Spanish Style Guide

March 2010

National Park Service interpretive media

Guidelines for translators, contractors, interpreters, rangers, writers, and editors working on Spanish-language museum labels, publications, film scripts, and wayside exhibits

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SECTION 1: GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1.01
How literal should Spanish translations be?

Avoid word-for-word translation. **Clarity of meaning** and natural-reading **elegance** of phrasing are more important than matching the exact word order of English original texts. We want to avoid the appearance that Spanish-language materials in national parks were written first in English and then translated in a rigid, mechanical way.

People who only read Spanish should be just as effectively engaged as English-only readers. Spanish-only readers should not be bored by a baby-talk Spanish, nor bogged down by strange and unnatural constructions that can happen when a translator forces Spanish to mirror the word order of English.

Sentence length in Spanish can be longer than the sentence lengths usually seen in English materials written for national parks. If your draft Spanish translation reads in a choppy, unnatural way, consider combining some short sentences to make it flow in a way more normal in Spanish prose writing.

1.02
Titles deserve special attention

The best Spanish titles to communicate important interpretive ideas are most probably **not** exact translations of the original English. Titles for Spanish-language exhibits and publications should be edited or rewritten to quickly engage reader interest.

1.03
Regional dialects or international Spanish?

Aim for an international Spanish, similar to what we hear today on news broadcasts on the major international television cable channels, such as *Univisión* or *Telemundo* or *CNN Español*.

1.04
Visual parity

If designers place translated Spanish text blocks below English on bilingual exhibits or publications, it gives Spanish-only readers the impression that the English audience is more important, and that the Spanish-reading audience is not.

If designers **place English text blocks on the left and Spanish text to the right,** you will have fewer complaints.

For publications, the cleanest, least confusing solution is to create a Spanish-only document and an English-only document.

SECTION 2:   **CAPITALIZATION**

Save editors and review teams time. Double-check to make sure that any texts submitted in Spanish conform to the accepted Spanish rules, *not the English norms taught in the United States*. There are significant differences.

In regions where many people know and use both English and Spanish on a daily basis, expect confusion about the rules of capitalization —in both languages. Here are problems that commonly crop up:

2.01
Days of week   per English rule   Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday
                        per Spanish rule   *lunes, martes, miércoles*

Months   per English rule   January, December, April, August
                        per Spanish rule   *enero, diciembre, abril, agosto*

2.02
River/mountain names   per English rule   Mississippi River
                        per Spanish rule   *río Misisipí*
                                               (lowercase RIVER río)

                        on maps along stream line   *Misisipí*
                        alternate on maps   *R. Misisipí*

2.03
Tribe and nation names per English rule   English, German, Seminole, Apache
                        per Spanish rule   *inglés, alemán, seminola, apache*

2.04
Titles of books, exhibits   per English rule   Most words in a title capitalized

                        Exhibit title   • "Plaza — The Heart of the Pueblo"
                        Book title   • For Whom the Bell Tolls

                        per Spanish rule   **Only the FIRST word capitalized**

                        Exhibit title   • *Plaza — el centro del pueblo*

                        Book title   • *Por quién doblan las campanas*

NPS publications, museum exhibits, and waysides follow the international rules of capitalization for Spanish seen in the *Chicago Manual of Style*, Sections 9.4 though 9.6.

SECTION 3:   **VERB FORMS AND PRONOUNS: ISSUES TO DECIDE**

3.01
Command verb forms

The problem: commands in English do not carry a clear sense of the degree of formality, nor the number of persons being addressed. Spanish verbs must have these concepts embedded in the verb form to be used.

Default for Spanish in NPS documents and exhibits should be the **formal command** verb forms, singular rather than plural. We assume an individual is reading the publication or the wayside or the indoor exhibit.

Some NPS exhibit texts ask for visitors to act safely or obey rules in nice, light-handed, often oblique terms.

Experience and evaluations show that this light-handed approach is often ignored. Use clear, **direct imperative** verb forms in Spanish, especially for safety messages.

3.02
YOU: formal or informal?

The word YOU in English can be problematic for Spanish translations. YOU in English can be either singular or plural, and often carries no clue of the relationship of the writer/ speaker to the reader or listener.

Determine how formal your Spanish text needs to be, working with park personnel that know the intended audience.

Will the formal second person singular –*USTED*— or the informal second person singular—*TU*— work best to achieve the goals?

SECTION 4:   **PUNCTUATION**

Make sure your texts' punctuation follows the accepted
Spanish rules. Check the *Chicago Manual of Style*, Sections
9.68 through 9.79. If you have other doubts, major Spanish-
language newspapers post their style guides on the Internet.

In areas of the United States where many people know and
see both languages daily, expect confusion, especially
about comma use. Punctuation problems that have shown
up many times in submittals are:

4.01
Comma use in sequences   per English rule   first, second, and third

                            per Spanish rule   *primero, segundo y tercero*

                            Note: **NO comma** is placed immediately before *Y (AND)*

4.02
Initial question mark   ¿   Spanish interrogatory and exclamatory sentences must start
Initial exclamation mark ¡   with an upside down question mark and an upside down
                             exclamation mark before the first word of the sentence.
                             These two symbols exist in all ASCII character sets. With
                             either Mac or PC computers, there are ways to include
                             them in Spanish texts and publications.

4.03
Vowels with accents   A word in Spanish without its proper accented vowel is a
                             misspelled word. Accents are not optional in any Spanish-
                             language products created for the National Park Service.

                             Software exists to create all the special characters needed to
                             write Spanish correctly on both Mac and PC computers.

                              Some people have argued that accented vowels are no
                             longer necessary for writing correct Spanish. Advertising
                             materials often omit accents, particularly when they are
                             using all caps to attract attention. This practice produces
                             work that looks shoddy and unprofessional.

SECTION 5: NUMBERS

5.01 Rounding off

Numbers seen in NPS publications, outdoor waysides, and indoor exhibits seldom express precise measurements. When writers say a trail is "a quarter-mile long," they are usually implying it is **about** a quarter of a mile, not a precise, exact 0.2500 mile, and not an inch more.

Calculators that converts miles to kilometers and inches/feet to meters assume exact quantities and convert that way. A calculator converts "quarter-mile trail" into **402.3 meters.** Writing a converted distance this way implies a degree of precision that is wrong.

