

among us

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Learning English through *Among Us*

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Recently published problem-solving roleplaying game *Among Us* has taken the world by storm. This multiplayer game was developed by a development team called Innersloth and was released on 15th June 2018. The game rose to fame in 2020, just when the COVID-19 pandemic arose. Based on the data in Google Play Store (by 4th December 2020), this game has garnered over 100 million downloads, and it is the number one game downloaded from the Apple Store in 2020 (Webster, 2020).

Among Us is set on one of three locations: a spaceship, above-earth base, or planet base. The game follows the story of a spaceship crew trying to get by in their voyage, only to find that there is a parasitic shapeshifter or the impostor among them. There can be a total of ten players in an online game, with up to three Impostors. *Among Us* game players have either one of these two roles: crewmate or impostor. As a crewmate, a player has to go around completing tasks. As an impostor, a player has to pretend to do the assigned tasks while going around killing crewmates. If a body is discovered, a crewmate can call an emergency meeting to figure out who the impostor is. The game ends when the impostor is found (InnerSloth, 2020).

Multiplayer games, in general, offer the potential to be used in English classrooms. The game format automatically provides a linguistically rich and cognitively challenging virtual environment. Meeting and playing with global players in a real-world English-language environment exposes learners to natural speech, a wide variety of Englishes, and various basic language functions such as asking and answering questions, sharing items or locations, praising, and warning. Studies have shown that having an immersive experience in a fun, informal, and interactive digital space is conducive to English language learning (Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012).

Among Us has some distinctive features compared to some other multiplayer games, and these features bring added benefits to the use of this particular multiplayer game in English classrooms. First, *Among Us* is suitable for class setting as it can be played by a maximum of 10 people. Depending on the class size, the teacher can then assign students into groups to play the game in multiple rounds. Second, for each game round, *Among Us* can be played roughly about 5 to 20 minutes. It does not take a long time to play, so it will not disturb the class. Third, the game has been rated 7+ on the Play Store and Everyone (E) on Apple Store. It is labelled as non-threatening; thus, it is suitable for all learners, including elementary school students.

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Liss Kerstin Sylvén, Pia Sundqvist. "Gaming as extramural English L2 learning and L2 proficiency among young learners", ReCALL, 2012

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