



Podcasting with iTunes

A What is a Podcast?

Podcasting is the method of distributing multimedia files, such as audio programs or music videos, over the Internet for playback on mobile devices and personal computers. The term podcast, can mean both the content and the method of delivery. A podcast can be distinguished from a straightforward mp3 file by its ability to be downloaded automatically using suitable software.

iTunes is a media player, written by Apple Computer, for playing and organizing digital music, video files and podcasts. The iTunes Music Store is the component of iTunes through which users can purchase digital music files from within iTunes and access podcasts.

(adapted from en.wikipedia.org/wiki/iTunes)

The benefit of iTunes for English language learners is that you can subscribe to podcasts within the iTunes music store and choose from thousands of free podcasts to get automatically downloaded onto your laptop.

The first step to extra listening practice is to download iTunes onto your laptop.

- Go to <http://www.itunes.com/> download and set up the latest version of iTunes.

B Exploring the Podcast Directory

1. Click on the iTunes icon on your desktop. On the left hand side under the general heading 'source' select podcasts. At the bottom of the page go to the podcast directory. iTunes will access its music store.
2. The podcast directory is where all the different areas of interest are organised. There are links to some of the most popular podcasts and a list of 'categories' which you can choose from.

Make a note of the categories that seem interesting so that you can explore them later.

Listening Practice

At university, listening to lectures and seminars will be one of the most important skills that you need. Developing and practising your listening skills is something which you can do in your own time outside the classroom using the many audio and visual resources that are available on the Internet. With resources like iTunes and the many podcasts you can download onto your laptop or iPod, listening practice can be done anytime, anywhere.

C Subscribing to a Podcast

One way of getting regular extra listening practice and keeping up to date about events around the world is to subscribe to a news and politics podcast.

1. Select 'News and Politics' from the list of categories in the podcast directory.
2. On this page you will see links to a few of the most popular news and politics podcasts. To access all the available podcasts click on 'see all' . You will find many pages of different podcasts. Using the arrow under the main heading go to the page where CNN News Update is featured.
3. Click and subscribe to CNN News Update. ITunes will automatically download the latest news update into your podcasts folder and your audio library.
4. Listen to the news by selecting the podcast and clicking on the play symbol at the top of the screen.

Make notes about the latest news. Use your notes to write a few sentences summarising the news

D Downloading a single Episode

You can download individual episodes without subscribing to a podcast.

1. Go to the podcast directory and select Education from the list of categories.
2. Look at all the pages of featured podcasts and select VOA Special English.
3. Click on the heading in bold.
4. In the bottom half of the page you will find a list of episodes. Select 'Non-governmental organisation..' and click 'get episode'. The podcast will automatically be downloaded into your podcasts folder. (See section E 'Searching for Podcasts if it is no longer listed.)
5. Listen to the podcast and complete the following task.

Non-Governmental Organisations Influence Policy around the World

- a. How many countries participated in the 16th International AIDS Conference?

- b. Who were the participants? (write two)

- c. How do political scientists describe NGOs?

- d. What is the definition of NGOs?

e. What are three of the possible goals of NGOs?

f. Name two of the most well-known NGOs.

g. According to James Paul some NGOs are not neutral. T/F

h. International NGOs focus on both industrialised and developing countries. T/F

i. The total number of NGOs is not known. T/F

Note: See end of document for answer key

E Searching for Podcasts

You can also search for podcasts using the search bar on the podcast directory page.

1. Write 'English as a Second Language' in the search bar. How many different podcasts are there?
2. Choose one that you think might be useful and click on the heading in bold.
 - At the top of the page you will find information about the podcast you have chosen and what type of material you might find.
 - At the bottom of the page you can find a list of the podcasts available. (You do not need to subscribe yet if you are still uncertain about whether the podcast is right for you. You can get individual podcasts or episodes here without subscribing.)
3. Look at the episode titles and choose one. Double click on the podcast to hear a short clip. Click on the Information icon in the description column to get more detail about the episode you have chosen.
4. Explore the list until you find a podcast you think might be useful and 'get episode'. The episode will automatically be downloaded. If you are satisfied with the material you can subscribe to the podcast and the latest episode will be downloaded each time you open iTunes.
5. In your library select the podcast you have just downloaded and click play to listen. Check the list of possible tasks below and choose one. Listen again and complete your task.

F Task Suggestions

1. Pair up with a friend and individually write tasks similar to the one in section D for podcasts of your choice. (You could also add multiple choice or fill in the blanks items). Exchange your tasks with your friend.
2. Take notes and try to write a brief summary and response to a podcast in your journal and ask your teacher to read it.
3. Take notes and use them to write an interview or report including the main ideas and important details in the listening.
4. Make a note of the new vocabulary items and write them in your vocab journal.
5. Listen to and repeat words and sentences to practice pronunciation.

Remember!

