TE QUIERO VS TE AMO

De querer a amar: Spanish vocabulary

Imagine this situation: You go out with a person, you have a friendship, and you get along well, so you decide to try to take it a step further and set up a date. The date is terrible, there are awkward silences, it turns out that that pair of interests that brought you together wasn't really that strong, and you also don't feel that chemistry that makes you want to not let go of that person. In the end, there is a kiss, but that confirms that is not the person for you.

And now, what do you do? You like the person, you don't want to lose his/her friendship. That person probably didn't enjoy the date either, and this becomes a funny story to tell at the next get-together with the group of friends! But, just in case, you write to your date:

— Hola

— Holi *heart emoji* la pasé tan bien hoy, ¿cuándo repetimos?

— Bueno... Te amo...pero como amigos

— ¿¡Qué?! Yo también te amo, ¡Te he amado siempre! *tons of heart emojis and faces with hearts*

— *worried emoji*

Oh no, you've made a fatal mistake: you've said "Te amo" instead of "Te quiero", and now that "But as a friend" (como amigos) sounds terrible! Even though both phrases in English can be translated as "I love you", each one has uses and moments, so if you don't want to live a moment like this one mentioned here, keep reading to learn when to use "Te amo" and when to use "Te quiero"!

Is it love or LOVE?

Knowing when to say te amo or te quiero can be almost as difficult as knowing if the person you are dating is just a passing fancy or a potential love of your life. There is a subjectivity part and an objectivity part, but if you follow our advice, maybe we can save

you some of that mental struggle (at least the objective part). Let's look at the "soft" version of to love first.

Te quiero: Querer verb

Using the verb querer is your go-to choice if you want to convey something casual. Although it may cause a slight sweat on your palms to say it for the first time, you can be sure that it won't be an otherworldly event, nor something to regret if the other person doesn't say it back.

To begin with, querer does not express deep love, and what's more! Sometimes it doesn't express love at all, but just a desire or need, like to want. For example:

Muero de hambre, quiero comerme una pizza extra grande. — I'm starving, I want to eat an extra-large pizza.

However, when you intend to use it as a mild synonym for "I love you", something like "I feel affection towards you in a very casual way" or "I am fond enough of you to go to the movies with you, but not so fond that I would share my fears and insecurities" you can safely say "te quiero". And this applies to anyone, from your friend or that uncle you just met, to your puppy or that person you recently started dating. For example:

Mi hijo tiene un amigo nuevo, se nota que se quieren mucho. — My son has a new friend, you can tell they love each other very much.

A mis amigos y familia, los quiero mucho, gracias por su apoyo. — To my friends and family, I love you very much, thank you for your support.

Te amo: Amar verb

Now, let's talk about that great moment when your knees shake, your throat dries up and sweat pours out of places you didn't know could sweat: the moment to say te amo. Amar, a verb you can often hear in the cheesiest songs or the latest teen novel, is a word that is reserved for those people for whom our feelings become the strongest.

A friend who's almost like a brother? You might amarlo (love him or her), although it's rare, you can use it at very specific times.

That relative who brought a couple of tears to your eyes by giving you an emotional speech at your wedding? Definitely amor, so confidently tell him or her you love them

with that hug.

Your significant other, who you're one step away from asking to move in with you? ¡Amor, amor, amor! I know it's scary, but you can say te amo (and cross your fingers that the love is mutual). But be careful, if the relationship is very new, sometimes it can be intimidating to use those words.

If you need some help on how to use it, here are a couple of examples:

– **Te amo (mucho),** Gabriela, ¿tú me amas? – I love you (so much), Gabriela, do you love me?

– Yo **también te amo,** Javier – I love you too, Javier.

– ¿Escuchaste? Javier y Gabriela **se aman** – Did you hear? Javier and Gabriela love each other.

– ¿Gabriela **ama a** Javier? ¡Qué bien! – Gabriela loves Javier? How nice!

Amar vs Encantar/Adorar

Some people, especially in Latin America, use the verb **Amar** to talk about likes , specifically those that we really enjoy. With this usage the verb loses its formality, since you can hear things like:

Yo amo las papas fritas. – I love french fries.

Hey there. Welcome.

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

Stuck on this topic? Hire me for just 1 hour to start mastering it. Pass a test, improve basic vocabulary or improve your conversational level in Spanish.

Book a 1 Hour Lesson With Me



Él ama jugar Fortnite, pero yo no entiendo. – He loves playing Fortnite, but I don't understand.

But in other countries, such as Spain, this may sound strange, since the verb is only used to talk about affection for people, so you can opt to use safer verbs such as Encantar or Adorar (both can mean to love in reference to likes) and say:

Me encanta tu corte de cabello. – I love your haircut.

Adoro este restaurante. – I love this restaurant.

Bonus: Enamorarse verb

If you are at that point in the relationship where the words "Te quiero" are not enough, but you are not yet ready to say the big "Te amo", you can always go in between and use the verb "Enamorarse" (to fall in love). As you can see, the -se ending on the verb tells us that it is a reflexive verb, so to use it, you must use reflexive pronouns to say:

Me enamoré de ti. – I fell in love with you.

Or use it as an adjective, changing the suffix to -ado/a and say:

Estoy **enamorado/a** de ti. – I am in love with you.

And if you just want to "warn" that love is coming, you can also say:

Me estoy enamorando de ti. – I am falling in love with you.

A-M-O-R

We can't tell you if that relationship you are in will be THE relationship or not, but what we can tell you is that every word has its moment and without a doubt amor is what we feel for Spanish, even with its subtle (and not so subtle) differences in vocabulary and grammar, and we hope you feel it too!