

Duolingo and Netflix Partner Launch ‘Learn Korean or Else’ Campaign Ahead of Squid Game Season 2

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Duo the Owl Joins the Pink Guard to Challenge Fans

PITTSBURGH, Dec. 10, 2024 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Duolingo, the world's leading mobile learning platform, today announced a new partnership with Netflix's *Squid Game* to promote Korean language learning through an immersive, one-of-a-kind campaign, including an update to its Korean course. Titled "Learn Korean or Else", the campaign combines Duolingo's humorous approach to promoting learning with the high-stakes energy of Netflix's *Squid Game* to motivate fans to do their Korean lessons, just in time for the premiere of Season 2 on December 26, 2024.

Duolingo is adding over 40 keywords and phrases from *Squid Game* to its Korean course, enabling learners to connect even more closely with the series. By learning Korean, *Squid Game* fans can appreciate the renowned series on an entirely new level, experiencing dialogue, expressions, and cultural context in ways only possible through understanding the language.

"We saw a 40% increase in Korean learners just after *Squid Game* Season 1, underscoring the powerful connection between entertainment, culture, and language learning," said Manu Orssaud, CMO of Duolingo. "This campaign allows us to continue that momentum in a way only Duolingo can—with humor, intensity, and a bit of chaos! We hope fans will accept Duo's challenge to learn Korean and immerse themselves in the experience."

"Great stories can come from anywhere, and last year, about 13% of hours viewed on Netflix in the US were non-English titles — with Korean, Spanish, and Japanese stories attracting the biggest audiences. Embracing the authenticity of these local stories is really important to us. Duolingo was the perfect partner for *Squid Game* Season 2 because not only did we see fans gravitate toward the app to learn Korean after Season 1, but also as a brand, they were willing to go bold with us," said Magno Herran, Vice President of Partner & Brand Marketing at Netflix. "We discovered there were a lot of shared traits between Duo the Owl and the Pink Guards — both very determined and menacing. So we made it official and gave Duo a Pink Guard uniform and ultimately created something we know fans will love and talk about, cheering A-ssa! in celebration."

The partnership leverages Duolingo's beloved mascot, Duo the Owl, who has taken on the role of a *Squid Game* Pink Guard. Much like the series' challenging environment, Duo isn't afraid to raise the stakes. Whether chasing down users in videos or appearing at fan events and on billboards, Duo reminds fans to learn Korean or "face the consequences".

Campaign Highlights

- **Creative Series:** A suspenseful teaser video introduces Duo as a Pink Guard, setting the stage for the "Learn Korean or Else" message, which will also run on Netflix's ad-supported plan. Following the teaser, an extended music video, directed by Warren Fu (Dua Lipa's "Levitating" and Megan thee Stallion feat. RM's "Neva Play") and choreographed by award-winning dancer and choreographer Sean Bankhead, features Duo leading a high-energy dance routine with guards in a K-pop remix of *Squid Game*'s Pink Guards as they humorously chase a learner who forgot to complete their Korean lesson. The cinematic videos will air across YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram.
- **"Korean or Get Eaten":** Netflix's music lab team created a K-pop remix of the ominous song, Pink Guards, now available on Spotify. The track "Korean or Get Eaten" uses a naming convention Duolingo employs for its music tracks to playfully threaten learners to do their lessons (e.g. "Japanese or Broken Knees", "Spanish or Vanish"). The lyrics, performed in both English and Korean, spotlight the recognizable Red Light, Green Light game played in *Squid Game* and features "hidden" threats in Korean, only understandable if you did your Korean lesson (e.g. 살아 남아야지 "Don't you wanna survive?" 빨리 외워 "Hurry up and memorize it"). The track supports the campaign's dance challenge on social media, encouraging fans to engage with Korean culture through a fun, viral music experience.
- **TikTok Interactive Game Filter:** An exclusive TikTok filter, inspired by the show's Red Light, Green Light game, lets users test their Korean skills with voice-activated challenges featuring Duo as *Squid Game*'s menacing doll in the iconic pink suit.
- **Out-of-Home Stunts:** In true *Squid Game* style, Duolingo and Netflix are taking over Koreatown billboards in LA, and NYC, with cryptic Korean messages challenging viewers to "learn Korean to stay safe". In an unforgettable live stunt, Duo and his Pink Guards will hack Netflix's iconic Sunset Boulevard marquee billboard, replacing the English words with Korean, in their menacing attempt to influence fans to learn the language.

As fans eagerly await *Squid Game* Season 2, Duolingo is set to bring them closer to the action than ever before—through language. With viral social content, immersive fan interactions, and innovative language learning challenges, Duolingo's "Learn Korean or Else" campaign will be impossible to ignore.

About Duolingo

Duolingo (www.duolingo.com) is the most popular language-learning platform and the most downloaded education app worldwide. The app makes learning new languages fun with bite-sized lessons that feel like playing a game. The company's mission is to develop the best education in the world and make it universally available. Duolingo offers over 100 total courses across 42 distinct languages, from Spanish, French, German and Japanese to Navajo and Yiddish.

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About Squid Game:

Created by Hwang Dong-hyuk, *Squid Game* premiered in 2021 and quickly became Netflix's [most popular title](#) ever. This global sensation boosted interest in K-content, [iconic moments](#) went viral, Vans slip-on sneakers sales increased 8,000%, and Halloween costumes sold out around the world, solidifying its place in pop culture. The series made [Emmy history](#) with first-ever wins for a non-English language series. Following this success, Netflix debuted [Squid Game: The Challenge](#), the [Emmy nominated](#) and [BAFTA winning](#) reality series that also topped the [Netflix Global Top 10](#). The franchise continues to expand with [Squid Game: The Experience](#), a touring activation where fans can play series-inspired games; *Squid Game: Virtuals*, a [Webby-winning](#) VR adventure; and in 2024, a multiplayer [video game](#), *Squid Game: Unleashed*. *Squid Game* season 1 is now on Netflix, with season 2 debuting on December 26 and the third and final season arriving in 2025.

A video accompanying this announcement is available at <https://www.globenewswire.com/NewsRoom/AttachmentNg/431f3af0-9f0e-4b7f-ab7e-403a8aeb6ef8>