

How to get a 5 in the AP Spanish Language Exam

KNOW the breakdown percentages

Reading	(25%)
Reading+Listening	(25%)
Essay	(12.5%)
Email Reply	(12.5%)
Conversation	(12.5%)
Cultural Comparison	(12.5%)

FOCUS on what you MUST do for each section:

Reading - about 40 minutes

- Relax/Breathe
- Read the THEME and the subtheme to focus on what it is that you're reading
- Read the information before the actual reading
- Pay attention to dates/titles (if any)
- Activate previous knowledge
- Read the questions CAREFULLY and understand what they're asking you
- Eliminate answer-choices that have zero relation to the question/topic
- If you have to, make EDUCATED guesses
- Remember that you do not have to understand all the words to answer understand the content and/or to answer correctly
- Do answer ALL questions!
- If you have time, go back to check your answers!

Reading+Listening - about 55 minutes

- Relax/Breathe
- Read the THEME and the subtheme to focus on what it is that you're reading/listening
- Read the information before the actual reading/listening
- Pay attention to the MAIN ideas/topics
- Activate your previous knowledge

- Read the questions CAREFULLY and understand what they're asking you
- Eliminate answer-choices that do not have a connection to the question/reading/listening
- If you must, make an EDUCATED guess
- ANSWER all questions!
- If you have time, go back and check your answers!

Essay - 45 minutes

- Understand the question!
- Pick a side
- PERSUADE your reader
- Think and develop a plan for writing before you start writing
- Have a strong introduction - grab the reader's attention
- Use the 3 SOURCES (reading, graph, and audio) and SYNTHESIZE that information into your own way of thinking!
- Develop your own ideas using advanced grammar; presente perfecto, subjuntivo, condicional, imperfecto del subjuntivo, pluscuamperfecto, etc. REVIEW the grammar tenses!
- Conclude strongly making the reader think more and deeply about the way YOU think about the topic/question. Por ejemplo... if it were about celebrating a quinceañera or not celebrating it... you could end your essay like this... *“Después de haber explorado varias razones por las cuales no se debe celebrar a una jovencita con una fiesta extravagante que al fin de cuentas deja a la familia en apuros financieros, preguntémonos, ¿por qué no mejor abrir una cuenta de ahorros a la cual todos los miembros de su familia y amigos y conocidos puedan contribuir para que la jovencita (y por qué no un chico también) pueda hacer uso de ese dinero para continuar su educación avanzada y así contribuir más efectivamente a la sociedad y a la vez reducir algunos de los problemas sociales que por mucho tiempo han encarado nuestras comunidades? Seamos el cambio que queremos ver.”*
- The idea is to THINK on your own about the topic

Email Reply - 15 minutes

- You must KNOW the format/structure of the email
- DATE - Fecha
- RE: - Asunto
- SALUTATION - Saludo

- INTRO PARAGRAPH - Párrafo de introducción/agradecimiento
- ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS WITH COMPLETE SENTENCES/SMALL PARAGRAPHS -
Contesta las preguntas
- ASK QUESTIONS - TWO OR THREE - Haz preguntas
- AN APPROPRIATE GOODBYE - Despedida
- SIGNATURE - Firma
- This reply must be written in FORMAL language (using USTED throughout!)

Conversation - about 5 minutes

- Identify if you must use TÚ or usted... most of the time will be tú
- READ and understand what you MUST do! Ask, answer positively, answer negatively, etc. etc.
- TRY to speak as much as possible within the .20 seconds, but most importantly, COMPLETE the task (do what the bullet is asking you to do!)
- Use advanced grammar - subjunctive included!
- Incorporate culture!
- Incorporate an idiomatic expression!
- Use your best pronunciation!
- Use your best voice volume!
- Also very important... STOP talking right after the end of the .20 second beep so that YOU UNDERSTAND the next part of the conversation so that you follow appropriately and you let others around you hear clearly!

Cultural Comparison - about 6 minutes (4 to prepare an answer, 2 to record your answer)

- Pick two cultures/countries (EE. UU. vs. a Spanish Speaking Country) If you do not fully identify with the EE. UU., you're free to use a country/culture that you call yours... for example India vs. a Spanish Speaking Country or México vs. another Spanish Speaking Country - but ONE of the countries MUST be a Spanish Speaking Country/Culture
- UNDERSTAND the question and prepare a good comparison; introduction, similarities, differences, insert your opinion and close out with an intelligible conclusion
- SPEAK clearly and with an appropriately voice volume!
- In order to be knowledgeable and ready to compare culture, think of a country and write out the things you KNOW about it. For example:

México

- Vicente Fernández (mariachi, traje de mariachi, ranchera mexicana), Maná (banda) - latin pop/rock
- Relaciones económicas con los EE. UU.
- Punta de inmigración - personas de todos los países
- Violencia - carteles de armas y drogas
- Chavo del ocho - casas de ese tipo
- Piñatas
- Película: como agua para chocolate
- Una rata vieja, un elefante se balanceaba, canciones infantiles
- (CDMX) Ciudad de México - ciudad más grande del mundo (número de personas). Más contaminada porque las montañas no permiten que la polución escape. Volcanes - Popocatepetl e Ixtaccihuatl - explican las diferencias entre clases sociales
- Comida: tamales, atole, agua fresca

Argentina

- Hablan español - ll=j, yo=sho, vos=tu
- Buenos Aires - arquitectura - famous ppl statues, combined houses
- Música - tango. Evita Perón wife of Juan Perón (prez) - did community service, helped poverty/equality among classes
- Película - Caballos Salvajes
- Comida: alfajores (galleta), mucha carne, asado

Colombia

- Shakira (Barranquilla), Juanes - más pop, vallenatos, cumbia (la pollera colora)
- Instrumentos - guacharaca, flauta (caña de millo), caja
- Botero (Medellín) - paints round people
- Minas antipersonales - la sangre
- Baila - mueven las caderas
- Hablan español
- Cultura muy floja - hace feliz, personas indígenas
- Carteles - drogas - cocaína
- Las guerrillas (Las FARC - grupos terroristas)
- Película: María Llena de Gracia
- Catolicismo, iglesias, libertad de religión (all countries)
- Comida: bandeja paisa (platter of food), mazamorra, sancocho (sopa con maize)

España

- Vosotros - español, /th/ en palabras con ZA, ZO, ZU, CE and CI
- Corridas de toros - toreros
- Independencia de Cataluña (Catalunya)
- Picasso - Guernica
- Francisco Franco y el fascismo
- Mar mediterráneo
- Comida - paella, sangria, tapas, garbanzos, gazpacho
- Película: mar adentro
- Música - flamenco
- ETA - grupo terrorista

Puerto Rico - territorio de EE. UU (estado libre asociado)

- Spanglish - r on the end is an l
- Huracanes
- Mar caribe
- Ricky Martin (Cantante), Jennifer López (Actriz), Luis Fonsi (despacito)
- Comida - lechón, alcapurrias, arroz con gandules, bacalaitos, el ron (rum), pasteles (the weird ones)
- Musica - salsa - puertorriqueñas de nueva york
- Película: cayo
- Problemas con electricidad y agua potable