

# UNIT **12** *Read and Write*



## **En esta unidad vas a:**

- leer la primera parte del relato de ciencia ficción *Age of Ecos*
- aprender a escribir en inglés utilizando tiempos verbales narrativos.



# AGE OF ECOS

**J**eff Fisher was an extremely successful software designer who worked for the computer games company Sci-Fi City in New York. At 23, he had already designed two major computer games which had sold over 100 million copies worldwide. But right now Jeff was having problems. He was gazing blankly at his computer screen in his Manhattan apartment because he had just made a very disturbing discovery. His new game, 'Age of Ecos', which he was supposed to be presenting the next morning at an international conference, didn't work. The managing director would be furious, and Jeff might even lose his job!

'Age of Ecos' was Jeff's first computer game set in space. The aim of the game was to settle on the planet Ecos, and then to launch an attack on the Econians to take over the planet. Ecos was rich in natural resources which could be used to build a settlement. The dense forests provided wood for building and cooking, and also a home for the many species of wildlife that could be hunted and eaten. Water could be obtained from the numerous rivers that crossed the planet.

Jeff restarted his laptop for the fourth time that evening and inserted yet another copy of the disc. As the graphics came up, he looked at the clock and saw that it was already 2 a.m. Only seven hours to go before the conference started, and it didn't look as if he was going to get much sleep. He started playing and was soon completely absorbed in the game. When instructed to do so, he pressed the 'hunting' option and a deer fell down screaming in front of him. 'Wait a minute,' he thought to himself, 'deer don't scream.' He looked at the screen more closely and suddenly felt himself being lifted off his chair. He was slowly sucked into the computer and then he was flying through space. He saw that he was heading towards a green planet in the distance. A few seconds later he slammed into the ground and lost consciousness for a moment.

When he came round, he saw a tall, transparent figure moving towards him. 'Where am I?' he enquired. The figure handed him a small silver box and signalled for him to speak into the box. His voice was transformed into a series of noises that sounded like broken glass. The figure made similar noises into the silver box that she was carrying which were converted into a mechanical kind of English. 'We have brought you to planet Ecos,' the figure explained. 'Our leader, Silva Murma, wishes to speak to you. I will take you to her.'

A short while later, Jeff found himself standing in front of one of the most amazing women he had ever seen. Silva Murma was still transparent, but she was also incredibly beautiful. She was carrying a small silver box, and she looked extremely angry. ■

**1 Relaciona las preguntas (1-8) con las respuestas (a-h).**

- 1 Who did Jeff Fisher work for?
- 2 Why was Jeff so successful?
- 3 What would happen if Jeff's game didn't work at the conference?
- 4 What could be found on the planet Ecos?
- 5 What time was it when Jeff started his laptop for the fourth time?
- 6 What did the Econian's voice sound like?
- 7 Why was Jeff taken to the planet Ecos?
- 8 What did Jeff think of Silva Murma?

- a It sounded like broken glass.
- b His manager would be angry and Jeff might be dismissed.
- c To speak to the Econian leader, Silva Murma.
- d A New York company called Sci-Fi City.
- e His computer games had sold millions of copies.
- f It was two o'clock in the morning.
- g Natural resources such as wood, wildlife and water.
- h He thought she was incredibly beautiful.

1 **d** 2 \_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_ 6 \_\_\_\_  
7 \_\_\_\_ 8 \_\_\_\_

**2 Completa el resumen con las palabras del recuadro.**

box conference take deer figure settle  
leader copy

*Age of Ecos* is a science fiction story about a software designer called Jeff Fisher who designs a new computer game. In his game, players have to **1** \_\_\_\_\_ on the planet Ecos and eventually **2** \_\_\_\_\_ it over.

When the story begins, Jeff is having problems with his new game. He's preparing for an important presentation at an international **3** \_\_\_\_\_ the next day when he discovers it isn't working properly. He inserts another **4** \_\_\_\_\_ of the disc and becomes completely absorbed in what he's doing. However, he realizes that something is wrong when the **5** \_\_\_\_\_ that he's hunting in the game starts screaming. He looks more closely at the screen and is sucked into the computer and transported to the planet Ecos. There, he meets a tall, transparent **6** \_\_\_\_\_ who communicates with him using a small silver **7** \_\_\_\_\_. She then takes him to see Silva Murma, the **8** \_\_\_\_\_ of the Econians, who looks extremely angry.

