

STUDENT TEST BOOKLET

READING SECTION

READING PASSAGE 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 1-13, which are based on Reading Passage 1 below.

The Landscape of Video Game Addiction

Video game addiction, defined as the compulsive use of the internet to play games, often with other players, has emerged as a significant public health concern in recent years. The proliferation of gaming-capable devices has made accessing games easier than ever, contributing to a rise in what is formally known as Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD). Research indicates that the neurological effects of this addiction are comparable to those of substance abuse and gambling, with observable changes in the brain's structure and function. Furthermore, a strong correlation has been identified between video game addiction and various psychological and social issues, including depression.

Identifying the signs and symptoms of video game addiction is the first step toward addressing the problem. One of the earliest indicators is a preoccupation with gaming, where an individual constantly thinks or fantasizes about playing, even when engaged in other important activities like schoolwork. This obsession is often accompanied by deceptive behavior, as individuals may lie about the amount of time they spend gaming or conceal their activities from loved ones. They might neglect basic needs such as eating, sleeping, and personal hygiene to maximize their time in the virtual world.

A noticeable loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities is another hallmark of video game addiction. A compelling example is that of a student who, after becoming engrossed in online gaming, abandoned his passion for baseball, a sport in which he had previously excelled. This shift in priorities often leads to social withdrawal, as the individual increasingly isolates themselves from friends and family to dedicate more

time to gaming. The friendships forged within the game can start to feel more significant than real-life relationships, further deepening the individual's isolation.

Psychological withdrawal is a particularly distressing symptom, where the inability to play a game leads to feelings of loss and an intense craving to return to it. This can result in emotional instability, with individuals becoming irritable, anxious, or even aggressive when they are unable to play. This defensiveness and anger can be especially pronounced when parents or guardians attempt to set limits on gaming time. For many, the game world becomes a psychological escape, a safe haven from the pressures and difficulties of the real world. Individuals who are shy or feel alienated from their peers may find a sense of confidence and belonging in the virtual environment that they lack in their everyday lives.

Despite the negative consequences, which can range from academic failure and job loss to the deterioration of personal relationships, individuals with a gaming addiction often continue to play. The urge to be the best in the game, particularly in immersive, mission-based games, can create a powerful incentive to keep playing. The more they progress, the more they feel compelled to continue, creating a cycle of compulsive behavior that is difficult to break.

Fortunately, various treatment options are being explored to help individuals overcome video game addiction. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), a common treatment for substance abuse, has shown promise in addressing IGD. CBT focuses on identifying and modifying negative thought patterns and behaviors associated with the addiction. Another promising approach is the PIPATIC program, an individualized psychotherapy program designed for adolescents with IGD. This multi-faceted program, which incorporates CBT and other therapeutic strategies, has demonstrated effectiveness in reducing gaming time and improving overall well-being. In some cases, pharmacotherapy, using medications typically prescribed for depression or ADHD, has also been found to be effective in reducing the symptoms of IGD.

Questions 1-6

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 1?

In boxes 1-6 on your answer sheet, write

TRUE if the statement agrees with the information **FALSE** if the statement contradicts the information **NOT GIVEN** if there is no information on this

1. Video game addiction is a more serious issue than gambling.
2. Deceptive behavior is a common symptom of video game addiction.
3. All individuals who play video games will eventually develop an addiction.
4. The PIPATIC program is only suitable for adults.
5. Social withdrawal is a rare symptom of video game addiction.
6. Pharmacotherapy is always the first line of treatment for IGD.

Questions 7-10

Choose the correct letter, A, B, C or D.

Write the correct letter in boxes 7-10 on your answer sheet.

1. According to the passage, what is one of the earliest signs of video game addiction? A. Social withdrawal B. Preoccupation with gaming C. Neglect of personal hygiene D. A decline in academic performance
2. The passage suggests that the game world can be an escape for individuals who feel... A. bored and unchallenged. B. confident and outgoing. C. shy and alienated. D. angry and aggressive.
3. Which of the following is NOT mentioned as a treatment for video game addiction? A. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) B. The PIPATIC program C. Hypnotherapy D. Pharmacotherapy
4. The passage states that the neurological effects of video game addiction are similar to... A. the effects of sleep deprivation. B. the effects of a poor diet. C. the effects of substance abuse. D. the effects of excessive exercise.

