

"To know": conocer vs. saber

The basic meaning of **conocer** is "to be acquainted with" and thus may be used as "to know" persons or places, or "to be familiar" with [rather than "to know by heart"] something such as a literary work. In the preterit it can be equivalent of the word "met", that is, "made the acquaintance of".

Yo no <u>conozco</u> a nadie en este cuarto.	<i>I don't know anyone in this room.</i>
Ah, pero <u>conoces</u> a Ana; la <u>conociste</u> anoche.	<i>Ah, but you know Ana; you met her last night.</i>
Nadie aquí conoce el poema compuesto por Bécquer.	<i>No one here is familiar with the poem composed by Bécquer.</i>
Claro que <u>conozco</u> a Madrid; nací allí.	<i>Of course I know Madrid; I was born there.</i>

Saber means "to know" a fact. It may also be used as "to know how to" when followed by an infinitive.

Yo <u>sé</u> la verdad y <u>sé</u> que tú no la dijiste.	<i>I know the truth, and I know that you didn't tell it.</i>
<u>Sabes pronunciar</u> esa palabra?	<i>Do you know how to pronounce that word?</i>
No sabemos quién es el hombre sentado allí.	<i>We don't know who the fellow seated over there is.</i>

Note that **saber** and not **conocer** is used in the third example --with **quién**-- because the issue is knowledge of information, not of acquaintance.