

Learning English podcasts ... from the
Hellenic American Union©

Level: Advanced
Lesson: 38
Title: "Video Games"

Summary:

Vanessa and Nick discuss about the advantages and disadvantages of playing video games.

In this episode of World Report Vanessa and Nick are in the middle of a live show in a radio studio. Listen to their conversation and answer the question that follows about the main idea.

Dialogue:

Vanessa: Beam me up Scotty – I mean, Nick, and download some video game info on me.



Nick: Star Trek was an excellent sci-fi series Vanessa but these days video games are **a far cry from** the golden oldies: from a techno-logical point of view of course.



Vanessa: Well my two nephews would definitely be amongst the top proponents of video games.

Nick: This nouveau silicon sensation **has taken young and old by storm** Vanessa. It's a win-win situation, from the game designers' perspective; once you start you can't stop; and it's got manufacturers **laughing all the way to the bank.**



Vanessa: As entertaining as it may be, it obviously **lacks any substance** though.

Nick: Well, yes, but you know, a recent study shows that today's kid's attention span is increasing due to the amount of time they spend in front of the screen. Also, their spatial coordination abilities are enhanced by all these games. And in fact, these games are meant to be a safe way of releasing **pent up aggression.**



Vanessa: I find this really hard to believe.

Nick: Yeah, as far as I'm concerned, sitting in front of a computer screen hours upon end really eliminates many other healthy alternatives like going out with friends, reading a book, playing sports etc.

Vanessa: I just think that kids spend too much time on these things.



Nick: **All things in moderation** would be an appropriate note to sign off on Vanessa.

Vanessa: Over and out!

Nick: Talk to you tomorrow.



Now answer the following question...

What are Vanessa and Nick taking about?
The benefits and drawbacks of playing video games.

Now listen again to the dialogue in parts. After each part there will be 3 to 4 questions on some details...

Part 1

Vanessa: Beam me up Scotty – I mean, Nick, and download some video game info on me.

Nick: Star Trek was an excellent sci-fi series Vanessa but these days video games are **a far cry from** the golden oldies: from a techno-logical point of view of course.

Vanessa: Well my two nephews would definitely be amongst the top proponents of video games.

Nick: This nouveau silicon sensation **has taken young and old by storm** Vanessa. It's a win-win situation, from the game designers' perspective;

once you start you can't stop; and it's got manufacturers **laughing all the way to the bank**.

Now answer some questions...

1. Nick says "These days video games are **a far cry from** the golden oldies". What does "a far cry from" mean?

"A far cry from" means something quite different from.

2. Nick says "This nouveau silicon sensation **has taken young and old by storm**." What does "take someone by storm" mean?

"Take someone by storm" means to impress someone greatly and immediately.

3. Nick says "**laughing all the way to the bank**". What does "laughing all the way to the bank" mean?

"Laughing all the way to the bank" means to be earning lots of money easily?

Part 2

Vanessa: As entertaining as it may be, it obviously **lacks any substance** though.

Nick: Well, yes, but you know, a recent study shows that today's kid's attention span is increasing due to the amount of time they spend in front of the screen. Also, their spatial coordination abilities are enhanced by all these games. And in fact, these games are meant to be a safe way of releasing **pent-up aggression**.

Vanessa: I find this really hard to believe.

Nick: Yeah, as far as I'm concerned, sitting in front of a computer screen hours upon end really eliminates many other healthy alternatives like going out with friends, reading a book, playing sports etc.

Vanessa: I just think that Kids spend too much time on these things.

Nick: **All things in moderation** would be an appropriate note to sign off on Vanessa.

Vanessa: Over and out!

Nick: Talk to you tomorrow.

