

EN



# Λαppý new year

EDUCATIONAL SHEET

# PRESENTATION

## TEACHER NOTES

This short film is part of a collaboration **project** between **Cinescuela** and the language program of the **Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje SENA**, with the aim of creating film cycles used within the framework of bilingualism training.

This intense short film raises awareness about communication skills in the professional environment, but especially about empathy and human connection through language.

## SUBJECTS

Civic education, Social sciences, Languages and Humanities

## KEYWORDS

Bilingualism, Interpreter, Home office, Translation, New Year, Empathy, Communication skills, Emergency

## SYNOPSIS

On the last day of the year, a dispirited work-at-home phone interpreter has her moribund life turned upside down when she answers an unexpected emergency call.

## TECHNICAL SHEET

- \* Genre: Fiction
- \* Written and directed by Brandon Grötzinger, Wander Theunis
- \* Director of Photography - Jeroen Kiers
- \* Sound - Matthijs Klijn
- \* Post-production - Augustine Huijsser
- \* Producer - Daniel Klijn

# PRESENTATION

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- NETHERLANDS FILM FESTIVAL 2018
- FILMBATH 2018 (UK)
- EINDHOVEN FILM FESTIVAL 2018 (NL) (\*EFF Award - Best Actress)
- SHORTCUTZ AMSTERDAM AWARDS 2019 (\*WINNER\* International Audience Award, Best Screenplay, Best Actress)
- INTERNATIONAL FILMFEST EMDEN-NORDERNEY 2019 (DE) (\*WINNER\* 2nd Prize - East Frisian Short Film Award)
- EUROPEAN FILM FESTIVAL OF LILLE 2019 (FR)
- CURTAS VILA DO CONDE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2019 (PT)
- SCHNIT WORLDWIDE SHORTFILMFESTIVAL 2019 (CH/AR/EG/ZA/HK/RU/CR/US)
- EYE FILM INSTITUTE NETHERLANDS SELECTED DUTCH SHORTS 2019
- BRUSSELS INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL 2019
- FILMFEST BREMEN 2018 (DE)
- FENÊTRES SUR COURTS DIJON 2018 (FR)
- COURT EN SCÈNE FESTIVAL DU COURT MÉTRAGE TROYES 2018 (FR)
- VÄSTERÅS FILMFESTIVAL 2018 (SE)
- SEDICICORTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2018 (IT)
- INDEPENDENT DAYS: INTERNATIONAL FILMFESTIVAL KARLSRUHE 2019 (DE)
- INSHORT FILM FESTIVAL 2019 (UK/PL)
- ROTTERDAMS OPEN DOEK 2018-2019

