

Explaining Cloze Passages

This part of the exam, in addition to Part D, Reading Comprehension, deals with reading. The section consists of two reading selections that contain numbered blanks indicating that words or phrases have been omitted. You are given four options for each blank, but only one is correct. The purpose of this exercise is to test your vocabulary and your knowledge of Spanish grammar.

There are approximately 2 Cloze Passages and 20 questions about the passages on any given version of the AP Spanish Language Exam. You should spend about 10 minutes on these questions.

Ability Tested

This part of the exam deals with reading, and it tests your ability to understand specific words and/or idiomatic expressions and grammar patterns.

Basic Skills Necessary

You need to be able to:

- Demonstrate control of an ample range of Spanish vocabulary, including idiomatic expressions.
- Determine the correct grammatical form of a word according to the context of the passage.

To understand the written Spanish language within the context of journalistic or literary texts, you need two things:

- Your vocabulary must be within the range expected for a third-level student of Spanish as a second language. You can greatly increase your command of Spanish vocabulary and grammar by reading the different types of selections found in newspapers, magazines, or the Internet, or by reading literary passages from short stories or novels. Although Part V of this book provides you with different lists of classified vocabulary and a glossary, you should also have your own bilingual dictionary.
- Your knowledge of Spanish grammar must be advanced enough to be able to discriminate past tense from present or future, to recognize the use of different modes of speaking (such as indicative and subjunctive), and to figure out the subject of a sentence.

Vocabulary and language mechanics are of the essence if you want to be successful in this part of the exam.

Your familiarity with Hispanic culture, as well as your own life experiences, will be of great help in achieving a good command of Spanish reading skills. For example, your ability to use guessing strategies to compensate for a lack of vocabulary can help you with reading comprehension. Try to identify words that are cognates, that is, words that may look a bit different in another language but have the same meaning (such as *león* and *lion*, *navegar* and *navigate*, and so on). Recognizing cognates will facilitate your understanding of the selection as a whole, as well as provide you with some specific details. Part V of this book contains a section that will help you identify cognates.

It is also important to think in Spanish. Translating word for word could lead you to arrive at the wrong meaning because some words have different meanings in different contexts. For example, the word *grado* is a cognate of the word *grade* when speaking of the school year (such as 7th grade), but it also has other meanings, such as *degree* when speaking about temperature and *rank* when speaking about the military. Translating word for word will lead you to make these kinds of mistakes; reading the passage as a whole will help you avoid these kinds of mistakes.

You must also remember that there are idiomatic expressions that, when you try to translate them word for word, lose their meaning or do not make any sense. For example, in English, when someone is playing a joke on you, you may say, “You’re pulling my leg.” This is an idiomatic expression and, of course, should not be taken literally. If you decide that you want to express the same idea in Spanish, the correct expression is “*Me estás tomando el pelo*” (which translates literally to “You are taking my hair”). As you see, the Spanish expression, once translated word for word into English, completely loses its meaning.

For questions dealing with grammar, you must be able to work with the Spanish grammatical patterns that are most commonly used in this type of exercise, such as the correct usage of verb tenses, prepositions, and pronouns. In Part V, you can find a summary of grammatical topics that you must master in order to be successful in this part of the exam.

Directions

In Part B of the Multiple Choice section, you will be working with Cloze Passages. These are reading passages in which some words (usually 10) have been substituted by numbered blanks; you must select from the four choices given the word or words that make sense or are grammatically correct. The directions are given to you in writing, in English and Spanish. Concentrate on the directions in the language you feel most comfortable with.

The following directions resemble what you will read during Part B of the Multiple Choice section of the AP Spanish Language Exam. It is important to be familiar with the directions for each section *before* you take the test so that you can use your time more efficiently during the test.

Each of the following passages contains numbered blanks, which indicate that words or groups of words are missing. There are four options to fill in each blank, but only one is correct.

In order to determine the general meaning of the passage, read quickly through it first. Then read it again and select the option that best fills each blank according to the context of the complete passage.