Questions 11-13

Complete the summary below.

Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 11-13 on your answer sheet.

The Cycle of Addiction

Individuals with a gaming addiction often feel a strong urge to be the best in the game, which creates a powerful 11. _____ to continue playing. The more they

advance in the game, the more they feel a 12. _____ to play. This creates a cycle of 13. _____ that can be challenging to overcome, even when faced with severe negative consequences in their personal and professional lives.

READING PASSAGE 2

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 14-26, which are based on Reading Passage 2 below.

The Psychology of Gaming: Addiction or Adaptation?

A. The allure of video games is undeniable. From the simple satisfaction of clearing a level in *Pong* to the complex, collaborative worlds of *Minecraft* and *Fortnite*, video games have captivated players for decades. However, for a small percentage of individuals, this pastime can morph into a compulsive behavior with severe consequences, including social isolation, emotional distress, and a profound neglect of real-world responsibilities. This has led to the question: are the games themselves inherently addictive, or are they a symptom of a deeper, pre-existing issue?

B. A groundbreaking study from UC Santa Barbara's Media Neuroscience Lab sheds light on this complex issue. The research, published in the prestigious JAMA Network Open, suggests that for many, a gaming disorder is not a direct result of the game's design but rather a manifestation of underlying mental health challenges. The study's co-author, Kylie Falcione, explains, "The kids who were already having depressive symptoms and social issues were more likely to get stuck in a cycle of problematic gaming." This indicates that for these individuals, gaming becomes an unhealthy coping mechanism, a way to manage pre-existing psychopathologies.

C. The study's longitudinal analysis, which followed 4,289 adolescents in the United States over a four-year period, provides strong evidence for this conclusion. The researchers tracked the participants' mental health, including symptoms of depression and anxiety, as well as their gaming habits. The findings were consistent: those with pre-existing mental health issues were significantly more likely to develop a gaming disorder. This challenges the popular notion that video games are the sole cause of addiction, suggesting instead that they may be a symptom of a larger problem.

D. This is not to say that the games themselves play no role. The intricate reward systems, the sense of community, and the immersive narratives are all powerful draws.

However, the research suggests that for most people, these elements are not enough to trigger an addiction. It is the combination of these engaging features with an individual's pre-existing vulnerabilities that can lead to a problematic relationship with gaming. As René Weber, another co-author of the study, cautions, the relationship between psychopathology and gaming disorder can be a "downward spiral," where each exacerbates the other.

E. The implications of this research for treatment are profound. Simply taking away the video games, a common parental response, may not be an effective long-term solution. Without addressing the underlying mental health issues, the individual may simply find another outlet for their distress or relapse into problematic gaming. A more effective approach, as Falcione suggests, is to "start at the psychopathology level — identify the underlying issues." This may involve therapy, counseling, or other forms of mental health support.

F. The prevalence of gaming disorder is estimated to be around 3-5% of all gamers, though this figure can vary depending on the definition of the disorder and the population being studied. A meta-analysis of 27 studies found a pooled prevalence level of 5.0%. The study also identified several factors associated with addictive gaming, including emotional dependence, social detachment, and increased gaming time. These factors, combined with the adverse outcomes of addictive gaming, such as lower academic scores and decreased life satisfaction, underscore the seriousness of the issue and the need for effective, evidence-based interventions.

Questions 14-19

Reading Passage 2 has six paragraphs, A-F.

Choose the correct heading for each paragraph from the list of headings below.

Write the correct number, i-viii, in boxes 14-19 on your answer sheet.

List of Headings

- i. The role of game design in addiction
- ii. The prevalence and predictors of gaming disorder
- iii. The limitations of current research
- iv. The link between gaming and pre-existing mental health issues
- v. The ineffectiveness of simply banning games
- vi. The methodology of a key study
- vii. The addictive nature of video games
- viii. The future of gaming addiction treatment

1. Paragraph A
2. Paragraph B
3. Paragraph C
4. Paragraph D
5. Paragraph E
6. Paragraph F

Questions 20-23

Choose the correct letter, A, B, C or D.