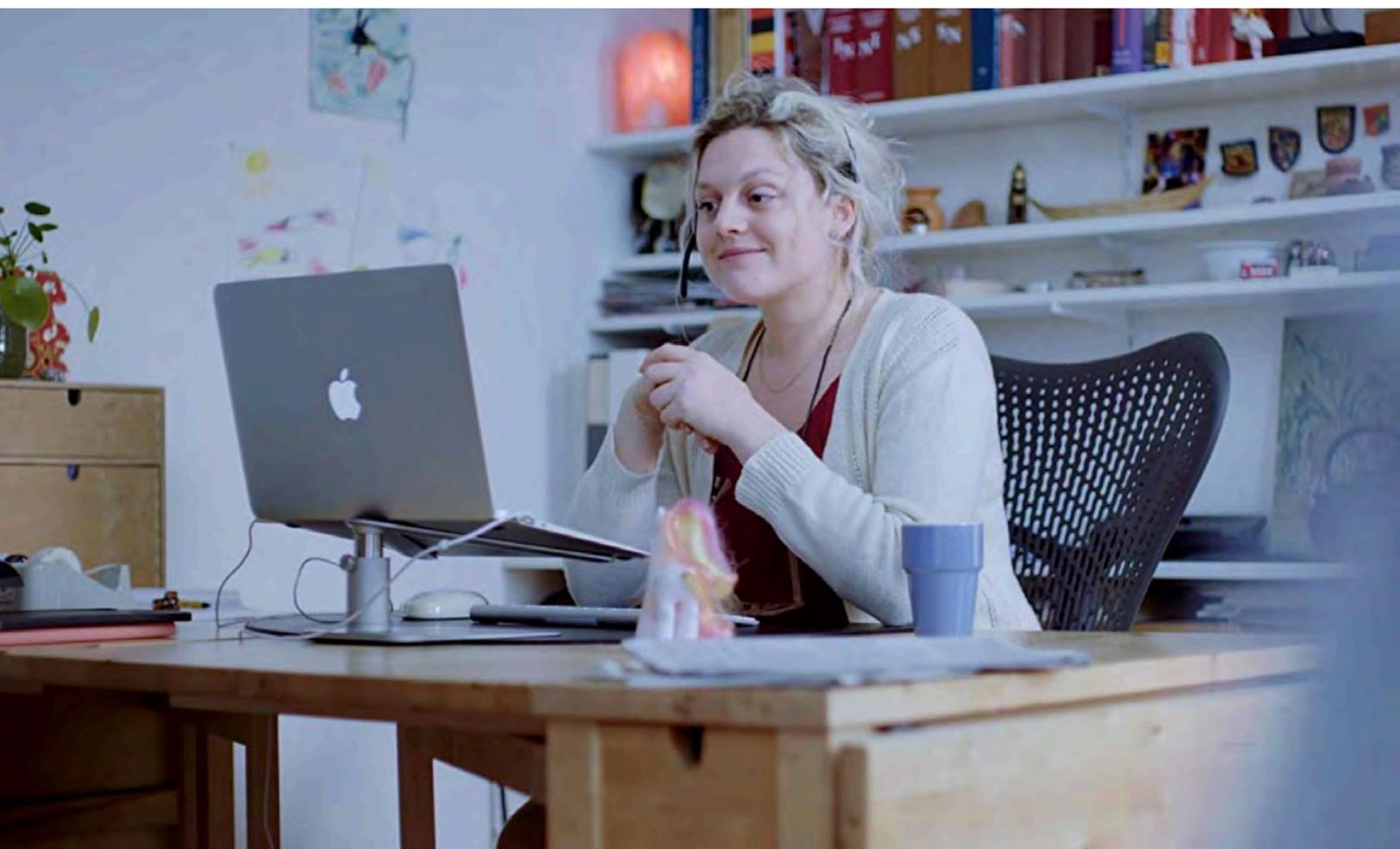
- GRAND OFF - WORLD INDEPENDENT SHORT FILM AWARDS WARSAW 2018
- NEWFILMMAKERS LOS ANGELES FILM FESTIVAL 2018
- ARCTIC MOVING IMAGE & FILM FESTIVAL 2018 (NO)
- SHOTS: INTERNATIONAL INDEPENDENT SHORT FILM FESTIVAL 2018 (SI)
- AMARCORT FILM FESTIVAL'S AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 SHORTS 2019 (IT)
- ONE NIGHT FILMS TOKYO 2018
- EN PLEIN PUBLIC 2019 (NL)
- MANIFESTO FILM FESTIVAL 2019 (NL)

## RELATED FILMS

**To the surface** 2020  
Directed by Gnarly Bay

**The Kid** 1921  
Directed by Charles Chaplin

**Bon voyage** 2012  
Directed by Fabio Friedli



# FILM

## WHAT IS THE STORY?

### Empathy for a stranger through the sound of your voice

**Happy New Year** is a short fiction film describing a typical day's work for *Helen*, a Dutch woman who works in a call center translating languages for people with different needs. On that particular day, Helen receives a call from a security guard at an airport in Holland requesting a translation for a Greek man who intends to travel without the corresponding document.

The Greek man, whose name is *Chrístos*, is desperate to travel because his son was involved in a car accident and could die. Through her understanding and advice, Helen manages to give *Chrístos* a clue as to where his document might be. The man finds the passport, which allows him to travel to see his son on New Year's Eve.

## ACTIVITIES

- What argument does *Chrístos* give *Helen* to justify that he should be able to fly?
- What suggestions does *Helen* give *Chrístos* to help him keep his cool?
- Why does *Helen* identify with *Chrístos*?
- In a short text, answer the following question:  
Do you think *Helen* goes beyond what her job requires of her?  
Argue your answer based on what happens in the short film.



*Helen* tries to calm *Chrístos* down to see if he can remember where his document might be.

# FILM

## HOW IS TOLD?

### Connected to the world, from your office

What makes this short film so special is that we, as the audience, never leave the room where *Helen* works. As we listen to the different conversations and reach the climax of the film, we have the opportunity to imagine what is happening on the other end of the phone.

