The ability to read Spanish handwritten records opens the door to a world of records for those with Hispanic ancestry. It also provides a wonderful opportunity to serve others by helping to index records in Spanish. In this class you will learn about the origins of the Spanish language; the composition of the Spanish alphabet; how to identify letters, spelling variations, names, and commonly used abbreviations. These skills will help enable you to more readily recognize record types and extract key information.

ORIGINS OF THE SPANISH LANGUAGE
After Mandarin and English, Spanish is the third most commonly spoken language in the world.
- Originated in the Iberian Peninsula
- Influenced by Latin
- Arabic influence beginning in the 8th century
- Castilian Spanish or Castellano began to dominate in the 1200s.

SPANISH ALPHABET
29 letters
- 26 letters of the English alphabet
- Extra letters – Ch, Ll, Ñ

Interchangeable letters
- i - y
- b – v - u
- j – g - x
- c – z – s – ss – ç – x

Examples of words with interchangeable letters
- Ysabel – Isabel – Isavel
- habia – havia
- mujer – muger – muxer
- licencia – lizencia

SPELLING VARIATIONS
Because of interchangeable letters you may find words misspelled. Some examples include:
- Enero – henero
- Cayetano – Calletano
Veinte – beinte

**NAMES**

*Commonly used first names*

- José
- Maria
- Juan

**Double surname system**

- First last name – Paternal surname
- Second last name – Maternal surname
- Women never change their surnames
- A road map for your Hispanic research

**Example** Juan Perez Ramos

- Perez = paternal surname
- Ramos = maternal surname (maiden name)

**Commonly used name abbreviations**

- Antonio - Antö
- Francisco - Fco or Franco
- Juana - Jª
- Magdalena - Magda
- Maria - Ma

For more information on name abbreviations, please click on the following link if you are viewing this document electronically [Name abbreviations](https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Spanish_Genealogical_Word_List) or visit the [Spanish Genealogical Word List](https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Spanish_Genealogical_Word_List) article in the FamilySearch Wiki:

**RECORD TYPES**

**FORMATS**

*Paragraph format*

- Date, place, and name of the official or priest
- Information about the informant (civil registration)
- Information about the type of event
- Names of other people you might find in records:
  - Parents (births/baptisms, marriages, deaths/burials)
  - Spouse (marriages, deaths/burials)
  - Grandparents (births/baptisms)
  - Witnesses
  - Godparents (baptisms)
  - Surviving heirs (deaths/burials)
Pre-printed Forms

- Not as common
- More likely in 20th century records

KEY WORDS

archive     archivo
baptism     bautismo, bauticé
birth       nacimiento, nació
burial      entierro, sepultura, sepultado(a)
Catholic church Iglesia Católica
census      censo, padrón
child       niño(a), hijo(a), párvulo(a)
christening See baptism
curch records registros parroquiales
civil registry Registro Civil
confirmation confirmación
day         día
death       muerte, defunción, fallecimiento, muerto(a), difunto(a), fallecido(a)
father      padre
grandparent abuelo(a)
husband     marido, esposo, cónyuge
index       indice
marriage    matrimonio, casamiento, casé, velé, casado(a)
military    militar, ejército
month       mes
morning     mañana
mother      madre
name, given nombre de pila
name, surname apellido
parents     padres
parish      parroquia
wife        esposa, mujer, cónyuge
year        año

For more keywords, please visit the Spanish Genealogical Word List article in the FamilySearch Wiki: https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Spanish_Genealogical_Word_List

NEED MORE HELP?

- Script tutorials found at the website Script.byu.edu
  https://script.byu.edu/Pages/home.aspx
- For more information on the Spanish alphabet, name abbreviations, and key words visit the Spanish Genealogical Word List article in the FamilySearch Wiki:
- Online classes in the Help Center of FamilySearch, https://familysearch.org/ask/landing
- Paleography Manual (in Spanish). This is a downloadable reference manual on reading Spanish handwriting, written in Spanish. It includes exercises you can do to improve
Achimeque (place of birth)
Juan Nepomuceno (name of child)

1. Tepetongo (locality)
2. á veinticinco de mayo de mil ochocientos ochenta y uno
(on the twenty-fifth of May of one thousand eight hundred eighty-one)
3. bautizé (I baptized)
4. un niño nacido á las cuatro de la mañana del día diez y seis de este mes en Achimeque (a male child born at four in the morning of the 16th in Achimeque)

5. le llamé Juan Nepomuceno (I named him Juan Nepomuceno)
6. hijo legítimo de Florencio Adame y Antonia Robles (legitimate son of Florencio Adame and Antonia Robles)
7. abuelos paternos son: Juan Pablo Adame y Refugio Gonzales (the paternal grandparents are: Juan Pablo Adame and Refugio Gonzales)
8. los maternos Jose Maria Robles y Carmen Lopez (the maternals [grandparents is implied] Jose Maria Robles and Carmen Lopez).
9. padrinos Jose Maria Robles y Maria Gonzales (godparents José Maria Robles and Maria Gonzales).