75 Spanish Sentence Starters

Frases para arrancar la conversación

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

Hablar es practicar. Pick a starter, say a sentence out loud, then check it against the examples.

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How to use this workbook

Each starter 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 starter, 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 starters and words you already know — so you lock it in by understanding it, not by memorizing it. Where you see Mexican slang (**la neta, me late, está cañón** …), that's the Puebla-ready version.

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

Quick reference — all starters

01	Creo que…	I think that…
02	Me parece que…	It seems to me that…
03	Pienso que…	I think that…
04	La verdad es que…	The truth is… / Honestly…
05	Desde mi punto de vista…	From my point of view…
06	Para mí…	For me… / In my opinion…
07	Yo diría que…	I would say that…
08	No estoy seguro de que…	I'm not sure that…
09	Tengo la impresión de que…	I have the impression that…
10	Lo que pasa es que…	The thing is…
11	Es que…	It's just that…
12	Porque…	Because…
13	Por eso…	That's why…
14	O sea…	I mean… / In other words…
15	En otras palabras…	In other words…
16	A lo que me refiero es que…	What I mean is…
17	El problema es que…	The problem is that…
18	La cosa es que…	The thing is…
19	No es que…	It's not that…
20	Depende de…	It depends on…
21	Hace poco…	Recently…
22	Una vez…	One time…
23	Cuando era niño…	When I was a kid…
24	Me acuerdo de que…	I remember that…
25	Nunca había…	I had never…
26	Lo que más me gustó fue…	What I liked most was…
27	Resulta que…	It turns out that…
28	Al final…	In the end…
29	Total que…	So anyway… / Long story short…
30	Y de repente…	And suddenly…
31	Me gustaría…	I would like…
32	Tengo ganas de…	I feel like… / I'm in the mood to…
33	Quiero…	I want…
34	Estoy pensando en…	I'm thinking about…
35	Me gustaría que…	I'd like it if…
36	Ojalá…	Hopefully… / I wish…
37	Si pudiera…	If I could…
38	En cuanto pueda…	As soon as I can…
39	Cuando tenga tiempo…	When I have time…
40	A ver si…	Let's see if… / Hopefully…
41	¿Sabes qué?…	You know what?…
42	Pues…	Well… / So…
43	Fíjate que…	You know what… / Interestingly…
44	Qué curioso que…	How interesting that…
45	¿Y si…?	What if…?
46	Por cierto…	By the way…
47	A propósito…	Speaking of which… / By the way…
48	No sé si…	I don't know if…
49	¿Te acuerdas de…?	Do you remember…?
50	Me imagino que…	I imagine that…
51	En cuanto a…	As for… / Regarding…
52	Respecto a…	Regarding…
53	En lo que respecta a…	As far as … is concerned…
54	En relación con…	In relation to…
55	Con respecto a…	With regard to…
56	Por lo que se refiere a…	As far as … goes…
57	Aparte de…	Apart from… / Besides…
58	Además de…	In addition to…

59	En cambio…	On the other hand… / Instead…
60	Sin embargo…	However…
61	Por otro lado…	On the other hand…
62	Es decir…	That is… / I mean…
63	De hecho…	In fact… / Actually…
64	En realidad…	Actually… / In reality…
65	A fin de cuentas…	At the end of the day… / All in all…
66	En el fondo…	Deep down… / At heart…
67	Lo bueno es que…	The good thing is…
68	Lo malo es que…	The bad thing is…
69	Lo importante es que…	The important thing is…
70	Lo que me preocupa es que…	What worries me is…
71	Se me hace que…	I get the feeling that…
72	Me da la impresión de que…	I get the impression that…
73	Hay que…	One has to… / We've got to…
74	Vale la pena…	It's worth…
75	No cabe duda de que…	There's no doubt that…

Chapter 1

Expressing opinions and thoughts

Starters 1–10

01 · Creo que…

I think that…

Raíz: Creer comes from Latin credere — to trust, to put your heart into something — and English kept the same root in credit, credible, and creed. So creo que is really 'I trust that…' — firmer than a guess, softer than a fact. The que is just the little bridge word 'that' joining your opinion to what follows.
Literal: I believe (trust) that…
Conecta: Head of the opinion family — Pienso que… (#3) and Me parece que… (#2) are softer cousins; creo pops up again in ¿no crees? (#74).

1. Creo que va a llover. *(I think it's going to rain.)*
2. Creo que ella tiene razón. *(I think she's right.)*
3. Creo que llegamos tarde ayer. *(I think we arrived late yesterday.)*
4. Creo que, la neta, no va a venir hoy. *(I honestly don't think he's coming today.)*
5. Creo que mañana va a hacer frío. *(I think it's going to be cold tomorrow.)*
6. Creo que deberíamos hablar con ella. *(I think we should talk to her.)*
7. Creo que la fiesta estuvo padrísima. *(I think the party was really cool.)*

02 · Me parece que…

It seems to me that…

Raíz: Parecer comes from Latin parere — to appear, to come into view — the same root as English appear and apparent. The trick is the build: the thing seems TO you, so the verb agrees with the thing, not with you. Me parece is really 'it appears to me'.
Literal: It appears to me that…
Conecta: Softer sister of Creo que… (#1) and Pienso que… (#3); same parecer root as ¿Qué te parece?; the feeling sense ties to Se me hace que… (#71).

1. Me parece que es una buena idea. *(It seems like a good idea to me.)*
2. Me parece que el precio es justo. *(It seems to me the price is fair.)*
3. Me parece que no entendió nada. *(It seems to me he didn't understand anything.)*
4. Me parece que va a llover mañana. *(It seems to me it's going to rain tomorrow.)*
5. Me parece que ustedes tienen razón. *(It seems to me you're right.)*
6. Me parece que la película estuvo padrísima. *(It seems to me the movie was really cool.)*
7. Me parece que es mejor esperar. *(It seems to me it's better to wait.)*

03 · Pienso que…

I think that…

Raíz: Pensar comes from Latin pensare — to weigh, to ponder. The Romans pictured thinking as weighing something in your hands, and English kept the idea in pensive and ponder. So pienso que is really 'I weigh that…' — an opinion you've turned over before saying it.
Literal: I think (weigh) that…
Conecta: Middle of the opinion trio with Creo que… (#1) and Me parece que… (#2); pensar returns in Estoy pensando en… (#34), the ongoing-thought version.

1. Pienso que deberíamos irnos. *(I think we should leave.)*
2. Pienso que es una buena oportunidad. *(I think it's a good opportunity.)*
3. Pienso que no tiene sentido. *(I think it doesn't make sense.)*
4. Pienso que van a llegar tarde. *(I think they're going to be late.)*
5. Pienso que el viaje estuvo a toda madre. *(I think the trip was awesome.)*
6. Pienso que mañana va a estar mejor. *(I think tomorrow will be better.)*
7. Pienso que necesitamos practicar más. *(I think we need to practice more.)*

04 · La verdad es que…

The truth is… / Honestly…

Raíz: Verdad comes from Latin veritas — truth — the root of English verity and verify, and even very, which once meant 'truly'. La verdad is simply 'the truth', and opening with it is a promise: what follows is the honest version, not the polite one.
Literal: The truth is that…
Conecta: Opens an honest opinion like la neta (the truth) in your slang — same word, la neta, is just verdad in street form; pairs with O sea… (#14) when you then explain it.

1. La verdad es que estoy cansado. *(Honestly, I'm tired.)*
2. La verdad es que no me gusta el café. *(Honestly, I don't like coffee.)*
3. La verdad es que está cañón el tráfico hoy. *(Honestly, traffic is crazy today.)*
4. La verdad es que no tengo ganas de salir. *(Honestly, I don't feel like going out.)*
5. La verdad es que ella siempre nos ayuda. *(Honestly, she always helps us.)*
6. La verdad es que, al chile, no sabía nada de eso. *(Honestly, for real, I didn't know anything about that.)*
7. La verdad es que prefiero quedarme en casa. *(Honestly, I'd rather stay home.)*

05 · Desde mi punto de vista…

From my point of view…

Raíz: Punto comes from Latin punctum — a point, a prick, a dot — the root of English point and punctual. Vista comes from ver, to see, from Latin videre, the root of video and vision. So you stand at your own little dot and look out from it: 'from my point of seeing'.
Literal: From my point of view… (literally 'from my point of sight')
Conecta: The formal cousin of Para mí… (#6); pairs with En lo que respecta a mí (#53) — use it when Para mí… feels too casual.

1. Desde mi punto de vista, es demasiado caro. *(From my point of view, it's too expensive.)*
2. Desde mi punto de vista, el plan es perfecto. *(From my point of view, the plan is perfect.)*
3. Desde mi punto de vista, está bien gacho el servicio. *(From my point of view, the service is pretty crappy.)*
4. Desde mi punto de vista, ella hizo lo correcto. *(From my point of view, she did the right thing.)*
5. Desde mi punto de vista, necesitamos más tiempo. *(From my point of view, we need more time.)*
6. Desde mi punto de vista, fue una gran idea. *(From my point of view, it was a great idea.)*
7. Desde mi punto de vista, el restaurante es muy bueno. *(From my point of view, the restaurant is very good.)*

06 · Para mí…

For me… / In my opinion…

Raíz: Para means 'for' — purpose, destination — and mí is the stressed form of 'me' that Spanish uses after prepositions, never 'para me'. Two words, one opinion: 'for me'. It's the shortest honest way to say 'this is just how I see it'.
Literal: For me…
Conecta: Casual twin of Desde mi punto de vista… (#5); the me in me late (I'm into it) is the same indirect-object 'me' — Para mí, ese plan no me late nada.

1. Para mí, lo más importante es la familia. *(For me, family is the most important thing.)*
2. Para mí, el café es lo mejor de la mañana. *(For me, coffee is the best part of the morning.)*
3. Para mí, ese plan no me late nada. *(For me, I'm not into that plan at all.)*
4. Para mí, la música es muy importante. *(For me, music is very important.)*
5. Para mí, el domingo es día de descanso. *(For me, Sunday is a day of rest.)*
6. Para mí, viajar es la mejor manera de aprender. *(For me, traveling is the best way to learn.)*
7. Para mí, la comida mexicana es la más rica. *(For me, Mexican food is the tastiest.)*

07 · Yo diría que…

I would say that…

Raíz: Decir comes from Latin dicere — to say — the root of English dictation and dictate. The -ía ending is the conditional, the 'would' ending, and the yo is optional, added only for emphasis. So yo diría que is 'I would say that…' — an opinion with the volume turned down.
Literal: I would say that…
Conecta: Softens Creo que… (#1) — same opinion, less push; the conditional also drives Si pudiera… (#37), where diría-style 'would' verbs finish the sentence.

