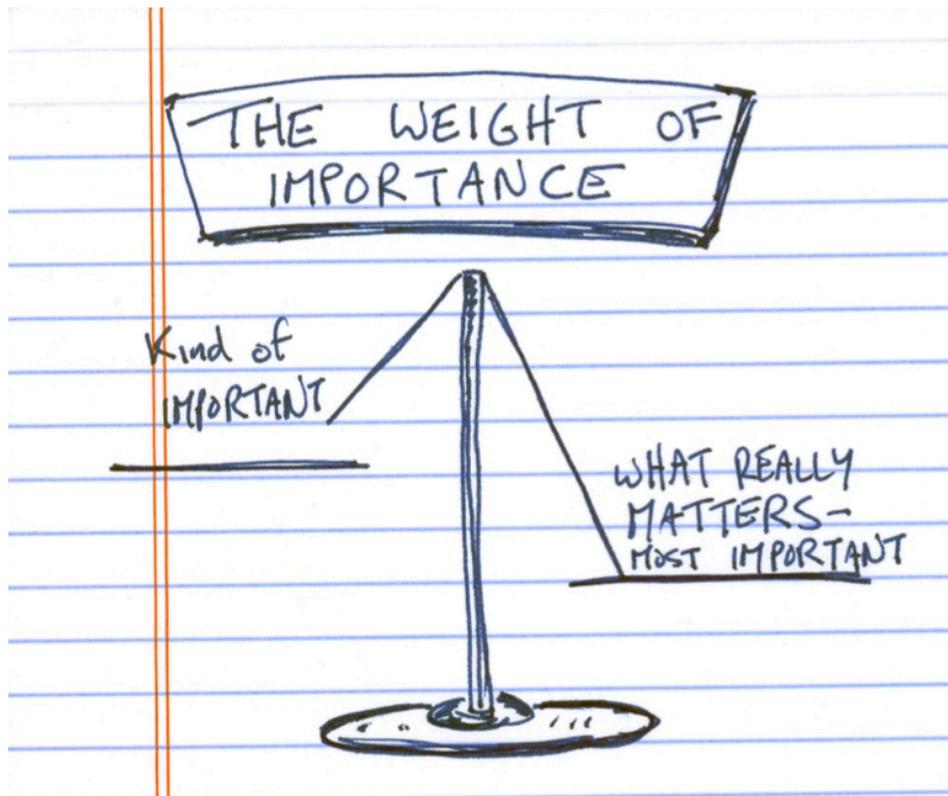


## PERO OR SINO

with contribution by student Manli Nouri

"Okay, I know *pero* means 'but' and *sino* means 'but rather'  
... *but I still don't get it!*"  
-¡pero todavía no comprendo!-

Does this example clear it up?  
No? Then try looking for . . .



*Sino* implies that one action or choice ends up being more important, desirable, valuable, etc. than another.

*No vamos a robar dos bancos, **sino** siete.*

We're not going to rob two banks, **but (rather)** seven.

*No quiero que me llames, **sino** que me escribas por Facebook para que todos sepan de nuestra amistad.*

I don't want that me you call, **but (rather)** that to me you write on Facebook so that everyone knows we are friends.

The loot from seven banks outweighs that from two. Facebook recognition is better than a phone call. That's the impact of **the weight of importance**.

Compare this piece of advice with the sentences that follow it:

- Look for **no** in the first half of the sentence. Chances are you'll use *sino*. Especially if there's no second verb that undermines **the weight of importance**.

*No vinimos para comprar leche, sino galletas.*

We didn't come to buy milk, **but (rather)** cookies.

*No vinimos para comprar leche, pero está bien. Podemos comprar leche también.*

We didn't come to buy milk, **but** that's ok. We can buy milk too.

In the second example a second verb came in and established that there was no real **weight of importance** in our motive. What we came to do matters far less to us in the second example than it does in the first. In the first example, we push the milk aside. No milk. We came for cookies.

*Does that mean if I've got two verbs I'll use pero?*

No. Not at all. Continue to look for **the weight of importance**. Are you stating that one action is more important than another?

- If there is a second verb, and it's conjugated, you might need **sino que**.

*No quiero que llames a la policía durante el robo, sino que me des el dinero.*

I don't want you to call the cops during the robbery,

**but (rather)** that you give me the money.

*No quiero llevar la máscara, pero necesito que nadie me conozca.*

I don't want to wear a mask, **but** I need nobody to recognize me.

The first example shows preference. I'd rather have the money than the cops right now, thank you very much.

The second example does not state two choices. Instead, what follows **pero** is an explanation of action.

So . . .

Look for **no** and look for **weight of importance**.

Find **no**? Find some **weight**? Use **sino**, or **sino que**.

If you don't start your sentence with **no**, use **pero**.

If you have **no** but don't have clarity on how important things are, look for an undermining statement or for an explanation. If you find either, use **pero**.

### ¿QUÉ? OR ¿CUÁL?

**qué** asks *what*

for a definition or for a selection from a general topic.