Write the correct letter in boxes 20-23 on your answer sheet.

1. The UC Santa Barbara study suggests that gaming disorder is often... A. a direct result of a game's design. B. a sign of underlying mental health problems. C. a harmless pastime for most people. D. a problem that only affects adolescents.
2. According to the passage, what is a common parental response to a child's gaming addiction? A. Seeking professional help B. Encouraging other hobbies C. Taking away the video games D. Setting strict time limits
3. The meta-analysis mentioned in the passage found the prevalence of gaming disorder to be... A. less than 1%. B. around 3-5%. C. approximately 5%. D. over 10%.
4. The passage suggests that an effective treatment for gaming addiction should focus on... A. the individual's gaming habits. B. the underlying mental health issues. C. the design of the video games. D. the social aspects of gaming.

Questions 24-26

Complete the sentences below.

Choose **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 24-26 on your answer sheet.

1. For some individuals, gaming can become an _____.
2. The relationship between psychopathology and gaming disorder can be described as a _____.

3. The meta-analysis identified emotional dependence and _____ as predictors of addictive gaming.

READING PASSAGE 3

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 27-40, which are based on Reading Passage 3 below.

The Debate Over Digital Dependency

With the global proliferation of video games, a significant debate has emerged within the medical and psychological communities regarding their potential for addiction. While the World Health Organization has officially recognized “gaming disorder” in its International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11), the discussion is far from settled. The core of the debate centers on whether excessive gaming constitutes a unique mental health condition or if it is a manifestation of other underlying disorders. This distinction is crucial, as it shapes the approaches taken for diagnosis, treatment, and public health policy.

A key aspect of understanding this issue is its scale. A systematic review and meta-analysis of numerous studies sought to determine the prevalence of video game addiction. By pooling data from 12 robust studies, researchers calculated the prevalence level of gaming addiction to be approximately 5.0%. This figure, while seemingly small, represents millions of individuals worldwide. The research identified several characteristics of addictive gaming behavior, including spending an excessive amount of time playing, a preference for online gaming over offline, and significant interference with sleep patterns. These behaviors are not just habits but are indicative of a compulsive cycle that individuals find difficult to break.

The factors that contribute to the development of addictive gaming are multifaceted, involving a complex interplay of psychological, social, and personal elements. Predictors of addictive gaming include a high degree of emotional dependence on the game, a sense of social detachment from the real world, and increased emotional and psychological stress. For vulnerable individuals, the immersive and rewarding nature of video games can provide a powerful escape from real-life problems, leading to a preference for the virtual world over reality. This can create a feedback loop where the game becomes a coping mechanism, further reinforcing the addictive behavior.

The consequences of this digital dependency are severe and far-reaching. Engaging in addictive gaming has been consistently linked to a range of adverse outcomes. Academically, it can lead to lower grades and a lack of engagement in school. Psychologically, it is associated with increased rates of depression, anxiety, and decreased self-esteem. Socially, it can result in a loss of social support and a diminished quality of relationships. Furthermore, individuals may experience a significant decrease in their overall life satisfaction, as their focus narrows to the virtual world at the expense of other life-enriching activities.

Given the significant negative impact of video game addiction, the development of effective interventions is a priority. The research underscores the need for corrective measures that are based on a clear understanding of the identified risk factors. A one-size-fits-all approach is unlikely to be effective, given the diverse factors that contribute to the disorder. Instead, interventions should be tailored to the individual, addressing their specific psychological and social needs. This requires a coherent strategy that can be adapted as new statistical data and a deeper understanding of the condition emerge.

In conclusion, while the academic debate over the precise classification of video game addiction continues, the tangible negative effects on individuals and society are undeniable. The evidence points to a clear need for greater awareness, early identification of at-risk individuals, and the development of targeted, evidence-based interventions to mitigate the harm caused by this modern form of addiction.

Questions 27-32

Do the following statements agree with the claims of the writer in Reading Passage 3?