1. Yo diría que tenemos unos veinte minutos. *(I'd say we have about twenty minutes.)*
2. Yo diría que es mejor ir mañana. *(I'd say it's better to go tomorrow.)*
3. Yo diría que ella tiene razón. *(I'd say she's right.)*
4. Yo diría que el concierto estuvo bien chido. *(I'd say the concert was really cool.)*
5. Yo diría que el viaje costó demasiado. *(I'd say the trip cost too much.)*
6. Yo diría que van a necesitar ayuda. *(I'd say they're going to need help.)*
7. Yo diría que fue un buen día. *(I'd say it was a good day.)*

08 · No estoy seguro de que…

I'm not sure that…

Raíz: Seguro comes from Latin securus — se-, 'without', plus cura, 'care' — literally 'without a worry', the root of English secure and security. So no estoy seguro is really 'I'm not without-worry about it' — a neat picture of doubt: the worry is still there.
Literal: I am not sure (secure) of that…
Conecta: Doubt twin of Creo que… (#1); the subjunctive after it (sea, venga) is the same uncertainty mood as Ojalá… (#36) and No sé si… (#48).

1. No estoy seguro de que sea buena idea. *(I'm not sure it's a good idea.)*
2. No estoy seguro de que venga hoy. *(I'm not sure he's coming today.)*
3. No estoy seguro de que tengamos tiempo. *(I'm not sure we have time.)*
4. No estoy seguro de que sea verdad. *(I'm not sure it's true.)*
5. No estoy seguro de que jale el internet aquí. *(I'm not sure the internet works here.)*
6. No estoy seguro de que haya lugar. *(I'm not sure there's room.)*
7. No estoy seguro de que nos alcance el dinero. *(I'm not sure we'll have enough money.)*

09 · Tengo la impresión de que…

I have the impression that…

Raíz: Tener comes from Latin tenere — to hold — the root of tenacious and contain. Impresión comes from Latin impressio — a pressing in — the root of English impression. So tengo la impresión is really 'I hold the pressed-in mark' — something pressed itself into your mind and stayed there.
Literal: I have (hold) the impression of that…
Conecta: Full form of Me da la impresión de que… (#72); impresión pairs with the feeling verbs Me parece que… (#2) and Se me hace que… (#71).

1. Tengo la impresión de que está enojado. *(I get the impression he's angry.)*
2. Tengo la impresión de que no le gustó. *(I get the impression he didn't like it.)*
3. Tengo la impresión de que va a llover. *(I get the impression it's going to rain.)*
4. Tengo la impresión de que es buena onda. *(I get the impression he's a nice guy.)*
5. Tengo la impresión de que anda crudo hoy. *(I get the impression he's hungover today.)*
6. Tengo la impresión de que ella ya lo sabía. *(I get the impression she already knew.)*
7. Tengo la impresión de que nos están esperando. *(I get the impression they're waiting for us.)*

10 · Lo que pasa es que…

The thing is…

Raíz: Pasar comes from Latin passare — to pass, to step — the root of pass and passage. Lo que is 'what' or 'the thing that'. So lo que pasa is 'what passes by' — the situation walking past you — and es que adds 'is that…'. It starts with the scene, not the excuse.
Literal: What happens (passes) is that…
Conecta: Twin of La cosa es que… (#18) and close to Es que… (#11); all three open an explanation — pick this one when the reason is a situation, not a person.

1. Lo que pasa es que no tengo tiempo. *(The thing is, I don't have time.)*
2. Lo que pasa es que llegué tarde. *(The thing is, I arrived late.)*
3. Lo que pasa es que ando sin lana. *(The thing is, I'm out of cash.)*
4. Lo que pasa es que está cañón el calor. *(The thing is, the heat is intense.)*
5. Lo que pasa es que ella no quiere ir. *(The thing is, she doesn't want to go.)*
6. Lo que pasa es que se me olvidó. *(The thing is, I forgot.)*
7. Lo que pasa es que mañana trabajo todo el día. *(The thing is, tomorrow I work all day.)*

Chapter 2

Explaining, clarifying and giving reasons

Starters 11–20

11 · Es que…

It's just that…

Raíz: Just two words doing heavy lifting: es, from ser, 'it is', and que, 'that'. 'It is that…' — the shortest explanation opener in the book. Spanish speakers reach for it the way English speakers reach for 'the thing is…' — it buys a second to gather the real reason.
Literal: It is that…
Conecta: Short form of Lo que pasa es que… (#10) and La cosa es que… (#18); the same es que pattern answers a 'why' right after Porque… (#12).

1. Es que no entendí lo que dijiste. *(It's just that I didn't understand what you said.)*
2. Es que tengo mucho trabajo hoy. *(It's just that I have a lot of work today.)*
3. Es que no me siento bien. *(It's just that I don't feel well.)*
4. Es que el carro no arranca. *(It's just that the car won't start.)*
5. Es que ando buscando chamba. *(It's just that I'm looking for work.)*
6. Es que no me late ese lugar. *(It's just that I'm not into that place.)*
7. Es que mañana salgo muy temprano. *(It's just that I'm leaving very early tomorrow.)*

12 · Porque…

Because…

Raíz: Porque is por plus que — 'for that'. Por comes from Latin pro and per, the 'through, for' words English kept in per and pro. So porque is really 'for that reason' squeezed into one word: the reason-giver, the word you reach for when someone asks 'why?'.
Literal: For that (reason)… — because…
Conecta: Answers the 'why' that Es que… (#11) and Lo que pasa es que… (#10) set up; its mirror image is Por eso… (#13), the 'that's why' that follows a reason.

1. Porque tengo que trabajar mañana. *(Because I have to work tomorrow.)*
2. Porque me gusta la comida picante. *(Because I like spicy food.)*
3. Porque ando crudo hoy. *(Because I'm hungover today.)*
4. Porque no tenía tiempo. *(Because I didn't have time.)*
5. Porque quiero aprender español. *(Because I want to learn Spanish.)*
6. Porque tengo chamba mañana temprano. *(Because I have work early tomorrow.)*
7. Porque mañana es mi cumpleaños. *(Because tomorrow is my birthday.)*

13 · Por eso…

That's why…

Raíz: Por means 'for' or 'by', and eso is the neuter 'that' — it points at a whole idea, not a thing, and comes from Latin ipsum. Together they make 'for that' — the echo of a reason you just gave. Porque gives the reason; por eso gives the result that follows from it.
Literal: For that (reason)… — that's why…
Conecta: Mirror of Porque… (#12): porque gives the reason, por eso gives the result; eso also points back in Aparte de eso (#57) and Además de eso (#58).

1. Por eso prefiero viajar en otoño. *(That's why I prefer traveling in the fall.)*
2. Por eso ando sin lana. *(That's why I'm out of cash.)*
3. Por eso llegamos temprano. *(That's why we arrived early.)*
4. Por eso me late este lugar. *(That's why I'm into this place.)*
5. Por eso no le dije nada. *(That's why I didn't say anything to him.)*
6. Por eso siempre llevo paraguas. *(That's why I always carry an umbrella.)*
7. Por eso decidimos quedarnos en casa. *(That's why we decided to stay home.)*

14 · O sea…

I mean… / In other words…

Raíz: O means 'or', and sea is the subjunctive of ser — 'be'. Word for word it's 'or be it…' — an old rephrasing formula, 'or, let it be said as…'. Centuries of use have worn it down to pure filler, and proud of it: it's the sound of someone fixing their own sentence mid-flight.
Literal: Or be it… — I mean…
Conecta: Casual twin of En otras palabras… (#15) and Es decir… (#62); the go-to fix-up right after La verdad es que… (#4) when you restate yourself.

1. O sea, ¿quieres que te ayude? *(So, you want me to help you?)*
2. O sea, ¡no manches, qué caro! *(I mean, no way, how expensive!)*
3. O sea, ¿ya terminaste? *(I mean, are you done already?)*
4. O sea, necesito más tiempo. *(I mean, I need more time.)*
5. O sea, el vuelo sale mañana. *(I mean, the flight leaves tomorrow.)*
6. O sea, ¿qué onda contigo hoy? *(I mean, what's up with you today?)*
7. O sea, fue un malentendido. *(I mean, it was a misunderstanding.)*

15 · En otras palabras…

In other words…

Raíz: Otras comes from otro, from Latin alter — 'other' — the root of English alternate and alternative. Palabras comes from Latin parabola — a word, a tale — the root of parable and parole. So en otras palabras is 'in other tales' — the same idea told again with different words.
Literal: In other words…
Conecta: Formal twin of O sea… (#14) and Es decir… (#62); palabra also lives in 'palabra por palabra' and in your song lyrics — same word, same root.

1. En otras palabras, tenemos que empezar de nuevo. *(In other words, we have to start over.)*
2. En otras palabras, no hay tiempo. *(In other words, there's no time.)*
3. En otras palabras, el plan cambió. *(In other words, the plan changed.)*
4. En otras palabras, ella no va a venir. *(In other words, she's not coming.)*
5. En otras palabras, necesitamos ayuda. *(In other words, we need help.)*
6. En otras palabras, está cañón el trabajo. *(In other words, the work is intense.)*
7. En otras palabras, ya es demasiado tarde. *(In other words, it's already too late.)*

16 · A lo que me refiero es que…

What I mean is…

Raíz: Referirse comes from Latin referre — re-, 'back', plus ferre, 'to carry' — the root of refer and reference. A lo que is 'to what'. So the whole phrase is 'to what I carry myself back to is that…' — you're pointing at the exact spot you meant.
Literal: To what I refer (carry back) is that…
Conecta: Long form of O sea… (#14) and Es decir… (#62); same lo que frame as Lo que pasa es que… (#10) and Lo que me preocupa es que… (#70).

1. A lo que me refiero es que necesitamos más tiempo. *(What I mean is that we need more time.)*
2. A lo que me refiero es que no hay lana. *(What I mean is that there's no money.)*
3. A lo que me refiero es que el precio es alto. *(What I mean is that the price is high.)*
4. A lo que me refiero es que debemos hablar. *(What I mean is that we should talk.)*
5. A lo que me refiero es que fue un error. *(What I mean is that it was a mistake.)*
6. A lo que me refiero es que no me entendiste. *(What I mean is that you didn't understand me.)*
7. A lo que me refiero es que hay que practicar más. *(What I mean is that we have to practice more.)*

17 · El problema es que…

The problem is that…

Raíz: Problema comes from Greek problema, through Latin — pro-, 'forward', plus ballein, 'to throw'. A problem was literally 'a thing thrown in front of you', blocking the path. English kept the same word. El problema es que is you naming the obstacle before you walk around it.
Literal: The problem is that…
Conecta: Problem-opener like La cosa es que… (#18); its natural follow-up is a fix from Hay que… (#73) or a reason from Porque… (#12).

1. El problema es que no hay transporte. *(The problem is that there's no transportation.)*
2. El problema es que está cañón el tráfico. *(The problem is that traffic is crazy.)*
3. El problema es que está cerrado hoy. *(The problem is that it's closed today.)*
4. El problema es que no habla español. *(The problem is that he doesn't speak Spanish.)*
5. El problema es que llegamos muy tarde. *(The problem is that we arrived very late.)*
6. El problema es que no jala el carro. *(The problem is that the car won't work.)*
7. El problema es que no hay lugar. *(The problem is that there's no room.)*

18 · La cosa es que…

The thing is…

Raíz: Cosa comes from Latin causa — 'cause, matter, thing' — the root of English cause. Over centuries the meaning drifted from 'the cause' to just 'the thing'. So la cosa es que is really 'the cause of it is that…' — the reason, dressed up as an ordinary object.
Literal: The thing (cause) is that…
Conecta: Twin of Lo que pasa es que… (#10) and Es que… (#11); cosa also appears in '¿Qué cosa?' and in La cosa es que no hay bronca — same everyday word.