The goal is to make a distance or weight quick and easy to understand. Round off trail distances in miles to tenths of a mile. For short trails, round the distance to the nearest 50 meters/yards. Use common sense rounding large weights.

Recommended	quarter mile:	*400 metros*
	(about) 500 lbs.	*230 kg*
Not recommended	0.25 mile:	*402.3 metros*
	(about) 500 lbs.	*227 kg*

5.02 Separators

In the United States we separate whole numbers from decimals with a period. Commas separate every three places in very large numbers. Many other nations mark the decimal separation with a comma, and separate thousands with a period. Determine what will work best with your intended audience. Some national parks have chosen the alternate (comma as decimal point) system for Spanish.

5.03 Billions, Trillions

CAVEAT. A billion in English is NOT equal to 1 *billón* **in Spanish**. English-speakers use a different name system for very large numbers than most of Europe and Latin America, where the name changes only every 6 digits.

	USA	Spanish
1,000,000	million	*millón*
1,000,000,000	**billion**	*mil millón*
1,000,000,000,000	trillion	***billón***
1,000,000,000,000,000	quadillion	*mil billón*
1,000,000,000.000.000,000	quintillion	***trillón***

SECTION 6:	**GENERAL FORMATS AND RULES TO FOLLOW**

6.01
Time Format

Latin American countries and Spain use the 24-hour format for stating time, rather than the 12-hour AM/PM format.

Recommended	**16:00**	**19.00 hs**
Not recommended	4:00 PM	7.00 PM

6.02
Date Formats

Dates in text in Spanish follow the DD de MM de YYYY format, so when this is truncated for saving line space, it makes sense to give dates DD.MM.YYYY. Translating dates in full is a terrible line length/space waster.

Recommended	04-VII-1776
	4.7.1776
	4 de julio de 1776

Determine which hour-minute **separator** punctuation will work best for the anticipated audience.

6.03
Centuries

Recommended	Siglo XX, en el siglo XVIII
Not recommended	*Siglo 20, en el siglo 18*

6.04
BC &AD vs. CE

Recommended	**a.C., d.C.**
Not recommended	***antes de la Era Común***

The heated debate about expressing dates as Common Era (CE) and Before Common Era (BCE) in lieu of AD and BC does not have partisans in the Spanish-speaking world.

6.05
Decades

Recommended	en los años 1840 (note <u>no</u> final S)
	En los años 1960
	Durante la década de los 1840
Not recommended	***en los años 1840s***
	En los años 1960s
	Durante la década de los 1840s

6.06
Geographic names

CAVEAT! Place names are not always the same in English and Spanish. Two common errors of this type are:

| Rio Grande River | in English |
| *río Bravo del Norte* | in Spanish |

| Havana | in English |
| *la Habana* | in Spanish |

Check resources like *Cassell's Spanish Dictionary*, 1968. pp 1474, or http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Portada if in doubt.

6.07
States vs. Nations

On maps, take care labeling nations and states with parity. Texas, Arizona, California, and New Mexico are states. México and Canada are nations.

Either label only UNITED STATES and MÉXICO,

OR label   TEXAS, COAHUILA, TAMAULIPAS, CHIHUAHUA, NEW MEXICO, SONORA, ARIZONA, CALIFORNIA, BAJA CALIFORNIA

6.08
People's Names

Honor individuals by using their real name. Keep English names all English, and Spanish names all Spanish.

| Recommended | William Henry Gray |
| Not recommended | *Guillermo Enrique Gris* |

| Recommended | *Juan Ponce de León* |
| Not recommended | John Ponce from Leon |

6.09
Indian personal names

Honor individuals by using their real name wherever possible.

Translating an already translated-into-English name doesn't add much value for a Spanish-only reader. It is better to convey the actual sound of the original Indian name by

spelling phonetically using the Spanish spelling system. Then reveal what the original Indian name meant.

Indian name, translated	Rabbit-Skin-Leggings
Not recommended	*Polainas de Pellejo de Conejo*
Spelled phonetically (*19th-century spelling*)	Heh-yooks Toe-nihn
2nd variant spelling found	Hee-oh'ks-te-kin
Present-day Nez Perce	heeyuxc tohon
Spelled phonetically in Spanish	***Ji-lluks-tojón***

In the American Southwest, Indian people sometimes had both a name in their Indian language and a Spanish name.

A famous case in point is the Chiricahua Apache leader GERONIMO (1829–1909). His Apache name was *Go-yath-láy*. He is famous in both English and Spanish as GERÓNIMO. Keep his name in Spanish Gerónimo for the best chance to connect stories to readers' memories.

6.10
Use tribal names

For English NPS texts, we use the name of the group of people we are talking about instead of the general term INDIAN. Avoid using the popular term NATIVE AMERICAN.

Follow the same principle in Spanish.

Recommended	*los apache, los cayuse, los seminola*
Not recommended	*los indios*

Remember tribe names remain lowercase in Spanish.

6.11
Business names

Leave business names in their original English—or internationally best known form.

Recommended	Hudson's Bay Company
Not recommended	***Compañía de la Bahía de Hudson***

If in doubt, you can check in Spanish textbooks, or on the Internet,

SECTION 7: **PROBLEM WORDS AND SOLUTIONS**

7.01
Alligators & gator holes

Recommended	*aligátor*	*aligatores*
Not recommended	*caimán*	*yacaré*
	cocodrilo	

The most widely distributed and well known crocodilians in Latin America are caimans. Some NPS naturalists have advocated using CAIMÁN in the place of ALIGÁTOR because this word is so easily recognized. Some have argued that the word ALIGÁTOR looks like an Anglicism or mistake. In reality, the English name originally comes from Spanish.

The word ALIGÁTOR is proper Spanish. This is the right common name for *Alligator mississippiensis*, North America's most widespread crocodilian. The word ALIGÁTOR is found in the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española*. See http://buscon.rae.es/draeI/SrvltConsulta?TIPO_BUS=3&LEMA=alig%E5tor.

In exhibits translated and produced for Everglades NP, the colloquial —and unique to South Florida — expression **GATOR HOLE** was translated as CHARCO. The key idea is that these are pools full of water, not that the gator holes are excavations.

