

EPISODE 33  
LEVEL A1.2/A2.1

READING COMPREHENSION



COMPUTER GAMES



Mary: Would you like a cup of coffee?

John: I'd love to, but I have to come back home to finish my **campaign** (= a series of actions)

Mary: Your what?

John: My great campaign to become the greatest person in all Japan.

Mary: Oh, you mean that stupid computer game of yours, Shogun 2?

John: Mary, it's not stupid. It's a **strategy game** and it teaches you to think. It's not like an **arcade game** (e.g. Pac Man or Space Invaders), which is just **mindless entertainment** (= just primitive fun, no thinking).

Mary: Oh, I see. And what about the game you were playing last month? Dragon Age 2?

John: It's a **cRPG** (= computer **role playing game**). You create your own **character** (= a person, a hero you control) and you develop their **skills** and **traits** (= features and abilities). The **objective** (= aim) is to fulfill **quests** (= missions) and earn **experience points** (= XP, points which allow you to make your character better).

Mary: Right. And that skateboarding thing two months ago?

John: That was Tony Hawk Pro Skater 4, a sports **simulation game**. I was so bad at it, I kept **loading** the **saved** games all the time (= starting again from an earlier point, because you did something stupid in the game). I never got too far.

Mary: Well, well, aren't you a **nerd**?! (= someone too interested in one thing which other people consider boring)

John: Yes I am, but who cares?!

More contexts for the new words:

- Let's go to the **shopping arcade** (= a covered area or passage in which there are shops)
- She went to India on a spiritual **quest**. (= a long search for something that is difficult to find)



### EXERCISE 1

Complete the missing words.

1. An important task you have to do is a q.....
2. Before you load a game, you have to s..... it.
3. Television serials are just m..... entertainment.
4. The o..... of politics is to get as much power as you can.
5. The citizens have started a c..... against the new road in their town.
6. Her s..... include a talent for music and the ability to run fast.



### EXERCISE 2

Match the question halves. Then answer the questions.

- |                                     |                                     |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Do you agree that computer games | a. that you are most proud of?      |
| 2. What are your character traits   | b. are just mindless entertainment? |
| 3. Which type of computer games     | c. is/ would be your favourite?     |

## ENGLISH IN USE



The last two lines of the conversation are:

*Mary: Well, well, **aren't you** a nerd?!*

*John: **Yes I am**, but who cares?!*

'Aren't you a nerd?' is a negative question. Some other examples are:

*Wow, **isn't she** beautiful?*

***Don't you** love the weather today?*

***Haven't you** forgotten something?*

The real problem is how to answer such questions. The rule is simple: ignore the negation, and answer the question like a normal question. You don't have to worry about double negations. For example:

- *Wow, **isn't she** beautiful? - **Yes**, she is. She is so pretty. OR - **No**, she isn't. I think she's ugly.*

- ***Don't you** love the weather today? - **Yes**, it's lovely! OR - **No**, it's too sunny.*

- ***Haven't you** forgotten something? - **Yes**, I've forgotten to lock the door! OR - **No**, I haven't. Why?*

## IDIOM CLOSE-UP



A/ How is that new horror game you're playing?

B/ It's really scary. I was walking in the street when, **OUT OF THE BLUE**, a vampire attacked me!

If something happens **out of the blue**, it happens suddenly and unexpectedly.

## PHRASAL VERBS CLOSE-UP



Here are two phrasal verbs which are often used in the context of computer games, but also in everyday life:

1. If you **RUN OUT OF** something, you have no more of it.

*I was shooting at zombies when, suddenly, I **ran out of** ammunition. They killed me!  
I **ran out of** sugar, so I went to the shop to buy some.*

2. If you **RUN AWAY FROM** something, you try to escape from it.

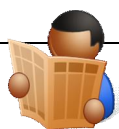
*In this game, all you do is **run away from** gangsters who are trying to kill you.  
If you see a fire, first call the fire brigade, and then **run away from** it!*



### EXERCISE 3

Add the missing vowels (e.g. a, e, i, o, u).

1. When I was 13, I **RN W FRM** home.
2. Many hospitals are **RNNNG T F** money.
3. **T F TH BL** she said, 'Your name's Mark, isn't it?'



## ROLE PLAYING GAMES

If you have played computer role playing games, you might wonder what 'just' role playing games, or RPGs, are. To a lot of people, they are an **esoteric** form of entertainment, available only to **the chosen few**, and associated with strange people wearing long black coats and long black hair. In reality, RPG fans are extremely intelligent people, who find it too boring to drink beer or watch films, and don't want to **take part in** too many sports. The most important person in an RPG meeting (called a session) is the game master. He is like a story teller, who – as if – paints the world in which the players are. Each of the players controls a character – a person with certain skills or abilities. The characters can be fantasy creatures, like trolls, orcs, elves, **dwarves** or gnomes, but they can also be regular people. The players decide what their characters do, and the game master tells them what the consequences of their actions are. An important attribute of players are **dice**. Most people know only six-sided dice, but there are also ones with 4, 10, 12, 20, or even 100 sides. So next time you meet someone with a strange dice, you might ask them, 'Do you play RPGs?'

## GLOSSARY

- **esoteric** – strange and unusual
- **the chosen few** – the elite
- **take part in** – participate in
- **dwarves** – (singular: a dwarf) – fantasy creatures who are shorter than humans, e.g. Kozłatek Opatek or Gimli)
- **dice** (singular: dice) - a small block of wood or plastic with six sides marked with spots, that you roll or throw to play a game

## KEY TO EXERCISES

### Ex.1

1. quest
2. save
3. mindless
4. objective
5. campaign
6. skills

### Ex.2

1. b

2. a

3. c

### Ex.3

1. ran away from
2. running out of
3. Out of the blue