C1-C2 English Worksheet

GTA 6 Sick Days: Is It OK to Take Time Off Work to Play?

17 November 2026

Article

As Grand Theft Auto VI approaches its scheduled release on 19 November 2026, fans gear up for a launch surrounded by workplace headlines. Predictions of a wave of 'GTA flu' have come under scrutiny. A survey commissioned by BambooHR found that 18% of 1,530 full-time US workers said they intended to take launch day off. Its workplace records also showed a leave-request rate around 13% higher than on comparable dates. Yet intentions and advance bookings do not establish widespread dishonest absence. Commentators can play down the figures or exaggerate them, but neither approach establishes what employees will actually do.

The controversy raises a broader question about how people weigh up competing priorities. A football final, concert, friend's wedding or family milestone may be just as meaningful as a long-awaited game. Employees should follow through on their plans by requesting leave early, giving managers time to arrange cover. Falsely claiming illness creates a different ethical problem. Employers must decide where to draw the line, and supervisors may need to step in when too many requests fall on one day. Importantly, authorised annual leave is not the same as unauthorised absence, whatever the employee chooses to do with the time.

Fair policies should make room for valuable experiences outside work, although flexibility differs sharply between occupations. A nurse cannot simply abandon a shift, while an office employee may be able to rearrange deadlines. The argument should not boil down to whether video games deserve respect. It concerns consistent rules, autonomy and mutual trust. Who carries the extra workload when colleagues are overstretched? When should family obligations outweigh professional commitments? Whether dramatic claims about lost productivity hold up remains uncertain until the launch itself. The deeper challenge is balancing personal freedom with responsibilities to colleagues and the public.

True/False

Decide if each statement is True (T) or False (F).

No.	Statement	T / F
1	The article distinguishes predictions about absence from observed behaviour.	
2	The workplace survey established a global rate of dishonest sick leave.	
3	The writer treats gaming as automatically less worthwhile than concerts.	
4	Booking leave in advance may help employers organise staffing.	
5	All occupations are presented as offering identical scheduling freedom.	
6	Managers may need to intervene when staff requests conflict.	
7	The writer raises the fairness of leave rules and the burden on colleagues.	
8	The article confirms the precise economic cost of the game's release.	

Phrase Match

Match the phrases (1-10) to the correct definitions (A-J).

Phrases (1-10)	Definitions (A-J)
1. gear up for	A. create time or space for something
2. come under scrutiny	B. become involved to help or deal with a problem
3. play down	C. be reduced to one essential point or idea
4. weigh up	D. carry out an action that was planned or promised
5. follow through on	E. make something seem less important or serious
6. draw the line	F. remain convincing when carefully examined
7. step in	G. prepare for an upcoming event
8. make room for	H. consider factors carefully before making a decision
9. boil down to	I. set a limit on what is acceptable
10. hold up	J. be examined closely or critically

Synonym Match

Match the words (1-10) to the correct synonyms (A-J).

Words (1-10)	Synonyms (A-J)
1. predictions	A. independence
2. scrutiny	B. conflicting
3. widespread	C. forecasts
4. exaggerate	D. examination
5. competing	E. uniform
6. milestone	F. unclear
7. consistent	G. landmark
8. autonomy	H. overburdened
9. overstretched	I. prevalent
10. uncertain	J. overstate

Use the New Language

Choose 5 words or phrases from the worksheet and write your own sentences.

No.	Your sentence
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Discussion Questions

Student A	Student B
1. What non-emergency occasion would you consider a good reason to take time off work?	1. Should an employer care why someone uses the annual leave they have earned?
2. Have you ever rearranged work for a major sporting or cultural event?	2. Where should companies draw the line between autonomy and staffing needs?
3. How much notice have you given for a planned absence?	3. Is faking illness for a concert ethically different from doing so for gaming?
4. Do colleagues ever judge how other people spend their annual leave?	4. What amount of advance notice should managers reasonably expect?
5. Have you regretted missing a personal milestone because of work?	5. Who should bear the cost when many workers request the same day off?
6. When have you needed someone to step in and cover for you?	6. Should essential workers receive compensation for restrictive leave rules?
7. Would you prefer fixed hours or greater flexibility over your schedule?	7. Does professional loyalty ever justify missing important family occasions?
8. Would you openly tell your employer you were taking leave for GTA VI?	8. If leave is regularly refused, do employers partly cause dishonest absence?

Answer Key

True/False	1=T, 2=F, 3=F, 4=T, 5=F, 6=T, 7=T, 8=F
Phrase Match	1=G, 2=J, 3=E, 4=H, 5=D, 6=I, 7=B, 8=A, 9=C, 10=F
Synonym Match	1=C, 2=D, 3=I, 4=J, 5=B, 6=G, 7=E, 8=A, 9=H, 10=F

Example Sentences With the Phrases

No.	Example sentence
1	Retailers gear up for busy periods well before a major launch.
2	Sensational claims should come under scrutiny before publication.
3	Employers should not play down staff concerns about burnout.
4	Managers must weigh up individual needs and staffing pressures.
5	People should follow through on commitments they make to colleagues.
6	Every company needs to draw the line at deliberate dishonesty.
7	An experienced colleague may step in when a dispute escalates.
8	A balanced schedule can make room for family celebrations.
9	The question may boil down to how much flexibility is practical.
10	Predictions of mass absenteeism may not hold up after the launch.