NEWS LESSON

Can One Video Game Be Worth More Than a Hollywood Blockbuster?



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. Which has more value to you, a good film or a good game? Why?
2. How do you decide whether something is worth its price?
3. Do you follow big releases, or do you wait to hear what people say?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**retail**	☐	A	a careful guess about an amount
2	**pre-orders**	☐	B	the first period when a film is shown
3	**small print**	☐	C	orders placed before a product goes on sale
4	**independent**	☐	D	to announce something clearly and publicly
5	**opening**	☐	E	details in a document that are easy to miss
6	**estimate**	☐	F	a very successful and expensive film
7	**declare**	☐	G	not connected to or controlled by the company
8	**blockbuster**	☐	H	to do with selling goods to customers

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

Grand Theft Auto VI launched on 19 November 2026, and its publisher says shoppers spent about US$3.79 billion on the first day. The figure is a company estimate, and comparing a game with a film is harder than it sounds.

1 On 19 November 2026, a video game called Grand Theft Auto VI, usually shortened to GTA VI, went on sale. It is made by Rockstar Games, which belongs to Take-Two Interactive, and it is rated Mature, which means it is meant for adults. Within a day, it was in the news because of money.

2 On 20 November, Take-Two said that day-one retail sales had reached about US$3.79 billion. It described this as the biggest entertainment launch in history. The company also said that 32.5 million copies were sold before the game came out, a record for any platform. Pre-orders opened in June, so the game was selling like hot cakes long before launch day. It is worth noticing the small print: the company says the figure is based on its own estimates up to the end of 19 November, worldwide. No independent source has confirmed it.

3 The numbers invite comparisons. GTA V made about US$800 million on its first day in 2013, so Reuters says the new game made roughly five times as much. Marvel's Avengers: Endgame took in about US$1.2 billion at cinemas worldwide in 2019, which was then the biggest film opening ever. On paper, one day of GTA VI sales is well above that.

4 Yet the comparison is not as fair as it looks. Retail sales usually means what customers spent, not what the publisher keeps, because shops and online stores take a share. A game costs far more than a cinema ticket, so fewer people may be behind the number. A film's opening is also counted over several days. Comparing a game with a film is a bit like comparing apples with oranges, and the company has not said how much of the total came from pre-orders.

5 The cost side is just as uncertain. Reuters says Take-Two has spent an estimated US$1 billion or more on production, which would make GTA VI one of the most expensive entertainment projects ever, but this is an estimate, not an official budget. The company has not published one. An analytics firm, Sensor Tower, estimated about US$2.36 billion earlier in the launch. That figure was a different kind of measurement, taken at a different time, so it is not a direct contradiction, but it shows how much the numbers depend on who is counting.

6 So can one game be worth more than a blockbuster? Perhaps, in one narrow sense: if the company's estimate holds, shoppers spent more on it in one day than the biggest film opening took at cinemas. Take-Two's boss has said the company is not ready to declare victory, and one analyst quoted by Reuters says the timing of the next online mode matters more than first-day sales. A game is a different ball game from a film, because the money keeps coming in only if people keep playing.

Sources: Reuters, Take-Two set to shatter sales records as 'GTA VI' launches to massive fanfare; Take-Two Interactive and Rockstar Games, Grand Theft Auto VI Shatters Entertainment Box Office Records with $3.79 Billion in Day One Retail Sales. Picture: Composite image, cover art © Rockstar Games.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. Sensor Tower's figure contradicts Take-Two's claim. T F NG
2. The writer suggests fewer people may be behind a game's sales number than a film's. T F NG
3. Rockstar plans to release the next online mode in 2027. T F NG
4. Reuters says the new game made twice as much as GTA V on its first day. T F NG
5. The text suggests the game's long-term success depends on people continuing to play. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

analyst	audience	confirmed	invite	measurement	production	publisher	turnover

1. The police have not yet _____ the cause of the fire.
2. The _____ of a book decides how many copies to print and how much to charge.
3. Such high prices _____ questions about whether the game is good value.
4. Film _____ can take years and employ hundreds of people.
5. A thermometer gives an accurate _____ of the temperature.
6. A financial _____ studies company results and predicts share prices.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. The figure _____ on the company's own estimates. (BASE)
2. By the morning of 19 November, 32.5 million copies _____ already. (SELL)
3. The figure is only an estimate, so we _____ be sure it is right. (CAN (NEGATIVE))
4. Avengers: Endgame _____ in about US$1.2 billion at cinemas worldwide in 2019. (TAKE)
5. By now, Take-Two _____ an estimated US$1 billion or more on production. (SPEND)

7 Language focus: prepositions

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Many verbs and adjectives need a fixed preposition after them. Check the word before the gap, then ask which preposition always goes with it.

at	by	for	from	in	on	with

1. The figure is based _____ the company's own estimates.
2. Comparing a game _____ a film is a bit like comparing apples with oranges.
3. A company is responsible _____ what it tells the public about its sales.
4. Sensor Tower put the early figure _____ about US$2.36 billion.
5. A game is very different from a film _____ terms of cost.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. Why might comparing a game with a film be unfair?
2. What would you like a company to tell you before you trust its sales number?
3. Do you think big budgets make better entertainment, and can you give an example?

9 Role-play: buy it now or wait?

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the fan

A big new game comes out today. You want to buy it now, on the first day. Explain why you can't wait and try to persuade your friend to buy it too.

Student B · the careful friend

You think it's better to wait. Ask about the price, the reviews and the other things you could spend the money on. Decide if you will buy it.

Useful phrases

I can't wait any longer, it's out today!
Why don't we read some reviews first?
It's a lot of money for one game.
That's a fair point, but I'd hate to miss out.
What would you do with the money instead?
Let's wait a week and then decide.

Afterwards, tell the class: who was more convincing, and did your friend buy the game on the first day?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 H · 2 C · 3 E · 4 G · 5 B · 6 A · 7 D · 8 F

4 True, false or not given

1 F · 2 T · 3 NG · 4 F · 5 T

5 Vocabulary

1 confirmed · 2 publisher · 3 invite · 4 production · 5 measurement · 6 analyst

6 Verb forms

1 is based · 2 had been sold · 3 cannot or can't · 4 took · 5 has spent

7 Language focus

1 on · 2 with · 3 for · 4 at · 5 in

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