

BOLETÍN

by oliemfl

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*Part 4 of the mini-series based on Spanish regional identity is here! In this week's issue we get learn a little about the region of Aragón from María (one half of the fantastic *Sonríe in Spanish*) including cultural traditions, food and what it was like to grow up there.*

👋 **Welcome to Boletín**, an English-language newsletter covering historical, cultural and topical stories related to the A Level Spanish course. These newsletters accompany a student worksheet which can be downloaded freely **here**. This week:

1. Edition 124 of Boletín.
2. An interview María (one half of [@sonrieinspanish](#)).
3. Download links.

📌 Issue 124.

Before we get to this week's interview it's worth introducing our guest, María.

María works alongside Ana to create incredible Spanish resources for their joint account [Sonríe in Spanish](#). Their distinctive and imaginative resources are loved by thousands of teachers and students in the UK and beyond. Personally, I love the escape rooms they create!

This week the regional identity mini-series continues as we get to read about life growing up in Aragón!



Boletín #124 ft.
[@sonrieinspanish](#)
part 1/Aragón

A Q&A with María from Aragón.

What is your favourite idiomatic expression? Either one particular to Aragón or just in general?

“Ser muy majico/a” is something that only people from Aragón would say. We use it when someone or something is very nice. You could also say ‘majo/a’, but the diminutive ‘-ico/-ica’ is very typical from my region and we use it all the time!

What is your favourite Spanish tradition or custom?

Without a doubt, las fiestas de pueblo! The summer festivals in the villages around my region don't have a competitor. The smaller the village, the better the festival will be. They usually last for a few days and honour the patron of each village or town. The programme of activities is jam-packed and I love the fact that there are activities for absolutely everyone: a parque infantil (inflatables) for the children, a jota exhibition that my grandmas look forward to every year, orquestas (cover bands) every night followed by a ‘disco móvil’, or even a chocolatada popular for everyone! We all have ‘peñas’ with our friends, which are places where we meet to have food and a drink before going out. It is definitely the best week of the year!

What is the most typical Aragonese tradition?

It is hard to choose, we have so many! But I'd say that something that we celebrate all around the region is el Día de San Jorge on the 23rd of April, which is also a very important day in England. San Jorge (Saint George) is the patron of Aragón. On that day, we gift each other a rose and a book. Also, there are many book fairs and theatrical representations of the legend of Saint George and the dragon across the region. Being Aragonese is something we feel very proud of and especially on that day, you can see Aragonese flags everywhere!

Another one of my favourite traditions is the legend of ‘Los amantes de Teruel’, or the lovers of Teruel. A sad but beautiful romance story between two 13th-century young lovers known as Diego and Isabel. Their story is celebrated during a festival called ‘Las Bodas de Isabel de Segura’ (popularly know as ‘Amantes’), Every February, the entire city of Teruel converts to a medieval village with reenactments that celebrate Los Amantes de Teruel. I can't recommend it enough!

What is Aragonese food like and whats your favorite typical dish?

You can never go wrong with pan con tomate and jamón, de Teruel, of course. Something a bit more elaborate, the renowned ternasco de Aragón is extremely tender and tasty. It has Protected Geographical Indication and the quality is unbeatable. My mum roasts it in the oven with potatoes, wild mushrooms, rosemary and a dash of red wine and it is to die for! And if you're looking for something a bit healthier, I'd definitely recommend checking up our local ‘borrajas’ or ‘borraines’.

What was growing up in Aragon like and was your experience typical of others'?

I am from a tiny village in a rural area. It is very safe and we all know each other, so from a young age we all were allowed to go out and play with friends. After school, we used to freely run around the streets, play 'polis y cacos' (an improved version of 'hide and seek') and lots of other games. We also enjoyed building our own little huts with wood and everything we found, planned excursions around the countryside and swam in the river during the warmest months. The bell in the church in the square dictated the time we had to be back at home for dinner. For my first communion, my nan and grandad bought me my first 'big' bike, and I have the happiest memories learning to cycle up and down the street with my grandad Aurelio. Children in cities have access to lots of opportunities, but I wouldn't change the freedom of growing up in my village for anything in the world!

Looking back, what distinguished your region from the rest?

Every region in Spain is special and Aragón is unique in so many different ways. Aragón is home to some of the most beautiful villages in Spain, such as Valderrobres, Albarracín, Aínsa or Sos del Rey Católico, full of history and traditions. We also have the most breathtaking and varied landscapes, ideal for nature and adventure lovers. I love Teruel's world heritage Mudejar art and... what can I say about Zaragoza? It's just the best city in the world!

Has anything been lost with the passing of time?

Some traditions have evolved and changed, and others have disappeared. Rural areas struggle with underpopulation, young people tend to move to bigger cities such as Zaragoza, and as a consequence, some jobs in the villages have disappeared. A clear example is farming. Few people decide to go into agriculture, so there are more and more barren fields left uncultivated.

In addition, three different languages are spoken in Aragón: Spanish, of course, but also Catalan (in the eastern part, also known as la Franja) and Aragonese (in the north, mainly in the province of Huesca). The repression during the dictatorship heavily affected them, as only Spanish was allowed. In more recent times, certain language policies have not always favoured the use or teaching of these languages in schools, which is why a lot of vocabulary is gradually disappearing. I notice it when I hear my grandmas speak, they say words that I have never used. This is especially serious in the case of Aragonese due to its small number of speakers.

Has anything changed for the better?

