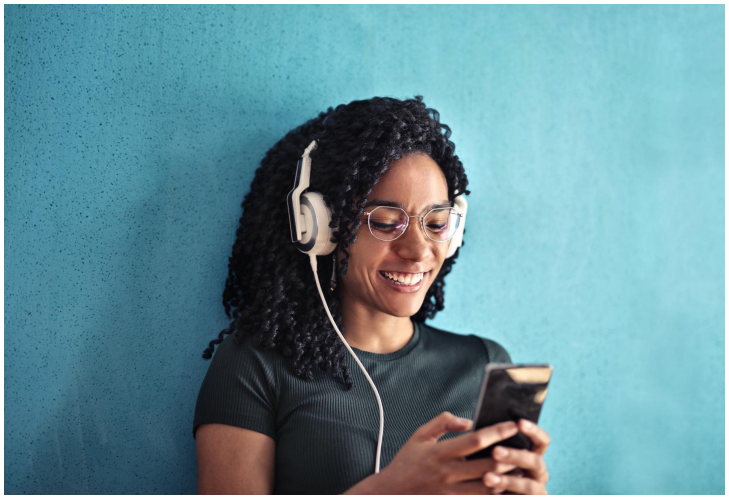
Newton Free Library

English Language Learning and Literacy Newsletter

November/December 2021

Listening for English Learners



Many of you have probably worked with learners who would benefit from improving their listening skills. Nowadays it's very easy for learners to practice listening with the aid of a smartphone or other mobile device. Gone are the days of requiring a CD player to listen to the audio from an English textbook!

I recommend two websites that focus on listening for English learners: Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab and the English Listening Lesson Library Online. Both have many audio files appropriate for a variety of levels, with accompanying transcripts, comprehension exercises, and other activities. You can use these sites together with your learner or encourage your learner to use them independently.

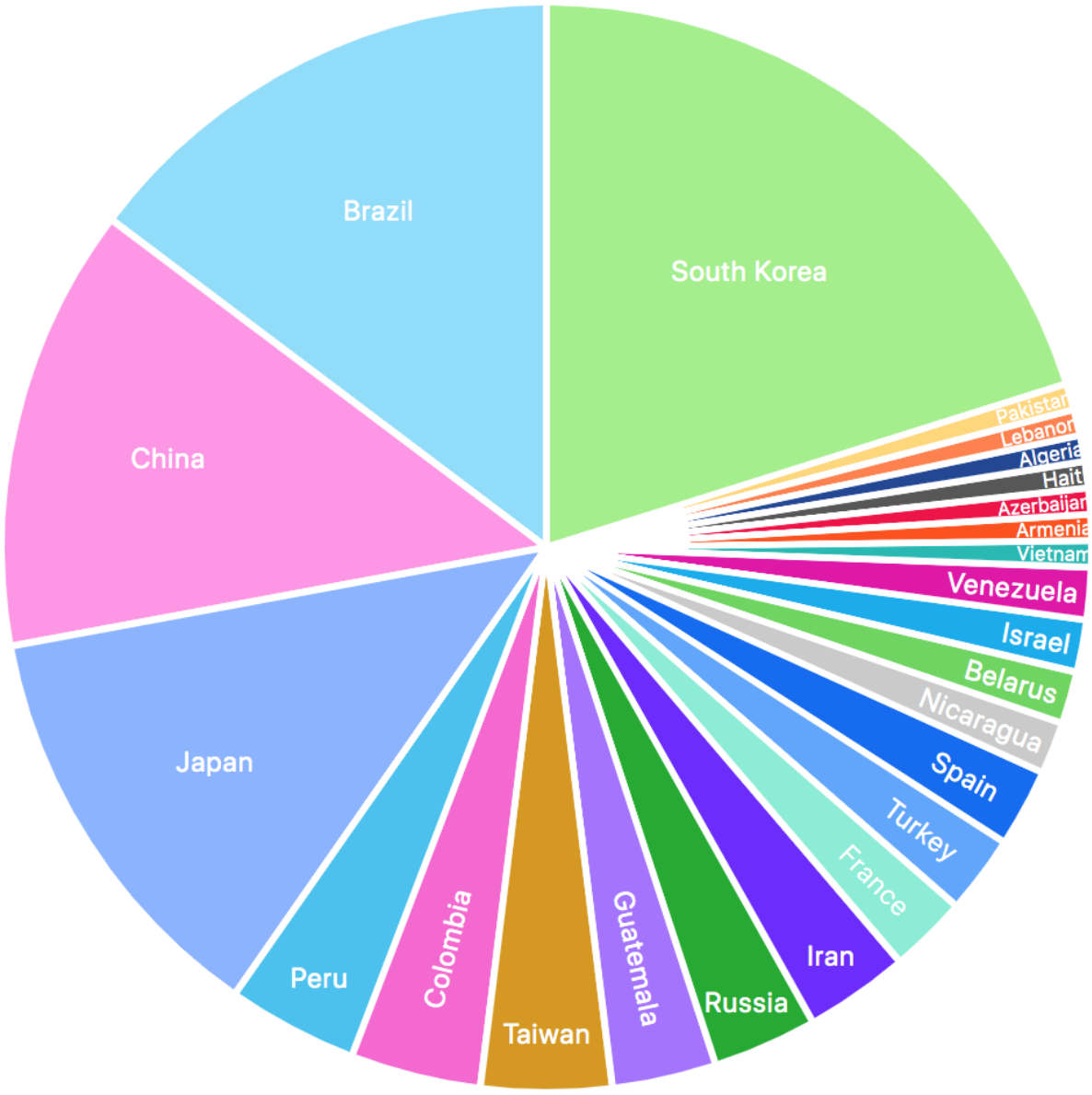
Podcasts are also a great way for learners to practice listening; I've found them to be very helpful in my own language learning. (Music, TV, movies, and YouTube videos are other excellent sources of listening "input." The more input, the better!) Here are a few

