

Unit 8 – Video games

Reading 1

Skills:

- Details
- Organize information

Getting started: Do you usually play video games? What kind of games do you like?

THE NEXT CONSOLES



The next generation of PlayStation is nearly here. After more than a year of rumors about the PlayStation 5, Sony has finally revealed the price, release date, and some of the games we can expect to play. With the PS5, you should expect to see better graphics in your games, plus, the PS5's custom **SSD** promises to offer such high loading speeds that it could change the way games are designed.

Microsoft also has a powerful console in the Xbox Series X, which promises better graphics and faster loading times, but it's also selling the somewhat lower-powered Xbox Series S. The company continues to make Xbox Game Pass, its Netflix-like game service, where you pay a monthly fee and have access to a huge catalog of games, it doesn't mind whether you play its games on an Xbox or a PC. And while the PS5 will play most PS4 titles, the new Xbox consoles will be compatible with the former Xbox One.

Like Microsoft, Sony is actually selling two versions of its next-generation console. But unlike Microsoft, the only thing that differentiates those two versions is whether it has a disc drive and how much each one costs. The console is powered by a custom eight-core AMD Zen 2 **CPU** and a custom AMD Radeon RDNA 2-based **GPU** that will provide 10.28 **teraflops** of raw graphical power. The PS5 also uses variable frequencies on both the PS5's CPU and GPU, which could theoretically push the graphics to run slightly faster than normal when the CPU isn't running at peak. The SSD has 825GB of storage and 5.5GB/s of **throughput** — which could be fast enough to let game developers build levels without things like elevator rides or corridors that actually hide levels loading in the background. If you want to expand the console's storage, though, you'll only be able to do so with a Sony-certified M.2 SSD.

The Xbox Series X will also have a custom SSD, one with a full 1TB of **NVMe** storage but a lower throughput of 2.4GB/s. That could be a disadvantage, meaning the Xbox Series X has slower loading times than the PS5, but it depends on a variety of factors. Microsoft has also announced a Quick Resume feature that will let you have multiple games paused on the console at once, and pick up where you left off "from a suspended state almost instantly, returning you to where you were and what you were doing, without waiting through long loading screens."

The new PS5 hardware is packed into the biggest game console in modern history. Seriously. The one with the disc drive is approximately 390mm x 104mm x 260mm — about 15.4 inches tall, 4.1 inches deep, and 10.2 inches wide. Compare that to the Xbox Series X (the larger of Microsoft's next-generation consoles), which is 301mm x 151mm x 151mm.

With all of these new features, it's perhaps unsurprising that Sony has confirmed that the old DualShock 4 controller won't work with new PS5 exclusive games. The DualShock 4 will still work with PS4 games you play on the console thanks to backwards compatibility, but don't expect to be using it when you play the PS5 version of Horizon Forbidden West. Microsoft, on the other hand, is promising that the Xbox Series X will work with all Xbox controllers across all of its games.

**Adapted from <https://www.theverge.com/21450334/playstation-5-ps5-sony-news-price-features-specs-hardware-games>*

Glossary:

- **SSD:** A solid state drive (SSD) is an electronic storage drive built on solid state architecture. SSDs are built with NAND and NOR flash memory to store non-volatile data and dynamic random access memory (DRAM).
- **CPU** (central processing unit): The part of a computer that controls all the other parts of the system.
- **GPU** (graphics processing unit): A component in a computer or other device that specifically handles the conversion (= changing) of digital to visual information on the device's screen.
- **Teraflop:** A teraflop is a rate of computing speed that achieves one trillion floating point operations per second. "Flops" refer to "floating point operations per second." The floating point method is similar to scientific notation and uses an exponent to scale real numbers and support a wider range of values than the alternative fixed-point method.
- **Throughput:** It is the performance of tasks by a computing service or device over a specific period. It measures the amount of completed work against time consumed and may be used to measure the performance of a processor, memory and/or network communications.
- **NVMe** (Non-volatile memory express): It is a scalable and high performing host controller interface with command set and streamlined register interface. It is designed for data centers, systems and enterprises that make use of storage based on non-volatile memory.

Read each sentence. Write **X** if it refers to the new Xbox or **PS** if it refers to the new PlayStation.

1. Starting a game in this console will be faster. _____
2. You don't need to buy a new controller if you play with this console. _____
3. This console is really big. _____
4. The company that makes this console offers a subscription where you can play many games. _____
5. In this console, you can switch from different games without exiting each one. _____
6. Its SSD doesn't offer a complete terabyte of storage. _____
7. Its throughput is not that high as the one the competition offers. _____
8. Not all games from the previous console will be compatible with the new one. _____

What do you think?

Planned obsolescence is a policy of planning or designing a product with an artificially limited useful life, so that it becomes obsolete (i.e., unfashionable, or no longer functional) after a certain period of time. That's something that happens with video game consoles. How do you feel about it?