

Formal Command

As in English, in Spanish we use commands to give someone advice or to tell people what you would like them to do. Formal affirmative commands (usted & ustedes) are used when addressing people in a formal manner or to be polite. When you do not know well a person or when you are talking to people older than you, you should use a formal command. By using the formal command, you express respect for that person. Moreover, Hispanic people use commands while talking to/with doctors, supervisor, boss, priest, professors, etc. Last but not least, use these commands to address any group of people.

1) Always conjugate the verb in first person singular (**yo**)

2) For -AR Verbs, drop the -O,

3) Add -E (for singular) / -EN (for plural)

AMAR → (yo) AMO → AME(N) (mandato)

4) For -ER / -IR Verbs, drop the -O,

5) Add -A (for singular) / -AN (for plural)

COMER → (yo) COMO → COMA(N) (mandato)

ABRIR → (yo) ABRO → ABRA(N) (mandato)

It is very important that your students conjugate the verbs in first person singular (yo) because some irregular and stem-changing verbs change orthographically.

Verbs ending in -CAR (Formal Commands)

sacar

SACO → drop [-CO] → add [-QUE(N)]

saque(n)

Verbs ending in -ZAR (Formal Commands)

comenzar

COMIENZO → drop [-ZO] → add [-CE(N)]

comience(n)

Verbs ending in -GAR (Formal Commands)

pagar

PAGO → drop [-GO] → add [-GUE(N)]

pague(n)

Informal commands

Informal affirmative commands (**tú**) are used among friends, coworkers, relatives, or when addressing a child. Singular informal affirmative commands normally use the present tense, third person form of the verb:

COMER → (él/ella/usted) COME → (tú) **COME** (mandato)

ABRIR → (él/ella/usted) ABRE → (tú) **ABRE** (mandato)

CANTA → (él/ella/usted) CANTA → (tú) **CANTA** (mandato)

Verbs that require stem-change in present tense usually have the same change in the formal (singular/plural) and informal commands:

Stem Change: -E → IE

cerrar

Formal Command

cierrro → cierrre

Informal Command

cierrra → cierrra

Stem Change: O/-U → UE

contar

Formal Command

cuento → cuente(n)

Informal Command

cuenta → cuenta

Stem Change: -E → -I

conseguir

Formal Command

Consigo → consiga(n)

Informal Command

Consigue → consigue