Sample 1
Complete the following passage by giving the appropriate present-tense form of the verbs provided next to the blanks.

Je ________ (aller) souvent au cinéma le weekend avec mes amis. Nous ________ (préférer) les films d'aventure, mais quelquefois nous ________ (choisir) un film d'amour. Les films français ________ (être) très intéressants, mais un peu difficiles à comprendre. . . . (text continues)

Sample 2
Complete the following passage by choosing from the box at the right a verb that makes the most sense in the context. Be sure to give the appropriate form of the verb in the present tense. (Each verb is used only once.)

Je ________ souvent au cinéma le weekend avec mes amis.
Nous ________ les films d'aventure, mais quelquefois nous ________ un film d'amour. Les films français ________ très intéressants, mais un peu difficiles à comprendre. . . . (text continues)

(Translation of passages above)
I often ________ to the movies on the weekend with my friends.
We ________ adventure films, but sometimes we ________ a love story.
French films ________ very interesting, but a little difficult to understand. . . . (text continues)

“Teachers should consider balancing such items with others that are more open-ended and communicative in nature. By creating achievement tests that require meaningful processing, even for more focused items, we can encourage students to develop skills that relate more directly to the proficiency-based goals of the curriculum. Because classroom tests are constructed to elicit those aspects of language that have been the object of recent study in class, they tend to be more limited in scope than are proficiency tests. By providing the teacher and students with feedback about the mastery of specific material learned during the course of instruction, they constitute formative evaluation—a type of evaluation that enables teachers to alter instruction in progress to better address the needs of the learners. Proficiency tests, on the other hand, are summative evaluation measures in that they characterize the language abilities of individuals at a given point in time without regard to a specific course of instruction. Clearly, both types of measures are useful in providing feedback to second-language learners, and the classroom teacher needs to be aware of the characteristics of both kinds of tests and the situations for which they are most appropriate.”

The Case for Hybrid Classroom Tests
In order to revise our traditional classroom tests to make them more oriented towards communicative goals, it is not enough to simply add a few “global” or
Illustration 9.5
Positions of Sample Listening Comprehension Formats on the Assessment Schema

Sequence of single sentences or phrases (unrelated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Convergent</th>
<th>Divergent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discrete-point</td>
<td>Global</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen for specific grammatical or lexical features</td>
<td>Write summary of message content in native language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen for specific semantic information</td>
<td>Choose appropriate title, summary statement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sequential, naturalistic discourse

textual and structural—a skill that is of great value in processing natural language outside of the classroom context.

**SAMPLE 1 (NOVICE)**

*Listening for time of day*

**Context:** International train travel

**Function:** Listening for specific information

**Student Task:** Students listen to a recorded message giving times of arrivals and departures for trains. As they listen they fill in the schedule given below. (Students are directed to use numbers to designate times rather than write them out.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ville</th>
<th>Arrivée</th>
<th>Départ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paris</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cologne</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varsovie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moscou</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Text:** Bonjour. Ici les services SNCF à la Gare du Nord. Le train numéro 241, Paris/Moscou, quitte la Gare du Nord à 17h12 à destination Cologne. Le train arrive à Cologne à 22h36 et quitte la gare à 22h42. Il continue à Hagen, à Hamm, et à Hanovre et arrive à Berlin à 7h06. Le train quitte Berlin à 8h25 et va directement à Varsovie, où il arrive à 18h04. De Varsovie, le train numéro 241 continue à Moscou, où il arrive en gare à 14h45. Je répète... [read twice]

**Translation:** Hello. This is the SNCF train service at the Gare du Nord. Train number 241, Paris/Moscow, leaves the Gare du Nord at 5:12 p.m. for Cologne. The train arrives in Cologne at 10:36 p.m. and leaves the station at 10:42 p.m. It continues to Hagen, Hamm, and Hanover and arrives in Berlin at 7:06 a.m. The train leaves Berlin at 8:25 a.m. and goes directly to Varsovie, where it arrives at 6:04 p.m. From Varsovie, train number 241 continues to Moscow, where it arrives in the station at 2:45 p.m. To repeat...

**Follow-up item:** As a follow-up to this listening task, a test item can be designed asking students to add appropriate prepositions before the names of the cities and countries in which the train stops, as in the following passage:


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**SAMPLE 2 (NOVICE)**

*Recognizing vocabulary in context*

**Context:** Advertising

**Function:** Recognizing relevant items in a radio advertisement

**Student Task:** Students imagine that their host family in Guadalajara has decided to buy a larger house and has made a list of items they need to buy to fur-
1. What is the occasion for the party?
2. Where is it being held?
3. What is the date and time of the party?
4. What two things does the invitation ask you to do?
(Note that the comprehension questions are designed to elicit the kinds of
details that would be important to retain in order to properly respond to the
invitation.)

