

Chief Reader Report on Student Responses: 2019 AP® Spanish Literature and Culture Free-Response Questions

Number of Students ScoredNumber of Readers	29,345		
Number of ReadersScore Distribution	171	NT	0/ 14
Score Distribution	Exam Score	N 2.702	%At
	5	2,793	9.5
	4	7,342	25.0
	3	11,070	37.7
	2	6,283	21.4
	1	1,857	6.3
Global Mean	3.10		

The following comments on the 2019 free-response questions for AP® Spanish Literature and Culture were written by the Chief Reader, Matthew V. Desing, Associate Professor, University of Texas at El Paso. 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.

Task: Text Explanation

Topic: Identify the author and period of the work, then explain the development of the theme of tradition and breaking from tradition within the work.

Max. Points: 3 Mean Score: Content: 1.82

Language: 2.63

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question required students to read a fragment or an entire selection from a work on the required reading list, and then respond to a prompt in a short response (not a fully-developed essay). On this year's exam the selection was the poem "Peso ancestral," which was written by the 20th-century Argentinean poet Alfonsina Storni and published in 1919. Students were asked to identify the author and the period of the text and to explain the development of the theme of *la tradición y la ruptura* ("tradition and breaking from tradition") within the poem. The question required students to identify the period, "época," with the purpose of situating the text historically, within either a specific date range, a broader period or century, or a literary movement connected to a specific period. Students were asked to explain the development of the theme of *la tradición y la ruptura* to show how the poet treats tradition and breaking from tradition in regard to men demonstrating emotion. Students were asked to write their short response in Spanish to demonstrate their proficiency in Presentational Writing in the target language.

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

A successful response correctly identified the author, the period of the text, and then effectively explained the development of the theme. A superior response situated the poem within the context of the 20th century and pointed to the ways in which men traditionally had not showed emotion in the familial context of the poetic voice, but that this situation has seemed to change, given the evidence of the referenced falling tear. Some of the most successful responses proposed possible meaning to the reference of the tear being poison.

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

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding	
Incorrect identification of author and period.	Top score responses correctly identified both the author and the period.	
Simply restating the poem in the student's words. In other words, not explaining the theme (but rather simply identifying its appearance).	The most successful responses went beyond identification and summary and moved toward the more complex task of explaining the theme.	

- Unnecessarily discussing literary/rhetorical devices to the detriment of the required tasks.
- The best answers responded to all tasks required by the prompt and only addressed elements of the poem that served to move forward the identified theme.

Based on your experience at the AP^{\otimes} Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Identifying basic information about works is always required on this free-response question and often on questions in the multiple-choice section of the exam. Many techniques can be used to acquire or review this information, from flashcards to memory work with images. Teachers should encourage their students to review this information periodically throughout the course.
- Similarly, teachers may work with students to help them understand the difference in complexity between the tasks of "identify" and "explain."
- The term "desarrollo" often appears in this free-response question. Teachers should make sure that students know the difference between identifying a theme and explaining its development. The term "development" implies change over time, and students should be attuned to this especially in terms of organizing a response.
- Locating evidence from the text is an important skill, which can be scaffolded. A first stage could be having students choose from among a given list of quotes that best supports a contention or theme provided by the teacher. A following stage could be having the students locate quotations in a text to support a theme given by the teacher (this could be done by marking up the particular work or selection). A final stage could be having the student identify a theme on their own and then choosing evidence to support it.
- The course subthemes and organizing concepts are important elements of the course as well as the exam. Helping students become familiar with these could greatly improve student performance.

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

- Teachers can view the online module for AP Spanish Literature and Culture that provides strategies to help
 improve students' skills in critical reading and analytical writing. This module, *Developing Students' Abilities in*Critical Reading and Literary Analysis, by Ceida Fernández Figueroa, is presented in Spanish and contains
 sample exam tasks for classroom practice: https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/resources/ap-worldlanguage-culture-interactive-online-modules
- Teachers should be thoroughly familiar with the expectations for this first free-response question. They can
 access information about it in the 2019 Spanish Literature and Culture Course and Exam Description on
 page 182: https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/pdf/ap-spanish-literature-and-culture-course-and-exam-description.pdf?course=ap-spanish-literature-and-culture
- Teachers can access the scoring guidelines on the exam information page and carefully review them with their students so that students will understand performance expectations and the evaluative criteria for each score point. https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-spanish-literature-and-culture/exam
- In AP Classroom, teachers will find a rich, new collection of resources for the 2019 school year that includes
 newly created formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course and that represents each of
 the types of questions on the AP Exam. This includes practice FRQs for teachers to use as formative assessment
 pieces beginning with scaffolded questions that represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the
 school year and an increased challenge as teacher's progress through the course.
- Teachers can access some of the student samples of Free-Response Question 1 from 2013–2019 posted on the
 exam information page and review them along with the scoring guidelines with students. This will help students
 see how the scoring guidelines are applied and understand the characteristics of high, mid, and low
 performances. https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-spanish-literature-and-culture/exam
- Teachers can access the remaining samples of Free Response Question 1 from 2013–2019 that are posted on the exam information page and use these to practice this question with their students. Before having students

