***Grand Theft Auto Online*** is an [online multiplayer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multiplayer_video_game) [action-adventure game](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Action-adventure_game) developed by [Rockstar North](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rockstar_North) and published by [Rockstar Games](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rockstar_Games). It was released on 1 October 2013 for [PlayStation 3](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PlayStation_3) and [Xbox 360](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xbox_360),[[a]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-2) 18 November 2014 for [PlayStation 4](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PlayStation_4) and [Xbox One](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xbox_One), 14 April 2015 for [Windows](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Windows), and 15 March 2022 for [PlayStation 5](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PlayStation_5) and [Xbox Series X/S](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xbox_Series_X/S). The game is the online component of [*Grand Theft Auto V*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_V). Set within the fictional state of San Andreas (based on [Southern California](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southern_California)), *Grand Theft Auto Online* allows up to 30 players[[b]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-players-3) to explore its [open world](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_world) environment and engage in [cooperative](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cooperative_video_game) or competitive game matches.

The open-world design lets players [freely roam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonlinear_gameplay) San Andreas, which includes an open countryside and the fictional city of Los Santos (based on [Los Angeles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Los_Angeles)). Players control a customisable [silent protagonist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silent_protagonist) in their journey to become a powerful criminal, slowly building an empire as they complete increasingly difficult tasks. Set both months before and years after the single-player campaign,[[c]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-5) *Grand Theft Auto Online* comprises cooperative missions where multiple players complete tasks to advance the narrative. The game also features numerous side missions and events, including the more advanced "Heists", and various businesses that players can purchase and manage to produce income.

Developed in tandem with the single-player mode, *Grand Theft Auto Online* was conceived as a separate experience to be played in a continually evolving world. At launch, it suffered widespread technical issues resulting in the inability to play missions and loss of character data. It initially polarised reviewers, being criticised for its lack of direction and repetitive missions, with praise particularly directed at the scope and open-ended gameplay. It won divided [year-end accolades](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_accolades_received_by_Grand_Theft_Auto_V), ranging from Biggest Disappointment to Best Multiplayer, from several gaming publications. The game receives frequent free updates that further expand on the game modes and content, which has improved critical reception. The 2015 *Heists* update was especially well received by the critics.

Gameplay[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Grand_Theft_Auto_Online&action=edit&section=1)]

Developed in tandem with *Grand Theft Auto V*, *Grand Theft Auto Online* was conceived as a separate experience to be played in a continually evolving world.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-6) Up to 30 players[[b]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-players-3) freely roam across a re-creation of the single-player world and enter lobbies to complete jobs (story-driven competitive and cooperative modes).[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-Persistent-7) The Content Creator toolset lets players create their own parameters for custom jobs, like racetracks and [deathmatch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deathmatch) weapon [spawn points](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spawning_(video_gaming)).[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-CVG-online-9) Players may band together in organised player teams called crews to complete jobs together. [Rockstar Games Social Club](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rockstar_Games_Social_Club) extends crews formed in [*Max Payne 3*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max_Payne_3)'s multiplayer mode to that of *Grand Theft Auto Online*. Players can create their own crews and join up to five total. Crews also have a hierarchy, crew leaders can change a members role in said hierarchy. Crews win multiplayer matches to earn [experience points](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Experience_point) and climb [online leaderboards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Online_leaderboards).[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-krupa1-10)

In *Grand Theft Auto Online*, players create a new character specific to the online world, which shows on the screen's Switch Wheel alongside single-player characters Franklin, Michael, and Trevor.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-Shacknews:_weeks_after-11) The [player-characters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Player-character) are designed by a genetics-related process.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-IGN_review-12) Greater control is given to the character's clothes and hairstyles. The protagonist arrives in [Los Santos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Los_Santos_(Grand_Theft_Auto)) by plane and is picked up by Lamar Davis, who gives the character a gun and a car. An hour-long tutorial introduces the player to the various game modes, driving, fighting, and game progression mechanics.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-IGN_review-12) The story is not central in the multiplayer, though it initially serves as a prequel to the single-player story, where characters from the single-player are woven in.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-IGN_review-12)

Similar to single-player, players can level up their character's attributes such as driving and stamina. Exclusive to *GTA Online* is a system of earning experience, usually by successful completion of activities. Accumulating enough experience to level up unlocks weapons, clothing, car customisations, and more advanced activities (such as parachuting and aircraft). Once unlocked, items need to be purchased with in-game currency, which can be earned or purchased with real money. Players can circumvent an activity's level requirements by joining a game with others of a sufficient rank. There are options to play alone or with friends, and an option for "Passive Mode", which makes the player immune to other players.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-IGN_review-12)