1. La cosa es que ya habíamos quedado. *(The thing is, we'd already made plans.)*
2. La cosa es que no tengo la dirección. *(The thing is, I don't have the address.)*
3. La cosa es que ella está enferma. *(The thing is, she's sick.)*
4. La cosa es que el vuelo se canceló. *(The thing is, the flight was cancelled.)*
5. La cosa es que no hay bronca con eso. *(The thing is, there's no problem with that.)*
6. La cosa es que mañana trabajo. *(The thing is, I work tomorrow.)*
7. La cosa es que no sé cocinar eso. *(The thing is, I don't know how to cook that.)*

19 · No es que…

It's not that…

Raíz: No plus es, 'it is', plus que, 'that': 'it is not that…'. It's built to correct a misunderstanding before it even forms — you hear the wrong idea coming, and you head it off. The negative twin of Es que… (#11), and it opens the door to the real reason.
Literal: It is not that…
Conecta: Negative twin of Es que… (#11); the classic follow-up is the real reason — es que estoy ocupado — and the same subjunctive mood as No estoy seguro de que… (#8).

1. No es que no quiera ir, es que estoy ocupado. *(It's not that I don't want to go; I'm busy.)*
2. No es que no me guste, es que es muy caro. *(It's not that I don't like it; it's just very expensive.)*
3. No es que no pueda, es que no tengo tiempo. *(It's not that I can't; I just don't have time.)*
4. No es que sea difícil, es que es nuevo. *(It's not that it's hard; it's just new.)*
5. No es que no te crea, es que me sorprende. *(It's not that I don't believe you; it just surprises me.)*
6. No es que no quiera ir, es que no me late el plan. *(It's not that I don't want to go; I'm just not into the plan.)*
7. No es que no sepa, es que se me olvidó. *(It's not that I don't know; I just forgot.)*

20 · Depende de…

It depends on…

Raíz: Depender comes from Latin dependere — de-, 'down from', plus pendere, 'to hang' — the root of English depend and pendant, something that hangs. The picture is perfect: the answer hangs from the condition, swinging until you know more. Literally, 'it hangs on…'.
Literal: It hangs (depends) on…
Conecta: The shrug answer to a yes/no question; its partner is Pues… (#42) ('well, it depends on you'); de also links Tengo la impresión de que… (#9) and No cabe duda de que… (#75).

1. Depende de cuánto cueste. *(It depends on how much it costs.)*
2. Depende de si jalas o no. *(It depends on whether you're in or not.)*
3. Depende de lo que diga el doctor. *(It depends on what the doctor says.)*
4. Depende de la hora. *(It depends on the time.)*
5. Depende de cuánta lana tengas. *(It depends on how much money you have.)*
6. Depende del clima. *(It depends on the weather.)*
7. Depende de si tengo dinero. *(It depends on whether I have money.)*

Chapter 3

Talking about experiences and stories

Starters 21–30

21 · Hace poco…

Recently…

Raíz: Hacer comes from Latin facere — to make, to do — the root of English factory and fact. Poco comes from Latin paucus — 'little, few' — the root of paucity. Spanish counts past time with hacer, as if time were something made: 'it makes little (time)' — recently, just a little while made.
Literal: It makes little (time)… — recently…
Conecta: Time opener like Una vez… (#22) and Cuando era niño… (#23); hace also counts time in 'hace rato' (a while ago) from your slang — same verb, same idea.

1. Hace poco fui a Guanajuato. *(I went to Guanajuato recently.)*
2. Hace poco vi una película buenísima. *(I recently saw a great movie.)*
3. Hace poco andábamos cotorreando en el parque. *(We were hanging out chatting in the park recently.)*
4. Hace poco empezó a estudiar español. *(He recently started studying Spanish.)*
5. Hace poco compré un carro nuevo. *(I recently bought a new car.)*
6. Hace poco me eché un coyotito después de comer. *(I recently took a little nap after eating.)*
7. Hace poco nos mudamos de casa. *(We recently moved house.)*

22 · Una vez…

One time…

Raíz: Una is 'one' (feminine), and vez comes from Latin vicis — a turn, an occasion — the root hiding in vice versa, 'the turn turned'. So una vez is 'one turn' — one occasion, one go-round. Every story starts with a turn of the wheel.
Literal: One time (turn)…
Conecta: Story opener beside Hace poco… (#21) and Cuando era niño… (#23); vez reappears in 'otra vez' (again) and in ¿Te acuerdas de aquella vez…? (#49).

1. Una vez me perdí en Madrid. *(I got lost in Madrid once.)*
2. Una vez echamos relajo toda la noche. *(One time we fooled around all night.)*
3. Una vez vi nieve en abril. *(One time I saw snow in April.)*
4. Una vez me caí de la bicicleta. *(One time I fell off my bike.)*
5. Una vez fuimos a la playa en invierno. *(One time we went to the beach in winter.)*
6. Una vez conocí a un vato bien buena onda. *(One time I met a really nice guy.)*
7. Una vez perdí mi pasaporte en el aeropuerto. *(One time I lost my passport at the airport.)*

23 · Cuando era niño…

When I was a kid…

Raíz: Cuando comes from Latin quando — 'when' — a cousin of English when, not a twin. Era is the imperfect of ser — 'was' — the tense for things that went on and on. And niño is a nursery word with no Latin root to lean on; it just means 'kid', the way kids' words do.
Literal: When I was a kid…
Conecta: Childhood-story opener; the imperfect era is the same past-tense mood as Me acuerdo de que… (#24) stories and Nunca había… (#25) — ongoing past, not one-off events.

1. Cuando era niño, jugaba mucho al fútbol. *(When I was a kid, I played soccer a lot.)*
2. Cuando era niño, echaba relajo con mis cuates. *(When I was a kid, I fooled around with my buddies.)*
3. Cuando era niño, odiaba las verduras. *(When I was a kid, I hated vegetables.)*
4. Cuando era niño, iba a la playa cada verano. *(When I was a kid, I went to the beach every summer.)*
5. Cuando era niño, tenía un perro grande. *(When I was a kid, I had a big dog.)*
6. Cuando era niño, soñaba con viajar. *(When I was a kid, I dreamed of traveling.)*
7. Cuando era niño, me encantaba cotorrear con mi abuela. *(When I was a kid, I loved chatting with my grandma.)*

24 · Me acuerdo de que…

I remember that…

Raíz: Acordarse comes from Latin cor — the heart — with ad-, 'to'. To remember was once to bring something back to your heart, and English kept the same root in accord and concord — hearts in agreement. So me acuerdo is really 'I bring it to heart again'.
Literal: I bring to heart (remember) that…
Conecta: Memory opener; its question form is ¿Te acuerdas de…? (#49) — same verb, same de; pairs with Una vez… (#22) to launch a story.

1. Me acuerdo de que hacía mucho frío. *(I remember it was really cold.)*
2. Me acuerdo de que estaba padrísimo. *(I remember it was really cool.)*
3. Me acuerdo de que llegamos de volada. *(I remember we got there quickly.)*
4. Me acuerdo de que todos estaban felices. *(I remember everyone was happy.)*
5. Me acuerdo de que no había nadie. *(I remember there was nobody there.)*
6. Me acuerdo de que comimos tacos. *(I remember we ate tacos.)*
7. Me acuerdo de que llovió todo el día. *(I remember it rained all day.)*

25 · Nunca había…

I had never…

Raíz: Nunca comes from Latin numquam — ne-, 'not', plus umquam, 'ever': 'not ever'. Había is from haber, the past perfect 'had'. Había plus a participle builds 'had done' — the past of the present perfect you already know from songs: 'never had I…'.
Literal: Never had I…
Conecta: Past-perfect opener; contrasts with Una vez… (#22), the one-time story starter; había also builds the 'there was' in Me acuerdo de que no había nadie (#24).

1. Nunca había probado esa comida. *(I'd never tried that food before.)*
2. Nunca había visto algo así. *(I had never seen anything like that.)*
3. Nunca había viajado en avión. *(I had never traveled by plane.)*
4. Nunca había comido mole. *(I had never eaten mole.)*
5. Nunca había estado tan nervioso. *(I had never been so nervous.)*
6. Nunca había echado relajo así. *(I had never fooled around like that.)*
7. Nunca había conocido a tanta gente. *(I had never met so many people.)*

26 · Lo que más me gustó fue…

What I liked most was…

Raíz: Gustar comes from Latin gustare — to taste — the root of English gustatory and gusto. Más comes from Latin magis — 'more' — the root of major and magnitude. So lo que más me gustó is really 'what tasted best to me' — the highlight of a story is the thing you savoured most.
Literal: What most pleased (tasted good to) me was…
Conecta: Highlight-opener; gustar is the same 'to me' verb family as Me parece que… (#2) and Me gustaría… (#31); lo que frame matches #10 and #70.

1. Lo que más me gustó fue la comida. *(What I liked most was the food.)*
2. Lo que más me gustó fue el museo. *(What I liked most was the museum.)*
3. Lo que más me gustó fue el cotorreo con la familia. *(What I liked most was hanging out chatting with the family.)*
4. Lo que más me gustó fue la playa. *(What I liked most was the beach.)*
5. Lo que más me gustó fue conocer a la familia. *(What I liked most was meeting the family.)*
6. Lo que más me gustó fue el atardecer. *(What I liked most was the sunset.)*
7. Lo que más me gustó fue que todo estuvo padrísimo. *(What I liked most was that everything was really cool.)*

27 · Resulta que…

It turns out that…

Raíz: Resultar comes from Latin resultare — re-, 'back', plus saltare, 'to spring' — the root of English result. Que is 'that'. Literally 'it springs back that…' — the outcome bouncing back into view when you least expect it. That's why resulta que always sounds like a plot twist.
Literal: It results (turns out) that…
Conecta: Surprise-reveal opener; the plot-twist partner of Y de repente… (#30); resulta's root result also gives you 'el resultado' — the result — for free.

1. Resulta que el restaurante estaba cerrado. *(It turns out the restaurant was closed.)*
2. Resulta que no hay bronca con el horario. *(It turns out there's no problem with the schedule.)*
3. Resulta que la chava es mi vecina. *(It turns out the girl is my neighbor.)*
4. Resulta que el vuelo salió tarde. *(It turns out the flight left late.)*
5. Resulta que ya conocía ese lugar. *(It turns out I already knew that place.)*
6. Resulta que no era tan difícil. *(It turns out it wasn't that hard.)*
7. Resulta que todos llegaron a tiempo. *(It turns out everyone arrived on time.)*

28 · Al final…

In the end…

Raíz: Al is a plus el — 'to the' — and final comes from Latin finalis, from finis, 'end', the root of English final and finale. Al final is 'at the end' — the landing spot of a story, where all the threads come down. Every tale needs one.
Literal: At the end…
Conecta: Story-closer; pairs with Total que… (#29) to wrap up, and with A fin de cuentas… (#65) for the summing-up; opposite end of the tale from Una vez… (#22).

