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The latest in language support materials.  
Compiled by Karine Harrington, Resources Editor

## ¿POR QUÉ? - 101 QUESTIONS ABOUT SPANISH

**Words:** Tim Guilford, Educational Consultant and Trainer in Modern Languages

**¿** *Por qué? – 101 Questions about Spanish* is a great read. Working around 101 questions and the answers to them, this punchy format really adds to the book's appeal.

The range of questions is varied and each section is a nice length for a read on a daily commute or to dip into for a few minutes during a break or before bed.

After every little foray into Judy Hochberg's book, I came away having learnt something new about the

language that I have loved and taught for most of my career. (Slightly embarrassingly too, but in the spirit of honesty, I have to admit that each read also gave me a slightly smug feeling of potential academic one-upmanship, should such questions ever crop up in conversation!)

Judy Hochberg's explanations are clear and you sense her enthusiasm for her subject. And, yes, these are just the sort of questions students of Spanish ask, every day. Here is an appetiser –

Question: 'Why do Spaniards use the 'th' sound?'

Answer: In a nutshell, in the fifteenth century two consonants 'ts' and 'dz' kind of got married and the off-spring was 'th'.

There you are, you see, wasn't that interesting? Well, I thought so.

My personal favourite is how 'hay' can mean both 'there is' and 'there are'? (Surely all Spanish verbs need to be singular or plural?) It turns out this all had its roots in a kind of early, medieval,

linguistic existentialism, as the poor old Romans lost all ability to speak Latin properly, "innit tho". While this must have been a tough time for the purists, I'm glad it happened, because Spanish was thus born and books like this could be written.

**By:** Judy Hochberg, Bloomsbury Publishing  
**Paperback:** £21.99  
**Website:** [www.bloomsbury.com/uk/por-que-101-questions-about-spanish-9781474227919/](http://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/por-que-101-questions-about-spanish-9781474227919/)

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## LANGUAGE LEARNING UNLOCKED PACK

**Words:** Liz Black, PGCE tutor, University of York

**THIS BOOK CONSIDERS** discussion in recent years that adults often state that they have no talent for languages and feel that they can't succeed. Andrew believes they often don't understand what gets in their way. He suggests that language learning ability can be dramatically improved by students of all ages reflecting on their own inner potential, their temperament and learning dispositions.

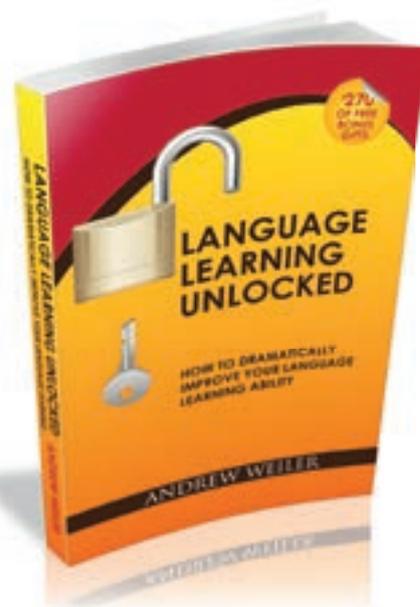
Mastery of a second language is, in his opinion, best achieved by a holistic approach. It is particularly interesting that he invites the reader to look again at the way babies and children revel in acquiring language and to try to 'remodel' these strategies in their adult lives.

Andrew suggests that students can train themselves to become engaged in the

language itself. There is a sharp focus on actually stopping ineffective learning practice and rediscovering enjoyment in learning and awareness of what works. The author suggests that if students pay more attention to the reading material they choose, listening to music and watching films, the foreign language will be absorbed.

Andrew has set out to empower language learners of all ages. Chapters are set out in logical order to help students develop their character, followed by all-important learning tools and finally how to implement them.

**By:** Andrew Weiler  
**Publisher:** Freedom by Choice  
**Paperback:** £10.99  
**Website:** [www.strategiesinlanguagelearning.com](http://www.strategiesinlanguagelearning.com)



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## SUCCESS STORIES FROM SECONDARY FOREIGN LANGUAGES CLASSROOMS

**Words:** Jenny Carpenter

**THIS COMPENDIUM OF** initial teacher training (ITT) research projects is a good example of partnership working among four London providers. There are messages here however, for teachers, trainee teachers and ITT providers anywhere in the country.

