

The 7 Steps -
November



1. CONTEXT



Electronic Arts (EA)

Mindmap anything you know about the topic, including vocabulary. Do some research online to help.

2. QUESTIONS

Read the listening questions to check your understanding. Look up any new vocabulary.

Listening Questions 1

- When and where was EA founded?
_____.
- How did EA attract developers to publish their games with the company?
_____.
- How did EA's business change in 1988?
_____.
- What did the company begin doing in the early 90s?
_____.
- What type of companies has EA been buying in the 2010s?
_____.

Listening Questions 2

- What is EA's current business?
_____.
- What are 3 of EA's major franchises?
_____.
- Why were EA's working conditions criticized?
_____.
- What do gaming companies often offer their employees?
_____.
- What is overwork commonly referred to in the gaming community?
_____.

3. LISTEN

Listen and answer the questions using full sentences. Circle the number of times and % you understood.

| Listening 1 | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| % | % | % | % | % |

| Listening 2 | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| % | % | % | % | % |

Discussion Questions

- What impact have video games had on our society? Has this been positive or negative overall?
- Is extreme overwork a part of your company's working culture? How do you maintain work life balance?

4. CHECK ANSWERS

Read through the transcript and underline the answers. Check them against your own answers.

5. CHECK VOCABULARY

Read the transcript and circle any new vocabulary you find. Look them up and add them to your list.

6. READ ALOUD

Read the transcript aloud at least 5 times, focusing on intonation and pronunciation.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

7. SHADOWING

Say the transcript aloud at the same time as the audio without reading it. Circle how many times below.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

TRANSCRIPT 1

Electronic Arts (or EA) was founded in 1982 by Trip Hawkins in the Silicon Valley area of California. It went on to become one of the biggest video game companies in the world, but it was **initially** only a publisher of computer games.

Hawkins founded the company after he left Apple Computer and he recruited his early employees from Apple and Atari. EA attracted developers to publish with the company by offering them credit as artists and by sharing profits with them.

In 1988, EA released a skateboarding game called Skate or Die! It was the first game that was developed by EA, not just published and distributed by them. It marked a turning point for the company's business model. In the early 90s, EA began **acquiring** video game development studios that would go on to create games for EA.

Acquisitions in the 2010s have included a number of mobile game developers such as Firemint in 2011 and Industrial Toys in 2018, reflecting the growing importance of mobile gaming as a source of revenue.

MATCH THE ANTONYMS BY DRAWING LINES BELOW:

| | |
|-----------|---------|
| Initially | Praise |
| Acquire | Consume |
| Generate | Neglect |
| Numerous | Scant |
| Criticize | Forfeit |
| Scrutiny | Finally |

TRANSCRIPT 2

Now, EA is a major video game developer, publisher, and distributor for a variety of platforms, including video game consoles, PCs, and mobile devices. It produces both digital content and physical media. In FY18, EA **generated** \$5.2 billion in net revenue and it had 9,300 employees around the world.

The company has **numerous** blockbuster franchises such as The Sims, Battlefield, Need for Speed, Mass Effect, and several annual sports games like Madden NFL and FIFA. Those games are developed by development studios that EA owns.

EA has been **criticized** for overworking its employees in the past. According to a blog written by the spouse of an EA developer, employees regularly work 80-90 hours a week without any additional compensation. This led to several class action lawsuits that rewarded the employees in 2009. Long hours are not unusual in the industry, but most companies offer some form of compensation such as additional time off after a game is finished.

The issue is commonly known as "crunch" in the gaming industry, and in 2018 and 2019 many major video game studios came under public **scrutiny** for the practice, indicating it was an industry wide concern.