



## Language Support for Migrants *A Council of Europe Toolkit*

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### Tool 32 – Using cartoons to help migrants to learn a new language

**Aim: To suggest ways of using cartoons as a means of helping migrants to learn to understand the new language.**

Plentiful exposure to the language being learned is crucial for successful language learning (see also Tool 31 – *Supporting migrants in taking advantage of opportunities to read in public spaces* and Tool 33 – *Accustoming migrants to watching the news*).

Whether they are children, adolescents or also adults, migrant learners can be encouraged to watch cartoons as a means of getting used to listening to the language as well as for relaxation. Cartoons can be especially useful because:

- depending on the series, they are easily available on the internet
- they can be particularly motivating
- depending on the cartoons chosen, the language is quite simple and there is often quite a lot of repetition
- each episode is likely to be short
- the characters and contexts do not change from episode to episode, and the relationships between them are consistent (friendly, hostile etc.).
- the plots of each episode are similar
- they are fun, especially for younger migrants.

#### **Suggestions for using cartoons in language support**

- As with listening materials, cartoons have to be chosen with care (see *Tool 28 - Selecting and using texts for listening at elementary level* for some questions that need to be considered, such as whether the cartoon or episode you select:
  - is suitable for the age group and background of the learners from a cultural point of view
  - is likely to be interesting and/or amusing for them and not too difficult to understand. And so on.
- Depending on their age, offer a selection of easily available cartoons to learners and agree with your group which series they would like to watch. There are plenty of them: *Lady Bug, Paw Patrol, Cars, Pokémon, the Simpsons, Family Guy, Peppa Pig* for younger children, and many others. Many are available in different language versions.
- Online trailers for the selected series can be a useful starting point. Get learners to identify the main characters by name as well as the context, asking them to repeat and note them down.
- After that, learners can watch brief segments of one episode with the sound turned off. You can ask them what they understand about the characters, the situation or storyline from just the images. Then watch each segment again with the sound on. If there are important new words or expressions that learners cannot understand, you can try to explain them or get learners to guess the meaning and write these on the board.

- It may be useful to transcribe parts of the dialogue or use subtitles in the target language if they are available. Seeing phrases or sentences and even onomatopoeia ('zzz', 'arghh' etc.) together with the cartoon can aid comprehension.

When you think learners are ready to watch cartoons by themselves, ask them to do so regularly. Many such cartoons may also be available in their first language but urge them to watch them in the new language they are learning. Point out that, although they may only understand parts of the cartoon to start with, comprehension will become easier as they get used to the series they have selected, the characters and their pronunciation.