



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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Resource Material

At war with *World of Warcraft*: an addict tells his story

Former video game addict, Ryan Van Cleave, almost lost everything as his life became consumed by gaming.

At the height of his addiction Ryan Van Cleave had little time for his real life. *World of Warcraft*, a fantasy role-play computer game, dominated everything: his wife and children, his job as an English teacher. Before classes or late at night while his family slept, he would squeeze in time on his computer. He would often eat alone at the computer. Meals often consisted of microwave packets, energy drinks, foods that needed only one hand, leaving the other free to work the keyboard and mouse.



To Ryan Van Cleave, *World of Warcraft* seemed better than everyday life, especially when that life involved constantly arguing with his wife about how much time he spent on the computer. "Playing *World of Warcraft* made me feel like a god," Van Cleave wrote. "I had total control and could do what I wanted with few real consequences. The real world, in comparison, made me feel useless ..."

World of Warcraft had entered Van Cleave's life seven years before. Life for the Van Cleave's should have been perfect. He had landed his dream job and his wife, Victoria, was pregnant. But already gaming was taking its toll: he and his wife were late for her first scan because Van Cleave was playing a football game.

Soon, Van Cleave played *World of Warcraft* for entire weekends, stealing away to the computer while his family were sleeping or while his parents played with his daughter. Victoria was disgusted that her husband could abandon her and their new baby for a computer game.

Eventually, Van Cleave's life began to fall apart. He began to feel that people at work disliked him and wanted him gone. But he didn't try to make things better, he buried himself in *World of Warcraft*, the only place he felt he could control.

For millions who play, games like *World of Warcraft* are hard to resist. Playing makes the gamer feel like a star in a science fiction movie. But *World of Warcraft* doesn't end. It goes on and on, with characters roaming through different worlds and meeting new characters along the way. To Van Cleave, the game became an obsession. "When I reached the top of one exciting world, the game makers offered new characters and more items to collect. You can never get enough."

The effects of some computer games are not to be taken lightly. Over the past five years, stories in the media have described people suffering from exhaustion and eyesight strain after playing games like *World of Warcraft* for 50 hours straight. On rare occasions, gamers have suffered from obsessional behaviour patterns such as paranoia and insomnia. In some sad cases, addicted parents have neglected their children while mesmerised by computer games.



Van Cleave insists that video game addiction is similar to gambling addiction. By the time his second baby was born in 2007, Van Cleave was playing for 60 hours a week. A few months later, his employers did not renew his contract and he found himself out of work.

It was New Year's Eve 2007 when Van Cleave finally acknowledged something was wrong. He had been gaming for 18 hours straight and was not feeling well. That night he decided to take control of his life. He immediately deleted the game from his computer. For the next week his stomach and head hurt and he was drenched in sweat – like an addict withdrawing from drugs.

Staying away from *World of Warcraft* was difficult, but he did not reinstall the game. Once the withdrawal symptoms and headaches stopped, he started rebuilding his life. His wife said, "At first I didn't believe him. I had heard it all before and had no confidence that he would stop."

Van Cleave started to focus on his professional life. He wrote poems and books for young adults. He wrote the story of his addiction, *Unplugged*, which was published last year. Now he works at a top university for video game designers. Van Cleave knows his students spend much of their lives online and he worries about them. "I don't think video games are evil," he said. "That's not what I'm saying at all. I think games are fine but only if they are part of a balanced life."

Tamara Lush