3. ¿No das abasto con el trabajo y la casa? *(Can't you keep up with work and the house?)*
4. No damos abasto para contestar todos los mensajes. *(We can't keep up answering all the messages.)*
5. El restaurante no dio abasto con tanta gente el sábado. *(The restaurant couldn't keep up with so many people on Saturday.)*
6. Si seguimos así, no daremos abasto en Navidad. *(If this keeps up, we won't be able to keep up at Christmas.)*
7. Ella no daría abasto sin la ayuda de su asistente. *(She couldn't keep up without her assistant's help.)*

36 · meter la pata

to put one's foot in it, screw up

Raíz: To stick your paw where it doesn't belong. Meter means to put in, to insert. Pata is of uncertain origin, parts only: paw, an animal's foot — and in slang, a person's foot too. One careless step and the paw is in the soup.
Literal: To put the paw in — to put your foot in it.
Conecta: One careless step can echar a perder (#30) a whole plan. The fix is hacer las paces (#46) fast, and the starter Perdón, me equivoqué covers the apology.

1. Metí la pata y le conté el secreto a Juan. *(I put my foot in it and told Juan the secret.)*
2. ¿Metiste la pata otra vez en la reunión? *(Did you screw up again at the meeting?)*
3. No metas la pata con el jefe; revisa el correo dos veces. *(Don't screw up with the boss; check the email twice.)*
4. Mi hermano metió la pata y llegó una hora tarde. *(My brother screwed up and arrived an hour late.)*
5. Si metes la pata, discúlpate rápido. *(If you put your foot in it, apologize fast.)*
6. Ellos meterían la pata si hablan sin pensar. *(They would screw up if they spoke without thinking.)*
7. Espero no meter la pata en la cena con mis suegros. *(I hope I don't put my foot in it at dinner with my in-laws.)*

37 · ponerse en marcha

to get going, get started

Raíz: Put yourself in motion. Ponerse is poner, Latin ponere, to put or place — position, with -se meaning oneself. Marcha is parts only, from French marche, a walk, a march: en marcha is 'on the move', like a march setting off.
Literal: To put oneself in motion — to get going.
Conecta: The start button to ponerse las pilas (#26): pilas is the energy, marcha is the motion. Once en marcha, you still need tomar una decisión (#38) about direction.

1. Nos ponemos en marcha a las siete de la mañana. *(We get going at seven in the morning.)*
2. El proyecto se puso en marcha en octubre. *(The project got started in October.)*
3. ¿Cuándo te pones en marcha con el gimnasio? *(When are you getting started with the gym?)*
4. No nos pusimos en marcha hasta después del café. *(We didn't get going until after coffee.)*
5. Mañana me pondré en marcha con la dieta. *(Tomorrow I'll get started on the diet.)*
6. Si te pusieras en marcha hoy, terminarías el viernes. *(If you got going today, you'd finish by Friday.)*
7. El equipo se pondrá en marcha en cuanto llegue el jefe. *(The team will get going as soon as the boss arrives.)*

38 · tomar una decisión

to make a decision

Raíz: To take a decision — and the word itself says what deciding is. Tomar is of uncertain origin, parts only: to take. Decisión is Latin decisio, from decidere, to cut off and settle — our decision. To decide is to cut away every option but one.
Literal: To take a decision.
Conecta: Every plan needs one before llevar a cabo (#33) anything. It pairs with estar de acuerdo (#49) — first you decide, then others agree — and the starter Lo que pasa es que... when you explain it.

1. Tengo que tomar una decisión sobre el viaje. *(I have to make a decision about the trip.)*
2. Tomó una decisión difícil y dejó su trabajo. *(She made a difficult decision and left her job.)*
3. ¿Ya tomaste una decisión sobre la casa? *(Have you made a decision about the house yet?)*
4. No tomamos ninguna decisión en la reunión de ayer. *(We didn't make any decision at yesterday's meeting.)*
5. Tomaremos una decisión después de hablar con Angie. *(We'll make a decision after talking to Angie.)*
6. Si tomara una decisión hoy, elegiría Puebla. *(If I made a decision today, I'd choose Puebla.)*
7. Espero que tomes una decisión pronto. *(I hope you make a decision soon.)*

Chapter 4

People & social life

Locuciones 39–50

39 · tomar el pelo

to pull someone's leg, tease

Raíz: To take someone's hair — gently, as a joke, not a fight. Tomar is of uncertain origin, parts only: to take. Pelo is Latin pilus, a hair — the root of pile, the nap of fabric. You tug a single hair to tease, not to hurt.
Literal: To take someone's hair — to pull someone's leg.
Conecta: Gentle teasing, not an insult — the joker's version of dar risa (#3). If it goes too far, you'll need hacer las paces (#46); the starter ¿En serio? is the natural reply.

1. No me tomes el pelo; sé que no es verdad. *(Don't pull my leg; I know it's not true.)*
2. Me tomó el pelo con lo del premio. *(He pulled my leg about the prize.)*
3. ¿Me estás tomando el pelo o hablas en serio? *(Are you pulling my leg or are you serious?)*
4. Siempre les toma el pelo a sus hermanos. *(He always teases his brothers.)*
5. No le tomes el pelo a tu hermana; se enoja. *(Don't tease your sister; she gets upset.)*
6. Les tomaría el pelo, pero hoy no tengo ganas. *(I'd pull their leg, but I'm not in the mood today.)*
7. Cuando le dije que gané, pensó que le tomaba el pelo. *(When I told her I'd won, she thought I was pulling her leg.)*

40 · llevarse bien

to get along well

Raíz: To carry yourself well with each other. Llevarse is llevar, Latin levare, to lift and carry — lever, with -se meaning each other. Bien is Latin bene, well — the root of benefit. Two people lifting the relationship well, together.
Literal: To carry oneself well with each other — to get along.
Conecta: The happy twin of llevarse mal (#41); the goal of hacer las paces (#46) and ponerse de acuerdo (#50). It pairs with the starter Me cae bien — same bien, warmer feeling.

