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 à (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**
  - ciero → cierre

- **Informal Command**
  - cierra → cierra

**Stem Change: O/-U → UE**

contar

- **Formal Command**
  - cuento → cuente(n)

- **Informal Command**
  - cuenta → cuenta

**Stem Change: -E → -l**

conseguir

- **Formal Command**
  - Consigo → consiga(n)

- **Informal Command**
  - Consigue → consigue