

Video game graphics across history

READING

LEVEL
Intermediate

NUMBER
B2_2043R_EN

LANGUAGE
English

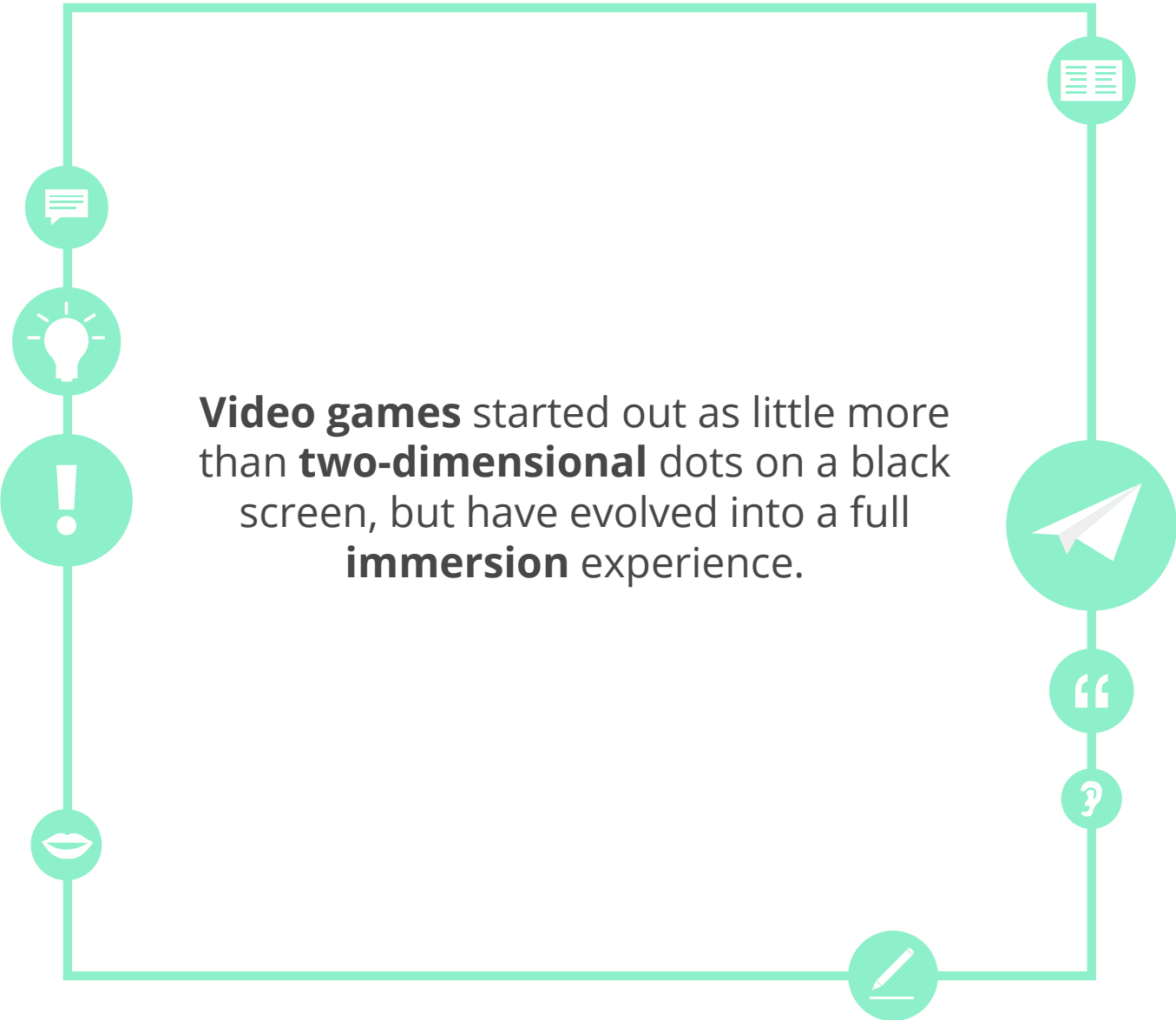




Goals

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





Video games started out as little more than **two-dimensional** dots on a black screen, but have evolved into a full **immersion** experience.



Vocabulary

**two-
dimensional**

**three-
dimensional**

virtual reality

arcade games



perspective

avatar

interaction

headset



Vocabulary



The first video games were **two-dimensional**. They first came into popularity in the 1970s.

Three-dimensional games look more realistic. Many people play them on widescreen TVs.



Virtual reality is the latest innovation in video gaming. Gamers wear a **headset** and experience a **virtual** place.