In boxes 27-32 on your answer sheet, write

YES if the statement agrees with the claims of the writer **NO** if the statement contradicts the claims of the writer **NOT GIVEN** if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this

1. The medical community is in complete agreement about the classification of gaming disorder.
2. The prevalence of video game addiction is insignificant.
3. A preference for online gaming is a characteristic of addictive behavior.

4. Video game addiction has minimal impact on an individual's social life.
5. Effective interventions for gaming addiction should be customized for each individual.
6. The author believes that video games should be banned to prevent addiction.

Questions 33-36

Choose the correct letter, A, B, C or D.

Write the correct letter in boxes 33-36 on your answer sheet.

1. What is the main purpose of this passage? A. To argue that video game addiction is not a real disorder B. To review the positive and negative effects of video games C. To discuss the debate, prevalence, and impact of video game addiction D. To present a new treatment for video game addiction
2. The meta-analysis mentioned in the passage calculated the prevalence of gaming addiction to be... A. 2.1% B. 5.0% C. 8.8% D. 12%
3. Which of the following is mentioned as a predictor of addictive gaming? A. High academic achievement B. Strong social connections C. Emotional dependence D. A preference for offline games
4. The passage suggests that future interventions should be... A. based on a single, universal approach. B. developed without considering risk factors. C. adapted based on new data and understanding. D. focused solely on reducing gaming time.

Questions 37-40

Complete the notes below.

Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 37-40 on your answer sheet.

Negative Outcomes of Addictive Gaming

- Academic: Lower grades
- Psychological: Depression, anxiety, and decreased 37. _____
- Social: Loss of 38. _____

- Personal: Reduced overall 39. _____
- Behavioral: Interference with 40. _____ patterns

LISTENING SECTION

SECTION 1 Questions 1-10

Complete the form below.

Write **ONE WORD AND/OR A NUMBER** for each answer.

Digital Detox Support Group - Registration Form

Personal Details

- **Name:** Sarah 1. _____
- **Contact Number:** 07700 900 2. _____
- **Email Address:** sarah.j@email.com

Gaming Habits

- **Primary Game Type:** 3. _____ Role-Playing Games (RPGs)
- **Average Hours Per Week:** 4. _____ hours
- **Preferred Gaming Platform:** PC

Reason for Joining

- Wants to reduce gaming time to improve 5. _____ life.
- Experiencing negative effects on 6. _____.
- Feeling disconnected from 7. _____ and friends.

Goals

- Reduce gaming time to a maximum of 8. _____ hours per week.
- Find new 9. _____ to replace gaming.
- Attend weekly group 10. _____.

SECTION 2 Questions 11-20

Questions 11-15

Choose the correct letter, A, B or C.

1. The speaker, Dr. Evans, is a... A. professional gamer. B. a technology journalist. C. a clinical psychologist.
2. According to Dr. Evans, what is the main reason people become addicted to video games? A. The social interaction with other players. B. The sense of achievement and reward. C. The desire to escape from reality.
3. What is one of the physical effects of video game addiction mentioned by the speaker? A. Improved hand-eye coordination. B. Repetitive strain injury. C. Increased physical fitness.
4. The speaker suggests that parents should... A. ban their children from playing video games. B. play video games with their children. C. set clear and consistent limits on gaming time.
5. What is the “detox” period mentioned by the speaker? A. A period of gradually reducing gaming time. B. A period of complete abstinence from gaming. C. A period of playing only educational games.

Questions 16-20

What does the speaker say about the following activities?

Write the correct letter, A, B, or C, next to questions 16-20.

A It is a recommended alternative to gaming. **B** It can be helpful, but has limitations. **C** It is not an effective strategy.

1. Outdoor sports
2. Reading books
3. Mindfulness and meditation
4. Watching movies and TV shows
5. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

SECTION 3 Questions 21-30

Choose the correct letter, A, B or C.

