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THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

LETTER-WRITING GUIDE

Portuguese

INTRODUCTION

This guide will help you prepare a letter in Portuguese to request genealogical information from Portugal or Brazil. Please note, however, that many records from these countries have been microfilmed and are available through the Family History Library. Before you write for information, check the Family History Library Catalog to see if the records you need are available on microfilm. Also, check the records of surrounding towns and parishes to see if there are any other records that may help you.

This guide is especially useful because letters written in Portuguese have a greater chance of receiving a reply than those written in English. Portugal, Brazil, and other Portuguese-speaking countries (such as Angola, Mozambique, and Macau) typically respond to requests, but the number of those who actually receive the answers can be low because of problems with the mail systems.

BEFORE YOU WRITE

Before you write a letter to obtain family history information, you should do two things:

- **Determine exactly where your ancestor was born, was married, died, or resided.** Because most genealogical records were recorded locally, you will need to know the specific locality where your ancestor was born, was married, died, or resided for a given time. See the library's publications *Latin America Research Outline* (34075), *Brazil Research Outline* (36336), and *Tracing Immigrant Origins* (34111) for help in finding hometowns and other helpful research information.
- **Determine where records from your ancestor's home parish are stored today.** When you have a locality, use a gazetteer to determine whether the name is a village, parish, city, district, county, or province and to determine which parish serves your ancestor's locality. In Portugal, parish record books whose last date is older than 90 years are generally sent to district archives. In Brazil, parish records will be found in the parish or diocesan archive.

RESEARCH BY MAIL

Letters requesting genealogical information from Portuguese countries should generally be written to a local Catholic parish, diocese, or archdiocese or to local or central government archives. Civil registration for non-Catholics in Portugal began in 1832 and became mandatory throughout the country in 1911. Civil registration in Brazil started in 1870. For information before these time periods you will need to write for church records.

Addressing Your Letter

Use the following format to address your letter:

Civil Registration Office:

Portugal

Conservatória do Registo Civil
(postal code), (city), (state)
PORTUGAL

Brazil

Cartório de Registro Civil
(postal code), (city), (state)
BRASIL

Catholic Priest:

Reverendo Pároco
Paróquia de (name of parish)
(postal code), (city), (state)
(COUNTRY)

Bishop:

Exmo. Sr. Bispo da
(name of diocese)
(postal code), (city), (state)
(COUNTRY)

Archdiocese:

Exmo. e Revmo. Sr. Arcebispo
Arquibispado de (name of archdiocese)
(postal code), (city), (state)
(COUNTRY)

National, State, or University Archives:

(name of archives)
Depto. de (department)
(postal code), (city), (state)
(COUNTRY)

Put the postal code, which is similar to a United States zip code, before the city. Postal codes for Portugal and Brazil can be found on the Internet at the following addresses:

Brazil:

English text: <http://www2.sunrise.combr/cd-cep/de-cep-e.htm>

Portuguese text: <http://cdcep.sunrise.com.br/>

Portugal:

Portuguese text: http://www.ctt.pt/correios/cpostais/dir_cpostais.stm

Sending Return Postage and Money

In your letter indicate that you will pay for research time, copies, and services. To pay for the return postage, include at least two international reply coupons, which are vouchers for stamps. You may purchase them from any United States post office.

When writing to a state archive or a local civil registration office *do not send money* in your first letter. Request information about fees and the best way to send money.

When writing to the local parish send a donation of \$5.00 to \$10.00, and express a desire to make further donations as the parish's services are needed. United States currency is most convenient for the recipient, or you can send a cashier's check from your local bank made payable to: Parroquia de (locality). Attach your check to the inside of the letter.

HOW TO WRITE A LETTER IN PORTUGUESE

Your letter should include:

- the date (at the top).
- the name and address of the addressee.
- a greeting.
- a brief introduction.

- biographical information about your relative.
- a short, specific genealogical request.
- referral request(s).
- a comment about payment.
- closing remarks.
- your signature.
- your return address (including your country).

The English-to-Portuguese translations that follow will help you compose your letter. Read the sentences in English, and choose those that best express what you want to say. Be sure to arrange your sentences logically. You may want to write your letter first in English, using the following sentences, and then replace the sentences with their Portuguese translations. However you proceed, make sure you type or neatly print your letter and, when necessary, add any diacritical marks and special characters (such as á, ã, é, í, ó, ú, ü) with a pen. Also, be sure to copy the sentences carefully to ensure the spelling, punctuation, and accent marks are correct.

Make your request specific and simple. Give the full name, the date of birth (at least approximate), and the town of birth or residence for each ancestor you need information about.

Include your return address. Offer to pay for time, copies, and services rendered. (See the "Sending Return Postage and Money" section above.) Do not request too much information at one time.

This guide is meant to help you create a letter that is specific to your needs. Do not use this letter-writing guide as the letter itself.

Writing Dates

Write dates carefully. To write dates in Portuguese:

- Write the day first, then the month, then the year.
- Write the full name of the month.
- Write the year in full (1845, not '45).

