

Tasks from the Catalan Culture Course

(designed by Josep-Anton Fernandez, QMUL)

TASK 1

Read Clare Mar-Molinero's article, 'The Politics of Language: Spain's Minority Languages.' Now imagine you are a minister's advisor, and you need to produce a digest of the essay for your boss (she is a very busy person and does not have much time for reading). So you take a black marker and cross out everything that is not essential to understand what the article is about. In other words, you set out to remove what is not relevant in this essay. (*Ah, but what does 'relevant' mean? Relevant to whom? In what context? Relevant for what purpose?*) Or, to put it differently, you remove words, bits of sentence, even entire paragraphs if you can, in order to reduce the article to **half its original length or less, but maintaining its sense.** (*Don't worry about ruining your copy of the article; next time we meet I'll bring you a fresh copy.*)

TASK 2

I thought you might like a little challenge. (*Oh no, not another one! This guy's a Sadist!!*) What I would like you to do is write a short paragraph (100 words max.) on *Modernisme* – but your paragraph should be made entirely of questions. You might want to focus on the most controversial or paradoxical aspects of this cultural phenomenon.

Sample student response:

?Modernisme?

Why did modernisme occur in different countries? Why did this movement occur in other countries at about the same time as in Barcelona? What is the difference between the modernisme in Spain and the modernisme in Catalonia? When was modernisme first defined and by whom? Was modernisme a movement that influenced all people from all societies? Did modernisme have the same affect on literature, architecture and politics as on arts? Why modernisme? Was there a pre-movement? Was modernisme a liberation movement? Why did modernisme galvanize an entire society? Why was modernisme so important in Catalonia?

TASK 3

Write a paragraph analysing the essay title you have been set. What is it asking you to do? What issues will you need to consider?

Sample student response:

What are the main problems and challenges facing language policy in Catalonia? What have its main successes and shortcomings been?

There are two questions in this essay title and each one can be further subdivided into two. The first question is asking about problems and challenges (what are the differences between these?). Perspective is an important issue here as something that might appear to be a problem or a challenge for one person might be viewed differently by another. This question is about language policy and it is important to make it clear what you understand by this term (who dictates the policy? What is its sphere of influence? Does it only cover Catalan or Castilian as well?) The second half of the title requires some sort of temporal parameters (post-Franco to present day?) and is asking where the policies already in place have succeeded and where they have not (and some indication of why).

TASK 4

The following statements are taken from the video we have watched. Respond to the Yes, but...prompts

1. 'To speak about *modernista* architecture is contradictory, because it was fixated with the medieval past'

Yes, but.....

2. 'Modernista architecture was mainly for the rich, and rep[roduced social hierarchies']

Yes, but....

3. 'Gaudi's buildings are organic structures that imitate nature in all its complexity'

Yes, but...