

## AP Spanish Language Audit

### Course Overview

#### Claims:

- The student has a strong communicative ability in Spanish in the interpersonal, presentational and interpretive modes.
- The student has a strong command of Spanish linguistic skills (including accuracy and fluency) that support communicative ability.
- The student comprehends Spanish for native speakers in a variety of settings, types of discourse, topics, styles, registers and broad regional variations
- The student produces Spanish comprehensible to native speakers in a variety of settings, types of discourse, topics and registers.
- The student acquires information from authentic sources in Spanish.
- The student is aware of some cultural perspectives of Spanish speaking peoples.

To meet the above claims as outlined in the College Board Course description I ensure that Spanish is spoken at all times in the classroom. At my school we are fortunate to have Spanish speakers who have come from different Spanish speaking countries in the eleventh and twelfth grades, and so my students are exposed to different authentic Spanish accents throughout the program. In this program both the native and non native students also develop a strong command of the Spanish language as they work at integrating language skills and synthesizing written and aural materials, the formal and informal writing process, interpersonal and presentational speaking and writing practice and aural comprehension skills through quality authentic and level appropriate audio and video recordings. They are also exposed to authentic literary material through magazines such as **Newsweek en español**, **Selecciones del Reader's Digest**, **National Geographic en español** and authentic Spanish newspapers via the internet such as **The paperboy.com** and **Todos los periódicos diarios**, **Prensa Escrita**. In the first semester we also look at language through a thematic approach. Several themes are done such as the pros and cons of television, the environment, women in the society and the role of the family. Appropriate articles on the different themes are used as pre-reading to discussion in class. Each theme is researched and discussed for the period of two weeks and then an essay is written.

We also look at language structure through the reading of a classic Spanish literary text written by an outstanding Spanish author, and this year we have read and critiqued a literary analysis of **El Túnel** by **Ernesto Sábato**.

## Course Outline

Grammar in the AP Spanish Language program is done through the use of several grammar texts viz. **Abriendo Paso Gramática, Una vez más, Galería de Arte y Vida, Encuentros Maravillosos-Gramática A Través De La Literatura** which are basically used as resource materials. These books are mainly used for the revision of grammar learnt in the lower grades and for the revision and further teaching of the subjunctive mood which is done in a more extensive way in the first semester. Through the use of these grammar books the teacher attempts to ensure that a very thorough review and practice of the grammar is done. The grammar item, however, is presented as the grammatical problems are identified. A power- point presentation of the grammar in question may be done or the overhead projector used, followed by a discussion on the grammar point presented. Questions are then asked and students then do practice exercises which may be completed at home. The school at which I teach uses the block schedule and my classes are 85 minutes long every day. The first quarter of the period every day is used for grammar review and discussion. My classes are not for teaching grammar in isolation as grammar is reviewed within the context of the literature read, the oral exercises, the summaries of the articles that have been read and the several exercises done from the various AP texts in the second, third and fourth quarters. The focus is on problematic areas as they arise in the several assignments when they are done by the students and of which the teacher would have made note. Students in the final analysis must however be able to use a variety of grammatical structures comparable to fifth and sixth semester college and university courses. Generally some of the problematic areas are ser versus estar, preterite versus imperfect, por and para, irregular preterit tenses, radical changing present tenses, accentuation. A look at the correct use of idiomatic expressions, synonyms, antonyms and transition words and expressions related to written and spoken Spanish are also looked at during this section of the period. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the appendix pages of the text AP Spanish preparing for the Language Examination which contain a list of the aforementioned expressions.