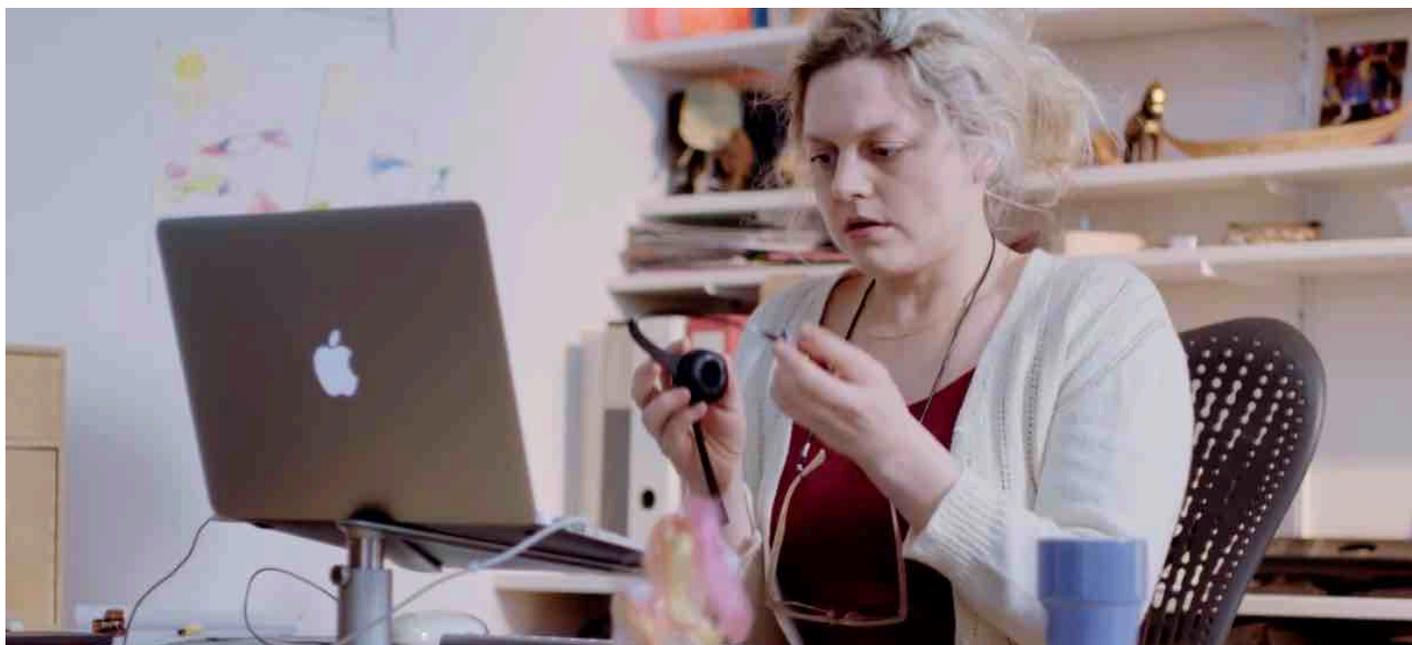
Although we stay in the room the whole time, the film doesn't feel slow or repetitive. It generates an excellent pace supported by engaging dialogue, exciting situations and believable performances (also over the phone).

We see a visual glimpse of *Helen's* world. Her dreams, her notion of the future, the care placed into her role as a mother, the pictures of her graduation when she was ready to do amazing things and even her embarrassment when someone recognizes her voice while doing this "ordinary job". The camera accesses her universe and shows us just enough to feel the story more convincingly.

Another issue that arises is sound. The film structure relies heavily on the actors' vocal performances, so we can imagine what is happening on the other end of the phone. The way the sound is mixed allows us to recreate the spaces in our minds and the violence of *Christos'* situation at the airport.

## ACTIVITIES

- What elements in the film provide information about who *Helen* is?
- According to what you heard, describe *Christos'* situation at the airport.
- Describe the sound of the film. Why is it so important?
- Make a selection of two scenes from the film that you consider to be related to each other.  
In a text, or orally, argue your choice. Describe each of the scenes briefly and indicate the similarities you find between them.



*Helen* solves several cases in her work. We see how emotionally involved she gets depending on who is on the other end of the phone.

