



FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY™

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

LETTER-WRITING GUIDE

Spanish

INTRODUCTION

You may want to write for genealogical information from Spain or Latin America if you cannot find the records you need at the Family History Library™. These instructions will help you prepare a letter requesting genealogical information from Spanish-speaking countries. Please note, however, that many records from Spain and Latin America have been microfilmed and are available through the Family History Library. Before you write for information, check the Family History Library Catalog™ to see if the records you need are available on microfilm. Also, check the records of surrounding towns and parishes to see if there are any other records which may help you.

Letters written in Spanish have a greater chance of receiving a reply than those written in English. Spain has good response to correspondence, but receiving an answer may be difficult because of problems with the mail. In Latin America frequent mail strikes result in letters getting lost.

BEFORE YOU WRITE

Before you write a letter to obtain family history information, you should do two things:

- **Determine exactly where your ancestor was born, married, or died.** Because most genealogical records were recorded locally, you will need to know the specific locality where your ancestor was born, married, died, or resided for a given time. See the library's *Tracing Immigrant Origins* (34111) for help in finding home towns.
- **Determine where records from your ancestor's home parish are stored today.** When you have a locality name, use a gazetteer to determine whether the name is a village, parish, city, district, county, or province and which parish serves your ancestor's locality. Parish record books in which the most recent entry is older than 90 years are generally sent to provincial archives.

RESEARCH BY MAIL

Letters for genealogical information in Spanish-speaking countries will generally be written to a local Catholic parish, diocese, or archdiocese, or to local or central government archives.

Addressing Your Letter

Address your letter using one of the following formats:

Civil Registration Office

Oficina del Registro Civil
(postal code) (city), (state)
COUNTRY

Catholic Priest

Reverendo Padre
Parroquia de (name of parish)
(postal code) (city), (state)
COUNTRY

Bishop

Excmo. Sr. Obispo de (name of diocese)
(postal code)(city), (state)
COUNTRY

Archdiocese

Excmo. y Revmo. Sr. Arzobispo
Arzobispado de (name of archdiocese)
(postal code) (city), (state)
COUNTRY

National, State, or University Archives

Name of Archive
(postal code) (city), (state)
COUNTRY

Postal codes, similar to United States zip codes, are used in Spain and in some Latin American countries. Put the postal code before the city. If you don't have the postal code, send the letter without the code.

How to Send Return Postage and Money

In your letter indicate that you will pay for research time, copies, and services. You can pay for the return postage by buying international reply coupons, which are vouchers for stamps; include at

least two coupons. You may purchase these coupons from any United States post office.

When writing to a state archive or a local civil registration office, **do not send money** in your first letter. Request that they advise you of their fees and the best way to send money.

When writing to the local parish, send a donation of \$5.00 to \$10.00 and express a desire to make further donations as their services are needed. U.S. currency is most convenient for the recipient or you can send a cashier's check from your local bank made payable to: Parroquia de (locality). It is advisable to tape your payment check or currency to the inside of the letter.

HOW TO WRITE A LETTER IN SPANISH

Your letter should include:

- the date (at the top)
- the name and address of the addressee
- a greeting
- a brief introduction
- biographical information about your relative
- a short, specific genealogical request
- referral request(s)
- a comment about payment
- closing remarks
- your signature
- your return address (including your country)

Select appropriate sentences from the following pages. Each sentence is translated into Spanish. Be sure your sentences are consistent and fit together logically. Copy the sentences carefully to ensure the spelling, punctuation, and accent marks are correct. Type the letter, if possible, and add the necessary accent marks and tildes using a pen, or print neatly.

Make your request specific and simple. Do not ask for too much at one time. Give the full name, the date of birth (at least approximate), and the town of birth or residence for each ancestor you need information about. Use the format on page 3 of this guide to provide ancestor information.

Include your return address. Offer to pay for time, copies, and services rendered. (See "How to Send Return Postage and Money" on page 1 of this guide.) Do not request too much information at one time.

The following English-to-Spanish translations will help you compose your letter. Read the sentences in English and choose those that best express what you want to say. Be sure that your sentences are arranged logically. You may want to write your

letter first in English using the following sentences, then replace the sentences with their Spanish translations. However you proceed, make sure you type or neatly print your letter and, when necessary, add any diacritical marks and special characters (such as á, é, í, ó, ú, ü, ñ) with a pen.

Do not use this guide as the letter itself! Doing so might insult the recipient and lessen the chance of a reply.

Writing Dates

Write dates carefully.

- Write the day first, then the month, then the year.
- Write the full name of the month.
- Write the year in full (1845, not '45).

The preposition de (of) is used in writing dates in Spanish. For example, April 7, 1890 should be written:

7 de abril de 1890

Names of the Months

English	Spanish
January	enero
February	febrero
March	marzo
April	abril
May	mayo
June	junio
July	julio
August	agosto
September	septiembre
October	octubre
November	noviembre
December	diciembre

FOLLOW-UP

When you receive a reply, send a note of thanks or acknowledgment. You may wish to do this in a follow-up letter requesting further information. Refer by date to your earlier letters and their return letters. If they have assigned you a reference number, include that number as well.