Cada uno de los siguientes pasajes contiene espacios en blanco numerados para indicar que faltan palabras o grupos de palabras. Hay cuatro opciones para llenar cada espacio, pero solamente una es correcta.

Para poder determinar el sentido general del pasaje, léelo rápidamente; luego léelo de nuevo y selecciona la opción que mejor complete cada espacio de acuerdo con el contexto total del pasaje.

Suggested Strategies for Cloze Passages

The Cloze Passage exercises are modified reading exercises; therefore, some of the strategies necessary to be successful in this portion of the exam are reading strategies. On the other hand, since your answers are based on your knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, there are other strategies that are directly related to how to manipulate the information you can glean from these two areas.

- **Read the complete selection first.** It is important to perform a first reading without attempting to answer any of the questions. Reading the entire passage will give you an idea of what the passage is about, what tense predominates throughout the narration, and what type of vocabulary you will encounter. For example, once you discover that the passage deals with someone's summer vacation in Acapulco, you can expect to see words like *playa* (beach) and *arena* (sand) later in the text. At the same time, if you encounter several verbal forms in the preterit or the imperfect, you can determine the time frame of the selection.
- **Use your existing knowledge of the world.** Once you have read the passage once, think about what you know about the topic or the experiences presented in the passage. For example, if you recognize that the selection is about somebody who has traveled to Spain, you can use any travel experience you've had, as well as any cultural knowledge you have about Spain. Use your knowledge about the subject to help you read for meaning and to predict what information the text will present.
- **Look at each group of options individually to determine whether the item is vocabulary or grammar related.** This step is extremely important because, depending on whether the item relates to grammar or vocabulary, you will apply different procedures to select the correct option. For example, if you observe that the four choices are verbs in the infinitive form (*cantar*, *leer*, and so on), you can deduce that, since all the options have the same grammatical value, only the meaning will determine the correctness of the option. On the other hand, if you notice that all the options are different forms of the same verb (*canto*, *canté*, *cantaba*, and so on), you will know that you must look for clues about what tense is required according to the time sequence of the passage.
- **Recognize cognates.** You know that there are many Spanish words that resemble and have the same meaning as English words. These words are called *cognates*. When you are able

to recognize cognates, it is easier to grasp the general meaning of the passage and to select the correct choice, either because the choice may be a cognate itself, or because some of the incorrect options are cognates.

- **Identify words by examining word formation.** In Spanish, words are grouped into *families of words*. This means that, out of one simple word, other words can be formed by adding prefixes and suffixes. For example, the word *decente* (a cognate of the English *decent*) is an adjective that can be used to form other words such as *indecente* (English *indecent*), *decencia* (English *decency*), and so on. By recognizing words that belong to the same family and relating them to words you do know, you can figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words.
- **Use the context of the passage to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words.** When you read a text, the word *context* refers to the words that surround an unfamiliar word. The context is very useful because it limits the meaning of a word. By using the context, you can eliminate some of your options.

For example, you can determine the meaning of the word *comodidad* by taking note of its context in the following sentence: “*La mujer de hoy busca la comodidad y compra ropa que tenga esa característica, ropa que pueda usar en muchas ocasiones y sentirse bien, a gusto, pero también elegante.*” Once you conclude that the sentence deals with what today’s woman (*la mujer de hoy*) looks for in clothing (*ropa*), you will realize that the last words (*pero también elegante*) signal a contrast. From this clue, you can deduce that *comodidad* is a false cognate: It does not mean *commodity*; rather, it means something the opposite of *elegant*.

- **Try to eliminate as many options as possible based on the knowledge you have of each.** In every group of options related to vocabulary, there are words whose meaning you should be able to determine by using any of the previous strategies. Once you are certain of the meaning of a word, place it in the corresponding blank to see if it makes any sense in the context. If it doesn’t, you can eliminate it.
- **Identify the time sequence.** This strategy is important in order to appropriately identify the correct answer in items that deal with verbal forms in different tenses. If you identify when one event took place, and whether it took place before or after another event, you will be able to make the correct choice. One good way of identifying the time sequence is by looking at the adverbial phrases of time (such as *la semana pasada*, *al año siguiente*, and so on).
- **Identify the subject of a sentence.** If an item lists as its options four forms of the same verb, you need to figure out the subject of the sentence. The correct choice is based on the agreement between subject and verb. For example, if your choices are forms of the same verb in the same tense (such as *canté*, *cantaste*, *cantó*, *cantaron*), you must look for the subject of the sentence because all the choices are equivalent except in person and number.

Remember that selecting and using these cues and strategies will help you avoid decoding the text word by word, understand the meaning of the passage, and successfully select the correct answer.

An Example of How to Read a Passage and Work Through Questions

Here is an example of a Cloze Passage that you may find on the exam. Below the passage is a suggestion for how you may be able to tackle the passage and arrive at the correct answers in a reasonable amount of time. The first few questions are also given.

En los (1) tiempos, parece ser que beber agua embotellada se ha puesto de moda. (2) fuentes periodísticas, en los últimos años la industria del agua embotellada (3) de forma inusual. Por ejemplo, (4) España se ha producido un crecimiento de un 5% de esta industria. Este incremento (5) debe a las nuevas tendencias aparecidas en la década de los 90 de que beber mucha agua es una manera de mantenerse sano.

Hoy en día, por donde (6) que uno mira se encuentra con una “botellita de agua.” Hasta las bolsas deportivas tienen un compartimento especial para (7).

Sin embargo, los verdaderos precursores del (8) de agua como fuente de salud fueron los romanos. Cuando uno visita Roma, enseguida (9) algo curioso: A cada paso, en cada plaza, de la parte antigua de la ciudad, se encuentra (10) fuente de agua mineral para que los ciudadanos puedan beber. Ahora, claro está, los turistas que visitan la bella ciudad, rellenan su botellita.

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|----------------|------------------|
| 1. A. primeros | 3. A. ha crecido |
| B. tantos | B. crecerá |
| C. últimos | C. crezca |
| D. muchos | D. crecería |
2. A. Sin embargo
B. Por consiguiente
C. A pesar de
D. Según

If you encounter this passage, you could go through a process similar to the one given below:

1. Read the entire passage.

Many students are tempted to skim the passage and then read the questions, or read the questions and then read the passage, or read just the first few sentences of the passage and then read the questions. However, reading the *entire* passage is always a good idea. In this case, you would realize that this passage is about the new trend of drinking bottled water. It also provides some facts about how this habit has affected other aspects of life.

2. Think about what you know about the topic.

If you have a lot of outside knowledge about the topic, this will help you on the exam. Observe that there are many words that are frequently used in Spanish (including *ser*, *beber*, *agua*, *años*, *nuevas*) that you should know by now. Use your knowledge of the topic to help you with the many cognates that you may easily recognize, such as *industria* (industry), *forma* (form), *producido* (produced), and *tendencias* (tendencies). Be cautious, though: *Sano* is a false cognate that means *healthy* in English.

3. Move on to the questions.

For the first question, determine whether it is testing your knowledge of grammar or your vocabulary. Notice that all four choices are adjectives in the masculine and plural form. Because they have the same grammatical value, it is apparent that this is a vocabulary item. All the choices are frequently used words in Spanish, and, from the context and your previous knowledge on the subject, you will be able to pick *últimos* (last) as the correct answer because the entire passage deals with the trend that has developed lately of drinking bottled water.

4. Go on to the next question, and repeat the process.

Once again, this is a vocabulary item. Notice that the choices are expressions that have a very specific meaning and whose function is to keep the logic of the text. From your experience, you know that when someone is giving data, she is probably using another source of information to back up what she is saying. The correct answer here is Choice **D** because *según* means *according to*. Of the four choices given, this is the only one that helps keep the logic of the text. The expressions given in Choice **A** and Choice **C** normally introduce a contradiction, and the expression in Choice **B** is generally used after a cause to introduce the effect.

5. As you continue to fill in the blanks, the text will make more sense to you.

Move to the next question. As soon as you see that the four choices given are different forms of the same verb, you will know that this is a grammar item.

You already know that this passage deals with facts; therefore, the subjunctive and conditional forms can be eliminated. This leaves you with two choices: Choice **A** and Choice **B**. Choice **B** is the in future form, however, and you know that the passage relates what has

been happening in the last few years. If you recollect what you know about verbal tenses, you will remember that the present perfect (used in Choice **A**) may be used as equivalent of the preterit, or to indicate an action that began in the past and that may or may not continue into the future.

One good technique to decide whether any given tense of a verb is correct is to go to the text and locate other verbal forms used in it. The logic of the language will help you here: If the preterit predominates in the passage, you may want to select the preterit form as your answer. In this specific passage, two verbal forms located near the omitted word are in the present perfect tense: *ha puesto* and *ha producido*. If you are trying to make an educated guess, you will select Choice **A**, which is in the present perfect form.

Sample Cloze Passages: Questions, Answers, and Explanations

Below are two sample Cloze Passages. Follow the directions, and, after you finish with the first sample, see “Answers and Explanations for Sample 1” (below). Make sure that you understand the reason for each correct answer. Repeat the process with Sample 2.

Sample 1

Si todo el hielo existente en el planeta (1) a derretirse, el proceso (2) miles de años y el aumento del peso del agua probablemente causaría el hundimiento de las hoyas oceánicas y la elevación de las masas continentales. (3) otra parte, el nivel del mar podría (4) en todas las costas hasta 170 o 200 metros. Solamente la capa (5) hielo antártica cubre (6) seis millones de millas cuadradas y, en caso de (7), produciría unos 6.5 millones de millas cúbicas de agua, cantidad suficiente para abastecer al Río Mississippi durante más de 50 mil años. Un aumento del nivel del mar de sólo 35 metros (8) casi toda la costa atlántica de los Estados Unidos y afectaría a las principales ciudades de este litoral. (9), podemos mantener la calma, ya que, desde siempre, los científicos (10) este suceso como una posibilidad sumamente remota.

1. A. llegara
B. llegará
C. llegó
D. llegue
2. A. evitaría
B. causaría
C. tendría
D. tardaría
3. A. Con
B. En
C. Para
D. Por
4. A. salir
B. seguir
C. sentir
D. subir
5. A. a
B. con
C. de
D. en
6. A. aproximadamente
B. rápidamente
C. típicamente
D. simplemente
7. A. derretirse
B. derritiendo
C. se derrita
D. derretido
8. A. inunda
B. inunde
C. inundará
D. inundaría
9. A. a pesar de
B. al contrario
C. sin embargo
D. en cambio
10. A. considerarán
B. considerarían
C. han considerado
D. hubieran considerado

Answers and Explanations for Sample 1

Remember that, although this is not a reading comprehension exercise, you must understand the text in order to select the correct option to fill in the blank. Some of the questions test your vocabulary; therefore, understanding the context is extremely important. Here are some tips to help you with this task:

- Use the content knowledge that you have acquired about environmental science in your science class, in other classes, or from your own experience to determine the theme of the passage and to anticipate the information the passage may include.

- Identify the cognates to determine that the purpose of the passage is to give information about natural phenomena: *planeta, proceso, probablemente, elevación, masas, continentales*, and so on.
- Pick out words that are used frequently in Spanish and that you are familiar with, such as *hielo, años, agua*, and so on.
- Focus on the time frame. Notice the absence of the present and past tenses in the passage. Scan the reading and identify the verb forms that appear, such as *causaría* and *produciría*. You can also identify the infinitives *causar* and *producir* and the endings attached to them to determine that these are conditional forms and that this passage presents a hypothesis. These clues will help you predict that you may encounter a subjunctive form, as is the case in the first question.

Below are the answers and explanations for each question in Sample 1.

