

# Saber vs Conocer / Pedir vs Preguntar

In Spanish, there are two verbs that express the idea “to know.” These two verbs are “saber” and “conocer.” The verb you choose depends upon the context in which it is used. These verbs are not interchangeable.

To express knowledge or ignorance of a fact or information about something, use “saber.”

Juan sabe donde está María ..... Juan knows where Maria is.  
Yo no sé tu número de teléfono ..... I don't know your telephone number.

To say that one is or is not acquainted with a person, a place, or an object, use *conocer*.

Yo no conozco a María ..... I don't know (am not acquainted with) Maria.  
Alberto y Alfredo conocen Madrid ..... Alberto and Alfredo know  
(are acquainted with) Madrid.

To express knowledge or ignorance of a subject or learning discipline, use *saber* or *conocer*, depending upon the context.

Juan no sabe nada de inglés..... Juan doesn't know any English.  
Él sabe matemáticas..... He knows mathematics.  
Juan conoce la literatura española..... Juan is familiar with Spanish literature.

To express knowledge or ignorance of a skill, or how to do something, use *saber* + infinitive.

María sabe conducir..... Maria knows how to drive.  
No sé nadar muy bien ..... I don't know how to swim very well.

To say that you know something by heart, use *saber*.

María sabe los verbos irregulares ..... Maria knows the irregular verbs (by heart).  
Ella no sabe la letra de esa canción..... She doesn't know the words to that song.

The situation with regards to the correct use of *saber* and *conocer* can be summarized as follows:

**saber:** to know a fact, to know something thoroughly, to know how to do something

**conocer:** to be acquainted with a person, place, or thing

The same sort of situation exists with respect to the two Spanish verbs *pedir* and *preguntar*. They both mean “to ask” but they are not interchangeable. Fortunately, the rules for using them are a bit more straightforward:

**pedir:** to ask for, or request an object, service or favor

Pido más carne ..... I ask for more meat.  
Pedimos ahora ..... We order now (ask for service).

**preguntar:** to ask a question, or request information

Pregunto qué hora es..... I ask what time it is.  
Preguntamos a qué hora sirven la cena ..... We ask what time they serve dinner.

Your verb flashcards should be your constant companions. You should always have them with you, and you should pull them out several times each day, even if you only look at them for a couple of minutes. Now, let's add these two verbs to our growing stack:

### Verb Flashcards

#### 36. **Saber vs Conocer**

saber: to know (facts, information, how to do something, something by heart)

conocer: to know (to be familiar with people, places, things)

#### 37. **Pedir vs Preguntar**

pedir: to ask (for an object or a service)

preguntar: to ask (a question, request information)