*¿Qué te gusta hacer?*

What is pleasing to you to do?

Whatever activity you chose to answer this question, you are now adding to the definition of that activity.

*-¿Qué te gusta hacer?- dice Ana.*

*- Me gusta andar en bicicleta.- contesta Bob.*

We know what it means to ride a bike, but we have now added to our definition.

To ride a bike: 1) v. to keep sufficient momentum to propel the bike and maintain balance, 2) n. an activity that Bob enjoys.

**cuál** asks *which*

out of a possible listing, or out of pre-mentioned items.

Ask yourself, "Is it possible to list a series of answers?" If so, use **cuál**.

*¿Cuál es tu nombre?*

It is possible to list names. Pick up a Baby Name book. Which name do you prefer?

Let's try sports. Compare these two:

*¿Cuál deporte prefieres?*

Which sport do you prefer?

*¿Qué quieres jugar?*  
What do you want to play?

Notice that the **qué** sentence does not refer to a particular category from which to choose. If I were to answer "Basket-Pato," my answer would help define my choice. "Basket-Pato" is the game that Mr. H wants to play.

### RELATING WITH RELATIVES

This gets quite maddening, so have patience with yourself. We're not talking about your brother, nor your aunt & uncle. **Relative Pronouns** help to "relate" more information between two ideas.

We will start with the relative pronoun **que**.

*El niño come muchos dulces.*  
*El niño tiene huecos en los dientes.*

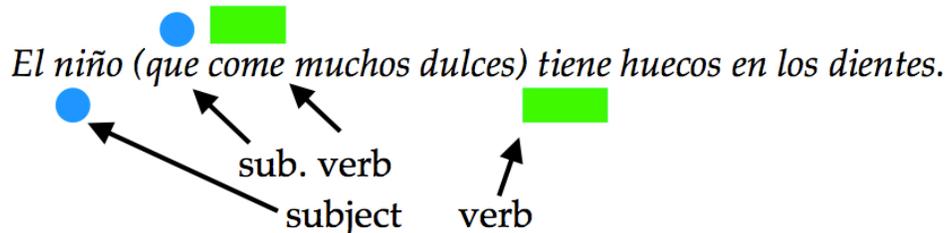
We could shorten this to say:

The boy that eats a lot of candy has holes in his teeth.

One idea **relates** to another. It would look like this:

*El niño que come muchos dulces tiene huecos en los dientes.*

*El niño* is our **subject** and *que* is our **pronoun** that is doing the job of **relating** more information. But do not forget that *que* is a pronoun, which means that it replaces a noun. What does it replace? It replaces *el niño*, and it works like this:



Don't believe me? Try it. Try adding more information, including a new verb, and see if you don't end up saying "that." See if "that" is not able to be substituted by the Subject if the sentence were broken into two.

The police officer eats donuts.  
The police officer wears a dirty uniform.

The police officer visits the same dentist as the boy.  
The boy eats lots of candy.

The police officer **that** wears a dirty uniform and **that** eats donuts, visits the dentist of the boy **that** eats lots of candy.

*El oficero **que** lleva el uniforme sucio y **que** come las donas, visita al dentista del niño **que** come muchos dulces.*

Read this sentence alone: *El oficero visita al dentista del niño.* Not a lot of detail. One might conclude the officer needs the boy's dental records. By using the relative pronoun **que** to introduce clauses, we learn more about the actions of the officer and conclude that his own records might be subject to inspection.

And how do we normally represent who is doing the action? We use **subject pronouns**. We could replace **que** with **él** . . .

*Él lleva el uniforme sucio. Él come las donas.*

. . . **if we were not combining sentences!!!**

But we are combining sentences, so we must use **que** to refer back to the preceding subject and allow it to continue doing the action. Think of **que** like a quick skip in a stride, further pushing the sentence along, yet adding a little more life to . . .

. . . the subject THAT did something - **QUE**

*If **que** is the subject THAT did something, TO WHOM are we referring when we use **quien**?*

Exactly. Think about the pronoun chart. We've decided, in essence, to use **que** as a **subject pronoun**. **Que** will **do action** and most often, in some conceivable and perhaps not so literal way, **quien** will **receive action**. Think **iDOP**.

We may also use prepositions with **quien**.  
con quien, para quien, de quien, a quien

The students in my classroom are smart. I wrote this book for my students. (for them)

The students for whom I wrote this book are smart.  
*Los estudiantes para quienes yo escribí este libro son listos.*



See how **quienes** isn't doing the action?

The author with **whom** I spoke gave me his autograph.  
*El autor con quien hablé me dio su firma en el libro.*

Now it is true that the author gave something to me and I, therefore, indirectly received his action. And it's also true that we spoke. The preposition "with" includes the author again. But the emphasis, the added information that we are relating, is not that he spoke to me, but rather "I to (with) him." *El autor con quien yo hablé . . .*

Don't give up. You're back to:

**Blue** does the action.  
Action is done **to purple**.

**QUE** does action,  
**QUIEN** receives action.