1. **A.** This is a grammar item. You immediately see that the four choices are forms of the same verb. The word *si* (if) is your clue that this is not a fact that has happened already; therefore, you can eliminate Choice **C**, which is in the preterit form. The subjunctive is the tense used to speak about speculations, and there are two forms of the subjunctive given, one in Choice **A** and another in Choice **C**. The use of the subjunctive in this if clause indicates that the event is not likely to occur, and the use of the conditional form *causaría* is a key element for selecting Choice **A**. The pattern here is “if *x*, then *y*,” where *x* = *llegara* and *y* = *causaría*.
2. **D.** This is a vocabulary item. The four choices are all verbs in the conditional form, so all of them would be grammatically correct. Once you determine that this passage presents a hypothesis, you can concentrate on the meaning of each choice and how it would or would not fit in the passage. *Causaría* is a cognate (to cause); *tendría* is a form of *tener*. You are left with two choices: If you relate *tardaría* or *tardar* to the word *tarde*, you will recognize this family of words and be able to select the correct answer.
3. **D.** This is a grammar item that tests your knowledge of the use of prepositions. Of the four choices, *por* and *para* are the ones that are most easily confused; therefore, you can eliminate Choice **A** and Choice **B**. Now you can look for a reason to select Choice **C** or Choice **D**. The preposition *por* is used in common expressions. In this case, it’s used in the expression *on the other hand*. For more on the uses of *por* and *para*, see Objective 19 in the Grammar Review appendix.
4. **D.** This is a vocabulary item. The choices *salir* and *sentir* are frequently used in Spanish and you probably know they mean *to leave or go out* and *to feel*, respectively. The verb that would follow the noun phrase *el nivel del mar* must be *subir* because it is the one that indicates the rising of the water level.
5. **C.** This is a vocabulary item. All four choices are prepositions. The preposition *de* is used to form noun phrases that are equivalent to noun + noun in English: in this case, *la capa de hielo* = *the ice cap*.

6. A. The adverb *aproximadamente* (approximately) is used before a quantity.
7. A. This is a grammar item. *Derrotando* is a distracter that appeals to English speakers; in Spanish, however, the infinitive (not the gerund) is used following a preposition. For more details on the use of the infinitive and the gerund, see Objective 17 in the Grammar Review appendix.
8. D. This is a grammar item, in which the four choices given are forms of the verb *inundar*. Use the conditional to maintain the hypothetical nature of the passage.
9. C. This is a vocabulary item. A vocabulary review will be useful in order to be able to choose the word according to the meaning you make of the passage. *Sin embargo* (however) is used to show the contrast between the previous statement and the next. *A pesar de* (in spite of), *al contrario* (on the contrary), and *en cambio* (on the other hand) are not appropriate answers. (Notice that *al contrario* includes a cognate.)
10. C. The use of present perfect indicates that the action was initiated in the past and continues in the present. This is the only sentence in the passage that includes a verb in a tense other than the conditional or the subjunctive. The clue to the correct answer is the phrase *desde siempre*: Because both *desde* (from) and *siempre* (always) are common words in Spanish, you can pick out the correct answer based on your prior knowledge of the language.

Sample 2

Investigaciones recientes (1) que los cambios climáticos que se registran a nivel mundial (2) las condiciones ecológicas favorables (3) que el nacimiento y desarrollo de insectos (4) día con día. Las noticias acerca de desastres ocasionados por plagas en cultivos y ganado, principalmente, se (5) en los últimos años. La Universidad de la Florida, en su departamento de entomología y hematología, trabaja en un proyecto, en el que se desarrollan nuevos controles que (6) el nacimiento y crecimiento de estos animales. Los insecticidas (7) aquí no llevan los pesticidas químicos que (8) incluyen estos productos y que dañan la capa de ozono. (9) otro lado, en el mismo proyecto, la bióloga Marie Knox (10) un silbato de tres pulgadas que se utiliza para localizar cucarachas, consideradas la peor plaga doméstica.

