

Whether you're corresponding with a Spanish-speaking friend or writing a formal business letter, the greetings and salutations in this lesson can help give your letters credibility and make them seem more authentic and less like you're mimicking English.

In English, it is common to begin both personal letters and business correspondence with "Dear ___" and to end them with "Sincerely." In Spanish, however, there is more variation depending on how formal you wish to be.

Greetings: In personal correspondence, the equivalent of "dear" is *querido* or *querida*, depending on the sex of the person. The plural form can also be used. In Spanish, it is more common to follow the greeting with a colon rather than the comma usually used in English.

- *Querido Roberto* (Dear Roberto)
- *Querida Ana* (Dear Ana)
- *Queridos Juan y Lisa* (Dear John and Lisa)
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But *querido* is too casual for business correspondence, especially where you aren't a friend of the recipient. Use *estimado* instead. The word literally means "esteemed," but it is understood the same way as "dear" would be in English:

- *Estimado Sr. Rodríguez* (Dear Mr. Rodriguez)
- *Estimada Sra. Cruz* (Dear Mrs./Ms. Cruz)
- *Estimada Srta. González* (Dear Miss Gonzalez)
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Spanish doesn't have a true equivalent of the English salutation Ms. (and in Spanish, the distinction between *señora* and *señorita* can be one of age rather than marital status). It normally is fine to use the courtesy title of *Sra.* (the abbreviation for *señora*) if you don't know whether she is married. In fact, you should use *Sra.* unless you know the woman prefers *Srta.*

If you don't know the name of the person you're writing to, you can use the following formats:

- *Muy señor mío* (Dear sir)
- *Estimado señor* (Dear sir)
- *Muy señora mía* (Dear madam)
- *Estimada señora* (Dear madam)
- *Muy señores míos* (Dear sirs, dear sirs/madams)
- *Estimados señores* (Dear sirs, dear sirs/madams)
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The Spanish equivalent of "to whom it may concern" is *a quién corresponda*.

Greetings in Spanish should be followed by a colon, not a comma as is common in English. Such use of the comma is considered an anglicism.

Salutations: Although the following closings for personal letters may sound overly affectionate to English speakers, they are quite commonly used:

- *Un abrazo* (literally, a hug)
- *Un fuerte abrazo* (literally, a strong hug)

- *Cariñosos saludos* (roughly, kind regards)
- *Afectuosamente* (affectionately)
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The following are common with close friends or family members:

- *Besos y abrazos* (literally, kisses and hugs)
- *Besos* (literally, kisses)
- *Con todo mi cariño* (with all my caring)
- *Con todo mi afecto* (with all my affection)
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In business correspondence, the most common ending, used in much the same way as "sincerely" in English, is *atentamente*. That can also be expanded to *le saluda atentamente* or *les saluda atentamente*, depending on whether you're writing to one or to more persons, respectively. A more casual ending that can be used in business letters is *cordialmente*.

There are many other greetings and salutations that can be used other than those listed, but these will be suitable in nearly all situations.