



DON'T SAY THE WRONG 'I LOVE YOU' IN SPANISH



TE QUIERO VS TE AMO



Querer is the light version of amar.



It has a lighter connotation of love and care.

Use querer with:

- Friends
- Family
- A recent relationship
- A person you have feelings for



Te quiero mucho.
I love you very much

Beto quiere a Elisa.
Beto loves Elisa

Quiero mucho a mi familia.
I love my family very much.

Amar is the direct translation of "to love"

Use amar with:

- Your partner (as long as you are in love).
- Family members



Use it to:

-Show the greatest and deepest love (intimate)

¿Me amas? Do you love me?

Eduardo ama mucho a su esposa. Eduardo loves his wife very much.

-Talk about Things You Love

Amo esa película. I love that movie.

Te Quiero vs Te Amo: Don't Say the Wrong 'I Love You' in Spanish

There is a [misconception](#) about using *te quiero* vs *te amo* when expressing the concept of "I love you" in Spanish.

Although *quiero* often means "I want," *te quiero* can translate to "I love you" in certain circumstances.

The two phrases are used in different ways across the vast Spanish-speaking world. *Amar* means to love. *Te amo* is a deeper, more intense declaration of love than *te quiero*, but it's not reserved only for romantic relationships.

When referring to a person, both *amar* and *querer* are Spanish verbs that mean "to love." Still, there are certain nuances to using *amar* and *querer* with different people and in different situations.

When to Use *Te Quiero* vs *Te Amo*

If you want to tell someone you love them in Spanish, should you say *te amo* or *te quiero*? Let's take a closer look at the different uses of these verbs to better understand when to use *te quiero* or *te amo*.

The Case for *Querer*

In general, the safer choice is "*te quiero*." It will be understood and sound natural.

Because *querer* is a common Spanish verb that often means "to want," beginning Spanish students may not realize that it can also express love.

Use *querer* with the following people:

- Friends
- Family members (using *te quiero* or *te amo* with family depends on your preference)
- A recent relationship
- A person you have feelings for

Commonly, *querer* expresses wants and desires, as in the following examples:

Marta quiere viajar a Asia el próximo año.

Martha wants to travel to Asia next year.

Quiero una taza de café.

I want a cup of coffee

But *te quiero* is actually the most common way to say “I love you” in Spanish!

Since its literal translation is “I want you,” it may sound a bit strong to native English speakers. In Spanish, however, it has a lighter connotation of love and care. Friends and relatives frequently say “*te quiero mucho*” to one another.

More specifically, *querer* is the light version of *amar*.

While *te quiero* expresses affection, it doesn’t have a romantic or intimate connotation like *te amo* does.

Querer Example Sentences and Usage

Te quiero mucho.

I love you very much

Beto quiere a Elisa.

Beto loves Elisa.

Quiero mucho a mi familia.

I love my family very much.

Ana quiere mucho a sus amigos.

Anna loves her friends.

Querer is rarely used to say “I want you” in a romantic sense. Learn more about [querer and its conjugation](#).

What About Amar?

In regards to *te amo*, the verb *amar*— depending on the region— isn’t used as much as *querer* by most native speakers. To some, it might sound like something a character would say in a telenovela and not something two young lovers would say

in real life. To others, it may sound like a deeper declaration of profound love for a person. *Te amo* is a common expression in poetry, movies, and song lyrics.

Use *amar* with the following people:

- Your partner (as long as you are in love).
- Family members

Keep in mind that *te amo* could come across as a little overpowering if you haven't been with your partner for long! *Amar* always expresses a greater and deeper degree of affection than *querer*.

The verb *amar* directly translates to the English verb "to love" and it expresses specific sentiments like warm attachment, devotion, and deep, loving admiration between kin or couples. As a result, use this phrase within meaningful relationships or very special people.

Amar, Querer, Adorar, Encantar, and More!

The dictionary says that either *amar* or *querer* (and even *desear* and *encantar*) translate in some contexts to the verb "to love." However, *encantar* is unlike *amar*, in that it doesn't have an affectionate tone. Instead, it expresses that you like something or someone very much.

When talking about objects or activities, *adorar* also expresses that you really like something. However, when referring to a person it would translate as "to adore."

Me encantó el final de la novela.

I loved the end of the novel.

Adoré este episodio.

I loved that episode.

Norma adora a su nieto.

Norma adores her grandson.

So, Which Do You Say: *te quiero* or *te amo*?

Te quiero is useful for all kinds of loving relationships, including friendship, marriage, and family.

Te amo is a common way of saying “I love you” in strongly committed romantic relationships or within families.

Equally, *querer* and *amar* can be used in non-romantic contexts like the love of siblings.

The ultimate difference is that *amar* shows a greater and deeper affection than *querer*.

Romantic Spanish Phrases

Last but not least, here are some endearing Spanish terms for expressing love and affection to your most favorite people:

Mi corazón – my heart

Mi amor / mi amorcito – my love

Mi cielo – my heaven/sky

Mi vida – my life

Mi cariño – my sweetheart

Querido/a – dear

Mi media naranja – my soulmate (informal)

Alma gemela – soulmate (literally “soul twin”)

Te adoro. – I adore you.

Abrázame. – Hug me.

Besame. – Kiss me.