AQA

Level 3 Certificate
MATHEMATICAL STUDIES

Paper 2A/2B/2C

June 2026

Preliminary Material

To be opened and issued to candidates on
Sunday 1 March 2026 or as soon as possible after that date.

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INFORMATION

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The Computer Games Market

This document contains extracts from two reports on the computer games market.

Report A presents data about the PC and console games markets.
Report B presents data about cloud gaming and the mobile games markets.

Glossary

Term	**Definition**
CAGR	The compound annual growth rate expressed as a percentage. It can be calculated using $CAGR = 100\left[\left(\frac{N_t}{N_0}\right)^{\frac{1}{t}} - 1\right]$ where N_0 is the initial value and N_t is the value after t years
Premium games	Games that are purchased with a one-off, upfront cost.
Cloud games	Games that are played purely online with no physical copy required.
PAYG (Pay-as-you-go) games	Games that charge based on the amount of time played.
F2P (Free-to-play)	Games that are free to play.
Microtransaction	A small payment to be paid in-game.
2023F 2026F	Forecast figures for 2023 and 2026 as the exact data is not yet available.

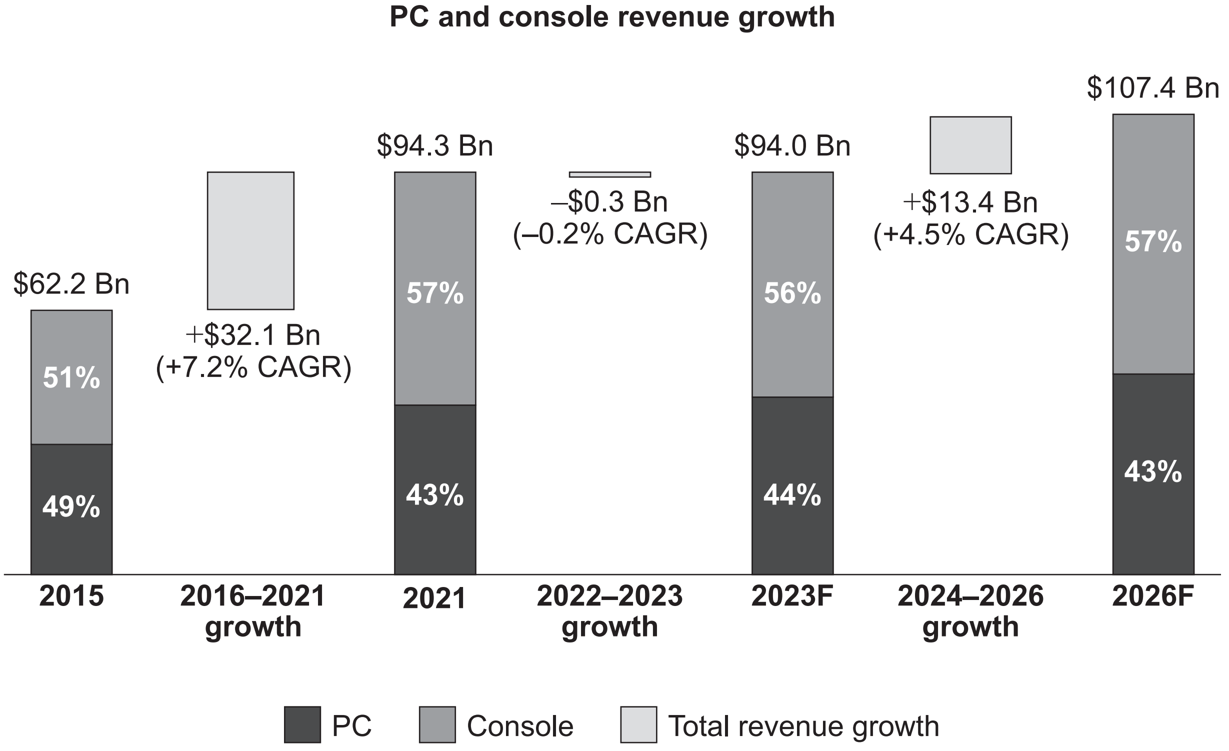
Report A

Revenue growth

From 2015 to 2021, the combined PC and console game revenue grew rapidly, reaching $94.3 billion, with growth exceeding 50%. The market will grow by a forecasted $13.4 billion from the end of 2023 to 2026, a more conservative growth outlook than before 2020. Most of the growth will come from an expanding console game market.