Now answer some questions

1. Vanessa says "It obviously **lacks any substance**". What does "lack any substance" mean?

"Lack any substance" means there is no true meaning

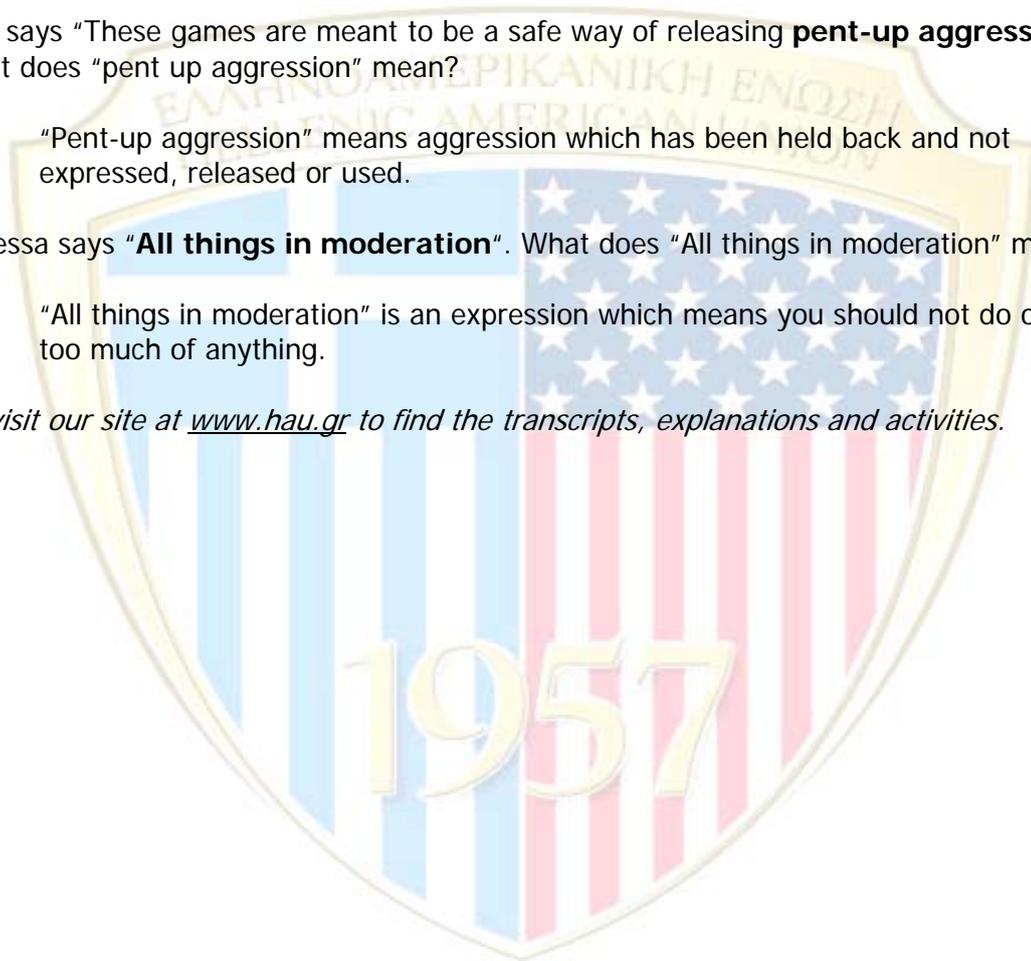
2. Nick says "These games are meant to be a safe way of releasing **pent-up aggression**". What does "pent up aggression" mean?

"Pent-up aggression" means aggression which has been held back and not expressed, released or used.

3. Vanessa says "**All things in moderation**". What does "All things in moderation" mean?

"All things in moderation" is an expression which means you should not do or have too much of anything.

Please visit our site at www.hau.gr to find the transcripts, explanations and activities.



GLOSSARY

Eliminate (vb.): If you **eliminate** something then you remove it or take it away.

Enhance (vb.): If you **enhance** something then you improve its quality, amount or strength.

In moderation: **In moderation** refers to quantities and it means neither small nor large but between the two.

Lack (vb.): If you **lack** something then you are without it. It suggests that this is something you need or want.

Nouveau (adj.): **Nouveau** is a French word which means new. It is used in a number of English words such as 'nouveau riche' and 'art nouveau'.