7.02
América and Americans

CAVEAT. Citizens of the United States routinely call our country "AMERICA" and ourselves "AMERICANS."

Recommended	*estadounidenses*
Alternate	*norteamericanos*
Not recommended	*americanos*

The most accurate—and least offensive—way to refer to the peoples of the United States is *estadounidenses*. No exact English cognate for this word exists.

The word *América* in Spanish includes all the nations on the two continents between the Arctic Circle and Cape Horn. *América* includes North America, Central America, and South America, not just the USA. From Mexico south to Argentina, all Latin Americans consider themselves to be "Americans," because they live in the Americas.

This makes a slogan like **EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA** challenging to translate well into Spanish, because it begs the question of which AMERICA you want people to experience and to whom that AMERICA belongs.

It is a fact that <u>half</u> of the Republic of Mexico was conquered and absorbed into the USA after the U.S.-Mexican War of 1846-1848. Taking over the word AMERICAN to only include U.S. citizens has the potential to open old resentments for many Latin Americans.

7.03 Barrier islands		
	Recommended	*cordón litoral*
	Not recommended	*islas barreras*

The term ISLAS BARRERAS has been showing up on the Internet, mostly in documents written in English, then translated by machines. The Spanish term most found in geography and geology textbooks is CORDÓN LITORAL.

7.04 Billions

CAVEAT. A billion in English is NOT equal to *un billón*.

1 billion	in English	$= 1,000,000,000$	$= 10^9$
1 *billón*	in Spanish	$= \mathbf{1,000,000,000,000}$	$= 10^{12}$

This is a very common translation error. Since the 17th century, Spanish-speaking countries—and most European nations—use the "long scale" in naming large numbers.

NOTE: $1,000,000,000 \ (10^9) =$ *mil millón o millardo*

7.05 Bayou

The French word BAYOU was critical for describing the life zones found in Gulf Islands National Seashore. No exact equivalent for BAYOU was found in Spanish. The translation team first suggested PANTANO (marsh, swamp). But bayous are not just static or tidal marshes, they usually involve very slow-moving creeks or arms of rivers.

Since travelers anywhere in the Gulf coast region will see the word BAYOU repeated many times on road signs and NPS maps, the review team decided the best solution was to keep it STET, untranslated, and put it in italics to give the clue to Spanish-readers that it is a special foreign word.

7.06
Bird calls written out in Spanish

Naturalists often try to describe the sound of birdcalls with either mnemonic devices or phonetic spellings. During Spanish translation for new exhibits for Gulf Islands NS in 2009, reviewers uncovered the need to have phonetic spelling that is language-specific. How English speakers hear a bird song and spell it turned out to be radically different from how naturalists who are native speakers of Spanish heard and described the same sound.

Least bittern song in English: **"oong-KA-chunk"**

Least bittern song in Spanish: **"tu-UM-tac-cuc"**

When in doubt about how to phonetically spell a bird song in Spanish, get help from birder colleagues in Latin America.

7.07
Bug

Recommended	*insecto*
Not recommended	*bicho*

Avoid using BICHO in NPS publications or exhibits.

In some countries, BICHO can just mean a "bug" or bothersome insect,— or a perverse person (all negative connotations). However in Puerto Rico, *bicho* is a very vulgar, offensive word.

7.08
Bullet nomenclature

ARMOR-PIERCING	~	*núcleo perforante*
BRASS (EMPTY CASE)	~	*casquillo*
BULLET	~	*bala*
CENTERFIRE	~	*fuego central*

CONICAL BULLET	~	*bala cónica*
COPPER JACKET	~	*envoltura de latón*
FULL-METAL JACKET	~	*bala blindada*
HOLLOW POINT	~	*bala expansiva*
LEAD INTERIOR	~	*núcleo de plomo*
MINIE BALL	~	*bala Minié*
MUZZLELOADING	~	*avancarga*
RIMFIRE	~	*fuego anular*
SINGLE-SHOT	~	*monotiro*
SOFT-POINT	~	*bala semiblindada*
STRIPPER CLIP	~	*peine de muelle*
WADCUTTER	~	*sacabocados*

Some military cartridges have names made up of two numbers. The first number is the caliber (diameter expressed in hundredths of an inch). The second number can be either be the year the bullet was designed or introduced — or the grains of (black) powder loaded in the brass case. Examples:

.30-40 Krag-Jørgenson [2nd number is grains of powder]

.30-06 Springfield [2nd number is year of introduction]

.45-70 Springfield [2nd number is grains of powder]

Although these cartridge names have a hyphen between two numerical values, they do not express a range of calibers (from diameter XX to diameter YY). Do not convert to metric. Keep the name of the bullet STET, because they are known worldwide by that nomenclature.

7.09
Caliber of cannon

Historic English: 24-pounder cannon
100-pounder Parrott rifle
15-inch Rodman

Historic Spanish: ***Un cañón de á 24 (libras)***
(17th, 18th, 19th centuries)

Not recommended: ***Un cañón Parrott de 45 kg***

Recommended: ***Un cañón de 135 mm***
Un cañón Rodman de 38 cm

Not recommended:	*Un cañón de á 18*
	Un cañón de á 100

Military history texts of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries name cannon using the archaic English word **POUNDER**. To knowledgeable history buffs, this information makes its possible to compare the bore diameters of different guns.

POUNDER is potentially confusing to modern readers. Many may assume that a 12-pounder cannon weighs 12 pounds. A 12-pounder is a cannon whose cannon ball weighed 12 pounds.

Spanish artillerists of the 1600s to 1800s also used a pound-based cannon naming system, referencing the weight of the cannonball. But unlike the English **POUNDER**, the Spanish nomenclature usually did not include the word **LIBRA** (POUND). Surveys of visitors in forts reveal that today's Spanish-only readers don't often know what the unusual historic artillerists' phrase implies.

Naming a 200-year-old cannon in either Spanish or English by telling how many pounds the ball weighed is a problem — and all the more so for readers who come from metric countries. Few readers have any idea of how big a 6-pound cannonball is relative to a 24-pound cannon ball.

The better cannon naming system is based on the measurement of the bore diameter, expressed in cm or mm. This name system started gaining favor in the late 19th-century. After the United States' military went metric after World War II, it became the most widely used nomenclature for cannon, mortars, and howitzers. Expressing the bore diameter in centimeters is the easiest way to give Spanish readers an easily understood clue as to the relative size of the cannon projectile.

