

## Chief Reader Report on Student Responses: 2018 AP<sup>®</sup> Spanish Language and Culture Free-Response Questions

• Number of Readers	1459		
<b>Total Group</b>			
• Number of Students Scored	180,435		
• Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At
	5	42,708	23.7
	4	62,658	34.7
	3	53,985	29.9
	2	18,597	10.3
	1	2,487	1.4
• Global Mean	3.69		
<b>Standard Group*</b>			
• Number of Students Scored	58,909		
• Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At
	5	9,735	16.5
	4	18,708	31.8
	3	20,383	34.6
	2	8,628	14.6
	1	1,455	2.5
• Global Mean	3.45		

\* Standard students generally receive most of their foreign language training in U.S. schools. They did not indicate on their answer sheet that they regularly speak or hear the foreign language of the exam, or that they have lived for one month or more in a country where the language is spoken.

The following comments on the 2018 free-response questions for AP<sup>®</sup> Spanish Language and Culture were written by the Chief Reader, Scott M. Alvord, Associate Professor of Hispanic Linguistics at Brigham Young University. They give an overview of each free-response question and of how students performed on the question, including typical student errors. General comments regarding the skills and content that students frequently have the most problems with are included. Some suggestions for improving student preparation in these areas are also provided. Teachers are encouraged to attend a College Board workshop to learn strategies for improving student performance in specific areas.

**Question #1****Task:** Interpersonal Writing:  
Email Reply**Topic:** Reply to an email regarding the development of a mobile APP for students who travel**Max. Points:** 5**Total Group Mean Score:** 3.38**Standard Group Mean Score:** 3.24***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

This task assessed writing in the interpersonal communicative mode by having the student write a reply to an e-mail message. Students were allotted 15 minutes to read the message and write the reply. The response received a single, holistic score based on how well it accomplished the assigned task. Students needed to be able, first, to comprehend the e-mail, and then to write a reply using a formal form of address. The reply must address all the questions and requests raised in the message, as well as ask for more details about something mentioned in the message.

The curricular theme for the e-mail reply was “Personal and Public Identities.” The students were asked to write a reply in response to an e-mail message from Javier González Prat from a tech company called “iTinerario” that is designing a mobile application to help students who are traveling. The original e-mail asked two questions:

1. Why is the student interested in traveling abroad?
2. If the student was traveling, what information would they need in order to plan an itinerary?

The students were also asked to include a greeting and a closing in their e-mail response.

***How well did the response address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?***

In general, the students were able to comprehend the language of the prompt. Students were able to answer both questions about their interest in international travel, with elaboration and even creativity in some cases. Students were able to request further information, directly or indirectly, about different aspects of the tech company, the mobile application, or the tablet contest.

**What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?**

The most common mistake was that students misunderstood elements of the prompt referring to the word “aplicación.” Some thought that they were applying for a job. Those who misunderstood this vocabulary item were not successful in meeting the other requirements of the task, such as answering the questions and requesting more information. The use of register was also not as consistent for responses in the mid-low range. Most responses in the mid-low range were missing the request for additional information, as is required in the general directions of the task.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responses demonstrated a misunderstanding of the prompt discussing traveling abroad as an opportunity to work with technology and about conditions of potential employment.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responses correctly understood that the prompt was referring to a tech company that was asking for information on what students want in their international travel.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responses included an inconsistent use of register.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responses included consistent and appropriate register (e.g. tú v. usted)</li></ul>

**Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?**

- Teachers should train their students to read the task carefully in order to understand what they ultimately have to do. Teachers should suggest that students check off each element of the task in the direction as they complete the task to ensure that they have addressed all the task’s requirements.
- Teachers should remind / teach students the use of formal register and provide numerous opportunities for students to use it in spoken and written interpersonal communication. Students need to be reminded that the formal register is much more than simply using tú or usted. It would be a good idea to provide samples of authentic emails and letters and to point out aspects of the formal register before asking students to write their first AP email reply.
- Teachers should encourage students to elaborate in the body of the email. This could be done early in the year by having the whole class engage in the development of an email reply where the teacher keeps requesting more details and more elaboration to include. In this way, students will come to understand the expectations for this task.
- Teachers should encourage students to build in time to proofread their email replies to correct grammatical and syntactical errors and to check spelling, accents, and punctuation. When practicing email replies in class, students could engage in peer-editing.