Aside from the open world, there are three main types of set activities: racing (by car, bike, aircraft, or boat), Deathmatch (team or free-for-all), and objective-based Contact Missions (simplified single-player-like storyline jobs, usually cooperative). *Online* uses lock-on aim and emphasises stealth in firefights. "Adversary Mode" adds several asymmetric variations on these activities, including "Siege Mentality" where one team is besieged by another, and "Hasta La Vista" where truckers chase down cyclists (reminiscent of the truck/motorcycle chase in [*Terminator 2: Judgment Day*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terminator_2:_Judgment_Day)). "Survival" pits a team of up to four players against ten waves of enemies, similar to the Zombies mode in [*Call of Duty: Black Ops*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Call_of_Duty:_Black_Ops). The *Heists* Update released on 10 March 2015 adds five [co-op](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cooperative_video_game) elaborate multi-part missions, each mission having several setup jobs leading up to the finale crime which is a high-profit job. The player who is the heist leader has to unlock each heist in order and pay the upfront costs, while receiving the largest payoff (at the end, if successfully completed) and getting their progress saved, while other players (the crew members) can join any setup/finale jobs without prerequisite and get paid a cut for each mission passed. The heists, all requiring four players except the first which is two-player, often assign specific roles to players such as driver, gunner, etc. and/or may split them apart, and a headset is recommended for communicating with other players.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-martin1-13)[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-mccaffrey2-14)

The game includes a content creation tool that lets players make automobile races and [deathmatches](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deathmatch).[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-Shacknews:_weeks_after-11) Players can choose the location, start and spawn points, and weapon and vehicle drops in deathmatches, and the location, route, race type, and player count in air, land, or sea races. Creations have to be tested against [computer-controlled](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artificial_intelligence_(video_games)) players before the mode is available online. The creations can also be published for others to use. Rockstar tags what they deem to be the best as "Rockstar Verified".[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-IGN:_deathmatch-15)

Plot[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Grand_Theft_Auto_Online&action=edit&section=2)]

The game's narrative begins in 2013, several months before [*Grand Theft Auto V*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_V). Players take on the role of a [silent protagonist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silent_protagonist) who moves to Los Santos in search for new pursuits. Upon arrival, they meet with Lamar Davis ([Slink Johnson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slink_Johnson)), whom they befriended on Lifeinvader. After a street race against the player, Lamar introduces them to drug dealer Gerald (Douglas Powell Ward) and corrupt [Armenian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenians) car salesman Simeon Yetarian (Demosthenes Chrysan) for work. As the player slowly builds up their reputation, they attract the attention of individuals like [Trevor Philips](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trevor_Philips) ([Steven Ogg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steven_Ogg)), hacker Lester Crest (Jay Klaitz), and Mexican drug lord Martin Madrazo (Alfredo Huereca), who also employ them.

Eventually, the player is offered bigger job opportunities by Lester, who recruits them for several bank robberies; a shady government agent known only as Agent 14 (Ryan Farrell), who has them break a convicted spy out of prison and raid a government-run lab; and Trevor, who enlists their help with a highly profitable drug deal.[[d]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-16) Later, Lamar also hires the player for a few jobs, which mostly consist of sabotaging rival gangs to set the stage for his eventual rise to power. However, this only leads to Lamar having a falling out with his own gang, so he attempts to win back their trust, once again with the player's help.[[e]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-17) During this time, the player slowly builds up their own criminal empire, starting with an initially small organisation,[[f]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-18) which is subsequently expanded by purchasing an office and several warehouses to aid the player in the theft and sale of various goods.[[g]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-19) Some time later, the player also starts a [motorcycle club](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outlaw_motorcycle_club) and begins running additional illicit businesses.[[h]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-20)

In 2017,[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-Rockstar_Games-4) the player continues to expand their empire by purchasing a bunker, from where they conduct a gunrunning operation alongside Agent 14,[[i]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-21) and a hangar, to help them run a smuggling operation with Trevor's former associate Ron Jakowski (David Mogentale).[[j]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-22) In December, Lester has the player purchase an ex-government underground facility, and introduces them to billionaire Avon Hertz (Sean McGrath) and his [AI](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artificial_intelligence) network Cliffford, who recruit them to help prevent an undisclosed future catastrophic event. During their mission, the group are joined by the International Affairs Agency (IAA), including Agent 14, and clash with a rogue Russian special ops unit led by a man named Bogdan ([Vyto Ruginis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vyto_Ruginis" \o "Vyto Ruginis)). However, after eliminating most of the unit, Avon and Cliffford turn on the group, revealing their true intentions to trigger a nuclear armageddon, and that they have been using everyone to gain access to the state's defence system. Now joined by Bogdan, the group works to thwart Avon and Cliffford's plot, and are ultimately successful, after the player raids their secret facility and eliminates them both.[[k]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-23)

In July 2018, the player opens a new nightclub in Los Santos with the help of former Liberty City nightclub entrepreneur ["Gay" Tony Prince](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto:_The_Ballad_of_Gay_Tony) (David Kenner), and begins using it as a front for their illicit businesses.[[l]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-24) In December, they become a top competitor in *Arena War*, a new [demolition derby](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demolition_derby)-like TV series taking place at the city's Maze Bank Arena.[[m]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-25) In July 2019, the player becomes a VIP member at the newly opened Diamond Casino & Resort, and begins assisting the staff with the various problems they are facing; primarily Texan businessman Avery Duggan, who is planning a hostile takeover. After disrupting his operations and defending the casino from several attacks, the player eventually kills Duggan, allowing his nephew Thornton to buy the casino after promising not to make any major changes.[[n]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-26) In December, the player and a retired Lester plan a robbery of the casino alongside Georgina Cheng (Christina Liang), sister of former casino owner Tao (Richard Hsu), who seeks retribution against Thornton for tricking her brother into selling him the casino. The heist is carried out successfully, humiliating Thornton, while Lester enters a relationship with Georgina.[[o]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-27)

In 2020, the player conducts several new jobs for Gerald,[[p]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-28) and enters a short-lived conflict with the [Kkangpae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kkangpae" \o "Kkangpae) after they raid their personal yacht, which ends with the player killing the gang's leader.[[q]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-29) In December, the player is hired by Martin Madrazo's son Miguel (Robbie Gottlieb) to steal some incriminating files of his family from Juan "El Rubio" Strickler (Joseph Melendez), the world's most notorious drug dealer and the Madrazo family's main supplier, who has threatened to report them to the [DEA](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drug_Enforcement_Administration) if they do not renegotiate their prices. As El Rubio rarely leaves his private and heavily guarded island, Cayo Perico, located offshore from [Colombia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colombia), the player poses as the tour manager of the music group Keinemusik after they are invited to one of El Rubio's parties, in order to gain intel on the island. Afterward, with the help of their recently purchased [submarine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Submarine) and its one-man crew, Pavel (Brandon Beilis), they plan a robbery of El Rubio's compound. The heist is ultimately successful, as the player escapes with both the files on Madrazo and various goods.[[r]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-30)

In July 2021, the player becomes a member of the LS Car Meet, an underground meeting place for fans of custom cars and street racing. There, they are introduced to [Kenny "KDJ" Dixon Jr.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moodymann) and Sessanta (Emana Rachelle), who provide the player with several robbery contracts after they purchase an auto shop and prove themselves to them.[[s]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-31) In December, Lamar reaches out to the player again, to persuade them to invest in the business of his old friend, Franklin Clinton ([Shawn Fonteno](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shawn_Fonteno)), who has recently started a celebrity solutions agency. Franklin manages to secure their first major contract with [Dr. Dre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dr._Dre), who had his phone stolen last year and needs it recovered before the unreleased music stored on it is leaked. The player works alongside Franklin and the agency's hacker specialist, Imani (Sarita Amani Nash), to track down the phone, only to discover that three copies have been made and distributed around Los Santos. The player investigates each lead and eventually recovers the stolen music. Afterwards, Imani learns that the culprit was Johnny Guns, a records producer at odds with Dre, and that he has sent hitmen to kill Dre at his recording studio. After the player saves Dre, they help him find and confront Guns, whom Dre beats with a [golf club](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golf_club) in revenge. As a token of appreciation for their help, Dre allows the player to be the first person to listen to his newest song. Meanwhile, Lamar, upset at being left out of Franklin's new dealings, starts his own [cannabis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cannabis_(drug)) business, LD Organics. Franklin and Lamar later attempt to diversify it by making a connection with a client involved in the Epsilon program. Although the client ultimately betrays them, the pair dismantle a rival business run by the Vagos gang, and their stunts draw widespread media attention, which Lamar takes advantage of to promote his business.[[t]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-32)

