

LESSON TRANSCRIPT

Absolute Beginner S3 #2

Formal Greetings in Mexican Spanish

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INTRODUCTION

Alisha: Hi, Alisha here.

Fernando: Bienvenidos, soy Fernando.

Alisha: Welcome to Absolute Beginner Season 3, Lesson 2 – Formal Greetings in Mexican Spanish

Fernando: In this lesson you will learn how to greet someone politely in Spanish. In other words, what to say when you meet someone of superior rank.

Alisha: It can be your teacher, your boss or simply someone in the street, who you don't know.

Fernando: The conversation takes place at a school.

Alisha: And it is between a student, Ashley, and her teacher, Mr. Gómez.

Fernando: The speakers have different professional ranks, so they will speak accordingly, using polite Spanish.

Alisha: Let's listen to the conversation.

LESSON CONVERSATION

A: Buenos días señor Gómez

B: Buenos días, Ashley

A: ¿Cómo está usted?

B: Muy bien, gracias ¿y usted?

A: Muy bien, gracias.

Alisha: Let's hear the conversation one time slowly.

A: Buenos días señor Gómez

B: Buenos días, Ashley

A: ¿Cómo está usted?

B: Muy bien, gracias ¿y usted?

A: Muy bien, gracias.

Alisha: Now let's hear it with the English translation.

A: Buenos días señor Gómez

Alisha: Good morning Mr. Gómez

B: Buenos días, Ashley

Alisha: Good morning, Ashley

A: ¿Cómo está usted?

Alisha: How are

you?

B: Muy bien, gracias ¿y usted?

Alisha: I'm fine thank you, and you?

A: Muy bien, gracias.

Alisha: I'm fine, thank you.

POST CONVERSATION BANTER

Alisha: So Fernando, they're speaking formally in this conversation, right? That means there are formal and informal ways to speak?

Fernando: Yes, that's exactly right. Which one you use depends on the person's rank.

Alisha: What do you mean by "rank?"

Fernando: Well, it's a bit complicated, but in Spanish-speaking countries, you have to be very aware of who is in a superior position to you, be it in age or professional standing, like, for example a teacher. Also, when talking to someone new, you are expected to use the formal word for "you", 'usted'.

Alisha: What about people who are younger than you?

Fernando: Normally, with people younger than you or with kids, you speak using informal speech. You use the informal word for "you", 'tú'.

Alisha: I see. What if you mess up and refer to someone using the wrong term?

Fernando: Well, it happens. Like you may refer someone using the casual form 'tú', and then realize he or she wasn't comfortable. So you have to go back to "usted" and it's not a nice feeling.

Alisha: Hmm, it does sound a bit complicated. So do you have to ask permission before you can move from 'usted' to 'tú'?

Fernando: That's right. But I think when in doubt, you should use 'Usted'. If the other person thinks it's okay to use 'tú', they will let you know.

Alisha: That's good to know! Okay, let's move onto the vocab section.

VOCAB LIST

Alisha: Let's take a look at the vocabulary for this lesson.

The first word we shall see is:

Fernando: buenos días [natural native speed]

Alisha: good

morning

Fernando: buenos días [slowly - broken down by syllable]

Fernando: buenos días [natural native speed]

Next:

Fernando: señor, señora [natural native speed]

Alisha: Sir, Ma'am, Mr., Mrs., gentleman, lady

Fernando: señor, -a [slowly - broken down by syllable]

Fernando: señor, -a [natural native speed]

Next:

Fernando: cómo [natural native speed]

Alisha: how

Fernando: cómo [slowly - broken down by syllable]

Fernando: cómo [natural native speed]

Next:

Fernando: estar [natural native speed]

Alisha: to be (temporary conditions)

Fernando: estar [slowly - broken down by syllable]

Fernando: estar [natural native speed]

Next:

Fernando: usted [natural native speed]

Alisha: you (formal)

Fernando: usted [slowly - broken down by syllable]

Fernando: usted [natural native speed]

Next:

Fernando: muy bien [natural native speed]

Alisha: very well

Fernando: muy bien [slowly - broken down by syllable]

Fernando: muy bien [natural native speed]

Next:

Fernando: gracias [natural native speed]

Alisha: thanks, thank you

Fernando: gracias [slowly - broken down by syllable]

Fernando: gracias [natural native speed]

Next:

Fernando: y [natural native speed]

Alisha:

and

Fernando: y [slowly - broken down by syllable]

Fernando: y [natural native speed]

KEY VOCABULARY AND PHRASES

Alisha: Let's have a closer look at the usage for some of the words and phrases from this lesson.