Words to remember

**3 Busca las palabras en el texto.**

To look at something or someone for a long time (paragraph 1).  
**gaze**



**1** An adjective which means worrying, shocking or upsetting (paragraph 1).  
\_\_\_\_\_



**2** Things such as forests and rivers that exist naturally and can be used by people (paragraph 2).  
\_\_\_\_\_



**3** A place where people have come to live and build their homes (paragraph 2).  
\_\_\_\_\_



**4** Animals, birds and plants that live in a natural environment (paragraph 2).  
\_\_\_\_\_



**5** To try to catch and kill animals for food or sport (paragraph 2).  
\_\_\_\_\_



**6** An adjective which means you can see through something (paragraph 4).  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Narrative tenses

El *past simple*, el *past continuous* y el *past perfect* son los tres tiempos verbales que más se utilizan para narrar historias.

El *past simple* se utiliza para narrar acciones sucesivas del pasado.

**Jeff restarted his laptop and inserted yet another copy of the disc.**

Jeff reinició su ordenador portátil e insertó otra copia del disco.

El *past continuous* se emplea para narrar una acción continua y de mayor duración que se estaba desarrollando en un momento determinado o durante un periodo de tiempo del pasado. Normalmente, la acción en *past continuous* estaba transcurriendo en el momento en que tuvo lugar otra acción (en *past simple*).

**He was gazing blankly at his computer screen.**

Miraba la pantalla de su ordenador sin comprender nada.

**The figure made similar noises into the silver box that she was carrying.**

La figura articuló unos sonidos parecidos en la caja plateada que llevaba consigo.

El *past perfect* se utiliza para hacer referencia a una acción del pasado que tuvo lugar antes que otra.

**At 23, he had already designed two major computer games.**

Con 23 años ya había diseñado dos videojuegos muy importantes.

**1 Completa las frases con las formas correctas de los verbos entre paréntesis.**



Jeff and Silva **left** the conference room as soon as they could. (leave)

- 1 They went towards the spacecraft that \_\_\_\_\_ for them in the car park. (wait)
- 2 Silva offered to operate the spacecraft and Jeff \_\_\_\_\_. (agree)
- 3 After a long flight, they \_\_\_\_\_ on top of Silva's palace on the planet Ecos. (land)
- 4 Jeff took out his phone and saw that one of his colleagues \_\_\_\_\_ him five times. (call)
- 5 However, the managing director \_\_\_\_\_ any messages so Jeff decided not to call the office. (not leave)
- 6 Jeff looked over at Silva who \_\_\_\_\_ some deer in the palace gardens. (watch)
- 7 'All these deer would have died if you \_\_\_\_\_ your game,' she said. (not rewrite)
- 8 Then she \_\_\_\_\_ the door to the palace and they both went inside. (open)

**2 Elige las palabras correctas.**

The managing director of Sci-Fi City drove back to the office in a state of shock. The future of the company was in danger because of what **1 happened / was happening / had happened** at the conference. When he got to the office, he noticed that all the staff **2 smiled / were smiling / had smiled** and he didn't understand why.



Up on the fifteenth floor, his secretary **3 greeted / was greeting / had greeted** him with a bottle of champagne. 'Have you heard the news?' she asked him. She explained that copies of *Age of Ecos* **4 sold / were selling / had sold** really quickly. They would have to release more copies as soon as possible because the game **5 ran out / was running out / had run out** and people would be disappointed if there weren't any left. Then she told him that she **6 received / was receiving / had received** an important message before he arrived. The biggest software company in the world **7 wanted / was wanting / had wanted** to form a business partnership with Sci-Fi City to work on more computer games like *Age of Ecos*.

'Thanks, Jeff!' the managing director **8 whispered / was whispering / had whispered** to himself and he opened the champagne. 'Now we can afford to donate the profits to environmental charities after all.'