How “Spanish” Is Spanish Architecture?

1. If you were to travel from the southwestern United States to the southern tip of South America, many buildings would look fairly familiar almost every place you visited. Although regional differences would be obvious, you would still be aware of a certain look shared by many communities in the southwestern United States and Latin America. In large part, that look can be traced to the architecture of Moorish Spain.

2. The Moors were North African Arabs who ruled most of the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal) for nearly 800 years—from the early eighth century until the late fifteenth century. Many elements of Latin American architecture were first introduced to Spain by the Moors during that period.

3. Patios, for example, became common in cities such as Córdoba and Sevilla beginning in the early eleventh century. Because of widespread political and social unrest during that time, houses were built with heavy doors and thick, fortress-like walls. These walls also helped shield the rooms inside from the sun’s heat. The patios, placed in the center of the house and accessible from all first-floor rooms, often had tiled floors. In the center, surrounded by lemon trees and flowers, there was often a pool or a large clay pot filled with cool water. Patios were thus probably the first naturally “air-conditioned” rooms. Throughout Latin America today, as well as in Spain, central patios are still a popular feature of many commercial buildings as well as homes.

4. Another common element of Latin American architecture is the balcón, or mirador. In Moorish Spain, homes typically had balconies off the second-floor sleeping areas. These balconies, which often included intricately designed wrought iron railings and grates, overlooked the patio. During the period when Latin America was being colonized by Spain, balconies became common in Latin America as well. There was, however, a major difference: Most Latin American balconies do not overlook the patio. Instead, they face outward so that people can view the street life of the town.

5. Buildings in Moorish Spain usually differed from those in northern Europe in another way as well. Although wood was used as a building material, it was not nearly as common as stone, brick, and adobe (heavy clay bricks made of sun-dried earth and straw). Today, builders in Latin America and the southwestern United States continue to use many of these same materials and techniques first introduced by the Moors.
1. When did the Moors conquer Spain?
   A. in the early 500s
   B. in the early 700s
   C. in the early 800s
   D. in the early 1200s

2. According to the article, what was the main reason why the doors and walls of Spanish homes were so thick during the time of Moorish rule?
   F. They kept the house warm.
   G. They were used for defense and protection.
   H. They enclosed the patio.
   J. The Moors were used to living in homes with thick walls.

3. Which of the following is the best English equivalent of mirador in paragraph 4?
   A. a door with a mirror in it
   B. a heavy mirror
   C. a door onto a patio
   D. an overlook

4. Why do architectural features that date to the period of Moorish influence in Spain exist in the southwestern United States and Latin America today?
   F. It gets very hot in those regions.
   G. Those regions were conquered by the Moors.
   H. Those regions were colonized by the Spanish.
   J. There is much political and social unrest in those regions.

5. Based on what you have read, compare and contrast typical modern homes in Spain and in the United States. What cultural influences might be responsible for these similarities and differences?
Test 11

Nombre: _____________________________ Fecha: _______________________

1. A B C D
2. F G H J
3. A B C D
4. F G H J

5. READ
THINK
EXPLAIN

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Mi segunda casa es ... ¡una cueva!

1 ¡Hola! Me llamo Macarena y soy española. Vivo con mis padres y tres hermanos en un apartamento grande y bonito en Granada, que está en el sur de España. Pero tenemos otra casa y es ... ¡una cueva! Nuestra casa-cueva está cerca de Guadix, un pueblo pintoresco de unos 20,000 habitantes. Guadix está a 60 kilómetros de Granada, y es famoso por sus casas-cueva.

2 Más de un cuarto de la población del pueblo vive en estas casas subterráneas. Tradicionalmente sólo para los pobres y artesanos, hoy día las casas-cueva son la segunda residencia de muchas familias de la clase media. ¡Me encanta pasar tiempo con mi familia en nuestra casa-cueva!

3 ¿Qué tienen de atractivo las casas-cueva?
- La temperatura se mantiene constante (20 grados centígrados) durante todo el año.
- Si la familia necesita más espacio, sólo hay que excavar otro cuarto.
- Tienen todas las comodidades de una casa moderna: dormitorios, cocina, cuarto de baño, sala, comedor, chimenea, electricidad y conexiones para Internet y fax.
- De la puerta hay una magnífica vista. (¡Pocas cuevas tienen ventanas!)

4 Si quieres vivir en un ambiente original, íntimo y rústico, o si simplemente prefieres vivir en otra casa durante el fin de semana o durante las vacaciones de verano, las casas-cueva son perfectas para ti.
1. According to the reading, which of the following statements is false?
   - A. Cave houses have all the conveniences of a modern home.
   - B. Cave houses are not only for artisans and the poor.
   - C. Macarena’s family has two homes.
   - D. Cave houses offer wonderful views from the windows.

2. From Macarena’s description of her family’s second home, the reader can conclude that
   - F. it gets too hot in Granada during the summer.
   - G. her parents are artisans.
   - H. she enjoys spending time in the cave.
   - J. she doesn’t like living in an apartment.

3. In paragraph 4, what does the word *ambiente* mean?
   - A. countryside
   - B. cave
   - C. atmosphere
   - D. city

4. Which of the following is not mentioned as an advantage of living in a cave house?
   - F. There’s a great view from the door.
   - G. It’s easy to make more furniture from the rocks.
   - H. The houses maintain an even temperature all year.
   - J. It’s easy to add more space to the home.

5. Make a list of buildings, vehicles, or places that could be used as homes. Describe the advantages or disadvantages of each one.

6. ¿Te gustaría vivir en una casa-cueva? Explica por qué.