
AP[®] Spanish Language and Culture

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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Task 4—Cultural Comparison

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Question 4: Cultural Comparison

5 points

General Scoring Note

When applying the scoring guidelines, the response does not need to meet every single criterion in a column. You should award the score according to the preponderance of evidence.

AP® Spanish Language and Culture 2025 Scoring Guidelines

1 Poor	2 Weak	3 Fair	4 Good	5 Strong
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Almost no treatment of topic within the context of the task Presents information only about the target culture or only about the student's own or another community, and may not include examples Demonstrates minimal understanding of the target culture; generally inaccurate Little or no organization; absence of transitional elements and cohesive devices Barely understandable, with frequent or significant errors that impede comprehensibility Very few vocabulary resources Little or no control of grammar, syntax, and usage Minimal or no attention to register Pronunciation, intonation, and pacing make the response difficult to comprehend; errors impede comprehensibility Clarification or self-correction (if present) does not improve comprehensibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unsuitable treatment of topic within the context of the task Presents information about the target culture and the student's own or another community, but may not compare them; consists mostly of statements with no development Demonstrates a limited understanding of the target culture; may include several inaccuracies Limited organization; ineffective use of transitional elements or cohesive devices Partially understandable, with errors that force interpretation and cause confusion for the listener Limited vocabulary and idiomatic language Limited control of grammar, syntax, and usage Use of register is generally inappropriate for the presentation Pronunciation, intonation, and pacing make the response difficult to comprehend at times; errors impede comprehensibility Clarification or self-correction (if present) usually does not improve comprehensibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suitable treatment of topic within the context of the task Compares the target culture with the student's own or another community, including a few supporting details and examples Demonstrates a basic understanding of the target culture, despite inaccuracies Some organization; limited use of transitional elements or cohesive devices Generally understandable, with errors that may impede comprehensibility Appropriate but basic vocabulary and idiomatic language Some control of grammar, syntax, and usage Use of register may be inappropriate for the presentation with several shifts Pronunciation, intonation, and pacing make the response generally comprehensible; errors occasionally impede comprehensibility Clarification or self-correction (if present) sometimes improves comprehensibility <p>Scoring note: A response that does not explicitly compare may earn a score of 3 if it provides a suitable treatment of the topic, including a basic understanding of the target culture and the student's own or another community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally effective treatment of topic within the context of the task Compares the target culture with the student's own or another community, including some supporting details and mostly relevant examples Demonstrates some understanding of the target culture, despite minor inaccuracies Organized presentation; some effective use of transitional elements or cohesive devices Fully understandable, with some errors that do not impede comprehensibility Varied and generally appropriate vocabulary and idiomatic language General control of grammar, syntax, and usage Generally consistent use of register appropriate for the presentation, except for occasional shifts Pronunciation, intonation, and pacing make the response mostly comprehensible; errors do not impede comprehensibility Clarification or self-correction (if present) usually improves comprehensibility <p>Scoring note: A response that does not explicitly compare may earn a score of 4 if it provides a generally effective treatment of the topic, including some understanding of the target culture and the student's own or another community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective treatment of topic within the context of the task Clearly compares the target culture with the student's own or another community, including supporting details and relevant examples Demonstrates understanding of the target culture, despite a few minor inaccuracies Organized presentation; effective use of transitional elements or cohesive devices Fully understandable, with ease and clarity of expression; occasional errors do not impede comprehensibility Varied and appropriate vocabulary and idiomatic language Accuracy and variety in grammar, syntax, and usage, with few errors Mostly consistent use of register appropriate for the presentation Pronunciation, intonation, and pacing make the response comprehensible; errors do not impede comprehensibility Clarification or self-correction (if present) improves comprehensibility <p>Scoring note: A response that does not explicitly compare cannot earn a score of 5.</p>

Score of 0: UNACCEPTABLE

- Mere restatement of language from the prompt
- Clearly does not respond to the prompt; completely irrelevant to the topic
- *“I don’t know,” “I don’t understand,”* or equivalent in any language
- Clearly responds to the prompt in English

NR: no response although recording equipment is functioning

Clarification Notes:

- The term “community” can refer to something as large as a continent or as small as a family unit.
 - The phrase “target culture” can refer to any community, large or small, associated with the target language.
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Question 4

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors. In the transcripts of students’ speech quoted in the commentaries, a three-dot ellipsis indicates that the sample has been excerpted. Two dots indicate that the student paused while speaking.

Overview

The question overviews can be found in the “Chief Reader Report on Student Responses” on [AP Central](#).