1. Me llevo bien con mis compañeros de trabajo. *(I get along well with my coworkers.)*
2. ¿Te llevas bien con tu suegra? *(Do you get along well with your mother-in-law?)*
3. Ellos se llevaban bien desde niños. *(They had gotten along well since they were kids.)*
4. No me llevo bien con el vecino nuevo. *(I don't get along well with the new neighbor.)*
5. Nos llevaremos bien si nos respetamos. *(We'll get along well if we respect each other.)*
6. Ella se llevaría bien con cualquiera; es muy amable. *(She would get along well with anyone; she's very kind.)*
7. Espero que se lleven bien en el viaje. *(I hope they get along well on the trip.)*

41 · llevarse mal

to get along badly

Raíz: The same carrying, gone wrong. Llevarse is llevar, Latin levare, to lift and carry — lever, with -se meaning each other. Mal is Latin malus, bad — malice. Two people carrying the relationship badly, dropping it between them.
Literal: To carry oneself badly with each other — to not get along.
Conecta: The unhappy twin of llevarse bien (#40); the state hacer las paces (#46) is meant to fix. If it lasts, no hay ponerse de acuerdo (#50) — first comes the talk.

1. Me llevo mal con mi jefe desde el año pasado. *(I've gotten along badly with my boss since last year.)*
2. ¿Por qué te llevas mal con tu hermano? *(Why do you get along badly with your brother?)*
3. Se llevaban mal, pero ahora son amigos. *(They used to get along badly, but now they're friends.)*
4. No nos llevamos mal; solo pensamos diferente. *(We don't get along badly; we just think differently.)*
5. Se llevarán mal si no hablan del problema. *(They'll get along badly if they don't talk about the problem.)*
6. Yo me llevaría mal con cualquiera en ese horario. *(I'd get along badly with anyone on that schedule.)*
7. Ojalá no se lleven mal durante las fiestas. *(I hope they don't get along badly during the holidays.)*

42 · pasarlo bien

to have a good time

Raíz: To pass the time well. Pasar is Latin passare, to pass and spend time — English pass. The -lo is 'it', the time itself. Bien is Latin bene, well — benefit. The hours pass and they pass well — that's the whole trick.
Literal: To pass it well — to have a good time.
Conecta: The good-time twin of pasarlo mal (#43); a walk helps — dar un paseo (#45) is a classic way to pasarlo bien. It echoes the starter ¡Qué padre! when the day was great.

1. Lo pasamos bien en la playa el domingo. *(We had a great time at the beach on Sunday.)*
2. ¿Lo pasaste bien en la fiesta? *(Did you have a good time at the party?)*
3. Siempre lo paso bien con mi familia en Puebla. *(I always have a good time with my family in Puebla.)*
4. No lo pasé bien en el viaje; me enfermé. *(I didn't have a good time on the trip; I got sick.)*
5. Lo pasarán bien en el mercado si van temprano. *(They'll have a good time at the market if they go early.)*
6. Lo pasaría bien contigo en cualquier lugar. *(I'd have a good time with you anywhere.)*
7. Espero que lo pases bien en tu cumpleaños. *(I hope you have a good time on your birthday.)*

43 · pasarlo mal

to have a bad time

Raíz: Same passing hours, worse weather. Pasar is Latin passare, to pass and spend time — pass. The -lo is 'it', the time. Mal is Latin malus, bad — malice. The time passes and it passes badly — the day drags.
Literal: To pass it badly — to have a bad time.
Conecta: The bad-time twin of pasarlo bien (#42); the feeling behind estar harto de (#10) a trip gone wrong. The cure is often dar un paseo (#45) or echar una mano (#28).

1. Lo pasé mal en el hospital la semana pasada. *(I had a bad time at the hospital last week.)*
2. ¿Lo pasaste mal en el examen? *(Did you have a rough time on the exam?)*
3. Lo pasa mal cuando viaja solo. *(He has a hard time when he travels alone.)*
4. No lo pasamos mal, pero el hotel era horrible. *(We didn't have a bad time, but the hotel was awful.)*
5. Lo pasarán mal si no llevan paraguas. *(They'll have a bad time if they don't bring umbrellas.)*
6. Lo pasaría mal sin mi familia en Navidad. *(I'd have a bad time without my family at Christmas.)*
7. Ojalá no lo pases mal en el vuelo. *(I hope you don't have a bad time on the flight.)*

44 · dar las gracias

to thank, give thanks

Raíz: Thanks arrive as a gift you give back. Dar is Latin dare, to give — donate. Gracias is Latin gratia, favour and thanks — the root of grace and gratitude. Las gracias is literally 'the thanks': the favour returned in words.
Literal: To give the thanks.
Conecta: The polite reply when someone te echa una mano (#28). It pairs with the starter Te lo agradezco — same gratia root, warmer — and with dar igual (#14) never: thanks always matter.

1. Quiero darte las gracias por tu ayuda. *(I want to thank you for your help.)*
2. Le di las gracias al doctor antes de salir. *(I thanked the doctor before leaving.)*
3. ¿Ya le diste las gracias a tu mamá? *(Have you thanked your mom yet?)*
4. No me dio las gracias por el regalo. *(He didn't thank me for the gift.)*
5. Les daremos las gracias en persona mañana. *(We'll thank them in person tomorrow.)*
6. Te daría las gracias mil veces si pudiera. *(I'd thank you a thousand times if I could.)*
7. Espero que le des las gracias a tu tía por la cena. *(I hope you thank your aunt for the dinner.)*

45 · dar un paseo

to take a walk/stroll

Raíz: A walk you give yourself, for pleasure, not to get somewhere. Dar is Latin dare, to give — donate. Paseo is Latin passare, to pass, to walk — English pass. Un paseo is a stroll with no destination except the pleasure of walking.
Literal: To give oneself a walk — to take a stroll.
Conecta: A gentle way to pasarlo bien (#42) and to clear your head after pasarlo mal (#43). It pairs with echar un vistazo (#29) — stroll, glance, enjoy — and the starter Vamos a caminar un rato.