1. The students are discussing a recent study on... A. the benefits of video games. B. the link between gaming and aggression. C. the connection between gaming and mental health.
2. What was the main finding of the study? A. Gaming causes mental health problems. B. People with mental health problems are more likely to become addicted to gaming. C. There is no link between gaming and mental health.
3. According to the students, what is a limitation of the study? A. The sample size was too small. B. The study was not longitudinal. C. The study only focused on male gamers.
4. The students agree that the term “addiction” is... A. a helpful and accurate description. B. a controversial and debated term. C. a term that should only be used for substance abuse.
5. What does the tutor suggest about the role of game design? A. It is the primary cause of addiction. B. It is a contributing factor, but not the sole cause. C. It is irrelevant to the issue of addiction.
6. The students discuss the concept of “flow,” which is... A. a state of complete immersion in an activity. B. the social aspect of online gaming. C. the frustration of being unable to complete a level.
7. What is the “downward spiral” mentioned in the discussion? A. The decreasing popularity of certain game genres. B. The mutual reinforcement of gaming and mental health problems. C. The financial cost of in-game purchases.
8. The students suggest that a good approach to treatment would be... A. to focus on the individual’s gaming habits. B. to address the underlying mental health issues. C. to use medication to control gaming urges.
9. The tutor raises the point that gaming can also have... A. negative physical effects. B. positive social benefits. C. a significant impact on academic performance.
10. What do the students conclude about the issue of video game addiction? A. It is a simple issue with a clear solution. B. It is a complex issue with no easy answers. C. It is not a serious issue and is often exaggerated.

SECTION 4 Questions 31-40

Complete the notes below.

Write **ONE WORD ONLY** for each answer.

Lecture on the Neurology of Gaming Addiction

Introduction

- Focus on the brain's response to video games
- Comparison with other forms of 31. _____

The Brain's Reward System

- The role of the neurotransmitter 32. _____
- This chemical is released in response to pleasurable activities
- Video games create a powerful and 33. _____ release of this chemical

Changes in the Brain

- Prolonged gaming can lead to changes in the brain's 34. _____
- The brain becomes less sensitive to the reward, requiring more stimulation
- This is known as 35. _____

The Prefrontal Cortex

- This part of the brain is responsible for decision-making and 36. _____ control
- In gaming addicts, the prefrontal cortex can become 37. _____
- This makes it harder to resist the urge to play

Cravings and Triggers

- Environmental cues can trigger intense 38. _____
- These cues can be visual, auditory, or even emotional
- The brain creates strong 39. _____ between these cues and the gaming experience

Conclusion

- Gaming addiction is a real neurological phenomenon

- It is not simply a matter of a lack of 40. _____
- Understanding the neurology is crucial for developing effective treatments

WRITING SECTION

WRITING TASK 1

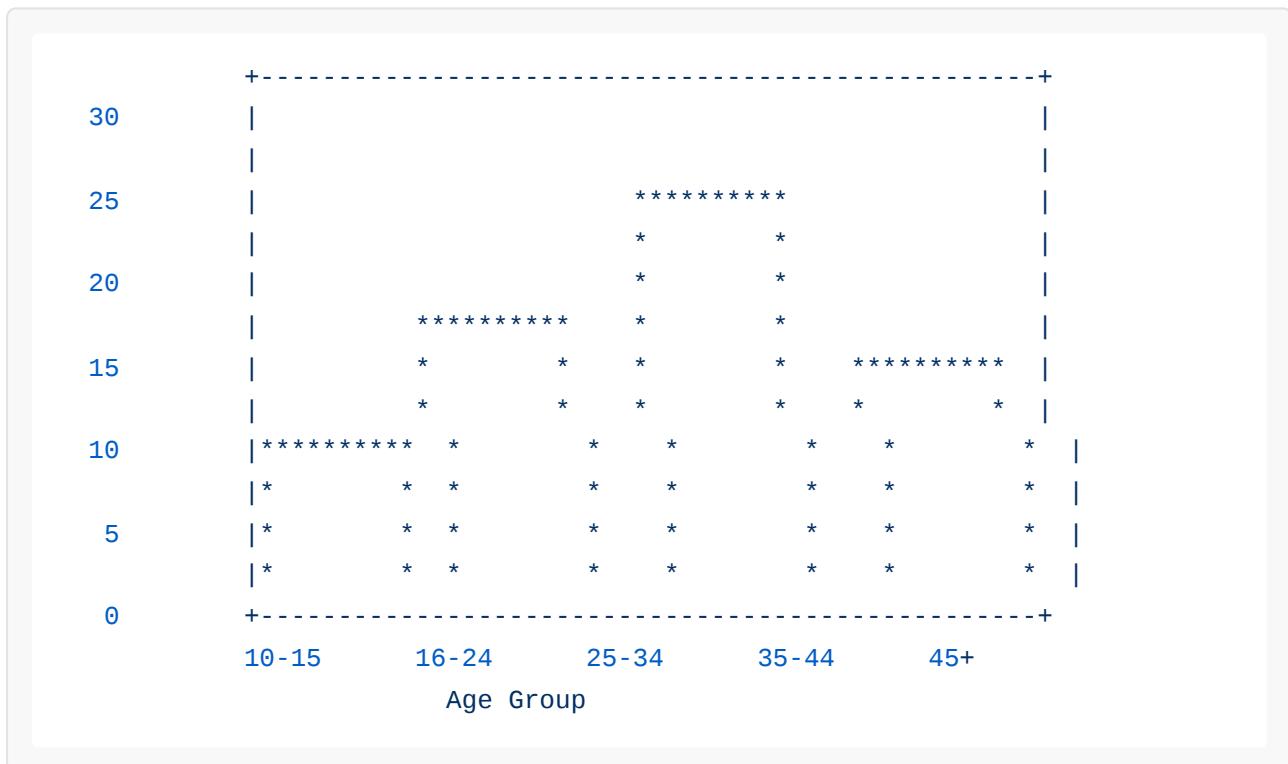
You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