The preposition 'de' (of) is used in writing dates in Portuguese. For example, April 7, 1890 should be written *7 de abril de 1890*.

Names of the Months

English	Portuguese
January	janeiro
February	fevereiro
March	março
April	abril
May	maio
June	junho
July	julho
August	agosto
September	setembro
October	outubro
November	novembro
December	dezembro

FOLLOW-UP

When you receive a reply, send a note of thanks or acknowledgment. You may wish to do this in a follow-up letter requesting further information. In subsequent letters refer by date to your earlier letters and to the letters from those who respond. If you received a reference number, include that number as well.

Use Portuguese-English dictionaries to help you understand the reply. You may know someone who speaks Portuguese who can help you translate, or you can hire an accredited genealogist to translate for you.

If you do not receive an answer, write again, sending a copy of your first letter. Do not send more money unless you verify that your first letter did not arrive.

Greetings

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| 1. Dear Sir (civil, government, or university), | 1. Estimado Senhor, |
| 2. Dear Father (Catholic priest), | 2. Estimado Reverendo Pároco, |
| 3. Dear Bishop, Your Excellency (Catholic bishop), | 3. Estimado Bispo, Sua Excelência, |
| 4. Dear Archbishop, Your Excellency (Catholic archbishop), | 4. Estimado Arcebispo, Sua Excelência, |
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Introductions

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| 5. I am researching the history of my ancestors of (city) and need information from your records. | 5. Estou pesquisando a história dos meus antepassados que eram de (city), e necessito de informações dos registros em seu arquivo. |
| 6. My ancestry is from (city), and I would like to know more about them. | 6. Meus antepassados eram de (city) e eu gostaria de saber mais sobre eles. |
| 7. The following person is my ancestor who was born in (city). I will give you all the vital data I have for this person. | 7. A seguinte pessoa é meu antepassado (minha antepassada, if the ancestor is female) que nasceu em (city). Eu lhe darei todas as informações que tenho sobre esta pessoa. |
| 8. The following persons are my ancestors who were born in (city). I will give all the vital data about them that I have. | 8. As seguintes pessoas são meus antepassados que nasceram em (city). Eu lhe darei todas as informações que tenho sobre eles. |
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Biographical Information

Give as much pertinent information as possible. Use only those items below for which you can give accurate information that is relevant to your request. Do not give information about events that occurred after the ancestor left his or her native land.

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|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 9. a. Given name and surname: | 9. a. Nome e sobrenome: |
| b. Date of birth (approximate): | b. Data de nascimento (aproximada): |
| c. Place of birth: | c. Lugar de nascimento: |
| d. Date of baptism: | d. Data de batismo: |
| e. Place of baptism: | e. Lugar de batismo: |
| f. Full name of father: | f. Nome completo do pai: |
| g. Full maiden name of mother: | g. Nome de solteira da mãe: |
| h. Full name of husband: | h. Nome completo do esposo: |
| i. Full maiden name of wife: | i. Nome de solteira da esposa: |
| j. Date of marriage: | j. Data de casamento: |
| k. Place of marriage: | k. Lugar de casamento: |
| l. Date of death: | l. Data de morte: |
| m. Place of death: | m. Lugar de morte: |
| n. Date of emigration: | n. Data de emigração: |
| o. Date of immigration: | o. Data de imigração: |
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Genealogical Requests

10. Please send me a complete copy of the birth (or christening) record of this (these) person(s).
 10. Por favor, envie-me uma cópia da certidão de nascimento ou batismo desta (destas) pessoa(s).
 11. Could you please check your birth registers from (year) to (year) for the birth record of this person.
 11. Tenha a bondade de procurar nos seus registros de nascimento entre (year) e (year) a data de nascimento desta pessoa.
 12. Please send me a copy of the marriage record of (1) these persons. (2) this person's parents.
 12. Por favor, envie-me uma cópia da certidão de casamento (1) destas pessoas. (2) dos pais desta pessoa.
 13. I believe that (name) died in your town about (date). I would like a copy of the death record.
 13. Creio que (name) faleceu em sua cidade aproximadamente em (date). Eu gostaria de obter uma cópia da certidão de óbito.
 14. I would like to know more about the family of this person. If you would provide the name and birth date of the brothers and sisters and an copy of the marriage record of the parents, I would be very grateful.
 14. Eu gostaria de saber mais sobre a família desta pessoa. Se puderem me fornecer nomes e datas de nascimento dos irmãos e irmãs e também uma cópia da certidão de casamento dos pais, eu ficarei muito grato (grata, if you are female).
 15. I would like to locate any relative who may live in your town. My ancestor was (name). He (She) resided in (town) before immigrating to the United States in the year (year). If you know of any persons of this name or relative of the family, I would be grateful if you would give this letter to them so that they can contact me.
 15. Eu gostaria de localizar qualquer parente meu que viva em sua cidade. Meu antepassado (Minha antepassada, if the person is female) era (name). Ele (Ela) era residente em (town) antes de imigrar para os Estados Unidos no ano de (year). Se conhecem alguns parentes desta pessoa, por favor entreguem-lhes esta carta para que eles possam se comunicar comigo.
 16. Please send me a copy of the family information on (husband's name) and (wife's name). They were married in (city), approximately (date).
 16. Por favor, pode me enviar uma cópia da informação que haja sobre (husband's name) e (wife's name). Eles se casaram em (city), aproximadamente em (date).
 17. I have searched the records for your parish covering the time period of (date) to (date). However, I need records for the years (year) to (year) for your area. Could you please inform me as to where these records can be found?
 17. Eu pesquisei os registros de sua paróquia entre os anos (date) e (date). Agora necessito os registros para os anos (year) a (year). Poderia me informar, por favor, aonde poderei encontrá-los?
 18. My relative worked in (city) as a (occupation). Do you have any information about this person?
 18. Meu parente trabalhou na cidade de (city) como (occupation). Poderia enviar-me qualquer informação sobre esta pessoa?
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Referral Requests