practice this task for the first time, teachers should carefully review the instructions, have students read and explain what the task entails, and then require students to check off each of the three components of the task once they have completed each in their response. Teachers can then use the scoring guidelines to score students responses and provide feedback to students as to how to improve their work to possibly move it up into the next higher score category. https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-spanish-literature-and-culture/exam

Task: Text and Art Comparison

Topic: Compare the representation of honor in the "Third Treatise" of the anonymous picaresque novel *Lazarillo de Tormes* and the painting *El caballero de la mano en el pecho* by El Greco, both in relation to the Golden Age of Spanish art and letters.

Max. Points: 3 Mean Score: Content: 1.78

Language: 2.54

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question required students to read a text or an excerpt of a text from the reading list and view a piece of artwork. The prompt then instructs students to engage in a thematic comparison of the two works, focusing on a subgenre, period, movement, or technique. The literary selection on this year's exam was a fragment from the third treatise/chapter of the anonymous picaresque novel *Lazarillo de Tormes*, and the artwork was a reproduction of the painting *El caballero de la mano en el pecho*, by the painter known as El Greco (Doménikos Theotokópoulos). Students were required to compare the representation of honor (*la representación del honor*) in the two works in relation to the *Siglo de Oro* (the "Golden Age" of Spanish art and letters). Supporting claims with evidence is an important part of any literary response, and to this end students were expected to support their responses to this question with specific, well-chosen examples from both the literary work and the artwork. This task requires students to respond in Spanish to the prompt in a well-organized short answer (not an essay) using varied vocabulary and grammatical forms appropriate to the task.

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

Successful responses effectively compared the representation of honor in both works. In the thematic comparison, appropriate responses often pointed to the trappings of honorable dress from the period represented in both the painting and the novel. The most successful responses were able to point to differences in the presentation of the theme as well, for example, emphasizing that the squire from *Lazarillo de Tormes* placed much weight on merely appearing honorable, with his focus on physical accoutrement, while the figure in the portrait, with the noble gesture of placing hand on heart, appeared to embody a more authentic sense of honor. Responses were able to draw connections to the literary/artistic period of the Golden Age (*Siglo de Oro*). The best responses were able to provide well-chosen examples from both works. Successful responses were able to accomplish these tasks in the form of a short response without extending their writing into a full-fledged essay.

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

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding	
Confusing honor with other concepts such as wealth, authority, or power.	The most successful responses demonstrated an understanding of the theme of honor and focused their attention on that specific theme.	
Misunderstanding the period of the Spanish Golden Age.	Responses that positively or productively responded to this aspect of the prompt connected the designation of <i>Siglo de Oro</i> to the correct historical period and its corresponding traits.	
Presenting a significantly unbalanced comparison favoring the fragment of the novel or a general lack of engagement with the painting.	Successful responses addressed both elements of the comparative task in a balanced manner, not unduly favoring the painting or the written work.	
Describing each element without engaging in direct comparison.	The most successful responses engaged in an active and explicit comparison of the two works (instead of treating the two works in isolation).	

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

- Prepare students to write concise, well-organized responses that address all elements of the prompt.
- Teach and analyze characteristics of literary movements or genres and consistently reference these when teaching a new text.
- Stress going beyond the description of the elements in isolation to a more integrated comparison.
- Provide templates or graphic organizers, such as Venn diagrams or T-charts, which will help students make comparisons.
- Work on balancing comparative responses.
- Teach and stress the use of comparative and contrastive conjunctions and transitional phrases.
- Teach students to analyze artworks and compare them thematically with the works on the mandatory reading list

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

Teachers can view the online module for AP Spanish Literature and Culture that provides strategies on
improving students' skills in critical reading and analytical writing. This module, *Developing Students' Abilities*in Critical Reading and Analytical Writing, is presented in Spanish and contains sample exam tasks for
classroom practice: https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/resources/ap-world-language-culture-interactive-online-modules

- Teachers should be aware of the expectations/requirements for this question and should share them with students. A brief description of this question is found on page 182 in the AP Spanish Literature and Culture Course and Exam Description: https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/pdf/ap-spanish-literature-and-culture-course-and-exam-description.pdf?course=ap-spanish-literature-and-culture
- In AP Classroom, teachers will find a rich, new collection of resources for the 2019 school year that includes
 newly created formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course and that represents each
 of the types of questions on the AP Exam. This includes practice FRQs for teachers to use as formative
 assessment pieces beginning with scaffolded questions that represent what students are ready for at the
 beginning of the school year and an increased challenge as teacher's progress through the course.
- Teachers can download and distribute to students the *Glossary of Literary Terms for AP Spanish Literature and Culture* available as a PDF. This resource provides definitions of all the literary terms in the course and exam description and provides examples of each taken from one or more of the works on the required reading list. Regular use of this resource will strengthen students' understanding of literary terms, movements, techniques, and genres. https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/pdf/ap-spanishliteratureglossaryofliteraryterms.pdf?course=ap-spanish-literature-and-culture
- Teachers can access the scoring guidelines on the exam information page and carefully review them with students so that students will understand the expectations for performance and the evaluative criteria for each score point. https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-spanish-literature-and-culture/exam?course=ap-spanish-literature-and-culture
- Teachers can access some of the student samples of Free Response Question 2 from 2013–2019 posted on the
 exam information page, and review the scoring guidelines with students so that students can see examples of
 student work and understand the characteristics of high, mid, and low performances. Teachers should share
 the provided scoring commentaries for each sample after students have reviewed and tried to determine its
 score based on the scoring guidelines. https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-spanish-literature-and-culture
- Teachers can access the remaining samples of Free Response Question 2 from 2013–2019 that are posted on
 the exam information page, and use these to practice this question with students. Before having students
 practice the first time, teachers should carefully review the instructions, have students read and explain what
 the question entails, and require students to check off each of the components of the task once they have
 completed each in their response. Teachers can then use the scoring guidelines to score responses and provide
 feedback to students, so they understand how to improve their work.
 https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-spanish-literature-and-culture/exam?course=ap-spanish-literature-and-culture

Task: Analysis of a Single Text

Topic: Analyze how the fragment of the novel *San Manuel Bueno, martir* represents the characteristics of the technique of metafiction and the historical context of Spain at the beginning of the 20th century.

Max. Points: 5 Mean Score: Content: 2.00

Language: 2.78

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question required students to read a fragment of a text on the required reading list and to write an essay analyzing how the text represents the characteristics of a particular subgenre, period, movement, or technique, and its historical context. The text for this year's exam was a selection from the novel *San Manuel Bueno, martir* by Miguel de Unamuno. Students were required to comment on both the historical context (*la España de principios del siglo XX*) and the literary devices relevant to the technique of metafiction (*la metaficción*), while citing examples from the text that supported their analyses. The students were asked to write their essays in Spanish to demonstrate their proficiency in Presentational Writing in the target language in support of literary analysis.

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

Successful responses covered all four basic elements solicited by the prompt: an analytical essay in Spanish, a treatment of the historical context of the text, a commentary on the literary devices of the technique, and appropriate textual examples to support the analysis. Effective responses were presented in coherent and cohesive essays using an academic register and observing the written conventions of Spanish, while attending to the content solicited by the prompt. The most effective essays expounded on the historical context of Spain at the beginning of the 20th century often pointing to the importance of religiosity in the small towns of Spain at that time. Effective responses attended to where, how, and even why the characteristics of the technique of metafiction were used in the selected work. The two previously stated aspects of the essay required evidentiary support, and successful responses provided clear and well-chosen textual evidence for both. Question 3 is often considered one of the more challenging of the free-response questions on the exam because of the number of elements that students are required to include, but exemplary responses integrated the prompt's four elements in an organized fashion.

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

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding	
Addressing only part of the prompt.	Successful responses addressed all aspects of this multi-part prompt.	
Not going beyond description to analysis.	Appropriate responses did not merely identify and describe elements of the technique, their literary devices, and elements of the historical context but analyzed these in the function of a strong thesis.	
Not understanding metafiction.	The most successful responses understood metafiction and its self-referentiality, its construction, or its containment of a fictional element within the frame of its own narrative fiction.	
Not identifying literary devices (especially those associated with narrative) related to metafiction.	The best responses analyzed the technique of metafiction with its characteristics and identified a minimum of two literary devices. The best responses also included an analysis of how the literary devices were used or why they were important to the technique.	

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

- Encourage students to take the time to underline, number, or mark each of the required tasks so they will remember to include each element in their essays.
- Teach students how to approach answering the question by formulating a thesis that addresses all of the different components of the prompt.
- Teach students the differences between analyzing, explaining, describing, and identifying.
- Expose students to a variety of texts (from the reading list and others) that contain the various literary techniques found on the list of literary terms (page 23–24 of the Spanish Literature and Culture Course and Exam Description).
- Practice regularly with students on identifying and applying literary devices, not just those used in poetry, and the features associated with different genres and subgenres that are listed in the curriculum framework on page 24 (remembering that the list is not exhaustive).
- Involve the class in small-group work to create an ongoing historical timeline and a parallel timeline for literary movements.
- Teach students how to develop and properly support each claim (each part of the prompt) by providing relevant and well-chosen evidence from the text.
- Help students develop and apply effective cohesive devices and transitional expressions so that they will be
 able to appropriately connect their thoughts and successfully guide a reader through their essays. Teachers
 should also help students focus on integrating comments of an analytical nature, as opposed to writing mere
 summaries or anecdotal commentaries.

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

- Teachers can view the online module for AP Spanish Literature and Culture that provides strategies on
 improving students' skills in critical reading and analytical writing. This module, *Developing Students' Abilities*in Critical Reading and Analytical Writing is presented in Spanish and contains sample exam tasks for
 classroom practice: https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/resources/ap-world-language-cultureinteractive-online-modules
- View the AP World Languages and Cultures Online Module, Building Students' Skills in Developing Effective
 Written Arguments, for guidance on how to help students craft more effective, concise, and organized
 arguments in presentational writing. https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/resources/ap-world-languageculture-interactive-online-modules
- Teachers should be aware of the expectations/requirements for this question and should share them with students. A brief description of this question is found on page 182 in the AP Spanish Literature and Culture Course and Exam Description: https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/pdf/ap-spanish-literature-and-culture-course-and-exam-description.pdf?course-ap-spanish-literature-and-culture
- In AP Classroom, teachers will find a rich, new collection of resources for the 2019 school year that includes newly created formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course and that represents each of the types of questions on the AP Exam. This includes practice FRQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces beginning with scaffolded questions that represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and an increased challenge as teacher's progress through the course.
- Teachers can download and distribute to students the *Glossary of Literary Terms for AP Spanish Literature and Culture* available as a PDF: This resource provides definitions of all the literary terms in the course and exam description and provides examples of each one taken from one or more of the works on the required reading list. Regular use of this resource will strengthen students' understanding of literary terms, movements, techniques, and genres. https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/pdf/apspanishliteratureglossaryofliteraryterms.pdf?course=ap-spanish-literature-and-culture.
- Teachers can access the scoring guidelines on the exam information page and carefully review them with students, so that they understand the expectations for performance and the evaluative criteria for each score point

for this task. https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-spanish-literature-and-culture/exam?course=ap-spanish-literature-and-culture

- Teachers can access some of the student samples of Free Response Question 3 from 2013–2019 posted on the
 Exam Information page (https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-spanish-literature-andculture/exam?course=ap-spanish-literature-and-culture) and review them alongside the scoring guidelines with
 students so that they can understand the characteristics of high, mid, and low performances. Teachers can
 share the provided scoring commentaries for each sample after they have reviewed each sample and tried to
 determine its score based on the scoring guidelines.
- Teachers can access the remaining samples of Free Response Question 3 from 2013–2019 that are posted on
 the exam information page and use these to practice this question with their students throughout the year.
 Before having students practice this task the first time, teachers should carefully review the instructions, have
 students read and explain what the question entails, and then require students to check off each of the
 elements of the task once they have completed each in their essays.
 https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-spanish-literature-and-culture/exam?course=ap-spanishliterature-and-culture

Task: Text Comparison

Topic: Analyze the effects of literary devices used to develop the theme of nationalism in a fragment of the essay "Nuestra América" by José Martí as compared to those in the essay "No llores por nosotros, Puerto Rico" by Luis Rafael Sanchez.

Max. Points: 5 Mean Score: Content: 2.57

Language: 3.25

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question required students to read two texts (or fragments of texts) related by theme: one from a work on the required reading list and the other from a work not on the list. Students were asked to analyze the effect of literary devices used by the authors in the texts to develop a particular theme; the analysis should be comparative in nature and should be supported by specific examples from both texts. On the 2019 exam the fragments came from two essays: "Nuestra América" by José Martí (from the list) and "No llores por nosotros, Puerto Rico" by Luis Rafael Sánchez (not on the list). Students were asked to analyze the effect of the literary devices used by the poets to develop the theme of nationalism (*el nacionalismo*) and to compare the presentation of the theme in the poems. Students were asked to write their essays in the target language of Spanish to demonstrate their proficiency in Presentational Writing.

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

Essays that demonstrated a strong understanding of both the content and the skills required by the prompt included a strong and clear analysis of the effect of the literary devices used by the authors, and a clear comparison of the presentation of the theme of *el nacionalismo* in the essay fragments. In successful responses, students analyzed the development of the theme in well-developed essays with an explicit statement of purpose (thesis), and a coherent structure that followed a logical progression of ideas. In these essays, students integrated specific, relevant, and well-chosen textual examples of literary devices to support their thematic argument. Students who were prepared for this task performed well.

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

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
Not balancing the comparative analysis in its treatment of both essay fragments.	The best responses treated both essay fragments nearly equally.
 Not mentioning literary devices in comparing the theme in both texts. Providing a list of literary devices but not analyzing their effect on the development of the theme. Incorrect identification of literary devices or confusing their nomenclature. 	Strong responses effectively integrated the identification and analysis of literary devices with the development of the theme in both essay fragments.
Not organizing the essay around common elements of the two fragments (either thematic or by devices).	The most effective responses organized the points of the essay around the commonalities within the fragments.
Spending time/space on long quotes instead of using abbreviation techniques (summary quotes, ellipses within brackets [], etc.).	Appropriate responses provided evidence for each claim made, but that evidence was presented succinctly.
 Use of description and explanation of the theme rather than analysis. Merely providing a summary or paraphrase of the poems. Providing irrelevant commentaries rather than the specific thematic analysis required by the prompt. 	Successful responses addressed all elements of the prompt, including analysis (avoiding mere summary). They only included additional information if it supported that analysis.

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

- Teachers should encourage students to focus on the prompt and its specific tasks (not presenting everything they know about a given text, or engaging with works not referenced in the prompt)
- Students should be taught to connect the analysis of literary devices to the development of the theme in texts and should be given practice with this throughout the year.
- Students need to learn to support their analysis of the literary devices and comparison of the theme with wellchosen examples (either direct quotes or summary quotes) from the texts.
- Teachers should provide opportunities to practice analytical writing and make sure the students know the difference between analyzing, explaining, describing, and identifying.
- Teachers should teach students how to craft an analytical essay with a logical progression of ideas, and that includes an explicit thesis, development of ideas, conclusion, and transitional words.
- Teachers should practice with students the correct nomenclature of literary devices and identify and analyze
 these using different textual examples; they should also explore the possible function of those same literary
 devices.
- Teachers should provide opportunities to practice transitional phrases and connecting phrases to improve the flow of comparative essays.

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

- Teachers can view the online module for AP Spanish Literature and Culture that provides strategies on
 improving students' skills in critical reading and analytical writing. This module, *Developing Students' Abilities*in Critical Reading and Analytical Writing is presented in Spanish and contains sample exam tasks for
 classroom practice: https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/resources/ap-world-language-cultureinteractive-online-modules
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- Teachers can access some of the student samples of Free-Response Question 4 from 2013–2019 posted on the
 exam information page and review them along with the scoring guidelines so that students can see examples
 of student work and understand the characteristics of high, mid, and low performances. Teachers can share
 the provided scoring commentaries for each sample with the students after they have reviewed each sample
 and tried to determine its score based on the scoring guidelines. https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-spanish-literature-and-culture
- Teachers can access the remaining samples of Free-Response Question 4 from 2013–2019 that are posted on the exam information page and use these throughout the year to practice this question with their students. Before having students practice the first time, teachers should carefully review the instructions, have students read and explain what the question entails, and then require students to check off each of the elements once they have completed each in their response. Teachers can then use the scoring guidelines to score students' responses and provide feedback to students as to how to improve their work. https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-spanish-literature-and-culture/exam?course=ap-spanish-literature-and-culture