An important exercise in the first quarter of the school year is the reading of articles on themes taken from magazines or newspapers of which summaries are done. Students basically try to understand the linguistic structure of the Spanish language as they look at language structure within a context. Through this extensive reading of authentic materials a wide vocabulary is also developed. Students are asked to develop their personal vocabulary books. At this stage, student's class time is spent in interaction with each other through oral language and presentations of authentic materials that they have read in Spanish. A lot of listening of authentic materials is also encouraged since listening for the non native student can be one of the more difficult skills to develop. Apart from **Nuevos Horizontes** to which some students subscribe, students are encouraged to listen to **CNN en español.com, BBC en español.com** and some other sites which were shared by other AP teachers via AP Central. Students are also encouraged to look at television programs in Spanish and report back to the class on what they have looked at. The school possesses a number of Spanish movies which have been ordered by the school's librarian on the Spanish department's recommendation, and students are

encouraged to look at a movie of their choice at home and to give an oral presentation in Spanish on what they have seen.

From the second quarter students begin to look more closely at the exam format and to begin to practice questions as they are presented in the AP Language exam. For this purpose I use the **AP Spanish Preparing for the Language Examination, Barron's Advanced Placement Exam Spanish 2007, Triángulo a Propósito** to further develop the integration of listening and oral skills, and the integration of listening, reading and writing skills.

**For our first semester exam I created an exam similar to the 2007 Spanish Language exam as outlined in the AP Spanish Language Course Description booklet (page 8) using exercises from the AP Spanish Preparing for the Language Examination. Prior to the Spanish exam in May, students will have done two more similar exams created from exercises in the AP Spanish Preparing for the Language Examination text.**

### **Sample Classroom activities**

#### **Listening Skill**

At the start of the course students report orally on listening summaries done at home. I encourage students to spend as much time as is possible developing their listening skills at home through several of the activities and sources mentioned before. In class their peers are encouraged to listen when presentations are done in Spanish and ask questions in Spanish and so there is an integration of listening (aural) skill, the oral skill and the writing skill. The reporting of what they have listened to and looked at also exposes them to a number of authentic Spanish accents since my students have studied and lived in at least 4 different Spanish speaking countries.

For the non- native speakers the important thing here is to develop confidence and to use strategies that will help them to be successful when they do listening. Whenever audio segments are listened to in class at the beginning of the course students are allowed to listen several times and to take notes. They are asked to work in pairs to discuss the content of the segment. There is an attempt as well to give lots of guided practice. To this end at the beginning of the program I would use the **Listening Comprehension Skills for Intermediate and Advanced Students- Preparing for the SAT II in Spanish and More by José M. Díaz** which does listening through a guided format and encourages students to listen for specific details. This text also contains assessments and activities that allow students to progress from simple to more complex activities. Whenever an article that relates to the listening segment can be found students are asked to compare and contrast the listening segment and the reading segment using a graphic organizer.

### **Sources of authentic listening activities**

**Nuevos Horizontes**

**CNN en español.com**

**BBC en español.com**

**Authentik en español**

**Español en vivo**

**Radio Naciones Unidas**

**El Mundo .es**

**Puerta del Sol**

**ABC News**

**Native Spanish speakers in the class.**

### **Speaking Skill**

From the very first semester there is great emphasis on reading and oral presentations thus emphasizing the integration of reading and oral skills. Students are encouraged to read articles from the internet or magazines and make presentations on topics they have read. Students are also asked to read on certain themes, do summaries and then present the sections they have read to the class while the others listen to gain information for an essay which they will write at the end of two weeks. The discussion on the themes can be quite lively and interesting because the themes are usually topical themes such as the role of women in the society, television as educational tool and the death penalty. In an effort to vary the discourse students have been asked to debate the pro and cons of the death penalty or to write out a role play on a theme such as juvenile delinquency or the generation gap. There is therefore an integration of listening, speaking reading and writing while students prepare for the oral section of the Spanish AP Language exam. Students are given the opportunity to use Spanish in both the interpersonal and presentational modes. The course also provides the students with regular opportunities to

develop their speaking skills in a variety of settings, types of discourse topics and registers. In the first quarter of the program materials such as **¿Hay un Problema?- Real Life Situational and Conversation Cards** by **Thomas W. Alsop** and **Let's Talk** are used to help students with the simulated conversation and to get their minds inside the simulated setting.