Reading for Sociocultural/Pragmatic Cues to Meaning

SAMPLE (NOVICE/INTERMEDIATE)

Making stylistic distinctions

**Context:** Invitations to social events

**Functions:** Understanding conventional expressions; detecting formal vs. informal style

**Student Task:** Students examine the three invitations to social functions given
in illustration 9.7. They then answer the following questions:
1. Rank the invitations in terms of formality, from least formal to most formal.
   In one or two sentences, explain why you ranked them as you did.
2. What is the occasion for each of the invitations?
   Invitation A: ______
   Invitation B: ______
   Invitation C: ______
3. For each of the following expressions or ideas in English, give the Spanish
equivalent or near equivalent, as represented in the invitations indicated:
   “Dear” ______ (Invitation A)
   ______ (Invitation B)
   “Please come...” ______ (Invitation A)
   ______ (Invitation B)
   “RSVP” ______ (Invitation A)
   ______ (Invitation B)
   ______ (Invitation C)
   “Yours truly” ______ (Invitation A)
   ______ (Invitation B)

**Source** Adapted from Gutiérrez and Rosser 1992, pp. 233-34.

Reading and Choosing the Best Paraphrase

In this type of format, students are given several options and are asked to choose
the best paraphrase of the main idea of a passage, paragraph, or series of par-
graphs. Multiple-choice options can be in either the native language (for testing
pure reading comprehension) or the target language. In the latter case, compre-
A

Estimada señora,
En la ocasión de la quinceañera de nuestra hija Marisol, la familia está organizando una fiesta en nuestra casa, Calle Sur No. 112, el sábado 17 de julio a las 21:00.
Nos daría mucho gusto tenerles a usted y a su hermano Carlos entre nosotros esa noche para la celebración.
Tenga la bondad de responder tan pronto como le sea posible.
Sin más por ahora, reciba los mejores deseos de,

Teresa Camacho Del Valle

B

Invitación a las fiestas A

Invitan cordialmente a

toma Víctor Amigo

a disfrutar de

la celebración del segundo aniversario de su boda, que

cabe en su residencia el sábado 17 de febrero

a las 10:00

R.S.V.P.

C

Illustration 9.7

Invitations to Parties

4. Ville/être/petit/mais/charmant.

1. I/to love/very much/university/campus/and/town.
2. The students/here/to be/nice/but/not/serious.
3. They/to spend/too much/time/in/bars.
4. Town/to be/small/but/charming.
5. There are/good/stores/and/many/theaters.
6. I/to go/movies/because/I/to adore/American/films.

A variety of discrete elements recently learned in class have been embedded into this set of sentences. For example, students show their mastery of present-tense verb forms, including the irregular verbs avoir and être, as well as the use of adjectives and certain impersonal constructions as they complete the task. This type of integrative format allows the teacher to combine a variety of discrete points of vocabulary and/or grammar into one exercise and thus avoid setting aside a whole section of a test for a single grammatical topic. This latter procedure is quite prevalent in more traditional achievement tests.

The slash sentence format, above, has the advantage of helping students whose proficiency in writing is quite limited to create fuller discourse from very structured sets of cues. The disadvantage, however, is that the format is rather stilted and the stimulus for writing does not resemble natural language use. In the sample below, the cues for writing take the form of simple notes that are expanded by the student into fuller discourse. The "notes" format resembles authentic language use a little more closely, yet retains the advantages of structuring the writing activity to elicit certain features that the teacher would like to test.

Note that Sample 2 below tests the same essential features and content as were tested in Sample 1. However, the format allows for greater flexibility in testing. For example, if the notes are given to the student in the native language, the writing task is an indirect translation activity, and the student must recall necessary vocabulary as part of the test item. If the notes are given in the target language, as shown, they provide key vocabulary and a framework for the written paragraph, which changes the nature of the task and lowers the difficulty level considerably. Choice of native- or target-language stimuli will thus depend on the testing purpose and the proficiency level of the students who are being tested.

**SAMPLE 2 (INTERMEDIATE)**

Creating full discourse from notes

**Context:** Impressions of life in an American town

**Function:** Description, giving opinions
Student Task:
(10 pts.) Vous venez d'interviewer Karin, une étudiante d'échange de Nancy, au sujet de ses impressions des Etats-Unis. En utilisant les notes ci-dessous, écrivez un résumé de ce qu'elle a dit. Ajoutez tous les mots nécessaires pour créer un bon paragraphe intéressant.

- aime beaucoup l'université, campus, ville
- trouve étudiants sympatiques
- étudiants pas trop sérieux, trop de temps—bars
- ville—petite, charmante, bons magasins, beaucoup de théâtres
- cinéma souvent, voir films

Student Response:

(10 pts.) You have just interviewed Karin, an exchange student from Nancy, about her impressions of the United States. Using the notes below, write a resume of what she said. Add any necessary words to make a good, interesting paragraph.

- likes the university, campus, town very much
- thinks students nice
- students not too serious, too much time—bars
- town—small, quaint, good stores, lots of theaters
- movies often, see films