

# Can you translate a poem into Spanish?

## Session Leader Notes

**You will need:**

- Printed worksheets (blue worksheet) and yellow learning resource
- Access to computer, projector and sound to display Oxplore Challenge presentation
- Writing surface and pens

**General pointers on this session:**

- This session takes approx. 45 minutes to deliver.
- This session works well with group sizes from approx. 8 to 40 pupils. Pupils will need to be broken up into small groups. Small groups should ideally not contain more than 4 pupils per group.
- This session is designed to build the Oxplore Key Skills of critical thinking and analysis, creativity and adventurousness.
- This session is focused on MFL subjects but skills are transferrable across all subjects.

**Session breakdown:**

Suggested Timings (minutes)	Slide Content	Discussion Points/Notes
Prior to pupils entering room	Slide 1: Title: Can you translate a Spanish poem?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move to Slide 2 as soon as pupils begin entering</li> </ul>
From first pupil entering room to all pupils seated 0:00-1:00 (1 min)	Slide 2: Brain teaser ( <i>En un auto iban dos madres y dos hijas, pero en el auto solo había tres pasajeras. ¿Cómo es esto posible?</i> )  ((In a car, there were two mothers and two daughters, but only three passengers. How is this possible?))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils may start calling out ideas/discussing aloud.</li> </ul>

1.00-2.00 (1 min)	Slide 3: Brain teaser answer: Una abuela, una madre y una hija.  (One is a grandmother, one is both a mother AND a daughter, and one is a daughter).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did anybody guess correctly?</li> </ul>
2.00-3.00 (1 min)	Slide 4: Skills you'll be building today: Critical Thinking, Creativity, Adventurousness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Briefly introduce each skill, give more detail if this is group's first Explore Challenge</li> <li>• You could point out here that these skills are essential for careers and further study, and will help you in your GCSEs and A-levels.</li> </ul>
3.00-4.00 (1 min)	Slide 5: Video part 1. Intro (00:38)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video: Introduction to Spanish Translation. A transcript of the video is available on Explore Teach.</li> <li>• <b>Note:</b> The yellow learning resource contains a full English translation of the poem. You may want to wait until students have completed the entire 45-minute activity before sharing the learning resource. The best place to introduce this would be after students have completed the activity on slide 14.</li> </ul>
5.00-10.00 (5 min)	Slide 6: Discussion Activity - Translating a poem (	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct pupils to discuss in pairs or groups and note down their ideas in their workbooks.</li> <li>• Some groups may require check-ins to keep on task.</li> <li>• Encourage pupils to share their ideas with the rest of the class.</li> </ul>
10.00-12.00 (2 min)	Slide 7: Video part 2 (1:34)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of challenge and Antonio Machado</li> <li>• Who were the Generation of 1898?</li> </ul>
11.00-13.00 (2 min)	Slide 8: Activity - Guess the words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils skim read the poem to spot words which look similar to English and write them down in their workbooks.</li> <li>• Pupils are encouraged to guess what the similar words mean.</li> <li>• Pupils guess the meanings of words.</li> <li>• Encourage pupils to share their ideas with the rest of the class.</li> </ul>
14:00-16:00 (2 min)	Slide 9: Video part 3 (1:28)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Translating English sounding words</li> </ul>
16:00-26:00 (10 min)	Slide 10: Activity – Build your translation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils create a word for word translation of the poem in their workbooks.</li> <li>• Pupils can use the glossary to discover other words to add to their translation.</li> <li>• What imagery is used in the poem?</li> </ul>

