KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SABER VS CONOCER

If I were to tell you right now that I know that look and I know the reason you came here, could you identify which verb to use between ***Saber*** or ***Conocer***? There are verbs that can be more difficult to learn in Spanish, and this pair falls into that list. In English, we have only one verb "To know", and we can say we know a piece of information in the same way we say we know a person or place. In Spanish, on the other hand, there are differences that you will have to learn to use these verbs correctly. If knowledge is power, by the end of this article you will be a more powerful person, are you ready?

Difference Between Saber vs Conocer

A moment ago, I told you that both verbs can be translated as "To know" and that may make you think that maybe they are used indifferently one as the other, and the truth is that they are not. There are very few cases (one, to be exact) where you can use Saber or Conocer without problems, but in general, each one has specific uses, let's see!

About the verb Saber

One of the main differences that distinguishes the verb Saber, and the first one you can learn, is that it is almost never used with people. There are several things you should know about this verb:

1. In all its English uses its equivalent would be "To know", with few exceptions where it can be replaced with "Can/Can't".

2. It is a very irregular verb.

3. Generally, it is always used before infinitive verbs or interrogative pronouns.

Uses of Verb Saber

Skills

If you want to show off those Salsa classes you're taking, or your newfound ability to burp the alphabet, this is the verb to use. For example:

- **Yo sé hablar tres idiomas** – I can speak three languages

You may have noticed that the form "To know how to" in English changes to "Saber + infinitive of the verb" in Spanish. A mistake that can give away your English-speaking roots is to say: "No sé cómo pintar" instead of "**No sé pintar**", so remember the next word: simplify. Not having to say one more word always helps you concentrate on the rest of the words you do have to say .

Facts and general information

Remember that scene in *Inside* Out where facts and opinions get mixed up, but look very similar? Well, don't let *Saber y Conocer* get mixed up, if it comes to facts and information, you should always go to Saber. Let's see a couple of examples:

- **No sé cuál es tu número telefónico** – I don't know your phone number.

Sometimes Spanish is complex, you probably already know that, so it may not surprise you when I tell you that there is an exception to the rule of "No people", and that is if you want to express you know/don't know some information about someone, you can use the verb Saber in the following way, always before an interrogative particle:

- **No sé quién es Jimi Hendrix** (I don't know who Jimi Hendrix is).

- **¿Quién en su sano juicio no sabe quién es Hendrix?** (Who in their right mind doesn't know who Hendrix is?).

Other uses

Although these are the most common ways of looking at the verb Saber, there are others that are considered grammatical constructions since you will always see them in a very similar way, some of them are:

- **Memorize (as a reflexive verb): Me sé** (de memoria) los 150 Pokémon originales – I know (by heart) all 150 of the original Pokémon.
- **Have proof: Él sabe** de lo que habla – He knows what he is talking about.

- **To find out (past tense): Ellos supieron** que no decía la verdad – They found out that I was not telling the truth.

About the Verb Conocer

The verb Conocer has a quite evident difference in relation to the verb Saber, although it can be used as "To know", it can also be substituted with "To meet", "To be familiar with" and "Have been to". It is also an irregular verb, you are generally going to see it being used with nouns (never before a verb) and its uses imply a contact or approach to someone or something, let's approach its uses!

Things

When we refer to an object, using the verb Conocer, we refer to how we have or do not have the ability to identify it and even name its characteristics. Remember that the key word will always be "Approach", so if you have some familiarity with that object, you should certainly use *Conocer*. As in:

- **No conozco ese coche, pero me dijeron que es veloz** – I don't know that car, but I was told it is fast.

You can also use it in reference to abstract things with which you have knowledge on an intellectual level, for example:

- **Él conoce** esa canción, es su favorita – He knows that song, it's his favorite.

Persons

This is perhaps the easiest usage to remember, if you want to mention any person and the contact or closeness, there was or was not between the two, Conocer will be there to lend you a hand in expressing yourself. One thing you should know (or remember, if you already knew it) is that to talk about people and an action, you will usually see a preposition arise: "a". It is not very difficult, you just have to follow the following formula:

[(No) Conocer + a + Person], for example:

Conozco a Miguel, es mi vecino – I know Miguel, he is my neighbor.

If the knowledge or lack of knowledge is mutual (to know each other), its use is very similar to that of a reflexive verb, you will need a pronoun and then the verb, for example:

- **Se conocen** muy bien, ¡son hermanos! – They know each other very well, they are brothers!

Places

How nice it is to travel and discover new places, isn't it? When we talk about a place and the experience or lack of personal experience in it, whether it is one around the corner, or one across the pond, we have to use the verb Conocer, as in:

- **¿Conoces un cine bueno y barato?** – Do you know a good and cheap movie theater?

Saber or Conocer?

Hey there. Welcome.

I'm Kéllyta Quijada - and I wrote this article.

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When I started learning English, I really appreciated those moments where I was told there was one less thing to memorize. If you remember correctly, I promised you that there was one opportunity where you could use both verbs without having to think about

which one to choose, and that's when you're talking about abstract ideas. Take for example: "The mysteries of the heart", if you are inexperienced in that subject (aren't we all?), you can say:

- Quisiera **saber** los misterios de tu corazón / Quisiera **conocer**. los misterios de tu corazón

And in both sentences you will be correctly expressing that you want to know the mysteries of a person's heart (whose name surely already came to your mind!).

That's it! Can you say that you *conoces* everything about this topic and you *sabes* for sure when to use one verb or the other? Please keep in mind that you can schedule a class with our tutors and test your knowledge!