

Understanding Latino Names

Legal last names for Latinos:

Luisa Maria **Pineda** Ruiz----Jorge Victor **Ortega** Castro
(Mother) (Father)

Maria Catarina **Ortega** Pineda (child)
(primary last name)

For Americans (generally):

Louise **Jones**---George **Smith**
(Mother) (Father)

Mary Catherine **Smith** (child)

Maria Catarina is the Latino woman's full first name. Latinos often have double "first" names.
(English equivalent: Mary Catherine)

ORTEGA is **Maria Catarina's** last name (her father's primary last name)
(English example: Smith -- Mary Catherine's father's last name)

Pineda is her mother's primary last name and Maria Catarina's secondary last name
(English example: Jones -- Mary Catherine's mother's maiden name)

If Mary Catherine Smith, an American, moved to Mexico, she would be legally known as "Mary Catherine Smith Jones" though in the U.S. she is legally "Mary Catherine Smith."

~ In **LEGAL** documents in Latin America the full two last names are always used, even though the person will generally refer to her/himself in conversation using their first name and father's primary last name only (in this case, Maria Catarina **Ortega**).

~ Latinos' two last names are **NOT HYPHENATED**.

~ Latino last names are incompatible with American databases. The primary last name is sometimes incorrectly left off or considered a middle name. In this example, Maria Catarina Ortega (**correct form**) and Maria Catarina Pineda (**incorrect form**) would be two different people, just like Mary Catherine Smith and Mary Catherine Jones would be two different people. (Incorrect use of the last names could lead to the release of the wrong person from jail.)

REMEMBER:

When you see two last names for a Latino, the first one of the two is the primary one.

HINTS:

** If you are entering a Latino name into a database, enter only the primary last name (the first of the two) or try hyphenating the two last names so that the database will allow you to enter them both in to the "Last name field," and then **DELETE** the hyphen (since it is not legally hyphenated).

** "Last name" is misleading when thinking of Latino names since the *last* name you see is not the name they use most.

FAMILY TREE

Pablo Villalobos Herrera marries Andrea Hernández de Villalobos

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Pablo and Andrea have one daughter.

| María Villalobos Hernández

Enrique García Huerta marries María Villalobos de García (María's married name represents her roles as wife and daughter)

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Fernando García Villalobos

Fernando García Villalobos marries Olga Lucía Vásquez de García
(Fernando's name stays the same as a husband and a son.)

What is Fernando's and Olga Lucía's son's name?

Miguel Antonio _____

Other tips:

- "Ma" is a legal abbreviation for "María"
- "Ma del Carmen" is a first name. Therefore her birth certificate could read:
Ma del Carmen López de Acuña