In July 2022, the player is contacted by Agent ULP ([Jeff Steitzer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeff_Steitzer)) of the IAA, with whom they previously worked during the Doomsday Heist, and sworn in as an IAA agent so that they may investigate the recent increase of gasoline prices in San Andreas. Their investigation reveals that Mason Duggan, Thornton's younger brother, is responsible, using backup drives of Cliffford's AI bought from the Federal Investigation Bureau (FIB) to manipulate the prices and keep the Duggans' profits high. The player manages to retrieve all the backup drives and eventually intercepts a deal between Mason and the FIB, killing the former and ending the crisis. To ensure a similar incident does not occur again, Agent ULP then sends the player to Avon Hertz and Cliffford's old facility, which has been seized by the government, to retrieve the last traces of Cliffford's code, before cutting ties with them.[[u]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-33) In December, the player is introduced to a [juggalo troupe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juggalo_gangs" \o "Juggalo gangs) called the Fooliganz, who are eager to start their own drug distribution ring, bringing them into conflict with [The Lost](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_IV:_The_Lost_and_Damned) [motorcycle club](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outlaw_motorcycle_club), who run a similar operation. The player helps the Fooliganz and their leader, Dax, sabotage The Lost's operation and build up their own, after which they are officially welcomed into the troupe.[[v]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-34)

Development[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Grand_Theft_Auto_Online&action=edit&section=3)]

*Grand Theft Auto Online* launched on 1 October 2013, two weeks after the release of *Grand Theft Auto V*.[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-35) Many players reported that they had difficulties connecting to the game's servers and the Social Club web service, and others further reported that the game would freeze while loading early missions.[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-36)[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-37) Rockstar released a technical patch on 5 October in an effort to resolve the issues.[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-38) The [microtransaction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Micropayment) system, which allows players to purchase game content using real money, was also suspended as a fail-safe.[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-39) Problems persisted the second week following launch, and some players reported their player-character progress as having disappeared.[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-40) Another technical patch was released on 10 October combating the issues, and players experiencing issues were told not to recreate their multiplayer avatars.[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-41) As recompense for the technical issues, Rockstar offered a stimulus of GTA $500,000 (in-game currency) to the accounts of all players connected to *Online* since launch.[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-42)

Rockstar announced in September 2015 that the PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 versions of the online mode will no longer receive any new additional content, due to limitation in the console capacity.[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-7th_Gen-43) This was criticised by [*Forbes*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forbes) writer Paul Tassi, who felt that Rockstar was "cutting out a lot of potential customers" who continued to play on the older systems, adding that the re-releases on PlayStation 4 and Xbox One were lacking in additional content.[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-Forbes-44) In June 2021, Rockstar announced that the game's servers for the PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 versions would shut down on December 16; microtransactions became unavailable for the platforms on September 15, and Social Club tracking closed on September 16.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-PS3_360_2021-1)

A standalone version of *Grand Theft Auto Online* was released alongside the enhanced version of *Grand Theft Auto V* for [PlayStation 5](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PlayStation_5) and [Xbox Series X/S](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xbox_Series_X/S) on 15 March 2022;[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-45) it was free on the former for the first three months.[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-GameSpot_PS5-46) In addition to graphical enhancements and various quality of life improvements, this version features some exclusive content, such as new vehicles, an auto shop called Hao's Special Works where select vehicles can be upgraded for elite driving performances, and the Career Builder, which provides players with enough in-game currency to set up one of four businesses upon creating a new character.[[25]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-47) For a limited time, players could permanently transfer their progress from the previous generation consoles; earned in-game money could only be transferred across the same console family (PlayStation 4 to PlayStation 5, or Xbox One to Xbox Series X/S).[[26]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-48)

In early 2021, a user known as "t0st" reported they had found a way to reduce the loading times of *GTA Online* by up to 70% with an unofficial patch. Rockstar affirmed that the patch improved these load times, and officially included this patch into the game in March 2021 update, and thanked the user for the discovery, awarding them $10,000 from their Bug Bounty program.[[27]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-49)[[28]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-50)[[29]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_Online#cite_note-51)