# FILM

## WHO ARE THE CHARACTERS?

### From a mother to a father

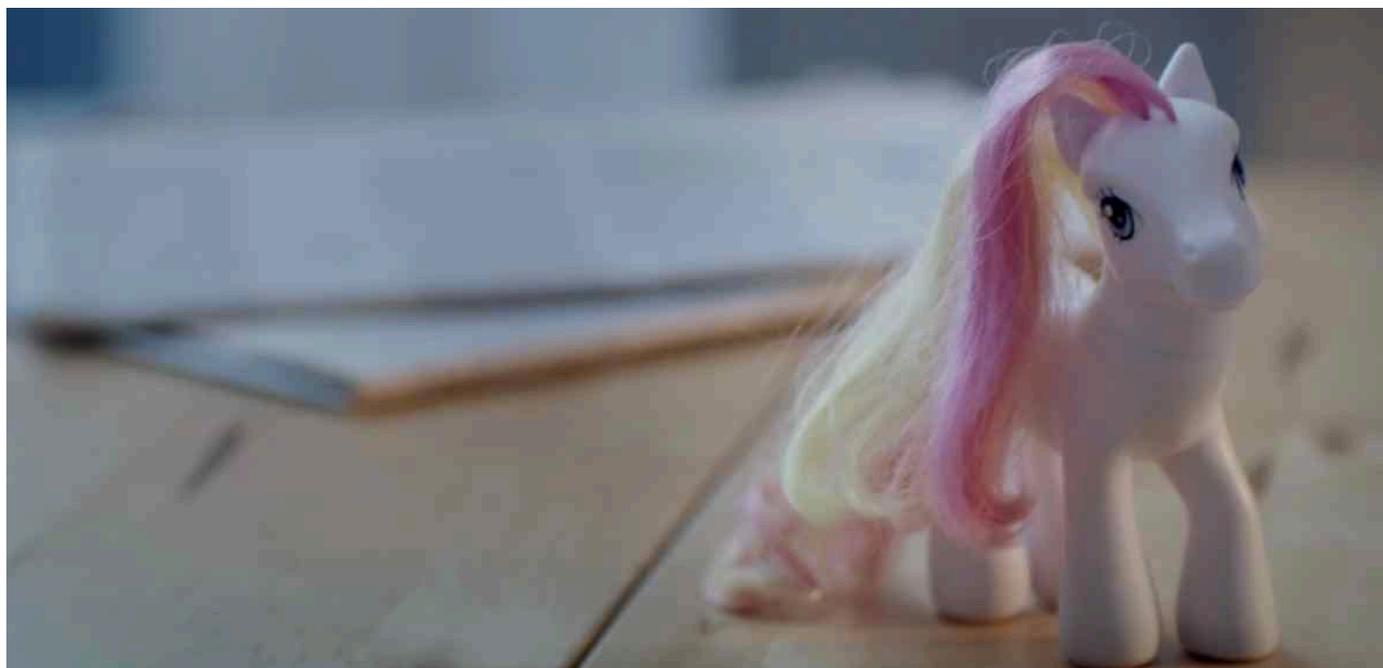
From what we can see, *Helen* is an exceptional and talented translator. We know that she expected more of herself as a professional, especially when confronted by a woman who insinuates that she is wasting her talents. The reasons she ended up working in a call centre are invisible to us, but we still see that there is a toy we can relate to a girl in her life.

*Christos*, on the other hand, is a man in an extreme situation in his life. His son could die soon, and taking that plane is his only chance to see him alive one last time. The thought of his son's death makes him erratic and aggressive.

The link between the two characters is the fact that they are both parents. Looking at the pony and putting herself in *Christos'* dilemma causes *Helen* to put all her efforts into supporting and comforting the Greek as best she can. *Helen* not only connects with *Christos* by speaking Greek, but she connects with him by understanding his pain and how he must feel. In the end, she goes beyond what she is expected to do and solves the document problem by listening, understanding and responding.

## ACTIVITIES

- Why is *Christos* so upset?
- What attitude does *Helen* take to help *Christos*, and how does she differ from the airport guards?
- Why does *Christos* say that *Helen* is an angel?
- In English, please list the elements in the short film that provide information about *Helen* and her life. In front of each word, write its translation into Spanish.



After hanging up the phone, *Helen* takes a minute to calm down as her daughter enters the room to grab her pony

# FILM

## VOCABULARY

### Location:

A location is a site used for film, television or advertising filming where the whole plot of the audiovisual product is developed. It can be a structure, building, town, city, or natural scenery. In the case of the short film, the location would be *Helen's* office at home.

### Sound effects:

A sound effect is an artificially created or enhanced sound or sound process used to emphasize the artistic content of films, television programs, animations, video games, music and other media. In the short film, *Christos'* situation is recreated through dialogue and sound effects.

### Camera angles:

The camera angle is the location at which the camera is positioned in a film. A scene can be filmed from different camera angles; this shows the scene from another perspective, generating diverse visualizations.

## ACTIVITIES

Make a list in English of words mentioned in the short film. In front of each word write its translation in Spanish.



Discover in this section basic cinematographic concepts, a sample of the vocabulary used on cinema, with definitions and examples related to the short film **Happy New Year**.

