

Useful Phrases for Those Who Write
in Spanish

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For some students, the idea of writing a paper may instill the fear of God in them. To complicate the matter even more, they may have to write the paper in a foreign language. They must try to remember vocabulary. They may struggle to make their efforts grammatically correct. Perhaps most difficult of all for students writing in a foreign language are transitions from one sentence, paragraph or thought to another. Good transitions are essential to good writing, and can be among the most difficult aspects of the writing task.

One of the best ways to learn good writing is to imitate good writing. Just as the child learns to speak his or her native language by imitating native speakers, so does the student learn the *foreign* language by imitating those who speak and write that language, particularly those who speak and write it well.

Of course there are many different styles of writing, which basically fall into two categories: informal and formal. For example, a letter to one's "abuela" is written quite informally, while a business letter has a more formal tone. An author's style in a short story might be much more informal than the tone of the literary critic who comments on the story. It is precisely this latter type of writing--literary criticism--that is the focus of this paper.

This study presents a collection of phrases taken from articles written by Spanish-speaking literary critics. For

this project, we have considered a significant number of articles taken from Hispania (the journal of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese) and from Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos.

This project was undertaken in the hope that students of Spanish might benefit in three significant ways: 1) that they be exposed to models of good writing in the area of literary criticism; 2) that the phrases would have a certain flexibility in a number of writing situations; and 3) that the students be alerted to the possibility of discovering other such phrases while doing their own reading.

We have organized the phrases according to the following plan:

- A. General statements of fact about work or author under consideration
- B. Reference to other authors or critics
- C. Phrases related to student's essay
 - 1. Introductory and transitional phrases
 - 2. Phrases indicating student's purpose for writing.
 - 3. Concluding phrases
- D. Phrases indicating student's opinion
 - 1. General statements of opinion
 - 2. Opinion about author's point of view

As mentioned above, one of the hopes of this project is that the phrases prove flexible. Let us give a few examples of this flexibility as we see it. The phrase, "El libro se inicia con..." could easily be transformed to read, "La novela se inicia con..." or "El ensayo se inicia con...". Or again, in some of the phrases there is a blank: "Lo interesante de _____ es...". Depending on the context of the student's study, this blank can be filled in as appropriate.

In addition, translations of each phrase have been provided. While these translations are not the focus of the study itself, they are included in order to make this project an even more useful tool.

Finally, the reader will notice that occasionally there is a reference in parentheses to the indicative, the subjunctive or the infinitive. When appropriate, these references are given in order to reflect the choice of verb in the original article, and to help make the student's verb choice easier.

As we bring this project to its conclusion, we realize full well that it is not really ended. Rather, this project is open-ended--these pages are only a beginning. We hope the reader will accept the challenge to continue the work we have begun.

A. GENERAL STATEMENTS OF FACT ABOUT WORK OR AUTHOR UNDER CONSIDERATION

1. A esta inspiración responde su estudio sobre...
To this inspiration responds his/her study on...
2. Al final del libro que comentamos...
At the end of the book we are discussing...
3. A lo largo de la novela abundan las referencias a...
Throughout the novel, references to _____
abound.
4. Como el autor menciona...
As the author mentions...
5. Como el título del libro ya nos adelanta...
As the title of the book already anticipates for
us...
6. Desde el inicio de su libro...
From the beginning of his/her book...
7. El autor afirma que...
The author asserts that...
8. El autor llega a la siguiente conclusión:
The author arrives at the following conclusion:
9. El autor se propone dejar probado que...
(indicativo)
The author proposes to prove that...
10. El ensayo de (autor) consta de...
(Author's) essay consists of...

11. El lector observa en este libro...
The reader observes in this book...
12. El libro consta de (cuatro) partes.
The book consists of (four) parts.
13. El libro que nos ocupa...
The book that concerns us...
14. El libro se inicia con...
The book begins with...
15. El libro se (re)imprimió en...
The book was (re)printed in...
16. El propósito queda definido en la página...
The purpose is defined on page...
17. El resto del texto narra...
The remainder of the text narrates...
18. El simple examen primero del libro impresiona por su...
A simple first examination of the book is impressive because of its...
19. El texto se compone de... (e.g., dos ensayos)
The text is composed of... (e.g., two essays)
20. En efecto, lo que encontramos, fundamentalmente, es...
In fact, what we find, fundamentally, is...
21. Es ésta la tesis unificadora de...
This is the unifying thesis of...