You don't need to answer questions like you do in exams for listening to be useful. Listening to podcasts can have many uses such as; listening for pleasure, familiarising yourself with different accents, learning something new, keeping up to date with the news, improving your concentration during listening, learning new vocabulary or getting ideas for essays and discussions.

6. Get a group of students together to report news stories they have listened to and discuss your views about the issues raised. (Other topics such as the latest technology, movies reviews etc are also potential discussion topics)
7. Listen to a story. (e.g 'English Through Stories' podcast.) As you listen stop the recording in the middle and write the end of the story. Then compare with the original.
8. For listenings with transcripts, practice dictation i.e. try to write the transcript yourself while listening. Check your transcript with the original. A good site for practising dictation is (<http://www.manythings.org/listen/>).

G Recommended Podcasts Featured in iTunes

- English as a Second Language (ESL Pod)→ Basic/Intermediate. Everyday and business English for speakers of English as a second Language.
- ELT Podcast →Basic/Intermediate. This site includes theme-based conversations (such as asking about weekend plans, talking about hobbies, introductions, etc.) Transcripts available.
- School of Languages- Sabancı University → Intermediate/Upper Intermediate. This podcast includes lectures and interviews by faculty staff at Sabancı University on various topics (including computer technology, nationalism, etc.)
- BBC Radio Newspod → Intermediate/Upper Intermediate. Interviews and News Reports about the latest British and international issues.
- NPR: Story of the Day → Intermediate/Upper Intermediate. An American podcast including in-depth reports about a range of current issues.
- ABC: All in the Mind → Intermediate/Upper Intermediate. Podcasts about the mind, brain and behaviour.
- NPR: Living on Earth → Intermediate/Upper Intermediate. News and Information about environmental issues.
- NPR: This I believe → Intermediate/Upper Intermediate. Americans giving their personal opinions and beliefs about issues.
- PBS: The American Experience→ Intermediate/Upper Intermediate. Characters and stories from mostly American history.
- NPR: Science Friday → Intermediate/Upper Intermediate. Includes discussions with scientists, authors and policy makers about the latest news in science, technology, health and the environment.
- TOEFL →Intermediate/Upper Intermediate. Native speakers talk and discuss topics similar to those that will appear on the TOEFL or IELTS exams. Transcripts available.
- Lonely Planet Travel Casts → Intermediate/Upper Intermediate. Travellers describe their experiences in different parts of the world.
- American Radioworks → Intermediate/Upper Intermediate. Documentaries and investigative reports about a range of subjects.
- UNICEF Podcast→Intermediate/Upper Intermediate. News reports on health, education, equality and protection of children.
- The Washington Post→ Intermediate/Upper Intermediate.
- The Best of National Geographic Magazine →Intermediate/Upper Intermediate. Documentaries about subjects such as culture and science. Listenings sometimes accompanied by excellent photos. Similar themes can be found in the 'National Geographic video shorts' podcast.
- The Changing World →Upper Intermediate. Documentaries that explore global issues.

Vocabulary Podcasts

- Just Vocabulary Podcast → Learn two new words a day with these three minute podcasts.
- Podictionary: Learn about the history of words.
- The Princeton Review Vocabulary → A musical way to learn new words.

H More Podcasts on the Web

- <http://www.manythings.org/listen/> → Basic. This American site provides good practice for pronunciation. As you listen, you can read the story (just like you are doing *karaoke*). The listenings are between 1 and 14 minutes and about subjects ranging from health to music. There are also short stories you can listen to.
- <http://www.englishthroughstories.com/> → Basic/Intermediate. Dramatic stories, episode by episode, for Speakers of English as a second language.
- <http://www.eslpod.com/website/index.php> : → Basic/Intermediate. This site includes many ideas about living in the USA and tips for communicating such as correcting misunderstandings, changing money, etc.). At the end of podcasts, new concepts and words are explained. This site comes with a learning guide in which you can find the transcript, definitions, and sample sentences. However, you need to pay to subscribe).
- <http://www.guardian.co.uk/audio/> → Intermediate/Upper Intermediate. This is an archive of news reports on the latest stories and reports previously featured in *The Guardian*, a quality British newspaper.
- <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/index.html> → Intermediate/Upper intermediate. This site contains reports about current events. There are easy and harder versions of the same news item. Each report has communication activities, pair work, discussion, reading and listening activities with answer keys and vocabulary exercises.
- <http://www.thepodlounge.com.au/listfeed.php?feed=16295> → Upper intermediate. This is an Australian podcast about scientific research and discoveries.

Answer Key for 'Non-Governmental Organisations'

a. 132 b. scientists, healthcare providers, activists, political and business leaders, people living with AIDS c. pressure groups d. Any non-profit organisation that is independent of government e. support community development, provide social services, help poor people, support human rights and social justice, protect the environment f. Oxfam, Amnesty International, Greenpeace g. T h. F (Their headquarters are in industrialised nations but they support more than one developing nation) i. T (experts estimate there are tens of thousands)