**What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?**

- Teachers should view the AP World Language and Culture Online Module on interpersonal writing, *Interpersonal Communication: Developing Writing Abilities*, to learn some strategies that focus on developing students’ interpersonal speaking skills. Teachers can access this online module here: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/resources/ap-world-language-culture-interactive-online-modules>
- Teachers should download the scoring guidelines for this task available on the AP Spanish Language and Culture Exam page and use them to review expectations for student performance: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-spanish-language-and-culture/exam?course=ap-spanish-language-and-culture>

- Teachers should choose a sample Email Reply prompt from the posted free response questions from 2014-2018 and access the corresponding student sample responses of high-, mid-, and low-performances to share with students so they can examine student work, vis-à-vis the scoring guidelines. This will inform them further of expectations for performance on this task, as well as the evaluative criteria for each score point :  
<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-spanish-language-and-culture/exam?course=ap-spanish-language-and-culture>
- Teachers should assign the other e-mail reply prompts from 2014-2018 under the same conditions and time constraints as on the exam and then score them using the scoring guidelines. Feedback to students should focus on what students should do to move their performance to the next higher level

**Question #2****Task:** Presentational Writing:  
Persuasive Essay**Topic:** Will traditional libraries be  
relevant in the future?**Max. Points:** 5**Total Group Mean Score:** 3.27**Standard Group Mean Score:** 3.32***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

This task assessed writing in the presentational communicative mode by having the student write a persuasive essay on a given topic while referencing three sources of information about the topic. Students were first given six minutes to read the essay topic and the two printed sources. Then they listened to the one audio source twice. Afterward, students had 40 minutes to write the essay. The response received a single, holistic score based on how well it accomplished the assigned task. Students needed to be able to comprehend the three sources and then to present their different viewpoints. They also had to present their own viewpoint and defend it thoroughly, using information from all of the sources to support the essay. As they referred to the sources, students had to identify them appropriately. Furthermore, the essay had to be organized into clear paragraphs.

The curricular theme for this question was “Science and Technology,” and the prompt was “Will traditional libraries be relevant in the future?”

Source 1 was an article titled: “*Bibliotecas y bibliotecarios preparados para una nueva era*,” published in Spain in 2013, which discussed future roles that librarians will perform in digital libraries. Source 2 was a pie chart from 2007 with percentages representing how frequently people visited libraries in Spain. Source 3 was a recording of a report, published by United Nations Radio, with a debate on the role of libraries in the digital era.

***How well did the response address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?***

Overall, students were able to successfully complete the task of answering the question with a personal opinion and defending that opinion by using the sources provided. The vast majority of responses showed an understanding of what was expected of the student. Because of the familiarity that the respondents had with the topic, there were strong personal opinions which led to elaboration. Students in the high range were able to utilize those parts of the sources that furthered their argument, as well as those who took an opposing point of view. Source 1 was very “user-friendly” because it gave statistics about library use that were easily adapted to support the opinions expressed in the responses. The graph was easy to read and interpret, and the recording, as is usually the case, was the most difficult for students to access.

**What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?**

Most gaps in knowledge seen in responses were related to not comprehending the sources' viewpoints or not integrating all three into the persuasive essay.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responses demonstrated a lack of comprehension of the sources viewpoints.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responses showed comprehension of the sources.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responses offered personal viewpoints exclusively instead of using the sources</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responses included information from all three sources to support the essay</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responses didn't include supporting information from all three sources.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responses included information from all sources and cited them appropriately.</li></ul>

**Based on your experience at the AP<sup>®</sup> Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?**

- Teachers should be sure that students clearly understand the task of writing a persuasive essay in Spanish in which they provide their own views, while supporting them by using information from the three sources, while citing these sources appropriately.
- Teachers should show students the difference between integrating information from the sources in support of their own viewpoints and simply summarizing the sources.
- Teachers should develop students' skills and confidence by gradually building skills through scaffolding the persuasive essay task. Teachers might begin this task early in the year by having students just respond to a prompt with a strong thesis statement, then move to having them build a thesis supported by two sources.
- Teachers should provide numerous opportunities for their students to engage in persuasive writing using sources that include readings, graphics, and audios with different points of view.

**What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?**

- Teachers should view the two AP World Language and Culture Online Module on Presentational Writing to learn some strategies that focus on developing students' presentational writing skills. Teachers can access these two online modules, *Presentational Communication, A Focus on Writing* and *Building Students' Skills in Developing Effective Arguments*, here: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/resources/ap-world-language-culture-interactive-online-modules>
- Teachers should download the scoring guidelines for this task available on the AP Spanish Language and Culture Exam page and use them to review expectations for student performance, as well as the evaluative criteria for each score point: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-spanish-language-and-culture/exam?course=ap-spanish-language-and-culture>
- Teachers should choose a sample persuasive essay prompt and its sources from the posted free response questions from 2014-2018 and access the corresponding student sample responses of high-, mid-, and low-performances to share with students, so that they can examine student work, vis-à-vis the scoring guidelines. This will inform them further of expectations for performance on this task.

