

5 Ways to Say *You* in Spanish

And one more thing *you* should know...

Five?! Well, yes. The single word you can be rendered in 5 different ways in Spanish. Here you'll find a brief explanation of the differences among them.



Tú

It is a **singular** form of *you* (it refers to only one person). This is perhaps the **most widespread** use of *you* in Spanish. It is used naturally by most Spanish speakers in many settings to refer to the (one) person they are addressing.

Some speakers, however, avoid using *tú* in a formal situation or if they want to show respect or distance towards the other person, especially in Latin America.

Usted

This is also a **singular** form of *you*, but it is used mostly in **formal** settings, particularly in Latin America. It can be used to show respect to the other person. Some speakers also use it when they do not know someone very well, but in some countries -such as Colombia- people use *usted* even to address family members or friends.



Vos

Another **singular** form, similar to *tú*. But *vos* is used in **Argentina** and some other countries, such as Uruguay, Paraguay, and even some places in Central America. However, it is normal speech in Argentina, where no one uses *tú*, and hardly anyone uses *usted* in the largest cities.

Ustedes

This is the **plural** form of *you*, and it is used in all **Latin America** (Argentina included). Some people from Spain also use it.

Vosotros

This **plural** form of *you* is used exclusively in **Spain**. It may appear as well in some books and other translated materials throughout the Spanish speaking world. Speakers **do not use it in Latin America**.

Curiosities about the forms of *you* in Spanish

- ◆ All of the forms of *you* have its origin in Spain. However, the forms that are now *usted* and *vos*, for example, stopped being used in Spain a long time ago.
- ◆ *Vos* used to be a special form of addressing somebody with a high level of authority. Funnily, it is now considered an informal use of *you*, especially in countries where both *tú* and *vos* are used.
- ◆ Each form of *you* in Spanish has its own verb form. *Usted* is always formed the same way as the third person singular (*él/ella*)
For example, the verb *ir* (go) in imperative forms as follows:

tú	ve
usted	vaya
vos	andá
ustedes	vayan
vosotros	id



- ◆ You should remember, however, that in Spanish there is **no need to use the subject** all the time, as it happens in English. So the verb will tell you what the subject is. This omission of the subject is called *sujeto tácito*.

¿De dónde eres? → Subject is *tú*.

¿De dónde sos? → Subject is *vos*.

Many companies take these differences into account when marketing their products in different countries. Here are some examples of slogans used in Latin America / Argentina:

Hazle caso a tu sed. / Hacele caso a tu sed.

Llega más lejos. / Llegá más lejos.

Porque tú lo vales. / Porque vos lo valés.

Lo que quieres ver cuando lo quieres ver. / Lo que querés ver cuando lo querés ver.

If you are **learning Spanish**, you don't need to learn all these forms from the start. You can choose the form *tú* for singular and *ustedes* for the plural, since these are the **most widely used**. Your choice may also depend on the reasons you have for learning Spanish. If you want to learn a variant from a **specific area**, you may want to choose the forms that are common in that region. However, it is useful to know that the other forms exist so that you don't get confused when you hear someone using them.

Do you want to learn Spanish?

Feel free to contact me and explain your language needs so that we can work them out together.

The best way to reach me is via [email](#). Please, bear in mind that I live in Argentina (time zone: GMT-3).

You can also visit acrosstraduccion.com or connect with me via social media:

