

Chief Reader Report on Student Responses: 2021 AP[®] Spanish Language and Culture Free-Response Questions

- Number of Readers 1,240

Total Group

- Number of Students Scored 148,486
- Score Distribution

Exam Score	N	%At
5	25,707	17.3
4	44,072	29.7
3	49,017	33.0
2	24,439	16.5
1	5,251	3.5
- Global Mean 3.41

Standard Group*

- Number of Students Scored 50,916
- Score Distribution

Exam Score	N	%At
5	6,554	12.9
4	14,198	27.9
3	18,482	36.3
2	9,684	19.0
1	1,998	3.9
- Global Mean 3.27

The following comments on the 2021 free-response questions for AP[®] Spanish Language and Culture were written by the Chief Reader, Scott M. Alvord, 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:** Email Reply**Topic:** Newspaper Collaboration**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 interpersonal communicative mode by having the student write a reply to an email 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 email 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 course theme for the email reply was “Personal and Public Identities.” The student was tasked with responding to Professor Luis Casillas, a teacher at the International School of Potosí in Bolivia. The student, who works as the editor of their school newspaper, has accepted the opportunity to collaborate with the International School of Potosí’s newspaper and must now respond to Mr. Casillas’ email. The original email asks two questions of the student:

1. What topics of general interest to young people could we include in this first edition together? Why?
2. What aspects of our academic life in Bolivia would be of interest to students in your school?

In the directions for this task, the students are also asked to include a greeting **and** a closing, and elicit more *information*.

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?

Most students were able to complete the task, answer the two questions, and request more information. The high-scoring students made it clear that they understood what the newspaper collaboration project entailed. Successful student responses demonstrated a clear exchange of information using a formal register. Responses also showed evidence of eliciting information needed for Luis Casillas to include in the newspaper edition using a variety of vocabulary not included in the prompt. In their responses, students also had questions regarding the virtual meeting, the content and final format of the newspaper edition, and academic life in Bolivia.

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 exchange that was to take place between the school in Bolivia and their school. Samples also showed that the use of the possessive adjectives *tu*, *su*, and *nuestra* was misinterpreted by students and therefore, there was confusion about their location. Those who misunderstood these possessive adjectives were not successful in meeting some of 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, the lower-scoring responses had more from the perspective as if they were in Bolivia. Additionally, some students wrote about their personal interests and not about the students in general.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses demonstrated a misunderstanding of the prompt addressing as if they were writing from Bolivia. Additionally, some responses confused the information about the bilingual publication, as if they were going to write in Spanish and not English. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses demonstrated understanding of the prompt giving concrete examples of the general interests of students and academic life in Bolivia.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some responses demonstrated a misunderstanding of the lexical item <i>vida académica</i>, leading to less appropriate responses. Or, some misunderstood that the email was seeking responses about general interest and not personal interest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses demonstrated an understanding of these lexical items as well as more advanced concepts, such as “joined edition” and “achieve an interesting cultural exchange,” to link these concepts to the information needed for the newspaper collaboration.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses included an inconsistent use of register using <i>tú / usted</i> or <i>hola, hasta luego, oye</i>, and direct commands in the <i>tú</i> form (e.g., send me more information <i>mándame más información</i>). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses included consistent and appropriate register, including more formal language in greetings/closings.

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 train their students to read the instructions and the task (topic of the email) carefully in order to understand what they ultimately have to do, i.e., write a response to the email, including a formal greeting, answers to the questions posed in the email, a request for information, and a formal closing. Teachers should suggest that students check off each element of the task listed in the directions as they complete the task to ensure that they have addressed all the task’s requirements as they relate to the topic of the formal email reply.
- Teachers should remind/teach students the use of formal register and provide numerous opportunities for students to use the formal register in spoken and written interpersonal communication. Students need to be reminded that the formal register is much more than simply using *tú* or *usted*. Students should be provided with samples of authentic emails to point out aspects of the formal greetings, use of register, and requesting information 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 without providing a set template for the students to follow. 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.
- Teachers should meet with colleagues who teach AP French, German, and Italian Language and Culture to determine what common shared challenges there are across languages for this task and then brainstorm strategies that will 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?

- The AP Spanish Language and Culture Course and Exam Description (CED) contains suggestions in the Unit Guides for building students' skills in writing successful email replies. The email reply task model is presented and practiced in Units 1, 3, and 5. The CED can be accessed here: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/pdf/ap-spanish-language-and-culture-course-and-exam-description.pdf>
- Teachers should become familiar with all the online resources available to support instruction and assessment for AP Spanish Language and Culture with AP Classroom: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/instructional-resources/ap-classroom>
- Through AP Classroom, teachers can access AP Question Bank for AP Spanish Language and Culture. This is a searchable collection of past AP Exam questions where teachers can find and access email replies from previous exams.
- Teachers can also access three Practice Exams in the AP Question Bank, which provide practice in the email reply and can be scored using the provided scoring guidelines.
- Teachers should view the AP World Language and Culture Online Module on interpersonal writing, *Interpersonal Communication: Developing Writing Abilities* by Nyan-Ping Bi, to learn some strategies that focus on developing students' interpersonal writing 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 Email Reply 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>
- Teachers should choose a sample email reply prompt from the posted free-response questions from 2014-2021 on the Exam Page on AP Central and access the corresponding 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>
- Teachers should assign Email Reply prompts for students to complete 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:** Argumentative Essay

Max. Points: 5

Topic: Volunteering

Total Group Mean Score: 3.06

Standard Group Mean Score: 3.23

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This task assessed writing in the presentational communicative mode by having the student write an argumentative essay on a given topic while referencing three sources of information about the topic. Students were first allotted 6 minutes to read the essay topic and the two printed sources. Then they listened to the one audio source. Afterward, they 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 first to comprehend the three sources and then to present the sources' different viewpoints. They also had to present their own position and defend it thoroughly, using information from all of the sources to support the essay. As they referred to the sources, they had to identify them appropriately. Furthermore, the essay had to be organized into clear paragraphs.

The course theme for the argumentative essay task was “Contemporary Life” with a focus on volunteering. The prompt was “Who benefits more, the people that volunteer or those that receive the help?” The first source was the article “5 razones por las que detesto los voluntariados” that discusses why the volunteering experience is bad for volunteers, how organizations take advantage—even charge them for room and board, and how advertising for volunteering experiences is often misleading. The second source was an infographic showing the types of volunteering activities done by Chileans and the percentages of people who do those activities. The third source was an interview entitled “Jóvenes voluntarios, promotores de la paz y desarrollo en Colombia.” In this interview, Orlando López describes his volunteer work with the Servir foundation in a detention center for minors. Mr. López explains how this changed his life as well as the lives of the youth he served, and invites young people to volunteer in order to make a difference in their society.

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?

Overall, students were able to successfully complete the task of answering the question with a personal position on the topic and defending that position by utilizing the sources provided. Because of the familiarity that students have with the topic, given that in many schools in the U.S. volunteering is a requirement for high school graduation, they were able to express their opinion, defend it, and provide examples. Source 1 was especially accessible to students supporting the opinion that those who receive help benefit more, because it so unequivocally argued against volunteering as a path to personal growth, and because of its accessible vocabulary and five headings that correspond to the five reasons for disliking volunteering. Source 2 was especially accessible due to the pictures and clear vocabulary, and was often used to support either position, while Source 3 was most often used to support the position that volunteering benefits the volunteer more, despite the fact that the other option is also present in this source.

Some responses indicated that both volunteers and those they help benefit equally, and this was deemed to be an acceptable answer to the question because students were not clearly asked to choose one over the other.

Responses in the high range integrated the skills required, specifically comprehension of different arguments in written text, charts, and aural sources. These responses develop the students' position on the topic, and sometimes include arguments from all three sources in support of the point of view. None of the sources presented widespread problems of misunderstanding, though Source 2 was most often used to support either position and was especially accessible because of the graphics. Most responses were organized in the form of an essay with clear paragraphs, though grammar and language usage vary widely among them.

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

Most gaps in knowledge seen in student responses were related to not comprehending the sources' viewpoints or not integrating all three into the argumentative essay. Also, some responses refer to volunteerism as positive or negative instead of answering the prompt.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responses discussed the advantages or disadvantages of volunteering, but didn't indicate for whom. Students answered a similar question, but not quite the one that was posed. This demonstrates a misunderstanding of the prompt.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More successful essays clearly identified who benefits more from volunteerism and demonstrate understanding of the prompt question and instructions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some responses in the low range made very simplistic arguments, stopping at providing their opinion without integrating sources; making a claim; using and developing the information from the sources throughout the essay as evidence; or explaining how the evidence supports the claim.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More successful responses were able to use Source 2 and provided examples about church, elderly people, teaching, entertainment, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some responses in the mid-to-low range used very simple examples or obvious arguments from the sources without demonstrating deep understanding of the sources' main position on the topic. For example, some used the easiest examples from source 1 (grabbing coffee, tedious tasks, unpaid work) and source 3 (volunteerism is very positive for the young man who has worked in youth detention centers). Many did not recognize that this volunteer work also helps the youth in the center move on to a better life, or that organizations may take advantage of volunteers without contributing to their development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In general, the more successful responses used more than one example from each of the three sources and elaborated to support their position. The best responses understand and contradict the information presented in the sources, providing clear counterarguments.

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 help students clearly understand the task of writing argumentative essays in Spanish. Include responding to a prompt and providing their own views supported by integrating information from the three sources, while citing the sources appropriately.
- Teachers should practice with prompts that differ from the classic positive vs. negative, or advantages vs. disadvantages. This year's prompt asked for a different type of response, and students often deferred to their training on answering questions about whether the prompt topic is better or worse. They should practice reading the prompt with the students highlighting key words or phrases that will lead to writing an effective argumentative essay based on the specific options given in the prompt.
- Teachers should show students the difference between integrating information from the sources to support their own position and merely summarizing the sources.
- Teachers should help students learn how to identify/cite sources unambiguously.
- Teachers should develop students' skills and confidence by gradually scaffolding the argumentative 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 one, two, then three sources.
- Teachers should provide numerous opportunities for their students to engage in argumentative writing using sources, including authentic readings, graphs, and audio sources that present different and contradictory points of view.
- Teachers should deemphasize the memorization of idiomatic expressions (e.g., *es pan comido*), which may only be used in one country. This does not necessarily help students develop an essay. Teachers should, instead, focus on addressing lexical and grammatical issues that are applicable to writing about any topic. A variety of transitional elements beyond *finalmente* or *para comenzar* would enhance organization and create a higher-quality essay.
- Teachers should consider meeting with colleagues who teach AP French, German, and Italian Language and Culture to determine what common shared challenges exist for this task across languages and to brainstorm strategies that will 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?

- The AP Spanish Language and Culture Course and Exam Description (CED) contains suggestions in the Unit Guides for building students' skills in writing successful argumentative essays. The argumentative essay task model is presented and practiced in Units 2, 4, and 6. This task is scaffolded to build students' skills and confidence. The first time it appears in Unit 2, students write an argumentative essay responding to a prompt using only two sources, and subsequently in Units 4 and 6, they write essays using three sources. The CED can be accessed here: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/pdf/ap-spanish-language-and-culture-course-and-exam-description.pdf>
- Teachers should become familiar with all the online resources available to support instruction and assessment for AP Spanish Language and Culture within AP Classroom: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/instructional-resources/ap-classroom>
- Teachers can access the AP Question Bank through AP Classroom. This is a searchable collection of past AP Exam questions where teachers can access argumentative essay tasks from previous exams.
- Teachers can access three Practice Exams in the AP Question Bank that provide practice with the essay task and can be scored using the scoring guidelines provided.
- Teachers should view the two AP World Language and Culture Online Module on Presentational Writing; the first: *Presentational Communication, A Focus on Writing*, by Federica Santini, and the second: *Building Students' Skills in Developing Effective Arguments*, by Ann Mar to learn some strategies that focus on developing students' presentational writing skills. Teachers can access these two online modules 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>

- Teachers should choose a sample essay prompt and its sources from the posted free response questions from 2014-2021 from AP Central: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-spanish-language-and-culture/exam> and access the corresponding 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 further inform them of expectations for performance on this task.
- Teachers should assign other argumentative essay prompts for students to complete 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:** Conversation**Topic:** Upcoming Summer Plans**Max. Points:** 5**Total Group Mean Score:** 4.11**Standard Group Mean Score:** 3.51***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 5 turns in the conversation. The series of 5 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 course theme for the conversation task was "Contemporary Life". The students were asked to engage in a conversation with Alejandra, a Colombian friend who studies at their school. They are helping her plan her upcoming vacation in the United States. There are five audio prompts.

1. Alejandra greets the student and asks for recommendations of places to go and why. The outline directs students to respond with details.
2. Alejandra mentions that there is a problem: she doesn't have much money. She then asks what the students suggest she can do. The outline directs students to respond with details.
3. Alejandra asks about the student's plans for the summer. The student is asked to respond with details.
4. Alejandra suggests meeting during the weekend to talk about their plans. The conversation outline indicates that the student should reject the suggestion and explain why.
5. Alejandra comments that she has to study for her finals, and asks if they have a lot of schoolwork to do. Again the students should respond with details.

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?

Most students found the questions to be accessible and provided a variety of answers that incorporated their knowledge of places and activities in the United States and Spanish-speaking countries. The responses showed a variety of language functions including identifying details, explaining details, rejecting an invitation, and suggesting an alternative. The responses demonstrated a wide range of appropriateness in terms of relevant content, amount of information, elaboration, and linguistic accuracy.

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

The responses to this task reflected the students' ability to comprehend the questions and varying lexical and grammatical resources to respond and elaborate appropriately in the context of a conversation about plans for the upcoming summer vacation.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses in the lower score range were often inappropriate, as students were unable to comprehend the spoken prompts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses in the high range (4-5) showed a clear understanding of all or most of the question, as evidenced by responses that were appropriate.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some responses showed a lack of familiarity with the format of the task, reflecting a lack of understanding of the context for the conversation provided in the conversation outline, and the instruction to reject the proposed weekend meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses in the high range reflected the students' ability to understand and take on the assigned role and interact appropriately while following the conversation outline.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some weaker responses showed a lack of communication strategies, as students inserted words in English (national parks, cities, attractions <i>como</i> Six Flags) when they lacked the vocabulary resources to express their ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger responses included communication strategies like circumlocution, as students expressed ideas with known vocabulary (<i>lugares para divertirse, lugares donde hay agua</i>) when specific words were lacking.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some responses in the mid range showed control of grammar and basic vocabulary, but the lack of detail and elaboration provided prevented the student from showing a fuller range of language resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger responses provided elaboration and detail by including more than one option, providing examples, and giving reasons to justify their proposals. These more expansive answers allowed students to demonstrate a wide variety of vocabulary and language use.

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?

- Students should be provided with many opportunities to converse spontaneously, in ways that force them to interpret questions in real time.
- AP teachers should work with the vertical team to ensure that, starting at the Novice level, teachers design lessons that engage students in spoken, spontaneous, unrehearsed, interpersonal communication, requiring negotiation of meaning, rather than performing memorized dialogues for oral practice.
- Teachers should consider meeting with colleagues who teach AP French, German, and Italian Language and Culture to determine what common shared issues exist for this task across languages and to brainstorm strategies that will improve student performance.
- Work with students so they can internalize the time of 20 seconds and learn to respond with elaboration and detail in the 20 seconds they have for each of their five responses in this task.
- Teachers should explicitly teach interpersonal communication strategies including asking for clarification, requesting additional information, asking follow-up questions, and commenting upon responses. While not all of these strategies are directly applicable to the AP Interpersonal Speaking task, they all focus on comprehension of the interlocutor, a skill gap for many of the lower-performing students.
- Teachers should explicitly teach the interpersonal communication strategies of using circumlocution, adding detail and elaboration, providing examples and anecdotes. These strategies will help students to provide richer, more detailed responses including more variety of vocabulary and grammar. Teachers should design activities involving role play and hypothetical situations to help students “think on their feet.”
- Students should practice engaging in functionally scripted dialogues to learn the names of language functions such as *rechaza, acepta, responde con detalles, pide información, responde negativamente*, etc.
- Teachers should explain the task structure and provide multiple opportunities to practice, using the previous years' interpersonal speaking task.

- Teachers should provide students with the opportunity to practice recording the speaking task with the same technology and in the same space that will be used for the AP Exam in the months prior to the exam. 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?

- The AP Spanish Language and Culture Course and Exam Description (CED) contains suggestions in the Unit Guides for building students' skills and confidence for engaging in the conversation task model. This task model is specifically presented and practiced in Units 1, 3, and 5. The CED can be accessed here: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/pdf/ap-spanish-language-and-culture-course-and-exam-description.pdf>
- Teachers should become familiar with all the online resources available to support instruction and assessment for AP Spanish Language and Culture within AP Classroom: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/instructional-resources/ap-classroom>
- Teachers can access the AP Question Bank through AP Classroom. This is a searchable collection of past AP Exam questions where teachers can access conversation tasks from previous exams.
- Teachers can access three Practice Exams in the AP Question Bank that provide practice with the conversation task and can be scored using the scoring guidelines provided.
- Teachers should go to AP Central and view the AP World Language and Culture Online Module by Clarissa Adams-Fletcher to learn about strategies, resources, and activities that focus on developing 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 a copy of the scoring guidelines for the conversation task available on the AP Spanish Language and Culture Exam page and use them to review expectations for student performance. They should select conversations from those available from 2014–2021 along with the provided sample responses. They should have students listen to the sample responses and use the scoring guidelines to understand how performance is assessed on the exam: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-spanish-language-and-culture/exam>
- Teach students how to use the conversation outline to their advantage. As you look at examples from previous years, point out commonalities from year to year so students can anticipate possible types of responses.

Question #4**Task:** Cultural Comparison**Max. Points:** 5**Topic:** Mealtimes**Total Group Mean Score:** 3.12**Standard Group Mean Score:** 3.15***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 an area of the Spanish-speaking world to the student’s own or another community, demonstrating 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.” The prompt asked the student to elaborate on the topic of mealtimes—breakfast, lunch, and dinner—and compare how these customs affect the lives of people in their own (or other community) and the lives of people in the target community. Students could base their responses on what they had experienced, studied, or observed.

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 developed this presentation in varied ways by integrating information on typical mealtimes and social practices familiar to students, and by demonstrating their knowledge of cultural features in a Spanish-speaking community. Responses showed a variety of approaches with examples that included reflections on the impact of different work and meal schedules on life, family customs around food and mealtimes, cultural practices such as *siesta* or *sobremesa* in relation to meal schedules, as well as the overall effect of mealtimes on how much time people spend with or away from family. Other variations in customs were often treated as societal and cultural differences that affected people’s energy levels in relation to how early or late typical meals were (e.g., late dinners in Spain), as well as reflections on how social expectations affect the hospitality industry (i.e., restaurant hours) in terms of when, how, or with whom the speakers had their meals when they were in the target community or at home.

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"> Students sometimes talked only about food types and mealtimes without delving into their effects on people’s lives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong responses demonstrated an accurate understanding of the task prompt, i.e., how mealtimes affected the lives of people in the two communities that were being compared.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students sometimes talked about foods they consumed in traditional <i>fiestas</i> or cultural celebrations, without relating their presentation to the topic of schedules and mealtimes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The most successful responses provided a notable amount of detail about all sorts of effects that mealtimes have on people’s lives, and they elaborated on ideas about familial, cultural, and social practices, and other complex relations.

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 make sure their students read the prompt carefully and address all parts of the task.
- Teachers should remind their students to differentiate between the AP “Tema curricular” and the topic of the presentation for that year, so they correctly engage in a presentation about the latter and not the former.
- Teachers should remind their students of the need to always include two communities in their cultural comparison; one of them being a Spanish-speaking community.
- Teachers should present students with similar questions that contain two or multiple parts and break them down into their constitutive elements: *los horarios de las comidas*, their effect on *la vida de las personas*, and on a *región del mundo hispanohablante*, as well as on the community that is familiar to the student (or another community).
- Teachers should work with their Vertical Team to ensure that students observe and compare cultural products, practices, and perspectives starting from the novice level, and to ensure that they have significant practice in making comparisons between cultures.
- By working with colleagues in AP French, German, and Italian Language and Culture, teachers can develop an understanding of the challenges of this task and work together to brainstorm strategies for improving student performance.
- Teachers should expose students to a wide variety of authentic written, audio, audiovisual and visual texts, and they should encourage students to make observations and inferences about the cultures of the target language.
- Teachers should help students make connections with prior knowledge about vocabulary and grammar, exposing them throughout the year to word banks related to family and community activities such as *almorzar*, *desayunar*, *cenar* and the various uses these words can have in different Spanish speaking countries (e.g., *almorzar* can mean “to have breakfast,” not lunch, in some cultures).
- Throughout the year, teachers should have their students practice 2-minute presentations so that they feel ready to complete the task in the time they will have on the exam. Teachers should familiarize students with the specific descriptors that illustrate each AP score. When students complete a cultural comparison presentation, teachers should provide immediate feedback, so that students have the opportunity to improve their performance in their next attempt. Teachers should always base their feedback to students in the Scoring Guidelines to explain why a specific score was given during practice presentations and they should focus on what students should do to move their performance to the next level.
- Teachers should provide effective strategies for making cultural comparisons. They should encourage the use of Venn diagrams or t-charts so that students can organize their thoughts when preparing the cultural comparison.
- As students prepare for cultural comparison presentations, teachers should encourage them to jot down their thoughts using key words/phrases instead of trying to write out a complete presentation in the 4 minutes they have to prepare.
- Teachers should provide instructions to guide students to better organize their presentation by providing transitional elements and cohesive devices, especially those used for comparing, contrasting, and connecting ideas.
- Teachers should have their students practice recording this speaking task using the same technology that will be used to take the exam starting early in the year. Acquainting students with the recording technology in advance will help to avoid confusion and delays on the day of the exam.
- Teachers should verify that the quality of recordings allows for accurate scoring and that the correct recording has been saved. If there is a problem with the 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?

- The AP Spanish Language and Culture Course and Exam Description (CED) contains suggestions in the Unit Guides for building students’ skills in the cultural comparison task model. This task model is specifically presented and practiced in all six units and is scaffolded to build students’ skills and confidence over time. For example, in Unit 1, students give a 1-minute cultural presentation about an aspect of culture learned in that unit; in Unit 2, they do a 1-minute cultural comparison; in Unit 3, a full 2-minute cultural comparison, and subsequent full comparisons on

topics of increasing difficulty in units 4, 5, and 6. The CED can be accessed here:

<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/pdf/ap-spanish-language-and-culture-course-and-exam-description.pdf>

- Teachers should become familiar with all the online resources available to support instruction and assessment for AP Spanish Language and Culture within AP Classroom: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/instructional-resources/ap-classroom>
- Through AP Classroom, teachers can access the AP Question Bank. This is a searchable collection of past AP Exam questions where teachers can find cultural comparison tasks from previous exams.
- In the Question Bank of AP Classroom, teachers will also find three Practice Exams that provide practice with the cultural comparison task that can be scored using the provided scoring guidelines.
- Teachers should go to AP Central and view the AP World Language and Culture Online Module on presentational speaking by Angelika Becker to learn about strategies, resources, and activities that focus on developing 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 a copy of 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>
- Teachers can select sample responses to cultural comparisons posted on AP Central from 2014–2021 and have students listen to them and apply the scoring guidelines to help them understand expectations for how this task is evaluated: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-spanish-language-and-culture/exam>