1. Al final decidimos quedarnos. *(In the end, we decided to stay.)*
2. Al final no fuimos a la playa. *(In the end, we didn't go to the beach.)*
3. Al final, órale, todo salió bien. *(In the end, wow, everything turned out well.)*
4. Al final me quedé en casa. *(In the end, I stayed home.)*
5. Al final compramos los boletos. *(In the end, we bought the tickets.)*
6. Al final nos fuimos de volada. *(In the end, we left quickly.)*
7. Al final comimos en el mercado. *(In the end, we ate at the market.)*

29 · Total que…

So anyway… / Long story short…

Raíz: Total comes from Latin totalis — whole, entire — the root of English total. Que is 'that'. 'The whole of it is that…' — you sweep the whole story into one pile and hand over the punchline. Long story short, in two words.
Literal: The whole (of it) is that… — long story short…
Conecta: Wrap-up twin of Al final… (#28); total also means 'in total' for bills and counts — same word, and ya ni modo (oh well) often rides along with it.

1. Total que llegamos tarde. *(So anyway, we arrived late.)*
2. Total que ya ni modo, nos quedamos en casa. *(So anyway, oh well, we stayed home.)*
3. Total que me quedé dormido. *(So anyway, I fell asleep.)*
4. Total que se canceló todo. *(So anyway, everything got cancelled.)*
5. Total que echamos relajo y se nos hizo tarde. *(So anyway, we fooled around and it got late on us.)*
6. Total que nadie vino. *(So anyway, nobody came.)*
7. Total que me perdí otra vez. *(So anyway, I got lost again.)*

30 · Y de repente…

And suddenly…

Raíz: Y is 'and', and de repente means 'suddenly'. Repente is an old word for a sudden burst with no English cousin — just learn the chunk whole. The picture is a story rolling along calmly and then — bang — something bursts in. That's exactly how de repente feels to say.
Literal: And suddenly…
Conecta: Plot-twist opener; pairs with Resulta que… (#27) for surprises — resulta reveals, de repente interrupts; ¡aguas! and ¡híjole! often crash in right after it.

1. Y de repente empezó a llover. *(And suddenly it started raining.)*
2. Y de repente se fue la luz. *(And suddenly the power went out.)*
3. Y de repente, ¡aguas!, casi me caigo. *(And suddenly, watch out! I almost fell.)*
4. Y de repente todos empezaron a reír. *(And suddenly everyone started laughing.)*
5. Y de repente, ¡híjole!, empezó el aguacero. *(And suddenly, wow, the downpour started.)*
6. Y de repente el perro salió corriendo. *(And suddenly the dog ran off.)*
7. Y de repente llegó el taxi. *(And suddenly the taxi arrived.)*

Chapter 4

Talking about plans, desires and possibilities

Starters 31–40

31 · Me gustaría…

I would like…

Raíz: Gustar comes from Latin gustare — to taste — the root of gusto and gustatory. The -ía ending is the conditional 'would', and me is 'to me'. The thing does the pleasing, so the verb agrees with it, not you. Me gustaría is 'it would taste good to me…' — a wish served politely.
Literal: It would please (taste good to) me…
Conecta: Polite-wish twin of Tengo ganas de… (#32) and Quiero… (#33); gustar family includes Lo que más me gustó fue… (#26) and Me gustaría que… (#35), the subjunctive version.

1. Me gustaría vivir en México. *(I'd like to live in Mexico.)*
2. Me gustaría cotorrear más contigo. *(I'd like to hang out and chat with you more.)*
3. Me gustaría viajar a Oaxaca. *(I'd like to travel to Oaxaca.)*
4. Me gustaría tomar un café. *(I'd like to have a coffee.)*
5. Me gustaría echar relajo en la playa. *(I'd like to fool around at the beach.)*
6. Me gustaría hablar español mejor. *(I'd like to speak Spanish better.)*
7. Me gustaría descansar un poco. *(I'd like to rest a little.)*

32 · Tengo ganas de…

I feel like… / I'm in the mood to…

Raíz: Tener comes from Latin tenere — to hold — the root of tenacious. Ganas, the desire or urge, comes from an old Germanic word with no Latin root — just plain wanting. So tengo ganas de is 'I hold a wanting to…' — the casual, everyday way to say you'd like to do something.
Literal: I have (hold) desires of…
Conecta: Casual-wish twin of Me gustaría… (#31) and Quiero… (#33); ganas reappears in Échale ganas (put in effort) and in La verdad es que no tengo ganas de salir (#4).

1. Tengo ganas de salir a caminar. *(I feel like going for a walk.)*
2. Tengo ganas de comer tacos. *(I feel like eating tacos.)*
3. Tengo ganas de echar relajo con mis cuates. *(I feel like fooling around with my buddies.)*
4. Tengo ganas de tomar una siesta. *(I feel like taking a nap.)*
5. Tengo ganas de ir a la playa. *(I feel like going to the beach.)*
6. Tengo ganas de cotorrear un rato. *(I feel like chatting for a while.)*
7. Tengo ganas de quedarme en casa. *(I feel like staying home.)*

33 · Quiero…

I want…

Raíz: Querer comes from Latin quaerere — to seek, to ask for — the root of English query and quest. Over centuries the meaning drifted from 'seek' to 'want', but the directness stayed: one word, no softening. Quiero is the bluntest of the wish words — use it when you mean it.
Literal: I want (seek)…
Conecta: Bluntest of the wish trio with Me gustaría… (#31) and Tengo ganas de… (#32); querer also asks questions — ¿qué quieres? — same verb, same root.

1. Quiero aprender a cocinar comida mexicana. *(I want to learn to cook Mexican food.)*
2. Quiero comprar una bicicleta. *(I want to buy a bike.)*
3. Quiero practicar mi español todos los días. *(I want to practice my Spanish every day.)*
4. Quiero ir a México en diciembre. *(I want to go to Mexico in December.)*
5. Quiero chambear menos este mes. *(I want to work less this month.)*
6. Quiero probar el mole poblano. *(I want to try mole poblano.)*
7. Quiero armar una carne asada el domingo. *(I want to put together a barbecue on Sunday.)*

34 · Estoy pensando en…

I'm thinking about…

Raíz: Estar is the verb for temporary states, and pensando comes from pensar — Latin pensare, to weigh — the root of English ponder and pensive. The -ando ending means it's happening right now. So estoy pensando en is 'I am weighing in…' — a thought still on the scales.
Literal: I am thinking (weighing) in/on…
Conecta: Ongoing-thought version of Pienso que… (#3) — same verb, -ando form; en also opens En cuanto a… (#51) and En relación con… (#54), the topic setters.

1. Estoy pensando en comprar una bicicleta nueva. *(I'm thinking about buying a new bike.)*
2. Estoy pensando en buscar chamba en Puebla. *(I'm thinking about looking for work in Puebla.)*
3. Estoy pensando en tomar un curso de español. *(I'm thinking about taking a Spanish course.)*
4. Estoy pensando en vender mi carro. *(I'm thinking about selling my car.)*
5. Estoy pensando en irme de vacaciones. *(I'm thinking about going on vacation.)*
6. Estoy pensando en aprender a cocinar. *(I'm thinking about learning to cook.)*
7. Estoy pensando en caerle a mi carnal. *(I'm thinking about dropping by my bro's place.)*

35 · Me gustaría que…

I'd like it if…

Raíz: Same gustar build as Me gustaría… (#31) — 'it would please me that…' — but now que opens a second person, so the next verb goes subjunctive: vinieras, fuera, hablaras. The wish isn't about a thing any more; it's about someone doing something, and Spanish marks that shift with the mood.
Literal: It would please me that…
Conecta: Subjunctive twin of Me gustaría… (#31); the que + subjunctive pattern also drives Ojalá… (#36), Lo importante es que… (#69) and Lo que me preocupa es que… (#70).

1. Me gustaría que vinieras con nosotros. *(I'd like you to come with us.)*
2. Me gustaría que le echaras ganas al español. *(I'd like you to put effort into Spanish.)*
3. Me gustaría que fuera más barato. *(I'd like it to be cheaper.)*
4. Me gustaría que hablaras más despacio. *(I'd like you to speak more slowly.)*
5. Me gustaría que cotorreáramos más seguido. *(I'd like us to hang out and chat more often.)*
6. Me gustaría que hiciera buen tiempo. *(I'd like the weather to be good.)*
7. Me gustaría que vinieran todos. *(I'd like everyone to come.)*

36 · Ojalá…

Hopefully… / I wish…

Raíz: Ojalá comes from Arabic inshallah — in sha' Allah, 'if God wills'. It crossed into Spanish centuries ago and kept the wish while dropping the 'if'. One word now carries a whole hope: 'may it happen'. It always takes the subjunctive after it — the grammar of wishing.
Literal: If God wills… — hopefully…
Conecta: Wish opener beside A ver si… (#40) and Si pudiera… (#37); the subjunctive after it (podamos, llegues, pudiera) is the same mood as Me gustaría que… (#35).

1. Ojalá podamos volver pronto. *(Hopefully we can come back soon.)*
2. Ojalá no ande crudo mañana. *(Hopefully he won't be hungover tomorrow.)*
3. Ojalá llegues a tiempo. *(Hopefully you'll arrive on time.)*
4. Ojalá tengamos buen clima. *(Hopefully we'll have good weather.)*
5. Ojalá jale el carro mañana. *(Hopefully the car works tomorrow.)*
6. Ojalá pudiera ir contigo. *(I wish I could go with you.)*
7. Ojalá todo salga bien. *(Hopefully everything turns out well.)*

37 · Si pudiera…

If I could…

Raíz: Si comes from Latin si — 'if'. Pudiera comes from poder — Latin potere, to be able — the root of English potent and potential. The -iera ending is the past subjunctive, the 'could' that lives in dreams. Si pudiera opens a wish and waits for a 'would' to finish it.
Literal: If I could (were able)…
Conecta: Dream opener; its second half is a conditional like Yo diría que… (#7) — 'Si pudiera, viajaría…'; pairs with Ojalá… (#36) for wishes that need a 'would'.

1. Si pudiera, viajaría por toda Latinoamérica. *(If I could, I'd travel throughout Latin America.)*
2. Si pudiera, me iría a cotorrear a Puebla. *(If I could, I'd go hang out in Puebla.)*
3. Si pudiera, compraría una casa grande. *(If I could, I'd buy a big house.)*
4. Si pudiera, hablaría español perfecto. *(If I could, I'd speak perfect Spanish.)*
5. Si pudiera, echaría relajo todo el día. *(If I could, I'd fool around all day.)*
6. Si pudiera, te ayudaría con eso. *(If I could, I'd help you with that.)*
7. Si pudiera, comería tacos todos los días. *(If I could, I'd eat tacos every day.)*

38 · En cuanto pueda…

As soon as I can…

Raíz: En cuanto is 'in how much' — en, 'in', plus cuanto from Latin quantus, 'how much', the root of quantity. Pueda is poder in the subjunctive, 'I can'. So en cuanto pueda is 'in the amount that I can…' — the moment the 'how much' becomes possible, it happens. As soon as I can.
Literal: In how-much I can… — as soon as I can…
Conecta: Time twin of Cuando tenga tiempo… (#39); same cuanto root as En cuanto a… (#51) — same word, different job: here it's timing, there it's topic.

