Formal Commands
(Los mandatos formales)

Argentinos:
El futuro económico depende de ustedes.
¡Trabajen y compren!
Formal Commands

We use commands to give instructions or to ask people to do things. In Spanish, commands have different forms to distinguish between formal (usted/ustedes) and informal (tú/vosotros) address. Formal commands use subjunctive forms, with the implied meaning that the speaker is trying to influence the listener to do something.
Formal Commands

We might make a simple statement to communicate a fact. Juan speaks French well, so we tell him so.

\[
\text{Juan, Ud. habla bien el francés.}
\]

It’s very nice that Juan speaks French, but we are in Madrid! So we tell him . . .

\[
\text{Por favor, Juan, hable Ud. español.}
\]

Commands are used (both politely and otherwise) to persuade others to do our bidding. We are trying to get Juan to do something that we want him to do.
Formal Commands
As mentioned, formal commands are based on subjunctive forms. Notice the following chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive</th>
<th>Subjunctive</th>
<th>Formal commands</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hablar</td>
<td>hable</td>
<td>Ud. hable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pensar</td>
<td>piense</td>
<td>Ud. piense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comer</td>
<td>coma</td>
<td>Ud. coma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>saber</td>
<td>sepa</td>
<td>Ud. sepa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>escribir</td>
<td>escriba</td>
<td>Ud. escriba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ir</td>
<td>vaya</td>
<td>Ud. vaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pedir</td>
<td>pida</td>
<td>Ud. pida</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Formal Commands

Of course, the same six (DISHES) verbs are irregular with command forms as they are in the subjunctive.

- **Dar** → dé, den
- **Ir** → vaya, vayan
- **Ser** → sea, sean
- **Haber** → haya, hayan
- **Estar** → esté, estén
- **Saber** → sepa, sepan
Formal Commands
Following are examples of formal commands:

**Hable con su gerente.**
Speak to your manager.

**Despida a ese empleado, Sr. Ruiz.**
Fire that employee, Mr. Ruiz.

**Salgan pronto de la oficina.**
Leave the office soon.

**Piensen antes de hablar.**
Think before speaking.
Formal Commands

*Negative* commands are formed by placing **no** in front of the command form.

**No** llegue tarde.
Don’t arrive late.

**No** asciendan a todos los empleados.
Don’t promote all of the employees.
Formal Commands
Subject pronouns may be used with commands for emphasis or clarification. As a rule, they are placed after the verb.

Piense usted.
You think.

No griten ustedes en el trabajo.
Don’t you shout at work.
Formal Commands

Object pronouns follow and are attached to affirmative commands and precede negative commands.

¡Váyase de aquí!
Leave here!

Traíganmelo, por favor.
Bring it to me, please.

No se levante, señorita.
Don’t get up, miss.

No se lo den al jefe.
Don’t give it to the boss.

Affirmative commands with pronouns attached require a written accent.
FIN