Arcade games have been popular since the 1970s. They can be found in many public places.





Vocabulary



Video games have various and distinctive **perspectives**.

The **avatar** is the character you control. Sometimes you are able to create them.



Interaction with the video game world is important for players. Many converse via the internet in virtual chat rooms, or whilst playing.



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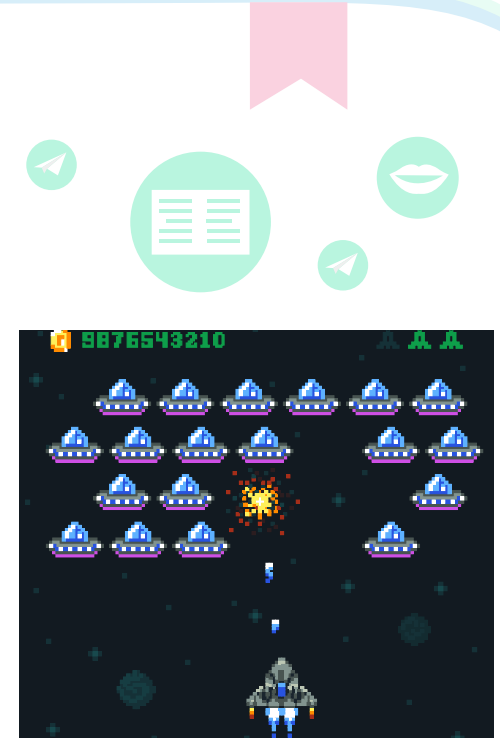
Video games sell based on their aesthetic, and their looks have come an awfully long way since the games which were available thirty or forty years ago. In that time, we have moved from **two-dimensional** graphics to full **virtual reality**.

The 1970s and 1980s saw the growth of **arcade games**. The home PC was still seen largely as a **tool** for work rather than play, and so gaming happened outside the home. Arcade games were mostly two dimensional and very simplistic, as computers lacked processing power at that time. Sometimes programmers tried to create the illusion of a **three-dimensional** picture on screen using lines and different colours, but it was nothing compared with what was to come. The **perspective** was always **third person** and usually **top-down** - think of Pac-man as an example of this.



Video game graphics across history

However, during the 70s and 80s games were not **solely** concentrated in the arcade. Home video game **consoles** were being developed - some of the best known are by Atari - though their graphics were not at the same standard as those in arcade games. Atari's first major **console** sold for a higher price compared to those on sale today, but despite this it was a huge hit on its **release**.





Vocabulary

Do you know what these words from the text mean?
Write a sentence for each.

tool

third person

top-down

console



Arcade games

Have you ever played any arcade games?

Were they 2D or 3D?

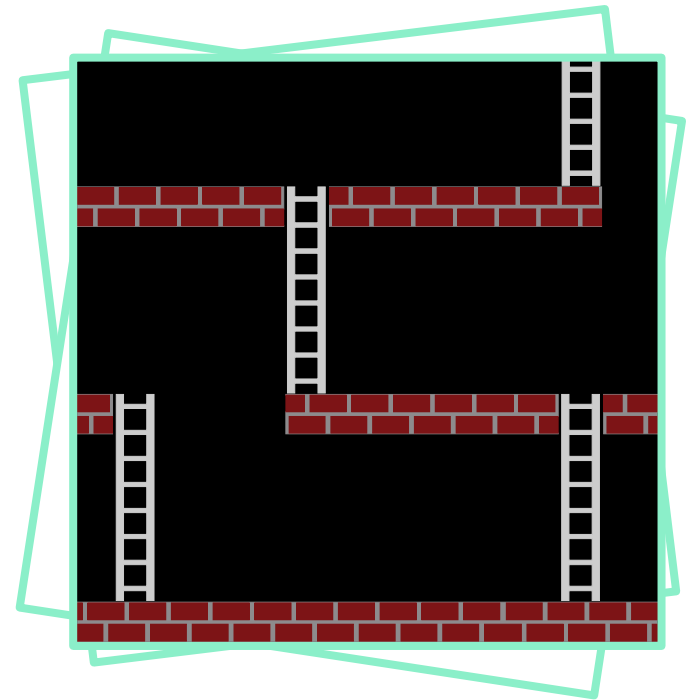
Do you like a third person, top-down perspective in games?

Are arcade games still popular in your country?



Early consoles

Have you heard of Atari? Why do you think their consoles were expensive when they were first released? What kind of people do you think bought them?