100%. After the pandemic many people, including families, decided to move to smaller villages and towns and start a new life there. They get a better quality of life and support the development of rural areas. Also, tourism is really growing in Aragón and many people decide to visit my region every year: from skying in the Pyrenees to discovering the 'Aragonese tuscany' in the Matarraña/Matarranya region, there are lots of possibilities!

How do other regions of Spain perceive Aragón?

It is said that Aragonese people are loyal, courteous and stubborn (tozudos/as or cabezones/as), although we take that as a compliment and synonym of resilience and determination. Unfortunately, the rural areas of Aragón are underpopulated. After the war, many Aragonese people had to emigrate to Zaragoza, the capital, or to bigger cities such as

Barcelona. Most of them have kept the family houses and return every weekend and in the summer.

Why should somebody whose never been visit Aragón?

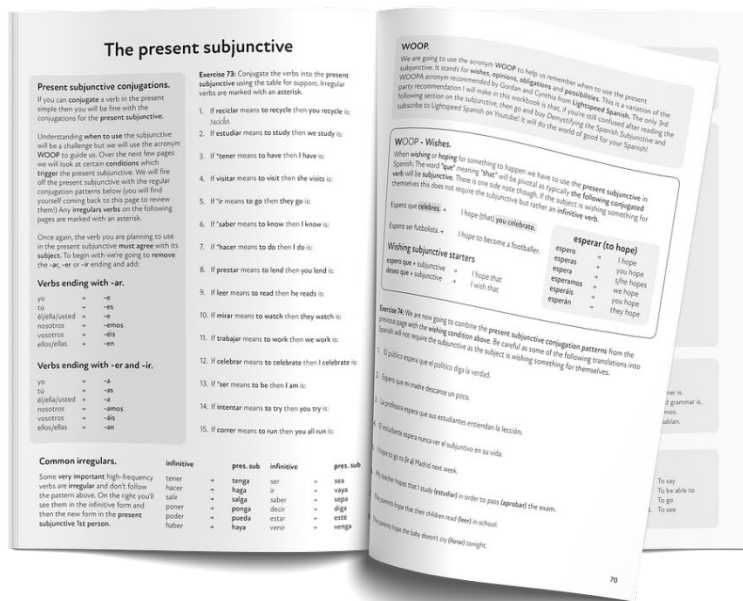
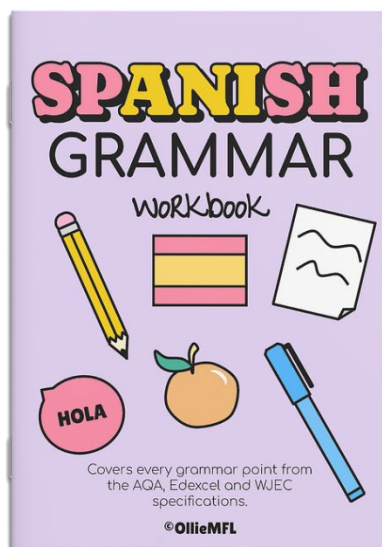
In Aragón, you can enjoy a varied offer of cultural attractions, scenic villages, Mudejar architecture, Romanesque churches, fairytale castles, natural sights, adventure activities surrounded by nature, the most fun festivals and the best food! In summary, because it is the best place in the world!

🔍 Grammar to look out for in the three texts.

1. The present perfect.
2. Connectives.
3. Avoiding the passive with an *se* structure.
4. Direct object pronouns.
5. Adjectival agreement.
6. Imperfect tense.
7. The use of gerunds.

🧠 A Level structures.

I've previously banged on quite a lot about my [GCSE grammar workbook](#) and it's to that which I turn today as we look at obligation subjunctive triggers. I am currently working on a 2nd edition of the workbook which should be out in August!



WOOP - Obligation triggers.

Next up is the second "o" which stands for "obligations".

What is an obligation trigger?

If somebody **modifies their behaviour, does something or changes the way they do something** as a result of an **instruction, demand or request** from **another party** then the **present subjunctive** is used. These are called **obligation triggers** as somebody is being obliged to do something by somebody else. Similar to the opinions section there are two sub-categories of obligation structures which we will explore in more detail below.

Es + adjective of obligation + que + subjunctive verb

The same structure that we saw two pages ago with the first of the two opinion triggers can be reused to form an **obligation trigger**. Below you'll see some **common adjectives** denoting **obligation** and some example sentence.

Es **esencial** que lo **hagas** lo antes posible. → It's **essential** that you **do** it as soon as possible.

Es **importante** que **leas** la información → It's **important** that you **read** the information.

Obligation adjectives

esencial	→	essential	preferible	→	preferable
necesario	→	necessary	aconsejable	→	advisable
importante	→	important			
preciso	→	essential			
vital	→	vital			
imprescindible	→	essential			

Obligation verb phrase + que + subjunctive

As well as adjectives we can also ask somebody to do something using a **verb** followed by "que" (that). Remember that if somebody **does something** as a result of a **request** (be it **polite** or more of an **order/demand**) then you must use the **present subjunctive**.

Quiero que **vayas** a Mercadona. → I want you to go to Mercadona.

Prefiero que **hablemos** de eso después → I prefer that we speak about that afterwards.

Obligation verbs

pedir que	→	to request that	sugerir que	→	to suggest that
recomendar que	→	to recommend that	aconsejar que	→	to advise that
querer que	→	to want that	insistir en que	→	to insist on
preferir que	→	to prefer that	mandar que	→	to demand that

That's all for this week, a massive thanks to María for taking the time to share her experiences growing up in Aragón.

Have a great week,

Ollie

