

NEWS LESSON

Taking a Day Off for a Video Game

BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. Have you ever waited a long time for a game, film or album?
2. What do you like to do on a day off?
3. Do you like to try something new before your friends do?

2 Key words

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

1	**launch**	☐	A	feeling shy or silly because of something you did
2	**queue**	☐	B	people you work with
3	**festival**	☐	C	to wait in a line of people
4	**disappoint**	☐	D	to make someone feel sad because you did not do what they hoped
5	**colleagues**	☐	E	a big event where people enjoy music, food or other things together
6	**pretending**	☐	F	the time when a new product first goes on sale
7	**embarrassed**	☐	G	extremely big
8	**enormous**	☐	H	acting as if something is true when it is not

3 Read

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

Some fans took time off work to play the new Grand Theft Auto game. Is that sensible or silly?

1 Imagine missing work because of a new video game. Would you feel embarrassed, or would you think that taking a day off for something you love is perfectly normal? When Grand Theft Auto VI arrived in November 2026, some fans were ready to do almost anything to play it straight away. They stayed up all night and went to launch events.

2 The game was eagerly awaited. Fans had waited thirteen years for a new main game in the Grand Theft Auto series. The Guardian reported on 19 November that players around the world had skipped work or school and stayed up through the night to play the new game. It takes place in a made-up American state called Leonida and follows a crime story about two main characters. The game is rated 18, so it is made for adults.

3 The excitement was not just about people posting online. A company called Remote said that requests for time off work around the world rose by 32% on launch day. On 20 November, the company behind the game said its estimated first-day sales in shops and online were $3.79 billion. That is an enormous amount of money for a single day. However, it was a figure from the company itself, and it was an estimate. Other estimates of the game's sales were also being talked about.

4 Why would people take time off for a game? For some, gaming is their favourite hobby, just as sport, books or music are important to other people. A big release can feel like a festival that friends enjoy together.

5 Others think taking time off to play is going too far. Staying awake all night can leave people tired and unable to concentrate the next day. Someone who misses important responsibilities may disappoint family members or colleagues. But taking an agreed holiday from work for a hobby is different from pretending to be ill. People use their free time for many activities that others may not understand.

6 Perhaps the interesting question is why we judge some hobbies more seriously than others. Nobody is surprised when people travel to watch a football final or queue for a concert. For dedicated fans, a major game release can feel just as important. The challenge is enjoying the experience without letting it take over everything else. Would you use a day of your holiday to play a new game, or would that be a waste of time?

Sources: The Guardian, Grand Theft Auto fans skip work and pull all-nighters to play new instalment; Associated Press, 'Grand Theft Auto VI' sets record with $3.79B in first-day retail sales, Rockstar Games reports. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

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

1. The game takes place in a state called Leonida. T F NG
2. Independent researchers checked the $3.79 billion figure. T F NG
3. Most fans took a whole week off work. T F NG
4. Remote said requests for time off rose around the world. T F NG
5. The text says taking an agreed holiday is the same as pretending to be ill. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

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

awaited	concentrate	estimate	queued	skipped	surprised	ticket

1. Fans had waited a long time, so the game was eagerly _____ .
2. Some fans _____ work or school to play the game.
3. The company's sales figure was an _____ , not a number that every researcher had checked.
4. Staying awake all night can leave people tired and unable to _____ the next day.
5. Nobody is _____ when people travel to watch a football final.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. Grand Theft Auto VI _____ in November 2026. (ARRIVE)
2. Fans had _____ thirteen years for a new main game. (WAIT)
3. Some fans _____ up all night. (STAY)
4. Requests for time off _____ by 32% on launch day. (RISE)
5. The Guardian _____ on 19 November that players had skipped work. (REPORT)

7 Language focus: linking words

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Linking words join ideas. Use because for a reason, so for a result, but and however for a difference.

and	because	but	however	if	so	why

1. Some fans stayed up all night, _____ they felt tired the next day.
2. Fans took time off _____ they loved the game.
3. The sales figure was huge. _____ , it was only an estimate.
4. Staying awake all night can be fun, _____ it can make it hard to concentrate.
5. Fans went to launch events _____ stayed up all night.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

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

1. Would you take a day off to play a new game?
2. Is missing work for a hobby the same as taking a holiday for it?
3. Do you think games are expensive?

9 Role-play: a day off for launch day

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

Student A · the manager

Your employee wants Friday off. The team is busy this week. Ask at least two questions before you decide. You can say yes, no, or yes with a condition.

Student B · the employee

A game you've waited years for comes out on Friday. Ask for the day off. Explain why it matters to you and how your work will be covered.

Useful phrases

I was hoping to take Friday off.

It's something I've waited years for.

Who'd cover your tasks?

I'd be happy to say yes if you finish the report first.

I'm afraid that's not possible, because we're short of staff.

Could we find a compromise?

Afterwards, tell the class: did the manager say yes, and was it a fair decision?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

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

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 F · 3 NG · 4 T · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 awaited · 2 skipped · 3 estimate · 4 concentrate · 5 surprised

6 Verb forms

1 arrived · 2 waited · 3 stayed · 4 rose · 5 reported

7 Language focus

1 so · 2 because · 3 However · 4 but · 5 and

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