26:00-28:00 (2 min)	Slide 11: Video part 4 (1:40)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading of the poem in Spanish for sound and tone.</li> </ul>
28:00-30:00 (2 min)	Slide 12: Discussion Activity – What did you notice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils discuss in pairs or groups: Did any of the words rhyme?</li> <li>• Are all the poems lines the same length? (Look at poem on worksheet for reference.)</li> <li>• What other sounds or effects were there?</li> </ul>
29:00-31:00 (2 min)	Slide 13: Video part 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final activity</li> </ul>
32:00-42:00 (10 min)	Slide 14: Final Activity – Refine your translation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils re-work their translation for poetic effect (to resemble as closely as possible the sound, rhythm, emotion and concept of Machado original poem.)</li> <li>• Teachers should be on standby to model this work if needed.</li> </ul>
42.00-43.00 (1 min)	Slide 15: Action: Send Team Oxplore your scripts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you would like to, please photograph pupils' work and email it to us at (<a href="mailto:exploreteach@admin.ox.ac.uk">exploreteach@admin.ox.ac.uk</a>). There is no obligation to do this, but it is very helpful for qualitative evaluation purposes. Please do not include identifying information about pupils, eg. crop/blur names.</li> <li>• Reference if needed: Did you know? Queen's College at the University of Oxford runs an annual prize for poetry translation just for secondary school pupils.</li> <li>• Pupils may ask "Do people at Oxford really read it?", the answer to this is yes, as it helps us to understand whether or not our programmes are helping people to develop their skills</li> </ul>
43.00-44.00 (1 min)	Slide 16: Today's skills: Critical Thinking, Creativity, Adventurousness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils are asked to judge whether they have practised each key skill.</li> <li>• You could ask pupils to carry out their self-assessment by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Closing their eyes and raising their hands if they feel they have practised each skill</li> <li>○ Giving a thumbs-up/thumbs-down to say whether they feel they have practised each skill</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If you are able to record how many pupils feel they have practised each skill, please email this to us at (<a href="mailto:exploreteach@admin.ox.ac.uk">exploreteach@admin.ox.ac.uk</a>).</li> <li>• This is another good time to build academic self-concept by emphasising that these skills are important for your future, and will get stronger each time you use them.</li> </ul>
44.00-45.00 (1 min)	Slide 17: Congratulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This could be a good point to gesture forward to future Oxplore Challenge sessions, or tally how many sessions the group has now completed if you are keeping count.</li> </ul>

45.00-46.00 (1 min)	Slide 18: If you enjoyed this session, here are some subjects you may be interested in studying in the future...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Here you can discuss GCSE or further education opportunities related to this topic.</li><li>• If you have additional time, this could be a useful jumping-off point for discussion about super curricular opportunities available within your school/local area.</li></ul>
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NAME:

DATE:

# Can you translate a Spanish poem?

## Key Term: The Generation of 1898

A group of thinkers who were critical of the corrupt state of the nation, yet displayed a deep affection for the Spanish landscape and folklore. They rejected complex literary language and instead favoured using simpler language and everyday scenes.

## Translating a poem

Discuss in your pairs/groups and write down your ideas.

What makes a poem different from other pieces of writing?

How will translating a poem be different from translating a newspaper article?

Why will you need to be creative?

## What words do you know?

Do you know any of the words in the poem?

Can you guess what any of the unfamiliar words might mean?

Write down the words you know and your guesses on your copy of the poem

Amanecer de otoño  
Una larga carretera  
entre grises peñascales,  
y alguna humilde pradera  
donde pacen negros toros. Zarzas, malezas, jarales.  
Está la tierra mojada  
por las gotas del rocío,  
y la alameda dorada,  
hacia la curva del río.  
Tras los montes de violeta  
quebrado el primer albor:  
a la espalda la escopeta,  
entre sus galgos agudos, caminando un cazador.

## Glossary

carretera	road
peñascale	terrain
pradera	pasture
negros toros	black bulls
pacen	graze
zarzas	brambles
la alameda dorada	golden poplar grove
rio	river
la escopeta	the shotgun
caminando	strides
un cazador	a hunter

## Build your translation

On your own, using the glossary provided, produce a word-for-word translation of the poem.

## Read through your translation

How would you describe the main emotion of the poem?

What is it about the poem that conveys this emotion?

## Refine your translation

On the next page, there is space for you to refine your word-for-word translation, so that it reads well in English.

Can you reproduce any of the French poem's images or effects?

Hint: You will not be able to keep everything in your translation! For example, you might decide to change some words to make it rhyme in English, or you might forget about rhyme in order to better reproduce the imagery.

# Refine your translation

Write your updated translation here.

## CHALLENGE SKILLS

Tick the skills you have practised.



Critical Thinking

The icon for Critical Thinking features a pink brain at the bottom, with three white lines extending upwards to a pink circle, a dark blue triangle, and a purple square. The background is a green circle with a white grid pattern.



Creativity

The icon for Creativity shows a blue rocket launching upwards, with colorful stars and streaks of light. The background is a green circle with a white grid pattern.



Adventurousness

The icon for Adventurousness depicts a blue mountain peak, a yellow compass, a green map, and a yellow sunburst. The background is a purple circle with a white grid pattern.

## Spanish Poem Translation

### Daybreak in Autumn

A road extends  
across grey terrain  
and humble pasture  
where black bulls graze. Brambles,  
thicket, rockrose.  
The earth is damp  
with dew drops,  
and the poplar grove golden  
where the river bends.  
Behind the violet crags  
the first light breaks:  
shotgun slung across his back  
greyhounds keen at his feet, strides a  
hunter.

