

Guide for Spanish Writing

Writing in Spanish is just like writing in English. If you're venturing into writing longer research papers in Spanish, you may be exploring a Spanish poem or piece of literature. If this is the case, your end result probably won't be too different from something you'd write for an English class—except, of course, it'll be in a different language!

All of the general rules about English writing will guide you. You should make sure you have a clear introduction, a structure that makes sense, and a good conclusion. Be sure to cite things well and include a bibliography, unless your professor says you don't need one. Back up your points with good evidence from the literature. You'll do just fine keeping these things in mind.

There are a few extra things that are also helpful to know as you put together your Spanish papers and go through the revising process.

- For the most part, it's safe to assume you should **use MLA**, unless your professor specifically requests another method of citation. (Dr. Sally Farrington-Clute has said that the Spanish professors aren't too picky about citation styles, as long as you cite.) There are great guidelines for MLA in books in the Writing Studio. You can also refer to the Internet.
- **Install a Spanish keyboard!** I cannot stress this enough! It will streamline your writing process dramatically and make your life so much easier. I was surprised to learn that my Spanish major friend did not have a Spanish keyboard installed and resorted to copying and pasting every accented letter! With a Spanish keyboard on your computer, you can easily type Spanish punctuation, including accents, tildes, upside-down exclamation points and question marks. (The method for use will vary slightly depending upon which keyboard you choose. You can find instructions for installation online—this website is useful: http://www.ehow.com/how_6108174_install-spanish-keyboard-windows.html.)
- **Read through your work.** Read through your work more times than you would if you were writing in your native tongue! Read it out loud—if it sounds funny, it may be because you've phrased it incorrectly. This can be very difficult, but don't worry. Do your best, and your professor's comments on your paper will help your Spanish writing improve. If you have questions on grammar, **refer to a textbook or a reputable website on Spanish grammar.**
- I *highly* recommend <http://wordreference.com> for the use of foreign language students. Not only is this the best **Spanish dictionary** I have found online, there are **excellent forums**, meaning you can search whole phrases in English or Spanish. With a free membership, you can ask questions of your own and get answers back quickly from native Spanish speakers (or help people learning English by answering their questions)! The forums are especially helpful if you're working with literature that has regional vocabulary, because volunteers from all over the Spanish-speaking world are there to help you.

Writing in another language can be a huge challenge, but it's also very satisfying. Your grasp of grammar and your “feel” for the language will improve as you express your ideas on paper and digest your professor's feedback. The most important thing to know is that there are great resources out there to help guide you as you write, so remember them and make use of the technology available to you!

By Marie Glackin, Spanish major