1. En cuanto pueda, te llamo. *(As soon as I can, I'll call you.)*
2. En cuanto pueda, te caigo en tu casa. *(As soon as I can, I'll drop by your house.)*
3. En cuanto pueda, te mando el dinero. *(As soon as I can, I'll send you the money.)*
4. En cuanto pueda, reservo los boletos. *(As soon as I can, I'll book the tickets.)*
5. En cuanto pueda, salgo de viaje. *(As soon as I can, I'll go on a trip.)*
6. En cuanto pueda, te escribo. *(As soon as I can, I'll write to you.)*
7. En cuanto pueda, armamos algo chido. *(As soon as I can, we'll put together something cool.)*

39 · Cuando tenga tiempo…

When I have time…

Raíz: Cuando comes from Latin quando — 'when'. Tenga is tener in the subjunctive, 'I have'. Tiempo comes from Latin tempus — time — the root of English temporal and temporary. Future plans after cuando need the subjunctive, because the future hasn't happened yet — Spanish grammar knows that.
Literal: When I have time…
Conecta: Future-plan twin of En cuanto pueda… (#38); tenga is the same subjunctive tener as in No estoy seguro de que tengamos tiempo (#8) and Depende de cuánto cueste (#20).

1. Cuando tenga tiempo, voy a aprender a bailar salsa. *(When I have time, I'm going to learn salsa dancing.)*
2. Cuando tenga tiempo, te llamo. *(When I have time, I'll call you.)*
3. Cuando tenga tiempo, leo ese libro. *(When I have time, I'll read that book.)*
4. Cuando tenga tiempo, voy a visitarte. *(When I have time, I'm going to visit you.)*
5. Cuando tenga tiempo, cocino algo rico. *(When I have time, I'll cook something tasty.)*
6. Cuando tenga tiempo, cotorreamos un rato. *(When I have time, we'll hang out and chat a while.)*
7. Cuando tenga tiempo, le echo ganas al jardín. *(When I have time, I'll put effort into the garden.)*

40 · A ver si…

Let's see if… / Hopefully…

Raíz: A ver is 'to see' — a, 'to', plus ver from Latin videre, to see, the root of English video and vision. Si is 'if'. Literally 'to see if…' — let's watch and check whether it happens. Less wishing than Ojalá, more waiting: hope with its eyes open.
Literal: To see if…
Conecta: Hopeful twin of Ojalá… (#36) with less wishing and more waiting; ver also opens the 'a ver' filler in your slang guide — same chunk, used to buy thinking time.

1. A ver si podemos ir mañana. *(Let's see if we can go tomorrow.)*
2. A ver si nos vemos al rato. *(Let's see if we see each other later.)*
3. A ver si nos alcanza el tiempo. *(Let's see if we have enough time.)*
4. A ver si me llamas esta noche. *(Let's see if you call me tonight.)*
5. A ver si hay lugar. *(Let's see if there's room.)*
6. A ver si llueve o no. *(Let's see if it rains or not.)*
7. A ver si jalas al rato. *(Let's see if you're in later.)*

Chapter 5

Keeping conversations going and reacting naturally

Starters 41–50

41 · ¿Sabes qué?…

You know what?…

Raíz: Saber comes from Latin sapere — to know, and originally to taste — the root of English savant and savvy. Qué is 'what'. Literally 'you know what?' — a tap on the shoulder before a new idea. Knowing and tasting were once the same verb: you know something the way you know a flavour.
Literal: Do you know what?…
Conecta: Attention-grabber; its partner Fíjate que… (#43) does the same job more softly; saber also appears in No es que no sepa (#19) — same verb, subjunctive there.

1. ¿Sabes qué? Mejor vamos mañana. *(You know what? Let's go tomorrow instead.)*
2. ¿Sabes qué? Tengo una idea. *(You know what? I have an idea.)*
3. ¿Sabes qué? Me late que tienes razón. *(You know what? I've got a feeling you're right.)*
4. ¿Sabes qué? Mejor lo dejamos para otro día. *(You know what? Let's leave it for another day.)*
5. ¿Sabes qué? ¡Órale, vámonos ya! *(You know what? Come on, let's go already!)*
6. ¿Sabes qué? No me gusta ese plan. *(You know what? I don't like that plan.)*
7. ¿Sabes qué? Mañana te llamo. *(You know what? I'll call you tomorrow.)*

42 · Pues…

Well… / So…

Raíz: Pues comes from Latin post — 'after, then' — the root of English post-, as in postpone. It drifted from 'then' to a soft 'well, so' that buys a beat before you speak. It's the universal softener: one small word that says 'give me a second, here's what I think'.
Literal: Well… / then…
Conecta: The universal softener — your slang guide lists it as a muletilla; it opens answers after Depende de… (#20) and pairs with O sea… (#14) when you backtrack.

1. Pues, no sé qué decirte. *(Well, I don't know what to tell you.)*
2. Pues, yo creo que sí. *(Well, I think so.)*
3. Pues, ¿qué onda? ¿Nos vamos o qué? *(Well, what's up? Are we going or what?)*
4. Pues, depende de ti. *(Well, it depends on you.)*
5. Pues, ¡chale!, qué mala suerte. *(Well, aw man, what bad luck.)*
6. Pues, mejor mañana. *(Well, better tomorrow.)*
7. Pues, qué le vamos a hacer. *(Well, what can we do about it.)*

43 · Fíjate que…

You know what… / Interestingly…

Raíz: Fijar comes from Latin fixus — fixed, fastened — the root of English fix and fixate. The -te means 'yourself'. Literally 'fix yourself that…' — plant your attention on this. It's the same root as fijo, 'fixed, sure': look here, this part is solid.
Literal: Fix your (attention) that…
Conecta: Attention-grabber twin of ¿Sabes qué?… (#41); the fixus root also gives 'fijo' (fixed, sure) — and the same command form appears as 'fíjate' in your slang guide's muletillas.

1. Fíjate que nunca había estado aquí. *(You know, I'd never been here before.)*
2. Fíjate que hoy hace mucho frío. *(You know, it's really cold today.)*
3. Fíjate que el vato es bien buena onda. *(You know, the guy is really nice.)*
4. Fíjate que ya vendieron la casa. *(You know, they already sold the house.)*
5. Fíjate que no sabía nada. *(You know, I didn't know anything.)*
6. Fíjate que el café estaba riquísimo. *(You know, the coffee was delicious.)*
7. Fíjate que ya mero llegamos. *(You know, we're almost there.)*

44 · Qué curioso que…

How interesting that…

Raíz: Qué is 'what' or 'how', and curioso comes from Latin curiosus — careful, inquisitive — the root of English curious. Curioso once meant 'careful'; now it means nosy-interested, the itch to know more. Qué curioso que is the sound of that itch: 'how curious that…'.
Literal: How curious (inquisitive) that…
Conecta: Reaction opener; pairs with Resulta que… (#27) when the surprise is odd, not just sudden; the subjunctive after it (llueva, estés) matches Ojalá… (#36).

1. Qué curioso que nos encontremos aquí. *(How interesting that we ran into each other here.)*
2. Qué curioso que llueva hoy. *(How interesting that it's raining today.)*
3. Qué curioso que estés aquí. *(How interesting that you're here.)*
4. Qué curioso que no haya bronca. *(How interesting that there's no problem.)*
5. Qué curioso que pienses lo mismo. *(How interesting that you think the same thing.)*
6. Qué curioso que nos guste lo mismo. *(How interesting that we like the same thing.)*
7. Qué curioso que sea tan chido el lugar. *(How interesting that the place is so cool.)*

45 · ¿Y si…?

What if…?

Raíz: Just two tiny words: y, 'and', and si, 'if', from Latin si. Together they launch a suggestion — 'and if we…?' — the question form of the Si pudiera… (#37) dream. Two words, and suddenly a plan is on the table. That's the whole trick: a suggestion disguised as a question.
Literal: And if…?
Conecta: Suggestion twin of Si pudiera… (#37); softer than Quiero… (#33) and a natural follow-up to ¿Sabes qué?… (#41) when the idea becomes a plan.

1. ¿Y si vamos a comer algo? *(What if we go get something to eat?)*
2. ¿Y si llamamos a un taxi? *(What if we call a taxi?)*
3. ¿Y si echamos relajo un rato? *(What if we fool around for a while?)*
4. ¿Y si probamos ese restaurante? *(What if we try that restaurant?)*
5. ¿Y si salimos más temprano? *(What if we leave earlier?)*
6. ¿Y si le preguntamos a ella? *(What if we ask her?)*
7. ¿Y si cotorreamos en el parque? *(What if we hang out and chat in the park?)*

46 · Por cierto…

By the way…

Raíz: Por means 'for' or 'by', and cierto comes from Latin certus — certain, sure — the root of English certain and certify. 'By the certain thing…' — a sidestep into something you're sure you forgot. It's the conversational equivalent of snapping your fingers: oh, by the way.
Literal: By the certain (thing)… — by the way…
Conecta: Topic-jump twin of A propósito… (#47); cierto also answers '¿cierto?' (right?) in conversation — same word, same 'sure' root.

1. Por cierto, ¿cómo está tu familia? *(By the way, how's your family?)*
2. Por cierto, ¿ya comiste? *(By the way, have you eaten yet?)*
3. Por cierto, andamos aquí nomás. *(By the way, we're just hanging around here.)*
4. Por cierto, ¿qué onda con Joni hoy? *(By the way, what's up with Joni today?)*
5. Por cierto, te traje un regalo. *(By the way, I brought you a gift.)*
6. Por cierto, ¿vas a venir el domingo? *(By the way, are you coming on Sunday?)*
7. Por cierto, el café está listo. *(By the way, the coffee is ready.)*

47 · A propósito…

Speaking of which… / By the way…

Raíz: A is 'to', and propósito comes from Latin propositum — a thing put forward — the root of English purpose and propose. 'To the purpose…' — back to the point, or a brand-new point entirely. Either way, you're putting something forward on purpose.
Literal: To the purpose… — speaking of which…
Conecta: Topic-jump twin of Por cierto… (#46); propósito shares its root with proponer (to propose) — and Con respecto a tu propuesta (#55) uses the same family.

1. A propósito, ¿ya compraste los boletos? *(By the way, did you buy the tickets yet?)*
2. A propósito, ¿hablaste con tu mamá? *(Speaking of which, did you talk to your mom?)*
3. A propósito, te debo veinte pesos. *(Speaking of which, I owe you twenty pesos.)*
4. A propósito, ¿cuándo es tu cumpleaños? *(Speaking of which, when's your birthday?)*
5. A propósito, sale, nos vemos al rato. *(Speaking of which, okay, see you later.)*
6. A propósito, ¿te late ir mañana? *(Speaking of which, are you up for going tomorrow?)*
7. A propósito, me acordé de algo. *(Speaking of which, I remembered something.)*

48 · No sé si…

I don't know if…

Raíz: No sé comes from saber — Latin sapere, to know — the root of English savvy and savant. Si is 'if'. 'I don't know if…' — doubt without the drama of No estoy seguro de que… (#8). This one takes the indicative after it (voy, jala), because you're unsure about a fact, not about a wish.
Literal: I don't know if…
Conecta: Doubt twin of No estoy seguro de que… (#8) — this one takes the indicative (voy, jala), that one the subjunctive; saber returns in ¿Sabes qué?… (#41).

