



Palabra abierta

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Houghton Mifflin Company
Boston New York

LA AMÉRICA DEL SUR
PANAMÁ



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Featu

Palabra abierta is a theme-driven, process-based Spanish composition textbook designed to develop advanced students' critical thinking skills and academic writing proficiency. Intended for learners of Spanish as a foreign language and for native speakers of Spanish who have already developed their interpersonal, oral communication skills, *Palabra abierta* is suitable for third- or fourth-year college Spanish courses as well as for high school advanced placement courses.

To help students develop their critical thinking and writing skills, *Palabra abierta* presents a variety of unabridged, authentic readings representing a broad range of prose genres such as reportage, interviews, photo essays, editorials, op-ed pieces, feature articles, biographical essays, academic essays, and research articles. Poems and short stories are also included to provide additional perspectives on several key themes. The presence of several readings in each chapter is based upon the proposition that we learn better by first formulating and reflecting upon personal ideas, then by thinking and writing objectively about these ideas, which is the basis of most academic essays and research papers.

Features of *Palabra abierta*

- **Readings.** Drawn from a variety of authentic sources, the readings in seven of the eight chapters of *Palabra abierta* focus on a single theme. This organization provides students with a rich source of theme-related vocabulary that they can use in their own writing. It also stimulates critical thinking by allowing students to consider different perspectives on the same theme.
- **Reading activities.** The open-ended, discussion-oriented activities that accompany each reading check students' comprehension of the selection and encourage them to think about it vis-à-vis the chapter theme. The activities also make student writers aware of different discourse strategies that the author of the reading has utilized to communicate information, opinions, and ideas.
- **Gramática funcional.** As is appropriate in an advanced composition textbook, the **Gramática funcional** sections address grammar topics within the context of the paragraph or the text as a whole.
- **Creando nuevos textos.** In the second part of each chapter, the **Creando nuevos textos** sections provides step-by-step instruction to guide students through every stage of the writing process: from pre-writing through drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, and analyzing the final product.

- **Carpeta de escritura.** At the end of each chapter, the **Carpeta de escritura** section helps students learn from their writing experience, fostering critical reflection upon their own writing development. The **Carpeta de escritura** also provides the basis for the creation of a writing portfolio.
- **Creando nuevos textos CD-ROM.** To accompany *Palabra abierta* the **Creando nuevos textos CD-ROM** reproduces the **Creando nuevos textos** section from the textbook so students can complete their writing assignments in an electronic environment. These materials are available as .rtf files, which can be used with any software program designed for processing text files.

Organization of *Palabra abierta*

Palabra abierta is divided into eight chapters. the **Capítulo preliminar** outlines the book's goals and methodology through discussions and activities. Each of the seven chapters that follow is divided in two parts, with the first part, **Lectura**, containing the chapter reading selections and the second part, **Escritura**, focusing on the development of the chapter's main writing assignment. Within this overall organization are the following sections.

- **Acercándonos al tema.** This section has two main objectives. First, it helps the student activate and build on the background information necessary to understand the reading theme. Second, it activates student's knowledge of theme-related vocabulary. These activities are ideal for the multi-level classroom; they are intended for small group work and encourage the sharing of vocabulary and culturally relevant ideas and experiences among group members.
- **Acercándonos al texto.** This section precedes each reading and provides brainstorming and additional pre-reading activities.
- **Interactuando con el texto.** The post-reading activities in this section are specifically tailored to the nature and difficulty of each selection. They serve first, to check students' basic understanding of the reading and second, to prompt them to think critically about the reading and its connection to the chapter theme. Students are guided to communicate their reactions to the readings in oral and written activities.
- **Variaciones del español.** This post-reading section helps students understand how regional usage in writing enables an author to attain certain objectives. These presentations also discuss aspects of register and tone in writing.
- **Gramática funcional.** In this section, students learn how to analyze the reading as discourse. It shows how language weaves meaning and form to achieve certain socio-textual functions by analyzing, illustrating, and practicing aspects of textual cohesion, register, and mode.
- **Creando textos.** Activities in this section guide students to consider further the reading's main topics and to create new texts based on these topics. These activities allow students the possibility of experimenting with two different kinds of writing. **Escritura personal**, on the one hand, fosters free-writing and theme-based journal writing. In this activity, student writers communicate their ideas to

themselves, without the formal constraints of an assignment that will be evaluated. **Escritura pública**, on the other hand, is writing to be shared with or created in collaboration with other participants in the classroom; the instructor may or may not choose to evaluate this kind of writing. This is another ideal section for the multi-level classroom, since some activities are intended for small-group work in which students can share with group-mates their individual expertise in the creative co-production of a text.

- **Escritura.** *Escritura*, the second part of each chapter, starts with a presentation on the general characteristics of the target genre. The structures of the reportage, the academic essay, and the research paper are analyzed; strategies to write introductions and concluding paragraphs are discussed; strategies for organizing paragraphs and for attaining cohesion among paragraphs are described; and the process of writing the research paper is analyzed step by step.
- **Creando nuevos textos.** This section guides student writers through the development of the chapter's main writing assignment. This is always a formal essay to be turned in and evaluated by the instructor. Through a carefully designed set of process-writing activities, students are encouraged to bring together and analyze the chapter theme and their own writing. These activities provide students with strategies to formulate their thesis, to choose an appropriate organization to develop their thesis, and to introduce and conclude their essay in an interesting and appropriate manner. Moreover, these activities teach students to analyze different aspects of their writing in progress, and to recognize and produce academic language in the assignment.
- **Palabra abierta.** The end-of-chapter section concludes the chapter assignment. Through group activities and the **Carpeta de escritura** journal-portfolio activity, student writers reflect on the writing process and formulate advice to themselves for the next writing assignment, which they write in their journal.