that are aimed at English learners; the links will take you to the podcasts' official websites, which contain some other content, but it may be easier to search for them using a podcast app:

- Culips English Podcast
- All Ears English
- Espresso English

For advanced learners, there are podcasts intended for native speakers on almost any topic you can imagine. Two popular podcasts that appeal to a general audience are *This American Life* and *Stuff You Should Know*.

Student Snapshot



As we near the end of 2021, I thought I would share some data about the learners who applied to the program this year. They come from 24 countries in total. About 60% are from South Korea, Brazil, China, or Japan. The other countries rounding out the top 10 are: Peru, Colombia, Taiwan, Guatemala, Russia, and Iran. As you would expect, Korean, Portuguese, Mandarin, and Japanese are among the most common native languages. However, Spanish speakers (from several different countries) make up the

third-largest group. The ELL program is truly a window onto the diversity of the Newton community!

Program News

- If you or someone you know used to volunteer with the ELL program but stopped due to the pandemic, consider getting involved again! There are over 100 English learners eagerly waiting for a tutor. You could meet with one of them online or in person. If you don't know how to set up a Zoom meeting, I'd be happy to help!

- There will be another round of tutor training workshops on Saturday afternoons in February and March. I will explain more about them in an online information session on Saturday, January 29, at 2:00 PM. Please tell anyone you know who might be interested! They can sign up here.

- Many classes and conversation groups will start in January. You can read about them here.

- The new resources page on the ELL website is still in the works. In the meantime, I encourage you to make use of this document, which has recommended print and digital resources in many areas (speaking, reading, grammar, and so on).

As you can see, this newsletter is for November and December. Going forward, I expect to send it out either every month or every two months, depending on how much there is to share. Past editions will be available on the ELL website.

Thank you to all who tutored an English learner, led a class, or otherwise contributed to the ELL program this year. I admire your dedication to helping others during these challenging times, and I appreciate the support you have shown me in my first six months as coordinator. Best wishes for a happy and healthy 2022!

With gratitude,
Andrew

Andrew Shapira
ELL and Literacy Coordinator
Newton Free Library
330 Homer Street
Newton, MA 02459
617-796-1364
https://newtonfreelibrary.net/services/education/ell/