A. General Guidelines

The Graduate Language Reading Examination in Spanish is offered twice each semester, once two or three weeks into the semester, and once at the end. Graduate students from any department can apply and register for the test. Only students that have previously studied Spanish should take the test. If you have very limited or no knowledge of Spanish you will be unable to pass the test.

The purpose of the exam is to determine whether the Department of Spanish and Portuguese believes that the student, with the aid of a dictionary, can adequately render a passage of standard Spanish into a reasonable English equivalent. Successful completion of this test fulfills the Reading Foreign Language requirement expected of Ph.D. and MA students in graduate departments at Temple University.

Our department does not currently offer a course to help students prepare for this test. If a student feels the need to practice for the test or is interested in procuring advice on how best to prepare for it, he or she will have to either hire a tutor or enroll in Spanish courses. Alternately, if one has taken several Spanish courses, has lived in Spanish-speaking countries or has learned the language by reading or being exposed to it in various ways, then he/she can be confident that no extra preparation is needed in order to do well in the exam.

The exam is one hour long. There is no minimum quantity that must be translated. Evaluation is strictly pass/fail; the determination is made on the basis of quantity versus quality. While we realize no one taking the exam is an expert translator, your English must read naturally and not alter significantly the content of the original Spanish (see next page for a sample exam). You may bring a dictionary of your choice. We discourage anything but a dictionary; one assumes that the student recognizes verb tenses before he/she takes the exam.

The exam will be administered and evaluated by faculty at the department and the result will be forwarded to the College of Liberal Arts Graduate Office. Please, do not call the Department of Spanish and Portuguese for the examination results. The CLA Graduate Office will notify your department by letter.

To apply you must fill out the necessary form (available from Ms. Annette Vega at Anderson Hall 428) at least one week prior to the exam date. An application fee (non-refundable) of $10.00 MONEY ORDER ONLY, payable to Temple University is required with each application.
B. Sample Language Reading Exam

To help you decide whether to take the exam or not at this point, below is a selection that has been used as an exam, followed by a correct translation, followed by several examples of translations that were either pass or fail. Please, use this as a guide to determine if you are ready.

A. Text of Exam

“La historia de los maroons fugitivos de Jamaica es tan antigua como la de la esclavitud en las Américas. Maroons es un término derivado de la palabra española “cimarrones” que denomina a los esclavos que se refugiaban en los montes buscando la libertad, y que se ha utilizado en todos los lugares donde existió la esclavitud. Pero fue solamente en Jamaica donde los maroons, recurriendo a su coraje y a tácticas guerrilleras astutas y audaces, desplegadas en un terreno amenazante, evadieron la captura durante casi un siglo y forzaron la conclusión de un tratado que, al igual que la cultura maroon, sigue existiendo al cabo de 250 años.

En su primera carta tras el descubrimiento de América, Cristóbal Colón aseguró al rey Fernando que podía “traer cautivos para que sirvieran como esclavos, tantos como se quisiese.” Las enfermedades y los trabajos agobiadores mataron a muchos pacíficos indígenas Arawak. Otros se ahorcaron, bebieron jugo de mandioca venenoso, asesinaron a sus hijos o hicieron abortar a sus mujeres antes que caer en la esclavitud…”

B. Translation of Text

The history of the fugitive Maroons in Jamaica is as old as slavery (itself) in the Americas. Maroons is a term that has been derived from the Spanish word cimarrones and used to refer to slaves who escaped into the forests seeking freedom. But it was only in Jamaica, where the Maroons, resorting to their courage and to clever and bold military tactics, spread out over a threatening area, managed to avoid capture for almost a century and forced the signing of a treaty which, just as Maroon culture itself, continues even after 250 years.

In his first letter written after the discovery of America, Christopher Columbus assured King Ferdinand that he could “bring captives to serve as slaves, as many as might be desired.” Illness and backbreaking work killed many non-warlike Arawak Indians. Others hanged themselves, drank poisonous cassava juice, killed their offspring or made their wives abort rather than to fall into slavery.

C. Samples of Actual Student Work

The following are exams of actual student work, nothing has been altered from the blue books.

1. The history of the fugitive Maroons of Jamaica is as ancient as slavery in the Americas. “Maroons” is a term derived from the Spanish word cimarrones (wilds) which denotes the slave that took refuge in the mountains searching for liberty, y that have been used in places where slavery existed. But it was only in Jamaica, where the maroons, resorting to their courage and astute and daring guerilla tactics, displayed on the conclusion of a treaty which, equally to the Maroon culture, has finally continued to exist for 250 years. (N.B. There are some mistranslations but clearly the person knows the language adequately to give a reasonable English equivalent.) PASS

2. The history of Jamaican fugitive Maroons is as ancient as slavery in the Americas. The designation of Maroons as refugees in search of liberation was ended, and instead all those existing were used as slaves. But only in Jamaica, where the Maroons resorted to anger and threatened to deploy the trickery and audacity of guerilla tactics, evaded capture for nearly a century and forced the end of unequal treatment which had existed for 250 years. (N. B. The English is incomprehensible, never mind the mistranslations from the original.) FAIL

3. The history of the fugitive Maroons of Jamaica is as old as slavery in the Americas. “Maroons” is derived from the ending of the Spanish word “cimarrones (runaway slaves),” which means slaves that sought refuge in the mountains looking for freedom, and is used in all the places where slavery existed. But it was
only in Jamaica where the Maroons, appealing to their courage, their tactical guerilla skills, and their audacity, deploying in threatening terrain, evaded capture for almost a century and forced the signing of a treaty which, just like the Maroon culture, has continually existed for 250 years. PASS

4. The history of Jamaica’s Maroons fugitives is as old as the history of slavery in the Americas. “Maroons” is a term derived from the Spanish word “cimarrones,” which refers to slaves that hid in the mountains, searching for freedom, and that had made use of every opportunity where slavery existed. But that was only in Jamaica, where the Maroons, using their courage, and frightening and bold guerilla tactics, spread terror over the earth, evaded capture for almost a century, and forced the end of a treaty that, to the culture of the Maroons as well. (N.B. To many mistranslations.) FAIL

5. The history of the fugitive Maroons of Jamaica is as old as slavery in the Americas. Maroons is a term derived from the Spanish fugitive slave word for the slaves who took refuge in the mountains in search of liberty, and who reclaimed all of the places where slavery existed. But it was only in Jamaica, where the Maroons, having resorted to their courage and astute guerilla tactics and boldness, displayed an earthy menace, avoiding capture for nearly a century and forcing the conclusion of a treatment which, like the Maroon culture, had been in existence for 250 years. (N.B. This was almost a pass, but not quite.) FAIL