

Why 'EE. UU.' for 'Estados Unidos'?

From [Gerald Erichsen](#),
Your Guide to [Spanish Language](#).
FREE Newsletter. [Sign Up Now!](#)

Question of the Week

Question: Why is the abbreviation for *Estados Unidos* written *EE. UU.* instead of simply *E.U.*?

Answer: The double *E* and double *U* indicate that the letter represents a plural. Some other common Spanish abbreviations, among them *FF. AA.* for *Fuerzas Armadas* (Armed Forces) and *AA. EE.* for *Asuntos Exteriores* (Foreign Affairs), do the same thing. (Also in very common use are the abbreviations without the spaces and/or periods, such as *EEUU*, *FFAA* and *AAEE*.) Such a doubling of letters isn't done for all plurals; *ONU* is the abbreviation for *la Organización de las Naciones Unidas*, the United Nations.

We do the same doubling of letters in English in a few cases for words of Latin origin.

For example, the abbreviation for "page" is "p.," while for "pages" it's "pp." (The same abbreviations are used in Spanish for *página* and *páginas*.) And the abbreviation for "manuscript" is "MS" or "ms," while in the plural it's "MSS" or "mss." (Again, the same abbreviations are used in Spanish.)

You will in Spanish occasionally see the abbreviations *EUA* (for *Estados Unidos de América*) and even *USA* for *Estados Unidos*, but much less commonly than *EE. UU.* and its variations.