

What to watch now in French and Spanish

Welcome to EB Lingo blog number 2! I hope everyone is enjoying the freedom of 'deconfinement'! Fingers crossed for a fine summer whatever you have planned, but should the clouds gather (as they tend to do here in Wales), here are some pointers for practicing those all-important listening skills. This is arguably the trickiest of the language communication skills in which to achieve confidence, due to the speaker's speed of delivery and the likelihood of unknown vocabulary being used. Watching film and TV provides great exposure to authentic and natural language delivery, so here are some ways to make the most of it when learning a language...



Training the earⁱ.



- 1) If you are a beginner, set the subtitles to English and sit back and enjoy the show. Passive listening in the foreign language allows you to begin to tune in to the sound of the language (although always give yourself a pat on the back when you recognise a word, phrase or question!).
- 2) As you progress up the language ladder, a new challenge is to set the subtitles to the foreign language. Your comprehension of the foreign languages is improving so it is helpful to see the speech as complete clauses. Study can become more active at this point by noting down words and phrases to add to vocabulary lists (although you can of course allow yourself to just be immersed in the language, depending on how active you feel that day!).
- 3) As you've no doubt noticed, children pick up vocabulary very quickly from repeatedly watching their favourite shows or films. The same principle can be applied to language learning! Watch a film once through to get an understanding of the story and characters, and then repeat to focus on the vocabulary. You could even pause and repeat phrases and sentences as you hear them, as a child would, to help with accent acquisition. Similarly, with a TV series, a marathon box set session will do wonders for comprehension, as your interest in the storyline will help you to stay motivated to keep watching!

Regarder quoi? / ¿Qué ver?

Here are a top 5 recommendations for film and TV in each language, including some for young learners, available across a range of streaming services (some films should also be available on DVD)ⁱⁱ.



French

Film name	Synopsis	Rating and streaming service
Bienvenue à Marly-Gomont / The African Doctor (U)	The story of a French-Congolese doctor's move to a small rural French village.	7.00/10 IMDB rating. Netflix
Mauvaises Herbes (15)	Comedy featuring Catherine Deneuve as one half of a scammer duo who find redemption by accidentally mentoring a group of unruly students.	7.3/10 IMBDB rating. Netflix
La Famille Bélier (12A)	The story of the daughter of deaf-mute parents who discovers a talent for singing.	7.3/10 IMBDB rating. Amazon Prime, Google Play Movies.
Le Grand Bain / Sink or Swim (15)	Comedy about a middle-aged man struggling with depression who joins an all-male synchronized swim team.	7.0/10 IMDB rating Amazon Prime / YouTube / Google Play Movies.
Les Misérables (N/A)	Dubbed the new 'La Haine', Oscar nominated and a Cannes Jury prize winner. Following the trials of Stéphane as anti-crime fighter in one of the toughest neighbourhoods in Paris	7.6/10 IMBDB rating. Amazon Prime

TV show name	Synopsis	Rating and streaming service
Miraculous (PG)	Two teenagers transform into superheroes to fight crime on the streets of Paris. Disney+	7.8/10 IMDB rating. Netflix

	has just acquired the film rights to this franchise.	
Au service de la France (15)	Comedy about a newbie French secret service agent at the height of the Cold War.	7.8/10 IMDB rating. Netflix.
Philharmonia (15)	Psychological thriller following the targeting of a classical music conductor.	7.5/10 IMDB rating. Walter Presents All4.com
Resistance (15)	A WWII drama about a group of teenagers fighting the Nazi occupation.	7.5/10 IMDB rating. Walter Presents All4.com
Varane, destin de champion (U)	The life and career of Raphael Varane, one of France's 2018 World Cup winners.	7.1/10 IMDB rating Amazon Prime

Spanish

Film name	Synopsis	Rating and streaming service
Roma (15)	Oscar winning family drama set in 1970s Mexico City, focussing on the life of middle-class family's maid.	7.7/10 IMDB rating. Netflix
Dolor y Gloria / Pain and Glory (R)	The latest film from Almodóvar starring Antonio Banderas as an aging film director reflecting on his life and work.	7.6/10 IMDB rating. Amazon Prime / YouTube / Google Play
La Buena Vida / The Good Life (PG)	Documentary following the changing fortunes of a traditional Columbian village in the heart of the forest as a coal mine threatens its survival.	8.2/10 IMDB rating. Amazon Prime
Mientras dure la Guerra / While at War (N/A)	Drama about the choices made by an intellectual and writer as he is forced to take sides during the Spanish Civil War.	7.0/10 IMDB rating Available on DVD.
Tesoros (PG)	Set on the Mexican Pacific coast, a young group of friends search for long lost treasure.	7.0/10 IMDB rating Amazon Prime

TV show name	Synopsis	Rating and streaming service
La Casa de Papel / Money Heist	An ambitious group of bank robbers attempt to carry out high stake heists. One of the most-watched shows on Netflix, now in its 4 th series.	8.4/10 IMDB rating. Netflix
Nailed It! Mexico (PG)	Reality TV baking series, the antithesis to 'Bake Off' where some of Mexico's worst bakers attempt to recreate masterpieces.	6.3/10 IMDB rating. Netflix.
Vis a Vis (18)	Tense prison drama about a female's inmate fight for survival in a women's prison.	8.3/10 IMDB Walter Presents All4.com
El tiempo entre costuras / The Time in Between (15)	Drama about how a young seamstress' life is changed as the Civil War takes hold in Spain.	8.3/10 IMDB Amazon Prime
El Corazón de Sergio Ramos	Documentary following the daily life of the Real Madrid captain.	5.0/10 IMDB rating. Amazon Prime

My personal favourites :

I couldn't write a post on films without mentioning some of my own must-see films! As you will see my preferences tend to be easy-watching or comedy, and occasionally whimsical, but I like to come away having learnt something cultural as well as linguistic:

- Amélie (15) – romantic comedy/drama, a young Parisian girl wants to help everyone find happiness and find her own true love.
- Diarios de motocicleta (15) – a young Che Guevara embarks on a motorcycle journey with his best friend across South America.
- Bombón El Perro (15) – road movie about an unemployed Argentinian man who embarks on a new life when he is gifted a pure bred Argentine Dogo.
- Intouchables / Untouchable (15) – comedy drama about a rough diamond Parisian immigrant who becomes a carer for a disabled French nobleman.

Et vous?

What would be your recommendations for film and TV in French or Spanish?

What are you watching right now?

Do you have any all-time favourite foreign language film recommendations?

Let me know on the Facebook page post! <https://www.facebook.com/eblingo/>

ⁱ Read more about the linguistic studies on the impact of TV shows in language learning:
https://theconversation.com/watching-foreign-language-tv-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic-can-help-you-learn-a-new-language-141170?utm_source=thoroldnews.com&utm_campaign=thoroldnews.com&utm_medium=referral

ⁱⁱ Many thanks to Emily MA at the MFL Ideas and Resources Facebook group, who has undertaken a fantastic piece of work to list available shows and films, some of which I have mentioned here. I will watch and comment on some of the others on your list Emily this summer!