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Grown-ups buying kids' toys



This is not a word-for-word transcript.

Phil

Hello, this is 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English. I'm Phil.

Beth

And I'm Beth. Action figures, building bricks, stuffed cuddly animals – there's a whole world of toys that many of us have forgotten since we were children. Do you still have any toys from when you were a boy, Phil?

Phil

Erm, a couple, but I gave them to my kids.

Beth

Well, nowadays, grown-ups playing with toys is more common than you might think. Recent estimates suggest that adults buying kids' toys for themselves account for between 30 and 40% of the entire toy market, so many that advertisers have come up with a term for them: **kidults** – adults who are interested in toys and games intended for children.

Phil

Between last October and December alone, American kidults spent over \$1.5 billion on toys for themselves. Among the most popular were **plush toys**, or **plushies** for short – toy dolls or animals made from cloth and filled with soft material. And like other recent trends, the toy trend is being driven by online shoppers and social media.

Beth

In this episode, we'll meet a children's toy maker and an online influencer who are both involved in the increasing trend of adults interested in kids' toys. We'll also learn some useful new vocabulary. And remember – you'll find a transcript for this episode, along with all the new words and phrases, on our website, bbclearningenglish.com.

Phil

But first I have a question for you, Beth. Lego remains one of the most popular, and expensive, children's toys. So, according to MSN News, what was the most expensive Lego set ever made? Was it:

- a) the Lego Harry Potter Hogwarts School,
- b) the Lego Star Wars Millennium Falcon, or
- c) the Lego Eiffel Tower?

Beth

I'm going to guess Hogwarts because I like Harry Potter.

Phil

OK. Well, we'll find out the answer later in the programme. Lisa Lee is a toy maker based in Vancouver and the owner of Leather Monsters, a brand of leather plushies which she advertises online. Here, Lisa tells BBC World Service programme Business Daily how she reconnected with her love of toys as an adult:

Lise Lee

Once I kind of had a stable job with **disposable income**, I kind of rediscovered my love for soft toys, and I started buying them again because I've always loved collecting things, because, you know, they bring me happiness, they bring me joy. And I think also a big pillar of my channel and my content is reconnecting with my childhood, and healing that **inner child**, and I think the toys also play a part in that.

Beth

Lisa started collecting toys as an adult with a job and **disposable income**. **Disposable income** is the money you have left over after paying all your expenses. You can use it to buy whatever you like.

Phil

Soft, cuddly toys make Lisa happy and help her reconnect with her **inner child** – a term from psychology which describes the part of your adult personality that still feels and reacts like a child.

Beth

Besides the adults who sell kids' toys are the adults who buy them. Jay Glatfelter is an enthusiastic toy collector and influencer who makes YouTube videos under the name Geek Dad Life. Here's Jay talking about the link between Covid lockdowns and the rise in adult toy collecting to BBC World Service's Business Daily:

Jay Glatfelter

And then what happened was a whole **bunch** of new collectors kind of jumped into toy collecting. And for those of us that were into it before, we saw the prices – the secondary market prices – like, explode once the pandemic happened, because you had people that had **time on their hands**, maybe they had extra money because they're not spending it by going out, and now they're putting it into collecting toys.

Phil

During the pandemic, people **had time on their hands** – an idiom meaning to have a lot of free time and nothing to do with it. Many adults went online, hoping to find the toys they remembered from childhood.

Beth

As a result, a whole **bunch** – meaning a large number – of people started collecting toys, and slowly but surely demand increased and prices went up.

Phil

Yes, it seems that the feeling of rediscovering your childhood, reported by many adult toy collectors, comes at a price, with the cost of collectable items, like Pokémon cards and Jellycat plushies, increasing dramatically during the pandemic.

Beth

And speaking of expensive toys, Phil, isn't it time you reveal the answer to your question?

Phil

Ah, yes. I asked you, "What was the most expensive Lego set ever made?" You said it was the Lego Hogwarts School. Well, I'm afraid the answer is actually the Lego Star Wars Millennium Falcon, which had a UK retail price of £734.99, according to MSN news.

Beth

That's crazy!

Phil

OK. It's time to recap the vocabulary we've learned, starting with **kidult** – an adult who likes playing with toys and games intended for children.

Beth

Plushie is short for **plush toy** – a toy doll or animal stuffed with a soft cloth filling.

Phil

Your **disposable income** is the amount of money you have left to buy whatever you want after paying your expenses.

Beth

Someone's **inner child** refers to the part of their adult personality that still feels and reacts like a child.

Phil

A **bunch** is a number of things, often a large number of things.

Beth

And finally, the idiom **to have time on your hands** means having free time and nothing much to do with it. Once again, our six minutes are up, but remember – you'll find episodes about plenty more trending topics, along with a quiz and worksheet for this episode, on our website, bbclearningenglish.com. See you there soon, but for now it's goodbye.

Phil

Bye!

VOCABULARY

kidult

(slang) adult who likes buying and playing with toys and games intended for children

plushie (or plush toy)

toy dolls or animals made from cloth and filled with soft material stuffing

disposable income

money left over, after paying all your expenses, for you to buy whatever you like

inner child

the part of your adult personality that still emotionally feels and reacts like a child

bunch

a (large) number of things

have time on your hands

(idiom) have free time and nothing to do with it



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