



# Teaching with podcasts

*di Silvia Chini*

*Secondaria di 2° grado - Inglese*

As teachers we have big challenges in front of us such as finding diverse materials, **engaging students**, dealing with current affairs, involving teenagers outside the classroom and many more...

An interesting and innovative solution is working with **podcasts**.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-Cv5Nu-Uss&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-Cv5Nu-Uss&feature=emb_logo)

Podcasts have a lot of potential for language teachers. First of all they are **authentic**. They provide examples of how people talk in real life and moreover students have the possibility to listen to a **variety of accents** and types of spoken English. Many explore completely niche subjects that are generally not taken into consideration in "normal" lessons.

They can be any length, from 2 minutes to 3 hours and therefore can be used for any purpose in the **ESL classroom**.

## HOW TO USE PODCASTS IN THE CLASSROOM

Teaching with podcasts is more than simply listening to the audio file. They can be used to boost grammar, vocabulary, to teach **listening skills** but also **speaking skills**, for CLIL and civics and for many more reasons but the lesson with podcasts should be planned carefully.<

First of all podcasts should be chosen only when they align to the lesson plan and curriculum (both for language level and content), secondly podcasts should be followed by fun and interesting activities in order to keep students engaged.

In the following part of this article there will be a **list of great podcasts** to use in ESL classrom and some useful teaching ideas.

## GOOD PODCASTS FOR ESL

### But why: A podcast for curious kids

<https://www.vpr.org/programs/why-podcast-curious-kids#stream/0>

Level A2

### The American life

<https://www.thisamericanlife.org/>

Level B2-C1

### The English we Speak

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02pc9zn/episodes/downloads>

Level A2-C1

### Podcasts in English

<https://www.podcastsinenglish.com/>

Level A1-B2

### The Travel diaries

<https://podcasts.apple.com/za/podcast/the-travel-diaries/id1471130008>

Level C1-C2

### Song Exploder

<https://songexploder.net/>

Level B2-C1

### More or Less: Behind the Stats

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/more-or-less-behind-the-stats/id267300884>

Level C1-C2

### Ted Radio Hour

<https://www.npr.org/programs/ted-radio-hour/?showDate=2018-02-16>

Level B1-C2

### Free Resources: ONLY TRANSCRIPTS The Flywheel

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/ep0-what-did-amazon-do-now/id1551197011?i=1000506905496>

Level B2-C2

### General English

<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/general-english/podcasts>

Level A2-C1

### Anything Goes

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/anything-goes-with-emma-chamberlain/id1458568923>

Level B2-C1

## The Michelle Obama Podcast

<https://open.spotify.com/show/71mvGXupfKcmO6jlmOJQTP>

Level B2-C1

## The Allusionist

<https://www.theallusionist.org/>

Listening comprehension (A2) **Teaching Ideas**

LE Podcasts: S01E01: <https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/general-english/podcasts/series-1/episode-01>

STEP 1 – Work with your students on the topic “Introducing yourself” (vocabulary, grammar, phrases, expressions)

STEP 2 – Play the podcast

STEP 3- Play the podcast again and ask your students to make some notes following these guiding questions

- What is the episode about?
- Who is speaking?

STEP 4 – Use the quiz provided by British Council on the same webpage.

<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/general-english/podcasts/series-1/episode-01>

STEP 5 – Boost language and vocabulary with the 5 tasks provided

<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/general-english/podcasts/series-1/episode-01>

STEP 6 – Ask your students to work in pairs, choose a celebrity and organize the script for an episode in which they introduce the VIP chosen.

Discussion+Debate (B2-C1)

EP2: **Product Targeting & Hotdogs** □□□□

STEP 1- Warm up activities with questions like

- What is product targeting?
- Which ad types support it?
- Which ad types are best for product targeting?

STEP 2- Visit Amazon homepage with your students. Try and find targeted products

STEP 3 – Personal experience on Amazon. Ask your students if they buy on Amazon and how they choose the product they want to buy

STEP 4 – **Listen to the podcast**

STEP 5 – Ask your students to answer the questions

- What is product targeting?
- Why is it underutilised?
- What does this ad look like on Amazon?
- What are the three pillars for ads on Amazon?

STEP 6 – Discuss and debate about the way Amazon advertises products.

STEP 7 – Ask your students to invent an ad for the last product they bought on Amazon

Project-based learning (B2-C1)

Class podcast

STEP 1 – Ask your students to choose the topic for their class podcast. Here are some suggestions:

- Travel guide/Virtual guided tour of your city
- Music
- Current affairs
- Around the world in 10 dishes
- Biographies
- Book reviews
- Film reviews

STEP 2 – Listen to a podcast on the topic they have chosen and consider the main features (mood, language, music, sounds)

- Travel guide/Virtual guided tour of your city ( [The bike show](#))
- Music ( [All songs considered](#) )
- Current affairs ( [The Briefing Room](#))
- Around the world in 10 dishes ( [The food fight](#))
- Biographies ( [BBC In our time](#))
- Book reviews ( [THE BOOK REVIEW PODCAST](#))
- Film reviews ( [Zoom](#))

STEP 3 – In pairs, ask your students to write the script for their episode.

STEP 4 – Record and edit

STEP 5 – Play the podcasts in class. You can give an oral mark for the project.

Flipped classroom (B1-B2)

WW1 poetry

STEP 1 – Introduce historical background

STEP 2 – Divide the class into small groups. Every group will listen to a different podcast

- GROUP 1: [What is a war poem?](#)
- GROUP 2: [Selling Patriotism: Rupert Brooke in the First World War](#) □□□□
- GROUP 3: [Poetry Tour – London \(1\)](#)□□□□
- GROUP 4: [Poetry Tour – London \(2\)](#)□□□□

STEP 3 – Ask your students to prepare and present the topic they've investigated to their classmates

STEP 4 – In class start each of the following lesson with the presentation given by the students of one group and then, if necessary, integrate with details and information.

Literature (B2-C1)

[The history of Literature: 293 Ebenezer Scrooge](#)

STEP1 – Work on the novel "A Christmas Carol"

STEP 2 – Work on the background (Use the opening scene of the movie)

STEP 3 – Investigate the main characters starting from the podcast

Podcasts for vocabulary (A1-A2)

[Word of the day](#)

STEP 1- Divide the students into groups

STEP 2 – Give each group a "new word podcast" to listen to

STEP 3 – Ask each group to make 3 sentences using the new word

STEP 4 – Mingling activity: Ask your students to stand up and walk around the class. Provide them with a list of sentences

with a blank space that replaces the words you've chosen for the lesson.

EXAMPLE: If one of the words you've chosen is SINGER give them a sentence like this one

MY FAVOURITE\_\_\_\_\_ IS JON BON JOVI

With the help of their classmates they will fill in the blank spaces. Each student will help with the word he has studied so that at the end of the lesson your class will know all the new words.