

Introducing The Subjunctive

The subjunctive mood is used to express actions, which are subjective: will, wanting, emotion, doubt, possibility, necessity and judgment. It is nearly always found in dependent clauses introduced by *que* or *qui*. The subjects of the dependent and main clauses are usually different. Remember that "that" is not always required in English.

- Je veux que tu le fasses - I want you to do it
- Il faut que nous partions maintenant - It is necessary that we leave now
- Je cherche un homme qui sache la vérité (He may not exist = doubt)

The subjunctive is used when the main clause expresses subjectivity, as with the following cases:

- Verbs / expressions of will which express an order, a need, a piece of advice, or a want. E.g. *Commander que* - To order that
- Verbs / expressions of emotion or feeling which indicate fear, happiness, anger, regret, surprise, or other sentiments. E.g. *aimer que* - To like that
- Verbs / expressions of doubt, possibility, and opinion. E.g. *chercher ... qui* To look for...

The Subjunctive is also used in:

Subordinate clauses with the negative pronoun e.g. *ne ... personne* or *ne ... rien*, or the indefinite pronoun e.g. *quelqu'un* or *quelque chose*.

Je ne connais personne qui veuille le faire. - I don't know anyone who wants to do it.

Y a-t-il quelqu'un qui puisse m'aider ? - Is there someone who can help me?

After main clauses, which contain the words *seul*, *unique*, *premier*, *dernier*, or any superlative, the subjunctive is optional - it depends on how certain the speaker feels about what is being said.

C'est la seule personne que je connaisse. - That's the only person that I know.

C'est l'étudiante la plus intelligente que j'aie. - She's the smartest student that I have.

Conjunctions that take the Subjunctive

The following conjunctions all take the Subjunctive:

à condition que - provided that
à moins que* - unless
afin que - so that
à supposer que - assuming that
avant que* - before
bien que - although
de crainte que* - for fear that
de façon que - so that, in order that, in such a way that
de peur que* - for fear that
en admettant que - assuming that
en attendant que - while, until
jusqu'à ce que - until
pour que - so that
pourvu que - provided that
quoique - even though
quoi que - whatever, no matter what
sans que* - without

*These conjunctions are followed by the ne explétif: E.g Mangeons avant que nous ne partions! - Let's eat before we leave!

Conjunctions that do not take the Subjunctive

The following conjunctions do not take the subjunctive, because they express facts, which are considered certain:

ainsi que - just as, so as
alors que - while, whereas
après que* - after, when
au cas où - in case
aussitôt que* - as soon as
car - because, since
dans l'hypothèse où - in the event that
de même que - just as
depuis que - since
dès que* - as soon as, immediately
en même temps que - at the same time that
encore que - even though
lorsque* - when, as
parce que - because
pendant que - while

plutôt que - instead of, rather than
puisque - since, as
quand* - when
quand bien meme - even though/if
sitôt que - as soon as
supposé que - supposing
tandis que - while, whereas
une fois que* - once

*These conjunctions are followed by the future tense.

NOTE: There is no future subjunctive. Even if the action is to happen in the future, the present subjunctive is used.