

¿Tú o Usted?

We were all taught to speak to older people, our teachers, people in authority, etc. in a more formal, respectful manner. With our family and friends, we usually have a more informal, casual way of speaking.

The same is true in Spanish, but the practice varies widely depending on the country.

Spanish has the word **usted** (abbreviated **Ud.**) which is the formal form of you. The so-called familiar form of you is **tú**.

As a general rule, you would use **usted** when addressing strangers, your teachers, people in authority, or a person you address by his or her last name.

Tú is used with family, very good friends, people you would address by their first name, children, pets and the Diety. In some countries, however, children address their parents using the **usted** form. So when in doubt, it is always best to use the **usted** form until given permission to use the **tú** form.

The verb **tutear** means to address someone using the **tú** form.

Los amigos se tutean. The friends use the **tú** form with each other. (address each other informally.)

Práctica. Using the general rules concerning the usage of **tú** and **usted**, decide which form is best when addressing:

Ejemplo: Your boyfriend – **tú** form

1. your best friend
2. your Spanish teacher
3. your best friend's mother
4. your dog, Pepe
5. your school principal
6. Mrs. Sánchez, your next-door neighbor
7. your brother
8. your classroom facilitator
9. your school bus driver
10. your teacher's five-year-old son