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|-------------|---------------|
| 1. A. datan | 2. A. crean |
| B. entregan | B. crearán |
| C. rebelan | C. crearían |
| D. revelan | D. han creado |

3. A. de
B. en
C. para
D. por
4. A. aumenta
B. aumente
C. aumentó
D. aumentaría
5. A. incrementan
B. incrementarán
C. han incrementado
D. incrementen
6. A. conducen
B. producen
C. reducen
D. traducen
7. A. elaborados
B. elaboraron
C. elaborando
D. elaborar
8. A. al revés
B. al tanto
C. por el contrario
D. por lo general
9. A. Desde
B. En
C. Por
D. Para
10. A. analizó
B. inventó
C. ocurrió
D. sustituyó

Answers and Explanations for Sample 2

To help you answer these questions correctly, you may:

- Use the content knowledge you have acquired about insects in your science class, in other classes, or from your own experience to determine the theme of the passage and to anticipate the information the passage may include.
- Identify the cognates to determine that the purpose of the passage is to give information about natural phenomena: *climático, condiciones, favorables, insectos, universidad, entomología, hematología, animales*, and so on.
- Focus on words that are used frequently in Spanish and that you are familiar with, such as *día, noticias, años, trabaja*, and so on.
- Focus on the time frame. Notice the abundance of verbs in the present tense, such as *registran, trabaja, desarrollan*, and so on. This passage addresses an ongoing process: therefore, your choices need to be consistent with this time frame. Besides the present and the present subjunctive, the other tense that fits in this sequence is the present perfect, especially in reference to an action that began in the past but may be still happening.

Below are the answers and explanations for each question in Sample 2.

- 1. D.** This is a vocabulary item. Because your four choices are verbs in the same form, they are grammatically equivalent. You may be able to eliminate Choice **A** because you can relate it to the word *date*. Choice **C** is a good distracter because of its spelling; in fact, a native speaker of Spanish may select it due to a lack of spelling knowledge. Choice **D** is a cognate, and, if you try to fit it within the context, you will see that it is the correct answer: To give the appropriate meaning to the sentence, it needs to state that recent research reveals a fact.
- 2. D.** This is a grammar item. The choices given are four verbal forms of *crear*. The use of the present perfect indicates that the action was initiated in the past and continues in the present.
- 3. C.** This item requires the knowledge of the usage of prepositions, especially *por* and *para*. *Por* followed by *que* is used to introduce a cause. *Para que* introduces a clause that demonstrates an action that is a result of another. This type of clause requires the subjunctive.
- 4. B.** This is a grammar item. Because the verb is part of a clause with *para que*, the subjunctive mode is required. The use of the subjunctive in the second part of the clause indicates the goal of an action, whether it is accomplished or not. For a more detailed explanation on the uses of the subjunctive, refer to Objective 14 in the Grammar Review appendix.
- 5. C.** The use of the present perfect indicates that the action was initiated in the past and continues in the present. Look for a clue that will help you choose the appropriate tense: *En los últimos años* refers to a point in time in the past and helps you eliminate the other choices because they include the present tense (Choice **A**), the future tense (Choice **B**), and the present subjunctive (Choice **D**).
- 6. C.** This is a vocabulary item, where three out of the four choices are cognates, including the correct answer. Apply your previous knowledge about the subject to choose the appropriate answer to this item. Choice **C** (*reducen*) is the correct choice because the sentence needs to state that the project's goal is to reduce the number of insects.
- 7. A.** This is a grammar item that tests your knowledge of impersonal forms of verbs. The past participle is the only one that may be used as an adjective. When used as an adjective, it must agree in gender and number with the noun. For a more detailed explanation of the impersonal forms of verbs, see Objective 17 in the Grammar Review appendix.
- 8. D.** *Por lo general* is an idiomatic expression equivalent to *in general*. Studying a list of phrases such as this one will be useful because they are used rather frequently in Spanish. For a list of phrases such as this one, see the list of idiomatic expressions in Part V.
- 9. C.** The preposition *por* is used in common expressions such as *por otro lado*. For a more detailed explanation on the uses of *por* and *para*, see Objective 19 in the Grammar Review appendix.
- 10. B.** This is a vocabulary item, for which it is useful to rely on your knowledge of cognates. For example, *inventó* is a form of *inventar* (to invent): Thus, you know that, as a result of the research, the biologist invented a whistle.