Use Spanish-English dictionaries to help you understand the reply. Sometimes you can hire accredited genealogists to translate for you.

If you do not receive an answer, write again and include a copy of your first letter. Do not send more money unless you verify that your first letter did not arrive.

Greetings

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1. Dear Sir (civil, government, or university): | 1. Estimado Señor: |
| 2. Dear Father (catholic priest): | 2. Estimado Reverendo Padre: |
| 3. Your Excellency (catholic bishop, archbishop): | 3. Su Excelencia: |
-

Introductions

- | | |
|---|---|
| 4. I am researching the history of my ancestors of <i>(fill in city)</i> and need information from your records. | 4. Estoy investigando la historia de mis antepasados que son originarios de <i>(fill in city)</i> y preciso información de sus archivos. |
| 5. My ancestors are from <i>(fill in city)</i> and I would like to know more about them. | 5. Mis antepasados son de <i>(fill in city)</i> y me gustaría saber más acerca de ellos. |
| 6. The following person is my ancestor who was born in <i>(fill in city)</i> . I will give you all the vital data I have for this person. | 6. La siguiente persona es mi antepasado que nació en <i>(fill in city)</i> . Le proporcionaré toda la información que tengo de esta persona. |
| 7. The following persons are my ancestors who were born in <i>(fill in city)</i> . I will give all the vital data about them that I have. | 7. Las siguientes personas son mis antepasados que nacieron en <i>(fill in city)</i> . Le proporcionaré toda la información que tengo de ellos. |
-

Biographical Information

Give as much information as possible. Use only those items below for which you can give accurate information relevant to your request. Do not include information about events which occurred after the ancestor left his or her native land.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 8. a. Given name and surname: | 8. a. Nombres de pila y apellidos: |
| b. Date of birth (approximate): | b. Fecha de nacimiento (aproximada): |
| c. Place of birth: | c. Lugar de nacimiento: |
| d. Date of baptism: | d. Fecha de bautismo: |
| e. Place of baptism: | e. Lugar de bautismo: |
| f. Full name of father: | f. Nombre completo del padre: |
| g. Full maiden name of mother: | g. Nombre y apellido de soltera de la madre : |
| h. Full name of husband: | h. Nombre completo del esposo: |
| i. Full maiden name of wife: | i. Nombre y apellido de soltera de la esposa: |
| j. Date of marriage: | j. Fecha de casamiento: |
| k. Place of marriage: | k. Lugar de casamiento: |
| l. Date of death: | l. Fecha de defunción: |
| m. Place of death: | m. Lugar de defunción: |
| n. Date of emigration: | n. Fecha de emigración: |
| o. Date of immigration: | o. Fecha de inmigración: |
-

Genealogical Requests

9. Please send me a complete copy of the birth (or christening) record of this (these) person(s).
 10. Could you please check your birth registers from *(fill in year)* to *(fill in year)* for the birth record of this person.
 11. Please send me a copy of the marriage record of (1) these persons, (2) this person's parents.
 12. My Ancestor *(fill in name)* died in *(fill in city)* about *(fill in year)*. I would like a copy of the death record.
 13. I am very interested in knowing more about the family of this person. If you would provide a copy of the marriage record of the parents and names and birth dates of the brothers and sisters, I would be very grateful.
 14. I am interested in communicating with my relatives who may live in your town. My ancestor was *(fill in name)*. He (She) resided in *(fill in town)* before he (she) left for the United States in the year *(fill in year)*. If you know of any persons of this name or relatives of the family, I would be grateful if you would give this letter to them so that they can contact me.
 15. Please send me a copy of the family information on *(fill in husband's name)* and *(fill in wife's name)*. They were married in *(fill in city)*, approximately *(fill in date)*.
 16. For my family research I need information from the Jewish records of births, marriages, and deaths from your community. Do you know where such records were kept and where they are presently located? I would appreciate any information you could send me.
 9. Le agradecería que me enviara una copia literal de la partida de nacimiento (o bautismo) de esta(s) persona(s).
 10. Le agradecería que buscara la partida de nacimiento de esta persona entre sus registros de los años *(fill in year)* y *(fill in year)*.
 11. Le agradecería que me enviara una copia de la partida de matrimonio de (1) estas personas, (2) los padres de esta persona.
 12. La información que poseo de *(fill in name)* es que falleció en *(fill in city)* aproximadamente en *(fill in year)*. Quisiera obtener una copia de la partida de defunción.
 13. Estoy muy interesado en saber más acerca de la familia de esta persona. Le agradecería mucho que me enviara una copia de la partida de matrimonio de sus padres junto con los nombres y fechas de nacimiento de sus hermanos y hermanas.
 14. Estoy interesado en comunicarme con cualquier familiar mío que resida en su ciudad. Mi antepasado fue *(fill in name)*. Él (Ella) residía en *(fill in town)* antes de venir a los Estados Unidos en el año *(fill in year)*. Si usted sabe de cualquier persona con este apellido, o si posee alguna información acerca de los parientes de mi antepasado, le agradecería muchísimo que les entregara esta carta para que ellos se pongan en contacto conmigo.
 15. Sírvase enviarme una copia de la información familiar de *(fill in husband's name)* y *(fill in wife's name)*. Ellos se casaron en *(fill in city)*, aproximadamente el *(fill in date)*.
 16. En mi investigación familiar me veo en la necesidad de indagar información acerca de nacimientos, matrimonios y defunciones de los registros judíos de su localidad. ¿Tiene usted conocimiento de dónde se guardaban tales registros y de dónde puedo localizarlos actualmente? Le agradezco de antemano la información que pueda suministrarme.
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Referral Requests

