

READING

# Video game graphics across history

**LEVEL**

Upper-Intermediate  
(B2)

**NUMBER**

EN\_B2\_2073R

**LANGUAGE**

English

## Learning outcomes

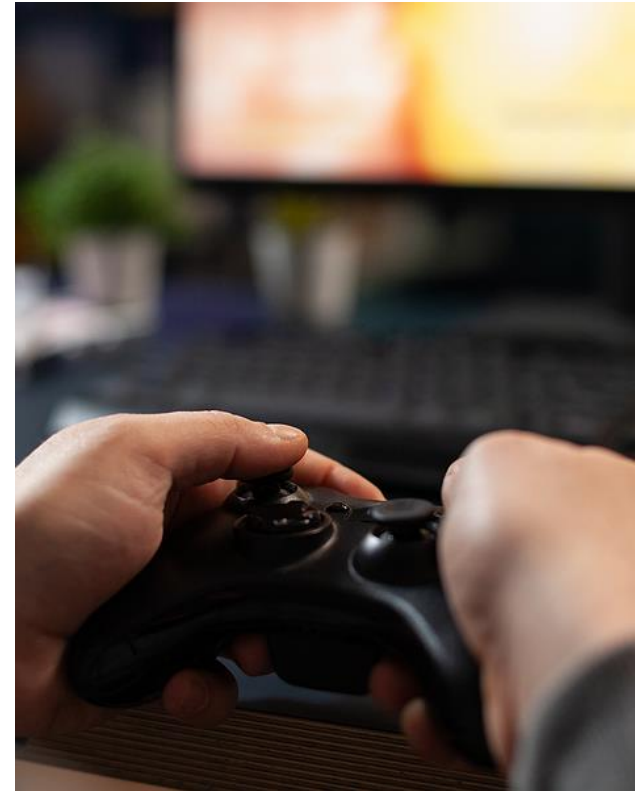
- I can read and understand the main points in a text about the evolution of video game graphics.
- I can discuss and explain the evolution of video games and give my own views on the topic.



## Warm-up

**Do you have a  
favourite game or  
console?**

**Share your answer with the  
rest of the class!**





# Vocabulary

**Match** the words to their definition. You will come across these words in the text!

**1** aesthetic

**2** to scroll

**3** massively

**4** fixed

**5** overlay

**a** arranged and not able to be changed

**b** extremely, or very much

**c** the characteristics of something that relate to beauty and artistic quality

**d** to cover something with a layer of something else

**e** to move something on a screen in order to see a different part of it

# Video game graphics across history (1/3)

**Read** the first part of the text below.

Video games sell based on their aesthetics, and their looks have come a long way, from two-dimensional graphics to virtual reality.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the home PC was still seen largely as a tool for work rather than play, and so gaming happened outside the home in video arcades. Arcade games were mostly two-dimensional and very simplistic. Sometimes programmers tried to create the illusion of a three-dimensional picture by using lines and different colours, but it was nothing compared to what was to come.

During the 70s and 80s, home video game consoles were being developed - some of the best known were by Atari. Atari's first major console sold for a higher price compared to those on sale today. Despite this, it was a huge hit upon its release.

The two-dimensional, top-down perspective dominated gaming into the 1990s, particularly in war games, role playing games, and construction simulation games.

During this same decade, the side scrolling game became popular...







# Paraphrasing

**Paraphrase** the text you've just read by completing the sentences below.

1 In the 1970s and 1980s, gaming happened outside the home in video arcades because...

2 Arcade games were...

3 Atari was...





# Prediction

1. **Read** the text in the yellow box.
2. Then **answer** the questions below.



*During this same decade, the side scrolling game became popular...*



What do you think side scrolling games are like?

Can you name any side scrolling games?



# Video game graphics across history (2/3)

1. **Read** the second part of the text.
2. Then **answer** the questions below.

In side-scrolling games, players followed characters as they moved left and right - they usually couldn't move in other directions. In most of these games, the screen would continue to scroll forward slowly and it was the job of the player to keep up with it while completing tasks. At-home gaming consoles at this time included those released by Nintendo, which showed that graphics had evolved massively since previous consoles were released.

Three-dimensional games were the next big thing. These games often used fixed backgrounds. Around this time, the first-person viewpoint also became popular in certain video games, particularly in driving games and shooter games. One of the advantages of a first-person perspective was better control and aim of the avatar. However, it was more difficult to assess depth and distance.

