

(H)appy learning

In this lesson students will explore the adequacy of the learning app Duolingo for learning English. They will learn about the advantages and disadvantages of learning a language from a digital source rather than a human teacher.

Duration: 1 hour.

STRUCTURE

- Introduction: I don't feel like teaching today; here's an app.
- Next step: What does Duolingo teach? What does it not teach?
- In practice: Does Duolingo teach well? What can you learn from it?
- Evaluation: Could learning apps replace real teachers?

PREPARATION

You can prepare by:

- Reading this teacher's guide and the students' worksheet.
- Downloading Duolingo (or equivalent learning app) and exploring the app.
- Opening the presentation.

WORK AND CAREER

Learning apps like Duolingo, Babbel or Rosetta Stone have become more and more commonplace in both personal and professional learning. They provide an effective way to teach yourself not just new languages, but all kinds of new skills for a variety of career paths. More and more companies are using e-learning to help their employees learn new skills. Big companies like Shell or PayPal even created their own e-learning environments for their employees. Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of learning from an app helps students make an educated choice on how to adequately improve their skillset.

ETHICS AND TECHNOLOGY

We aim to teach our students proper use of the English language. By far most of their use of the language will involve (digital) media. In this lesson, we explore the benefits and limitations of apps as a language learning tool. What if we would always learn languages from apps, without real teachers? What do you think would happen? What can be learned from an app and what can only be learned from a real teacher? What are other advantages of having a real teacher?

LEARNING GOALS

Domein curriculum 2021	Leerdoelen digitale vaardigheden	Kerdoelen	21st century skills
1 Digitale communicatie & samenwerking DG4.2 Digitale communicatie.	1 Computational thinking De leerling weet hoe een programma getest kan worden.	1 Engels De leerling leert verder vertrouwd te raken met de klank van het Engels door veel te luisteren naar gesproken en gezongen teksten.	1 Communiceren
2 Digitaal burgerschap DG5.1 De digitale burger.	2 Mediawijsheid De leerling weet wanneer welke toepassingen meerwaarde hebben bij het realiseren van persoonlijke doelstellingen en hij/zij kan deze effectief inzetten.	2 Engels De leerling leert strategieën te gebruiken voor het uitbreiden van zijn Engelse woordenschat.	2 Kritisch denken

INTRODUCTION

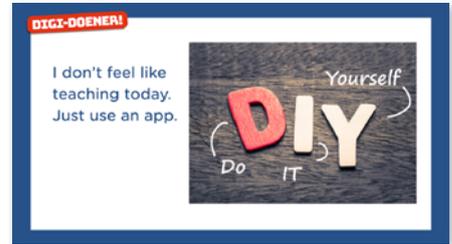
Opening slide

(H)appy learning



Slide 1, Individual work

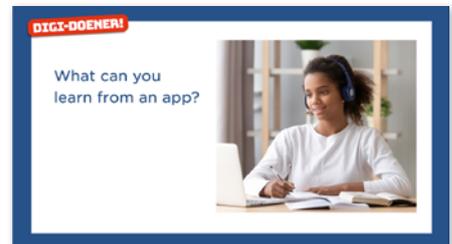
Tell the students that you don't feel like teaching today. Instruct them to download the free Duolingo app on their phones, start the English course and use that for this lesson. Ask them to explore the possibilities of the app. At this point you could leave the class for a minute or two for a dramatic effect.



NEXT STEP

Slide 2, Group discussion

Explain: Learning apps are widely used to learn languages by people in their free time. But are they also good enough to use in formal education? That's what we are going to find out today. Have you ever used an app to learn a new skill? If so, what did you learn? Do you feel that the app did a good job at teaching you? What did you miss from the app that a real teacher could have provided?



Slide 3, Group discussion

Ask the students: You have explored the Duolingo app. If you think of what you should learn in English class, what parts do you expect you can learn from Duolingo? What parts do you expect it can't teach? Think of vocabulary, grammar, speaking, listening and writing.



WORK AND CAREER

Slide 4, Group discussion

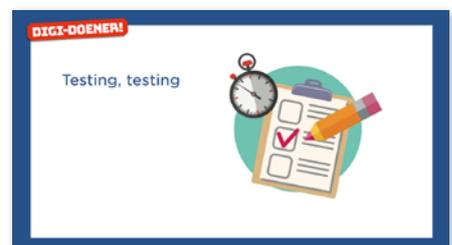
Tell the students: Learning apps aren't just meant for students. Most people spend their entire life learning. Different platforms exist around the Internet that help people with Life Long Learning, like Udacity, Udemy or Coursera. More and more, companies are using e-learning to help their employees learn new skills. Big companies like Shell or PayPal even created their own e-learning environments for their employees. Understanding what you can and what you can't learn from an app can help you learn new skills more efficiently.



IN PRACTICE

Slide 5, Group work

Tell the students: You will now test the effectiveness of the Duolingo app. Rate the app on the different aspects of language learning: vocabulary, grammar, speaking, listening and writing. You can find an assessment form on the worksheet. First follow a couple of lessons on the app, then fill in the form. Work in teams of two.



EVALUATION

Slide 6, Group discussion

 Discuss with the students: What if we would always learn languages from apps, without real teachers? What do you think would happen? What can be learned from an app and what can only be learned from a real teacher? What are other advantages of having a real teacher?

