



ARGENTINA GENEALOGY TIPS

LETTERS OF THE PAST: READING HISTORICAL HANDWRITING IN PARISH RECORDS

PARROQUIA
LIBROS DE
BAUTISMOS
MATRIMONIOS
Y DEFUNCIONES
ARGENTINA



Parish registers are among the most valuable sources for family history in Argentina. They were written by hand for centuries, using letterforms that differ from modern handwriting. Learning to recognize these letters will help you unlock the stories of your ancestors.



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

1. Don't try to read word for word. Read the whole line first to understand the context.
2. Look for familiar words and phrases such as: *hijo de, vecino de, natural de, en la calle, viudo/a.*
3. Compare letters with the tables.
4. With practice, it becomes easier. Transcriptions may change the meaning completely.
5. Be patient. Errors are normal. Each book and each priest had their own handwriting. Practice makes confidence.

LETTERS OF THE PAST

A	<i>A</i>	<i>ae</i>	<i>ah</i>	<i>ā</i>
B	<i>B</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>B</i>
C	<i>C</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>c</i>
Ch	<i>Ch</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>Ch</i>	<i>Ch</i>
D	<i>D</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>D</i>
E	<i>E</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>E</i>
F	<i>F</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>F</i>
G	<i>G</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>G</i>
H	<i>H</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>H</i>
I	<i>I</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>I</i>
J	<i>J</i>	<i>J</i>	<i>J</i>	<i>J</i>
K	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>K</i>	<i>K</i>
L	<i>L</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>L</i>
LI	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>LI</i>	<i>LI</i>
M	<i>M</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>

a	<i>a</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>
b	<i>b</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
c	<i>c</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>c</i>
ch	<i>ch</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>ch</i>	<i>ch</i>
d	<i>d</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>d</i>
e	<i>e</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>e</i>
f	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>
g	<i>g</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>g</i>
h	<i>h</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>h</i>
i	<i>i</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>i</i>
j	<i>j</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>j</i>
k	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>k</i>
l	<i>l</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>l</i>
ll	<i>ll</i>	<i>ll</i>	<i>ll</i>	<i>ll</i>
m	<i>m</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>m</i>

N	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>
Ñ	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>ñ</i>	<i>ñ</i>
O	<i>o</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>o</i>
P	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>
Qu	<i>Qu</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>Qu</i>	<i>Qu</i>
R	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i>
RR	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>RR</i>	<i>RR</i>
S	<i>s</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>s</i>
T	<i>t</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>t</i>
U	<i>u</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>u</i>
V	<i>v</i>	<i>v</i>	<i>v</i>	<i>v</i>
W	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>W</i>
X	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>
Y	<i>y</i>	<i>y</i>	<i>y</i>	<i>y</i>
Z	<i>z</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>z</i>

n	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>
ñ	<i>ñ</i>	<i>ñ</i>
o	<i>o</i>	<i>o</i>
p	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>
qu	<i>qu</i>	<i>qu</i>
r	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i>
rr	<i>rr</i>	<i>rr</i>
s	<i>s</i>	<i>s</i>
t	<i>t</i>	<i>t</i>
u	<i>u</i>	<i>u</i>
v	<i>v</i>	<i>v</i>
w	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>
x	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>
y	<i>y</i>	<i>y</i>
z	<i>z</i>	<i>z</i>

FREQUENT EXAMPLES

A	Antonio
B	Bautista
C	Córdoba
D	dia
E	España
F	Francisco
G	Gregorio
H	hijo
I	Ignacio
J	Juan
L	Lorenzo
LL	Llamas / Llavalol
M	Manuel
N	natural
Ñ	España
P	Pedro
Q	que
R	Ramírez
S	Santiago
T	Tomás
U	Urquiza
V	vecino
Y	Ygnacio / Ybarra
Z	Zeballos

COMMON ABBREVIATIONS & SIGNS

-	q̄	ḍ	dho.	dto.	Nro.	Sn.	Sra.	Vdo.
abbreviation (dashed or stroke)	que	dicho / dicha	dicho	documento	número	San / Santo	Señora	Viuda

These letterforms come from centuries of Spanish colonial handwriting. Parish priests, scribes and notaries wrote quickly with quill pens, which explains the flourishes, abbreviations and variations you will see. Every book is different, but the more you practice, the more patterns you will recognize.

<h4>COMMON OLD SPELLINGS & VARIATIONS</h4> <p>hijo = <i>fijo, hixo, hixo legitimo</i> vecino = <i>vegino, beçino</i> natural = <i>natural, natural de</i> bautizo = <i>bautisó, bautisó, bautisó</i> casó = <i>casó, casó, casó</i> falleció = <i>falleció, falleció, falleció</i> septiembre = <i>Setiembre</i> José = <i>Josef, Jphé, Joseph</i></p> <p>Domingo = <i>Domings, Dom.ing*</i> Dominga = <i>Domíng, D.*Domings</i> Manuel = <i>Manuel, Man.*</i> Francisco = <i>Francisco, Fran.*</i> Ignacio = <i>Ygnacio, Ynacio</i> Santiago = <i>Sant.*, Santiago</i> Antonio = <i>Antonio, Ant.*</i> Córdoba = <i>Cordoba, Córdoba</i> España = <i>Espana, España</i></p>	<h4>BEYOND PARISH RECORDS</h4> <p> Civil Registry (Registro Civil) Births, marriages and deaths after 1869.</p> <p> Notarial Archives (Escribanos) Wills, inventories, powers of attorney and property records.</p> <p> Military Records (Archivos Militares) Useful for service, pensions and citizenship.</p> <p> Immigration Records (Registros de Entrada) Passenger lists and naturalization files.</p>	<h4>MORE TIPS FOR SUCCESS</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Always check the beginning and the end of the page—important notes are often in the margins. ★ Use magnification and good lighting. ★ Compare with other entries on the same page. ★ Take notes of familiar family names in different spellings. ★ Don't forget to consult civil records, newspapers and notarial records.
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"Quien conoce su historia, honra a sus ancestros
y construye su futuro."

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