22. En esta obra, hay que distinguir...
In this work, one must distinguish...
23. En este fragmento aparece...
In this fragment there appears...
24. En esto, como en otros aspectos, el libro refleja...
In this, as in other aspects, the book reflects...
25. Es aquí donde (autor) introduce la categoría de...
It is here that (author) introduces the category of...
26. Hay en este párrafo una alusión implícita a...
In this paragraph there is an implicit allusion to...
27. La intención de (autor) es la de...
(Author's) intention is to...
28. Lo que dice sirve para explicar...
What he/she says serves to explain...
29. Lo que preocupa al autor no es tanto (infinitivo)... cuanto (infinitivo)...
What preoccupies the author is not so much (infinitive)... as (infinitive)...
30. Me refiero al hecho de que el tema de _____ aparece como...
I refer to the fact that the theme of _____ appears as...
31. No se trata únicamente de...
It is not only a question of...

32. Predomina(n) en el libro...
There predominate(s) in the book...
33. Reconocemos en esta novela...
We recognize in this novel...
34. Respecto a _____, el autor afirma...
With regard to _____, the author affirms...
35. Según declara el autor...
As the author declares...
36. Se trata de un sentimiento de...
It is about a feeling of...
37. También en esta obra se encuentran trozos que...
In this work are also found passages that...
38. Una característica que salta a la vista es....
One obvious characteristic is....
39. Una mayor profundidad adquiere el tratamiento de este tema en...
This theme is treated in greater depth in...
40. Uno de los primeros capítulos de este libro...
One of the first chapters of this book...

B. REFERENCE TO OTHER AUTHORS OR CRITICS

1. Además de los escritores arriba citados, se incluye(n)....
In addition to the writers mentioned above, is (are) included....
2. En este sentido se destaca la labor de (nombre).
In this sense the work of (name) stands out.
3. Es en este sentido en que leemos los comentarios a la obra de....
It is in this sense that we read the commentaries on the work of....
4. Igualmente útil para caracterizar la dirección de estos trabajos es el comentario de (nombre).
Equally useful for characterizing the direction of these works is the commentary of (name).
5. Muchos críticos han afirmado que... (indicativo)
Many critics have asserted that....
6. Quizás el mayor aporte crítico del trabajo de (nombre) consiste en....
Perhaps the greatest critical contribution of (name's) work consists in....
7. Tampoco podríamos compartir la opinión de (nombre) de que... (indicativo)
Nor can we share the opinion of (name) that....
8. Una mayor profundidad adquiere el tratamiento de este tema en....
This theme is treated in greater depth in....

9. Uno de los propósitos del crítico (nombre) es...
One of the purposes of the critic (name) is...
10. Uno de sus críticos más perspicaces coincide con nosotros en...
One of his/her more shrewd critics agrees with us in...
11. Y aquí es precisamente donde incide la posición de...
And it is precisely here that the position of (nombre) makes itself felt.

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C. PHRASES RELATED TO STUDENT'S ESSAY

Introductory and Transitional Phrases

1. Al acercarnos a este texto...
When we approach this text...
2. Antes de entrar en el análisis de los conceptos fundamentales que establece (autor)...
Before we enter into the analysis of the fundamental concepts established by (author)...
3. A través de una lectura cuidadosa...
Through a careful reading...
4. Cabe decir esto de entrada porque...
It is fitting to say this at the start because...
5. Como quedó dicho...
As it was said...

6. De este modo se anuncia...
In this manner is announced/foreshadowed...
7. Dejando de lado...
Leaving aside...
8. Dicho esto...
This having been said...
9. En breve...
In short...
10. En terminos generales...
In general terms....
11. Entonces nos preguntamos por qué...
And so we wonder why...
12. En un lugar anterior de este escrito hemos
destacado...
Earlier in this text we emphasized...
13. Es quizá éste el momento adecuado de nuestra expo-
sición para referirnos a...
This is perhaps the appropriate time in our
exposition to refer to...
14. Hay que empezar describiendo...
It is necessary to begin by describing...
15. Mirado desde este punto de vista...
Looked at from this point of view...
16. No quisiéramos dejar de citar...
We would not want to fail to cite...