1. Damos un paseo por el malecón cada tarde. *(We take a walk along the boardwalk every afternoon.)*
2. Di un paseo con Joni esta mañana. *(I took a walk with Joni this morning.)*
3. ¿Damos un paseo después de comer? *(Shall we take a stroll after lunch?)*
4. No di un paseo hoy porque llovió todo el día. *(I didn't take a walk today because it rained all day.)*
5. Dará un paseo por el centro antes de la cena. *(She'll take a stroll downtown before dinner.)*
6. Daría un paseo contigo, pero tengo que trabajar. *(I'd take a walk with you, but I have to work.)*
7. Cuando lleguemos a Puebla, daremos un paseo por el zócalo. *(When we get to Puebla, we'll take a stroll around the main square.)*

46 · hacer las paces

to make peace, patch things up

Raíz: To make the peaces — plural, because a truce is remade piece by piece. Hacer is Latin facere, to do and make — factory. Paces is Latin pax, peace — the root of peace and pacify. Two people rebuild the peace between them, one piece at a time.
Literal: To make the peaces — to make up.
Conecta: The repair after meter la pata (#36) or llevarse mal (#41); the road back to llevarse bien (#40). It needs ponerse de acuerdo (#50) on what changed, and the starter Perdóname, por favor.

1. Hicimos las paces después de la pelea. *(We made peace after the fight.)*
2. ¿Hiciste las paces con tu hermana? *(Did you make peace with your sister?)*
3. Tienen que hacer las paces antes de Navidad. *(They have to patch things up before Christmas.)*
4. No hizo las paces con nadie; sigue enojado. *(He didn't make peace with anyone; he's still angry.)*
5. Harán las paces cuando hablen con calma. *(They'll make peace when they talk calmly.)*
6. Haría las paces, pero ella no quiere hablar. *(I'd make peace, but she doesn't want to talk.)*
7. Espero que hagan las paces pronto. *(I hope they patch things up soon.)*

47 · ponerse en contacto

to get in touch

Raíz: Put yourself in touch — literally, in touching. Ponerse is poner, Latin ponere, to put or place — position, with -se meaning oneself. Contacto is Latin contactus, a touching together — our contact. En contacto means your lives are touching again.
Literal: To put oneself in contact — to get in touch.
Conecta: The first step before ponerse de acuerdo (#50) on anything. Use it instead of no decir ni pío (#48) when silence won't help, and pair it with the starter Te escribo para...

1. Me puse en contacto con la clínica por teléfono. *(I got in touch with the clinic by phone.)*
2. ¿Te pusiste en contacto con el hotel? *(Did you get in touch with the hotel?)*
3. Nos pondremos en contacto contigo la próxima semana. *(We'll get in touch with you next week.)*
4. No me puse en contacto con ella porque perdí su número. *(I didn't get in touch with her because I lost her number.)*
5. Ponte en contacto conmigo cuando llegues a Puebla. *(Get in touch with me when you arrive in Puebla.)*
6. Se pondría en contacto si necesitara ayuda. *(He would get in touch if he needed help.)*
7. Espero que se pongan en contacto antes del viernes. *(I hope they get in touch before Friday.)*

48 · no decir ni pío

to not say a word, not utter a peep

Raíz: Not even a peep — the sound a baby chick makes. Decir comes from Latin dicere, to say — the root of dictate. Pío is onomatopoeia, the peep of a chick, with no Latin root at all. Ni pío means not even that tiny sound escaped.
Literal: To not say even a peep.
Conecta: Silence after meter la pata (#36) is sometimes wisest — but ponerse en contacto (#47) beats ni pío when someone waits for news. It pairs with the starter No sé qué decir.

1. No dijo ni pío durante toda la reunión. *(He didn't say a word during the whole meeting.)*
2. Cuando le preguntaron, no dijo ni pío. *(When they asked him, he didn't utter a peep.)*
3. No digas ni pío sobre la sorpresa, ¿sí? *(Don't say a word about the surprise, okay?)*
4. Los niños no dijeron ni pío en el consultorio. *(The kids didn't say a word in the office.)*
5. No diré ni pío hasta hablar con mi abogado. *(I won't say a word until I talk to my lawyer.)*
6. ¿No vas a decir ni pío sobre lo que pasó? *(Aren't you going to say a word about what happened?)*
7. Si no dices ni pío, nadie sabrá nada. *(If you don't say a word, nobody will know anything.)*

49 · estar de acuerdo

to agree

Raíz: To be of one heart. Estar is the verb of state and condition. Acuerdo comes from Latin accordare, to bring hearts together, from cor, heart — the root of accord. De acuerdo means your hearts are in the same place.
Literal: To be of agreement — to be of one heart.
Conecta: The state after ponerse de acuerdo (#50) succeeds; the opposite of llevarse mal (#41) over an idea. It pairs with the starter Tienes razón — agreement with warmth.

1. Estoy de acuerdo contigo en casi todo. *(I agree with you on almost everything.)*
2. ¿Estás de acuerdo con el plan? *(Do you agree with the plan?)*
3. No estoy de acuerdo con subir los precios. *(I don't agree with raising the prices.)*
4. Estábamos de acuerdo, pero luego cambió de opinión. *(We agreed, but then he changed his mind.)*
5. Estarán de acuerdo cuando vean los números. *(They'll agree when they see the numbers.)*
6. Estaría de acuerdo si me explicaras mejor. *(I'd agree if you explained it better.)*
7. Espero que estés de acuerdo con la fecha. *(I hope you agree with the date.)*

50 · ponerse de acuerdo

to come to an agreement

Raíz: To put yourselves of one heart — the action behind the state. Ponerse is poner, Latin ponere, to put or place — position, with -se meaning each other, together. Acuerdo is Latin accordare, from cor, heart — accord. Two people place their hearts side by side.
Literal: To put yourselves in agreement — to reach an agreement.
Conecta: Produces estar de acuerdo (#49); the fix for llevarse mal (#41) and the seal on hacer las paces (#46). It pairs with the starter ¿Te parece si...? when you propose the deal.

1. Tenemos que ponernos de acuerdo antes del viernes. *(We have to come to an agreement before Friday.)*
2. ¿Se pusieron de acuerdo sobre el precio? *(Did you come to an agreement on the price?)*
3. Nos pusimos de acuerdo en reunirnos a las nueve. *(We agreed to meet at nine.)*
4. No nos pusimos de acuerdo y cada quien hizo lo suyo. *(We didn't reach an agreement and everyone did their own thing.)*
5. Se pondrán de acuerdo cuando hablen sin pelear. *(They'll come to an agreement when they talk without fighting.)*
6. Me pondría de acuerdo contigo, pero necesito más tiempo. *(I'd come to an agreement with you, but I need more time.)*
7. Ojalá nos pongamos de acuerdo esta semana. *(I hope we come to an agreement this week.)*

Chapter 5

Time, change & luck

Locuciones 51–63

51 · estar a punto de

to be about to

Raíz: Standing on the very edge before something starts. Estar is Latin stare, to stand — state and station. Punto is Latin punctum, a point or prick — the root of point and punctual. A punto marks the last point before the action tips over into happening.
Literal: To be at the point of something — to be about to.
Conecta: Time twin of al parecer (#60): one is about to happen, the other only seems true. It pairs with tener cuidado (#71) when you must act first.