# CONTEXT

## TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION

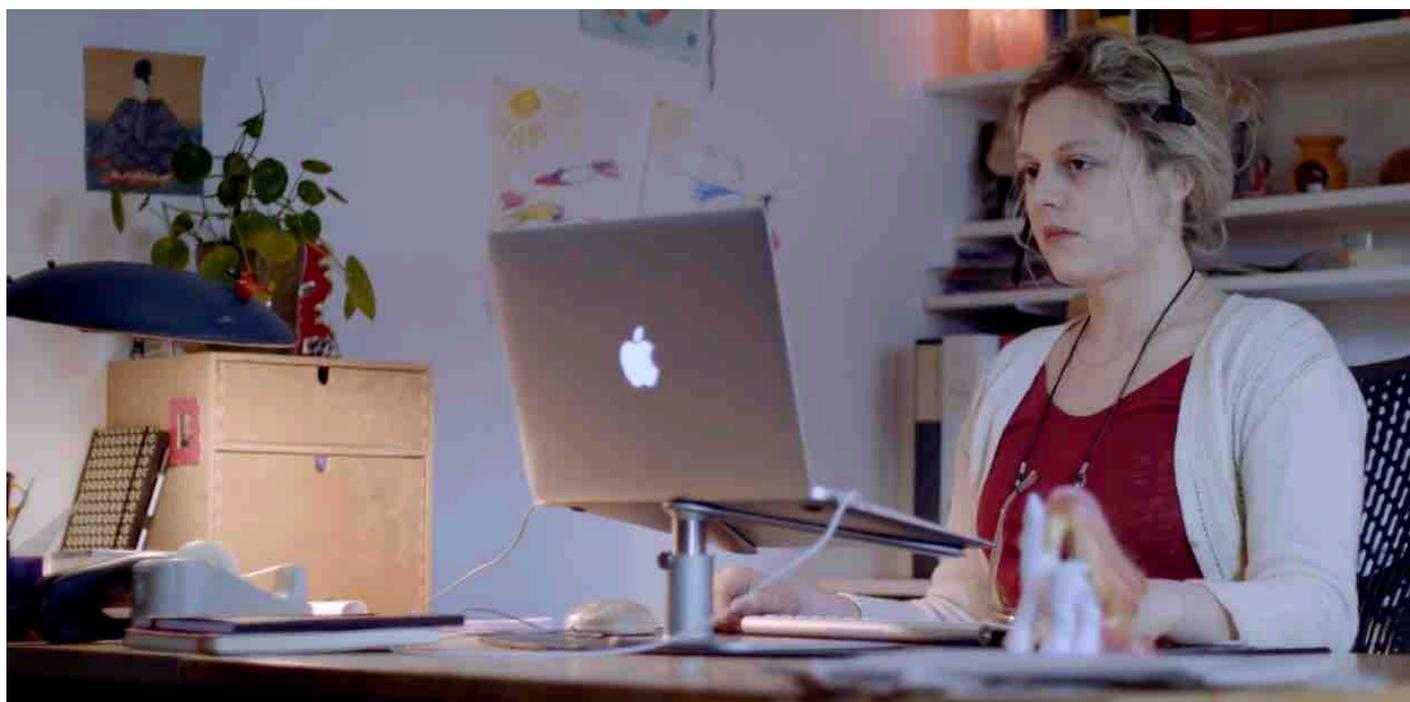
According to *Ethnologue magazine*, there are around 7,117 languages in the world, and although only 600 have more than 100,000 speakers, translation and interpretation services have become indispensable for effective communication between people, communities, governments and nations in this globalized world. It is often mistakenly thought that anyone who speaks a foreign language can translate and interpret, but the truth is that it is a task that requires a language professional with communicative skills acquired through the study and analysis of language.

*Helen*, the protagonist of the short film **Happy New Year**, is a language professional who enables fluid communication between people who do not speak the same language. Her job is to be an interlocutor and provide a translation and interpretation service to whoever needs it worldwide. She must ensure that the intention and meaning of the message travel without variations from the sender to the receiver.

Although at a particular moment it may seem that *Helen* feels ashamed of her profession, it is not particularly easy to provide such a service. An interpreter must have an understanding and absolute mastery of the codes, the structural elements, the modes of use and functioning in specific spaces or situations of interaction in the language. In addition, one must have the ability to understand the language and speak, read, and write it perfectly, which requires several years of study and experience.

## ACTIVITIES

- What exactly does *Helen's* work entail?
- Who attends *Helen's* service?
- What do you think are the possible job opportunities offered by this profession?
- Make a poster in which you present the main characteristics of each of the two professions.



*Helen* works as a call-center liaison from home, providing a translation and interpreting service to whoever needs it around the world.

# CONTEXT

## EMPATHY

The acute stress reaction or state of emotional shock is a condition that manifests itself just after a person experiences a traumatic or frightening event that limits the ability to cope with their own emotions. This state has psychological repercussions and triggers nervous, physiological and biochemical alterations in the body. When witnessing such a reaction in a person, empathy is awakened, and we want to help the other person get out of this state. However, it is crucial to know how we can do it. Even if our intentions are good, if we are not informed, we may end up causing more problems.