Adapting *Palabra abierta* to Different Course Schedules

Palabra abierta is designed for flexibility of use. It is ideal for a two-quarter or two-semester college-level writing course, but can easily be adapted to a one-quarter or semester course. Thus, two weeks may be devoted to each chapter (in a three-day weekly schedule). However, since each chapter includes a variety of readings of different levels of difficulty, instructors may choose to include some selections and leave out others according to their students' or course needs.

The chapters are organized around seven broad topics: human relationships, family and culture, today's society, women and society, magic realism, cultural borders, and Latino identity in the U.S. Our philosophy is to do in class what cannot be done on one's own. This means that most of the interactive activities should be done in class and the individualized activities, such as drafting the first version of the compositions, should be done outside of class.

Palabra abierta however, provides flexibility to the instructor in this regard, too: he or she will be able to plan activities according to specific classroom needs

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or circumstances such as class-period length, number of weekly meetings, and so on. Thus, many of the small-group activities can be done by individuals interacting alone with the text and writing out work to be submitted to the instructor. Likewise, it is possible to have students brainstorm at home for the next-day group activities so that when they arrive in class they can begin immediately to share their ideas with their group-mates.

To help students and instructors easily locate pair, group, and journal-portfolio writing activities, three icons appear throughout *Palabra abierta*.



This icon appears next to pair activities. Most of these are identified with the label **En parejas**.



This icon appears next to group activities. Most of these are identified with the label **En grupos**.



This icon signals personal writing activities; it appears next to the **Escritura personal** and the **Carpeta de escritura** activities.

Beyond the Textbook

In this age of technological developments, students interact on a daily basis with different types of media, such as the Internet and CD-ROMS, as well as with the more traditional media of films, songs, pictures, and written texts. *Palabra abierta* exposes students to the breadth and diversity of the Spanish language in the world today through texts originally appearing in a variety of media (newspaper, photographic journals, Web editions of newspapers, and so on.). Additionally, *Palabra abierta* encourages students to interact outside of class with the variety of media available today in Spanish. Several activities in the textbook invite students to further investigate the chapter themes through movies, songs, Web pages, Internet newsgroups, and the like. Because of this, *Palabra abierta* is ideal for computer-assisted sections of Spanish composition courses, where students can turn to the computer to do the necessary research on their writing topics, as well as to do their own writing, revisions, peer editing, and rewriting.

The authors of *Palabra abierta* have carefully selected the following films as accompaniments to each of the chapter themes. Because the majority of these films are widely available on video across the country, students can rent them and view them at home as they develop their ideas for their writing assignments.

- Chapter 1 *Tango Feroz*. Directed by Ricardo Piñeiro, 1993, Argentina.
Belle Époque. Directed by Fernando Trueba, 1993, Spain.
Fresa y chocolate. Directed by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1994, Cuba.

- Chapter 2 *Miss Mary*. Directed by María Luisa Bemberg, 1986, Argentina.
De eso no se habla. Directed by María Luisa Bemberg, 1994, Argentina.
- Chapter 3 *La historia oficial*. Directed by Luis Puenzo, 1984, Argentina.
Memorias del subdesarrollo. Directed by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1968, Cuba.
- Chapter 4 *Hasta cierto punto*. Directed by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1984, Cuba.
Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios. Directed by Pedro Almodóvar, 1988, Spain.
La flor de mi secreto. Directed by Pedro Almodóvar, 1996, Spain.
Danzón. Directed by María Novaro, 1992, México.
Camila. Directed by María Luisa Bemberg, 1984, Argentina.
Tristana. Directed by Luis Buñuel, 1970, Spain.
Viridiana. Directed by Luis Buñuel, 1961/1980, Spain.
- Chapter 5 *Milagro en Roma*. Directed by Lisandro Duque Naranjo, 1984, Colombia
Como agua para chocolate. Directed by Fernando Arau, 1992, México.
- Chapter 6 *Mi familia*. Directed by Gregory Navas, 1994, U.S.A.
El espejo enterrado: Reflexiones sobre España y el Nuevo Mundo.
 Directed by Carlos Fuentes, 1991, México.
The Milagro Beanfield War. Directed by Robert Redford, 1988, U.S.A.
Zoot Suit. Directed by Luis Valdez, 1987, U.S.A.
La Bamba. Directed by Luis Valdez, 1982, U.S.A.
La ofrenda. Directed by Lourdes Portillo y Susana Muñoz, 1988, U.S.A.
- Chapter 7 *El norte*. Directed by Gregory Navas, 1983, U.S.A.
El super. Directed by León Ichaso, 1979, U.S.A.

Acknowledgments

Many have helped make this book possible. First of all we would like to thank our students, who provided the inspiration and motivation to write this book. Finding appropriate materials for a book of this nature is never very easy: one needs library resources and generous friends and colleagues who are willing to share their materials. We are grateful to the members of the Department of Spanish at the University of California, Davis, for their support. We would also like to thank the following friends and colleagues for their contributions: Francisco X. Alarcón, Marta Altisent, and Hugo Verani.

We would also like to thank the instructors who provided helpful comments during the development of the project: Silvia R. Anadón, University of Notre Dame; Juan Ramón de Arana, Ursinus College; Concepción Barba, College of Charleston; Duane Bunker, Palm Beach Atlantic College; Joseph Collentine, Northern Arizona University; Dr. Florencia Cortés Conde, University of Florida, Gainesville; Dr. Richard K. Curry, Texas A&M University; Ozzie F. Díaz-Duque, University of Iowa;