7.10
Caliber of rifles, shotguns, pistols

English today:	A .75-caliber Brown Bess musket
	A .69-caliber Spanish pistol
	A 20-gauge shotgun
Historic Spanish:	*Un fusil inglés de á 12*
	Una pistola española de á 16
	Una escopeta de á 20

Recommended   *Un fusil de 19 mm*
                   Una pistola de 17.5 mm

                   * Una escopeta de calibre 20

The best solution for rifles and pistols is to **state the bore diameter expressed in millimeters**.

Military history writers commonly refer to the size of rifles, muskets, and pistols by a decimal number below 1.0 followed by the word CALIBER — a *.75 caliber musket*, a *.50 caliber pistol*. This nomenclature tells readers the diameter of the bullet, measured in hundredths of inches.

Shotguns (in English) are named by a whole number followed by the word GAUGE. Gauge relates the diameter of a barrel for what number of spherical lead balls can be made from a pound. A *12 gauge shotgun* has a bore that would fit a large lead ball that weighs $1/12^{th}$ of a pound.

Shotguns in Spanish still follow this name system.

In the 1700–1800s, Spanish nomenclature for pistol and musket calibers followed the same name system still used today for shotgun gauge nomenclature in English. Only arms collectors or military historians will know this arcane nomenclature. Using millimeters is a sure bet.

7.11
Cannon projectiles

Writers describing cannon ammunition of the 1600s–1800s often use a specialized vocabulary to deliver a flavor of the times. These terms are tough for non-military-background translators to render accurately.

BAR SHOT	~	*palanqueta*
CHAIN SHOT	~	*balas encadenadas*
GRAPESHOT, CANISTER SHOT	~	*metralla*
HOT SHOT	~	*bala roja*
ROUND SHOT, SOLID SHOT	~	*bala rasa*
SHELL	~	*granada real*
SPHERICAL CASE	~	*granada de metralla*

Source: Tomás de Morla, <u>Tratado de Artillería</u>, 1804.

Another resource for Spanish military technical terms specifically for artillery recently found on the Web:

700 Años de Artillería: Evolución histórica de los materiales de artillería y sus municiones
Por Coronel de Artillería Don Antonio de Sousa y Francisco, Museo del Ejército, Madrid, España. [El coronel Sousa y Francisco estuvo destinado en el Museo del Ejército de Madrid y es hoy Director del Museo Militar de Melilla.]

http://www.fortunecity.com/victorian/churchmews/1216/HistoriaArtilleria/artilleria1.htm

This website showcases many of the engravings from de Morla treatise as well as the correct vocabulary for cannon types, tools, munitions, and practices.

7.12
The Civil War

Recommended   *la guerra civil estadounidense*

Alternate   *la Guerra de Secesión* **(1861–1865)**

Military history writers in the United States are accustomed to writing about <u>the</u> Civil War (1861–1865) because this nation has only experienced one civil war, and their English-speaking audience won't be confused.

Spanish-speaking readers come from countries that have had more than one civil war, and may not immediately connect the simple phrase <u>the</u> Civil War with the middle of the 19th century. Augment clarity by including the dates.

7.13
Critter and Creature

CAVEAT. Nature writers often use the term CRITTER as a playful, friendly, or lighthearted synonym for ANIMALS.

Recommend: **Avoid translating CRITTER**

                  Rework your Spanish texts
                  Use the actual species name instead

There is no good way to translate CRITTER into Spanish so that it carries the same positive, lighthearted tone.

Some Spanish-English dictionaries translate CRITTER as *BICHO*. Avoid this word in NPS publications and exhibits.

Even the root word for CRITTER —CREATURE — is potentially problematic in Spanish. *CRIATURA* is not a value-neutral term, and often implies a person who is the puppet or tool of a more powerful figure.

Some dictionaries translate CREATURES as *ANIMALITOS*. But the word *ANIMAL* in Spanish is not value neutral. *ANIMAL* is sometimes used as a synonym for a violent brute or an uncultured person of low social status.

7.14
Dumping station & other campground euphemisms

Recommended   ***depósito de aguas negras***

This expression, seen often on maps for national parks, baffled a translator who is neither a camper, nor a first-language English speaker.

Be aware that the National Park Service is accustomed to using many euphemisms, like "COMFORT STATIONS" meaning bathrooms, to communicate with park visitors. Spot such words ahead of beginning a translation project, and clarify what these euphemisms mean to save time.

7.15
Gun parts

The right words in Spanish for triggers, hammers, springs, sears, touchholes, and frizzens are time-sensitive. What you would call a trigger in a modern firearm may not be right for a flintlock musket, or a percussion-cap-era pistol.

FOR FLINTLOCKS   (listed in alphabetical order)

COCK	~	*pié de gato*
FLINTLOCK (TRUE)	~	*llave francés*
FRIZZEN	~	*rastrillo*
FRIZZEN SPRING	~	*muelle del rastrillo*
GUN FLINT	~	*perdernal*
HAMMER	~	*pié de gato*
LOCK	~	*llave*

MAIN SPRING	~	*muelle real*
MIGUELET LOCK	~	*llave española*
PAN	~	*cazoleta*
TOUCHHOLE	~	*oido*
TRIGGER	~	*disparador*

FOR PERCUSSION-ERA AND MODERN GUNS

BOLT ACTION	~	*cerrojo*
BREAK ACTION	~	*basculante*
CAPLOCK	~	*llave de percusión*
CYLINDER (PISTOL)	~	*barrilete*
HAMMER	~	*percutor o martillo percutor*
MAIN SPRING	~	*resorte principal*
NIPPLE & DRUM	~	*chimenea*
TRIGGER	~	*gatillo*

7.16
Guns, large and small

Be aware that military writers often call cannon GUNS.

In most English-Spanish dictionaries, the first meaning given for GUN is *PISTOLA*. In general, the Spanish term ARMA is the best solution for a small hand-held pistol.

But if the English writer is speaking of artillery, use *CAÑÓN*.

GUNNERS in many NPS military history texts refer to men who serve on artillery crews, and should be translated into Spanish as *artilleros*.

