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Grand Theft Auto IV to smash sales records

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THE ARTICLE

The wait is over. The latest version of the world's best-selling video game, Grand Theft Auto (GTA), hit the shelves on April 29th. Analysts predict worldwide sales of GTA IV will smash all previous records. Games experts believe it will sell 9 million copies in its first week and make more money than Microsoft's Halo 3, which netted \$400 million after its launch. GTA IV has received top reviews from games critics around the world. They say it is a "masterpiece" and the best game ever created. Amazingly, GTA IV has an average rating of 99% from the top games reviewers. Even more amazing is that GTA IV's makers, Take-Two Interactive Software and Rockstar Games, have spent very little money marketing and advertising its new product. The controversial action driving game could see record sales simply by word of mouth, TV news and Internet reports.

Earlier this year, Rockstar vice president Dan Houser explained why his company was not actively promoting GTA IV around the world. He said: "We want people to be really excited and not know everything by the time they play the game." He added: "Of course, we want them to understand what they're buying, but we want there to be surprises along the way." The action in the game takes place in Liberty City, which looks remarkably like the Big Apple, New York City. One surprise in the game is the really bad "hero" Niko Bellic, a violent gangster from Eastern Europe. Players can pretend to be Bellic and destroy everything in their sights. They can hijack cars, shoot the police and kill innocent bystanders. The graphics are outstanding and it's quite addictive playing. It's definitely not kids' stuff and carries an adult rating.

WARM-UPS

1. VIDEO GAMES: Walk around the class and talk to other students about video games. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your original partner(s) and share what you found out.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

wait / latest versions / smashing records / top reviews / marketing / word of mouth / being really excited / surprises / heroes / destroying everything / graphics / addictive

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. GAMES: Are video games better than other games? Complete this table and find out. Give a score from 10 (excellent) to 1 (very bad) for these games. Talk with your partners about the scores you gave.

Game	Fun	Educational	Sociable	Easy	Exciting
video games					
board games					
chess					
word games					
sports games					
card games					

4. MUST HAVES: What is important in a video game? Rank these 'must haves' in order of most and least important. Talk about your rankings. Change partners and share your ideas.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| _____ good graphics | _____ body movement (like the Wii) |
| _____ violence | _____ shooting |
| _____ being able to play online | _____ an educational message |
| _____ sound | _____ using English |

5. HEADLINE PREDICTION: With your partner(s), use the words in the "Chat" activity above to predict what the news article will be about. Once you have your story, change partners and share them. Who was closest to the real story?

6. MASTERPIECE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'masterpiece'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. A new video game is set to sell more than any other game before it. T / F
- b. People in the know think it will sell 9 million copies a week. T / F
- c. Experts said GTA IV is the best video game ever created. T / F
- d. The game's creators spent lots of money on advertising the game. T / F
- e. The creators wanted to keep parts of the game a secret. T / F
- f. A lot of the game takes place inside a giant apple. T / F
- g. There is very little violence in this latest version of Grand Theft Auto. T / F
- h. The article says you may become addicted to playing the game. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. version | a. ranking |
| 2. hit the shelves | b. edition |
| 3. netted | c. informal conversation |
| 4. rating | d. happens |
| 5. word of mouth | e. took in |
| 6. promoting | f. incredibly |
| 7. takes place | g. onlookers |
| 8. remarkably | h. went on sale |
| 9. bystanders | i. amazing |
| 10. outstanding | j. pushing |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. The wait | a. all previous records |
| 2. hit the | b. along the way |
| 3. smash | c. action driving game |
| 4. They say it is a "masterpiece" and | d. bystanders |
| 5. The controversial | e. is over |
| 6. his company was not actively | f. stuff |
| 7. surprises | g. shelves |
| 8. The action in the game takes | h. the best game ever |
| 9. kill innocent | i. promoting GTA IV |
| 10. It's definitely not kids' | j. place in Liberty City |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

