

Reading Homework: Preview into 5th Grade

You've arrived at the LAST homework of your fourth grade year! ☺

Below is an actual reading passage on the 5th Grade STAAR test, giving you a preview of what you're required to pass next year. Make sure to show your strategies.

Read the selection. Then choose the best answer to each question.

Dear Editor,

- 1 In your recent article "Just a Play Day," you argue that playing video games is a waste of time. You also describe video-game players as lazy young people who loaf for hours in front of a screen. I respectfully disagree with your opinions. I would like to offer some examples that show that playing video games has many benefits.
- 2 On Saturday I visited my friend Devan. He was playing a video game that looked like fun. It was no ordinary game, though. It was created by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to help kids understand what it is like to be an astronaut and work at the International Space Station. By playing the game, Devan was learning how to build a spaceship and manage a crew of astronauts. Devan wants to become an astronaut one day, and this game teaches him about some of the skills astronauts need in their work.
- 3 My little sister Louisa loves to play history games whenever she visits the computer center at our neighborhood library. The history games help players imagine what it would be like to live during a particular time. Louisa is especially interested in learning about the pioneering days of the 1800s. In fact, that's all she talks about. So the next time I have a history report due, I can turn to Louisa for the knowledge she's gained from video games.
- 4 Even though you insist in your article that playing video games has no value, Devan and Louisa's use of video games is anything but a waste of time. You also suggest that young people tend to play video games for hours at a time. However, I recently read a report published by researchers at the University of Michigan, and they suggested that it is not a problem for kids to play video games for as long as two hours a day. Louisa definitely doesn't play that much. In fact, our library regulates computer use by limiting people to 30 minutes at a time in order to allow other library visitors the opportunity to use the computers. Devan does play video games a bit longer than Louisa. He says he plays about an hour a day. However, I think playing video games an hour a day or a few hours a week fits well with a balanced, busy schedule. And I know a lot about having a busy schedule.
- 5 Like Devan and Louisa, I enjoy playing video games. But while I play video games almost daily, I also attend sports practices, complete my schoolwork on time, and

organize activities for the computer club. In fact, being able to play video games often encourages me to get my tasks done throughout the day so that I can reward myself with some game play in the evening.

- 6 You also might not be aware that playing video games can actually help improve study and athletic skills. The University of Michigan researchers found that playing video games can help people pay more attention to details and clues and learn math skills such as memorizing and using strategies. Some video games can help improve eye-hand coordination, which would be helpful in sports when throwing, catching, or hitting a ball.
- 7 I hope you and your readers will consider the many advantages of playing video games that I have presented. Playing video games is not a waste of time. In addition to being fun to play, video games provide educational experiences. Who knows? Even you might enjoy playing them!

Sincerely,
Paul Arroyo
8th grader Austin, Texas

Monday

1 Based on information in his letter, Paul would most likely agree with which of these statements?

- A Neighborhood libraries need more variety in the video games they have for students to use.
- B Young people have the responsibility to keep video games from interfering with their schoolwork.
- C The skills that students need to succeed in school are best learned on computers.
- D Young people should not be allowed to play video games unless an adult is available to supervise them.

2 Which of these sources does Paul use to support his argument?

- A Personal experiences and information from a research report
- B Facts collected by a library and a university
- C Interviews he conducted with family members
- D Information from a newspaper article titled "Just a Play Day"

Tuesday

- 3 Paul organizes the information in his letter mostly by —
- A stating the editor's opinions about playing video games and then providing evidence to dispute them
 - B comparing one person's experience with playing video games to another person's experience
 - C describing problems with playing video games and then offering solutions
 - D listing ways playing video games can improve students' grades and skills
- 4 What can the reader infer from the last sentence of Paul's letter?
- A Paul would like to play a video game against the editor.
 - B Paul knows that the editor will have a change of opinion about video games.
 - C Paul believes that the editor needs to play video games every day.
 - D Paul thinks that the editor has not played video games.

Wednesday

- 5 Paul uses the information in paragraphs 2, 3, and 6 to show that —
- A playing video games encourages people to be active in their daily lives
 - B video games can help students strengthen their skills in a variety of areas
 - C students tend to play video games that relate to what they are learning in school
 - D playing video games helps people develop their creativity
- 6 What does Paul hope to accomplish by writing his letter?
- A To describe the many types of video games available to young people
 - B To explain to readers that playing video games prepares young people for future careers
 - C To request that libraries limit the use of computers used to play video games
 - D To convince readers that playing video games has many benefits

Thursday

- 7 Paul's main argument is that —
- A video games have educational value
 - B young people like video games
 - C video games help develop skills useful in sports
 - D most young people play video games daily
- 8 What are your overall thoughts about this 5th grade passage? What did you notice that was different than the 4th grade passages that we've been doing all year?