1. No sé si voy a poder ir. *(I don't know if I'll be able to go.)*
2. No sé si jala el wifi aquí. *(I don't know if the wifi works here.)*
3. No sé si me late ese plan. *(I don't know if I'm into that plan.)*
4. No sé si tengo tiempo. *(I don't know if I have time.)*
5. No sé si va a llover. *(I don't know if it's going to rain.)*
6. No sé si es buena idea. *(I don't know if it's a good idea.)*
7. No sé si ella viene mañana. *(I don't know if she's coming tomorrow.)*

49 · ¿Te acuerdas de…?

Do you remember…?

Raíz: Acordarse comes from Latin cor — the heart — with ad-, 'to': remembering was once bringing something back to your heart, English kept the root in accord. Te is 'you', de is 'of'. So ¿te acuerdas de…? is 'do you bring it to heart?' — a memory check, not a quiz.
Literal: Do you bring to heart (remember) of…?
Conecta: Question form of Me acuerdo de que… (#24); natural follow-up to Una vez… (#22) — '¿Te acuerdas de aquella vez?' — and to De hecho, ¿te acuerdas de aquella vez? (#63).

1. ¿Te acuerdas de aquella vez que fuimos a la playa? *(Do you remember that time we went to the beach?)*
2. ¿Te acuerdas de mi cuate de Puebla? *(Do you remember my buddy from Puebla?)*
3. ¿Te acuerdas de esa canción? *(Do you remember that song?)*
4. ¿Te acuerdas del restaurante de Puebla? *(Do you remember the restaurant in Puebla?)*
5. ¿Te acuerdas de cuando echábamos relajo en el parque? *(Do you remember when we used to fool around in the park?)*
6. ¿Te acuerdas de la fiesta del año pasado? *(Do you remember last year's party?)*
7. ¿Te acuerdas de ese día en Guanajuato? *(Do you remember that day in Guanajuato?)*

50 · Me imagino que…

I imagine that…

Raíz: Imaginar comes from Latin imaginari — to picture in the mind — from imago, an image, the root of English imagine and image. Me is 'to myself'. So me imagino que is 'I picture to myself that…' — a guess you can see in your head before you say it out loud.
Literal: I imagine (picture) to myself that…
Conecta: Guess-opener beside Me parece que… (#2) and Se me hace que… (#71); imagen also gives you 'la imagen' — picture — the same root you meet in your lyric videos.

1. Me imagino que estás muy ocupado. *(I imagine you're very busy.)*
2. Me imagino que fue difícil. *(I imagine it was hard.)*
3. Me imagino que te late la idea. *(I imagine you're into the idea.)*
4. Me imagino que ya lo sabías. *(I imagine you already knew.)*
5. Me imagino que va a llover. *(I imagine it's going to rain.)*
6. Me imagino que es bien buena onda. *(I imagine he's a really nice guy.)*
7. Me imagino que no es fácil. *(I imagine it's not easy.)*

Chapter 6

Connecting ideas and adding nuance

Starters 51–75

51 · En cuanto a…

As for… / Regarding…

Raíz: En cuanto is 'in how much' — en, 'in', plus cuanto from Latin quantus, 'how much', the root of English quantity. A is 'to'. 'In how-much to…' sounds odd in English, but the picture is a measure: in the measure of this topic, here's what I think. As for…
Literal: In how-much to… — as for…
Conecta: Head of the respecto family — #52 Respecto a…, #54 En relación con…, #55 Con respecto a…; all take a noun or an infinitive (en cuanto a viajar).

1. En cuanto a la comida, todo estuvo riquísimo. *(As for the food, everything was delicious.)*
2. En cuanto a viajar, me encanta ir en tren. *(As for traveling, I love going by train.)*
3. En cuanto a mi hermano, se mudó a Puebla el año pasado. *(As for my brother, he moved to Puebla last year.)*
4. En cuanto al dinero, ando sin lana este mes. *(As for money, I'm out of cash this month.)*
5. En cuanto a salir hoy, la neta no tengo ganas. *(As for going out today, honestly I don't feel like it.)*
6. En cuanto a la casa, ¿ya la limpiaron? *(As for the house, did you already clean it?)*
7. En cuanto a trabajar los domingos, prefiero descansar. *(As for working Sundays, I'd rather rest.)*

52 · Respecto a…

Regarding…

Raíz: Respecto comes from Latin respectus — a looking back at — from respicere, to look back, the root of English respect. A is 'to'. 'Looking back at this topic…' — you turn your gaze to the subject and consider it. Respect, at its root, is just paying attention.
Literal: Looking back to… — regarding…
Conecta: Middle of the respecto family — #51 En cuanto a…, #54 En relación con…, #55 Con respecto a…; respecto is also the noun in En lo que respecta a… (#53).

1. Respecto a tu pregunta, todavía no lo sé. *(Regarding your question, I still don't know.)*
2. Respecto a comer en Puebla, hay moles buenísimos. *(Regarding eating in Puebla, there are great moles.)*
3. Respecto a mi trabajo, este año fue muy bueno. *(Regarding my work, this year was very good.)*
4. Respecto a la reunión, ¿a qué hora empieza? *(Regarding the meeting, what time does it start?)*
5. Respecto a viajar con niños, hay que planear bien. *(Regarding traveling with kids, you have to plan well.)*
6. Respecto a tu mamá, ¿cómo está de salud? *(Regarding your mom, how is her health?)*
7. Respecto a la lana, no hay bronca, yo pago. *(Regarding the money, no problem, I'll pay.)*

53 · En lo que respecta a…

As far as … is concerned…

Raíz: En lo que is 'in what', and respecta comes from respetar — Latin respectare, to look back at, to regard — the root of English respect. A is 'to'. It's the formal big brother of Respecto a… (#52): longer, politer, same gaze. 'As far as this is concerned…'
Literal: In what concerns (looks back at)… — as far as … is concerned…
Conecta: Formal big brother of Respecto a… (#52); the en lo que frame also opens Por lo que se refiere a… (#56).

1. En lo que respecta a mí, estoy de acuerdo. *(As far as I'm concerned, I agree.)*
2. En lo que respecta a salir de noche, prefiero quedarme en casa. *(As far as going out at night goes, I'd rather stay home.)*
3. En lo que respecta a la comida mexicana, me encanta el mole. *(As far as Mexican food goes, I love mole.)*
4. En lo que respecta a mi hija, ya habla bastante español. *(As far as my daughter goes, she already speaks quite a bit of Spanish.)*
5. En lo que respecta a viajar en diciembre, hace frío en Puebla. *(As far as traveling in December goes, it's cold in Puebla.)*
6. En lo que respecta a la chamba, ando bien, gracias. *(As far as work goes, I'm doing fine, thanks.)*
7. En lo que respecta a ustedes, ¿qué opinan? *(As far as you all go, what do you think?)*

54 · En relación con…

In relation to…

Raíz: Relación comes from Latin relatio — a carrying back, a relation — the root of English relation and relative. Con is 'with'. 'In relation with…' — the topic is tied to what follows, carried back to it. Note the con here, not a: this is the one in the family that uses 'with'.
Literal: In relation with…
Conecta: Respecto-family member — #51 En cuanto a…, #52 Respecto a…, #55 Con respecto a…; note con here, not a — the one in the family that uses 'with'.

1. En relación con el viaje, ya compré los boletos. *(In relation to the trip, I already bought the tickets.)*
2. En relación con cocinar, me gusta probar recetas nuevas. *(In relation to cooking, I like trying new recipes.)*
3. En relación con el clima, va a llover mañana. *(In relation to the weather, it's going to rain tomorrow.)*
4. En relación con estudiar español, le echo ganas todos los días. *(In relation to studying Spanish, I put in effort every day.)*
5. En relación con tu hermano, ¿ya llegó a Puebla? *(In relation to your brother, has he arrived in Puebla yet?)*
6. En relación con la casa, pagamos la renta el primero. *(In relation to the house, we pay the rent on the first.)*
7. En relación con salir temprano, ¡aguas con el tráfico! *(In relation to leaving early, watch out for the traffic!)*

55 · Con respecto a…

With regard to…

Raíz: Con is 'with', respecto comes from Latin respectus — a looking back — the root of English respect, and a is 'to'. 'With regard to…' — the same respecto as #52, dressed up with con. It's the most formal suit in the family wardrobe.
Literal: With regard (looking back) to…
Conecta: Respecto-family member — #51 En cuanto a…, #52 Respecto a…, #54 En relación con…; con respecto also opens the proposal line in #47's family (tu propuesta).

1. Con respecto a los precios, subieron mucho. *(With regard to prices, they went up a lot.)*
2. Con respecto a viajar en avión, me pongo nervioso. *(With regard to traveling by plane, I get nervous.)*
3. Con respecto a la salud, hay que cuidarse. *(With regard to health, you have to take care of yourself.)*
4. Con respecto a tu propuesta, me late mucho. *(With regard to your proposal, I'm really into it.)*
5. Con respecto a los niños, ¿ya comieron? *(With regard to the kids, have they eaten yet?)*
6. Con respecto a trabajar en la clínica, me encanta mi chamba. *(With regard to working at the clinic, I love my job.)*
7. Con respecto a la fiesta, estuvo padrísima. *(With regard to the party, it was really cool.)*

56 · Por lo que se refiere a…

As far as … goes…

Raíz: Por lo que is 'for what', and se refiere comes from referirse — Latin referre, re-, 'back', plus ferre, 'to carry' — the root of English refer and reference. 'For what it carries itself back to…' — the most formal way to point at a topic, cousin of En lo que respecta a… (#53).
Literal: For what it refers (carries back) to…
Conecta: Formal cousin of En lo que respecta a… (#53) — same 'lo que' frame, different verb; referirse also builds A lo que me refiero es que… (#16).

1. Por lo que se refiere al clima, va a estar frío. *(As far as the weather goes, it's going to be cold.)*
2. Por lo que se refiere a comer fuera, Puebla tiene de todo. *(As far as eating out goes, Puebla has everything.)*
3. Por lo que se refiere a mi familia, todos van a venir en diciembre. *(As far as my family goes, they're all coming in December.)*
4. Por lo que se refiere a la música, me gusta el mariachi. *(As far as music goes, I like mariachi.)*
5. Por lo que se refiere a estudiar, le echo muchas ganas. *(As far as studying goes, I put in a lot of effort.)*
6. Por lo que se refiere al tráfico, ¡está cañón hoy! *(As far as traffic goes, it's crazy today!)*
7. Por lo que se refiere a ustedes, ¿van a venir a cenar? *(As far as you all go, are you coming to dinner?)*

57 · Aparte de…

Apart from… / Besides…

Raíz: Aparte is a plus parte — parte comes from Latin pars, a part, the root of English part and partial. De is 'of, from'. 'To a part off to the side of…' — set this aside, here's the rest. Aparte adds something separate; its twin Además de… (#58) adds something more.
Literal: To the side (part) of… — apart from…
Conecta: Add-on twin of Además de… (#58) — aparte adds something separate, además adds something more; parte also appears in 'por otra parte' and Por otro lado… (#61).

