**SPN 200 Level Courses**

Let’s say the prompt was as follows:

“Write a composition talking about how you used to spend your summer vacation as a child. Use several instances of the imperfect tense.”

Immediately you decide you want to start out with the following sentence:

> Every year since I can remember, my family has gone to the mountains during the summer.

If you were to look up that sentence word by word in a dictionary, it would probably look something like this:

> Cada año desde yo puedo recordar, mi familia tiene ausente a las montañas durante el verano.

**…WRONG!**

Let’s go back to the sentence in English. We want to phrase it in such a way that it utilizes the grammar that we have learned in class. The first step is to figure out what the prompt wants. Above, you can see that the prompt wants you to use the imperfect. Ask yourself – when do you use the imperfect?

- To talk about an ongoing or habitual action in the past

You sentence talks about doing something every summer, which is definitely habitual. Now, simplify the sentence:

> Every year, my family used to go to the mountains during the summer.

This is a sentence that you should have no trouble expressing in Spanish. Now, find the verb:

Every year, my family used to go to the mountains during the summer.

We know that the imperfect is typically translated as “used to” do something – in this case, “used to go”.

The infinitive of the verb “to go” is ir. Now we just conjugate it in imperfect of the correct form → family (third person singular) → iba.

From there, we can put the sentence together:

> Cada año, mi familia iba a las montañas durante el verano.

**…CORRECT!!!**
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Now, let’s do an example with the subjunctive. Here is your prompt:

“You are writing a letter to an incoming freshman student to give him or her suggestions, advice and/or recommendations for things he/she should do, bring, or expect when he/she arrives at UNCW. Use several instances of the subjunctive.”

You decide you want to write the following sentence:

*Don’t forget to register for classes that count towards your major as soon as possible!*

First, we need to go back to the prompt – What does it want?

- Suggestions
- Advice
- Recommendations
- The subjunctive

That should remind you of how the subjunctive works – you are trying to get someone else to do something. How can we change your sentence in English to a suggestion or recommendation?

*I recommend you register for classes that count towards your major as soon as possible.*

Much better! We can’t forget vocab though. Let’s say you don’t know how to say the verb “to register”, and the phrases “count towards” and “as soon as possible” may allude you. Now it is time to simplify. How can you get a similar message across using words that you know?

*I recommend that you take classes for your major in your first year.*

This is something that we can say in Spanish:

*Yo recomiendo que tú tomes clases para tu especialidad en tu primer año.*

Excellent!

Remember, figure out what the prompt wants, then SIMPLIFY!!!!!

*Say what you can say, not what you want to say!*