- Teachers should assign the other persuasive essay prompts from 2014-2018 under the same conditions and time constraints as on the exam and then score them using the scoring guidelines. Feedback to students should focus on what students should do to move their performance to the next higher level.

**Question #3****Task:** Interpersonal Speaking:  
Conversation**Topic:** Discussing future study  
plans with Carla, a classmate**Max. Points:** 5**Total Group Mean Score:** 4.02**Standard Group Mean Score:** 3.04***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

This task assessed speaking in the interpersonal communicative mode by having the student respond as part of a simulated oral conversation. Students were first allotted 1 minute to read a preview of the conversation, including an outline of each turn in the conversation. Then the conversation proceeded, including 20 seconds for students to speak at each of five turns in the conversation. The series of five responses received a single, holistic score based on how well it accomplished the assigned task. The responses had to appropriately address each turn in the conversation, according to the outline as well as the simulated interlocutor's utterance.

The curricular theme for this task was "Contemporary Life." The student was asked to engage in a conversation with Carla, a classmate, about a meeting with academic advisors. Carla was not able to attend the meeting and would like suggestions about her university studies.

1. In the first prompt Carla asked the student to report on the meeting she missed. The student was expected to answer and explain to Carla what she missed.
2. In the second prompt Carla asked the student to let her know which universities the student likes and explain why the student likes these universities. The student was expected to respond with details.
3. In the third prompt Carla asked the student to tell her what the student wants to study. The student was expected to respond with details.
4. In the fourth prompt Carla asked the student to give her advice on a possible career path. The student was expected to give a suggestion regarding said career path.
5. In the fifth prompt Carla suggested that they get together to discuss a possible future meeting. The student was expected to respond affirmatively to the suggestion and to say farewell.

***How well did the response address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?***

Most students found the questions to be accessible and they provided a variety of answers with different degrees of appropriateness in terms of relevant content, amount of information, elaboration, and linguistic accuracy and variety. Some students were able to provide somewhat appropriate responses by using basic vocabulary and grammatical structures. Other students offered higher-level grammar and richer vocabulary to construct more elaborated and appropriate responses in the good and strong evaluation categories.



**What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?**

There were two main gaps in knowledge or performance in responses to this question: 1) limited vocabulary that only allowed responses to list universities or careers, and 2) limited control of verbal paradigms allowing the response to reference various time frames.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responses in the lower performance ranges had more limited vocabulary and gave lists of careers and/or of universities.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Many responses offered a wide range of appropriate vocabulary and were able to elaborate about the meeting that Carla missed and to suggest that careers that she would like.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responses in the lower performance ranges had limited mastery of the various verbal tenses.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responses in the mid- to high-performance ranges were able to give more thorough answers and to switch between the different elicited tenses.</li></ul>

**Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?**

- Students should be provided with many opportunities to converse spontaneously in order to develop their abilities to successfully engage in spoken, interpersonal communication.
- The students should be provided many opportunities to participate in spontaneous role play and hypothetical situations.
- Students should practice providing full and detailed responses that fit into the task’s 20-second timeframe.
- Students should be attentive to the sequence of solicited responses.
- Students should be aware that some of the prompts may require a multi-part response.
- Students should practice responding to complex questions that require immediate responses.
- Teachers should provide strategies for how students can recover if they miss a prompt.
- Teachers should provide students with the opportunity to practice the speaking task with the same technology and in the same space that will be used for the AP Exam early in the school year. Teachers should verify that the quality of the recordings allow for accurate scoring. If there is a problem with audio quality, teachers should work with the AP Coordinator to provide an appropriate testing environment for the speaking portion of the exam.

**What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?**

- Teachers should view the AP World Language and Culture Online Module on interpersonal speaking, *Interpersonal Communication: Developing Speaking Abilities*, to learn strategies that focus on developing students’ interpersonal speaking skills. Teachers can access this online module here: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/resources/ap-world-language-culture-interactive-online-modules>
- Teachers should download the scoring guidelines for this task available on the AP Spanish Language and Culture Exam page and use them to review expectations for student performance: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-spanish-language-and-culture/exam?course=ap-spanish-language-and-culture>
- Teachers should choose a sample conversation prompt from the posted free-response questions from 2014-2018 and access the corresponding student sample responses of high-, mid-, and low-performances to share with students so that they can examine student work, vis-à-vis the scoring guidelines. This will inform them further of

expectations for performance on this task and of the evaluative criteria for each score point:

<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-spanish-language-and-culture/exam?course=ap-spanish-language-and-culture>

- Teachers should assign the other conversation prompts from 2014-2018 under the same conditions and time constraints as on the exam and then score them using the scoring guidelines. Feedback to students should focus on what students should do to move their performance to the next higher level.