Fernando: The first phrase we'll look at is....

Fernando: Buenos días.

Alisha: Which means "good morning". To go along with that, we also have -

Fernando: Buenas tardes.

Alisha: "Good afternoon", or "hello", and...

Fernando: Buenas noches.

Alisha: "Good night." One more time? Repeat after Fernando...

Fernando: "Good morning." 'Buenos días' (pause). "Good afternoon". Buenas tardes. (pause) "Good night." Buenas noches. (pause).

Alisha: The phrase for "good night" can also mean "good evening", right?

Fernando: Sure! Buenas noches can be used to greet someone when they go into a restaurant or party at night. But it is also a way to say Goodbye when people go back home, or before they go off to sleep.

Alisha: So when you are at home ready to go to bed you say buenas noches?

Fernando: That's right. Please note that these are formal greetings. You wouldn't say Buenos días or Buenas tardes to your friends at school.

Alisha: What's our next word?

Fernando: Muy bien. Muy bien means "very well". Muy means "very", and bien means "well".

Alisha: This was the answer to "how are you" in the dialogue, right?

Fernando: Yes. ¿Cómo está usted? Muy bien. "How are you? Very well."

Alisha: We translated it simply as "I'm fine" in the dialogue.

Fernando: And we'll look at that a bit more in the next section.

Alisha: Great, and what's the last word we have?

Fernando: Gracias.

Alisha: Many listeners may already be familiar with this – it means "thank you".

Fernando: These two phrases go together very well – muy bien, gracias. "Very well,

thanks.”

Alisha: Ah, I see! So in the dialogue these two are like a set.

Fernando: That’s right!

Alisha: Ok, let’s move onto the grammar.

LESSON FOCUS

Alisha: The focus of this lesson is greeting someone in formal Spanish.

Fernando: The main phrase we are learning is ¿cómo está usted?

Alisha: “How are you?” Now keep in mind that this is formal Spanish.

Fernando: Repeat after me - ¿cómo está usted? (pause)

Alisha: Fernando, let’s break it down.

Fernando: Okay. Cómo

Alisha: This means “how”

Fernando: está

Alisha:

Fernando: This is the verb... ESTAR. It’s conjugated in the third person form, está

Alisha: And lastly?

Fernando: Usted.

Alisha: The formal word for “you”. All together again?

Fernando: ¿Cómo está usted? (pause)

Alisha: We’ll learn how to ask the same question using informal Spanish in the next lesson, so stay tuned for that!

Fernando: But for now, let’s look at the answer for this.

Alisha: We actually saw it earlier in the vocab section.

Fernando: That’s right, it was Muy bien, gracias.

Alisha: Literally, “very well, thanks.” In the dialogue, we translated it as “I’m fine, thanks.” So, all together now. Listeners, please repeat. “How are you?”

Fernando: ¿Cómo está usted? (pause)

Alisha: I’m fine, thanks.

Fernando: Muy bien, gracias. (pause)

Alisha: Great! There’s one other little thing I want to mention.

Fernando: What’s that?

Alisha: After Mr. Gomez says “I’m fine, thank you,” he says “and you”?

Fernando: Oh, right. ¿Y usted?

Alisha: It literally means “and

you”?

Fernando: Yes. ¿Y usted?

Alisha: Okay, so now it's time for the listeners to come up with the phrases on their own. Are you ready listeners? Fernando will ask how you are. Please respond!

Fernando: Okay, here I go. ¿Cómo está usted? (pause)

Alisha: And the answer is?

Fernando: Muy bien, gracias.

Alisha: Great, Now let's try it the other way around. Listeners, ask Fernando [pause]

Fernando: Muy bien, gracias.

Alisha: Great! How did you do? Fernando, I think that's going to wrap up this lesson!

Thanks for joining us, everyone!