Sample: 4A

Score: 5

Transcription of Student’s Response

El rol de los espacios, um, al aire libre . . es importante en todas partes del mundo, pero hoy vamos a ver y comparar um . . estos, uh, estos espacios en Estados Unidos esp, específicamente en uh, acerca de San Antonio y en Nicoya, Costa Rica. Primero vemos las uh similitudes. En uhm, pues en cualquier parte del mundo se puede decir que um, uhm, los roles de los espacios públicos al aire libre como los mercados, los parques, las plazas, son para . . para relajarse, para salir con la familia, uh para . . respirar el aire libre, para recibir el sol en, en la piel, para hacer, y para hacer uh conexiones sociales importantes. Uhm, uh . . por ejemplo, en mercados por todos p–por todas partes del mundo vienen, venden frutas, venden vegetales, venden uh cosas hechas, hechas por mano, así que es muy importante hacer esas conexiones. Uh, pero, segundo, vamos a comparar. Uh, en Estados Unidos, hay más urbanización uh que en Costa Rica lo que, la que ha llevado a, a menos espacios uh públicos de aire libre, uh para que la gente se relaje, uhm, um, una experiencia que tuve yo es que fui a un, un mercado, uh, cerca de San Antonio y no había . . muchas cosas um . . luego vemos um Nicoya Costa Rica. Cost, um Nicoya es en la zona al sur uh tienen más espacios tienen una comunidad uh menos urbanizada, menos industrializada, pero uh la falta de esos, esos recursos ha llevado, a, la posibilidad de tener más recursos, más espacios pa-públicos y lo que ha llevado. .

Commentary

This response demonstrates a strong performance in Interpersonal Speaking. The response effectively addresses the topic by comparing the role of public outdoor spaces in San Antonio, Texas, and Nicoya, Costa Rica. The presentation opens with a global perspective (“*en cualquier parte del mundo. . los roles de los espacios públicos al aire libre*”) and transitions into a culturally informed comparison supported with relevant examples. The response highlights both similarities, such as the use of public spaces for family time and social interaction, and differences rooted in urban development. For instance, the response explains how urbanization in San Antonio has reduced access to public spaces, while Nicoya’s less industrialized environment has preserved more communal areas. The presentation is well-organized, beginning with a clear introduction (“*hoy vamos a ver y comparar*”) and following a logical sequence supported by transitions (“*primero*”;

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“segundo”; “por ejemplo”). Supporting details – like references to markets, handmade goods, and the student’s personal experience – contribute to the development and depth of the comparison. The register is consistent with a presentational format, and the speaker maintains audience engagement with appropriate pacing and clear organization.

In terms of language use, the response demonstrates control and variety in grammar, syntax, and vocabulary. The response incorporates complex structures, including relative clauses (“lo que ha llevado”), appropriate moods (“para que la gente se relaje”), and past narration (“una experiencia que tuve yo es que fui”). While there are occasional errors (“hechas por mano”; “Nicoya. . . tienen una comunidad”), these do not impede comprehension. Vocabulary is appropriate and varied, with idiomatic phrases (“recibir el sol, en la piel”) and accurate descriptors (“menos urbanizada”; “menos industrializada”). The response uses cohesive devices naturally to link ideas. Pronunciation, pacing, and intonation are generally clear and support listener comprehension, despite a few small stumbles (“esp, específicamente”). The response demonstrates effective self-correction with occasional corrections (“por todos p–por todas partes del mundo”) that enhance clarity. Overall, language control, cultural insight, and clarity of expression contribute to an effective presentation.

Sample: 4B

Score: 3

Transcription of Student’s Response

Hola, buenos días. Me gustaría discutir los ares libres de espacios públicos en dos comunidades diferentes, de mi comunidad de los Estados Unidos y la comunidad hispanohablante de Costa Rica. Y hay muchos similitudes y diferencias en los países. Por ejemplo, los similitudes es los ríos de turismos y muchos personas pueden nadar en el río y espeshialmente en las playas tiene muchos personas y turismos de los ríos y las playas y son muy populares en los Estados Unidos y Costa Rica. Pero las diferencias es en Costa Rica los parques son bosques de agua y llorar y tienen animales y insectos más raro y en Costa Rica tienen actividades de explorar. Pero en los Estados Unidos los parques nacionales son por caminar y conservación de los animales y insectos. Pero concluir hay muchas diferencias y similitudes pero todos las diferencias y similitudes son importante por la cultura y la historia de la país, espeshialmente todos los aspectos y perspectivas en dos países.

