

Identity Nouns & Identity Adjectives

How to describe **who we are** using the Spanish verb **ser**
&
Expanding chunks using **era** and **tenía**.

1. The Verb *Ser* – Identity

We use **ser** to talk about **identity**: who I am, what I am like, and what kind of person I am.

The verb **ser** describes **permanent or essential characteristics**.

In this lesson, we focus on the **first person**: **yo soy** ("I am").

Conjugation of *Ser* (Present Tense)

- **yo soy** — I am
- **tú eres** — you are
- **él/ella es** — he/she is
- **nosotros somos** — we are
- **ellos son** — they are

In this lesson, we primarily use **yo soy**.

The Past of *Ser* (Imperfect)

To talk about identity in the past, Spanish uses **era**.

- **yo era** — I was / I used to be

This is the natural shift from **soy** → **era** when describing identity over time.

2. Identity Nouns

An **identity noun** describes **who I am**: my role, my profession, or my basic identity.

Spanish uses **soy + noun**.

Examples

- **soy profesora** — I am a teacher

- **soy estudiante** — I am a student
- **soy amiga** — I am a friend
- **soy voluntaria** — I am a volunteer

3. Identity Adjectives

An **identity adjective** describes **what I am like as a person**: my personality or character.

Spanish uses **soy + adjective**.

Examples

- **soy tranquila** — I am a calm person
- **soy curiosa** — I am a curious person
- **soy organizada** — I am an organized person
- **soy creativa** — I am a creative person

4. The Chunk: *Cuando era joven...* ("When I was young...")

This chunk allows us to talk about our life in the past using **identity**.

It uses the imperfect form **era**.

Model

Cuando era joven, _____. *When I was young, _____.*

Examples

- **Cuando era joven, era muy curiosa.** When I was young, I was very curious.
- **Cuando era joven, era tímida.** When I was young, I was shy.
- **Cuando era joven, era aventurera.** When I was young, I was adventurous.
- **Cuando era joven, era muy activa.** When I was young, I was very active.

5. The Expanded Chunk: “Cuando era joven, tenía...” (“When I was young, I had...”)

This expanded chunk lets us talk about what we **had** in our life when we were young. To express “I had” in the past, Spanish uses the **imperfect** form of *tener*: **tenía**.

We use **tenía** for things we possessed, things that were part of our life, or ongoing conditions in the past.

This is the natural partner to **era** (“I was / I used to be”) when describing childhood or youth.

Guided Link: **tenía**

Model

Cuando era joven, tenía _____. *When I was young, I had _____.*

Examples

- **Cuando era joven, tenía un perro.** *When I was young, I had a dog.*
- **Cuando era joven, tenía una bicicleta.** *When I was young, I had a bicycle.*
- **Cuando era joven, tenía mucha energía.** *When I was young, I had a lot of energy.*
- **Cuando era joven, tenía curiosidad por todo.** *When I was young, I had curiosity about everything.*
- **Cuando era joven, tenía muchos amigos.** *When I was young, I had many friends.*