

Part 5

You are going to read an article about the video games industry. For questions 31–36, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

Mark your answers on the separate answer sheet.

A career in the video games industry?

Reporter Lauren Cope finds out about working in the video games industry.

Initially populated by computer scientists and the self-taught, the video game design industry used not to offer many routes into its midst. Often, perhaps unfairly, viewed as just a hobby for young enthusiasts, the video games industry is now being taken seriously. Surprised? Industry experts aren't.

It's not easy though. Video game spin-offs that rapidly follow any new movie require dozens of team members and months of incredible skill, perseverance and intricacies. As with almost every industry, it's tricky to get into – but it is expanding. Jim Donnelly, a spokesman for an online games magazine says: 'It's certainly very difficult to make much headway within big companies, or to influence any of the really big mainstream games. But the truth is, the industry needs game designers more than ever. Not just director-level people who orchestrate an entire game, but the lower-level people who design systems and individual set pieces.'

So, how can you get into such a competitive industry? Although many companies prefer people to have a degree in computer science, Jim disagrees. 'There is only one route: make games. The tools are there. You won't get a job if you haven't made something, and you won't get anywhere independently if you are not making stuff. Game design is less a job than it is a way of life. Like any creative endeavour it must be done to be real.' Another industry expert, John Field, sees other options. 'There's a lot to be said for "just doing it", but it's really more complicated than that. There are lots of people who want to work in games, but few who measure up to the requirements of the industry these days; even fewer who have the creative talent, technical know-how, vision and entrepreneurial ability to really contribute to the ever-changing face of an evolving medium.'

Can you do it on your own? 'Perhaps, but it's pretty tricky,' says John. 'However, a good postgraduate course in games can help, plus provide a year or two of top-level support and guidance. Most games designers start their careers as programmers, or artists, progressing their way up the ladder. They are interested in all forms of entertainment media, plus have a healthy appetite for all areas of the arts and contemporary culture. They may or may not have spent a few years in the working world post-graduation, but have realised that games is going to be their "thing". They are not merely fans, but are fascinated by the future possibilities of games, and are aware of the increasing breadth and diversity of the form. And finally connections can help. This is often overlooked, but in order to get ahead in games – as in many other areas – you need to network.'

The childish stereotype of the adolescent boy glued to his games console has long been replaced by the more accurate perception of a grown-up medium, grabbing our attention. Families frequently get involved on interactive consoles. Smart phones introduce a wealth of new games through apps, as well as social media. John believes there is plenty of room for expansion. 'Games have become pervasive play-things for increasingly large audiences. They are also a great way to learn things and I see this already big area as an expanding array of possibilities and opportunities.'

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- 31** What is the writer's main point about the video games industry in the first paragraph?
- A** It is reasonable to consider making a living in this field.
 - B** Young people's contributions to it should be appreciated.
 - C** It offers a relatively limited number of career options.
 - D** Specialists in this area have failed to value its potential.
- 32** What does Jim tell us about the video games industry?
- A** It can be hard to decide which idea will prove successful.
 - B** Many designers are required to take charge of each large project.
 - C** It is worth recognising the value of having a long-term strategy.
 - D** There is room for people with different degrees of responsibility.
- 33** What does 'that' refer to in line 32?
- A** getting a degree in computer science
 - B** making games
 - C** being independent
 - D** seeing other options
- 34** What opinion does John express in the third paragraph?
- A** It is a mistake to believe that the jobs people do in the industry are easy.
 - B** Many people lack the qualities needed to do effective work in the industry.
 - C** The industry could benefit from people who have a strong desire to work in it.
 - D** The industry is changing too rapidly for people to keep up with it.
- 35** What does 'overlooked' mean in line 54?
- A** not considered
 - B** understood
 - C** not used
 - D** required
- 36** In the final paragraph, we are told that
- A** video games have not been effectively exploited as learning tools.
 - B** young people are being offered more demanding games to play.
 - C** people used to misunderstand the true nature of video games.
 - D** other technologies have forced the games industry to compete.