The upbeat title is seductive for teachers looking for solutions to day-to-day challenges. Indeed, it contains a number of 'nuggets' of interesting practice for teachers to explore and detailed insights into serious and systematic academic research. However, it demands that teachers or researchers allocate time for reading and reflection on their own practice and therefore it may be of particular interest to ITT providers and schools who work in close partnership.

Chapters of this book will have different resonances for individual teachers, however, a personal 'must-read' is definitely Jane Jones' 'Teachers as emergent critical researchers of practice'. She makes a convincing case for bringing theory and reflective practice into language teaching.

Do not miss Caroline Conlon's 'Making the most of the mixed-experience Year 7 classroom'. There is plenty of food for thought here for teachers who have received a 'mixed-bag' of experience at the start of Year 7. A final recommendation would be 'Breaking out: The use of film in the MFL classroom' by Colin Christie and Shirley Lawes. We are in for exciting times if teachers "regenerate the curriculum

content, develop a distinctive cultural focus and, above all... encourage learners to see [language]

learning as an important part of their education". (Christie, Lawes, p101)

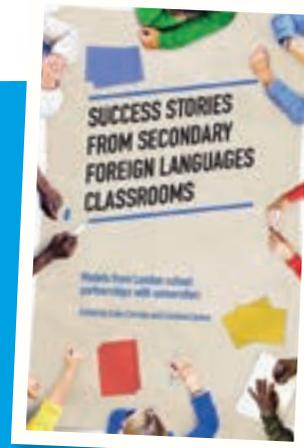
**Edited by:** Colin Christie

**& Caroline Conlon**

**Publisher:** Trentham Books

**Price:** £22.99

**Website:** [www.ucl-ioe-press.com/books/language-and-literacy/success-stories-from-secondary-foreign-languages-classrooms/](http://www.ucl-ioe-press.com/books/language-and-literacy/success-stories-from-secondary-foreign-languages-classrooms/)



## Modern Languages Film and Literature Study Guides

**Words:** Vanessa Salter, MFL trainer

**WHETHER YOU'RE AN** experienced teacher who has taught literature and film before, or a 'novice' somewhat daunted by the requirements of the new A Level languages specification, the Hodder *Modern Languages Study Guides* are a superb resource for teachers and students alike.

Hodder have produced a series of 16 guides, covering well-known texts and films which are on the prescribed list of all new specifications, and include titles in French, German and Spanish.

So why are they so good, I hear you ask? For me, there are several different reasons. Firstly, each guide is designed in the same user-friendly format. After a brief synopsis of the book or film, sections cover the social and historical context, individual scene or chapter summaries, the major themes, the main characters and significant techniques used by the director or author in the

work. Every aspect of the new specification has been taken into consideration to guide students towards the final goal of writing a critical and analytical response in the target language to the set questions in the examination.

Secondly, the guides are written partially in English and partially in the target language, ensuring that students can learn and use key vocabulary and structures they'll need for the essays in Paper 2, but also allowing them to develop a deep understanding of the work they're studying and the concepts involved.

Within each section of the guide, key vocabulary is highlighted and translated, activities aid comprehension and tasks encourage use of the specialist target language needed. Specific questions build critical skills, alongside tips for 'grade boosters' and key quotations relevant to the section being

studied. Colourful mind maps provide a clear visual representation of the main points covered.

Finally, there are sections full of exam and essay-writing advice and sample essays with commentaries, explaining the AO4 criteria and how to reach the top band of the mark-scheme. Written by experienced teachers and examiners, these guides could provide an excellent basis for your schemes of learning for the literature or film element of the new A Level specification.

**Publisher:** Hodder Education

**Price:** £11.99

**Website:** [www.hoddereducation.co.uk/modernlanguagesstudyguides](http://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/modernlanguagesstudyguides)