- | | |
|---|---|
| 17. If you do not have the necessary records, I request that you provide the address of the place where such records can be found. | 17. Si no tiene a su disposición estos registros, le agradecería que me suministrara información acerca de adónde puedo dirigirme para solicitarlos |
| 18. If you are unable to do this research for me, please recommend a local researcher that I could hire for this purpose (if possible someone who speaks some English). | 18. De no ser posible que usted realice esta investigación, le agradecería que me recomiende una persona de su localidad, si es posible, alguien que hable ingles, que haga este tipo de investigaciones y con la cual yo pueda poneme en contacto. |

Payment

- | | |
|---|--|
| 19. Would you please inform me if it is possible to obtain photocopies from your records and the cost of such copies? | 19. Favor de informarme si es posible obtener fotocopias de sus registros. A la vez, por favor, hágame saber el costo correspondiente. |
| 20. Please let me know how I can make an offering to your parish in gratitude for your help. | 20. Tenga la bondad de indicarme la forma correcta de realizar una donación a su parroquia en gratitud por los servicios y la colaboración que usted me ha brindado. |
| 21. I enclose \$_____ as a donation for your parish. | 21. Adjunto una donación de _____ dólares como ofrenda para su parroquia. |
| 22. Please let me know the cost of your help and how I can pay. | 22. Le agradecería me hiciera saber el costo de sus servicios y la mejor forma de remitirle el pago de los mismos. |

Closing Remarks and Return Address

- | | |
|---|---|
| 23. I thank you in advance for your assistance. | 23. Le agradezco de antemano la ayuda dispensada. |
| 24. Sincerely,
Cordially, | 24. Atentamente,
Cordialmente, |
| 25. My address is: <i>(fill in address)</i> | 25. Mi dirección es: <i>(fill in address)</i> |
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-

Follow-up

Use these sentences in follow-up letters as needed.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 26. Thank you for the information you sent. It has helped me very much. | 26. Gracias por la información que me ha enviado, ya que ha sido una ayuda valiosa en mi investigación. |
| 27. I need further information about one of the individuals you mentioned in your letter, (<i>fill in name</i>). I thank you for the additional information that you may be able to provide about this person. | 27. Me encuentro con la necesidad de recabar más información acerca de una de las personas que usted mencionó en su carta, (<i>fill in name</i>). Le agradecería cualquier información adicional que pudiera facilitarme sobre esta persona. |
| 28. I have already received from you the following information about this person: | 28. He recibido de usted la siguiente información acerca de esta persona: |
| 29. I am enclosing a copy of a letter I sent you on (<i>fill in date</i>). Please write and tell me if you can do this research. | 29. Adjunto una copia de la carta que le envié el día (<i>fill in date</i>). Le suplico que me escriba y me haga saber si le es posible llevar a cabo esta búsqueda. |
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EXAMPLE LETTER

Date 20 de julio de 1993

Addressee Oficina del Registro Civil
42009 Pachuca, Hidalgo
MÉXICO

Greeting Estimado Señor:

Introduction La siguiente persona es mi antepasado que nació en Pachuca. Le proporcionaré toda la información que tengo de él.

Biographical Information Nombres de pila y apellidos: Francisco Paulo Morales Velásquez
Fecha de bautismo: 2 de abril de 1889
Lugar de bautismo: Pachuca, Hidalgo, México
Apellido de soltera de la esposa: María Lauriana Gómez
Fecha de casamiento: 18 de diciembre de 1921
Lugar de casamiento: Tochimilco, Hidalgo, México

Genealogical Request Le agradecería que me enviara una copia literal de la partida de nacimiento de esta persona.

Referral Requests Si no tiene a su disposición estos registros, le agradecería que me suministrara información acerca de adónde puedo dirigirme para solicitarlos.

Payment Le agradecería que me hiciera saber el costo de sus servicios y la mejor forma de remitirle el pago por los mismos.

Closing Le agradezco de antemano la atención, el servicio y la colaboración que me ha brindado.

Signature Atentamente,

Return Address Jane Doe
67 Q Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84103
USA

COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

The Family History Library™ welcomes additions and corrections that will improve future editions of this guide. Please send your suggestions to:

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