¿Tú o Usted?

We were all taught to speak to older people, our teachers, people in authority, etc. in a more formal, respectful manner. With our family and friends, we usually have a more informal, casual way of speaking.

The same is true in Spanish, but the practice varies widely depending on the country.

Spanish has the word **usted** (abbreviated **Ud.**) which is the formal form of you. The so-called familiar form of you is **tú**.

As a general rule, you would use **usted** when addressing strangers, your teachers, people in authority, or a person you address by his or her last name.

**Tú** is used with family, very good friends, people you would address by their first name, children, pets and the Diety. In some countries, however, children address their parents using the **usted** form. So when in doubt, it is always best to use the **usted** form until given permission to use the **tú** form.

The verb **tutear** means to address someone using the **tú** form.

Los amigos se tutean. The friends use the **tú** form with each other. (address each other informally.)

**Práctica.** Using the general rules concerning the usage of **tú** and **usted**, decide which form is best when addressing:

**Ejemplo:** Your boyfriend – **tú** form

1. your best friend
2. your Spanish teacher
3. your best friend’s mother
4. your dog, Pepe
5. your school principal
6. Mrs. Sánchez, your next-door neighbor
7. your brother
8. your classroom facilitator
9. your school bus driver
10. your teacher’s five-year-old son