Hispanic Names

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☰ WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn about how Spanish speakers' names are constructed, and how to ask for the names you need.

1. Los Nombres Hispanos (Hispanic Names)
   a. Name Diagram

1. Los Nombres Hispanos (Hispanic Names)

Spanish speakers typically (but not always) have two last names/surnames. A distinction that will become important later is that **apellido** is the word for **surname**, not for "last name." Though those two mean the same to English speakers, the word "apellido" does not imply last in sequence in Spanish.

The first surname (apellido) is from the father (apellido paterno). The second surname is from the mother (apellido materno). Forms in the U.S. typically just have one space provided for a surname/last name. A Spanish speaker reads the word "last" and interprets it as last in sequence. This would be "González" in the example that follows (the maternal last name).

The problem is that Spanish speakers file things by their paternal surname (the first of the two, or "Álvarez" in the example that follows). You can see how this could cause confusion and how a person could be in your system multiple times.

First Name (Primer Nombre)	Middle Name (Segundo Nombre)	Paternal Surname (Apellido Paterno)	Maternal Surname (Apellido Materno o del Esposo)
María	Teresa	Álvarez	González

Next, you will find every question you could wish to ask to clarify the name you need. However, we recommend that you use the first phrase in the list, **What is your full name?** in Spanish: **¿Cuál es su nombre completo?** This will get you all of the components of the name the patient is using in the correct order.

Simply because you now know to file the person below under "A" for "Álvarez" doesn't mean that everyone else will. It's best to get as many names from the patient as possible.

English	Spanish
What is your full name?	¿Cuál es su nombre completo?

What is your first name?	¿Cuál es su nombre?
If you also want a "middle" name: What is your first name? What is your middle name? What is your middle initial?	¿Cuál es su primer nombre? ¿Cuál es su segundo nombre? ¿Cuál es su segunda inicial?
What is your last name (that you want to file things by)?	¿Cuál es su apellido paterno?
What is your father's last name?	¿Cuál es su apellido paterno?
What are your last names (if you want both– the one they say first is the one you will file them under)?	¿Cuáles son sus apellidos?
What is your maiden name?	¿Cuál es su apellido de soltera?
What name do you go by?	¿Qué nombre y apellido usa diariamente?
What is the maiden name of your (family member)?	¿Cuál es el apellido de soltera de su (family member)?
What is your mother's maiden name?	¿Cuál es el apellido de soltera de su madre?
There is a three name limit.	Solamente se puede poner un nombre y dos apellidos; solamente hay tres espacios.
Is your name spelled correctly here?	¿Es correcto el deletreo de su nombre y sus apellidos aquí?
Is this how you'd like your name to appear?	¿Es como quiere usted que su nombre completo aparezca?
What is the name of your (family member)?	¿Cómo se llama su (madre/padre /hijo/hija/, etc.)?
Is this correct?	¿Es correcto?
Are you sure?	¿Está seguro/a?
Write it down, please.	Escríbalo, por favor.

1a. Name Diagram

Refer to the same chart from earlier with the name examples.

First Name (Primer Nombre)	Middle Name (Segundo Nombre)	Paternal Surname (Apellido Paterno)	Maternal Surname (Apellido Materno o del Esposo)
María	Teresa	Álvarez	González

Now, you can use the following phrases and instructions with the name chart to ask the patient for the names you need.

Spanish Singular	English	Spanish Plural	English
Necesito (point to a name above) este nombre / apellido de usted / de él / de ella.	I need (point to a name above) this name from you / from him / from her.	Necesito (point to a name above) estos nombres / apellidos de usted / de él / de ella.	I need (point to names above) these names from you / from him / from her.

SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that **Hispanic names** are typically comprised of two last names/surnames. The order of the names is important and can cause filing errors if you don't ask for the patient's entire name. You can use the phrase "¿Cuál es su nombre completo?" or "What is your full name?" to gather all of the components of the patient's name in the correct order. The **name diagram** provided in this lesson can also help you identify which names you are looking for.

¡Buena suerte!

Support

If you are struggling with a concept or terminology in the course, you may contact **SpanishforNursesSupport@capella.edu** for assistance.

If you are having technical issues, please contact **learningcoach@sophia.org**.

Source: This content has been adapted from "Spanish for Nurses" by Stephanie Langston.