The chart below shows the average number of hours spent playing video games per week by different age groups in the UK in 2023.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

Write at least 150 words.

Average Weekly Gaming Hours in the UK (2023)



WRITING TASK 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

Some people believe that video game addiction is a growing problem and that stricter regulations should be placed on the gaming industry. Others argue that individuals are responsible for their own behavior and that the industry should not be blamed.

Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

SPEAKING SECTION

PART 1

- Do you like playing video games? Why or why not?
- What kinds of video games are popular in your country?
- How much time do you think is acceptable for a person to spend on video games each day?
- Do you think video games can be educational?
- What are some of the positive and negative effects of playing video games?

PART 2

Describe a time when you or someone you know spent too much time playing video games.

You should say:

- who the person was
- what game they were playing
- what the consequences were

and explain how the situation was resolved.

PART 3

- Why do you think some people become addicted to video games?
- In what ways can video game addiction affect an individual's life?

- Do you think the government should regulate the video game industry more strictly?
- What role should parents play in preventing their children from becoming addicted to video games?
- How do you think the problem of video game addiction will develop in the future?

GRAMMAR SECTION

Questions 1-5: Error correction

Find the error in each sentence and correct it.

1. He has been playing video games for hours, so he is feeling very tire.
2. The number of people suffering from gaming addiction have increased in recent years.
3. She is not used to spend so much time indoors.
4. If I would have known about the negative effects, I would have played less.
5. The game, that was released last year, has become incredibly popular.

Questions 6-10: Sentence transformation

Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between two and five words, including the word given.

1. He started playing the game three hours ago. (BEEN) He _____ the game for three hours.
2. It is a bad idea to spend so much money on in-game purchases. (SHOULD) You _____ so much money on in-game purchases.
3. She was so addicted to the game that she couldn't stop playing. (SUCH) She had _____ to the game that she couldn't stop playing.
4. He regrets not spending more time with his family. (WISHES) He _____ more time with his family.

5. The new game is more popular than the old one. (AS) The old game is _____ the new one.

Questions 11-15: Fill in the blanks

Complete the text with the correct form of the verb in brackets, or with a suitable article or preposition.

Video game addiction is a serious issue that (11) _____ (affect) millions of people worldwide. It is often characterized (12) _____ an inability to control the amount of time spent playing games, which can have a negative impact (13) _____ various aspects of a person's life. For example, someone who is addicted to gaming might neglect their responsibilities at work or school, and their relationships with friends and family (14) _____ (suffer). In recent years, there (15) _____ (be) a significant increase in the number of people seeking help for this problem.

