GLOSSARY

fighting – violent; with two or more people physically struggling against each other
* In this fighting game, you can make the characters kick and hit each other in several directions.

role-playing – imagining that one is another person; acting as if one were another person; using another person's identity
* When I was in high school, some of my friends played Dungeons & Dragons, a role-playing game where players act like characters in the story.

simulation – a game where players re-create the real world; a game where players act as if they were in a real, parallel life
* This is a popular simulation game where players have homes, jobs, pets, cars, and everything else that they have in the real world.

strategy – a careful, detailed plan for doing something; a plan for moving armies and for fighting in a war
* Our company needs a new strategy for marketing its health products.

mission – an important and adventurous job that one must do
* The secret unit's mission is to find the nuclear laboratory and destroy it.

graphics – animation; the designs and drawings that are used in a computer program, movie, or book
* These graphics are very helpful in understanding how the human heart works.

console – a small machine that is used to play video games
* The new video game console put out by this company is much smaller than their last one.

multiplatform – able to work on more than one system; able to work with more than one type of equipment
* Microsoft Word is multiplatform because it can be used on PCs and Macs.

joystick – a small piece of equipment that has many buttons and a stick for one to hold to move things on a computer screen, especially in a video game
* In this game, you need to push up on the joystick to make the character jump.

navigation system – something that is used to move around in a video game
* This navigation system is confusing because you have to push the left arrow to move right, and the right arrow to move left!

to be into (something) – to like something very much; to be interested in something
* Were you into sports when you were in high school?

retro – related to the styles or fashion of recent decades; related to the styles or fashion of the recent past
* Mindy has a retro style, often wearing dresses from the 1960s and 1970s.

old school – old-fashioned; not modern; traditional
* Romulo has a lot of old school ideas about how women should stay at home and men should go to work.

violent – using a lot of physical strength and force that is meant to hurt or kill another person
* The government report warned that young children shouldn't watch action movies because they are too violent.

gamer – a person who plays video games all the time and knows a lot about them
* My parents don't understand that I spend so many hours playing video games because I'm training to be a world-class gamer.

3-D – three-dimensional; seeming to have three measurements: length, width, and height; not appearing to be flat
* To see this movie in 3-D, you'll need to wear these red and green plastic glasses.

gore – blood, usually from an injury caused by violence
* The movie Braveheart is full of blood and gore because it is about war.

to pass – to say "no" to something; to decide not to do something that one is being asked to do; to not accept something that one is being offered
* Yolanda asked me to go to the movies with her yesterday, but I passed, saying that I needed to study.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What does Achim think about old school games?
a) He thinks they have a lot of blood and gore.
b) He thinks they are like last year's retro games.
c) He thinks they are boring and uninteresting.

2. Why does Marcia pass on the game?
a) Because it is a violent fighting game.
b) Because it is too old school and retro.
c) Because it isn't multiplatform.

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WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

mission
The word "mission," in this podcast, means an important and adventurous job that one must do: "The team is on a mission to raise sales by 40% in six months." A "mission" is also the work that a group of Christians do when they go to another country to teach people about their religion: "Gabriela is on a two-year mission trip in Ghana." Most businesses and organizations have a "mission statement," which describes their purpose, or the reason that they exist. For example, Google's mission statement is "to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful." Finally, when someone finishes a difficult project, or something that has taken a lot of time and effort, he or she might say "Mission accomplished!" to show that he or she is proud of having finished the work.

console
In this podcast, the word "console" means a small machine that is used to play video games: "When I was younger, we had an Atari console to play simple video games." A "console" is also the flat surface of a machine that has many buttons: "The people who fly planes have to know what each and every button does on the plane's console." As a verb, "to console (someone)" means to comfort someone, or to be nice to someone who feels very sad or worried: "No one knew how to console Marina when her husband died." Or, "Sometimes the best way to console other people is simply to listen to them talk about why they are so sad."

CULTURE NOTE

There are many different types of consoles and "platforms" (hardware) for playing video games. The simplest is a "personal computer game," which is a game that can be played on one's computer, without any special equipment. Most computers come with personal computer games like Solitaire and Minesweeper.

A "console game" is played by using a special piece of equipment. If the console is connected to one's television set at home, it is called a "video game console." These games are usually played by using a joystick to make the characters move.

If the console doesn't need to be connected to anything else, and the whole piece of equipment can be held in one's hand, it is called a "hand-held game console." Hand-held game consoles are good to have when one is traveling and wants something to do to make the time pass more quickly.

Many video games are "arcade games" that are played in "arcades," or large rooms or buildings that are filled with many big machines that are used to play video games. Many people like to go to arcades, where they can put coins into the machines to play. The arcade games remember who had the highest "score" (number of points) so players can compete with each other over time.

Finally, "online games" and "mobile games" use different technology to play video games. An "online game" is played over the Internet, so that people in different places can play against each other. A "mobile game" is played by using a cell phone or a small hand-held computer, so that people can play anytime, anywhere.

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Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – c; 2 – a

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 295: Playing Video Games.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 295. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Visit our website at eslpod.com and take a look at our ESL Podcast Store, which has some additional premium courses that you may be interested in.

This episode is called "Playing Video Games." Let's get started.

[start of story]

Achim: Check out this new game I just got!

Marcia: Let me see. Oh, it's a fighting game. I'm not into those. I like role-playing or simulation games a lot better.

Achim: This isn't just a fighting game. You have to use strategy for each mission. Check out these amazing graphics!

Marcia: I can't play that at my house. I have a different console.

Achim: Yes, you can. It's multiplatform. Look at the box. It says that you can use a joystick as your navigation system or a keyboard and mouse.