**Question #4****Task:** Presentational Speaking:  
Cultural Comparison**Topic:** Attitudes toward the  
treatment of animals in the student’s  
community compared to that in a  
Spanish-speaking community**Max. Points:** 5**Total Group Mean Score:** 3.61**Standard Group Mean Score:** 3.34***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

This task assessed speaking in the presentational communicative mode by having the student make a comparative oral presentation on a cultural topic. Students were allotted 4 minutes to read the topic and prepare the presentation, and then 2 minutes to deliver the presentation. The response received a single, holistic score based on how well it accomplished the assigned task. The presentation had to compare the student’s own community to an area of the Spanish-speaking world, demonstrating an understanding of cultural features of the Spanish-speaking world. Furthermore the presentation had to be organized clearly.

The course theme for the cultural comparison task was “Families and Communities,” and the prompt asked students to compare the attitudes of people in their own community to those of the target community with respect to the treatment of animals.

***How well did the response address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?***

Responses developed this presentation in varied ways, integrating knowledge of a variety of cultural practices and perspectives. Attitudes reflected in the role of pets in the family, traditions such as bullfights, organizations that protect animal welfare, wildlife preserves and zoos, and the use of animals for labor and food. Many responses were more developed, including details and relevant examples, while others simply provided somewhat negative generalizations about the target culture.

***What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?***

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some responses revealed a misinterpretation of the expression ‘con respecto a’ as referring to respect for animals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many responses showed an accurate understanding of the task and prompt addressing attitudes about the treatment of animals.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some responses showed a lack of knowledge of specific practices of the target culture, and did not include appropriate inferences about attitudes towards animals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The most successful responses supported statements about attitudes about the treatment of animals with specific examples such as ecological reserves, organizations to protect animals, and traditions relating to animals in a variety of Spanish-speaking communities.</li> </ul>

**Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?**

- Working in a vertical team, teachers should develop knowledge of specific cultural products, practices, and perspectives starting at the novice level.
- Accurate pronunciation of the names of countries is important.
- Students should frequently reflect on how specific products and practices can provide insights into cultural attitudes and perspectives. General statements should be supported with culturally relevant and specific examples.
- Teachers should provide instruction to guide students to better organize their presentations and incorporate transition expressions and cohesive devices, especially those for comparing and contrasting, to connect ideas and to guide the listener’s understanding.
- Teachers should provide effective strategies for making cultural comparisons. They should encourage the use of Venn diagrams or t-charts to help students make comparisons and organize their thoughts.
- Students should be encouraged to try to make “equal comparisons” – comparing a country to a country, a city to a city, etc.
- Students should be instructed to plan their presentations by using key word or key ideas. They should not attempt to write a script of their presentations.
- Students should consider beginning their comparisons with the target language community, as the main point of this task is for them to demonstrate understanding of the target culture.
- Students should be taught to address the task prompt clearly and specifically.
- Students should be sure to address the prompt and not speak in general terms about the provided course theme.
- Teachers should develop and emphasize students’ control of grammar so that students will communicate effectively and appropriately.
- From the beginning of language study, teachers should ensure that students acquire varied and appropriate vocabulary.
- Teachers should provide students with the opportunity to practice the speaking task with the same technology and in the same space as will be used for the AP Exam early in the school year. Teachers should verify that the quality of the recordings allows for accurate scoring. If there is a problem with audio quality, teachers should work with the AP Coordinator to provide an appropriate testing environment for the speaking portion of the exam.

**What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?**

- Teachers should view the AP World Language and Culture Online Module *Presentation Communication: A Focus on Speaking* to learn strategies that focus on developing students’ presentational speaking skills. Teachers can access this online module here:  
<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/resources/ap-world-language-culture-interactive-online-modules>
- Teachers should download the scoring guidelines for this task available on the AP Spanish Language and Culture Exam page and use them to review expectations for student performance:  
<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-spanish-language-and-culture/exam?course=ap-spanish-language-and-culture>
- Teachers should choose a sample cultural comparison prompt from the posted free response questions from 2014-2018 and access the corresponding student sample responses of high-, mid-, and low-performances to share with students so that they can examine student work, vis-à-vis the scoring guidelines. This will inform them further of expectations for performance on this task and of the evaluative criteria for each score point:  
<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-spanish-language-and-culture/exam?course=ap-spanish-language-and-culture>
- Teachers should assign the other Cultural Comparison prompts from 2014-2018 under the same conditions and time constraints as on the exam and then score them using the scoring guidelines. Feedback to students should focus on what students should do to move their performance to the next higher level