7.17
Handicapped /
Disabled
CAVEAT

Recommended term =	*LOS DISCAPACITADOS*
Not recommended	*los descapacitados*
	los disminuidos
	persona impedida
Alternate term gaining popularity in México =	*los minusválidos*

7.18
Horseshoe crab
Limulus polyphemus

Recommended	***CANGREJO BAYONETA***
Alternates	*cangrejo cacerola*
	límulo
	xifosuro
	cacerolita del mar
	tanquecito de mar
	cucaracha marina
Not recommended	***cangrejo herradura*** **(Anglicism)**

This species turned out to be a classic example of finding many common names in Spanish while looking for something better than a machine translation of its English common name.

7.19
Indians
CAVEAT

Recommended	***los indígenas***
Not recommended	***los indios***

Reviewers for early NPS Spanish translation projects revealed that the simple word INDIO has pejorative or negative connotations for some readers from some Spanish-speaking countries. Consider how emotionally loaded the words NEGRO, BLACK, and AFRICAN AMERICAN have been in the United States in the last 40 years.

7.20
Use metric measurements

Trail and road distances are critical for visitors to understand to make decisions how best to enjoy their experiences in national parks. Should such distances be converted to metric equivalents, and then translated into Spanish?

The cleanest solution is the give miles/yards only in English, and kilometers/meters only in Spanish.

Recommended:	25 miles	*40 kilómetros*	

Not recommended	25 miles	40 kilometers	1 hour drive
	25 millas	*40 kilómetros*	*viaje de 1 hora*

Putting both miles and kilometers in both languages creates terrible visual clutter and eats up valuable space on maps.

Some national parks near the border with Mexico have argued the case that most of their Spanish-speaking visitors live in the United States and are therefore more familiar with feet/miles/gallons than meters/km/ and liters. Hence there is little or no need to include metric units in exhibits. No rigorous study or survey has been done to prove that hypothesis true.

To provide solid information to international audiences, the simple and effective solution is to include metric units that are easily understood all around the world.

7.21
Musket and Fusil

Recommended	*fusil*
Not recommended	*mosquete*

If the text speaks of a flintlock musket of the late-17th century through the mid-19th century, use FUSIL.

If you are referring to a MATCHLOCK MUSKET of the 1500s to the 1600s, then in Spanish use MOSQUETE.

MOSQUETE and FUSIL are not interchangeable. Present-day Spanish-English dictionaries often do not correctly understand the distinction of these two words. Rely on published period sources in Spanish, such as Tomás de Morla's **Tratado de Artillería**, an encyclopedia of cannon and illustrations of the standard military long guns and pistols. To impart the flavor of the colonial era, use the actual Spanish technical/military words of the time.

The Musket/Fusil confusion is made worse because both words exist in 17th-18th-century English, and are not used in English as they were in Spanish. A FUSIL in an 18th-century English-speaking army was a lighter, smaller long arm carried by an officer. The common soldiers carried a MUSKET. A FUSIL in an 18th-century Spanish-speaking

army was the standard long gun carried by the common soldier in the ranks.

FUSIL continues to be the name for the standard soldier's rifle in modern Spanish-speaking armies.

7.22
National Park Service

DO NOT TRANSLATE. Keep the names of all U.S. governmental organizations un-translated in English. Names of agencies, bureaus, and offices are proper nouns.

Translations of some NPS materials for the Columbus Quincentennial in the early 1990s ran into controversy over whether the National Park Service can best be translated as el SERVICIO DE PARQUES NACIONALES , or el SERVICIO NACIONAL DE PARQUES. Is the NPS an agency that serves National Parks? Or a National Service of Parks? English allows modifiers to be stacked, and nouns can be used as adjectives. Spanish requires the relationship between the noun and its modifiers to be less vague.

7.23
Nature-based collective nouns

Watch out for texts that explain zones of plant life that (in English) just using a plural noun for the principal plant in that life zone.

The PINES in English may mean both a plurality of trees, or it may mean a plant community. In Spanish two different words are needed to express these different ideas. Examples seen in NPS products reviewed:

PINES	PINOS	(many pine trees)
	PINAR	(pineland, pine grove)
MANGROVE	MANGLES	(many mangrove plants)
	MANGLAR	(a mangrove forest)
SHRUB	MATAS	(many shrubs, often dry)
	MATORRAL	(scrubland, thickets)
BUSH	ARBUSTOS	(many bushes)
	ARBUSTAL	(zone of bushes)
	EL MONTE	The Bush (wild country)

7.24
Needles on conifers

Recommended	*acícula*
Not recommended	*aguja*

7.25
Panther or puma?

Recommended	PUMA
Not recommended	*pantera*

North America's most widespread big cat, **Felis concolor**, has many common names in English: cougar, catamount, panther, mountain lion, painter, and puma.

In Spanish, most widely known name for this species— **regardless of country**— is **PUMA**. This short word helps safety signs visually get to the main idea quickly. PUMA also saves text line length in waysides and publications.

In 2006 first-language Spanish-speaking reviewers from many different countries felt that the word *PANTERA* referred more to the Old World (African) **Panthera leo**.

An widely accepted alternate Spanish common name for **Felis concolor** is LEÓN AMERICANO.

Unfortunately, translators working for South Florida national parks years ago ignored the term PUMA. Perhaps they wanted to emphasize that Florida panthers are a breed apart from the cougars of the Great Smokies or western states. So there are many existing materials, printed and on the Internet, calling the Florida panther ~ *LA PANTERA DE LA FLORIDA*.

For the sake of consistency, Everglades National Park chose to keep *LA PANTERA DE LA FLORIDA*.

Big Cypress safety signs use the shorter term *PUMA*.

7.26
The Park vs. *Parque nacional*

CAVEAT. *El parque* ≠ A NPS-MANAGED SITE

Recommended   *el parque nacional*

Not recommended   *el parque*

Writers often assume that readers understand the phrase 'THE PARK' is a synonym for a National Park, National Monument, National Seashore, etc. But translating 'THE PARK' directly into Spanish will NOT guarantee that Spanish-only readers will understand the national connection.

In Spanish-speaking countries the word *PARQUE* by itself means a small downtown urban green space. The word *PARQUE* by itself does not mean a large natural or historico-cultural patrimony of national or international significance.