Our PC and console forecast for 2023 to 2026 anticipates a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 1.6% for the number of PC players and 3% for the number of console players. This is equivalent to an absolute increase over the three years of 4.9% and 9.3%, reaching 909 million and 664 million players respectively. The flat growth trend from 2021 to 2023F will continue. Forecasted growth rates from 2023F to 2026F are significantly lower than in the period from 2018 to 2021.

Graph 1

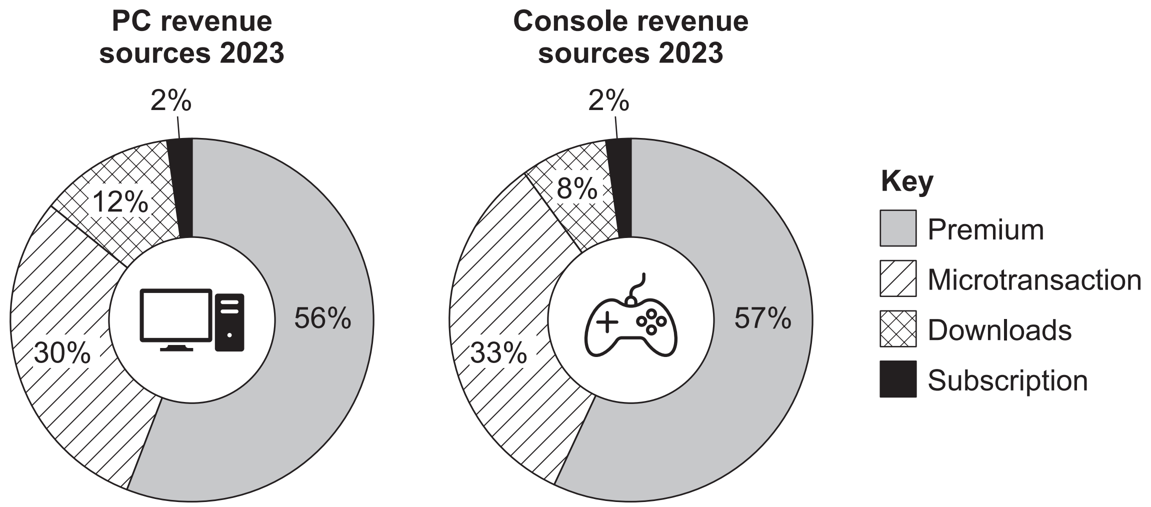


Revenue sources

In 2023, revenue from premium game purchases accounted for 56% of overall PC spending and 57% of console spending. Premium game revenue share was high for consoles, partly thanks to the large number of blockbuster premium game launches. The time spent playing those games took some revenue share away from recurring spending.

In-game spending accounted for 43% of PC and console revenues in 2023. The share of recurring revenues grew on PC despite the success of some premium hits.