1. Estoy a punto de salir para la clínica. *(I'm about to leave for the clinic.)*
2. ¿Estás a punto de comer sin mí? *(Are you about to eat without me?)*
3. Ayer estuvimos a punto de perder el autobús. *(Yesterday we were about to miss the bus.)*
4. Mi mamá estaba a punto de llamar cuando llegamos. *(My mom was about to call when we arrived.)*
5. No estoy a punto de rendirme, ni mucho menos. *(I'm not about to give up, not by a long shot.)*
6. Mañana estaremos a punto de despegar cuando suene el teléfono. *(Tomorrow we'll be about to take off when the phone rings.)*
7. Si no te apuras, vas a estar a punto de llegar tarde otra vez. *(If you don't hurry, you're going to be about to arrive late again.)*

52 · tener suerte

to be lucky

Raíz: Luck was once a lot drawn from a hat. Tener is Latin tenere, to hold — tenacious and contain. Suerte is Latin sors, sortis, a lot or fate — the root of sort. A sors was a lot drawn to decide fate; to hold luck is to hold the winning lot.
Literal: To have luck.
Conecta: Luck pairs with por si acaso (#53): luck helps, but a backup plan helps more. Compare a lo mejor (#57), which also leaves room for chance.

1. Tuve suerte y encontré mesa en el restaurante. *(I got lucky and found a table at the restaurant.)*
2. ¿Tienes suerte con el clima en Puebla? *(Are you lucky with the weather in Puebla?)*
3. Ella siempre tiene suerte en los exámenes. *(She's always lucky on exams.)*
4. No tuvimos suerte: el mercado ya estaba cerrado. *(We had no luck: the market was already closed.)*
5. Si llegamos temprano, tendremos suerte con el estacionamiento. *(If we arrive early, we'll be lucky with parking.)*
6. Mi hermano tenía suerte hasta que perdió las llaves. *(My brother was lucky until he lost the keys.)*
7. Ojalá tengas suerte en tu entrevista de mañana. *(I hope you're lucky in your interview tomorrow.)*

53 · por si acaso

just in case

Raíz: For if by chance — a little insurance policy in four words. Por means for, si means if. Acaso is a + caso, from Latin casus, a fall or event — the root of case and casual. Caso is what happens by chance, not by plan, and you're ready for it.
Literal: For if by chance — just in case.
Conecta: Cautious cousin of tener cuidado (#71) and tener suerte (#52): prepare for the worst, hope for the best. Use it with por lo menos (#62) for a minimum backup.

1. Llevo un paraguas por si acaso llueve. *(I'm taking an umbrella just in case it rains.)*
2. Por si acaso, guarda mi número en tu teléfono. *(Just in case, save my number in your phone.)*
3. Traje dinero extra por si acaso suben los precios. *(I brought extra money just in case prices go up.)*
4. ¿Llevas las llaves por si acaso? *(Are you bringing the keys just in case?)*
5. No salimos sin agua por si acaso nos da sed en el camino. *(We never leave without water just in case we get thirsty on the way.)*
6. Ayer compré pan por si acaso venían visitas. *(Yesterday I bought bread just in case guests came.)*
7. Por si acaso, mañana revisaré la hora del vuelo. *(Just in case, tomorrow I'll check the flight time.)*

54 · por fin

finally, at last

Raíz: For the end — the wait is over. Por means for. Fin is Latin finis, end and limit — the root of final, finish and finite. Fin is the boundary where something stops, so por fin ends the waiting and the relief rushes in.
Literal: For the end — at last, finally.
Conecta: Relief after waiting — it pairs with tener paciencia (#72), which gets you to por fin. Opposite of al principio (#59): the end of the wait, not the start.

1. Por fin llegamos a Puebla después de tantas horas. *(We finally arrived in Puebla after so many hours.)*
2. Por fin entiendo cómo funciona la aplicación. *(I finally understand how the app works.)*
3. ¿Por fin vas a descansar este fin de semana? *(Are you finally going to rest this weekend?)*
4. Después de meses, por fin abrieron el nuevo mercado. *(After months, they finally opened the new market.)*
5. No llegó por fin hasta las diez de la noche. *(He didn't finally arrive until ten at night.)*
6. Por fin tendremos vacaciones en diciembre. *(We'll finally have vacation in December.)*
7. Ella practicaba todos los días y por fin pasó el examen. *(She practiced every day and finally passed the exam.)*

55 · de vez en cuando

from time to time, now and then

Raíz: One turn among many. De means from. Vez is Latin vicis, a turn or change — the root of vice versa. En means in, cuando means when. Vez is one turn in a series, so the phrase means one turn among many — now and then, not always.
Literal: From time in when — now and then.
Conecta: Habit phrase — compare por lo general (#61), which is more regular. It pairs with echar una siesta (#73) and dar un paseo (#45), things done now and then.

1. De vez en cuando vamos al mercado de los domingos. *(From time to time we go to the Sunday market.)*
2. ¿Sales a caminar de vez en cuando? *(Do you go out for a walk now and then?)*
3. De vez en cuando me gusta cocinar mole en casa. *(Now and then I like to cook mole at home.)*
4. No lo veo de vez en cuando, lo veo casi todos los días. *(I don't see him now and then, I see him almost every day.)*
5. De vez en cuando llovía durante nuestro viaje. *(From time to time it rained during our trip.)*
6. Mi abuela nos visitaba de vez en cuando cuando era niño. *(My grandmother used to visit us now and then when I was a child.)*
7. De vez en cuando me tomo un café bien cargado por la tarde. *(Now and then I have a strong coffee in the afternoon.)*

56 · de todos modos

anyway, in any case

Raíz: In every way things could go — so you keep going anyway. De means of. Todos is Latin totus, all and whole — the root of total. Modos is Latin modus, measure and way — mode and modify. Todos modos covers every possible way, and none of them stops you.
Literal: Of all modes — anyway, in any case.
Conecta: The shrug that keeps going — compare por supuesto (#63), which is certain, and por lo menos (#62), which sets a floor. It pairs with salir adelante (#27) when you push on.