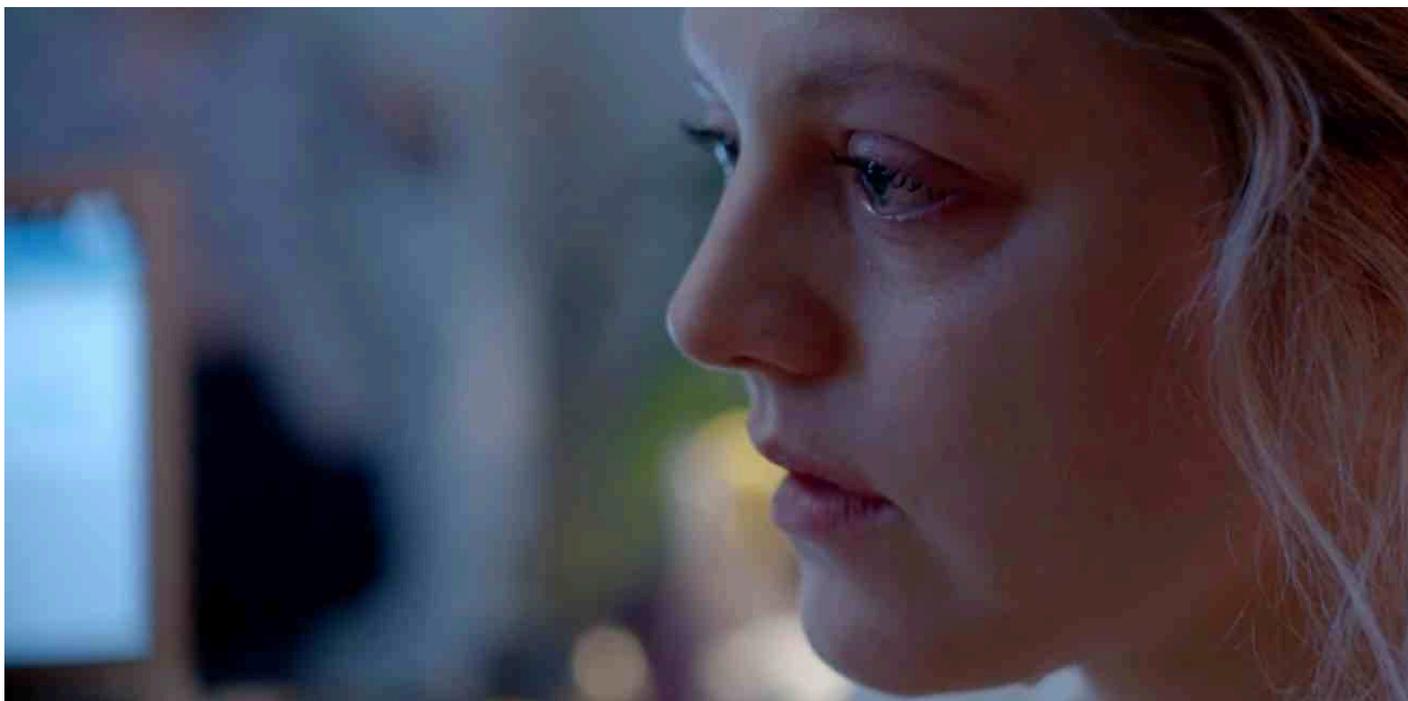
There are multiple recommendations to help a person in a state of emotional shock. However, the primary tips include empathy as an essential characteristic that the person providing help must have. *Helen*, the protagonist of the short film, recognizes *Christos* as her peer, understands him and indirectly experiences his feelings of anguish. *Helen's* empathy appears when *Christos* asks her if she has children and, through a close-up of a toy, we realize that the answer is affirmative. Added to the fact that she is an empathic

being, she has both the cognitive and emotional or affective ability to put herself in the emotional situation of the other.

*Helen* is correct in many of the behaviors and attitudes that specialists recommend when helping someone in shock. For example, she introduces herself and, at a certain point, addresses the man by his name, analyzes the situation, listens to the person and recapitulates what happened. *Helen* is also direct and active and provides, as far as possible, reassurance and calm. She tries to focus on the here and now and never transmits false hopes, remaining truthful and realistic.

## ACTIVITIES

- What do you consider to be the determining factor in *Helen's* actions so that *Christos* can find his passport?
- Do you think the immigration authorities talking to *Helen* are empathetic? Why?
- What could they have done differently to help *Christos* with his problem instead of banning him from travelling?
- Make a chart in which you present the differences you find between the two times *Helen* and *Christos* speak.



*Helen* manages to identify with *Christos's* feeling of distress, which is why she insists on helping him.