## Can You Translate a Spanish Poem? Transcript pt.1

00:00 Hi, my name is Georgie Fooks, I grew up speaking Slovak and English, and I research and teach Spanish and Latin American literature at the University of Oxford. Today I'm speaking to you from the Queens Collee here in Oxford. Today, you're going to translate a poem from Spanish into English. This means that today you're going to be poets as well as translators because you will need to come up with creative solutions to make sure that your translation sounds good in English as well as in Spanish.

00:20 Before you start on your translations, I'd like you to take a minute to think about how translating a poem requires a different sort of approach to translating, say a newspaper article or a text message.

## Can You Translate a Spanish Poem? Transcript pt.2

00:00 When we translate poetry, we are not just moving words from one language to another. We are also trying to reproduce ideas and sounds of the original poem, because we want our translation to have a similar effect on the reader and listener in English.

00:13 The poem that we will translate today was written by Antonio Machado, a leading member of the Spanish literary movement, known as the generation of 1898. At the time Antonio was writing, Spain had just been defeated in a war with the USA over territory in the Caribbean and in the Pacific. The Spanish Empire had lost a lot of its reach and influence. The nation was marked by what he called 'the two Spains', a split between conservatives and socialists, two political groups who had different ideas about how to run the country. This later led to the Spanish Civil War.

00:46 The generation of 1898 was critical of the corrupt state of the nation, yet displayed a deep affection for Spanish landscape and folklore. They rejected complex literary language and instead favoured using simpler language and everyday scenes. They wanted everyday Spanish people to enjoy their work and to feel inspired through it. As you translate, you could ask yourself if there is any evidence of this wider content in the poem.

01:11 Let's start by decoding the poem. Take a minute to see if you can spot any familiar words in the poem. Can you guess what any unfamiliar words might mean? You can use words you know to help. For instance, if you know that 'malezas' means 'weeds' can you guess the meaning of 'zarzas'.

## Can You Translate a Spanish Poem? Transcript pt.3

00:00 Did you guess that the poem 'Amanecer de otoño' is about Autumn? You have probably learned the Spanish names of the seasons in school and I'm sure you'll have learned some words linked to nature and geography, which will have given you a sense of the landscape of the poem.

0:11 Some other words you might know from school are:

'toros' – meaning bulls.

'tierra' - which means earth, ground or land.

and 'rio' - for river.

You might have also spotted some words which are similar in English, 'curva' which sounds like curve or bend.

'montes' – which sounds like mounts or hills.

and 'violeta' which sounds like violet.

Violet isn't the only reference to colour in the poem. Did you spot the others? I expect you knew 'Gris' and 'Negro'. I wonder if any of you have spotted the word 'Dorada'? Have you heard of the El Dorado, the lost city of gold? Well done if you did! Dorado or it's feminine inflection, Dorada means golden or gold coloured.

00:59 Now, it is time to translate the poem. You can use the glossary in your handout to help with this. Don't worry about making it perfect, for now we just want a word-for-word translation to understand what is described.

## Can You Translate a Spanish Poem? Transcript pt.4

00:00 Now that you have a literal translation, you know that the poem describes a rural landscape at dawn and a hunter. But if you read your literal translation out loud, I bet it sounds a bit strange, like something you would never usually say or write in English.

So, it's time to start thinking about editing your translation to better recreate the images, sounds, and effect of the original Spanish.

Let's start by thinking about how the poem sounds when we read it in Spanish. I'll read the poem out loud now. As you listen, I'd like you to read the words on the page in front of you.

Amanecer de otoño

Una larga carretera  
entre grises peñascales,  
y alguna humilde pradera  
donde pacen negros toros. Zarzas, malezas, jarales.

Está la tierra mojada  
por las gotas del rocío,  
y la alameda dorada,  
hacia la curva del río.

Tras los montes de violeta  
quebrado el primer albor:  
a la espalda la escopeta,  
entre sus galgos agudos, caminando un cazador.

## Can You Translate a Spanish Poem? Transcript pt.5

00:00 Now that you've decoded the poem and thought about what it means, it's time to make your translation read as well in English as it does in Spanish. This means it is time to get creative. Your job is to translate the Spanish poem into English.

00:14 Remember, that this means translating not only the meaning of the poem, but also reproducing the poetic effects. You will not be able to keep everything in your translation. You might change some words to make it rhyme in English, or you might forget about rhyme in order to better reproduce the imagery.

00:28 Finally, you can test the translation by reading the poem in English out loud.