1. De todos modos, mañana voy a la clínica temprano. *(Anyway, tomorrow I'm going to the clinic early.)*
2. No me gusta el frío, pero de todos modos salí a caminar. *(I don't like the cold, but I went out for a walk anyway.)*
3. De todos modos, gracias por avisarme. *(In any case, thanks for letting me know.)*
4. ¿De todos modos vas a venir a la cena? *(Are you coming to dinner anyway?)*
5. El vuelo se retrasó, pero de todos modos llegamos a tiempo. *(The flight was delayed, but we still arrived on time.)*
6. De todos modos, yo ya había comprado los boletos. *(Anyway, I had already bought the tickets.)*
7. Si llueve, de todos modos iremos al centro. *(If it rains, we'll go downtown anyway.)*

57 · a lo mejor

maybe, perhaps

Raíz: To the best — the best-case guess among the options. A means to, lo is the neutral 'the'. Mejor is Latin melior, better — the root of ameliorate. A lo mejor points at the rosiest possibility and hopes it's the true one.
Literal: To the best — maybe, perhaps.
Conecta: The maybe of guesses — softer than al parecer (#60), which claims evidence. It pairs with por si acaso (#53) as its cautious partner, and with tener suerte (#52).

1. A lo mejor vamos a la playa este fin de semana. *(Maybe we'll go to the beach this weekend.)*
2. A lo mejor ella ya sabe la noticia. *(Maybe she already knows the news.)*
3. ¿A lo mejor prefieres quedarte en casa hoy? *(Maybe you'd rather stay home today?)*
4. A lo mejor no viene porque está enfermo. *(Maybe he's not coming because he's sick.)*
5. Ayer pensé que a lo mejor llovería, pero no llovió. *(Yesterday I thought it might rain, but it didn't.)*
6. A lo mejor mañana nos toca un día soleado. *(Perhaps tomorrow we'll get a sunny day.)*
7. Si estudias, a lo mejor pasas el examen a la primera. *(If you study, maybe you'll pass the exam on the first try.)*

58 · a tiempo

on time

Raíz: Inside the right slice of time. A means at. Tiempo is Latin tempus, time — the root of temporal, temporary and tempo. Tiempo is the flow of hours, so a tiempo means you landed inside the right slice of it — not early, not late.
Literal: At time — on time.
Conecta: Clock twin of al principio (#59): one is the start, the other the right moment. It pairs with estar a punto de (#51) when you nearly miss it.

1. Llegué a tiempo a mi cita con el doctor. *(I arrived on time for my doctor's appointment.)*
2. ¿Llegaste a tiempo al trabajo hoy? *(Did you get to work on time today?)*
3. El autobús siempre llega a tiempo los lunes. *(The bus always arrives on time on Mondays.)*
4. No llegamos a tiempo porque había mucho tráfico. *(We didn't arrive on time because there was a lot of traffic.)*
5. Si salimos ahora, llegaremos a tiempo al aeropuerto. *(If we leave now, we'll get to the airport on time.)*
6. Ella entregaba la tarea a tiempo todos los viernes. *(She used to turn in her homework on time every Friday.)*
7. Llegar a tiempo es una forma de respetar a los demás. *(Arriving on time is a way of respecting others.)*

59 · al principio

at first, in the beginning

Raíz: The first step, where things start. Al is a + el, at the. Principio is Latin principium, beginning and first place — the root of principle and principal. Principio is the first place in line, the opening scene of the story.
Literal: At the beginning.
Conecta: Opening scene — opposite of por fin (#54), which closes the wait. It pairs with al parecer (#60) when first impressions prove wrong, and with tener paciencia (#72).

1. Al principio no me gustaba el café, ahora me encanta. *(At first I didn't like coffee, now I love it.)*
2. Al principio del viaje todos estábamos nerviosos. *(At the beginning of the trip we were all nervous.)*
3. ¿Al principio te costó aprender español? *(Was it hard for you to learn Spanish at first?)*
4. Al principio no entendía nada de la película. *(At first I didn't understand anything about the movie.)*
5. Al principio pensaba quedarme una semana, pero me quedé un mes. *(At first I thought I'd stay a week, but I stayed a month.)*
6. Al principio del año prometí hacer más ejercicio. *(At the beginning of the year I promised to exercise more.)*
7. Todo es difícil al principio, luego se vuelve más fácil. *(Everything is hard at first, then it gets easier.)*

60 · al parecer

apparently, it seems

Raíz: At the appearing — how something shows itself to your eyes. Al is a + el, at the. Parecer is Latin parere, to appear and be visible — the root of appear and apparent. Parecer is the look of the thing, not the thing itself, so the word always leaves room for doubt.
Literal: At the appearing — apparently, it seems.
Conecta: Evidence word — stronger than a lo mejor (#57), which is only a guess. It pairs with al principio (#59) when appearances change, and with tener en mente (#16).

1. Al parecer, mañana va a llover en Puebla. *(Apparently, it's going to rain in Puebla tomorrow.)*
2. Al parecer, el restaurante ya cerró. *(It seems the restaurant has already closed.)*
3. ¿Al parecer no viene nadie a la reunión? *(Apparently nobody is coming to the meeting?)*
4. Al parecer, no había boletos para la función de anoche. *(Apparently, there were no tickets for last night's show.)*
5. Al parecer, ella ya sabía todo desde el principio. *(It seems she knew everything from the start.)*
6. Al parecer, el doctor llegará un poco tarde hoy. *(Apparently, the doctor will arrive a little late today.)*
7. Si al parecer todo está listo, ya podemos salir. *(If everything seems to be ready, we can leave now.)*

61 · por lo general

generally, as a rule

Raíz: For the whole pattern, not the exception. Por means for, lo is the neutral 'the'. General is Latin generalis, of a whole kind — our general and generally. Lo general is the full pattern of how things usually go.
Literal: For the general — generally, usually.
Conecta: Habit word — more regular than de vez en cuando (#55), which is occasional. It pairs with tener sueño (#68) and tener hambre (#69) for daily patterns.