1. Aparte de eso, todo salió bien. *(Apart from that, everything went well.)*
2. Aparte de español, también hablo un poco de portugués. *(Apart from Spanish, I also speak a little Portuguese.)*
3. Aparte de trabajar, me gusta caminar con Joni. *(Apart from working, I like walking with Joni.)*
4. Aparte de la lluvia, el viaje estuvo padrísimo. *(Apart from the rain, the trip was really cool.)*
5. Aparte de eso, ¿qué más pasó? *(Apart from that, what else happened?)*
6. Aparte de correr, también hago pesas. *(Apart from running, I also lift weights.)*
7. Aparte de mi familia, mis cuates son lo más importante. *(Apart from my family, my buddies are the most important thing.)*

58 · Además de…

In addition to…

Raíz: Además is a plus de plus más — más comes from Latin magis, 'more', the root of English major. De is 'of'. 'To more of…' — piling one more thing on top of what you just said. Más is the same 'more' as Lo que más me gustó fue… (#26).
Literal: In addition (to more) of…
Conecta: Add-on twin of Aparte de… (#57); más is the same 'more' as Lo que más me gustó fue… (#26) — and además de eso echoes Aparte de eso (#57) exactly.

1. Además de español, estoy aprendiendo portugués. *(In addition to Spanish, I'm learning Portuguese.)*
2. Además de trabajar, estudio español todos los días. *(In addition to working, I study Spanish every day.)*
3. Además de la comida, me encantó la gente de Puebla. *(In addition to the food, I loved the people of Puebla.)*
4. Además de eso, trajimos regalos para todos. *(In addition to that, we brought gifts for everyone.)*
5. Además de caminar, ¿qué más haces para cuidarte? *(In addition to walking, what else do you do to take care of yourself?)*
6. Además de la chamba, también doy clases los sábados. *(In addition to my job, I also teach classes on Saturdays.)*
7. Además de eso, ¿quieres un poco de pan dulce? *(In addition to that, do you want a little pan dulce?)*

59 · En cambio…

On the other hand… / Instead…

Raíz: En is 'in', and cambio comes from cambiar — an old word for swapping or exchanging, the root English got as change, through French. 'In exchange…' — swap one thing for another. Cambio is also the word for change at the market: same swap, different counter.
Literal: In exchange… — instead…
Conecta: Contrast opener beside Sin embargo… (#60) and Por otro lado… (#61); cambio is also 'change' for money — same word at the market when you ask for cambio.

1. En cambio, ella prefirió quedarse en casa. *(Instead, she preferred to stay home.)*
2. En cambio, yo me fui a caminar. *(Instead, I went for a walk.)*
3. En cambio, a mí me late más la playa. *(Instead, I'm more into the beach.)*
4. En cambio, ellos se quedaron en el hotel. *(Instead, they stayed at the hotel.)*
5. En cambio, nosotros llegamos de volada. *(Instead, we got there quickly.)*
6. En cambio, ¿tú qué hiciste ayer? *(Instead, what did you do yesterday?)*
7. En cambio, mañana va a hacer sol. *(Instead, tomorrow it's going to be sunny.)*

60 · Sin embargo…

However…

Raíz: Sin is 'without', and embargo comes from embargar — to bar, to hinder, to put a barrier in the way. Here's the fun part: English borrowed the word embargo straight from Spanish, so you already know it. Sin embargo is really 'without the barrier…' — the thought pushes past it anyway. However.
Literal: Without hindrance… — however…
Conecta: Contrast opener with En cambio… (#59) and Por otro lado… (#61); embargo's 'bar' also gives you 'embargar' — to seize — but here it just means 'still, though'.

1. Sin embargo, no me arrepiento de nada. *(However, I don't regret anything.)*
2. Sin embargo, la fiesta estuvo padrísima. *(However, the party was really cool.)*
3. Sin embargo, yo sí quiero ir. *(However, I do want to go.)*
4. Sin embargo, el vuelo salió con retraso. *(However, the flight left late.)*
5. Sin embargo, no hay bronca, lo resolvemos mañana. *(However, no problem, we'll sort it out tomorrow.)*
6. Sin embargo, ¿crees que valga la pena? *(However, do you think it's worth it?)*
7. Sin embargo, mañana lo intentamos otra vez. *(However, tomorrow we'll try again.)*

61 · Por otro lado…

On the other hand…

Raíz: Por is 'for' or 'by', otro comes from Latin alter — 'other' — the root of English alternate, and lado comes from Latin latus — 'side' — the root of lateral. 'On the other side…' — turn the coin over and look at the back. That's what a contrast is: the same thing, other side.
Literal: For (on) the other side…
Conecta: Contrast opener with En cambio… (#59) and Sin embargo… (#60); otro also starts Otras palabras in En otras palabras… (#15) — same 'other' root.

1. Por otro lado, el hotel estaba muy cómodo. *(On the other hand, the hotel was very comfortable.)*
2. Por otro lado, la comida no me gustó nada. *(On the other hand, I didn't like the food at all.)*
3. Por otro lado, aquí andamos bien contentos. *(On the other hand, here we are, really happy.)*
4. Por otro lado, el precio está cañón. *(On the other hand, the price is crazy.)*
5. Por otro lado, ¿tú qué opinas? *(On the other hand, what do you think?)*
6. Por otro lado, el clima estuvo perfecto. *(On the other hand, the weather was perfect.)*
7. Por otro lado, mañana será otro día. *(On the other hand, tomorrow will be another day.)*

62 · Es decir…

That is… / I mean…

Raíz: Es is from ser, 'it is', and decir comes from Latin dicere — to say — the root of English dictate and dictation. 'It is to say…' — the formal way to restate yourself, the suit-and-tie version of O sea… (#14). Same job, different register.
Literal: It is to say…
Conecta: Formal twin of O sea… (#14) and En otras palabras… (#15); decir also drives Yo diría que… (#7) — same verb, conditional there, infinitive here.

1. Es decir, necesitamos salir más temprano. *(That is, we need to leave earlier.)*
2. Es decir, no vamos a poder ir mañana. *(That is, we won't be able to go tomorrow.)*
3. Es decir, ¿me estás diciendo que ya se acabó? *(That is, are you telling me it's already over?)*
4. Es decir, la neta, no entendí nada. *(That is, honestly, I didn't understand anything.)*
5. Es decir, hay que llegar a las ocho en punto. *(That is, we have to arrive at eight sharp.)*
6. Es decir, el doctor te va a revisar el lunes. *(That is, the doctor is going to see you on Monday.)*
7. Es decir, no es tan fácil como parece. *(That is, it's not as easy as it looks.)*

63 · De hecho…

In fact… / Actually…

Raíz: De is 'of' or 'from', and hecho comes from hacer — Latin factum, 'done, made' — the root of English fact. 'Of the done thing…' — grounding the talk in what actually happened, not what anyone thinks happened. De hecho is a reality check in two words.
Literal: Of (the) fact (done thing)…
Conecta: Reality-check opener beside En realidad… (#64); hecho is the past participle of hacer — same hacer as Hace poco… (#21) — and de hecho opens the ¿te acuerdas? line in #49.

1. De hecho, yo ya lo sabía. *(In fact, I already knew that.)*
2. De hecho, la conocí en Guanajuato. *(In fact, I met her in Guanajuato.)*
3. De hecho, ¡no manches, qué chido está esto! *(In fact, no way, this is so cool!)*
4. De hecho, mañana es mi cumpleaños. *(In fact, tomorrow is my birthday.)*
5. De hecho, ¿te acuerdas de aquella vez? *(In fact, do you remember that time?)*
6. De hecho, a mí también me pasó lo mismo. *(In fact, the same thing happened to me.)*
7. De hecho, eso mero es lo que quería decir. *(In fact, that's exactly what I wanted to say.)*

64 · En realidad…

Actually… / In reality…

Raíz: En is 'in', and realidad comes from Latin realitas — thingness — from res, a thing, the root of English reality and real. 'In reality…' — what is real versus what merely seemed so. The same res gives you 'real' for prices, and ¿a poco? in your slang is the same 'really?' surprise.
Literal: In reality (thingness)…
Conecta: Reality-check twin of De hecho… (#63); the real root also gives '¿en serio?' — and ¿a poco? in your slang is the same 'really?' surprise.

1. En realidad, no fue tan difícil. *(Actually, it wasn't that hard.)*
2. En realidad, yo no quería ir. *(Actually, I didn't want to go.)*
3. En realidad, la película estuvo buenísima. *(Actually, the movie was great.)*
4. En realidad, ¿a poco sí pasó eso? *(Actually, really? Did that happen?)*
5. En realidad, me la pasé a toda madre. *(Actually, I had an awesome time.)*
6. En realidad, no tengo tanto tiempo como antes. *(Actually, I don't have as much time as before.)*
7. En realidad, mañana lo hablamos con calma. *(Actually, we'll talk about it calmly tomorrow.)*

65 · A fin de cuentas…

At the end of the day… / All in all…

Raíz: A fin is 'to the end' — fin comes from Latin finis, 'end', the root of English final and finish. De cuentas is 'of the counts' — cuentas from contar, Latin computare, to count, the root of English count and compute. 'At the end of the counting…' — the books are closed, here's the total.
Literal: At the end of the counts (accounts)…
Conecta: Summing-up closer like Al final… (#28) and Total que… (#29); fin also closes 'al fin' — and cuentas is the same 'counting' as '¿cuánto cuesta?'.

1. A fin de cuentas, lo importante es la familia. *(At the end of the day, the important thing is family.)*
2. A fin de cuentas, todo salió bien. *(At the end of the day, everything went well.)*
3. A fin de cuentas, ¿qué más da? *(At the end of the day, what does it matter?)*
4. A fin de cuentas, la neta, vale la pena. *(At the end of the day, honestly, it's worth it.)*
5. A fin de cuentas, ya ni modo, hay que seguir. *(At the end of the day, oh well, we have to keep going.)*
6. A fin de cuentas, nos vemos en Puebla. *(At the end of the day, we'll see each other in Puebla.)*
7. A fin de cuentas, el viaje fue increíble. *(At the end of the day, the trip was amazing.)*

66 · En el fondo…

Deep down… / At heart…

Raíz: En is 'in', and el fondo comes from Latin fundus — the bottom, the base — the root of English fund and foundation. 'In the bottom…' — what's down underneath the surface talk. Fondo is also the background of a photo: same word, same depth.
Literal: In the bottom (depth)…
Conecta: Deep-feeling opener; the feeling sense ties to Me parece que… (#2) and Se me hace que… (#71); fondo is also the 'background' of a photo — same word, same depth.

