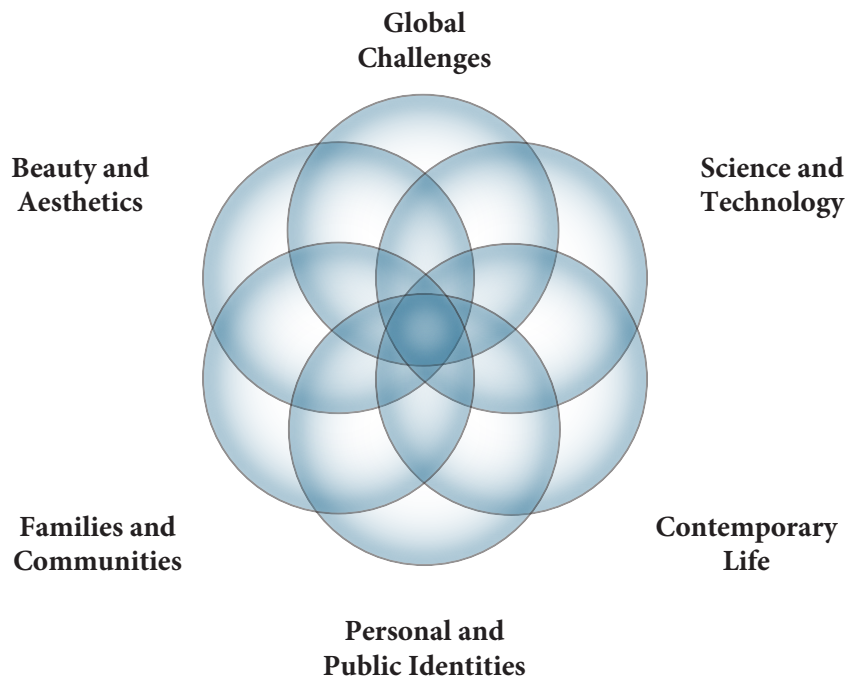# Course Themes

Designing the AP Spanish Language and Culture course around themes creates an interesting, meaningful context in which to explore a variety of language concepts. Themes help teachers integrate language, content, and culture into an interrelated series of lessons and activities that promote the use of the language in a variety of contexts. A theme may be used to plan a brief unit of study, a comprehensive unit spanning a greater period of time, or to connect with courses in other disciplines.

The AP Spanish Language and Culture course is structured around six themes:

Global
Challenges

Beauty and
Aesthetics

Science and
Technology

Families and
Communities

Contemporary
Life

Personal and
Public Identities

Recommended Contexts and Essential Questions

Each theme includes a number of *recommended contexts* for exploration. Teachers are encouraged to engage students in the various themes by considering historical, contemporary, and future perspectives as appropriate. Teachers should assume complete flexibility in resource selection and instructional exploration of the six themes. The recommended contexts are not intended as prescriptive or required, but rather they serve as suggestions for addressing the themes.

One way to design instruction with the themes is to identify *overarching essential questions* to motivate learners and to guide classroom investigations, learning activities, and performance assessments. Essential questions are designed to spark curiosity and engage students in real-life, problem-solving tasks. They allow students to investigate and express different views on real world issues, make connections to other disciplines, and compare aspects of the target culture(s) to their own. Essential questions also lend themselves well to interdisciplinary inquiry, asking students to apply skills and perspectives across content areas while working with content from language, literature, and cultures of the Spanish-speaking world.

Integrating Themes, Recommended Contexts, and Essential Questions

AP Spanish Language and Culture teachers are encouraged to consider the interconnectedness of the themes. A unit on environmental issues (Global Challenges) might, for example, touch upon recommended contexts from more than one theme. Students might study inventions as catalysts of change (Science and Technology), influences from religious beliefs or social values (Personal and Public Identities), or the aesthetics of eco-friendly architecture (Beauty and Aesthetics).

The recommended contexts for exploring a theme can be varied depending on available authentic materials, teacher-developed resources, and commercially produced materials, as well as teacher creativity and student interest. The design of the course should include essential questions that will capture students' interest, engaging authentic materials, and learning activities that help students consider themes across time and across cultures.

It should be noted that literature is not merely a recommended context for one of the course themes (Beauty and Aesthetics) but should serve as a powerful vehicle for delivering content to address all of the themes. Literary works may be incorporated throughout the AP Spanish Language and

Culture course in relation to a variety of themes, such as the environment (Global Challenges), rites of passage (Contemporary Life), or issues of cultural assimilation (Personal and Public Identities).

Themes, Recommended Contexts, and Overarching Essential Questions

Theme: Global Challenges / *Los desafíos mundiales*
Recommended Contexts:

- Economic Issues / *Los temas económicos*

- Environmental Issues / *Los temas del medio ambiente*

- Philosophical Thought and Religion / *El pensamiento filosófico y la religión*

- Population and Demographics / *La población y la demografía*

- Social Welfare / *El bienestar social*

- Social Conscience / *La conciencia social*

Overarching Essential Questions:

- What environmental, political, and social issues pose challenges to societies throughout the world? / *¿Cuáles son los desafíos sociales, políticos y del medio ambiente que enfrentan las sociedades del mundo?*

- What are the origins of those issues? / *¿Cuáles son los orígenes de esos desafíos?*

- What are possible solutions to those challenges? / *¿Cuáles son algunas posibles soluciones a esos desafíos?*

Theme: Science and Technology / *La ciencia y la tecnología*
Recommended Contexts:

- Access to Technology / *El acceso a la tecnología*

- Effects of Technology on Self and Society / *Los efectos de la tecnología en el individuo y en la sociedad*

- Health Care and Medicine / *El cuidado de la salud y la medicina*

- Innovations / *Las innovaciones tecnológicas*

- Natural Phenomena / *Los fenómenos naturales*

- Science and Ethics / *La ciencia y la ética*

Overarching Essential Questions:

- How do developments in science and technology affect our lives? / *¿Qué impacto tiene el desarrollo científico y tecnológico en nuestras vidas?*

- What factors have driven innovation and discovery in the fields of science and technology? / *¿Qué factores han impulsado el desarrollo y la innovación en la ciencia y la tecnología?*

- What role does ethics play in scientific advancement? / *¿Qué papel cumple la ética en los avances científicos?*

Theme: Contemporary Life / *La vida contemporánea*
Recommended Contexts:

- Education and Careers / *La educación y las carreras profesionales*

- Entertainment / *El entretenimiento y la diversión*

- Travel and Leisure / *Los viajes y el ocio*

- Lifestyles / *Los estilos de vida*

- Relationships / *Las relaciones personales*

- Social Customs and Values / *Las tradiciones y los valores sociales*

- Volunteerism / *El trabajo voluntario*

Overarching Essential Questions:

- How do societies and individuals define quality of life? / *¿Cómo definen los individuos y las sociedades su propia calidad de vida?*

- How is contemporary life influenced by cultural products, practices, and perspectives? / *¿Cómo influyen los productos culturales, las prácticas y las perspectivas de la gente en la vida contemporánea?*

- What are the challenges of contemporary life? / *¿Cuáles son los desafíos de la vida contemporánea?*

Theme: Personal and Public Identities / *Las identidades personales y públicas*
Recommended Contexts:

- Alienation and Assimilation / *La enajenación y la asimilación*

- Heroes and Historical Figures / *Los héroes y los personajes históricos*

- National and Ethnic Identities / *La identidad nacional y la identidad étnica*

- Personal Beliefs / *Las creencias personales*

- Personal Interests / *Los intereses personales*
- Self-Image / *La autoestima*

Overarching Essential Questions:

- How are aspects of identity expressed in various situations? / *¿Cómo se expresan los distintos aspectos de la identidad en diversas situaciones?*
- How do language and culture influence identity? / *¿Cómo influyen la lengua y la cultura en la identidad de una persona?*
- How does one's identity develop over time? / *¿Cómo se desarrolla la identidad de una persona a lo largo del tiempo?*

Theme: Families and Communities / *Las familias y las comunidades*
Recommended Contexts:

- Customs and Values / *Las tradiciones y los valores*
- Education Communities / *Las comunidades educativas*
- Family Structure / *La estructura de la familia*
- Global Citizenship / *La ciudadanía global*
- Human Geography / *La geografía humana*
- Social Networking / *Las redes sociales*

Overarching Essential Questions:

- What constitutes a family in different societies? / *¿Cómo se define la familia en distintas sociedades?*
- How do individuals contribute to the well-being of communities? / *¿Cómo contribuyen los individuos al bienestar de las comunidades?*
- How do the roles that families and communities assume differ in societies around the world? / *¿Cuáles son las diferencias en los papeles que asumen las comunidades y las familias en las diferentes sociedades del mundo?*

Theme: Beauty and Aesthetics / *La belleza y la estética*
Recommended Contexts:

- Architecture / *La arquitectura*
- Defining Beauty / *Definiciones de la belleza*
- Defining Creativity / *Definiciones de la creatividad*
- Fashion and Design / *La moda y el diseño*

- Language and Literature / *El lenguaje y la literatura*
- Visual and Performing Arts / *Las artes visuales y escénicas*

Overarching Essential Questions:

- How are perceptions of beauty and creativity established? / *¿Cómo se establecen las percepciones de la belleza y la creatividad?*

- How do ideals of beauty and aesthetics influence daily life? / *¿Cómo influyen los ideales de la belleza y la estética en la vida cotidiana?*

- How do the arts both challenge and reflect cultural perspectives? / *¿Cómo las artes desafían y reflejan las perspectivas culturales?*