Questions 16-20: Word formation

Use the word in capitals to form a word that fits in the gap.

1. The game is incredibly _____. (ADDICT)
2. He felt a great sense of _____ when he finally completed the level. (ACHIEVE)
3. The game's graphics are _____ stunning. (ABSOLUTE)
4. She was _____ of the dangers of spending too much time online. (AWARE)
5. The company has received many _____ about the game's difficulty. (COMPLAIN)

ANSWER KEY

READING SECTION

1. NOT GIVEN
2. TRUE
3. FALSE
4. FALSE

- 5. FALSE
- 6. FALSE
- 7. B
- 8. C
- 9. C
- 10. C
- 11. incentive
- 12. compulsion
- 13. compulsive behavior
- 14. vii
- 15. iv
- 16. vi
- 17. i
- 18. v
- 19. ii
- 20. B
- 21. C
- 22. C
- 23. B
- 24. unhealthy coping mechanism
- 25. downward spiral
- 26. social detachment
- 27. NO
- 28. NO
- 29. YES
- 30. NO
- 31. YES
- 32. NOT GIVEN
- 33. C

- 34. B
- 35. C
- 36. C
- 37. self-esteem
- 38. social support

- 39. life satisfaction
- 40. sleep

LISTENING SECTION

- 1. Jones
- 2. 341
- 3. Massively Multiplayer Online
- 4. 40
- 5. social
- 6. studies
- 7. family
- 8. 10
- 9. hobbies
- 10. meetings
- 11. C
- 12. B
- 13. B
- 14. C
- 15. B
- 16. A
- 17. A
- 18. A
- 19. B
- 20. B

- 21. C
- 22. B
- 23. B
- 24. B
- 25. B
- 26. A
- 27. B
- 28. B
- 29. B
- 30. B
- 31. addiction
- 32. dopamine
- 33. consistent
- 34. structure
- 35. tolerance
- 36. impulse
- 37. underactive
- 38. craving
- 39. associations
- 40. willpower

GRAMMAR SECTION

- 1. tired
- 2. has
- 3. spending
- 4. had I known
- 5. which
- 6. has been playing
- 7. should not spend

8. such an addiction
9. wishes he had spent
10. not as popular as
11. affects
12. by
13. on
14. suffer
15. has been
16. addictive
17. achievement
18. absolutely
19. unaware
20. complaints

TUTOR GUIDE

WRITING TASK 1: MODEL ANSWER

The bar chart illustrates the average number of hours per week that people in the UK spent playing video games in 2023, categorized by age group.

Overall, the chart shows a clear trend of decreasing gaming hours with age, with the youngest age group spending the most time gaming and the oldest group spending the least. The 25-34 age group is a notable exception to this trend, with the highest average weekly gaming hours.

The 25-34 age group spent the most time gaming, with an average of 25 hours per week. The 16-24 age group followed, with an average of 15 hours per week. The 10-15 and 35-44 age groups both spent an average of 10 hours per week on gaming. The 45+ age group spent the least amount of time gaming, with an average of just 5 hours per week.

In summary, the data indicates that video gaming is most popular among young adults in the UK, particularly those aged 25-34. The amount of time dedicated to gaming

declines significantly in older age groups.

WRITING TASK 2: MODEL ESSAY (BAND 9)

The debate surrounding video game addiction and the responsibility of the gaming industry is a complex one, with valid arguments on both sides. While personal responsibility is undoubtedly a crucial factor in an individual's choices, the powerful and persuasive design of modern video games cannot be ignored. This essay will argue that while individuals must take ownership of their behavior, the gaming industry also has a significant ethical obligation to mitigate the risks of addiction, and that some form of regulation is therefore necessary.

On the one hand, the argument for personal responsibility is compelling. Adults, in particular, are expected to make their own choices and manage their time effectively. It can be argued that blaming the gaming industry for an individual's addiction is akin to blaming a car manufacturer for a speeding driver. Ultimately, the decision to play a game for an excessive amount of time lies with the individual. Furthermore, millions of people enjoy video games as a harmless hobby without developing any addictive behaviors, which suggests that the problem may lie with the individual's predisposition rather than the games themselves.