17. Trataré de explicarme...
I will try to explain (myself)...

18. Volvemos un momento a...
We turn a moment to...

19. Y ésta es la razón por la cual...
And this is the reason that...

* * * * *

Phrases Indicating Student's Purpose for Writing

1. Con este análisis se trata de establecer...
With this analysis I am trying to establish...

2. El énfasis de este estudio está en...
The emphasis of this study is on...

3. El propósito aquí es analizar...
The purpose here is to analyze...

4. El propósito de este estudio es...
The purpose of this study is...

5. En este ensayo nos proponemos encontrar...
In this essay we propose to find...

6. En este estudio, nos proponemos discutir...
In this study we propose to discuss...

7. Entre los objetivos de este estudio se ha querido demostrar como...
Among the objectives of this study we have tried to demonstrate how...

8. Este estudio constituye un intento de...
This study is an attempt to...
9. Este estudio intenta darle al lector una idea general de...
This study intends to give the reader a general idea of...
10. Este estudio no se ocupa de..., sino que se concentra en...
This study is not concerned with..., but rather concentrates on...
11. Este estudio se refiere exclusivamente a...
This study refers exclusively to...
12. Este proyecto se formula desde una perspectiva...
This project is formulated from a perspective...
13. Este trabajo trata de contestar la pregunta...
This work tries to answer the question...
14. No estamos haciendo aquí un juicio...
We are not making a judgment here...
15. Queremos simplemente llamar la atención sobre un problema...
We simply want to call attention to a problem.

* * * * *

Concluding Phrases

1. A manera de conclusión, proponemos...
By way of conclusion, we propose...

2. Concluimos con el aserto de que...
We conclude with the assertion that...
3. De aquí la conclusión inevitable:
Hence the inevitable conclusion:
4. En fin...
Finally...
5. En suma...
In short...
6. Estamos al final de esta breve exposición del pensamiento de...
We are at the end of this brief exposition of the thought of...
7. Para cerrar este punto...
To bring this point to a close...
8. Pero al fin y al cabo...
But when all is said and done...
9. Pero, en resumidas cuentas...
But, in a nutshell...
10. Podemos recapitular...
We can recapitulate...
11. Sería posible escribir mucho más sobre...
It would be possible to write much more about...

D. PHRASES INDICATING STUDENT'S OPINION

General Statements of Opinion

1. Al lector le será muy fácil identificarse con...
It will be very easy for the reader to identify with...
2. A lo más, se diría que se trata de...
At the most, it could be said that it is a question of...
3. Al tener en cuenta _____, no debe extrañarnos nada que...
Taking into account _____, it should not surprise us at all that...
4. Ante este libro de (autor), cabe mejor hablar de...
Before this book of (author), it is more fitting to speak of...
5. A nuestro parecer...
In our opinion...
6. A pesar de la dificultad inherente en este cuento...
Despite the inherent difficulty in this story...
7. Aunque resulta difícil... (indicativo)
Although it proves to be difficult...
8. Cabe decir esto de entrada porque...
It is fitting to say this at the start because...
9. Cabe la reflexión de que...
It is fitting to reflect that...

10. Como era de esperar...
As was to be hoped...
11. Como es bien sabido...
As is well known...
12. Como prueba y ejemplo de esta afirmación, le
ofrecemos al lector...
As a proof and example of this affirmation, we
offer the reader...
13. Con acierto se señala también...
With skill is also pointed out...
14. Con estos datos es necesario preguntarse...
With these facts it is necessary to ask oneself...
15. Conviene observar las razones por las que el
trabajo...
It is important to observe the reasons that the
work...
16. Debemos, pues, preguntarnos en primer lugar por...
We should thus ask ourselves in the first place
about...
17. De manera más importante aún...
In an even more important way...
18. De particular importancia es la propuesta de que...
(indicativo)
Of particular importance is the proposal that...
19. De particular interés es la idea de que...
Of particular interest is the idea that...

