

# Formation of the imperative

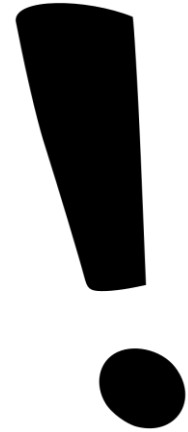
## Affirmative “tú” commands (familiar singular)

For the vast majority of verbs, the affirmative **tú** command is identical to the third person singular (he/she/it) of the present tense:

<b>¡Habla!</b>	<i>Speak!</i>
<b>¡Come con nosotros!</b>	<i>Eat with us!</i>
<b>¡Vive bien!</b>	<i>Live well!</i>

The following verbs are irregular in the affirmative **tú** command forms:

<b>decir</b>	(to say, tell):	<b>di</b>	<b>Di la verdad</b>	<i>Tell the truth.</i>
<b>hacer</b>	(to do, make):	<b>haz</b>	<b>Hazlo mañana</b>	<i>Do it tomorrow.</i>
<b>ir</b>	(to go):	<b>ve</b>	<b>Vete</b>	<i>Go away</i>
<b>poner</b>	(to put, place):	<b>pon</b>	<b>Ponlo aquí</b>	<i>Put it here.</i>
<b>salir</b>	(to leave, go out):	<b>sal</b>	<b>Sal en seguida</b>	<i>Leave immediately.</i>
<b>ser</b>	(to be):	<b>sé</b>	<b>Sé bueno</b>	<i>Be good.</i>
<b>tener</b>	(to have):	<b>ten</b>	<b>Ten cuidado</b>	<i>Be careful.</i>
<b>venir</b>	(to come):	<b>ven</b>	<b>Ven acá</b>	<i>Come here.</i>



## Imperatives with Pronouns

In positive commands, pronouns are added to the end of the verb and an accent has to be placed on the stressed vowel of the verb:

Mira los dibujos - ¡Míralos! [Look at **them!**]

Haz la encuesta - ¡Hazla! [Do **it!**]

In negative commands, pronouns go before the verb:

¡Míralos ! - ; ¡No los mires !

¡Levántate! - ¡No te levantes !

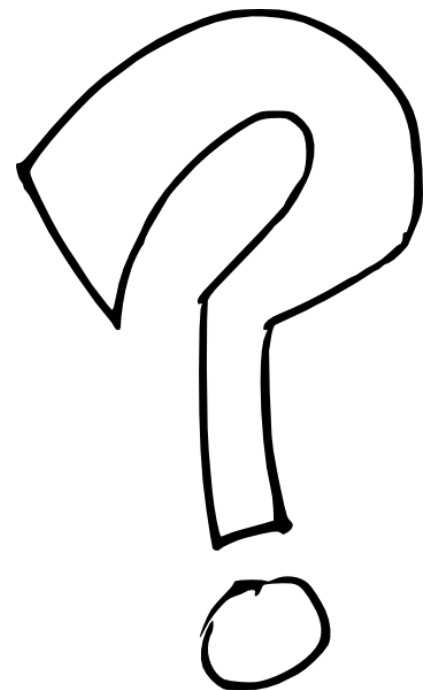
## Exercise

NB. \* = irregular “tú” imperative

Change the verbs in brackets to give familiar commands to one person (tú).

**Example:** (Hablar) con el profesor = Habla con el professor [Talk to the teacher]

1. (Preparar) una comida.
2. (Hacer) tus deberes ahora.\*
3. (Tener) cuidado.\*
4. (Poner) tus cosas en la mesa.\*
5. (Dar)me el dinero. [Give **me** the money]
6. (Volver) antes de las cinco.
7. (Venir) a las siete. \*
8. (Levantarse) ahora mismo.



## Affirmative “vosotros” commands (familiar plural)

To form the affirmative **vosotros** command, drop the -r of the infinitive and add -d. This -d is omitted if the pronoun **os** (yourselves) is added to the end of the verb (which will require a written accent over the -i- of -ir verbs: ¡Reuníos!).

<b>Hablad en voz alta</b>	<i>Speak aloud.</i>
<b>Comed con nosotros</b>	<i>Eat with us.</i>
<b>Vivid en paz</b>	<i>Live in peace.</i>
<b>Id</b>	<i>Go.</i>
<b>Dadme algo</b>	<i>Give me something.</i>
<b>Sentaos aquí</b>	<i>Sit down here. (Note the omission of the -d.)</i>

In the following sentences change the verb in brackets into the “vosotros/as” command.

**Example:** (Volver) a casa a las nueve = Volved a casa a las nueve.

1. (Volver) a casa a las nueve.
2. (Despertarse) en seguida.
3. (Lavarse) las manos.
4. (Acostarse) a las nueve.
5. ¡(Comer) más!
6. (Ir) a Paris en abril.\*
7. (Hablar) menos.
8. (Venir) a buscarme a las ocho.
9. (Abrir) todas las ventanas.
10. (Salir) de esta clase ahora!