Commentary

This response demonstrates fair performance in Presentational Speaking. The response addresses the topic by attempting to compare outdoor public spaces in the United States and Costa Rica. The presentation begins with a clear statement of intent and follows a recognizable structure with an introduction, body, and conclusion. The response addresses both similarities and differences, including the shared popularity of rivers and beaches for tourism (“los ríos de turismos. . . espeshialmente en las playas tiene muchos personas y turismos”) and contrasting characteristics of national parks in both countries. For example, the response suggests that Costa Rican parks are

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more exploratory and nature-focused, while U.S. parks are tied to conservation. The response attempts to develop the topic with examples and observations, though these remain generic and repetitive. There is some use of transitional words (“*por ejemplo*”; “*pero*”) but the range of connectors is limited and overused. The conclusion reiterates the idea of cultural significance, though in a generalized manner (“*todos los diferencias y similitudes son importante por la cultura y lo jistoria de la país*”).

In terms of language use, the response demonstrates basic control of grammar, syntax, and vocabulary. There are consistent issues with article-noun agreement (“*los similitudes*”; “*muchos personas*”; “*los diferencias*”), as well as lexical errors that occasionally interfere with meaning (“*llorar*” instead of *llover*; “*por la cultura*” instead of *para la cultura*). Word choices are appropriate but limited to elementary terms (“*playas*”; “*ríos*”; “*animales*”; “*turismos*”), some of which are used incorrectly or repetitively. There are noticeable pronunciation issues that sometimes hinder clarity (“*jistoria*”; “*espeshialmente*”; “*conserveción*”). The register shifts inconsistently from formal (“*Me gustaría discutir*”) to informal (“*Hola*”), which detracts from the overall tone expected in a presentational setting. There is no evidence of self-correction, and the pacing of the response, while mostly steady, includes moments of hesitancy. Overall, while the response provides a basic cultural comparison, limited elaboration and recurring language errors restrict the effectiveness of the response and makes its treatment of the topic only suitable.

Sample: 4C

Score: 2

Transcription of Student’s Response

Hola, ¿cómo estás? Hay muchos públicos al aire libre en un comunidad. Uh, por ejemplo, parques, plazas y más. Um . . un uno cosa yo pienso que es muy uhm familiar en mi comunidad es un mer . . mercados . . sí, uhm. Una mércado en mi comunidad es gran, uh por ejemplo se llama Kroger. Uhm, tiene cosas de to todas países, y y populares y es típicamente en el centro de un suidad. Uhm, en el otro mano, un s-mércado uhm jispano . . habla . . hablamente es pequiño y una familia es uhm trabajo, y uhm hay hay cosas como comida tradiciones y de un país específicamente, y uhm hay diferentes productos, dineros, colores, decoraciones en la tienda, y también tipos y grupos de personas son diferente en los dos mércados uhm quien usar el mércado. Y sí, hay muchos diferentes pero es similar en todos maneras, uhm pero es más diferente con mi mércado y uno jispanolmente.

Commentary

This response demonstrates a weak performance in Presentational Speaking. The response demonstrates an attempt to address the role of public outdoor spaces. However, the treatment of the topic is unsuitable within the context of the task, as the focus shifts away from the role of public outdoor spaces to a comparison of types of markets – specifically a mainstream supermarket in the U.S. (“*Kroger*”) and a small, family-run market in a Spanish-speaking community. Although the response references two communities, the intended cultural comparison lacks relevance to the role

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or significance of outdoor public spaces. Instead, the comparison is superficial, consisting of a loosely structured list of differences – such as the size of the markets, types of products sold, and general observations about who frequents each one – without clear development or meaningful cultural insight. The content is marked by generalizations (“*tipos y grupos de personas son diferente*”) and unclear claims (“*es más diferente con mi mercado y uno hispanolmente*”) that limit the effectiveness of the response. There is minimal organization, and some transitions are incorrect (“*en el otro mano*”) and do not help with connecting or transitioning between different ideas. The conclusion fails to offer a synthesis of the ideas presented, and it is limited to repeating the idea that markets are both different and somehow similar.

In terms of language use, the response reflects limited control of grammatical structures, vocabulary, and pronunciation. There are persistent issues with agreement (“*todas países*”; “*una familia es uhm trabajo*”; “*personas son diferente*”), prepositions, verb usage, and word formation that interfere with clarity. Lexical choice is basic and frequently inaccurate or repetitive, with overused terms (“*mé debate*”; “*diferente*”) and invented or distorted words (“*hispanolmente*”; “*suidad*”). The response presents incomplete and fragmented sentences that lack elaboration (“*Uh, por ejemplo, parques, plazas y más*”). The register is informal and inconsistent with the expectations of a presentational task, beginning with an informal greeting (“*Hola, ¿cómo estás?*”) and continuing in a conversational tone. Pronunciation, pacing, and frequent filler words (“*uhm*”; “*uh*”) further hinder comprehensibility, and attempts at self-correction (“*hispano . . habla . . hablamente*”) do not improve comprehensibility. Overall, the language limitations significantly affect the coherence, development, and delivery of the presentation.