

# Perspectivas del mundo hispano

## ¿Qué es un amigo?

**Marcos**, a Costa Rican student on an exchange program in the United States writes:



“When I arrived in the United States, I was amazed at all the friends my host brother and sister had. They knew a lot of people. These friends came to the house frequently, and we went out in groups. People were very open when meeting me. We’d spend some time together and get to know each other in a short amount of time. And once you got to know them, you ended up talking about everything!”

**Brianna**, a United States student on an exchange program in Colombia writes:



“After I spent my year in Colombia, I learned that the concept of friendship is a little different than in the United States. My host brother and sisters spent a lot of time with their family. They knew people at school and from after-school activities, but they had just a few close friends and we’d do things with them. It was definitely a smaller group than I was used to. It seems that it took longer to become close friends

with people too.”

In Spanish, two expressions are used frequently to describe friendly relationships: *un amigo*, which means “friend,” and *un conocido*, which means “acquaintance.” You already know the word *amigo*. *Conocido* comes from the verb *conocer*, which means “to meet.” Each expression implies a different type of relationship.

**Check it out!** In many Spanish-speaking countries you’ll find lots of expressions for someone who is your friend: *hermano*, *cuate* (México), *amigote* (España), and *compinche* (Uruguay, Argentina, España). Make a list of the expressions for “a friend” that are popular in your community. How would you explain them to someone from a Spanish-speaking country?

**Think about it!** Compare how the United States perspective on friendship is different from that of a Spanish-speaking country. Use the terms *amigo* and *conocido* as you make the comparison.



Dos amigas estudiando en Cozumel, México



Amigos en una fiesta en España