Use *PARQUE NACIONAL* to be clear and to impart more dignity and significance to your site.

7.27
Place Names – Don't Translate

Recommended =   Red Hills Visitor Center (STET)

Not recommended =   *Centro de visitantes de Colinas Coloradas*

For many new Spanish NPS publications, there is not funding available to completely rebuild a map with all new Spanish labels. If text next to a map refers to specific places, like a named visitor center, keep the complete name of the feature in the running Spanish text in English, so that a reader can look from the text to the map and see exactly where the reference is.

Place names, like any compound proper names in Spanish, **should not be divided at the end of a line of text**.

7.28
<u>Place Names that were
originally Spanish</u>

If a place or key feature in a national park has an exotic Spanish name, writers often use some space in the text to explain or define it in English. This is a great opportunity to save some line length in the Spanish language version. It is completely unnecessary to explain what these original Spanish terms mean to native speakers of Spanish.

Words that may sound appealing and exotic to English-only readers may be as mundane as "oak tree" or "cow" to someone from the Southwest who understands Spanish.

In the case of Saguaro National Park, there are two districts, now named SAGUARO EAST and SAGUARO WEST. Back-translating these district names to words that parallel OAK TREE ON THE EAST and OAK TREE ON THE WEST will not help get more readers interested in Saguaro's stories. Don't use SAGUARO DEL ESTE and SAGUARO DEL OESTE as cognates for the district names Saguaro East and West.

Avoid confusing readers with tricky or nonsensical back translations from Spanish to English back to Spanish.

7.29
Plant & Animal
Common Names

Names of plants and animals vary greatly from country to country in Latin America and Spain. Sometimes as many as 20 different common names can be found for a single animal. But for other plants or animals, no common name exists in Spanish.

Park staffs can shorten the time needed to get the right popular names in Spanish. Give the translator the **correct scientific name** for every plant or animal mentioned in the film or texts before they start. If the bilingual staff at a national park already has a common Spanish name they use when talking with visitors, list it.

When you find more than one Spanish common name…

Identify your expected audience: Cuban-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans, Central Americans, or a mixture of international visitors.

When in doubt, use the common name of the **closest Spanish-speaking country** to the national park. For Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, or California, use the Mexican common Spanish name. For Florida, use the Cuban, Dominican, or Puerto Rican common Spanish name.

If no Spanish name is found…

Use **the scientific name** by itself, with a preceding general noun to give Spanish-only readers a hint what it is you are talking about.

Examples: el molusco *Neverita duplicata*
la vieira *Argopecten gibbus*
el camarón *Tozeuma carolinense*

Scientific names are not considered too highbrow in Latin America. In many national parks in the Spanish-speaking world, interpretive texts use the genus and species binomial in the place of local names, and readers expect to see it.

7.30
Rifles

Recommended	*FUSIL*
Caution with:	**RIFLE** (considered an Anglicism)

Most of the time this word is used is in military history sites. If the weapon in question is a standard military long arm carried by an infantry soldier, **FUSIL** is the best Spanish term.

CAVEAT! Some cannon in the mid-19th century have rifled barrels, and were commonly called RIFLES, e.g. the Parrott Rifle. Park interpreters should tell translators which rifles are small arms and which refer to artillery.

7.31
Ring of Fire

Recommended	*cinturón de fuego*
Not recommended	*El Anillo de Fuego*

Be wary of nicknames or phrases that have been used to popularize scientific ideas—like the RING OF FIRE around the Pacific Rim. These phrases may not be universal concepts. What English-speakers think of as a RING may look more like a BELT to another culture. Confusion often occurs when English-language materials are machine translated for new "bilingual" Internet web pages, without checking with a native speaker of Spanish to see if that phrase is actually something in use in the real Spanish-speaking world.

An excellent resource for translations of geological terms: undergraduate-level textbook by L. Don Leet & Sheldon Judson, **FUNDAMENTOS DE GEOLOGÍA FÍSICA**, 1997. ISBN 968-18-0475-9. Publisher: EDITORIAL LIMUSA S.A. DE C.V. GRUPO NORIEGA EDITORES, MÉXICO, DF. TRANSLATORS/PROFESSIONAL GEOLOGICAL reviewers in MEXICO: ING. LUIS BENAVIDES GARCÍA & ING. GEÓLOGO EDUARDO J. GUZMÁN, UNAM.

7.32
Sawgrass

Recommended	*hierba serrucho*
Not recommended	*hierba serrada*
	cortadera, sibal

SAWGRASS (*Cladium jamaicense*) proved to be one of the biggest translation challenges of 2003 at Everglades NP.

SAWGRASS is used as a noun and also frequently as an evocative descriptor of the watery prairies. Many nature writers think that the word SAWGRASS delivers a distinctive flavor of South Florida.

After much debate with bilingual Everglades staffers, we concluded there was no common name in Spanish that was used by the Spanish-speaking naturalists working in South Florida. No one in 2003 could find *Cladium jamaicense* in a published Spanish dictionary or biology textbook. A similar sharp-sided sedge in Argentina is CORTADERA. A Google search in Spanish only revealed that the same species *Cladium jamaicense* is known in coastal Mexico and Guatemala as SIBAL. But the word SIBAL drew blank looks from all bilingual Everglades reviewers.

The decision in 2003 for what to call **SAWGRASS** in Spanish was a made-up compound of two nouns. This choice followed the pattern seen in Audubon Society publications and other field guides when common names for birds have been made-up for Spanish where an English common name existed, and a Spanish common name did not.

HIERBA SERRUCHO will not deliver the same tone of specific-to-South-Florida meaning and poetic associations as the English word SAWGRASS. Editors of the translated Spanish materials need to make sure that final version does not lean too heavily on any newly coined word to carry the heart of the message to visitors.

7.33
Sounds, Lagoons, and Bays

Translators working for Gulf Islands National Seashore in 2009 struggled to find a good rendering for the Mississippi SOUND. Check maps and geography books for solutions.

Bodies of water that are perceived as SOUNDS or BAYS in English may be know in Spanish as LAGUNAS (lagoons). Both Texas and North Carolina have barrier islands with large tidal bodies of water behind them. In North Carolina, it's called Albemarle SOUND. In Texas, the same kind of place is called la LAGUNA MADRE.

