**Introduction**

**First Contact**

Here you can see at a glance the Spanish key language related to first contact: greetings, addressing people and introducing someone.

**Greetings: saying hello and goodbye** (part 1)

The tables below show the Spanish ways to say hello and goodbye. For practice, you can hide the Spanish and English columns and listen to audio prompts.

To say hello

Hide Spanish Hide English

¡Hola! Hello (formal and informal)

Buenos dias Good morning

Buenas tardes Good afternoon

Buenas noches Good evening/Good night

¡Qué tal! What’s new

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

To say goodbye

Hide Spanish Hide English

Chao Bye bye (informal)

Adiós Good bye

Adiós, buenas noches Bye, (have a) good evening

Nos vemos See you soon (formal)

Hasta pronto See you soon

Hasta luego See you later

Hasta la vista See you later

Hasta mañana See you tomorrow

Hasta el lunes (+ other days of the week) See you on Monday

Know-how:

‘Hello’ or ‘goodbye’ depend on the time of day. In Spanish the day is divided into four parts: la manana (morning), la tarde (afternoon), la noche (evening -night).

‘Buenos dias’ is the right phrase to use until lunch time (normally between 12.00 and 14.00). Use ‘Buenas Tardes’ until 17.00/18.00 and ‘buenas noches’ s from dinner time (normally between 19.00 and 21.30) until you go to bed. Use ‘buenas noches, hasta mañana’ only to say goodbye to someone before going home after dinner or to wish someone a good night before they go to bed.

**Greetings: saying hello and goodbye (Part II)**

Listen to people saying hello and goodbye by clicking on the clicking on the audio icons. The key language is summarised in the table.

**Formal request Formal response**

Hola, Señora Martínez, ¿cómo está? ‘Hello Mrs. Martínez, how are you?’

Muy bien, gracias. ¿Y usted? ‘Very well, thanks. And you?’

Buenos días, señor González, ¿Cómo está? ‘Hello Mr. González, how are you?

Bien, Gracias. Y usted, ¿cómo está? ‘Fine, thank you. How about you?’

**Informal request Informal response**

Hola. ¿Como estás? ‘Hello, how are you?’

Bien, gracias. ¿Y tú? ‘Fine thank you. And you?’

Así, Así… ¿Y tú? So – so. And you?

Regular, ¿y tú? ‘Not too bad. And you?’

Fatal awful

Fenomenal. ¿Y tú qué tal? Great. And you?

Desafortunadamente, no muy bien. ¿ Y Tú? ‘Not so good, unfortunately. How about you?’

Hola, ¿Qué tal? ‘Hi, how is it going?’

Todo bien. ¿Y Tú? ‘All Fine. And you?’

Todo bien, gracias. ¿Y tú? ‘Everything OK, thank you. And you?’

**Addressing people: formality and informality**

Listen to formal and informal ways to address people by clicking on the audio icons. The key language is summarised in the table.

Tú/vosotros - Informal usted/ustedes - Formal

¿Cómo estás (tú)? How are you? (talking to one person)

¿Cómo está (usted)? How are you? (talking to one person)

¿Cómo están (ustedes)? How are you? (talking to more than a person)

¿Cómo estáis? How are you?(talking to more than a person-

(in Spain)

Know-how:

In Spanish, we have two forms of ‘you’: ‘tú’ and ‘usted’. Their use depends on the person you are talking to. ‘Tú’ is more widley used with friends, family members and children. ‘Usted’ is used in more formal situations like:

— meeting someone for the first time for work.

— speaking to people who are senior to you by age or social situation (bank manager, university/school staff, doctors).

— asking for directions in the street.

— shopping or in a restaurant talking to assistants or waiters.

The ‘Usted’ form can also be used to show respect (for example to an elderly person) or, conversely, to keep a certain distance. When you get to know someone a bit better, you can start using ‘tú’. The best policy is to listen to how the Spanish speaking people address you and follow their example.

**Introducing someone: and this is...**

Listen to people introducing each other by clicking on the audio icons. The key language is summarised in the table.

Introduction Response

Te presento a mi amiga Laura. Hola, Laura. ¡Un placer conocerte!

This is my friend Laura. Hello, Laura. It is a pleasure to meet you!

Hola, Rosario. Este es mi amigo Federico. ¡Hola! Mucho gusto.

Hello, Rosario. This is my friend Federico. Hello! Nice to meet you.

Hola Lucas. Esta es mi amiga Claudia. Hola, es un placer conocerte. Soy

Lucas.

Hello, Lucas. She’s my friend Claudia. Hello! I am Luca. Nice to meet you.

Te presento al señor y la señora Rivera. ¡Mucho gusto!

These are Mr and Mrs Rossi. Nice to meet you!

