



GCSE

4171/02

**ENGLISH/ENGLISH LANGUAGE
HIGHER TIER
UNIT 1 (READING)**

A.M. TUESDAY, 3 June 2014

1 hour

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Resource Material.

An 8 page answer book.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Use black ink or black ball-point pen.

Answer **all** questions.

Write your answers in the separate answer book provided.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

The total mark available for this unit is 40.

The number of marks in brackets will give you an indication of the time you should spend on each question or part-question.

Answer **all** the following questions.

The **separate Resource Material** is a newspaper article, 'At war with *World of Warcraft*', written by Tamara Lush.

The passage on the opposite page, 'Want to Be Smarter? Play Computer Games', is an internet report written by Erika Andersen.

Read the first page of the newspaper article in the separate Resource Material: 'At war with *World of Warcraft*'.

1. Explain how gaming affected Ryan Van Cleave's life. [10]

Read the second page of the article.

2. According to this part of the article, why is *World of Warcraft* a dangerous game? [10]

Read the internet report on the opposite page.

3. How does the writer try to persuade us that gaming is a beneficial activity? [10]

To answer the next question you will need to refer to both texts.

4. Compare and contrast what the two texts say about computer games. [10]

Use the following headings in your answer:

- The possible effects of computer games on health;
- The possible effects of computer games on behaviour.

You must make it clear from which text you get your information.

Want to Be Smarter? Play Computer Games

Recent research suggests we may have to put aside our stereotyped image of computer gamers as jobless, sleep deprived and obsessive nerds who live in their bedrooms, playing computer games like *World of Warcraft* until three in the morning, surrounded by their beloved *Star Wars* action figures collection.

It now looks as though playing some computer games can help you develop or improve key skills and, in fact, improve your brain.

Jane McGonigal is a game designer who believes passionately in “games that are designed to improve real lives and solve real problems.” One of her more popular computer games has been used by 100,000 people. This game helps gamers to tackle health problems such as depression, anxiety and chronic pain. Although those opposed to gaming feel that computers can cause these problems in the first place, McGonigal completely disagrees.

McGonigal is certainly not alone in her passion for gaming. She and many others argue that playing computer games can provide real benefits.

Teaching you how to solve problems.

Alan Weiss, a health care expert, says, “A computer game can encourage gamers to develop creative solutions to problems which can then be applied to real life situations. The results can be surprisingly positive and imaginative. Even kids’ games involve working out how to come up with a solution to a problem that will help them complete a game or win a competition.”

Teaching you how to work with others.

Continuous developments in technology, such as headsets that allow you to talk to fellow gamers across the world, mean that gamers can play in multiplayer games. In order to be successful in multiplayer games, players need to work together and this is a vital skill you need to learn in real life in order to succeed with others.

Teaching you how to fail.

In a world where every kid who runs in a race gets a medal, and children are told they’ve done a good job even when they haven’t, computer games have clear winners and losers. Winning teaches you how to win well – with pride and modesty. Losing teaches you how to lose well – without whining or blaming. These are important lessons, especially for young people.

... And they make you happy.

Critics of computer games suggest they cause epilepsy or repetitive strain injuries but there is a strong argument that they make you happy too. McGonigal says, “Games make us happy because they are hard work that we choose for ourselves.” They stretch us – we go past our limitations, learn how to do new things. We get smarter. Even when we are not using our computers we can discuss games with friends, giving us enjoyment, and providing a social benefit.

So, next time you spend some time in *Gnome Town* or *Star Wars: The Old Republic*, don’t think of it as a waste of time, consider it brain food.

Erika Andersen

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