1. Por lo general, desayuno en casa antes del trabajo. *(Generally, I have breakfast at home before work.)*
2. Por lo general, los domingos vamos al mercado. *(As a rule, on Sundays we go to the market.)*
3. ¿Por lo general duermes bien por la noche? *(Do you generally sleep well at night?)*
4. Por lo general, no como carne los viernes. *(As a rule, I don't eat meat on Fridays.)*
5. Por lo general, hacía frío en las mañanas de diciembre. *(Generally, it was cold on December mornings.)*
6. Por lo general, ella llega antes que todos. *(Generally, she arrives before everyone else.)*
7. Por lo general, en Puebla llueve más en el verano. *(Generally, in Puebla it rains more in the summer.)*

62 · por lo menos

at least

Raíz: For the least — the smallest amount you'll accept. Por means for, lo is the neutral 'the'. Menos is Latin minus, less — the root of minus and minimize. Menos marks the lower limit, the floor below which you won't go.
Literal: For the least — at least.
Conecta: Floor-setter — compare por supuesto (#63), full certainty, and por lo general (#61), the usual case. It pairs with por si acaso (#53) when you ask for a minimum backup.

1. Por lo menos, avísame si vas a llegar tarde. *(At least let me know if you're going to be late.)*
2. Necesito por lo menos una hora para prepararme. *(I need at least an hour to get ready.)*
3. ¿Por lo menos probaste el mole poblano? *(Did you at least try the mole poblano?)*
4. Ayer caminé por lo menos cinco kilómetros. *(Yesterday I walked at least five kilometres.)*
5. No es mucho, pero por lo menos es un comienzo. *(It's not much, but at least it's a start.)*
6. Por lo menos, mañana hará sol según el pronóstico. *(At least tomorrow will be sunny, according to the forecast.)*
7. Si no puedes venir, por lo menos mándame un mensaje. *(If you can't come, at least send me a message.)*

63 · por supuesto

of course

Raíz: For the supposed — what you take as given. Por means for. Supuesto is Latin suppositus, from supponere, to place under and assume — the root of suppose and supposition. Supuesto is what you place underneath as assumed true, so the answer is already certain.
Literal: For the supposed — of course.
Conecta: Certain yes — opposite of a lo mejor (#57), which only guesses. It pairs with estar de acuerdo (#49) when you agree without doubt, and with dar las gracias (#44).

1. Por supuesto que voy a ayudarte con la mudanza. *(Of course I'm going to help you with the move.)*
2. ¿Por supuesto vas a venir a la cena de Navidad? *(Of course you're coming to the Christmas dinner, right?)*
3. Por supuesto, el café de la mañana es sagrado. *(Of course, the morning coffee is sacred.)*
4. No, por supuesto que no voy a cancelar el viaje. *(No, of course I'm not going to cancel the trip.)*
5. Por supuesto que ayer le dije la verdad. *(Of course I told him the truth yesterday.)*
6. Por supuesto, mañana te acompaño al mercado. *(Of course, tomorrow I'll go with you to the market.)*
7. Si me invitas, por supuesto que acepto. *(If you invite me, of course I'll accept.)*

Chapter 6

Body & health

Locuciones 64–75

64 · estar en forma

to be in shape, fit

Raíz: In form — the shape your body is in. Estar is Latin stare, to stand — state and station. En means in. Forma is Latin forma, shape and form — our form and format. Forma is the shape you're standing in right now.
Literal: To be in form — to be in shape.
Conecta: State word — it pairs with ponerse en forma (#65), its action twin: estar is the result, ponerse the journey. Compare estar hecho polvo (#7), the opposite state.

1. Mi papá está en forma porque camina todos los días. *(My dad is in great shape because he walks every day.)*
2. ¿Estás en forma para subir la montaña? *(Are you in shape to climb the mountain?)*
3. Ella está en forma después de años de nadar. *(She's in great shape after years of swimming.)*
4. Estaba en mejor forma antes de lesionarme la rodilla. *(I was in better shape before I hurt my knee.)*
5. No estoy en forma para un maratón todavía. *(I'm not in shape for a marathon yet.)*
6. Si sigues entrenando, estarás en forma para el verano. *(If you keep training, you'll be in shape by summer.)*
7. Dice que está en forma, pero se cansa rápido. *(He says he's in shape, but he gets tired quickly.)*

65 · ponerse en forma

to get in shape

Raíz: Put yourself into a new shape. Ponerse is poner, Latin ponere, to put or place — the root of position and postpone, with -se meaning oneself. En means in. Forma is Latin forma, shape — form. Ponerse is 'put yourself' into the shape you want.
Literal: To put oneself in form — to get in shape.
Conecta: Action twin of estar en forma (#64): ponerse starts the change, estar keeps it. It pairs with ponerse las pilas (#26) for motivation, and with hacer un esfuerzo (#31).

1. Voy a ponerme en forma antes del viaje a Puebla. *(I'm going to get in shape before the Puebla trip.)*
2. ¿Quieres ponerte en forma conmigo? *(Do you want to get in shape with me?)*
3. Se puso en forma caminando con su perro cada mañana. *(She got in shape by walking her dog every morning.)*
4. Nunca se puso en forma porque nunca tenía tiempo. *(He never got in shape because he never had time.)*
5. Si quieres, mañana empezamos a ponernos en forma juntos. *(If you want, tomorrow we start getting in shape together.)*
6. Antes me ponía en forma cada enero, luego lo dejaba. *(I used to get in shape every January, then I gave up.)*
7. Ponerse en forma toma paciencia y un poco de esfuerzo cada día. *(Getting in shape takes patience and a little effort every day.)*

66 · no pegar ojo

to not sleep a wink

Raíz: The eye that won't stick shut. No means not. Pegar comes from Latin picare, to smear with pitch — pitch is the sticky stuff, and the eye is meant to stick shut in sleep. Ojo is Latin oculus, eye — the root of ocular. No stick, no sleep.
Literal: To not stick an eye — to not sleep a wink.
Conecta: Sleepless twin of quedarse dormido (#67): one is falling asleep, the other failing to. It pairs with tener sueño (#68), wanting sleep, and echar una siesta (#73).