20. De valor es...
Of value is...
21. El ejemplo más interesante para este punto es...
The most interesting example for this point is...
22. El inconveniente reside en que... (indicativo)
The difficulty lies in (the fact) that...
23. El lector queda preguntándose si...
The reader keeps wondering if...
24. El lector se lleva la impresión de que...
(indicativo)
The reader takes away the impression that...
25. El mayor acierto del libro es...
The greatest success of the book is...
26. Ello no implica, sin embargo...
That does not imply, however...
27. El problema radica en...
The problem lies in...
28. El problema primero, el más hondo, es...
The first and deepest problem is...
29. El rasgo característico es, sin embargo...
The characteristic trait is, however...
30. El tema central será...
The central theme will be...

31. En cierto sentido, se puede leer (autor) como...
In a certain sense, one can read (author) as...
32. En cualquier caso, una aproximación más profunda exige que...
In any case, a closer look demands that...
33. En el trabajo de (autor) queda claramente expuesto que... (indicativo)
In (author's) work, it is clearly shown that...
34. En este momento podría decirse que...
In this moment one could say that...
35. En este último aspecto, debemos constatar que...
In this last aspect, we must show that...
36. En realidad estamos aquí tocando uno de los nervios centrales de la actitud intelectual de (autor)...
In reality we are touching here one of the central nerves of the intellectual attitude of (author)...
37. Entonces nos preguntamos por qué...
And so we wonder why...
38. Es aquí donde se hace necesario introducir algunas reflexiones sobre...
It is here that it becomes necessary to introduce some reflections on...
39. Es decir que la tarea que se impone es la de (infinitivo)...
That is to say that the task which imposes itself is (infinitive)...
40. Es de esperar que... (subjuntivo)
~~It is to be hoped that~~

41. Es de lamentar que... (subjuntivo)
It is to be regretted that...
42. Es de notar que...
It is to be noted that...
43. Es difícil sustraerse a la impresión de que...
(indicativo)
It is difficult to avoid the impression that...
44. Es importante remarcar que...
It is important to notice that...
45. Es interesante notar que...
It is interesting to note that...
46. Es interesante saber que... (indicativo)
It is interesting to know that...
47. Es obvio que una lectura válida de (autor) exige...
It is obvious that a valid reading of (author)
demands...
48. Esta característica es particularmente útil para
explicar...
This characteristic is particularly useful to
explain...
49. Estas afirmaciones no deben extrañar, porque...
These affirmations should not be surprising,
because...
50. Esto lleva a presumir que...
This leads one to presume that...

51. Francamente tenemos que confesar que...
We must frankly confess that...
52. La afirmación que acabamos de hacer tiene particular importancia en...
The affirmation we have just made has particular importance in...
53. La importancia de (autor/obra) radica en que... (indicativo)
The importance of (author/work) lies in...
54. Lo interesante de _____ es...
The interesting thing about _____ is...
55. Lo nuevo que aporta este volumen es...
The new thing that this volume brings forward is...
56. Lo que dice sirve para explicar...
What he/she says serves to explain...
57. Lo que más llama la atención es...
What calls our attention the most is...
58. Lo que no queda claro es...
What is not clear is...
59. Más sorprendente es que... (subjuntivo)
More surprising is that...
60. No cabe duda que... (indicativo)
There can be no doubt that...

61. No es de extrañar que el autor... (subjuntivo)
It is not surprising that the author...
62. No es exagerado decir que...
It would not be exaggerating to say that...
63. No es extraño que...
It is not strange that...
64. No hay que pensar que...
One must not think that...
65. No obstante las objeciones hechas...
In spite of the objections that have been made...
66. Nos parece apropiado...
It appears appropriate to us...
67. No se debe olvidar que... (indicativo)
One must not forget that...
68. Parece indiscutible que...
It appears to be indisputable that...
69. Pareciera que la importancia de este punto descansa en...
It would appear that the importance of this point rests in...
70. Pero hay que señalar también...
But it is also necessary to point out...
71. Pero lo que este hecho demuestra en realidad es...
But what this fact demonstrates in reality is...