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The two-dimensional, top-down **perspective** continued to **dominate** gaming even into the 1990s, and was common in war games, role playing games and construction **simulation** games. During the same decade, the **side scrolling** game entered the **fray**. In a side scrolling game the perspective is from the side and we follow the character 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 machines at that time included those released by Nintendo, which showed that graphics had **evolved** massively since previous consoles were released.



Video game graphics across history



The 1990s also saw a rather unsuccessful foray into **full motion video games**. These games contained pre-recorded, television quality animations which did admittedly look a lot better than their counterparts at the time. However, the **downfall** of these types of game was that there was a lack of **interaction** for the players, who described the experience as like watching a bad film and pressing buttons at the right time. They were ultimately a huge failure in the video game market.



Vocabulary

Match the vocabulary from the text to the meaning on the right.
Try to use each example in a brief conversation about computer games
with your teacher.

side scrolling

to move up and down or
side to side on a screen

scroll

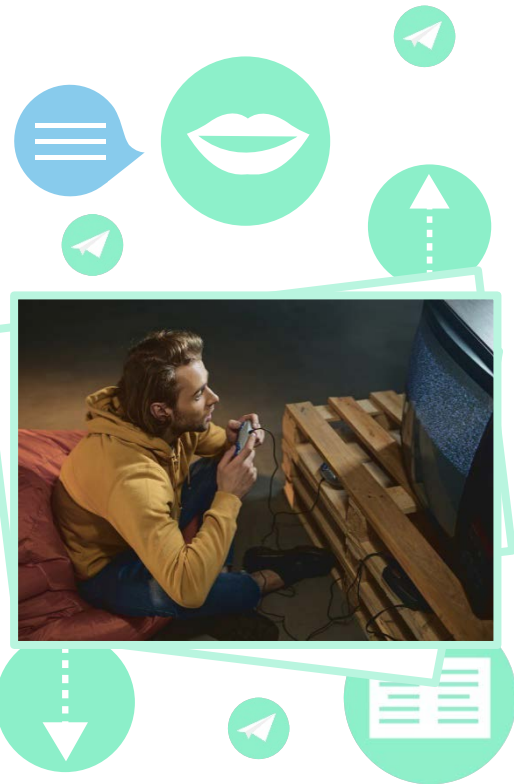
something that causes
failure

full motion video game

moving from right to left at a
constant rate

downfall

a type of game with pre-
recorded footage





Writing

Write your answers to these questions and then share them with your classmates or teacher.

Do you like point-of-view video games?

Did you have any at home gaming consoles in the 1990s?

Have you ever played a full motion video game?

A vertical sheet of lined paper with a spiral binding on the left side, intended for writing answers. The paper has several horizontal lines for writing.



Interaction

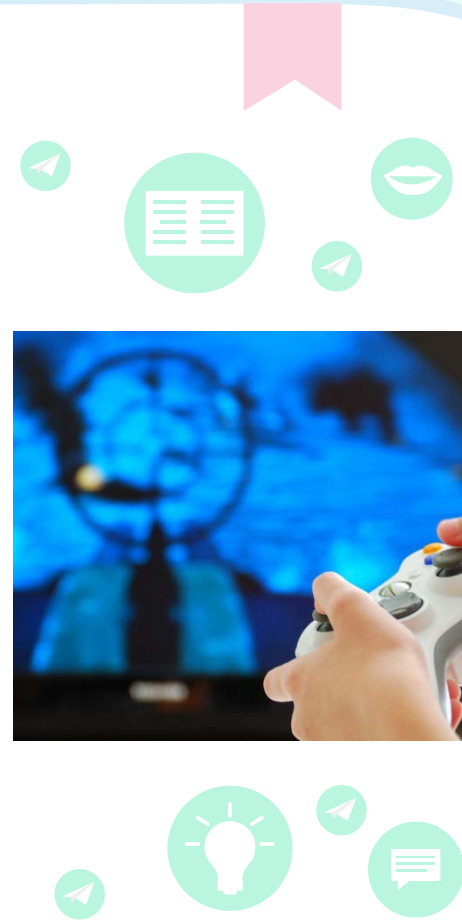
How important is it for you to feel in control and not like a game is pre-planned when playing video games?





Video game graphics across history

Three-dimensional games were the next big thing. 3D games often used **fixed** backgrounds. These were not completely 3D in order to fake areas which players were unable to access, or to create backgrounds which do not need to be in **sharp focus**. At a similar time, the **first person viewpoint** became popular in certain video games, particularly in driving games and shooter games. One of the **advantages** of a first person perspective is better aim of the **avatar**, but that it is less easy to **assess** depth and distance.