## Knowing When to Use Tú and Usted

Spanish speakers use **tú** and **usted**, which both mean “you,” to convey the formality of a relationship. **Tú** is less formal than **usted**. [*vosotros* is the plural version of *tú* and *ustedes* is the plural of *usted*]

You use **tú** when you’re talking to :

- someone of the same age
- the same rank
- to express a certain level of friendship

Most adults address children using **tú**

**Usted** signifies a more respectful way of talking to someone, such as:

- a new acquaintance
- an older person
- someone you consider to be of higher rank

The **usted** form of the verb is exactly the same as he/she.



At some point in a relationship between people who speak Spanish, a shift occurs from the formal **usted** to the more informal and intimate **tú**. At this point, they use the word **tú** when addressing each other. In Spanish, this is called **tutearse**, that is, "to talk tú." On the other hand, if you want to keep the relationship more professional and less chummy, you should stick to calling that person **usted**.

Following are some examples of sentences that use **tú** and **usted**:

- ¿Dónde vive **usted**? (Where do you live? [Respectful])
- ¿Dónde vives? (Where do you live? [Friendly])

### Polite commands (usted / ustededs) + negative commands

ALL polite commands and all negative commands in Spanish use the subjunctive:



### Formation of the Subjunctive

Take the first person singular of the present tense, remove the "o" and add the appropriate endings depending on whether it is an **-ar** verb or an **-er/-ir** verb. That's all there is to it.

<b>-ar</b>	<b>-er</b>	<b>-ir</b>
compre	beba	reciba
compres	bebas	recibas
compre	beba	reciba
compremos	bebamos	recibamos
compréis	bebáis	recibáis
comprendan	beban	reciban

The above verbs are in the present subjunctive. The first thing to notice about them is the endings. It is almost as if the verbs in the present subjunctive have a sudden identity crisis: **-ar** verbs use the endings of the **-er** verbs and **-er** and **-ir** verbs use the endings of **-ar** verbs.

### Formation exercise

Work out the "I" form of the present subjunctive for these verbs. Firstly work out the first person of the present tense and then work out the subjunctive.

Infinitive	First person of the present tense	First person of the present subjunctive
abrir		
bailar		
caer		
salir		
leer		
poder		
traer		
aparecer		
volver		

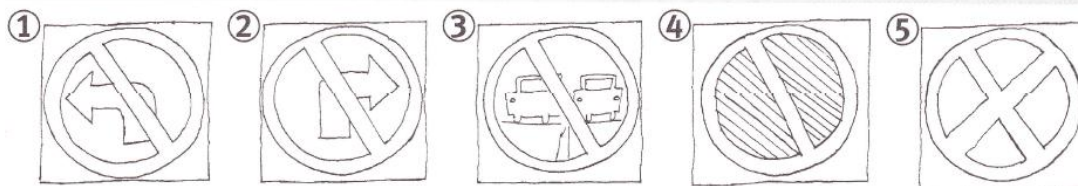
**NB** Note that verbs such as llegar add a "u" to keep the sound, e.g. **llegue**.

Of course, as you would expect, some verbs are beyond all help and are completely irregular. Here are some of the most frequent ones:

ir	voy	<b>vaya</b>
saber	sé	<b>sepa</b>
estar	estoy	<b>esté</b>
dar	doy	<b>dé</b>
ser	soy	<b>sea</b>
haber	he	<b>haya</b>

## Exercise

Look at the road signs below. Select the correct verb and make the correct POLITE negative command.



1. (girar) \_\_\_\_\_ a la izquierda. = No gire a la derecha.
2. (girar) \_\_\_\_\_ a la derecha.
3. (adelantar) \_\_\_\_\_ aquí.
4. (aparacar) \_\_\_\_\_ aquí.
5. (parar) \_\_\_\_\_ aquí.

## SUMMARY

- ✓ All commands except affirmative tú and **vosotros** are based on the subjunctive.
- ✓ All negative and formal commands in Spanish use the subjunctive.

## Exercises

Look at the sentences below. Decide what type of command you need i.e. singular/plural + polite (usted/es) or familiar (tú/vosotros/as). Then change the verb in brackets into the correct form of the imperative.

1. (a un amigo) Están llamando. (Abrir) \_\_\_\_\_ la puerta, por favor.
2. (a unos niños) (Cruzar) \_\_\_\_\_ por el paso de cebra.
3. (a unos amigos) La paella está riquísima. (Comer) \_\_\_\_\_ más.
4. (a un amigo) (Hablar) \_\_\_\_\_ más bajo. No soy sorda.
5. (a alguien de su familia) (Bajar) \_\_\_\_\_ la televisión. Está muy alta.
6. (a un amigo) ¿Puedo llamar por teléfono? Sí, por supuesto. (Llamar) \_\_\_\_\_.
7. (a un niño) ¿Puedo comer otro pastel? Sí, claro. (Comer) \_\_\_\_\_ todos los que quieras.

