

Style

These activities have been designed to develop student awareness of *style* focusing on two specific, key scenes. Students will also develop listening, reading, writing and translation skills as they scrutinise the clips and manipulate and create subtitles. Employability in the subtitling industry adds extra value to this set of activities.

Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios

With this film, Almodóvar became internationally recognised both in Europe and the US. It was nominated for an Oscar for best foreign film in 1988 and received many awards worldwide. This is a film about women, and it explores the colourful Spanish society of the post Franco era with hilarious sarcasm and irony.

Almodovar presents feminine characters as the product of a creation, both artificial and fragmented. In this film, where everything is exaggerated, female characters are presented as more complex than male characters. "Men can cry, but women can cry better", says Almodovar. He intends to make the spectator associate femininity with a whole range of elements which are usually associated with beauty. For example, at the beginning of the film and in the gazpacho scene used in this resource, women wear flamboyant make-up, have varnished nails, many rings on their hands, conspicuous lipstick, large earrings, elaborate hairstyles, high heels, hats, etc. By using the *collage* technique, Almodovar combines all these elements to emphasise the pressure women are under and portrays them as suffocated and suppressed by their environment. His overly melodramatic style based on classic Hollywood 50s films is used to show how different women can respond to certain situations.

"Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios" is an enjoyable comedy which reveals many aspects of the Spanish society and it has been the subject of study in many universities throughout the world.

Activity	Skills covered	Ideas for use
Activity 1	The first activity uses the trailer and subtitles containing deliberate errors. Students use their listening and reading skills to spot the mistake(s).	This activity could be done as a starter for subsequent stand-alone activities. Learners have to watch and listen to the clip and click on the subtitle error/s in readiness for the next activity
Activity 2	Students use their listening, reading and writing skills to spot and correct the mistake(s).	In this activity students have to correct the incorrect subtitle word/s in each section of the clip. The solutions are available for self-assessment.

Activity 3	As with the previous two activities, students have to listen carefully and write down what they hear as subtitles for the film (in Spanish), as this scene has none.	<p>This activity is based on one of the trailers of the film, where Almodovar`s genuine style is evident.</p> <p>Students can write the subtitles on paper or on-screen, and the computer programme will then allow the students to watch the clip with the subtitles which the students have written. If done in small groups, then translations can be compared and discussed. If schools have the film, they can further compare with the original.</p>
Activity 4	This activity tests students' listening, reading and translation skills.	This is very similar to activity one, only the language is different. This time the subtitles are in English with deliberate errors. Students have to identify the errors by clicking on the incorrect word/s.
Activity 5	Students use their listening, reading and translation skills to spot and correct the mistake(s) and click on them.	This is very similar to activity two, but here students have to correct the error(s) in translation. A printable solutions sheet is also available.
Activity 6	This final activity is a subtitling and translation exercise.	Now students return to the classic "gazpacho scene" to upload their own English subtitles and create their version of the subtitled extract. A downloadable sheet is available with solutions.