

Spanish Forms of Address

In many ways, Spanish is a more formal language than English. Therefore, it is important to understand the social nuances and signs of respect already worked into the [Spanish language](#). To speak the language it is critical to understand and properly use the forms of addressing people.

Formal Titles

Spanish-speaking cultures hold their elderly in high regard and, as noted before, it is vitally important that you always show them the [utmost respect](#) through the use of titles. Here are some of the most common titles you will use in Spanish.

Titles: Mr., Mrs. and Miss

señor (Sr.) → mister (Mr.)

señora (Sra.) → missus (Mrs.)

señorita (Srta.) → miss (Ms.)

* Cultural Note: The use of *señora* and *señorita* can be a touchy subject as in Spanish-speaking cultures it openly implies a woman's perceived age. You might even hear someone refer to an elderly woman as *señorita* used in an endearing way as to call her a "young lady." As a general rule, women who look under 40, who are unmarried or have no children can be referred to as *señorita* and anyone who looks over 40, married or who has children can be referred to as *señora*. Further, if you don't know someone's name but you need to call to them, you can always say ¡Señor! (or *señora/señorita*) to get their attention.*

More Titles: Don and Doña

don + name → mr./sir

doña + name → mrs./lady

* Cultural Note: Don and Doña were old titles used, mostly, in the 19th century to address men and women of high social status. Although they are not as commonly used anymore, you will still hear them now and then when addressing elderly people as a form of endearment and respect.*

Titles: Professions

doctor/a → doctor

su señoría → your honor (judge)

padre → father (when addressing a Catholic priest)

majestad → your majesty

alteza real → your royal highness