Video game graphics across history

The most recent development has been in **virtual reality (VR)**. The idea of virtual reality has long been played 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, it means that the player feels like they are in the game. In the most advanced applications, players wear a **glove** or their body movements are sensed and sent to a computer to be translated into movements in the game. Otherwise, players use a **hand-held controller** as in more **traditional** games.

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. Pokemon Go is a famous example of a popular AR game, in which people can see Pokemon on their phone screen in the world around them.



Do you know what these words mean? Explain their meaning in the context of computer games.

sharp focus

first person

immerse

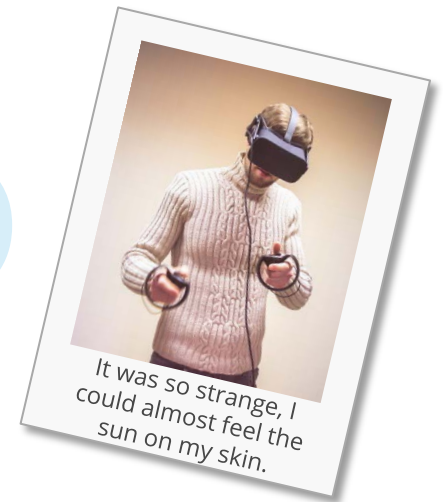
glove

augmented reality

overlaid



**Have you tried any
VR or AR games?**



**What do you think
their advantages and
disadvantages are?**



The evolution of video game graphics

Make notes here on the evolution of video game graphics through the decades. Add as much detail as you can remember.

1970s:



Virtual reality:





About you

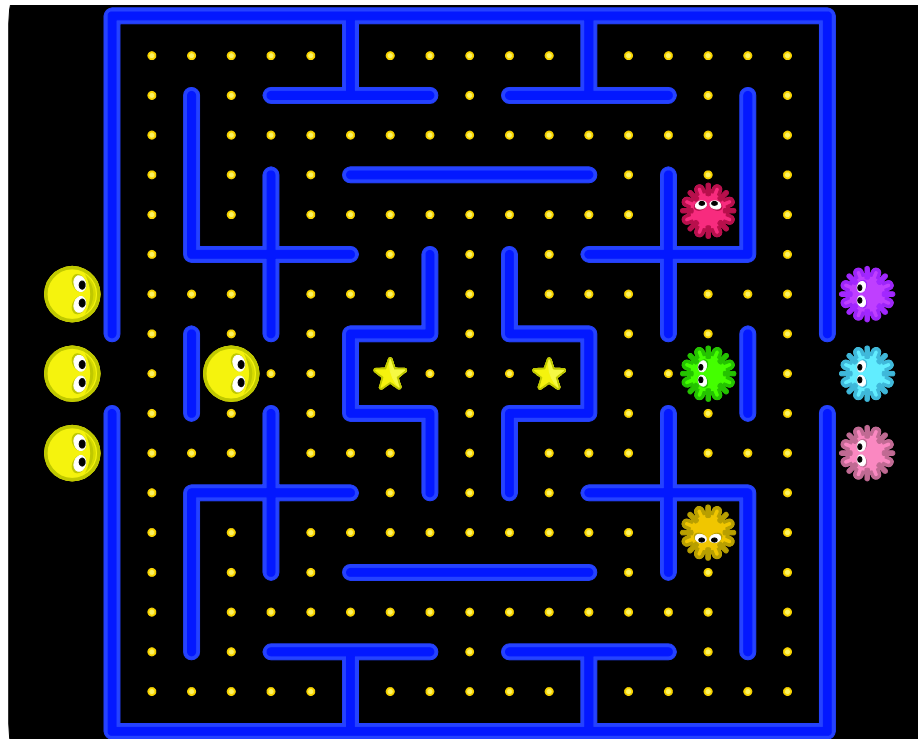


Have you played on any of the **consoles** or **games** mentioned?
Do you have a favourite game or console?



Video games

What was your favourite era for video games?
Is it because of the graphics or is there another reason?





Reflect on the goals

Go back to the second slide of the lesson and check if you have achieved all the goals of the lesson.

yes

no

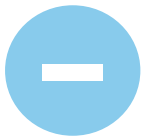
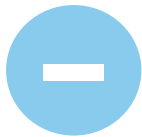




Reflect on this lesson

Think about everything you have seen in this lesson.
What were the most difficult activities or words? The easiest?