7.34
Swamps, Marshes, and Wetlands

Recommended	*HUMEDALES* for WETLANDS
	MARJALES for SALTWATER MARSHES
Caution:	*PANTANO, CIÉNAGA* are <u>fresh</u>water, and may be considered negative words by some readers.
	MARISMA is also saltwater marsh.

National parks with important wetlands have found out there are strong linguistic debates about what words in Spanish can be best used to put wetlands in a positive, not negative light. See the discussion below about WILDERNESS.

7.35
Trains

Spanish has a cognate word *TREN* **—** for a **railroad** train.

But TRAINS in some National Park Service military history texts do not refer to railroads. Examples are WAGON TRAINS or LOGISTICAL TRAINS or SUPPLY TRAINS. These words require extra attention to translate in a way that Spanish general readers who are not historians can understand.

7.36
The United States

Write out the entire name of our country.

Recommended	*Estados Unidos **de América***
Not recommended	*Estados Unidos*

There are several countries in the world that have or have had a name that includes "United States"— Belgium, Brazil, Central America, Colombia, Indonesia, Mexico, and Venezuela. The formal name for the republic that lies south of our border is still ESTADOS UNIDOS DE MÉXICO.

7.37
Wagon

Recommended	*carro*	
	carromato	for COVERED WAGON
	carreta	for 2-WHEEL CART
Not recommended	*vagón*	

VAGÓN looks like it should be the cognate of the English word WAGON. Be aware that VAGÓN refers to **railroad** cars—which the British in the 1800s also call wagons.

There are many specific names in Spanish for horse-drawn or oxen-drawn cargo vehicles, just as in English before the days of the internal combustion engine writers used wagon, cart, dray, tumbrel, truck, etc. Find the right word for the historic period.

7.38
Walls

Walls of a fortified city or a fortress are called MURALLAS in Spanish. There is no exact English cognate for this term.

The standard word for a wall of a building – PARED – is not the right word to use for a fortress or castle.

7.39
Names of wars

Direct translations of the customary names known widely in the United States may not be the name that Spanish-only readers know for many wars. Examples where the name known to Spanish-speaking audiences differs from the best-known English war name are:

King William's War	1689–1697	Guerra de los Nueve Años
Queen Anne's War	1702–1713	Guerra de la Sucesión Española
War of Jenkin's Ear	1740–1748	Guerra de Sucesión Austriaca
French & Indian War	1754–1763	Guerra de los Siete Años
American Revolution	1776–1783	Guerra de Independencia de Estados Unidos
War of 1812	1812–1815	Guerra anglo-estadounidense de 1812
Mexican-American War	1846–1848	Guerra de 47 (in Mexico) Guerra de México contra Estados Unidos
Spanish-American War	1898	Guerra Hispano-americana Guerra hispano-norteamericana (in Cuba) Guerra de 1898 (in Puerto Rico)
The Punitive Expedition The Mexican Expedition (official name)	1916–1917	3ª Intervención estadounidense en México
World War I	1914–1918	1ª Guerra Mundial, Gran Guerra
WWII	1939–1945	SGM (Segunda Guerra Mundial)

7.40
Whites, white settlers

CAVEAT. A direct translation of WHITES as BLANCOS, like the term INDIOS, may have negative connotations linking back to the colonial past and its *criollo* and *peninsular* elites. In interpretive texts written for the National Park Service, always look for other, less offensive ways to express this idea.

The best solution may be to edit or rewrite the passage. Sometimes using the term ANGLOSAJONES works.

For the Whitman Mission Spanish park brochure, we opted to use SETTLERS: POBLADORES / COLONOS instead.

7.41
<u>Wilderness</u>

CAVEAT. Conservationists consider the concept of **WILDERNESS** is something that is univerally seen as positive and wonderful. This point of view has turned out to be a cultural, linguistic minefield in Spanish translations.

Unfortunately, the standard Spanish words normally used for a WILDERNESS — *DESIERTO, SELVA, TIERRA SALVAJE* —are not positive, but heavily negative.

Recommended: *tierras silvestres*
              zona silvestre

Alternate: *tierras indomadas*

Up until the 1800s, even English-language writers saw WILDERNESS as something to fear, to conquer, and to obliterate— not something positive or wonderful.

When you search in a Spanish-language thesaurus for more options of how to say WILDERNESS, the negative connotations abound.

ABANDONADO,
DISHABITADO,
SOLITARIO,
DESPOBLADO,
VACIO,
INHOSPITALARIO,
SOLEDADES,
INEXPLORADO,
SOLEDUMBRE

The whole idea that there is a legal classification of land use in the USA that we label WILDERNESS is very puzzling to many Spanish readers.

Putting WILDERNESS AREA on a map in Spanish and expecting people to "get it" the way National Park Service employees understand that label (as a special-laws-apply area) won't work. Literal translation would give you something very similar to those very old maps that have "UNEXPLORED AREA" in the big blank spots in the middle of Africa and Australia.

In 2006 Sequoia–Kings Canyon staff strongly felt that *INDOMADO* was the best rendering for WILDERNESS. The Spanish verb *domar* means "to break a horse" and is fairly common in Latin America. Others in the Department of the Interior felt this word would draw blank stares from most Latin American readers.

Although Mexico established their first legal wilderness area and called it ***tierra silvestre*** in 2006, this term does not carry exactly the same meaning in Spanish as WILD has in English.

SILVESTRE also means SAVAGE, RUSTIC, UNCULTURED, UNREFINED, CRUDE, BARBARIC, and PEASANT.

7.42
Wildlife versus
Plants and Animals

Recommended	*flora y fauna*	for WILDLIFE
Alternate	*vida silvestre*	

Although it is acceptable and common to write "plants and animals" in English with no articles, this is usually translated in Spanish with the articles: *LAS PLANTAS Y LOS ANIMALES*.

This choice produces a text line that increases from 18 to 25 spaces. If you use the standard Spanish phrase *FLORA Y FAUNA* you will save valuable space.

The terms *FLORA Y FAUNA* are not perceived to be as high vocabulary in Spanish, even though using their English cognates FLORA AND FAUNA seems high fallutin for general readers in today's English. You can find *FLORA Y FAUNA* widely used in many Latin American national parks.

