



*Teaching
Genealogists AI™*
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Getting Started in Genealogy – Quick Reference Card

Puerto Rican Genealogy Group | <https://puertoricangenealogy.org>

The 4 Steps

Step 1: Start With Yourself

- Write down your full name, birth date, and birthplace
- Add your parents' names, birth dates, and birthplaces
- Continue backward one generation at a time
- Do not skip generations

Step 2: Talk to Living Relatives

- Interview parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and godparents

- Ask about places, migrations, and family stories
- Request copies of photos and certificates
- Write down exactly what they say

Step 3: Collect Basic Documents

- Birth certificates (*Actas de nacimiento*)
- Marriage certificates (*Actas de matrimonio*)
- Death certificates (*Actas de defunción*)
- Obituaries (*Obituarios*)
- Census records (*Censos*)

Step 4: Keep a Research Log

- Write down where you searched
 - Record what you found
 - Record what you did NOT find
 - Always note your sources
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The 5 Beginner Research Questions

For every person in your family tree, ask:

1. What is the person's full name?
 2. When and where were they born?
 3. When and where did they marry?
 4. Did they move? If so, when and why?
 5. When and where did they die?
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Free Online Resources

Resource	URL
FamilySearch (free account)	https://www.familysearch.org
Find A Grave	https://www.findagrave.com
National Archives	https://www.archives.gov
Puerto Rican Genealogy Group	https://puertoricangenealogy.org

Library tip: Many public libraries offer free access to Ancestry.com and Newspapers.com. Ask your librarian!

Key Spanish Record Terms

Spanish	English
<i>Acta de nacimiento</i>	Birth record
<i>Acta de matrimonio</i>	Marriage record
<i>Acta de defunción</i>	Death record
<i>Bautismo</i>	Baptism
<i>Pueblo</i>	Town / municipality
<i>Barrio</i>	Neighborhood / sector
<i>Natural de</i>	Born in / native of
<i>Vecino/a de</i>	Resident of
<i>Hijo/a legítimo/a</i>	Legitimate child
<i>Viudo / Viuda</i>	Widower / Widow
<i>Testigo</i>	Witness
<i>Padrino / Madrina</i>	Godfather / Godmother

Puerto Rico Record Systems

System	Starts	Where to Find
Civil records (<i>Registro Civil</i>)	1885	FamilySearch, <i>Registro Demográfico</i>
Church records (<i>Registros Parroquiales</i>)	~1700s	FamilySearch, parish archives

Always check both systems. Church records often predate civil records and may contain different details.

The Golden Rule

Work from the known to the unknown. Never skip generations.

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