If you have time, go over
the most difficult slides again

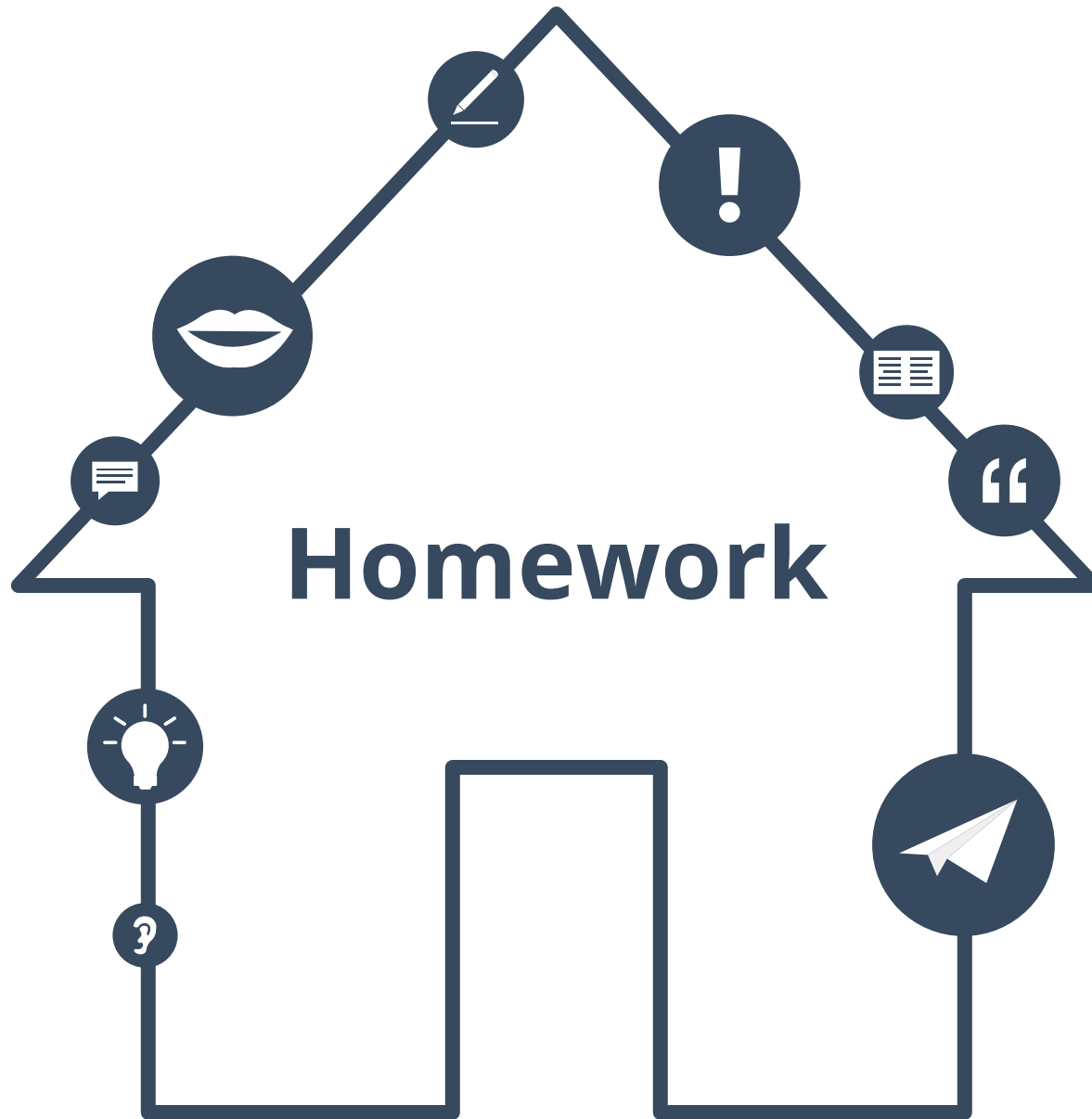




Answer key

Activity p. 14

Side scrolling: moving from right to left at a constant rate
Scroll: to move up and down or side to side on a screen
Full motion video game: a type of game with pre-recorded footage
Downfall: something that causes failure





Fill in the gaps

The first video games were _____ dimensional and from a top down perspective. Those with the best graphics were _____ games, but there were some home _____ too. Graphics moved on to become _____ dimensional and to the point where you could have a _____ person perspective, with the sense that you were the _____. _____ reality is the latest development in video gaming and it looks set to have huge popularity.

arcade

three

two

Virtual

consoles

avatar

first



Homework answer key

Exercise p. 28

two, arcade, consoles, three, first, avatar, virtual

