NEWS LESSON

Would You Miss Work to Play a Video Game?



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. Have you ever looked forward to something for months, and how did it feel when it finally arrived?
2. How do you decide what to do with a free day?
3. Why do some people care so much about experiencing a new release before everyone else?

2 Key words

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

1	**spotlight**	☐	A	deserved because you have worked hard
2	**extraordinary**	☐	B	public attention
3	**attributed**	☐	C	said to come from a particular source
4	**concentration**	☐	D	the ability to keep your attention on one thing
5	**streamer**	☐	E	very unusual or surprising
6	**well-earned**	☐	F	a person who shows themselves playing games live online
7	**irresponsible**	☐	G	people who are very keen on a particular thing
8	**enthusiasts**	☐	H	not taking proper care of your duties

3 Read

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

Grand Theft Auto VI fans around the world skipped work, stayed up all night and helped the game to a record first day. Is taking time off for a hobby ever a good idea?

1 Imagine booking a day off work, not to travel or attend a family event, but to spend twelve uninterrupted hours playing a video game. Some people would consider that a perfect use of their holiday. Others might think it was childish or irresponsible. The release of Grand Theft Auto VI in November 2026 brought this disagreement into the spotlight, as fans across the world stayed awake all night, attended launch events and made room in their schedules for an eagerly awaited game.

2 The Guardian reported on 19 November that enthusiasts had skipped work or school and organised overnight gaming sessions to celebrate the arrival of the new title. Players had waited thirteen years for another main instalment in the Grand Theft Auto series. The new adventure is set in the fictional American state of Leonida and follows two central characters through a crime story. The game is rated 18, so it is meant for adults.

3 The numbers were extraordinary too. The human resources platform Remote said there was a 32% increase in leave requests worldwide on launch day. On 20 November, Rockstar Games reported estimated first-day retail sales of $3.79 billion. That amount is the company's own estimate of what players spent, so it should be attributed rather than treated as an independently checked total. Before the launch, the research firm Omdia had estimated that the game could earn $3.2 billion in sales by the end of the year, so the estimates differ.

4 For many gamers, the appeal goes beyond the screen. A launch gives friends a shared experience, something to talk about at school or work and a chance to discover surprises before they are spoiled online. People may even arrange time off in advance, much as music fans plan for a festival or sports supporters travel for an important match. From that perspective, using a holiday for gaming is no stranger than spending it on another favourite hobby.

5 However, there is a difference between choosing how to spend your free time and neglecting your responsibilities. Missing an important shift without permission affects other people, while staying awake all night can damage concentration and mood the next day. Cost matters too. A streamer told the BBC that consoles are very expensive at the moment, so some fans can only enjoy the story through other people's streams. Excitement can easily get out of hand when everyone online seems to be talking about the same release.

6 The debate may reveal more about our attitudes towards hobbies than about gaming itself. People rarely question someone who takes a day off for a football final or an expensive concert, yet they may judge a person who does the same for a video game. Perhaps leisure is valuable because we enjoy it, not because other people approve of it. Would you consider a day spent gaming a well-earned break, or would you rather use your free time for something else?

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. Fans had waited more than a decade for a new main game. T F NG
2. An independent audit confirmed the $3.79 billion figure. T F NG
3. A thousand people attended the launch event in London. T F NG
4. The high price of consoles stops some fans from playing the game themselves. T F NG
5. People often question someone who takes a day off for a football final. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

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

appeal	attitudes	instalment	permission	question	refund	review	schedules

1. Fans made room in their _____ for an eagerly awaited game.
2. Players had waited thirteen years for another main _____ in the series.
3. For many gamers, the _____ of a launch goes beyond the screen.
4. The debate may tell us more about our _____ towards hobbies than about gaming.
5. Missing an important shift without _____ affects other people.
6. People rarely _____ someone who takes a day off for a football final.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. The release _____ this disagreement into the spotlight. (BRING)
2. Enthusiasts _____ work or school to celebrate the new title. (SKIP)
3. Before the launch, Omdia _____ that the game could earn $3.2 billion. (ESTIMATE)
4. The game is rated 18, so it _____ for adults. (MEAN)
5. A streamer _____ the BBC that consoles are very expensive. (TELL)

7 Language focus: linking words

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Think about what the link does: give a reason, a result, a contrast or a condition.

although	because	besides	however	instead	so	unless

1. Fans waited thirteen years, _____ the excitement was enormous.
2. Some people think gaming is childish. _____ , others see it as a perfect reward.
3. _____ staying awake all night can be fun, it can damage concentration.
4. Some fans watch streams _____ they cannot afford a console.
5. Missing a shift is a problem _____ you have agreed it with your manager.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

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

1. Would you book annual leave to play a new game, and why or why not?
2. Do you think people judge gaming more harshly than sport or concerts?
3. Where would you draw the line between enjoying a hobby and neglecting your responsibilities?

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

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 F · 3 NG · 4 T · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 schedules · 2 instalment · 3 appeal · 4 attitudes · 5 permission · 6 question

6 Verb forms

1 brought · 2 had skipped or skipped · 3 had estimated or estimated · 4 is meant · 5 told

7 Language focus

1 so · 2 However · 3 Although · 4 because · 5 unless

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