

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #8

Expressing Preferences in Mexican Spanish

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INFORMAL SPANISH

1. JORGE: ¿Te gusta la Ciudad de México?
2. ASHLEY: Sí, me gusta mucho.
3. JORGE: ¿Por qué?
4. ASHLEY: Me gusta la arquitectura.
5. JORGE: A mí me gusta la gente.

ENGLISH

1. JORGE: Do you like Mexico City?
2. ASHLEY: Yes, I like it a lot.
3. JORGE: Why?
4. ASHLEY: I like the architecture.
5. JORGE: I like the people.

VOCABULARY

Spanish	English	Class	Gender
arquitectura	architecture	noun	feminine
me	me, to me, for me	pronoun	
mucho	much, a lot	adjective	

por qué	why	interrogative pronoun	
gustar	like	verb	
te	you		
ciudad	city	noun	feminine
gente	people	noun	feminine

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Me gusta la arquitectura. "I like the architecture."	Me gusta la comida. "The meal is pleasing to me."
Mucha gente trabaja en la ciudad. "Many people work in the city."	Ellos comen mucho. "They eat a lot."
¿Por qué no trabajas? "Why don't you work?"	A la niña realmente le gustan los cachorros. "The girl really likes the puppies."
La mujer te sonrió. "The woman smiled at you."	Vivo en la ciudad. "I live in the city."

A toda la gente le gusta bailar.
"Everyone likes to dance."

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

me gusta

We use *me gusta* to express preference. Its opposite is *no me gusta* ("I don't like") and in question form *¿te gusta?* ("Do you like?") or *¿le gusta?* ("Do you like?" *formal Spanish*). The root verb is *gustar* ("to like") and must include a pronoun, which can be *me*, *te* or *le*, depending on the indirect object of the verb (responding to the question who likes or dislikes?).

Me encanta is similar to *me gusta*, but it is more intense and denotes true excitement. A stronger expression would be *me fascina*, and a softer one, *me agrada*. The opposite of *me encanta* is *me choca* ("I hate it"). We often use *me encanta* for things we like to eat, do, listen to, etc. or people we admire.

¿Por qué?

We use *¿Por qué?* to ask the reason for something, as in *¿Por qué te gusta?* ("Why do you like?") Other inquiring remarks include *¿Cómo?* ("How?") *¿Dónde?* ("Where?") or *¿Cuándo?* ("When?") to get the full view of something.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is to Teach You the Use of the Verb *Gustar* ("to Like") with Its Corresponding Pronouns (*Me*, *Te*, and *Le*).

***¿Te gusta la Ciudad de México? Sí, me encanta.*
"Do you like Mexico City? Yes, I love it."**

The verbs *gustar* ("to like") and *encantar* ("to love") both require an indirect object pronoun (*me*, *te*, or *le*) depending on the person it refers to. They can be followed by a verb in infinitive form or by an article + a noun.

Followed by a Verb

<i>Indirect Object</i>	<i>Pronoun</i>	<i>Verb</i>	<i>Verb in Infinitive</i>
<i>a mí</i> ("I")	<i>me</i>	<i>gusta/encanta</i>	<i>comer</i> ("to eat")
<i>a ti</i> ("you")	<i>te</i>	<i>gusta/encanta</i>	<i>hablar</i> ("to talk")
<i>a él/ella</i> ("he"/"she")	<i>le</i>	<i>gusta/encanta</i>	<i>bailar</i> ("to dance")

Followed by Article + a Noun

Indirect Object	Pronoun	Verb	Article	Noun
<i>a mí</i> ("I")	<i>me</i>	<i>gusta/encanta</i>	<i>el</i>	<i>caviar</i> ("caviar")
<i>a ti</i> ("you")	<i>te</i>	<i>gusta/encanta</i>	<i>la</i>	<i>música</i> ("music")
<i>a él/ella</i> ("he"/"she")	<i>le</i>	<i>gusta/encanta</i>	<i>la</i>	<i>vainilla</i> ("vanilla")

It is not always necessary to say the indirect object *a mí*, *a ti*, *a él/ella* unless one needs to add emphasis to "me," "you," or "him"/"her," for example, to distinguish what "I," "you," or "he"/"she" likes from what somebody else likes. In this dialogue, Ashley explained that she liked Mexico City's trees and gardens, and then it was Jorge's turn to say his own preferences. Therefore, Jorge used the indirect object *a mí...* as if saying "as for me, I like the people..." whereas Ashley simply said "I like..."

Using the Verb *Gustar* in the Plural Form

Jorge used the singular form of the verb *gustar*, whereas Ashley used it in the plural form. This is because Ashley said she liked trees and gardens (plural), but Jorge said he liked people (as a single entity). Note that when talking about plural things, you must add the letter *-n* at the end of the verb: *gusta*

Singular Verb	Object	Plural Verb	Object
<i>Me gusta (encanta)</i>	<i>el árbol</i>	<i>Me gustan (encantan)</i>	<i>los árboles</i>
<i>Te gusta (encanta)</i>	<i>el jardín</i>	<i>Te gustan (encantan)</i>	<i>los jardines</i>
<i>Le gusta (encanta)</i>	<i>la ciudad</i>	<i>Le gustan (encantan)</i>	<i>las ciudades</i>

For Example:

1. *Me gusta México.*

2. "I like Mexico."
3. *A mí me gusta México.*
4. "As for me, I like Mexico."

Examples from This Dialogue

1. *Me gustan los árboles y jardines.*
"I like the trees and gardens."

Language Tip: Using the Negative Form *No Me Gusta*

Note that to express dislikes, you simply have to add *no* at the beginning of the phrase. *Me gusta* ("I like")

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Do You Run Away from or Embrace Conflict?

Some people in Mexico are often shy to say what they feel for fear of offending others, since it is considered impolite to come off too strongly with what you want. So people will often go to extremes pretending they are okay just to avoid conflict. But later on, they invariably have to come up with the truth, and they often do it abruptly or by losing contact. Some intellectuals have argued that Mexicans have a persistent aversion to conflict. So, you can choose to go with the flow or play tough and draw your line from the beginning. Balancing your own preferences with those of others can be tricky. One good way is to use abundant positive remarks, such as "I love it," "this is wonderful," etc. while softly expressing your opinions.