72. Pero no es fácil saber lo que (autor) quería decir cuando decía...
But it is not easy to know what (author) meant when he/she said...
73. Pero no podemos dejar pasar por alto...
But we cannot pass over...
74. Pero quizás de mayor importancia es...
But perhaps of greater importance is...
75. Podría decirse que...
It could be said that...
76. Por esta razón, creemos oportuno introducir ahora...
For this reason, we believe appropriate to introduce now...
77. Puede parecer extraño que... (subjuntivo)
It may appear strange that...
78. Quizás una de las metáforas más ilustrativas... (indicativo)
Perhaps one of the most illustrative metaphors...
79. Resulta interesante mencionar que...
It proves interesting to mention that...
80. Resulta lógico que... (subjuntivo)
It proves logical that...
81. Resulta particularmente fascinante porque...
It proves to be particularly fascinating because...

82. Se podría contestar, en líneas generales, que...
One could answer, in broad outline, that...

83. Se podría decir que... (indicativo)
One could say that...

84. Se puede decir sin lugar a dudas que...
(indicativo)
It can be said without room for doubt that...

85. Se puede deducir que... (indicativo)
One can deduce that...

86. Sería erróneo pensar que... (subjuntivo)
It would be erroneous to think that...

87. Sin embargo, la atención del lector no se queda
solamente en... sino que...
Nevertheless, the reader's attention does not
remain solely on... but...

88. Su mayor aportación está en...
His/Her greatest contribution is in...

89. Su mayor importancia radica en que es...
His/Her greatest importance lies in this, that
he/she is...

90. Su originalidad yace, precisamente, en ser...
His/Her originality lies precisely in being...

91. Tampoco debemos olvidar que...
Neither should we forget that...

92. Toda la vida y escritos de (autor) pueden verse como...
The entire life and writings of (author) can be seen as...
93. Todo parece indicar que... (indicativo)
Everything appears to indicate that...
94. Una primera cuestión que parece inevitable preguntarse es...
A first question that appears inevitable to be asked is...
95. Un aspecto importante de su tarea es...
An important aspect of his/her work is...
96. Una vez que se tiene en cuenta..., es fácil...
(infinitivo)
Once you take into account..., it is easy...
(infinitive)
97. Un enfoque justo del cuento de (autor) debe hacer notar que...
A right approach to (author's) story must point out that...
98. Uno de los aspectos más importantes es...
One of the most important aspects is...
99. Un simple repaso a los títulos que componen la obra de (autor) nos confirmaría en todo lo dicho.
A simple review of the titles that make up the work of (author) would confirm everything we have said.
100. Y lo que es más importante...
And what is more important...

Opinion about Author's Point of View

1. Ante este libro de (autor), cabe mejor hablar de...
With regard to this book of (author), it is more fitting to speak of...
2. Asimismo, hubiéramos deseado ver un mayor énfasis en...
Likewise, we would have liked to see a greater emphasis on...
3. (Autor) no logra explicar satisfactoriamente el por qué de...
(Author) does not succeed in explaining satisfactorily the reason for...
4. (Autor) prueba sin lugar a dudas que...
(Author) proves without a doubt that...
5. Creemos que sería más adecuado hablar de...
We believe that it would be more appropriate to speak of...
6. El acierto de (autor) consiste en...
The (author's) skill consists in...
7. El lector atento sólo desearía que... (subjuntivo)
The attentive reader would only wish that...
8. Es loable que... (subjuntivo), pero sería más loable que... (subjuntivo)
It is commendable that..., but it would be more commendable that...
9. Es muy difícil estar de acuerdo con...
It is very difficult to agree with...

10. Hubiera sido más fructífero concentrarse aquí en...
It would have been more fruitful to concentrate here on...
11. Lamentamos que... (indicativo)
We regret that...
12. Lástima que no... (subjuntivo)
It is a shame that he/she does/did not...
13. Nos parece que habría sido igualmente valioso estudiar...
It seems to us that it would have been equally valuable to study...
14. Tal vez hubiera sido más acertado que... (subjuntivo)
It would have perhaps been more fitting to...

