

1. Video games

The subject of this week's lesson is video games, the earliest forms of which were developed in the late 1960s. One of the landmarks in the history of home video games was the arrival of the immensely popular 'Nintendo 64' system, launched on the North American market on 29th September 1996.

Level

Pre-intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level A2-B1 and above)

How to use the lesson

1. Brainstorm on the subject of video games. How many of your students play them, and what do their favourite games consist of? Do they think video games are in any way bad?
2. Divide the students into pairs and give them five to ten minutes to read through the text on Worksheet A, encouraging them to look up new vocabulary. Tell them they are going to have to fill the gaps with appropriate words. You could perhaps suggest that they guess what those words might be before starting the exercise.
3. When the time is up, hand out Worksheet B and give the students another five to ten minutes to fill the gaps using the correct words from the box. Make it clear that (a) there is only one possible word to fill each gap, and (b) there are sixteen words in the box but only twelve gaps in the text, meaning that four of the words should not be used.
4. When the time is up, check answers in open class. Then, keeping the students in their pairs, give them at least five minutes to try the second exercise on Worksheet B, in which they have to put the mixed-up transcript of a conversation back together again.
5. Check answers in open class.

Answers

Part A (gap-fill)

1. inside
2. Technology
3. anywhere
4. presents
5. popular
6. idea
7. fire
8. features
9. mouth
10. enemies
11. alternative
12. positive

(Words that should not be used: happy, eat, friends, games)

Part B (mixed-up transcript of conversation)

E	James, it's after 10.30.
I	Is it?
F	Yes, it is. It's time for you to go to bed.
K	Oh, Dad, I'm still trying to beat my high score.
B	Don't worry about the high score. You've got school in the morning.
L	I know, I know. Just five more minutes.
G	OK, five minutes – and no more. What game is it, anyway?
C	One that Mark gave me.
N	I hope it's not one of those violent ones.
A	No, it isn't.
H	Good. Too many of these modern video games are violent. And none of them are as good as the ones I used to play, like Space Invaders.
D	What happened in that?
J	You controlled a spaceship and had to kill as many aliens as possible.
M	Oh, right, not violent at all, then?

2. Related Websites

Send your students to these websites, or just take a look yourself:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid_4820000/newsid_4825300/4825364.stm

A BBC *Newsround* forum (2006) asking 'How important is gaming to you?' Contains links to numerous other *Newsround* pieces on the subject of video and computer games. Aimed primarily at children and younger teenagers. Appropriate for pre-intermediate level.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid_5400000/newsid_5405800/5405846.stm

Another BBC *Newsround* forum (2006), this time asking 'How useful are computer games?' Appropriate for pre-intermediate level.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/new_media/1747040.stm

A BBC article (2002) on the debate surrounding violent video games. Intermediate level and above.