

El verbo *tener*

The verb ***tener*** means to have. The forms of *tener* are a bit irregular, so study the chart below carefully. Note that a **g** is added before the **o** in the *yo* form. In the *tú, el/ella/Ud.* and *ellos/ellas/Uds.* forms, the **e** of the stem changes to **ie**. The *nosotros* and *vosotros* forms are formed regularly.

| subject | tener | meaning |
|---------------------------|---------|---|
| yo | tengo | I have |
| tú | tienes | you have (familiar, sing.) |
| él ella usted | tiene | he has she has you have (formal, sing.) |
| nosotros nosotras | tenemos | we have |
| vosotros vosotras | tenéis | you have (familiar, plural) |
| ellos ellas ustedes | tienen | they have you have (plural) |

Tener is used in various expressions in Spanish. Two of these uses are (1) to express age and (2) to express a sense of obligation.

1. **Tener** to express age.

In English we use the verb "to be" to express age. For example we say: "I am thirty years old"; "He is eight years old"; "You are fifty years old."

In Spanish the verb *tener* (to have) is used. Note how the above examples would be expressed in Spanish.

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| I <u>am</u> thirty years old. | (Yo) Tengo treinta años. |
| He <u>is</u> eight years old. | (Él) Tiene ocho años. |
| You <u>are</u> fifty years old. | (Tú) Tienes cincuenta años. or |
| | (Ud.) Tiene cincuenta años. |

2. **Tener que + infinitive** to express a sense of obligation.

To express the phrase "to have to ...", Spanish uses the verb *tener* followed by *que* and then the infinitive of the verb. For example: I have to write the homework; She has to prepare the meal; We have to take notes.

In Spanish, these would be expressed as follows:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| I <u>have to write</u> the homework. | (Yo) Tengo que escribir la tarea |
| She <u>has to prepare</u> the meal. | Ella tiene que preparar la comida. |
| We <u>have to take</u> notes. | (Nosotros) Tenemos que tomar apuntes. |