Marcia: You know, right now I'm really into retro games.

Achim: You mean last year's games?

Marcia: No, I mean really old school games, like the ones my parents used to play.

Achim: You mean like Pac-Man and Pong?!

Marcia: Yeah, exactly. They're classic and a lot less violent.

Achim: Yeah, but they're so boring you fall asleep playing them. You can't call yourself a gamer if you play those kinds of games. Give me 3-D action and some blood and gore.

Marcia: You can have it. I'll pass.

[end of story]

Our dialogue between Achim and Marcia begins by Achim saying, "Check out this new game I just got!" Achim is talking about a video game, something like Xbox or PlayStation Portable. I have to tell you that I don't play video games, and I've never played with Xbox or any of the other video games that are popular now. I last played a video game, I think, in 1981 when I was just leaving high school. But, many people do play video games. Achim says, "Check out," or look at, "this new game I got!"

Marcia says, "Let me see. Oh, it's a fighting game," meaning it's a game that is a competition between two or more people who are fighting each other, a rather violent game perhaps. Marcia says, "I'm not into those." To be "into" means to like. So, she's saying, "I don't like fighting games. I like role-playing or simulation games better."

"Role (role) -playing (playing)" is when you imagine that you are another person, and you act as if you were another person. You use another person's identity, you could say. That's a general definition for "role-playing." "Simulation" (simulation) is a game where players try to recreate the real world. It's a game where you act as if you were in a real, you could say parallel, life. That's a "simulation."

Achim says, "This isn't just a fighting game. You have to use strategy for each mission." "Strategy" is a careful or detailed plan for doing something. For example, you'd talk about strategy in a war: where you're going to put your soldiers, how you're going to use them. "Strategy" is any sort of plan to do something. It is often associated with a war or fighting in some ways, but doesn't have to be.

A "mission" is an important, usually interesting or adventurous, job that you have to do. You may know the movie Mission Impossible – with my brother, Tom Cruise! Mission Impossible is about a man on a special secret government mission – a job, something he has to do. We often use that word "mission" in talking about secret government things that have to be done, often related to

spying or war. Here, it just means what the person in your game has to do – what their task is, what their job is.

Achim says, "Check out these amazing graphics!" The "graphics" refer to the "animation," or the designs and the drawings that are used in a computer game or, perhaps, a movie, or even a book. Someone who designs things that are related to pictures is called a "graphic designer."

Marcia says, "I can't play that at my house. I have a different console" (console). A "console" is a small machine that you use to play video games, like an Xbox or PlayStation Portable. The word "console" and the word "mission" have additional meanings in English; take a look at our Learning Guide for some extra explanations of those words.

Achim says, "Yes, you can" – yes you can use it at your house. "It's multiplatform." "Multiplatform," it can also be pronounced "mul-tee-platform," is when you can use a game on more than one kind of system, or more than one kind of equipment.

"Look at the box," Achim says. "It says that you can use a joystick as your navigation system or a keyboard and mouse." A "joystick" (joystick – one word) is a small piece of equipment that has, usually, different buttons and a little stick that you can move something up or down with. Usually there are joysticks with a lot of video games, and that's where you usually see the word "joystick." A "navigation system" is something you use to move around in the video game.

Marcia says, "You know, right now I'm really into retro games." "Retro" (retro) refers to older styles or fashions, usually from 10 years, or 20 years, or 30 years ago. When I was growing up in the 1970s, as a child, there were many movies and TV shows about the 1950s, movies like Grease and television shows like Happy Days, and they were about America in the 1950s. That was considered "retro," it was from a previous time. Now, of course, you have "retro" meaning the 1980s or the 1990s.

Achim says, "You mean last year's games?" And Marcia says, "No, I mean really old school games." The expression "old school" is sometimes used in popular music to talk about traditional – not modern – music, maybe even "old-fashioned." Something that isn't popular right now; that would be "old school." It's an informal term, something that you might hear a teenager say.

Marcia says that she likes the games her parents used to play. Achim says, "You mean like Pac-Man and Pong?!" "Pac-Man" (Pac-Man) and "Pong" (Pong)

were two video games popular in the 1970s, two of the earliest video games. When I was growing up, we had a Pong video game at home, and it basically was a ping-pong game. Pac-Man was very popular, also, when I was in high school.

Marcia says, "Yeah, exactly. They're classic and a lot less violent" – a lot less fighting. Achim says, "Yeah, but they're so boring you fall asleep playing them." He says, "You can't call yourself a gamer if you play those kinds of games." A "gamer" is someone who plays a lot of video games and knows a lot about video games. I, for example, am definitely not a gamer; I don't know anything! In fact, before preparing this episode, I didn't even know what some of these words were!

Achim says, "Give me 3-D action and some blood and gore." The expression here, "give me," means this is what I like. "3-D," or three-dimensional, "action and some blood and gore." That's a common expression, "blood and gore" (gore); it means blood that is part of some sort of violent behavior – some sort of fight: "The movie Braveheart is full of blood and gore." This is different from Al Gore, the former Vice President of the United States, of course; he was in a different movie!

Marcia says, "You can have it" – you can enjoy those kinds of games, but "I'll pass." To "pass" here means to say no to something, to decide not to do something. If you say to me, "Jeff, would you like to play video games with me this afternoon?" I would probably say, "No thank you, I'll pass. I don't know anything about video games."

Now let's listen to the dialogue, this time at a normal speed.

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Marcia: You can have it. I'll pass.

[end of story]

The script for this episode was written by Dr. Lucy Tse.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. We'll see you next time on ESL Podcast.

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