
Lambright, Ann, Sharon W. Foerster, and Ramonita Marcano-Ogando. *Lecturas Literarias: Moving Toward Linguistic and Cultural Fluency Through Literature.*

New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007. ISBN: 0-07-321197-4.

Lecturas Literarias consists of six chapters, reflecting the authors' philosophy of "Moving Toward Linguistic and Cultural Fluency Through Literature." Each chapter contains two engaging literary readings and includes both pre- and post-reading activities. A grammatical appendix presents key aspects of the Spanish language and functions as a reference tool. *Lecturas Literarias* is intended to be used by students at the post-secondary intermediate level in a bridge course or a content-focused conversation course. It is also related structurally and thematically to the well-known *Punto y Aparte: Spanish in Review* and could be used as one of its ancillaries.

This textbook is built around seven communicative functions: *Descripción, Comparación, Reacciones y Recomendaciones, Narración en el pasado,*

Hablar de los gustos, *Hacer hipótesis*, and *Hablar del futuro*. Each of them (except *Comparación*, which functions within the framework of the others) constitutes a communicative goal for each chapter. Such a methodology calls for an array of creative activities in order to hold student interest, increase their reading comprehension, and elicit different types of quality-content discourses based on the literary selections presented. The authors certainly answered the challenge by relying on students' experiences, opinions, and feelings to introduce the reading. They concentrate on a limited set of nine key vocabulary words and present a simple mechanism for successful reading comprehension (guessing, association, skipping, dictionary). They also apply "the three V's" technique (vocabulary, visualization, and verification) within the text, as well as adding a visual element: a self-explanatory drawing illustrating the essence of the reading.

In the post-reading section, several activities deserve mention for their unorthodox and exciting exploration of student opinions. This reviewer is particularly impressed by *¡A dramatizar!*, a role-playing exercise; *Yo, poeta*, a writing activity where the essence of the reading is an extremely condensed five-line poem (*a quintilla*); and *Las siete metas comunicativas en contexto*, a simple and effective sequence of questions for learning and reviewing the communicative goals within the context of the reading. These techniques stimulate students' creative expression and sharpen their communication skills.

Other written and oral activities lend themselves to extensive exploration in the form of a composition. (Students should take advantage of the short review and practice with literary analysis provided in *Hacia el análisis literario*). *El editor exigente*, for example, offers the student the opportunity to alter the main reading while maintaining the original tone and style. The *¡A conversar!* section relies on a series of brainstorming activities that serve as an interactive tool for students, establishing a connection between the fictional world and their perceptions of the complex world around them.

My students' favorite assignment was an online-based project about some aspect of the Hispanic world, dealing with its arts and literature, politics, human relief agencies, environment, and popular and native cultures. The Website @ *explorar un poco más* provides cultural closure for each chapter and is dedicated to one Hispanic country or region, linked to the biography and work of its writers, and supplemented by maps and site photographs.

At Canisius College, *Lecturas Literarias* would best serve students with high intermediate-level Spanish language skills. It could possibly be used in a Spanish composition course as a bridge between intermediate grammar-based review courses and major electives, where the emphasis is on literature, critical thinking, and intensive writing. *Lecturas Literarias* is a worthwhile text to consider for adoption since it is flexible enough to accommodate various curricula, group dynamics, and teaching personalities.

Margaret Stefanski
Assistant Professor of Spanish
Canisius College
Buffalo, NY

Publisher's Response

We are delighted to respond to Professor Stefanski's favorable review of *Lecturas literarias: Moving Toward Linguistic and Cultural Fluency Through Literature*. As noted by Professor Stefanski, this is a new literary anthology recently published by McGraw-Hill. It was written expressly to serve as a companion anthology for *Punto y aparte*, a McGraw-Hill intermediate-level textbook, but it can also be used with any intermediate-level textbook or in other intermediate courses.

As described so aptly by Professor Stefanski, *Lecturas literarias* is based on the authors' philosophy of focusing on seven specific communicative functions and three reading strategies while developing reading skills. The inclusion of pre- and post-reading activities serves to facilitate and enhance comprehension while also allowing students to make personalized connections to the reading selections. We are especially delighted that Professor Stefanski has highlighted certain types of activities in her review, including ¡A dramatizar!, Yo, poeta, and ¡A conversar!. These activity types characterize the creative yet pedagogically sound approach of the materials.

It is also worth noting that the twelve reading selections in *Lecturas literarias* are from authors from various Spanish-speaking countries, including works by Carmen Laforet (Spain), Reynaldo Arenas (Cuba), Elena Poniatowska (Mexico) and Julio Ramón Ribeyro (Peru), among others.

Again, we would like to thank Professor Stefanski for her very enthusiastic review of *Lecturas literarias* and for sharing it with the readership of *The NECTFL Review*. It is especially gratifying to learn that Professor Stefanski has used this exciting new anthology with success in her classroom. McGraw-Hill World Languages is delighted to publish unique readers for intermediate Spanish courses.

William R. Glass, Ph.D.
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