

Duolingo for Schools (Full Review)

Overview

Resource Type	Subjects	NRS Level(s)
Online	Writing, Grammar, Reading, ESL	ESL 1-3

Summary

General Information

Duolingo for Schools is a free online language instruction resource appropriate for ESL learners in NRS levels 1-3. Duolingo for Schools is a classroom management extension of the popular Duolingo base app which enables instructors to track student progress and engagement time. The Duolingo for Schools lessons are built upon a micro-learning format, with short lessons highlighting relevant vocabulary, speaking and listening skills, and syntax. While short and convenient, most Duolingo for Schools lessons are decontextualized. Duolingo does not provide extensive instruction on sociolinguistics, so while it is a supplement to provide students with further practice on vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar, it does not provide a complete language-learning experience or situate lessons within the social context in which the targeted vocabulary and grammar is likely to occur.

There is a premium subscription for Duolingo that is available for a monthly fee and which unlocks additional features for students, but for the purposes of this review, only the free version will be discussed.

Language Instruction

Duolingo for Schools lessons can be completed within a few minutes and provide practice on relevant vocabulary and grammar forms. Each lesson includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing practice as students record their voices for pronunciation practice, listen and respond to short prompts, organize sentences, and match vocabulary words with images or definitions. The Duolingo for Schools curriculum is aligned to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), beginning with lessons aligned to the CEFR "Beginner" levels and finishing at the "Independent" levels. All lessons are organized within sections that focus on a common topic and are aligned to a CEFR level. Within each section are smaller collections of lessons that contain a

Language Instruction

guidebook with an explanation of the highlighted grammar form and useful phrases that students will encounter as they study.

The Duolingo for Schools curriculum is based upon vocabulary and grammar forms and students must use the Duolingo for School's initial assessment for placement. As students complete lessons, they encounter check points that serve as a form of summative assessment. Formative assessment is built into each individual lesson, as students cannot complete a lesson before first answering a certain number of questions correctly. After repeated incorrect answers, Duolingo prompts learners to take a break or move back to previous lessons to review concepts and reduce frustration.

Translation from native language to English, and vice versa, is one of the primary teaching approaches used by Duolingo for Schools. Because of the limitations of this method, Duolingo for Schools is best used as a supplement to more communicatively-focused classroom lessons. Additionally, because of the vocabulary/grammar focus of the curriculum, language instructors will find that students build their ability to use the targeted words and forms, but because they are largely divorced from the context in which they are most often used, students will need additional support to learn how and when to use the materials they have studied while using Duolingo for Schools.

Teacher Support

Duolingo for Schools is free for both instructors and learners and offers unlimited student seats. Instructors can set up classes, add learners to class rosters, and track student engagement with activities. Duolingo for Schools provides training videos and documents to help instructors learn how to set up and navigate the application.

Time reporting is available in Duolingo for Schools by customizable date frames, making it easy to track supplemental distance learning time for students. Duolingo for Schools sends automated notifications to students with reminders to log in and study, but there is no in-class communication method, so instructors will need to conduct all relevant communication with students outside of the application. Students work through the lessons at their own pace with limited input from the instructors, reducing setup time, but also limiting the instructor's ability to dictate which lessons a student should complete or to see where they are working within the overall curriculum. An additional limit to Duolingo for Schools is that it indicates when a student has completed a lesson, but it does not provide reports on scores, making it difficult for instructors to determine areas or topics where students need additional support.

Functionality

Duolingo for Schools is available via web browser or iOS or Android apps. It is very functional in either setting, making it easily accessible to a broad range of learners regardless of the device they use. On the student side, Duolingo for School's interface is relatively simple and easy to navigate, so even learners without extensive digital literacy

Functionality

backgrounds can likely find success with it. If students need technical support, they can find it via Duolingo for School's FAQ page, help form, or password reset support.

Accessibility Features

Online platforms may include different accessibility features to aid learners. To learn more about these features contact the publisher's sales representative or customer support. Some platforms may offer a document titled a Voluntary Product Accessibility Template to delineate the features offered. Information that may help you understand a VPAT is available in our [informational document](#).