1. En el fondo, sé que tiene razón. *(Deep down, I know she's right.)*
2. En el fondo, me cae muy bien. *(Deep down, I really like him.)*
3. En el fondo, yo sabía que iba a pasar. *(Deep down, I knew it was going to happen.)*
4. En el fondo, ¿tú qué sientes? *(Deep down, what do you feel?)*
5. En el fondo, me late que sí va a venir. *(Deep down, I've got a feeling he will come.)*
6. En el fondo, todos queremos lo mismo. *(Deep down, we all want the same thing.)*
7. En el fondo, no me arrepiento de haber ido. *(Deep down, I don't regret having gone.)*

67 · Lo bueno es que…

The good thing is…

Raíz: Lo turns an adjective into a noun — lo bueno is 'the good thing'. Bueno comes from Latin bonus — 'good' — the root of English bonus and bounty. Es que is 'is that'. So lo bueno es que is 'the good thing is that…' — the good news, served before the details.
Literal: The good (thing) is that…
Conecta: Good-news twin of Lo malo es que… (#68); the lo + adjective frame also builds Lo importante es que… (#69) and Lo que me preocupa es que… (#70).

1. Lo bueno es que ya casi terminamos. *(The good thing is we're almost done.)*
2. Lo bueno es que mañana no trabajo. *(The good thing is I'm not working tomorrow.)*
3. Lo bueno es que el clima estuvo perfecto. *(The good thing is the weather was perfect.)*
4. Lo bueno es que ya llegó mi familia. *(The good thing is my family already arrived.)*
5. Lo bueno es que no hay bronca con el horario. *(The good thing is there's no problem with the schedule.)*
6. Lo bueno es que, órale, nos dieron descuento. *(The good thing is, wow, they gave us a discount.)*
7. Lo bueno es que la pasamos a toda madre. *(The good thing is we had an awesome time.)*

68 · Lo malo es que…

The bad thing is…

Raíz: Lo turns an adjective into a noun — lo malo is 'the bad thing'. Malo comes from Latin malus — 'bad' — the root of malice and malign. Es que is 'is that'. 'The bad thing is that…' — bad news first, details after. Malo also gives 'mala onda', bad vibes, in your slang.
Literal: The bad (thing) is that…
Conecta: Bad-news twin of Lo bueno es que… (#67); same lo + adjective frame as Lo importante es que… (#69); malo also gives 'mala onda' — bad vibes — in your slang.

1. Lo malo es que no hay estacionamiento. *(The bad thing is there's no parking.)*
2. Lo malo es que llovió todo el día. *(The bad thing is it rained all day.)*
3. Lo malo es que ando sin lana. *(The bad thing is I'm out of cash.)*
4. Lo malo es que no me contestó el teléfono. *(The bad thing is he didn't answer the phone.)*
5. Lo malo es que, ¡chale!, se nos hizo tarde. *(The bad thing is, aw man, we ran late.)*
6. Lo malo es que mañana tengo que madrugar. *(The bad thing is I have to get up early tomorrow.)*
7. Lo malo es que no hay nadie en la casa. *(The bad thing is there's nobody at home.)*

69 · Lo importante es que…

The important thing is…

Raíz: Lo importante is 'the important thing' — importante comes from Latin importans, 'bringing in weight', the root of English important and import. Es que is 'is that' — and what follows goes subjunctive, because importance is about what should be, not what is.
Literal: The important (thing) is that…
Conecta: Value twin of Lo bueno es que… (#67) and Lo malo es que… (#68); the que + subjunctive (estemos, llegues) matches Me gustaría que… (#35) and Ojalá… (#36).

1. Lo importante es que estemos juntos. *(The important thing is that we're together.)*
2. Lo importante es que llegues a tiempo. *(The important thing is that you arrive on time.)*
3. Lo importante es que no falte nadie. *(The important thing is that nobody is missing.)*
4. Lo importante es que se diviertan los niños. *(The important thing is that the kids have fun.)*
5. Lo importante es que le echemos ganas. *(The important thing is that we put in the effort.)*
6. Lo importante es que, ¿me entiendes?, todos participen. *(The important thing is that, you know what I mean?, everyone takes part.)*
7. Lo importante es que haya paz en la casa. *(The important thing is that there's peace at home.)*

70 · Lo que me preocupa es que…

What worries me is…

Raíz: Preocupar comes from Latin praeoccupare — prae-, 'before', plus occupare, 'to seize' — the root of English preoccupy. Worry literally seizes you before the thing even happens. Lo que is 'what', me is 'me', es que is 'is that'. 'What seizes me beforehand is that…'
Literal: What preoccupies (seizes beforehand) me is that…
Conecta: Worry opener; same lo que frame as Lo que pasa es que… (#10) and A lo que me refiero es que… (#16); the que + subjunctive matches Lo importante es que… (#69).

1. Lo que me preocupa es que llegue tarde. *(What worries me is that he'll be late.)*
2. Lo que me preocupa es que no tenga dinero. *(What worries me is that he doesn't have money.)*
3. Lo que me preocupa es que se pierda en el aeropuerto. *(What worries me is that he'll get lost at the airport.)*
4. Lo que me preocupa es que no nos entiendan. *(What worries me is that they won't understand us.)*
5. Lo que me preocupa es que esté lloviendo mañana. *(What worries me is that it'll be raining tomorrow.)*
6. Lo que me preocupa es que, la neta, no sé qué hacer. *(What worries me is that, honestly, I don't know what to do.)*
7. Lo que me preocupa es que se enferme antes del viaje. *(What worries me is that he'll get sick before the trip.)*

71 · Se me hace que…

I get the feeling that…

Raíz: Hacerse comes from hacer — Latin facere, to make, to do — the root of fact and factory. Se me is 'to me, it makes itself'. 'It makes itself to me that…' — a gut feeling forming on its own, before your head catches up. That's why it always sounds like instinct, not argument.
Literal: It makes itself to me that…
Conecta: Gut-feeling twin of Me parece que… (#2) and Me imagino que… (#50); hacer is the same verb as Hace poco… (#21) and De hecho… (#63) — three uses, one root.

1. Se me hace que va a llover. *(I get the feeling it's going to rain.)*
2. Se me hace que ya es tarde. *(I get the feeling it's already late.)*
3. Se me hace que no va a venir. *(I get the feeling he's not coming.)*
4. Se me hace que tienes razón. *(I get the feeling you're right.)*
5. Se me hace que la fiesta estuvo padrísima. *(I get the feeling the party was really cool.)*
6. Se me hace que, ¿a poco no?, es el mejor mole. *(I get the feeling, right?, it's the best mole.)*
7. Se me hace que mañana sale el sol. *(I get the feeling the sun will come out tomorrow.)*

72 · Me da la impresión de que…

I get the impression that…

Raíz: Dar comes from Latin dare — to give — the root of donate and data, 'things given'. La impresión comes from Latin impressio — a pressing in — the root of impression. So me da la impresión is 'it gives me the pressed-in mark' — the feeling handed to you, not one you went looking for.
Literal: It gives me the impression of that…
Conecta: Giving-form of Tengo la impresión de que… (#9) — same impresión, different verb; impression family also includes Me parece que… (#2) and Se me hace que… (#71).

1. Me da la impresión de que no le gustó. *(I got the sense he didn't like it.)*
2. Me da la impresión de que está enojada. *(I get the impression she's angry.)*
3. Me da la impresión de que va a llover. *(It looks to me like it's going to rain.)*
4. Me da la impresión de que no me entendió. *(I get the impression he didn't understand me.)*
5. Me da la impresión de que, ¡híjole!, algo salió mal. *(I get the impression that, jeez, something went wrong.)*
6. Me da la impresión de que nos están esperando. *(I have a feeling they're waiting for us.)*
7. Me da la impresión de que tú ya sabías. *(I get the impression you already knew.)*

73 · Hay que…

One has to… / We've got to…

Raíz: Hay comes from haber — Latin habere, to have or hold — the root English kept in habit, as in a habit you hold on to. Hay is the impersonal 'there is', so hay que is 'there is a need that…' — a duty with no one in particular assigned to it. One has to…
Literal: There is (a need) that… — one has to…
Conecta: Duty opener; the fix-it follow-up to El problema es que… (#17); haber also builds Nunca había… (#25) — same verb, past perfect there, impersonal here.

1. Hay que salir temprano mañana. *(We've got to leave early tomorrow.)*
2. Hay que echarle ganas al español. *(We've got to put effort into Spanish.)*
3. Hay que llevar paraguas, va a llover. *(We've got to bring an umbrella, it's going to rain.)*
4. Hay que reservar el hotel con tiempo. *(We've got to book the hotel in advance.)*
5. Hay que, órale, ponernos al tiro. *(We've got to, come on, get ready and alert.)*
6. Hay que comer antes de salir. *(We've got to eat before leaving.)*
7. Hay que preguntar antes de pagar. *(We've got to ask before paying.)*

74 · Vale la pena…

It's worth…

Raíz: Valer comes from Latin valere — to be strong, to be worth — the root of value and valour. La pena is Latin poena — penalty, pain — the root of pain and penalty. 'It is worth the pain…' — cost and reward weighed on the same scale. Pena also means sorrow: 'qué pena' is 'what a shame'.
Literal: It is worth (strong enough for) the pain…
Conecta: Worth-it opener; valer also asks '¿vale?' in Spain, but in Mexico your 'sale' and 'va que va' do that job.

1. Vale la pena visitar Puebla en diciembre. *(It's worth visiting Puebla in December.)*
2. Vale la pena probar el mole poblano. *(It's worth trying mole poblano.)*
3. Vale la pena que lo intentemos otra vez. *(It's worth us trying again.)*
4. Vale la pena, la neta, ir al mercado. *(It's worth, honestly, going to the market.)*
5. Vale la pena el viaje, aunque sea largo. *(The trip is worth it, even if it's long.)*
6. Vale la pena estudiar un poco cada día. *(It's worth studying a little every day.)*
7. Vale la pena esperar, ¿no crees? *(It's worth waiting, don't you think?)*

75 · No cabe duda de que…

There's no doubt that…

Raíz: Caber comes from Latin capere — to hold, to contain — the root of capable and capacity. Duda is Latin dubitare — to doubt — the root of dubious and doubt. 'No doubt fits in…' — no room for it. The opposite pole of No estoy seguro de que… (#8): certainty as a lack of space.
Literal: No doubt fits (holds) of that…
Conecta: Certainty closer — the opposite pole of No estoy seguro de que… (#8); cabe is the same 'fits' as in 'cabe mencionar' (worth mentioning) from your journal practice.

1. No cabe duda de que es un buen doctor. *(There's no doubt that he's a good doctor.)*
2. No cabe duda de que Puebla es hermosa. *(There's no doubt that Puebla is beautiful.)*
3. No cabe duda de que va a llover mañana. *(There's no doubt it's going to rain tomorrow.)*
4. No cabe duda de que, la neta, es el mejor mole. *(There's no doubt that, honestly, it's the best mole.)*
5. No cabe duda de que lo hiciste muy bien. *(There's no doubt you did it very well.)*
6. No cabe duda de que nos vemos en diciembre. *(There's no doubt we'll see each other in December.)*
7. No cabe duda de que el café estaba buenísimo. *(There's no doubt the coffee was excellent.)*