

LECTURA GRADUADA • NIVEL A1

Una noche en Nueva York

A short story about courage, kindness, and finding your voice.

READ	LEARN	THINK
A complete short story	Glossary in Spanish	Comprehension practice

FREE LEARNING MATERIAL

Created for Spanish speakers who are ready to use English in real life.

ANTES DE LEER

Get ready

This is an A1 story. You do not need to understand every word. First, read for the main idea. Then use the glossary and read again.

Before you begin

Look at the title. Where is Sofía? What do you think happens at night? Write two ideas.

1. _____
2. _____

Meet the main character

SOFÍA

Sofía is 24 years old. She is from Bogotá, Colombia. She is visiting New York for the first time. She can read some English, but speaking makes her nervous.

Reading tip

When you see a word in **bold**, you can find it in the glossary at the end. Try to guess its meaning before you look it up.

THE STORY · PART 1

The wrong train

Sofía stands inside a **busy subway station**. It is 7:10 in the evening. Her cousin, Elena, is waiting at a small restaurant in Brooklyn.

Sofía looks at the map on her phone. The map says: Take the F train **downtown**. She sees two **platforms**, many **signs**, and hundreds of people. Everyone walks fast.

‘Downtown,’ she says **quietly**. ‘Which side is downtown?’

She wants to ask someone, but the words stay inside her head. She sees a train and gets on. The doors close.

After three stops, Sofía looks out the window. The station names are not on her map. Her stomach feels tight. She is on the **wrong** train.

She gets off at the next stop. The platform is almost **empty**. Her phone has only three percent battery.

‘Okay, Sofía,’ she tells herself. ‘You can do this.’

An older woman in a red coat is sitting on a **bench**. Sofía walks **toward** her.

‘Excuse me,’ Sofía says. Her voice is quiet. ‘I need to go to Brooklyn. Is this the right train?’

The woman smiles. ‘No, honey. You need the train on the other platform.’ She points to the **stairs**. ‘Go up, **cross** the **hall**, and take the F train downtown.’

Sofía understands most of the words. ‘Up, cross, F train downtown,’ she repeats.

‘Exactly,’ says the woman. ‘You’ve got it.’

Sofía smiles. Her English is not perfect, but it works.

THE STORY · PART 2

A small act of courage

Sofía finds the correct platform. A message appears on the screen: F train **delayed**. She does not know the word, but she sees people waiting. She understands: the train is **late**.

Her phone turns off.

Now Sofía cannot call Elena. She looks at the station clock. It is 7:38. She is already late.

A young man with a guitar is standing near the stairs. He is looking at a subway map.

‘Do you know when the F train is coming?’ Sofía asks.

‘Maybe ten minutes,’ he says. ‘Are you **lost**?’

Sofía **takes a breath**. ‘A little. I am going to a restaurant on Smith Street.’

‘That’s near my stop,’ he says. ‘You can come with me.’

His name is Marcus. He plays music in cafés around the city. He asks Sofía about Colombia. Sofía makes some mistakes, but Marcus understands her. When she does not know a word, she uses her hands or says it another way.

The train **finally** arrives. Inside, a little girl is singing. Two friends are laughing. A man is sleeping with a newspaper on his chest. Sofía looks around and feels less **afraid**.

‘New York is loud,’ she says.

Marcus laughs. ‘Very loud. But sometimes it listens.’

At the next stop, an older man enters the train. There are no empty **seats**. Sofía stands and **offers** him her seat.

‘Thank you,’ he says.

Sofía answers without thinking: ‘You’re welcome.’

The words come easily this time.

THE STORY · PART 3

Finding her voice

At 8:05, Sofía and Marcus leave the subway. The street is full of warm lights and the smell of food. Sofía sees the restaurant across the street.

Elena is standing outside. She runs to Sofía and hugs her.

'I was **worried**! What happened?' Elena asks in Spanish.

Sofía looks at Marcus and smiles. Then she answers Elena in English.

'I took the wrong train. My phone died. I asked for help, met a musician, and found the restaurant.'

Elena looks surprised. 'All of that in English?'

'Yes,' Sofía says. 'Not perfect English. My English.'

Marcus **waves goodbye** and walks toward the next corner.

Inside the restaurant, the server brings two menus. Elena starts to **order**, but Sofía gently touches her arm.

'Let me try,' she says.

She looks at the server. 'Good evening. I would like the chicken soup, please. And can I have a glass of water?'

'Of course,' the server says.

It is a simple order. It is a small moment. But for Sofía, it feels like a door opening.

Outside, New York moves fast under the night sky. Cars honk. Trains run below the street. People speak many languages.

Sofía is still learning English. She still makes **mistakes**. But tonight she learns something important: **confidence** does not come before speaking. Confidence comes **because** you speak.

And sometimes, finding your way starts with three small words:

'Excuse me. Please.'

Words to keep

Read each word aloud. Then cover the Spanish column and try to remember the meaning.

ENGLISH	ESPAÑOL
busy	ocupado/a, con mucha actividad
subway station	estación de metro
downtown	hacia el centro
platform	andén
sign	letrero / señal
quietly	en voz baja
wrong	equivocado/a
empty	vacío/a
bench	banca / banco
toward	hacia
stairs	escaleras
cross	cruzar
hall	pasillo
delayed	retrasado/a
late	tarde / con retraso
lost	perdido/a
take a breath	respirar profundamente
finally	finalmente

ENGLISH	ESPAÑOL
afraid	asustado/a
offer	ofrecer
seat	asiento
worried	preocupado/a
wave goodbye	despedirse con la mano
order	pedir comida / ordenar
mistake	error
confidence	confianza

COMPREHENSION

Check your understanding

A. Choose the best answer

1. Where is Sofía trying to go?

- a) A hotel b) A restaurant c) An airport

2. Why does Sofía get off the first train?

- a) It is the wrong train b) It is too full c) She sees Elena

3. Who first helps Sofía?

- a) Marcus b) A server c) A woman in a red coat

4. What happens to Sofía's phone?

- a) She loses it b) The battery dies c) Marcus takes it

5. What does Marcus do?

- a) He plays music b) He drives a taxi c) He works at the restaurant

B. True or false

1. Sofía is visiting New York for the first time. **TRUE / FALSE**

2. Sofía's cousin is named Mariana. **TRUE / FALSE**

3. The F train is delayed. **TRUE / FALSE**

4. Sofía gives her seat to an older man. **TRUE / FALSE**

5. Elena orders Sofía's food for her. **TRUE / FALSE**

COMPREHENSION

Think and use English

C. Answer in a complete sentence

1. Why is Sofía nervous at the beginning of the story?

2. How does the woman in the red coat help her?

3. What does Sofía do when she does not know a word?

4. Why is ordering dinner important to Sofía?

5. What does Sofía learn about confidence?

D. Make it personal

Have you ever felt nervous speaking English? What happened? Write 3-5 sentences.

ANSWER KEY

Review your work

A. Multiple choice

1. b 2. a 3. c 4. b 5. a

B. True or false

1. True 2. False 3. True 4. True 5. False

C. Suggested answers

1. She is nervous because she does not feel confident speaking English.
2. The woman tells Sofía to go to the other platform and take the F train downtown.
3. She uses her hands or says the idea another way.
4. It shows that she can use her own English independently.
5. She learns that confidence comes because you speak, not before you speak.

**KEEP
GOING**

Read the story one more time aloud. On your second reading, notice how many more words feel familiar.

INGLÉS REAL. PARA UNA VIDA SIN BARRERAS.