# CONTEXT

## COMMUNICATION

### Communication skills in the professional environment

Nowadays, when looking for a job, it is not enough to know, be an expert, and have experience for the work to be performed. It is also essential to have communication skills, even if it is not related to public relations or customer service. Communication skills such as eloquence, coherence, attentive listening, eye contact or cordiality will allow professionals to enjoy their work and improve their performance while expressing their ideas and thoughts clearly and concisely, work successfully in a team, serve customers, support their colleagues in specific tasks, etc.

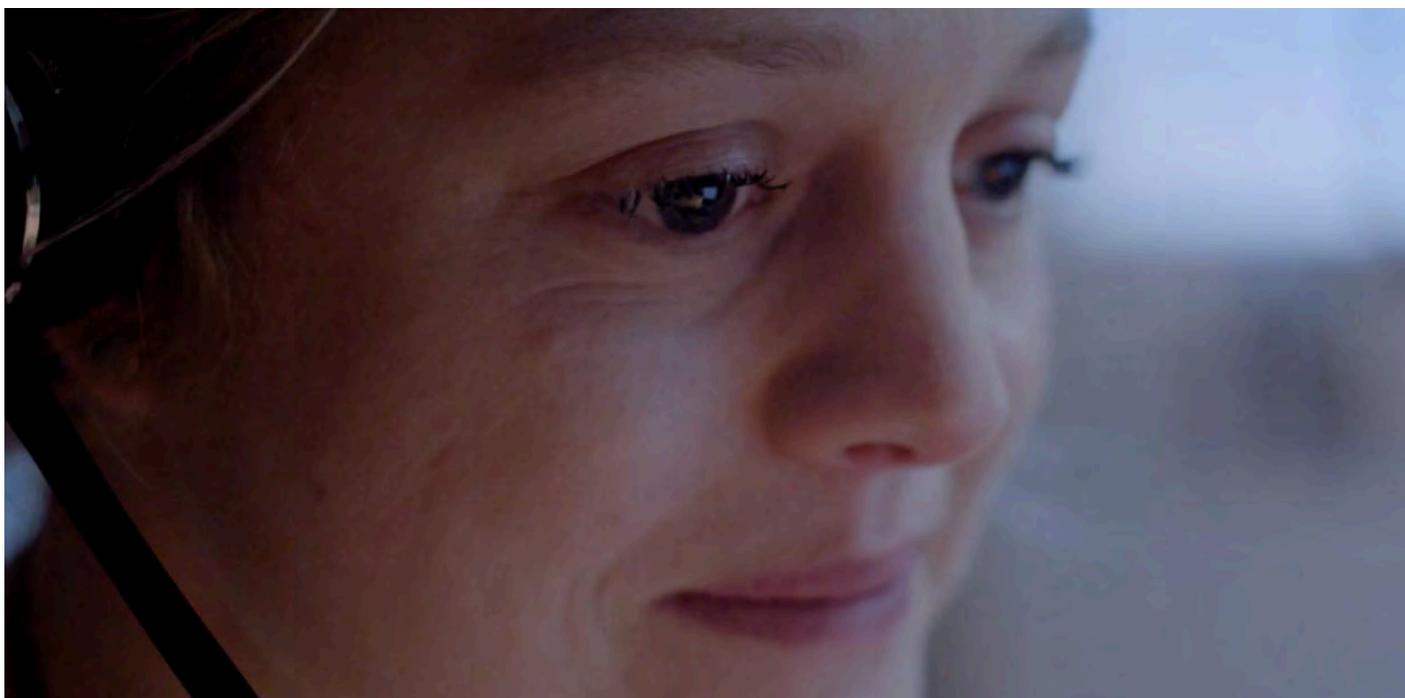
In any profession, job or trade, communication is an essential skill, whether it is to relate with your colleagues, clients, or bosses, and this job is no exception. Communication skills are an intrinsic part of the language profession and translation and interpreting services. Helen is not only providing customer service in which she must be cordial, friendly and attentive; she is also exercising a profession that requires advanced training that demonstrates a critical awareness in the use of the language. Because of this, she manages to navigate the

situation satisfactorily both professionally, empathetically, and humanely.

At first, when the problem arises in the short film, the protagonist is contacted only to clarify to *Christos* that he will not travel. However, she ends up having much more impact on the situation than the people who are present at the airport because Helen listens attentively to what *Christos* tells her, shows interest and willingness to help, analyzes the problem, and only through her kind and concise words manages to calm *Christos* down so that he can think calmly and in detail about where he may have left his passport.

## ACTIVITIES

- How would you describe Helen's type of care? How does she interact with her clients?
- What communication skills do you recognize in Helen that allowed her to help them solve their problem?
- Do you think you have communication skills? Which ones?
- Choose a skill that you consider fundamental to the work environment and argue your choice in a short piece of writing.



