

El verbo *tener* - Explanation

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.