

duolingo podcast

Teacher Guide

Introduction to Podcast

[Spanish podcast](#)

[French podcast](#)

The Duolingo Podcast delivers real-life stories in easy-to-understand French or Spanish with English narration. There are three ways we make these stories easy for learners to follow:

- First, after we collect stories from our protagonists, language-learning experts simplify the podcast script to a high A2 or low B1 language proficiency level on the [CEFR scale](#). This makes them accessible and interesting to students from advanced beginner through advanced levels!
- Next, if we find that a particularly difficult word in the target language is necessary for nuanced storytelling, we ask our English-speaking host to provide a quick explanation or translation.
- Finally, the host also interjects intermittently to summarize and contextualize the target language sections. These interjections serve as guideposts for learners who've gotten a bit lost or simply need a brain break before we launch into more Spanish or French.

So, even though podcasts are not language lessons, they can be, with your help!

Supplementary materials

To help you incorporate this as a teaching tool, we've designed [supplementary materials](#) to accompany each podcast episode. You can just **print and copy**, or you can **modify to suit the unique needs of your students**. If you wish to **edit**, go to File-->Make a copy. Edit your copy as you wish!

If you find something that works really well for you, please [tell us](#)! Your insights will allow us to improve, to share your ideas with more teachers, and ultimately to support you even more.

Some ideas for using the materials

Vocabulary list

Each worksheet begins with a list of useful vocabulary for understanding the episode. Want to get more creative?

- Delete the English translations, and have students fill them in with a partner.
- Put each word on an index card, and have students play vocabulary games like charades or taboo to learn them.
- Have students make their own flashcards. They can write the new word on one side, and put on the other side either the English translation, an image of the word (that they create or print), or a sentence in the target language that will help them recall the word's meaning.
- A lot of the more difficult vocabulary words appear in the script near their synonyms, to aid comprehension. Have students look up synonyms of vocabulary words (or find them in the script!), and learn them together as a group.

Pre-listening questions

These are designed to prime students before a longer listening activity. When students can predict a little bit of what they're about to hear, they understand better and enjoy it more!

- Discuss the questions together as a class.
- Do a Think-Pair-Share: let students stew on a question for a few moments, then tell a partner what they're thinking, then finally share with the whole class.
- Encourage students to try to use the new vocabulary from the list! Put a mark on the board every time a student uses a new word. Course sections can compete with each other for a prize for the highest number or marks. If you only teach one section, encourage the class to get up to 10 marks and then give them that number of extra free reading minutes at the end of class (or other reward that you use in your class). Only give a mark if they use the word correctly, and reasonably!
- Many of our pre-listening questions use images. You can ask A LOT more questions about an image than what we've suggested, and images are a great way to explore culture in the classroom. Some possibilities to get your students talking in the target language:
 - Ask students to describe what they see.
 - Tell students they're about to see an image of _____. Ask them to describe what they think it will look like. Then, show the image to them and have them compare the reality to what they had envisioned.
 - Ask students to imagine where or when the image was produced (usually, these images come from the target country, and often they are even provided by the protagonist of the episode). What would be different if the image was taken in their country? Their hometown? What does that tell them about the place they're going to hear about?

Listening comprehension

These are time-stamped at the moment one should stop the recording in order to answer the question (Spanish podcast only, French are not time-stamped). You can stop the recording if you're listening during class, or have students answer these for homework if they're listening at home. Some other ideas:

- All podcast transcripts are available on the [website](#). Copy an especially relevant section in the target language and blank out some words. Ask students to listen and fill in the blanks when they hear the missing word.
- Consider whether to ask students to answer questions in English or in their learning language. You might do both with the same episode, or experiment with this over multiple episodes. Answering in English will ensure everyone in the class has understood, while answering in the learning language will give them practice speaking and summarizing in the target language.
- If students listen at home, ask them to come up with their own comprehension questions to ask a partner in class the next day.
- Have students make their own vocabulary lists as they listen, of words they'd like to learn.

Post-listening comprehension

These ask students to put it all together and understand the story as a whole. Additional post-listening comprehension activities could include:

- Print out the transcript and cut up the target language chunks. Ask students to work in pairs or groups to put the script in the right order, based on what they remember of the story (this is also great reading practice, and will help those who had trouble understanding the story aurally to all be on the same “page” about what happened).
- Have students draw the story in 4 frames: (1) who is the protagonist; (2) what is the obstacle encountered; (3) what does the protagonist do in response; (4) how is s/he changed at the end.
- Students can do the 4-frame activity as a writing or speaking exercise, too. If you have less time, you can put students in groups of 4 and assign just one part to each student to say out loud, draw, and/or write down. You might ask students to stand up in their group and form a circle while they recite their part or describe their drawing out loud, to get them moving after a seated listening activity.
- Ask students to write a summary of the episode for the Podcast store. It must be 50 words or less. They can then compare their summaries with the actual summary on the website.
- Show students the image associated with the episode on the website. Ask them if they think it's a good selection, and why or why not. If they could choose a single image to describe the episode, what would it look like?

Discussion

These questions help students to move beyond just comprehending what happened, and to think critically about the protagonist, the story, and how it is told. More ideas:

- Does this story relate to other things they've studied in your class? In another subject? Ask them to think about interdisciplinary connections across courses or units.
- Make it personal! We've included at least one personal question in each worksheet, but you know your students best! What aspects of the episode might resonate with them?

Have they, your school, or your town experienced something related to the theme of the episode?

- Want to practice grammar? Ask students to write about what happened *before* we meet the protagonist using past tenses, or about what the protagonist will do next, using the future tense. Make them justify their ideas based on what they've gleaned from the story.
- Further reflective questions: do you think your parents, grandparents, principal, or classmates would appreciate this story? Why or why not? What are the protagonist's values? Do you share those values? Did the protagonist adhere to those values throughout the episode? Why or why not, in your opinion? Have you ever acted in a contradictory way to your own values?

More fun stuff

These activities are meant to encourage students to use the target language outside of the classroom, in hands-on activities and everyday situations. Other possibilities:

- Brainstorm other topics to research with your students, then assign those topics to groups for a research activity (remember: "research" is not just online searches and articles! Interview people in your town or school, visit monuments, and look at popular materials like magazines, blogs, and advertisements to glean more cultural information about a topic).
- Have students plan a trip to the area focused on in the episode. What would they visit, when would they go, what would they need to pack or prepare?
- If you use Integrated Performance Assessment, you could consider this an opportunity to do a more presentational activity, since the earlier activities are more interpretive and interpersonal:
 - Have students work in pairs to create their own podcast episode. One plays the host and the other the protagonist. They meet five years later and continue the discussion.
 - Students must give an oral pitch to the producers at Duolingo for a new podcast episode. You, another student, or the whole class could play the role of producer asking questions about their pitch.
 - Students must pitch *this* podcast episode to the Duolingo producer. You, another student, or the whole class plays the role of difficult producer who isn't easily convinced.

Remember, [tell us](#) what you do and how it goes! We love hearing from you!