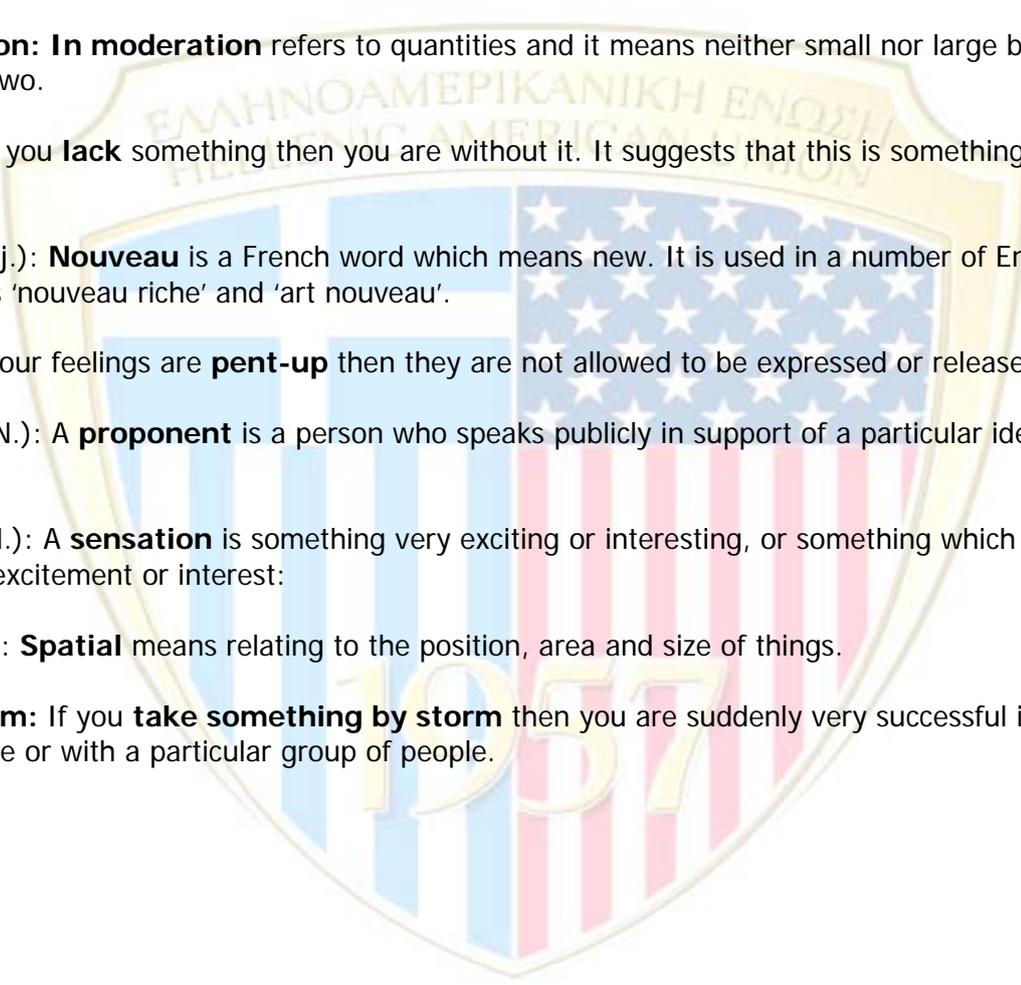
Pent-up: If your feelings are **pent-up** then they are not allowed to be expressed or released.

Proponent (N.): A **proponent** is a person who speaks publicly in support of a particular idea or plan of action.

Sensation (N.): A **sensation** is something very exciting or interesting, or something which causes great excitement or interest:

Spatial (adj.): **Spatial** means relating to the position, area and size of things.

Take by storm: If you **take something by storm** then you are suddenly very successful in a particular place or with a particular group of people.



ACTIVITIES

Activity 1

Choose the most appropriate aforementioned word or expression to fill in each blank. You may need to change the form of the word (e.g. from a noun to a verb)

1. He is one of the leading _____ of capital punishment.
2. Art _____ is an international movement and style of art, architecture and applied art that peaked in popularity at the turn of the 20th century.
3. Their affair caused a _____.
4. This task is designed to test the child's _____ awareness
5. These scandals will not _____ the organization's reputation/image.
6. A move towards healthy eating could help _____ heart disease.
7. He just _____ a little confidence.
8. You can eat whatever you like as long as it's _____.
9. Screaming at the top of your voice is a good way of venting _____ frustration
10. Today we're interviewing the 20-year-old fashion designer who has _____ Paris by storm.

Activity 2

A. Consider the following explanations:

Nick says "a recent study shows that today's kid's attention span is increasing **due to** the amount of time they spend in front of the screen." **Due to** here means because of. **Because of / Due to** are used before a noun or a noun phrase. **Owing to** can also be used but most people avoid using it after the verb **be**. **Since** can also express a reason, though it is considered to be rather formal.

B. Correct the errors in these sentences.

1. Because I was playing Guitar Hero III, so I was late for class.
2. We stayed in and played computer games because the weather.
3. I couldn't understand the instructions due to I don't know Italian.
4. I can't print out the letter owing to my computer isn't working.
5. Since that the film was in Swedish, we decided to the cinema.

KEY TO ACTIVITIES

Activity 1

1. proponents
2. Nouveau
3. sensation
4. spatial
5. enhance
6. eliminate
7. lacks
8. in moderation
9. pent-up
10. taken

Activity 2B

1. Because I was playing Guitar Hero III, ~~so~~ I was late for class.
2. We stayed in and played computer games because **of** the weather.
3. I couldn't understand the instructions ~~due to~~ **because** I don't know Italian.
4. I can't print out the letter owing to **the fact that** / **because** my computer isn't working.
5. Since ~~that~~ the film was in Swedish, we decided to the cinema.

