
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute English

Is a game just a game?



NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript

Rob

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute English. I'm Rob...

Finn

...and I'm Finn. Hello.

Rob

Hello, Finn. Did you have a good weekend?

Finn

Yeah, it was OK thanks although, you know, I'm a bit tired now.

Rob

Why's that?

Finn

It's a bit embarrassing but I stayed up all night playing a computer game.

Rob

All night?! You must be addicted. **Addicted**, by the way, means unable to stop doing something.

Finn

Well, maybe today's programme might have some advice for me.

Rob

That's right. Today we're discussing whether computer games are bad for our health – and in particular – bad for children.

Finn

OK, Rob, why don't you wake me up a little bit by asking me today's quiz question?

Rob

OK – here goes. In America, what percentage of people who play computer games are female? Is it...

- a) 28%?
- b) 38%?
- or c) 48%?

Finn

Well, I do know a few female gamers so how about b) 38%.

Rob

OK, right. Go for the middle option? We'll find out if that's the right answer later on. OK, so what kind of computer games do you like to play, Finn?

Finn

Well, I quite like those role-playing games. You know, the fantasy role-playing games.

Rob

OK, well, **role playing** is where you create your own characters and stories in a **fantasy** – or imaginary – world. But, to be honest, those kind of games aren't really **up my alley** – which means they're not really suited to my tastes or abilities. Any other kind of games you like, Finn?

Finn

Yeah, I also quite like **shoot-'em-up** games. These are games where you have to do a lot of shooting and there's a lot of violence.

Rob

It's funny because you don't strike me as a violent person, Finn.

Finn

I'm not, at all. I wouldn't hurt a fly, Rob! But maybe shooting people on a computer screen seems a bit more harmless.

Rob

OK. And **not to hurt a fly** means to be gentle and unwilling to make people unhappy. And **harmless** means unlikely to hurt or upset anyone. Well, let's hear Internet safety advisor Alan MacKenzie discussing how adult computer games can have a negative effect on children.

Alan MacKenzie, Internet safety advisor

Many people understandably will just think that a game is just a game and not realising the explicit content that's in there – and as you suggest, the violence and sexualisation of women in particular, which is highly inappropriate for anybody, never mind children.

Finn

Well, you know, if you want my opinion, Rob, a game is just a game. It's generally a harmless form of entertainment. What do you think?

Rob

I'm torn, actually – meaning I'm unable to decide. Most people, like you Finn, probably aren't affected by what you see in computer games. But we can't ignore the small percentage of people who are affected.

Finn

Well, that's true really, isn't it, Rob? And whilst playing computer games all night doesn't make me violent, it certainly makes me very tired!

Rob

I can see that. But also Finn – when do you and your wife actually talk to each other – when you're in your own computer fantasy world for hours on end?

Finn

Yeah, it's not great, is it? And **for hours on end** means a long time, by the way! So, I don't know. Maybe if she played as well, then we could have some virtual conversations...

Rob

Well, that sounds ridiculous! But let's move on, Alan talks about **explicit content** in games. What does that mean?

Finn

That means showing things in an open and direct way. So some adult games contain open violence and sexualisation.

Rob

And shall we explain what **sexualisation** means?

Finn

Yes. It means making someone or something sexual – and in this case, women. This might be through the shape of a woman's body, or the clothes she wears, or the way she behaves in these games.

Rob

Alan says this type of explicit content – violent or sexual – is inappropriate for computer games. And **inappropriate** means not the right thing for a particular situation.

Finn

And he is worried about children accessing this type of content. Let's hear more from him. What advice does he give?

Alan MacKenzie, Internet safety advisor

So it's a matter of educating the parents and the wider community in these issues, and making them aware of the type of content that's in there, and why it's inappropriate, and the effects that it may be having on their children and their behaviour.

Finn

Alan thinks it's the responsibility of parents and the **wider community** – now that means other groups of people, such as friends, relatives and teachers for example – to check on what children are viewing and playing.

Rob

But this will only work if they understand which types of content are OK and which aren't.

Finn

That's right. So the adults need educating too. They need to be shown.

Rob

Yes, that's right. So I'll be checking on your behaviour from now on, Finn!

Finn

OK, That's probably a good idea. So, let's hear the answer to today's quiz question next.

Rob

Yes and I asked you, in America, what percentage of people who play computer games are female? Is it... a) 28% b) 38% or c) 48%?

Finn

And I went for the middle option, as usual, and I said b) 38%.

Rob

And you are wrong, this time Finn! The answer is actually c) 48%. Are you surprised by that?

Finn

Yes and no. I think a lot more people are playing games in general, so lots of them must be women.

Rob

Absolutely. Why not? OK, shall we now listen to the words we learned today?

Finn

Good idea. We heard:

addicted

fantasy

up your alley

shoot 'em up

not to hurt a fly

harmless

for hours on end
explicit content
sexualisation
inappropriate
wider community

Rob

Thank you. Well, that brings us to the end of today's 6 Minute English. We hope you enjoyed today's programme. You can hear other 6 Minute English programmes at bbclearningenglish.com. Please join us again soon.

Both

Bye.

Vocabulary

addicted

unable to stop doing something

fantasy

imaginary

up your alley

suited to your tastes or abilities

shoot 'em up

a film, TV programme or computer game that has a lot of shooting and violence

wouldn't hurt a fly

to be gentle and not wanting to hurt a fly

harmless

not able or not likely to cause harm

for hours on end

a long time

explicit content

showing things in an open and direct way

sexualisation

making someone or something sexual

inappropriate

not the right thing for a particular situation

wider community

other groups of people, such as friends, relatives and teachers