Le presento a la señora Fernández. ¡Un placer conocerla!

May I introduce Mrs Fernández. Pleased to meet you!

Mamá, papá, les presento a los senores Fernandez. ¡Gusto en conocerlos!

Mum, dad, may I introduce Mr and Mrs Ferri. Pleased to meet you both!

Know-how:

Este es … Federico: you use ‘este’ because Federico, the person you are introducing, is male or neutral gendre.

Esta es … Beatríz: you use ‘esta’ because Beatríz, the person you are introducing, is female.

In formal introductions, you usually use the person’s name + surname or their title + surname (‘señor’ for a man and ‘señora’ for a woman and ‘señorita’ for a young lady).

**Ungendered Spanish (the future in our hands)**

In recent years, the **gender-neutral** movement has changed vocabulary in many languages forced by the everyday use of the language. The society changes so the language that they use to communicate.

Since Spanish is a gendered language, all nouns and pronouns have a gender. What to do then?

However, the dictionaries in Spanish are not as accepting of gender neutrality. In fact, at the end of October 2020, the Real Academia Española (the utmost authority of the Spanish language,) suggested on their website the use of the pronoun “elle” (pronounced “Eh-jeh). But a few days later, they retracted the entry, stating that ” ‘elle’ is a created and promoted by certain groups of people to allude to those that do not identify with either of the two traditional genders in use.” They also added that due to the confusion that the entry had on the readers, they decided to retract its entry in the Observatorio de Palabras, and that if the term becomes more commonly used they would consider to add it again.

Along with the “elle” movement, in Spanish, inclusivity has included the use of the bar: (amigos/amigas), the @: (amig@s), x: (amigx), and e: (amigues). The word “les” (instead of los or las) is also used.

In other words, if the Real Academia Española does not accept it, the reality will cause it to be tomorrow. Reality is first, and language follows. As it goes, let’s start our change with something simple using ‘e’ as the neutral gender.

**Learn how:**

una amiga ruidosa — a loud (female) friend

un amigo ruidoso — a loud (male) friend

unas amigas ruidosas — some loud (female) friends

unos amigos ruidosos — some loud (not-all-female) friends

following the development of gender-neutral ‑e:

unes amigues ruidoses — some loud friends

Back to top

Exercises

Here are different types of exercises for practicing expressions of first contact.

**1. Fill in the table below** by dragging greetings and goodbye expressions into the appropriate column marked by .

Buen día Buenas tardes Buenas tardes Hola Adiós Nos vemos mañana Buenas noches Hasta el jueves Hasta luego Hasta pronto, Adiós

**Greetings** **Goodbyes**

**2. Multiple choice I (formal and informal greetings and replies)**

Consider the greetings and replies below. Select whether they are formal or informal.

1. Bien, gracias. ¿Y usted?

Formal Informal

2. ¿Hola, cómo estás?

Formal Informal

3. Hola Marta, ¿cómo estás?

Formal Informal

4. Buenas noches, Sr. Gómez, ¿cómo está?

Formal Informal

5. Señora, ¿cómo está?

Formal Informal

6. Todo bien, gracias ¿y usted?.

Formal Informal

7. Así Así. Y tú ¿cómo estás?

Formal Informal

**3. Match the halves (introducing someone)**

Complete each dialogue by dragging the appropriate reply. If your choice is correct you will be able to listen to the dialogue using the audio icon . You can check your answers and reset the exercise any time.

1. Hola, Marcos. Esta es Charo.

2. Esta es mi hermana Sara.

3. Conozca a los señores Serrano.

4. Sr. Romero, ésta es mi madre.

5. Encantado de conocerles.

• Hola Charo, muy contenta en conocerte.

• ¡Por fin te conozco! Soy Valentina.

• Un placer conocerle.

• Es un placer conocerte.

• ¡Hola, también es un placer para nosotros!

Reset Check

**4. Multiple choice II (Introducing someone)**

In the Dialogues below, select the correct form. If you get it wrong use the hint to help you.

Dialogue 1

Hola Marcos, \_\_\_\_\_\_? (estas bien)

See Hint: ESTAR 2nd sing. informal

Todo bien, \_\_\_\_\_. Y tú? (gracias) See Hint: thank you

Dialogue 2

Buenos días Don Vicente, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_? (como estas)

See Hint: ESTAR 2nd sing. formal

a \_\_\_\_\_ señora María. ¿Todo bien? (buenas dias)

See Hint: Good morning

Sí, muy bien gracias. \_\_\_\_? (Y usted)

See Hint: you sing. formal

**Dialogue 3**

Buenas noches señores, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? (como estan)

See Hint: ESTAR 2nd pl. formal

bien, gracias Carmela. Y \_\_\_\_\_\_? (usted)

See Hint: second person singular FORMAL