1. No pegué ojo por el ruido de la calle. *(I didn't sleep a wink because of the noise in the street.)*
2. ¿Pegas ojo después de tanto café? *(Did you sleep a wink after all that coffee?)*
3. Ella no pegó ojo antes de su examen. *(She didn't sleep a wink before her exam.)*
4. Anoche di vueltas en la cama y no pegué ojo. *(Last night I tossed and turned and didn't sleep a wink.)*
5. Si sigues preocupándote, no pegarás ojo esta noche. *(If you keep worrying, you won't sleep a wink tonight.)*
6. Antes se quedaba despierto toda la noche y no pegaba ojo antes de los viajes. *(He used to stay up all night and not sleep a wink before trips.)*
7. Ojalá pegue ojo esta noche después de este día tan largo. *(I hope I sleep a wink tonight after this long day.)*

67 · quedarse dormido

to fall asleep

Raíz: To stay asleep — the staying is the point. Quedarse is of uncertain origin, parts only: quedar means to stay and remain, se means oneself. Dormido is Latin dormire, to sleep — the root of dormant. You stay, and sleep takes you.
Literal: To stay asleep — to fall asleep.
Conecta: Sleep twin of no pegar ojo (#66): one succeeds, the other fails. It pairs with tener sueño (#68), the drowsy feeling before it, and echar una siesta (#73).

1. Me quedé dormido en el sofá viendo la tele. *(I fell asleep on the couch while watching TV.)*
2. ¿Te quedaste dormido durante la película? *(Did you fall asleep during the movie?)*
3. Mi hijo se queda dormido en cuanto se acuesta. *(My son falls asleep as soon as he lies down.)*
4. Ella no se quedó dormida hasta después de la medianoche. *(She didn't fall asleep until after midnight.)*
5. Si leo en la cama, me quedaré dormido en cinco minutos. *(If I read in bed, I'll fall asleep in five minutes.)*
6. Cuando era niño, me quedaba dormido en el carro. *(When I was a kid, I used to fall asleep in the car.)*
7. Por favor, no te quedes dormido antes de que termine el cuento. *(Please don't fall asleep before I finish the story.)*

68 · tener sueño

to be sleepy

Raíz: To hold sleep — and the dream inside it. Tener is Latin tenere, to hold — tenacious and contain. Sueño is Latin somnus, sleep — the root of somnolent and insomnia. Sueño is both the sleep and the dream in it, held in your head.
Literal: To have sleep — to be sleepy.
Conecta: Drowsy feeling before quedarse dormido (#67) and after no pegar ojo (#66). It pairs with tener hambre (#69) and tener frío (#70) — all three use tener for body states.

1. Tengo tanto sueño que apenas puedo mantener los ojos abiertos. *(I'm so sleepy I can barely keep my eyes open.)*
2. ¿Tienes sueño después del almuerzo? *(Are you sleepy after lunch?)*
3. Tiene sueño porque trabajó toda la noche. *(She's sleepy because she worked all night.)*
4. No tenía sueño, así que leí un rato. *(I wasn't sleepy, so I read for a while.)*
5. Si nos levantamos temprano, tendremos sueño todo el día. *(If we get up early, we'll be sleepy all day.)*
6. A él le daba sueño a la misma hora cada tarde. *(He used to get sleepy at the same time every afternoon.)*
7. Ojalá no tenga sueño en la reunión de mañana. *(I hope I'm not sleepy at the meeting tomorrow.)*

69 · tener hambre

to be hungry

Raíz: To have hunger — and listen for the old f. Tener is Latin tenere, to hold — tenacious. Hambre is Latin fames, hunger — the root of famine. The f-to-h shift is regular: Latin facere became hacer, and fames became hambre.
Literal: To have hunger — to be hungry.
Conecta: Body-state sister of tener sueño (#68) and tener frío (#70): Spanish uses tener, not estar, for hunger, sleep and cold. It pairs with tener buena pinta (#75) when food looks good.

1. Tengo hambre, ¿preparamos el almuerzo? *(I'm hungry, shall we make lunch?)*
2. ¿Tienes hambre después de la caminata? *(Are you hungry after the walk?)*
3. Mi hija siempre tiene hambre cuando llega de la escuela. *(My daughter is always hungry when she gets home from school.)*
4. No teníamos hambre, así que solo pedimos café. *(We weren't hungry, so we only ordered coffee.)*
5. Si vamos al mercado, tendré hambre al mediodía. *(If we go to the market, I'll be hungry by noon.)*
6. Tenía tanta hambre que se comió dos platos de mole. *(He was so hungry he ate two plates of mole.)*
7. Ojalá los niños no tengan hambre antes de la cena. *(I hope the kids aren't hungry before dinner.)*

70 · tener frío

to be cold

Raíz: To have cold — the chill you hold in your body. Tener is Latin tenere, to hold — tenacious. Frío is Latin frigidus, cold — the root of frigid and refrigerate. Frío is the chill you feel, from the same root as the fridge.
Literal: To have cold — to be cold.
Conecta: Body-state sister of tener hambre (#69) and tener sueño (#68): all three use tener for what the body feels. It pairs with estar hecho una sopa (#74) when rain makes you cold.

1. Tengo frío, ¿puedes cerrar la ventana? *(I'm cold, can you close the window?)*
2. ¿Tienes frío en las mañanas en Puebla? *(Are you cold in the morning in Puebla?)*
3. Mi abuela siempre tiene frío, hasta en verano. *(My grandma is always cold, even in summer.)*
4. No tenía frío porque llevaba una chamarra gruesa. *(I wasn't cold because I was wearing a thick jacket.)*
5. Si llueve esta noche, tendremos frío en el campamento. *(If it rains tonight, we'll be cold at the campsite.)*
6. Ayer tenía tanto frío que no sentía las manos. *(Yesterday I was so cold I couldn't feel my hands.)*
7. Ojalá no tengas frío en el camino a casa. *(I hope you don't get cold on the way home.)*

71 · tener cuidado

to be careful

Raíz: Care is thinking ahead. Tener is Latin tenere, to hold — tenacious. Cuidado comes from cuidar, from Latin cogitare, to think and consider — the root of cogitate. Cuidado is care born of considering the danger before it arrives.
Literal: To have care — to be careful.
Conecta: Careful twin of por si acaso (#53): care prevents the trouble the backup plan covers. It pairs with estar a punto de (#51) when danger is near, and with tener paciencia (#72).