Graph 2



Report B

Cloud gaming and mobile market

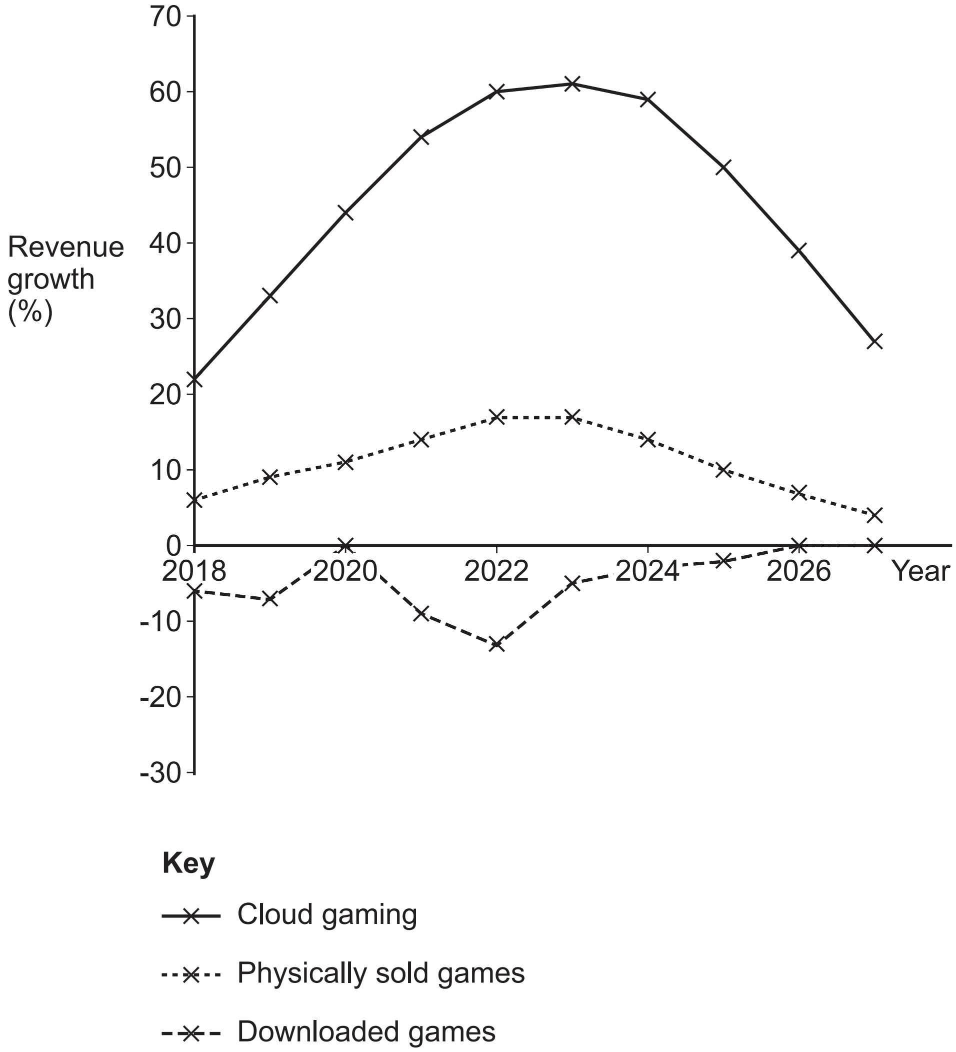
The games market has changed significantly in the last ten years largely due to the rise of cloud gaming and the uptake of gaming on mobile devices. With players able to access games purely online, developers and publishers have had to adapt their monetisation models. The five years between 2018 and 2023 saw a significant surge in revenue growth as the industry reshaped accordingly, although the growth is forecast to realign with other gaming sectors.

Cloud gaming utilises several methods of generating revenue. Premium games; subscription based games; free-to-play (F2P) games; and pay-as-you-go (PAYG) games. F2P games generate revenue from advertising, whereas subscriptions bring in a steady flow of revenue direct from the player. PAYG games allow the player to only pay for the time they spend playing which can be appealing for the player, but it does not guarantee the developer sustainable long-term revenue. That said, the PAYG model is expected to reach around $50 Bn globally by 2030.

Survey data from 2023 showed that F2P games were preferred by 53% of players, while 39% still preferred to pay a premium one-off charge. The subscription model was only preferred by 9% of respondents. The survey question did not include PAYG as an option.

Graph 3

Revenue growth by game type



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