

The Remarkable Se



The little word that does big work

You all recognize *se* as the reflexive form — the one we use when someone does something to themselves. But in this lesson, we're focusing on two other uses that appear everywhere in real Spanish: the impersonal *se* and the passive *se*. These two forms look similar, but once you see the pattern, they become wonderfully simple.

1. El *se* impersonal

Impersonal *se* refers to “people,” “one,” or “in general.” The verb is **always singular** because no specific person is doing the action.

Ejemplos / Examples

1. **Se habla español.** → Spanish is spoken / People speak Spanish.
2. **Se vive bien aquí.** → One lives well here / People live well here.
3. **No se fuma.** → No smoking / People don't smoke here.

If the sentence sounds like a **rule, custom, or sign**, it's **impersonal *se***

2. El *se* pasivo

Passive *se* means “is sold,” “are offered,” “is needed,” etc. The verb **matches the noun** that follows it (singular or plural).

Ejemplos / Examples

1. **Se vende la casa.** → The house is for sale.
2. **Se venden casas.** → Houses are sold / Houses for sale.
3. **Se buscan voluntarios.** → Volunteers are needed.
4. **Se ofrecen clases.** → Classes are offered.

If there is a **noun right after the verb**, and the verb **agrees** with it, it's **passive *se***