

Read the passages and answer the questions that follow.

## Passage 1

### Excerpt from “Checking In”

by Hiawatha Bray

- 1        The social-networking site Foursquare was created in 2009 by Dennis Crowley (the maker of an earlier site called Dodgeball, which had been bought by Google before failing) and an Indian-born software engineer named Naveen Selvadurai.
- 2        With Foursquare there is no need to punch your location into the phone. The phone already knows its own latitude and longitude, and Foursquare’s database knows thousands of restaurants and other places you might want to visit. The software app shows you a listing of places nearby. A user who wants to meet up with friends can simply select a place and “check in” with a finger tap. All her Foursquare buddies now know exactly where to find her.
- 3        When Foursquare appeared, it was a handy and fun app for a social butterfly. Yet people had plenty of other ways to keep in touch—using the phone to make a call, for instance. Foursquare would only catch on if it could change the habits of millions of people, by convincing them that the app was a better way to stay in touch.
- 4        So Crowley and Selvadurai made it a game. A Foursquare user who checked in most often at a particular location became the “mayor” of that place. The reward? At first just a little cartoon badge (and bragging rights, of course). Later, Foursquare worked with local businesses to offer discounts and special offers in exchange for check-ins.
- 5        Within two years of launching, Foursquare had more than 6 million registered users, who were checking into the service 1.5 million times per day. Early on, much of the activity was driven by people competing to become the mayor of a favorite dining spot, public landmark, or subway station.
- 6        In Philadelphia in 2010, for instance, Internet developer Andrew Miguelez fought ferociously to hang on to the “mayorship” of Penn’s Landing, a well-known local site. “I was in a heated battle with another daily visitor,” said Miguelez. “The title of mayor bounded back and forth between us every couple of days as one of us would check in earlier than the other, or would check in on a weekend.”

- 7 Competition is occasionally so intense that users cheat by checking into a location even when they are nowhere near it. Foursquare had to start using software to spot and cancel fake check-ins.
- 8 By the beginning of 2013, Foursquare had 30 million subscribers, with half of them signed up in the previous year. Since its founding, users have posted more than 3 billion check-ins.
- 9 Although each check-in may be valuable to your curious friends, they may someday be much, much more valuable to Foursquare. Taken together, these check-ins let the company track your movements—not only through the physical world, but through the economy. People who check in regularly are leaving a series of breadcrumbs that could let marketers figure out where they like to spend money—and what other nearby businesses they might want to know about.
- 10 Stores can learn even more by pooling the check-in data from millions of people and looking for patterns. For example, they might find out that Foursquare users who often check in at art museums also like to shop at fancy clothing stores. Now art lovers who launch the app might be greeted with an ad from an upscale clothing chain.
- 11 Foursquare has earned hardly any money in its brief life. But the company is hoping that someday, this kind of advertising targeted to your location will bring in plenty of cash. Other social networking sites—Foursquare’s rivals—agree, and they’ve moved quickly to add location features. The billion or so members of Facebook can now attach their exact location to their posts, and so can the half-billion users of the messaging service Twitter.

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## Passage 2

### Your Life: The Game

by Stephanie Warren Drimmer

- 12 You're at home, doing push-ups on the living room floor. Each time you lift your body upwards, a small device in your pocket records the movement. Your physical activity is building up virtual points on a website called Zamzee. If you get enough, you can trade them in for real prizes.
- 13 Zamzee is part of a business trend called gamification. "The basic idea of gamification is that you take something that's not fun, and you make it fun," says Dan Botwinick, Zamzee's vice president of marketing. Zamzee and other gamified businesses borrow techniques from games — like competition and rewards for high scores — to make tasks like exercising as much fun as playing.

#### Head Games

- 14 Gamification can help motivate people to do activities that are usually boring or frustrating. Think of learning a new language. The average person spends two years studying a foreign language in school, but fewer than one in 100 actually learns to speak it. "Language education is a drag," says Gina Gotthilf. She's the head of marketing for Duolingo, a company that is using gamification as a strategy to perk up the process.
- 15 Duolingo teaches language by asking students to translate text. Beginners start with a single word; advanced students get complex sentences. The text is from real online documents, such as news articles. Duolingo combines answers from its 50 million users to translate the Web, bit by bit.
- 16 The software rewards students by filling a strength bar when they translate text correctly and leveling them up when they learn a new skill set. Like a game, Duolingo breaks down the process of learning a language into small steps and gives users encouragement as they accomplish each one.
- 17 Quirky is a business that uses game-inspired techniques to create products. Users submit ideas for new inventions. The Quirky community votes on which ideas it likes best. Top ideas become real products, like Porkfolio, a piggy bank that keeps track of how much change you've collected.
- 18 Quirky users are involved in every step of product development, voting on everything from colors to the best way to solve a design problem. Competing to come up with the best ideas keeps users hooked on creating.

## Why Are Games Fun?

- 19 In 2012, Zamzee studied two groups of kids. Both groups used their activity tracking device, but only one had access to the Zamzee website with points and rewards. The gamified Zamzee users exercised 59 percent more than the others. This shows Zamzee really does get kids moving, the company claims. What makes gamification work?
- 20 Jamie Madigan is a psychologist who studies games. He says that there are three psychological needs that games satisfy. Businesses that successfully use gamification fulfill all three.
- 21 “The first psychological need is the need to feel competent,” says Madigan, “like you’re making things happen.” To fulfill this need, most gamified businesses use rewards. In Duolingo, you can use points to dress up Duo, the game’s owl mascot. In Zamzee, you can trade in points for real prizes, like electronics or gift cards.
- 22 Another need is autonomy, says Madigan — giving people choices. Zamzee, for example, lets users choose how to earn points: they can walk the dog, run in place, or another activity — whatever sounds the most fun.
- 23 The third need is relatedness, or feeling that what you’re doing matters to other people. Gamified businesses accomplish this with leaderboards that allow users to compare their progress with their friends’.

## Gamify Your Life

- 24 Imagine if doing your homework were as much fun as playing a video game. By borrowing ideas from gamification, Madigan says, it could be.
- 25 First, break down your goal into small steps. If you have a science project due, make a list of tasks to accomplish: do research online, gather supplies for your experiment, print out pictures for your poster, and so on. Give yourself flexibility so that you can choose which task to do next.
- 26 Next, you need rewards. Choose things that you know will motivate you — like downloading a new song, or reading the new Muse. Each time you complete a task, you get a reward.
- 27 Finally, make your challenge social. Get your science project partners to join you. Make the challenge competitive by having rewards for doing the most tasks, or completing a task fastest.
- 28 Any time you think of a way to bring the fun to an unfun activity, consider — should I get some investors for my new gamification business?

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## Writing Prompt

Write an informational essay comparing and contrasting how the two passages explore the role of games in people’s lives. Develop your essay by providing textual evidence from **both** passages.

Manage your time carefully so that you can

- plan your essay and do some prewriting using your scratch paper.
- write your essay on the lined pages in your test booklet.

Be sure to

- use evidence from **both** passages.
- avoid over-relying on one passage.

Your written response should be in the form of a multi-paragraph informational essay.

Write your essay on the lined pages of your test booklet. **Anything you write that is not on the lined pages in your test booklet will NOT be scored.**