### **Reading Skill**

Reading is for me the basis of language development. I encourage students to spend as much time as is possible reading Spanish material. The students who do extensive reading eventually are the better writers of Spanish. I begin however by showing them how to read. And for this purpose I use a text written by Mary Lee Bretz and others which is called "**Pasajes: Cultura**" This text does two things: It Exposes students to another culture and in this instance the culture is the Spanish culture. Secondly it teaches them how to read and understand Spanish without the fears and obstacles that students experience at the beginning of the AP course. In this text each section includes a section called **Antes de Leer** which includes **Aspectos lingüísticos, Aproximaciones al texto** and **Prelectura**. The first section focuses on particular vocabulary and or structural elements that are known to slow down reading comprehension for non-native speakers. Specific strategies for handling these problems are provided to help students recognize new lexical items, the location of the main parts of the sentence, the breaking of complex sentences into simpler ones and the recognition and interpretation of pronouns and transition words. I also use the exercises that help students transfer the skills they have learnt. Students are taught how to skim a text using titles and section heads to prepare for reading, scanning and outlining.

Discussions are also created around the readings and the topics presented which help students to establish a mental set of expectations and pre-knowledge. This helps them to feel more confident about the set questions on any of the readings in the book that they are asked.

Students also read Spanish materials on set themes as was stated before. A presentation of the summaries of the readings is done after which an essay is written. Students are asked to listen to the presentations and each student has to ask at least two questions on the presentation which forces them to listen and to speak. Once again there is integration of the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

We also address the reading skill through the study of a literary text and this year the literary text is **El Túnel** by **Ernesto Sábato**. We look at the structure of language, vocabulary and themes through written summaries, oral presentations and essays on themes and characters. At the end of the reading of the text before the analytical essay is written the film based on the novel **El Túnel** is looked at and students are asked to make a comparison between the book and film. This is usually an oral assignment.

## Writing Skill

In the reading and summarizing of the authentic thematic materials students learn to identify the main points of a passage and to express this in Spanish. They also learn to paraphrase in their own words the main points of the text. Students are required to write an essay on a particular theme every two weeks. Whenever audio material is available on any of the themes students are required to listen to the audio segment and attempt to synthesize both textual and audio material. To enable students to do this they are asked to compare and contrast the information they listen to and the information they read using a graphic organizer. Before students begin to synthesize, however, students are given information on what synthesis writing is about, and the key features of a synthesis. Students are referred and encouraged to refer to the site <http://www.users.drew.edu/sjamieso/synthesis.html> for more information on how to synthesize. Greater practice of the synthesizing of written and audio material and the integration of the four language skills are, however, done from the beginning of the second quarter when texts such as **AP Spanish Preparing for the Language Exam by José Díaz and Triángulo** are used to give students practice. The aforementioned texts are also used at this stage until the exam in May to give students practice with the paragraph completion (with and without words) and the formal and informal writing.

## Course Planner

### Semester 1

**AP Spanish scheduled for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. First quarter begins on 28<sup>th</sup> August and ends 3<sup>rd</sup> November. 10 weeks**

**Week 1** is an Introduction to the AP Program. Students are given Course description and told of expectations for the course

**Weeks 2-10** Students focus on techniques that will help them develop their listening skills and which will help them integrate this skill with their speaking, reading and writing skills using authentic materials. During weeks 2-10 students are encouraged to use various techniques to develop and integrate their listening and speaking skills. The classes are conducted in Spanish and students are required from the very first class to speak in Spanish. Since there are native speakers in my class the non-native speakers are exposed to different types of authentic Spanish accents as they listen to the native speakers speak.

The native Spanish speakers are paired with the non native Spanish speakers to discuss audio selection and to compare notes. Students are taught to listen for specific details. They are asked to write a brief a summary of the audio in pairs and this also gives them an opportunity to compare notes. The important factor is also to give the non native

speakers an opportunity to gain confidence. Because we are focusing on developing listening students listen to the segments several times.

