

SPANISH

Type word or phrase 

WORD OF THE DAY

rezagarse 

VERB



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Writing letters in Spanish

The following information about writing letters in Spanish is not exhaustive, but should be regarded as information which will make your letters more "Spanish" and very importantly may avoid misunderstandings or misinterpretations. Being familiar with some of the conventions of Spanish letter writing will also be of interest when you receive letters in Spanish or English from Spanish native speakers.

Laying out the letter

In formal letters if you are writing on a plain sheet of paper, it is normal to write your name,



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SPANISH

Type word or phrase 

MENU

address, it is of course quite correct to place commas at the ends of lines, if you wish. However, when writing the address of your Hispanic addressee in a formal letter or on the envelope, it is worth remembering that end-of-line punctuation is not the norm in Spanish letters and may even be regarded as a mistake or something which may cause a letter to be misdirected. The addressee's name and address should be inserted on the left-hand side of the sheet above the opening greeting. In a letter to someone with a title, in a business for instance, this is placed after the addressee's full name. Note some of the courtesy titles that may be used to men and women.

To a man:

Sr. D. full form *Señor Don* = Mr (Level: formal)

Sr. full form *Señor* = Mr (Level: formal)

To a woman:

Sra. Dña. full form *Señora Doña* = Ms or Mrs

(Level: formal) *Sra.* full form *Señora* = Ms or Mrs (Level: formal)

Note the use of points above. The full forms are given for information only and are not normally used in ordinary correspondence.

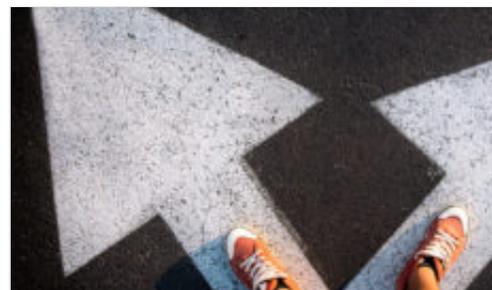
In many Spanish-speaking countries addresses may have what appear to be somewhat complicated combinations of numbers and even letters. These are very important and usually refer to the number of the building in the street, followed by the number of the floor on which the person lives. More numbers and letters refer to apartment numbers on a shared landing. For example:

Sra. Laura López Hernández / Francisco de Silvela, 14, 4º28077 Madrid

This means that the addressee lives at number 14 Francisco de Silvela Street on the fourth floor. You can key the raised º by typing Alt and



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TRENDING WORDS

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2. hidrópico
3. precapitalismo
4. disparate
5. atragantar

When writing an informal letter it is customary not to include either your own or the addressee's address. In this type of letter it is sufficient to write the name of the place you are in, followed by the date at the top of the page. The place is the town, city, village or other recognizable location.

Medina, 11 de octubre de 2002

Note that in writing the date, the day number is followed by *de*, which again follows the name of the month. The convention is to write dates: day-month-year. More informally you can write this information in numerals: 11-10-02.

In formal letters when you have included the addressee's address, the date would be written: *11 de octubre de 2002*.

Greetings

In formal letters when you do not know the person to whom you are writing:

Muy señor mío:Muy señora mía:Muy señores míos:

Rather less formal is the greeting using the word *estimado-da*:

Estimado señor:Estimada señora:Estimados señores:

This opening appears on the left-hand side. Note the use of the colon.

A very formal and impersonal opening is: *De mi consideración*:

If you know the name of the addressee, the following greetings are appropriate:

Estimado Señor Pérez:Estimada Señora González:

In a business letter when you have established a good relationship with the addressee

Estimado José: Estimada María:

In informal letters or when you know the addressee well, an opening following *querido-da* is appropriate:

Querido Rafael: Querida Beatriz: Queridos Beatriz y Rafael: Querido Papá:

Closing the letter

If you read correspondence manuals in Spanish you will probably be surprised at how many potential letter endings there are for formal correspondence. Modern practice, particularly in Spain, is to use a limited number of endings and to keep them shorter and less formal than was formerly the case. The following are should be adequate for most situations. Your signature should follow directly below, as it would in English.

Formal endings

A la espera de sus prontas noticias, le saluda atentamente,

Sin otro particular, le saluda atentamente,

Le saluda atentamente,

Atentamente,

Less formal endings

Un cordial saludo,

Cordialmente,

In friendly personal letters, the following are often used:

Un abrazo,

Un fuerte abrazo,

Un fuerte abrazo de tu amigo,

The ending *Un abrazo* is often used in business correspondence and even in internal company

In letters to family members endings are obviously freer, but some typical ones are:

Un afectuoso [*or cariñoso*] saludo,

Afectuosamente,

Un beso,

Besos,

Con todo mi cariño,

Addressing the envelope

The address should be carefully written taking account of the comments made above. If you want to include your return address on the envelope, this should be written on the back of the envelope after the word: *Remite*. An example would be along the lines of:

Remite: Mary O'Reilly, 867 Fifth Avenue, New York NY10022.

Street names

In many Spanish-speaking countries the full street name is often abbreviated in correspondence, so that a name like:

Avenida de la Independencia,350

could be written:

Avda. Independencia,350

or even,

Independencia,350

This is something to be aware of when you are given what may look like a very abbreviated street address. Abbreviations appearing in addresses such as *Avda.*, *c/*, *Apdo.* etc are given alphabetically in the *Oxford Spanish Dictionary*. The shortened form of the street address may be used with confidence.

These can appear to be long and complex. There is an explanation of the conventions regarding surnames in Spanish-speaking countries in the vocabulary-building note "Spanish surnames" under Vocabulary-building notes about the Spanish language (in English).

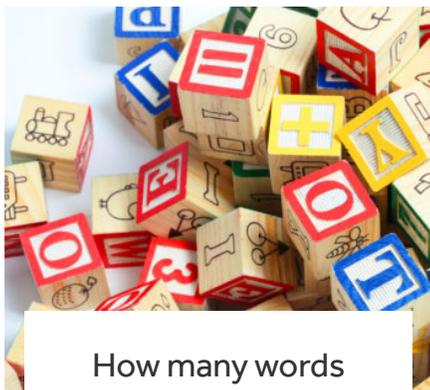
Married and unmarried women

Married women often use their unmarried surnames in Hispanic countries, see the surnames information above. The equivalent of Miss, *Señorita* abbreviated to *Srta.*, is used less and less. The trend is for *Señora* abbreviated to *Sra.*, to be used for all women regardless of marital status.

[Download specimen letters of formal and informal correspondence](#)

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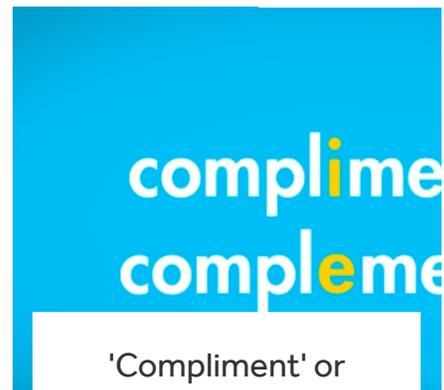
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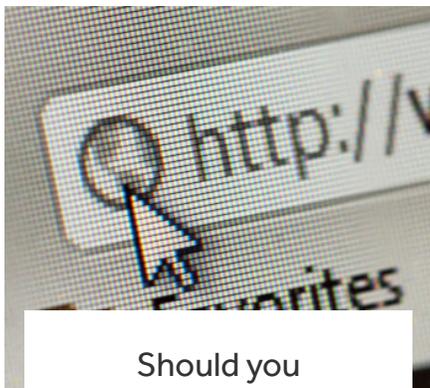
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