7.43
Zone vs. Area

The debate about how to label wilderness "areas" in text and maps revealed that first-language Spanish readers saw a distinction between *zona* and *área*.

ZONA was perceived to be a more managed, controlled place.

ÁREA was perceived to be a more general concept.

If the point of your text is that wilderness has to be protected and managed to survive in today's world, use *zona*. If you are referring to a large area that is more loosely controlled, use *área*.

SECTION 8:   **WRITING & SYNTAX SUGGESTIONS**

8.01
Adjectives:
variety needed

When an English noun functions as an adjective, or makes a compound noun, it usually makes texts longer in Spanish— and often makes them more repetitive to read.

Examples: DESERT TREES   *árboles del desierto*
               DESERT PLAINS   *planicies del desierto*

Here 12 letter spaces in English became 20 letter spaces in Spanish (160%). Publications and outdoor exhibits have limited space, and text fitting is challenging.

Look for other adjective forms, such as *DESÉRTICO/A*.

Editors and reviewers should ask how many times the modifiers like DESERT or MOUNTAIN or ENVIRONMENT need to appear over and over in a text block to get the job done. Save space and promote adjective variety.

8.02
Place-name-based adjectives in Spanish
Gentilicios

Give readers some variety by not repeating the formula (NOUN) DE (PLACENAME). Avoid 20 repetitions of SONORAN DESERT translated as *desierto de Sonora.* Most places have *gentilicios* in Spanish.

Alternate: *desierto sonorense*

Note the adjective of locality is always **lowercase** in Spanish, for example – PUERTO RICAN RAINFOREST ~ *bosque pluvial boricua*.

8.03
Multiple (stacked) modifiers

Interpretive writing in English abounds in noun series like DESERT PLAINS, FOOTHILLS, AND MOUNTAINS. Series like these produce very long and involved sentences in Spanish. Does DESERT modify just PLAINS or does it modify all three nouns? English syntax makes it possible to compress expressions that require more words in Spanish.

When trimming translated text to fit a space, the writer/ editor and translator should watch out for rhetorical expressions and nouns in series that are mostly included for rhythm in English. Phrases like MOUNTAINS, DESERTS, AND PLAINS or BREAD AND BUTTER may read well in the original English, but they may not necessarily be the heart of the story to tell.

In the Saguaro park brochure, keeping the single word SWEET in front of NECTAR cost an additional line of text space in the translated Spanish text. Since nectar is by nature sweet, it can be trimmed out to save space.

8.04
Name-based museum texts

In some new museum labels written for Gulf Islands in 2009, the whole effectiveness of the thought hinged on being able to understand a play on words of the English name for a seashell or animal. But the Spanish names for some of these creatures were nothing like the English names. In some cases, there was no Spanish common name. And there was not extra space available to explain at length in Spanish what the English name meant.

The best solution for this situation is to find an interesting angle or story to tell in Spanish about the creature that does not depend on wordplay with its name(s). Early in museum projects writers should be cautioned to not write labels this problematic way.

8.05
 Use verbs instead of nouns

English relies heavily on nouns for key meanings. In contrast, texts originally written in Spanish often loads more meaning and functions on the verbs.

A very literal translation often retains the English emphasis on the noun. This is especially true in passive or transitive voice English sentences.

Invest time and thought to find Spanish verbs for text that is more natural to read and more effective in conveying key thoughts.

8.06
Vocabulary — Is it too high?

Latin or Greek-based words that sound too scientific or too professorial in English can be normal vocabulary in a Latin-based language like Spanish. Because Spanish and English share so many close cognates, reviewers who are bilingual may think some Spanish-translated texts are too complex for general readers, because those high-level-vocabulary English cognates would be reader roadblocks.

 A real-life example came up during a review for Spanish materials prepared for a national park where the review team asked that DEL ESTE and DEL OESTE replace ORIENTAL and OCCIDENTAL.

Know your target audience, and adjust the vocabulary level of translations to them.

SECTION 9: WORD DIVISION CAVEATS

NPS publications, exhibits, and waysides follow the international rules of word division for Spanish seen in the Chicago Manual of Style Sections 9.68 through 9.79.

9.01
Spanish double letters

When you divide a Spanish word into syllables for a line break, don't rely on your computer to do it right. The letters ch, ll, and rr in Spanish are considered one letter.

Examples: *ci-ga-rro* *mo-chi-la* *ca-ba-lle-ro*

9.02
Safeguard key words
during text adjustments

Complex words, unusual words, and words that are the critical to the meaning of the sentence should not be divided at the end of the line of text, if at all possible.

9.03
Proper names – don't divide
at line ends

Names of people in Spanish are not supposed to be divided by a line break, if there is any way to possibly avoid it.

Note that this is different from English editing practices.

For further information, or to add items
to this ongoing list of problems and solutions, contact:

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NATIONAL PARKS WHERE THESE GUIDELINES HAVE BEEN USED

Spanish translations of park brochures and other publications:

Biscayne NP, Florida	Oklahoma City NM, Oklahoma
Big Cypress National Preserve, Florida	Pinnacles NM, California
Castillo de San Marcos NM, Florida	Saguaro NP, Arizona
Dry Tortugas NP, Florida	San Juan NHS, Puerto Rico
Everglades NP, Florida	Whitman Mission NHS, Washington

Spanish translations of film scripts:

Cabrillo NM, California

Castillo de San Marcos NM, Florida

San Juan NHS, Puerto Rico

Spanish translations of wayside exhibit and museum exhibit texts:

Big Bend NP, Texas	Joshua Tree NP, California
Big Cypress National Preserve, Florida	Juan Bautista de Anza Trail, California
Biscayne NP, Florida	Organ Pipe NM, Arizona
Carlsbad Caverns NP, New Mexico	Palo Alto National Battlefield, Texas
Dry Tortugas NP, Florida	Salinas Pueblo Missions NM, New Mexico
Everglades NP, Florida	San Antonio Missions NHP, Texas
Grand Canyon NP, Arizona	San Juan NHS, Puerto Rico
Guadalupe Mountains NP, Texas	Sequoia-Kings Canyon NP, California
Gulf Islands NS, Florida/Mississippi	Timpanogos Cave NM, Utah
Indiana Dunes NL, Indiana	