During weeks 2 -10 students are also taught techniques on how to read and understand what they read which they are encouraged to apply when they Spanish. The text that is mainly used then is the text **Pasajes-Cultura**. They are encouraged to apply these techniques to help them understand the vast amount of reading they will be required to do for the next 19 weeks. Themes are identified and students will be told that 4 themes will be done over the next 9 weeks. Some of the themes are as follows: La mujer en la sociedad, El medio-ambiente, La televisión, and La Guerra y La Paz. Articles on each theme are identified and each student is given a different article on the theme that is being looked at. He or she then summarizes the article in Spanish and shares the salient points, new vocabulary and structures with the other students. The students are required to note the new vocabulary and structures acquired from each article read. This is done for one period twice a week. At the end of two weeks an essay is done in Spanish on the theme which had been studied over the two weeks

During week 2-10 students also do background research on the author **Ernesto Sábato** as preparation for the start of the reading of the book **El Túnel**. Research and discussion in Spanish are also done on **Existentialism** and how it may have influenced the writers of the period in which the book was written. When this is completed students start reading book and do summaries and analysis of each chapter which is discussed at length in Spanish. The presentation of the summaries and analysis are done for an entire period once a week.

## **FIRST SEMESTER**

**For the first ten weeks 28th August to 3<sup>rd</sup> November or first quarter** my course schedule will be as follows:

**Week 1. (28<sup>th</sup> August-1<sup>st</sup> September)** The course begins with an introduction to the AP program and a look at the AP Spanish Course description

**Weeks 2-10. (4<sup>th</sup>September-3<sup>rd</sup> November)** The first week is followed by an introduction to listening and reading techniques in the second week. Students also learn how to integrate the four skills and to synthesize using authentic materials. A thematic approach to reading and writing is also introduced. There is also an introduction to a Spanish literary text. The subjunctive Mood will be studied over the next few weeks and

all other grammar items to be reviewed will be addressed as the several summary presentations are done.

**For the next 9 weeks or 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter (6<sup>th</sup> November – 26<sup>th</sup> January)** in addition to the thematic approach for the development of reading and listening skills, the contextualized grammar review and the reading and critical review of El Túnel of the first ten weeks, students will now also be exposed to the AP exam format in preparation for the first end of semester exam which will approximate as close as possible the format of the new exam. The day to day schedule will include the following:

**Weeks 11-19. (6<sup>th</sup> November-26<sup>th</sup> January).** Students will begin to practice simulated informal conversations using the exercises in the AP Spanish Preparing for the Language Examination text and the Triángulo text. They will also look at the informal writing and the use of appropriate register, greetings and closure for informal and formal assessments. They will also learn how to write a thesis statement for the formal writing. Students will also look at note taking skills, and how to paraphrase, compare and contrast and synthesize two or more texts before they begin to practice some of the formal writing exercises in the aforementioned texts. During this practice session peer editing is encouraged. Using one or two of the items in the Formal Writing section of the AP Spanish Preparing for the Language Examination students will be taught how to interpret and how to avoid merely paraphrasing or repeating what the sources say in their own words. Students will also do practice on exercises with and without root words from the AP Spanish book.

**Week 19** First Semester Exam is held. Students do an exam which is similar to the proposed 2007 Spanish Language AP exam format both in the amount of items in each Section of the exam and in the duration of the exam. Items are taken from AP Spanish Preparing for the Language Exam.

## **SECOND SEMESTER**

**Week 1- (29<sup>th</sup> January-2<sup>nd</sup> February).** Students review first semester exam with the principal aim of improving their grades. All items in Sections 1 and 2 of the exam are looked at and for the speaking and writing items the preliminary, unofficial rubrics as listed on the AP central are used so that students can have an idea of how they have been marked.