1. Ten cuidado con el piso mojado en la clínica. *(Be careful with the wet floor in the clinic.)*
2. ¿Tienes cuidado cuando manejas de noche? *(Are you careful when you drive at night?)*
3. Ella siempre tiene cuidado con la espalda de sus pacientes. *(She is always careful with her patients' backs.)*
4. No tuvo cuidado y se resbaló en las escaleras. *(He wasn't careful and slipped on the stairs.)*
5. Si vas al mercado, ten cuidado con tu cartera. *(If you go to the market, be careful with your wallet.)*
6. Mi mamá siempre me decía que tuviera cuidado al cruzar la calle. *(My mom always told me to be careful crossing the street.)*
7. Por favor, ten cuidado, la sopa está muy caliente. *(Please be careful, the soup is very hot.)*

72 · tener paciencia

to be patient

Raíz: Patience is enduring without breaking. Tener is Latin tenere, to hold — tenacious. Paciencia is Latin patientia, from pati, to suffer and endure — the root of patience and patient. Paciencia is holding steady while you suffer the wait.
Literal: To have patience.
Conecta: Waiting virtue — it pairs with por fin (#54), since patience carries you to the end, and with ponerse en forma (#65), which needs it daily. Opposite of estar harto de (#10).

1. Ten paciencia, el doctor te atenderá en un momento. *(Please be patient, the doctor will see you in a moment.)*
2. ¿Tienes paciencia con los niños que están aprendiendo? *(Do you have patience with kids who are learning?)*
3. Mi maestra tiene mucha paciencia con mi español. *(My teacher is very patient with my Spanish.)*
4. Ayer no tuve paciencia, estaba de mal humor. *(I didn't have patience yesterday, I was in a bad mood.)*
5. Si sigues practicando, necesitarás paciencia, pero lo lograrás. *(If you keep practicing, you'll need patience, but you'll get there.)*
6. Antes perdía la paciencia fácilmente, ahora respira primero. *(She used to lose patience easily, now she breathes first.)*
7. Ojalá tenga paciencia con el tráfico de mañana. *(I hope I have patience with the traffic tomorrow.)*

73 · echar una siesta

to take a nap

Raíz: Throw a nap — at the sixth hour. Echar is Latin iactare, to throw — the root of eject and project. Siesta is Latin sexta, the sixth hour — our siesta. The sexta was the midday hour, the time for rest, so the nap is named after the hour it belongs to.
Literal: To throw a nap — to take a nap.
Conecta: Daytime rescue after no pegar ojo (#66) and tener sueño (#68). It pairs with ponerse las pilas (#26) — a nap recharges them.

1. Después del almuerzo, echo una siesta de veinte minutos. *(After lunch I take a nap for twenty minutes.)*
2. ¿Echas una siesta los domingos? *(Do you take a nap on Sundays?)*
3. Mi abuelo echa una siesta cada tarde en su sillón. *(My grandpa takes a nap every afternoon in his chair.)*
4. Ayer no eché una siesta y estaba agotado. *(Yesterday I didn't take a nap and I was exhausted.)*
5. Si me levanto temprano, echaré una siesta después del almuerzo. *(If I get up early, I'll take a nap after lunch.)*
6. Cuando era pequeño, mi mamá me hacía echar una siesta. *(When I was little, my mom made me take a nap.)*
7. Una siesta corta es la mejor forma de recargar pilas por la tarde. *(A short nap is the best way to recharge in the afternoon.)*

74 · estar hecho una sopa

to be soaked through

Raíz: Made into a soup — soaked through and through. Estar is Latin stare, to stand — state. Hecho is Latin factus, made — fact. Sopa is Germanic *suppa, with no Latin root, parts only. You're not just wet; you're cooked in it, like an ingredient.
Literal: To be made a soup — to be soaked to the skin.
Conecta: Soaked twin of tener frío (#70): rain leaves you cold and wet together. It pairs with por si acaso (#53) — an umbrella prevents it.

1. Estoy hecho una sopa por la lluvia en el camino a casa. *(I'm soaked through from the rain on the way home.)*
2. ¿Estás hecho una sopa después de esa tormenta? *(Are you soaked through after that storm?)*
3. Llegó hecho una sopa porque no llevaba paraguas. *(He arrived soaked through because he had no umbrella.)*
4. No estábamos hechos una sopa, solo un poco mojados. *(We weren't soaked through, just a little wet.)*
5. Si sales sin chamarra, volverás hecho una sopa. *(If you go out without a jacket, you'll come back soaked through.)*
6. Ella volvía hecha una sopa después de jugar bajo la lluvia. *(She used to come home soaked through after playing in the rain.)*
7. ¡Mira, estás hecho una sopa! Cámbiate la ropa. *(Look at you, you're soaked through! Change your clothes.)*

75 · tener buena pinta

to look good/healthy, to look promising

Raíz: A good painted look — how something appears. Tener is Latin tenere, to hold — tenacious. Buena is Latin bonus, good — bonus. Pinta comes from pintar, from Latin pingere, to paint — our paint. Pinta is the painted look, the appearance that promises what's inside.
Literal: To have good appearance — to look good.
Conecta: Healthy look — it pairs with estar en forma (#64), the body behind the look, and with tener hambre (#69) when food looks good. What looks promising usually tastes promising too.

1. Ese mole tiene buena pinta, el olor es increíble. *(That mole looks promising, the smell is amazing.)*
2. Tienes buena pinta hoy, ¿dormiste bien? *(You look great today, did you sleep well?)*
3. ¿Te parece que el restaurante nuevo tiene buena pinta? *(Does the new restaurant look promising to you?)*
4. El paciente tiene buena pinta hoy, se ve saludable y animado. *(The patient looks healthy and in good spirits today.)*
5. Ese plan no tenía buena pinta, así que lo cambiamos. *(That plan didn't look promising, so we changed it.)*
6. El jardín tenía buena pinta después de la lluvia de ayer. *(The garden looked promising after the rain yesterday.)*
7. Si la sopa tiene buena pinta, probaré un plato. *(If the soup looks good, I'll try a bowl.)*