

so that it is hard enough to smash your opponent's, but is unbreakable itself, by soaking it in vinegar, for example, or baking it. ³ The process sometimes takes days. I can't think of a game that doesn't involve competitiveness. Don't pretend you don't get pleasure from outsmarting an opponent. ⁴

But what, apart from competitiveness, holds our interest? Modern video games offer clear examples of what attracts us to games and keeps us playing, but I think the same features apply, though less obviously, to old-fashioned board games. Many people still enjoy games like Cluedo – ⁵. These features include a story-telling or make-believe element – often a reflection of the real world – but with more freedom of choice and without real-world consequences. They allow you to act out roles you never would in real life. You have goals and your efforts are rewarded and allow you to measure your progress. Entertainment and escapism with a pay-off. ⁶

Total absorption in games is another aspect of our fascination with them. You reach a state that sports people call being 'in the zone' and psychologists call 'flow'. You are so totally focused and in control that nothing can distract you, and you slip out of time.



LISTENING

A Work in pairs. Look at the picture of the video gamer. What might be some problems with this activity?



B LISTEN FOR MAIN IDEA Listen to the podcast. Tick (✓) only the things that are true according to Andrea.

- 1 If somebody becomes less social, it can be a warning that there is a problem. ☐
- 2 Games are the main reason people get addicted to the internet. ☐
- 3 Governments have solved the problem by passing laws restricting screen time. ☐
- 4 The problem isn't limited to younger users. ☒
- 5 Many gamers feel more at home in an artificial community. ☐
- 6 Gaming encourages people to do more physical activity. ☐



C LISTEN FOR SOLUTIONS Listen again and choose the correct options (a, b or c) to complete the sentences.

- 1 According to Andrea, gamers
 - a need to be banned from playing games by law.
 - b should be supported to set boundaries themselves.
 - c should be stopped from playing by their parents.
- 2 Andrea thinks the deeper cause of the problem is
 - a our desire for rewards and community.
 - b social networks refusing to be positive role models for gamers.
 - c the gamer's determination to play games.
- 3 The problem can be solved
 - a by recognising the causes and supporting the gamer.
 - b by encouraging them to adopt a different persona.
 - c by governments and parents working together to make gamers do more physical activity.

Glossary

persona (n) particular personality or character – often different to the one you normally have

D REFLECT Which solution do you believe would be most effective in tackling problems with video gaming?

