



T o the Student

Welcome to the Third Edition of *Punto y aparte: Spanish in Review, Moving Toward Fluency*, a unique and exciting intermediate Spanish program! As second-year students of college Spanish, you have already studied verb tenses, the subjunctive mood, pronouns, a lot of basic vocabulary, common idioms, and so on. The goal of this course is to help you acquire the ability to use what you have learned by focusing on seven major communicative functions (**metas comunicativas**) in Spanish: describing, comparing, reacting and recommending, narrating in the past, talking about likes and dislikes, hypothesizing, and talking about the future. All of your written and oral practice will involve topics that require you to demonstrate an ability to communicate those functions.


Another goal is for you to become a paragraph maker in Spanish. (In fact, the Spanish expression **punto y aparte** is used to indicate the beginning of a new paragraph!) You will also achieve greater cohesion in your speaking and writing abilities by including transition words and sentence connectors as you move toward fluency in Spanish. (Please see the list of common connectors and transition words on the inside back cover.)


A third goal is for you to increase your vocabulary by adding new words to your active vocabulary and by acquiring strategies that will help you understand the meaning of unfamiliar terms. You will also notice that all of the vocabulary is presented in groups of words that are thematically related. We suggest that you study the vocabulary in these thematic groups rather than as single, isolated words. You will find a consistent recycling of vocabulary throughout the text so that you will not forget vocabulary studied in **Capítulo 1** by the time you reach **Capítulo 5**.


What is unique about *Punto y aparte* and its approach is the idea of narrowing the focus of instruction to seven major communicative functions, all of which appear in every chapter from the beginning of the course. This focus on the communicative functions is supported by constant

recycling of the grammatical structures needed to accurately and successfully perform those functions. In other words, the content or themes will change with each new chapter, but the seven functions will be repeated throughout the program. To facilitate your growing abilities to communicate effectively in Spanish, icons are used to remind you with which function you are working. For example, when you see the D icon next to an activity, you know that you are working with description and that, in order to describe well, you must keep in mind the rules for gender/number agreement, the appropriate uses of **ser** and **estar**, and perhaps the use of past participles as adjectives. (Please see the inside front cover for a full display of the icons, the communicative functions, and the grammatical structures [**los puntos clave**] that accompany the functions.)

To accomplish each of these communicative functions, certain grammatical structures must be mastered. Therefore, *Punto y aparte* offers a wide variety of interactive tasks so that you can practice the functions throughout the text. By doing so, you will increase your grammatical accuracy and strengthen your ability to express yourself effectively in Spanish.

Besides concentrating on the seven functions and increasing your vocabulary, we want to help you enjoy reading in Spanish. Although many reading strategies can help guide you as you approach texts written in Spanish, *Punto y aparte* concentrates on three. We like to refer to these reading strategies as “the three V’s”: learning *vocabulary* in context, *visualization*, and *verification*. To aid you in acquiring these strategies we have placed consciousness-raising icons next to each reading in the **Lectura** sections. A **Vocabulario** icon  in the margin alerts you to make wise strategy decisions about a new vocabulary item, such as deciphering the word based on the context, relating it to similar words you *do* know, looking it up in a dictionary, or ignoring it altogether.

Visualizar icons  remind you to visualize images of the people, places, things, and situations described at that point.

Finally, a **Verificar** icon  and a short set of questions, positioned at logical break points within longer readings and at the end of most readings, encourage you to monitor your comprehension up to that point. The goal of these strategies is to help you get the overall gist of the passage.

It is also very important to understand from the outset how this course differs from previous courses you may have taken. As you move toward fluency in Spanish, you should progress from being a list maker to a paragraph maker, from memorizing isolated words to learning and using groups of thematically related words, and from studying grammar structures in a vacuum to studying grammar as a support for expressing the seven communicative functions that serve as the

core of the *Punto y aparte* methodology. Finally, you should also attain a deeper understanding and appreciation of Hispanic cultures through the rich and diverse **Rincón cultural** sections and through the lives of the five characters (**los cinco amigos**) who appear throughout *Punto y aparte* in their daily lives and interactions at the Ruta Maya café in Austin, Texas. The five friends are Sara Carrillo Jiménez, a Spanish graduate student; Javier Mercado Quevedo, a Puerto Rican journalist who also works at Ruta Maya; Laura Taylor, an American graduate student of Pharmacy and Health Administration and Sara's roommate; Diego Ponce Flores, a Mexican shop owner; and Sergio Wilson Flores, a Mexican-American concert promoter and Diego's cousin.

Above all, we hope that you enjoy this course and that you find yourself moving toward fluency in Spanish!



Ruta Maya en Austin, Texas



Los cinco amigos