

Xephos and Honeydew in Minecraft.

This title is the kind that gets attention, isn't it? I first heard about these two characters a few days ago. My three boys play an on-line game called Minecraft. It's actually quite fabulous. It is an unending arena, where you can discover and create different worlds made out of blocks. My sons' favorites are the survival worlds, where you have to find raw materials* such as wood, edible plants, animals, tools, and fire. In order to survive and prosper, you must build yourself a house, and be in it by nightfall*. The reason is that zombies, or 'creepers', come out at night and attack you if you are not safely hidden in your house. Every day, I hear of their new discoveries such as exotic animals, or useful tools of some kind, diamonds, gold, enemies, friends, and even lava. It is hugely popular and globally played and loved. I can see why. If you have a look at Minecraft, you will see that it is a perfect combination of computer game, interaction, creativity, and adventure. My boys tell me all the time how *educational* it is, "Mum, you have to read a little, and even type!" And, you know, compared to a lot of the mindless, destructive video games out there, Minecraft is superior because a player not only has to be creative and curious, but he can add his own personal touch in a world of his choice. As with many on-line games, you have the ability to chat with other players. Mind you, you have to be careful what you say. If you accidentally offend a person who has created the world that you are in, you get banned. There are rules. Two people who know these rules very well, are Xephos and Honeydew. They are gurus of the Minecraft world. Infact, they have made their knowledge and practice of this game into profit. They have a website with up-to-date* video blogs of their Minecraft activity and discoveries. They are two, young English gentlemen, who are friends, and devoted gamers. They give regular commentaries while they game together in the same world in Minecraft. They have, what we call in England, 'the gift of the gab', which means an ability to talk and entertain. They are funny, expressive, and energetic, and other gamers, like my boys, love to follow their progress and listen to their advice. They battle evil characters, build detailed and unusual homes, and even search other people's homes and 'borrow' items that they find. The accumulation of riches is an important theme in Minecraft, and Xephos and Honeydew are expert miners who manage to collect all kinds of precious metals and gems* from the ground. I have come to terms with the fact that* my boys are addicted to this game, as are millions of others. And, thanks to Xephos and Honeydew, they will be encouraged to continue for a long time.

Related vocabulary and expressions: raw materials, nightfall, up-to-date, gems.

1. Raw materials are materials that are obtained from nature, and have not yet been processed. Some examples of raw materials are: rock, wood, metals that have come straight from the mine, and unrefined oil and gases that are collected from the earth.
2. We must find shelter before nightfall. As soon as it gets dark, who knows what dangers will appear in this forest.
3. If you want to download from iTunes, you should get an up-to-date version of it first. You can get an update on the website.
4. Look at the gems in the Queen's crown. They are so beautiful. There must be ten different kinds.

Gems or gem can also be used as a complement for a thing or a person using the word 'of':

Ex: He's a gem of a person. He'll do anything to help.

Ex: We bought a gem of an antique car; there is no other like it.

Ex: I've just finished reading a gem of a novel. It's probably the best I've read in ten years.

Join me on FACEBOOK at Anna fromacupofenglish or email requests and comments to:

acupofenglish@live.com or acupofenglish@hotmail.com