The wait is over. The _____ version of the world's best-selling video game, Grand Theft Auto (GTA), hit the shelves on April 29th. Analysts predict worldwide sales of GTA IV will _____ all previous records. Games experts believe it will sell 9 million copies in its first week and make more money than Microsoft's Halo 3, which _____ \$400 million after its launch. GTA IV has received _____ reviews from games critics around the world. They say it is a "masterpiece" and the best game ever created. Amazingly, GTA IV has an average _____ of 99% from the top games _____. Even more amazing is that GTA IV's makers, Take-Two Interactive Software and Rockstar Games, have spent very _____ money marketing and advertising its new product. The controversial action driving game could see record sales simply by _____ of mouth, TV news and Internet reports.

rating
smash
reviewers
word
netted
little
latest
top

Earlier this year, Rockstar vice president Dan Houser explained why his company was not _____ promoting GTA IV around the world. He said: "We want people to be really excited and not _____ everything by the time they play the game." He added: "Of course, we want them to understand what they're _____, but we want there to be surprises along the _____." The action in the game takes place in Liberty City, which looks _____ like the Big Apple, New York City. One surprise in the game is the really bad "hero" Niko Bellic, a violent gangster from Eastern Europe. Players can _____ to be Bellic and destroy everything in their sights. They can hijack cars, shoot the police and kill _____ bystanders. The graphics are outstanding and it's quite addictive playing. It's definitely not kids' stuff and carries an _____ rating.

pretend
way
know
adult
actively
innocent
remarkably
buying

LISTENING: Listen and fill in the spaces.

The wait is over. The _____ world's best-selling video game, Grand Theft Auto (GTA), hit the shelves on April 29th. Analysts predict worldwide sales of GTA IV _____ records. Games experts believe it will sell 9 million copies in its first week and make more money than Microsoft's Halo 3, which netted \$400 million _____. GTA IV has received top reviews _____ the world. They say it is a "masterpiece" and the best game ever created. Amazingly, GTA IV has an average rating of 99% from the top games reviewers. _____ GTA IV's makers, Take-Two Interactive Software and Rockstar Games, have spent very little money marketing and advertising its new product. The controversial action driving game could see record sales simply _____, TV news and Internet reports.

Earlier this year, Rockstar vice president Dan Houser _____ was not actively promoting GTA IV around the world. He said: "We want people to be really excited and not know everything _____ the game." He added: "Of course, we want them to understand what they're buying, but we want there to be _____." The action in the game takes place in Liberty City, which looks remarkably like the Big Apple, New York City. One surprise in the game is the really bad "hero" Niko Bellic, _____ Eastern Europe. Players can pretend to be Bellic and destroy everything in their sights. They can hijack cars, shoot the police and _____. The graphics are outstanding and it's quite addictive playing. It's _____ and carries an adult rating.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words '**video**' and '**game**'.

video	game
--------------	-------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• version• hit• smash• top• average• simply	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• vice• excited• way• gangster• destroy• stuff
--	---

STUDENT VIDEO GAMES SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about video games in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

VIDEO GAMES DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the words 'video games'?
- c) What was the first video game you ever played?
- d) Are video games good for you?
- e) What do you think of the Grand Theft Auto video games?
- f) Do you really want to play Grand Theft Auto IV?
- g) What is your favourite video game?
- h) Do you prefer playing video games or watching movies?
- i) Do you think a video game can really be called a masterpiece?
- j) What do you think it is about GTA series that makes them so popular?

Grand Theft Auto IV to smash sales records - 30th April, 2008
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VIDEO GAMES DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What do you like and dislike about video games?
- c) What can you learn playing video games?
- d) Do video games make people more violent?
- e) Should parents limit the amount of time children spend playing video games so their children can exercise?
- f) What did adults do before video games came along?
- g) What was the last game you heard of by word of mouth?
- h) Do you feel good when you kill people and destroy things in video games? Why?
- i) Are you addicted to playing video games?
- j) Did you like this discussion?