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| 19. If you do not have the necessary records, I request that you provide the address of the place where such records can be found. | 19. Caso não tenham esses registros à sua disposição, eu lhes ficaria muito grato (grata, if you are female) se me indicassem aonde poderia encontrá-los, inclusive o endereço. |
| 20. If you are unable to do this research for me, could you please recommend a local researcher that I could hire for this purpose—someone who speaks some English if possible. | 20. Se não for possível fazer esta pesquisa para mim, poderá indicar um pesquisador que eu possa empregar para este propósito—alguém que fale inglês? |
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Payment

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| 21. Would you please inform me if it is possible to obtain photocopies from your records and the cost of such copies? | 21. Poderia me informar se é possível obter fotocópias de seus registros e qual é o preço de cada cópia? |
| 22. Please let me know how I can make an offering to your parish in gratitude for your help. | 22. Favor me informar qual é a melhor maneira de lhe enviar uma doação à sua paróquia em gratidão por seus serviços. |
| 23. I have enclosed \$__ as a donation for your parish. | 23. A doação incluída de \$____, é uma oferta para sua paróquia. |
| 24. Please let me know the cost of your help and how I can pay. | 24. Por favor, deixe-me saber o custo de seus serviços e como poderei pagar-lhe. |
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Closing Remarks and Return Address

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| 25. I thank you in advance for your assistance. | 25. Agradeço-lhe muito por sua atenção. |
| 26. Respectfully, | 26. <i>Use one of these words:</i>

Respeitosamente,
Atenciosamente,
Cordialmente, |
| 27. Sincerely, | 27. Sinceramente, |
| 28. My address is: (address) | 28. Meu endereço é: (address) |
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Follow-up

Use these sentences in follow-up letters as needed.

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| 29. Thank you for the information you sent. It has helped me very much. | 29. Obrigado (Obrigada, if you are female) pela informação que me enviou, tem-me ajudado muito. |
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| 30. I need further information about one of the individuals you mentioned in your letter. This is (name). | 30. Eu necessito mais informações sobre uma das pessoas que mencionou em sua carta. Esta pessoa é (name). |
| 31. I have already received from you the following information about this person: | 31. Eu já recebi do senhor (da senhora, if you are female) a seguinte informação sobre esta pessoa: |
| 32. I am enclosing a copy of a letter I sent you on (date). Please write and tell me if you can do this research. | 32. Incluo uma cópia da carta que lhe enviei em (date). Por favor, informe-me se pode realizar esta pesquisa. |

Example Letter

Date 20 de julho de 1993

Addressee Cartório de Registro Civil
42009 Aiuruoca, Minas Gerais
BRASIL

Greeting Estimado Senhor,

Introduction A seguinte pessoa é minha antepassada que nasceu em Aiuruoca. Eu lhe darei toda a informação que tenho sobre esta pessoa.

Biographical Information Nome e sobrenome: Agenor Rodrigues Fernandes
Data de batismo: 7 de maio de 1907
Lugar de batismo: Aiuruoca, Minas Gerais
Nome de solteira da esposa: Francisca Carolina Mascarenhas
Data de casamento: 18 de dezembro de 1930
Lugar de casamento: Itaberaba, Bahia

Genealogical Request Por favor, envie-me uma cópia da certidão de nascimento ou batismo desta pessoa.

Referral Requests Caso não tenham esses registros à sua disposição, eu lhe ficaria muito grata se me indicassem aonde poderia encontrá-los, inclusive o seu endereço.

Payment Poderia me informar se é possível obter fotocópias de seus registros e qual é o preço de cada cópia?

Closing Agradeço-lhe muito por sua atenção.

Respeitosamente,

Signature

Return Address Jane Doe
674 Q Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84103
USA

COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

The Family History Library welcomes additions and corrections that will improve future editions of this guide. Please send your suggestions to:

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