On the other hand, the gaming industry employs sophisticated psychological techniques to keep players engaged. Features such as loot boxes, daily rewards, and endless quests are specifically designed to trigger the brain's reward system and encourage compulsive play. These techniques can be particularly effective on vulnerable individuals, such as those with pre-existing mental health conditions. To argue that the industry has no responsibility in this context is to ignore the immense power and influence it wields.

In my opinion, a balanced approach is needed. While individuals must be encouraged to take responsibility for their gaming habits, the industry must also be held accountable for the potential harm its products can cause. This could involve stricter regulations on manipulative design features, such as loot boxes, as well as a greater investment in public awareness campaigns and support services for those who are struggling with addiction. The goal should not be to demonize video games, which can be a source of great enjoyment and social connection for many, but to ensure that they are enjoyed in a safe and responsible manner.

In conclusion, while personal responsibility is a key factor in video game addiction, the gaming industry's role in creating and promoting potentially addictive products

cannot be overlooked. A combination of individual accountability, industry responsibility, and government regulation is needed to address this growing problem effectively.

SPEAKING PART 2: SAMPLE RESPONSE

I'd like to talk about my younger brother, Tom, who went through a phase of being completely obsessed with a video game called *World of Warcraft*. It's a massively multiplayer online role-playing game, and he got really into it during his last year of high school.

At first, it seemed like a harmless hobby. He was connecting with his friends online and having fun. But gradually, it started to take over his life. He would play for hours on end, often late into the night. His grades started to slip, and he became withdrawn and irritable. He stopped hanging out with his friends in person and seemed to lose interest in everything else.

The consequences were quite serious. He ended up failing two of his final exams and had to repeat them over the summer. It also put a huge strain on our family. My parents were constantly arguing with him about his gaming, and the atmosphere at home was very tense.

Eventually, my parents decided to intervene. They sat him down and had a long talk with him about their concerns. They didn't just blame him; they tried to understand why he was spending so much time in the game. It turned out that he was feeling a lot of pressure about his exams and his future, and the game was a way for him to escape from that.

They came up with a plan together. They set strict limits on his gaming time and helped him find other ways to cope with his stress, like joining a local football team. It wasn't easy, and there were a few arguments along the way, but eventually, he managed to get his gaming under control. He still plays now and then, but it's no longer an obsession. He's much happier and healthier now, and he's doing really well at university.

KEY VOCABULARY LIST

- 1. Compulsive:** Resulting from or relating to an irresistible urge, especially one that is against one's conscious wishes.
- 2. Proliferation:** Rapid increase in the number or amount of something.

3. **Preoccupation:** The state or condition of being engrossed with something.
4. **Deceptive:** Giving an appearance or impression different from the true one; misleading.
5. **Hallmark:** A distinctive feature, especially one of excellence.
6. **Engrossed:** Having all one's attention or interest absorbed by someone or something.
7. **Psychological withdrawal:** The emotional and mental symptoms that occur when a person stops using a substance or engaging in a behavior to which they are addicted.
8. **Irritable:** Having or showing a tendency to be easily annoyed or made angry.
9. **Alienated:** Experiencing or inducing feelings of isolation or estrangement.
10. **Deterioration:** The process of becoming progressively worse.
11. **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT):** A type of psychotherapy in which negative patterns of thought about the self and the world are challenged in order to alter unwanted behavior patterns or treat mood disorders such as depression.
12. **Pharmacotherapy:** The branch of medicine concerned with the uses, effects, and modes of action of drugs.
13. **Longitudinal analysis:** A research design that involves repeated observations of the same variables over short or long periods of time.
14. **Psychopathology:** The scientific study of mental disorders.
15. **Bidirectional:** Functioning in two directions.
16. **Exacerbate:** Make (a problem, bad situation, or negative feeling) worse.
17. **Prevalence:** The fact or condition of being prevalent; commonness.
18. **Meta-analysis:** A statistical analysis that combines the results of multiple scientific studies.
19. **Intervention:** Action taken to improve a situation, especially a medical disorder.
20. **Mitigate:** Make (something bad) less severe, serious, or painful.