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LANGUAGE

The wait is over. The latest (1) _____ of the world's best-selling video game, Grand Theft Auto (GTA), hit the (2) _____ on April 29th. Analysts predict worldwide sales of GTA IV will smash all previous records. Games experts believe it will sell 9 million copies in its first week and make more money than Microsoft's Halo 3, which (3) _____ \$400 million after its launch. GTA IV has received top reviews from games critics around the world. They say it is a "masterpiece" and the best game (4) _____ created. Amazingly, GTA IV has an average rating of 99% from the top games reviewers. Even more amazing is that GTA IV's makers, Take-Two Interactive Software and Rockstar Games, have spent (5) _____ little money marketing and advertising its new product. The controversial action driving game could see record sales simply by word (6) _____ mouth, TV news and Internet reports.

Earlier this year, Rockstar vice president Dan Houser explained why his company was not (7) _____ promoting GTA IV around the world. He said: "We want people to be really excited and not know everything (8) _____ the time they play the game." He added: "Of course, we want them to understand what they're buying, but we want there to be surprises (9) _____ the way." The action in the game takes place in Liberty City, which looks remarkably (10) _____ the Big Apple, New York City. One surprise in the game is the really bad "hero" Niko Bellic, a violent gangster from Eastern Europe. Players can pretend to be Bellic and destroy everything (11) _____ their sights. They can hijack cars, shoot the police and kill innocent bystanders. The graphics are outstanding and it's quite addictive playing. It's definitely not kids' (12) _____ and carries an adult rating.

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|--------------|------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1. | (a) versus | (b) vision | (c) verse | (d) version |
| 2. | (a) shelves | (b) shelf | (c) shells | (d) shelf life |
| 3. | (a) net | (b) netted | (c) netting | (d) nets |
| 4. | (a) never | (b) even | (c) ever | (d) every |
| 5. | (a) all | (b) lots | (c) very | (d) loads |
| 6. | (a) if | (b) of | (c) off | (d) over |
| 7. | (a) action | (b) active | (c) activity | (d) actively |
| 8. | (a) by | (b) with | (c) when | (d) on |
| 9. | (a) long | (b) along | (c) alone | (d) longing |
| 10. | (a) lifelike | (b) life | (c) live | (d) like |
| 11. | (a) under | (b) over | (c) in | (d) on |
| 12. | (a) stuff | (b) staff | (c) stiff | (d) stuffing |

HOMework

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out about Grand Theft Auto IV. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. VIDEO GAMES: Make a poster about the history of video games. What are the greatest games of the past two or three decades? Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. GAMING: Write a magazine article about whether gaming is dangerous for kids. Include imaginary interviews with a 13-year-old who loves gaming and his/her worried parents who hate video games.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to Rockstar vice president Dan Houser. Give him three pieces of advice on what he should do to make future video games even better. Ask him three questions about his company and its games. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

6. DIARY / JOURNAL: You are a video game character. Write your diary entry for one day in your video life. Include your thoughts on the other characters in your video. Read your entry to your classmates in the next lesson.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T b. F c. T d. F e. T f. F g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | | | |
|-----|-----------------|----|-----------------------|
| 1. | version | a. | edition |
| 2. | hit the shelves | b. | went on sale |
| 3. | netted | c. | took in |
| 4. | rating | d. | ranking |
| 5. | word of mouth | e. | informal conversation |
| 6. | promoting | f. | pushing |
| 7. | takes place | g. | happens |
| 8. | remarkably | h. | incredibly |
| 9. | bystanders | i. | onlookers |
| 10. | outstanding | j. | amazing |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | | | |
|-----|------------------------------------|----|-----------------------|
| 1. | The wait | a. | is over |
| 2. | hit the | b. | shelves |
| 3. | smash | c. | all previous records |
| 4. | They say it is a "masterpiece" and | d. | the best game ever |
| 5. | The controversial | e. | action driving game |
| 6. | his company was not actively | f. | promoting GTA IV |
| 7. | surprises | g. | along the way |
| 8. | The action in the game takes | h. | place in Liberty City |
| 9. | kill innocent | i. | bystanders |
| 10. | It's definitely not kids' | j. | stuff |

GAP FILL:

Grand Theft Auto IV to smash sales records

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LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d 2 - a 3 - b 4 - c 5 - c 6 - b 7 - d 8 - a 9 - b 10 - d 11 - c 12 - a