*Christos* achieves his goal, and *Helen* is happy to have been able to help him.

# CONTEXT

## GLOSSARY OF ENGLISH TERMS

**Customer:** /'kʌstəmə/ n. [countable]

A person who purchases goods or services from another.

**Buyer:** buy • er /'baɪə/ n. [countable]

A person who buys; a purchaser, especially for a store.

**Border control:** The measures taken by a state or a bloc of states to monitor its borders and regulate the movement of people, animals, and goods across the border.

**Here on business:** In the process of doing business or something official.

**Madman:** /'mæd.mən/ n. [countable]

A man who behaves in a very strange and uncontrolled or dangerous way.

**Gate:** /geɪt/ USA pronunciation - n. [countable]

1. Any means of access or entrance.
2. A passageway in a passenger terminal or pier that leads to a place for boarding a train, plane, or ship.

**Predicament:** /prɪ'dɪkəmənt/ n. [countable]

An unpleasantly difficult situation.

**Eve:** /iv/ n. [countable]

The evening or the day before an event, especially a holiday.

**Flesh:** /fleʃ/ n. [uncountable]

1. The soft substance of an animal body between the skin and the skeleton, especially muscular tissue.
2. A person's family or relatives.

**Slip away:**

1. To depart quietly or unobtrusively; steal off.
2. To recede; slowly vanish.

**Get nowhere:** To make no progress despite much action and effort.

**Beg:** /bɛg/ v., begged, beg • ging.

To ask for something as a gift or as a favor.

**Retrace:** re • trace /rɪ'treɪs/ v., -traced, -trac • ing.

1. To go back over.
2. To go back over with the memory.

**Suitcase:** /'sut,keɪs/ n. [countable]

A piece of luggage, esp. for carrying clothes while traveling.

**Trousers:** /'traʊzəz/ n. [plural][countable]

Clothing for the lower part of the body, having individual leg portions. Also called pants.

**Slip:** /slɪp/ v., slipped, slip • ping.

1. To (cause to) move or go smoothly; (cause to) slide.
2. To move or go quietly or without being noticed.

**Sauerkraut:** /'saʊə.kraʊt, 'saʊr-/ n. [uncountable]

Foodcabbage cut fine, salted, and allowed to become sour.

## ACTIVITIES

- Read the words and expressions in the glossary and look for their definition in Spanish.
- Listen and read the links proposed in the **Culture and Society** section.



Discover in this section a glossary of terms in English used in the short film **Happy New Year**.

# CULTURE & SOCIETY

The following links offer online resources related to the themes of the **CONTEXT** section.

## GLOSSARY 01



Gate

<https://youtu.be/ai34GxYltas>



Border control

[https://youtu.be/NtYo\\_5vlttdQ](https://youtu.be/NtYo_5vlttdQ)



Buyer

<https://youtu.be/SzW8TUoNo1M>



Customer

[https://youtu.be/V3\\_en3lcllas](https://youtu.be/V3_en3lcllas)



## GLOSSARY 01



Flesh

<https://youtu.be/aDfL9inzd30>



Eve

<https://youtu.be/HrwEDS1Ou6c>



Predicament

<https://librivox.org/short-story-collection-vol-061-by-various/>



Madman

<https://librivox.org/the-madman-and-the-pirate-by-rm-ballantyne/>



# CULTURE & SOCIETY

The following links offer online resources related to the themes of the **CONTEXT** section.

## GLOSSARY 03



Retrace

<https://youtu.be/C2vMvoKYMTw>



Beg

<https://youtu.be/cgiX7h-4NwK>



Slip away

<https://youtu.be/Bc9VqUUNsuo>



## GLOSSARY 04



Sauerkraut

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/w3cswpt4>



Trousers

<https://youtu.be/Pl7siWwzibs>



Suitcase

[https://archive.org/details/milliondollarsuitcase\\_1702\\_librivox](https://archive.org/details/milliondollarsuitcase_1702_librivox)

# PEDAGOGICAL ROUTE

## PRESENTATION OF HAPPY NEW YEAR

Reading of the synopsis and the technical sheet.



## VISUALIZATION OF HAPPY NEW YEAR

To watch the film.

## CINEMATOGRAPHIC LANGUAGE OF HAPPY NEW YEAR

Analysis of the cinematographic language of the film: what, how, who tells, the point of view.



## CONTEXT OF HAPPY NEW YEAR

Analysis of the context of the film.

## CULTURE AND SOCIETY OF HAPPY NEW YEAR

Additional resources related to the context of the film.



You will also find this sheet  
in the following link

<https://www.cinescuela.org/pedagogicos/es/presentacion/happy-new-year-223091>