1. What was an advantage of first-person viewpoint games? A disadvantage?
2. Can you describe what an avatar is?





# True or false

1. **Read** the statements below.
2. **Decide** if they are *true* or *false*.

		true	false
1	In many side scrolling games, the screen continued to slowly scroll forward.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	The graphics in Nintendo consoles were comparable to the graphics in previous consoles.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	First-person viewpoint games often used fixed backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	First-person viewpoint games were particularly popular in fighting and sports games.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Players had better control and aim of the avatar in side scrolling games.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Prediction

1. **Read** the words in the pink box. 2. Then **answer** the question in the yellow box.

*immerse*

*sensations*

*another world*

*augmented*



**Which evolution of  
video games do you  
think the text will  
cover next?**

# Video game graphics across history (3/3)

1. **Read** the last part of the text. 2. Then **answer** the questions below.

The most recent development has been in virtual reality (VR). The idea of virtual reality has long been played around with but it is beginning to become reality for ever-larger numbers of people. It involves wearing a special VR headset which immerses you in another world by using computer generated images, sounds, and other sensations. By applying this to a game, players feel like they are in the game. In the most advanced applications, the body movements of players are sensed and sent to a computer to be translated into movements within the game.

As an aside to VR we have augmented reality, or AR. AR allows you to see the world that you actually live in, but with something overlaid on it. Pokémon Go is a famous example of a popular AR game, in which people can see Pokémon on their phone screen in the world around them.

Were your predictions correct?

Have you tried any VR or AR games?

What do you think their advantages and disadvantages are?



The idea of virtual reality has long been **played around with**...

Can you think of any other technological ideas that have been **played around with** for a long time?



## Discuss

**Are arcade games still popular in your country?**



**Have you ever heard of Atari? Why do you think their consoles were so expensive when they were first released?**



# Learn more about your classmates

In breakout rooms or together as a class, learn more about each other.

1. **Ask** and **answer** the questions below.
2. **Share** at least **one interesting fact** about your classmate with the rest of the class!

1 Did you own a video game console in the 1990s?

2 Have you ever beaten a video game?

3 Are video games popular in your country?

4 Do you know anyone who loves video games?  
Hates video games?







# End of the lesson

Idiom

***The game is up!***

**Meaning:** used to say that the truth has been discovered, especially when someone has been doing something wrong and will have to stop

**Example:** The game is up! We've found your fingerprints all over the weapon.



# Additional practice



# Fill in the gaps

Fill in the gaps with the correct word.

- 1 If you \_\_\_\_\_ across the screen, you will find the button you need to click.
- 2 Technological developments have changed video games \_\_\_\_\_ in the past 20 years. It's hard to believe just how far they've come!
- 3 In AR games, characters are \_\_\_\_\_ on the world we live in!
- 4 Many early three-dimensional video games featured a \_\_\_\_\_ background.
- 5 The \_\_\_\_\_ of video games have changed drastically over the years, in large part due to improvements in graphics.

aesthetics  
scroll  
massively  
fixed  
overlaid



# Discuss

**Answer** the questions below.

**Do you prefer playing against computer opponents or other human players?**



**Why do you think video games can be addictive?**



# What's your opinion?

1. **Read** the statement. 2. Then **answer** the questions below.

“

**A friendship made through an online video game can be just as enriching as an in-person friendship.**



Do you agree or disagree? Why?

What are some pros and cons of an online friendship?







# Answer key

**P.4:** 1.) c 2.) e 3.) b 4.) a 5.) d

**P.6:**

Example: In the 1970s and 1980s, gaming happened outside the home in video arcades because...the home PC was seen as more a tool for work than for entertainment purposes.

**P.8:** 1. Advantage: better control 2. Disadvantage: harder to assess depth and distance

**P.9:** 1.) true 2.) false 3.) false 4.) false 5.) false

**P.18:** 1.) scroll 2.) massively 3.) overlaid 4.) fixed 5.) aesthetics



# Summary

## Video games

- *aesthetic; to scroll; massively; fixed; to overlay; to immerse; augmented; to play around with*
- *Arcade games were simple but I liked the **aesthetic**.*
- *Now, **augmented** reality allows you to play games in your own world.*



# Vocabulary

aesthetic

to scroll

massively

fixed

to overlay

to immerse

augmented

to play around with