**Weeks 2- 12 (5<sup>th</sup> February-4<sup>th</sup> May).** Students continue to build listening skills using **Nuevos Horizontes**. **Listening items are also taken from the AP Spanish Preparing for the language Exam, Barron's Advanced Placement Exam and Triángulo.** Students are required to do a period of 30 minutes of listening every day. Students are also required to now write an informal and formal essay in class under timed conditions every Friday. After teacher has marked these scripts and before teacher's marks are disclosed to the students they are also encouraged to mark each other's essays using the preliminary, unofficial rubric as listed in the AP central and written by Connie Vargas and Leslie Patino. This is to gauge whether students have a realistic sense of what a good essay should be like and how they can improve their own writing if they have received a medium or low in their essays. Students also continue to practice the formal and informal oral exercises using items from the aforementioned AP texts. An effort is made to have more timed practice using a tape-recorder and having them do the recordings within the time stipulated by the College Board. Students are also assigned several multiple choice reading assignments which they are encouraged to do at home applying the techniques which they were taught in the first quarter. Students continue to practice the sentence completion items with and without words.

**In March and April students are given two more complete exams similar to the one administered at the end of the first semester. During the week of the 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup> April students will be administered their third and final practice exam and the Draft 2007 Scoring guidelines as listed on AP central in April, 2007 will be used for marking this exam.**

This again is followed by review of the exam and each student is advised as to what can be done to improve his or her weak areas.

## **TUESDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> MAY,2007- AP EXAM**

**9<sup>TH</sup> May-14<sup>th</sup> June.** AP Spanish students in collaboration with members of the Spanish Club prepare for their cultural night **NOCHE LATINA** which is a yearly cultural event put on by the AP students and which involves the student population of the school and the Latin Community in the neighbouring environs. This is a highly successful 2 and a half hours long event which is supported by the Latin residents of the community. It consists not only of a cultural event in which the students and members of the Mexican Embassy have participated over the years, but the event also consists of a Latin food fair prepared by the parents and families of our Latin students. The whole event is organized

by the AP students who are in charge of putting together the programme and training the students who will participate in the cultural event.

### **MAIN TEXTS**

**AP Spanish - Preparing for the Language Examination –third Edition -José M. Díaz, Margarita Leicher-Prieto, Gilda Nissenberg**

**Triángulo A Propósito - Cuarta Edición - Barbara Gatski and John Mc Mullan**

**Barron’s AP Advanced Placement Exam Spanish 2007- 5<sup>th</sup> Edition**

### **Additional Resource Materials**

**Pasajes Cultura - Mary Lee Bretz, Trisha Dvorack and Carl Kirschner**

**Listening Comprehension Skills for Intermediate and Advanced Students- José Díaz**

**Abriendo Paso Gramática-José Díaz**

**Una vez más- James H. Couch**

**Galería de Arte y Vida- Nivel Avanzado- Margaret Adey and Louis Albini**

**Encuentros Maravillosos –Gramática A Través de la Literatura**

**¿ Hay un Problema ? -Real Life Situational Conversation Cards – Thomas W. Alsop**

**Let’s Talk -Montgomery County Public Schools**

### **Authentic Listening Resources**

**Nuevos Horizontes**

**[www.nuevoshorizontes.org](http://www.nuevoshorizontes.org)**

**BBC en español**

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/spanish/news/>

**CNN en español**

<http://www.cnn.com/español>

**Authentik en español**

<http://www.authentik.com>

**Español en vivo**

<http://delta-systems.com>

**Radio Naciones Unidas**

<http://www.un.org/radi/es/>

**El Mundo es**

<http://www.elmundo.es/>

**Puerta del Sol**

[www.puerta-del-sol.com](http://www.puerta-del-sol.com)

**ABC News**

<http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/Podcasting/>

**Several catalogued movies which are housed in the school's library and can be used at home by students.**

### **Authentic Reading Materials**

**Newsweek en español**

**National Geographic en español**

**Selecciones del Reader's Digest**

**Prensa Escrita**

<http://www.prensaescrita.com/>

**The Paperboy**

<http://www.thepaperboy.com/>