

Informal Commands (tú)

In the previous lesson, you learned that commands are used when ordering, or telling someone to do something. This is often referred to as the “imperative” form of the verb.

Compra (tú) el anillo.

(You) Buy the ring.

Escribe (tú) la tarea.

(You) Do the homework.

Compra (tú) los libros.

(You) Buy the books.

Come (tú) la patata.

(You) Eat the potato.

Remember that Spanish has both a formal and an informal style of speech (tú/Ud.). This distinction applies to commands.

Compre Ud. el anillo.

Buy the ring. (formal)

Compra (tú) los dulces.

Buy the candy. (familiar)

Remember, formal speech is generally used to be polite or to express respect. Informal, or familiar, speech is used among friends, coworkers, relatives, or when addressing a child.

The affirmative informal (tú) commands are formed the same way as the present indicative Ud. form:

(hablar - ar + a = habla)

(comer - er + e = come)

(escribir - ir + e = escribe)

Be sure to note that the “tú” commands use the usted form, not the tú form!

The following examples of commands use three regular verbs: hablar, comer, and escribir.

Habla (tú) más lentamente.

(You) Speak more slowly.

Come (tú) la cena.

(You) Eat the dinner.

Escribe (tú) la carta.

(You) Write the letter.

Note that the negative informal commands use the tú form of the present subjunctive.

No cuentes tus beneficios.

Don't count your blessings.

No hables más lentamente.

Don't speak more slowly.

Be sure to note that this is the tú form!

Compare the affirmative informal (tú) commands with the negative informal (tú) commands:

Cuenta tus beneficios.

Count your blessings.

No cuentes tus beneficios.

Don't count your blessings.

Habla más lentamente.

Speak more slowly.

No hables más lentamente.

Don't speak more slowly.

Also note that the subject pronoun tú is not normally used with imperative form.

Habla más lentamente.

(You) Speak more slowly.

Come la cena.

(You) Eat the dinner.

Escribe la carta.

(You) Write the letter.

Let's add a flashcard for the informal tú commands:

Verb Flashcards

82. Informal (tú) Commands (Imperative)

Affirmative: Use the present indicative Ud. form

Negative: Use the present subjunctive tú form

Habla Speak.

No hables..... Don't speak.

Come..... Eat.

No comas..... Don't eat.

Escribe Write.

No escribas Don't write.